

Salem's Invasion of the Mind Snatchers

The mind control device wasn't visible.

Not surprising. I figured the Chamber of Commerce surgeons would be too skilled to leave any traces. They'd be the best money could buy. So after an election forum I decided to dive into the belly of the beast.

I looked Sheronne Blasi, a City Council candidate, in the eye. The question had to be asked.

"Have you gotten the Chamber of Commerce brain implant yet? You know, the one that allows Chamber officials to push a button and control how city councilors vote."

Blasi said, "No, I haven't."

Hah! Just the response someone programmed to do the Chamber's bidding would give!

As a child I repeatedly watched the original Invasion of the Body Snatchers movie. It wasn't instantly obvious when humans became "pod people" and lost their individuality. The locus of outside control was hidden.

I'll admit that proof is lacking of a city council candidate brain implant. Alternatively, the mind control could be accomplished by having the biggest source of campaign funds come from the local Chamber of Commerce, Association of Realtors, and Home Builders Association political action committees.

Such is the case with Blasi, Daniel Benjamin, and Jim Lewis, three of the four Chamber-endorsed candidates with similar policy positions who have been called "clones." The fourth, Steve McCoid, has gotten about 30% of his money from the PACs.

Voters in the May election should keep this in mind. Salem needs creative elected officials who think independently.

Watching the current crop of city councilors do their thing inspired my Chamber of Commerce brain implant hypothesis. For sure, something is making them act in weirdly robotic ways.

Important City Council decisions are made with very little discussion. Motions often are passed in the blink of an eye, frequently on 9-0 votes. Councilors are strangely agreeable with each other, even when they represent constituencies with distinctly different political leanings and social values.

I watch regimented, scripted City Council meetings and pray in my godless way:

“Dear Lord who doesn’t exist, bring us a city councilor who speaks his or her mind with honesty, forthrightness, and conviction. Give us a bold individualistic truth-teller rather than a bland repeater of tall tales conjured up by special interests.”

This isn’t really a liberal versus conservative thing. Though I’m a progressive, I get bothered by dissembling on both ends of the political spectrum.

For example, the Oregon League of Conservation Voters, a group I usually support, endorsed Sheronne Blasi — along with the other Ward 2 candidates, Tom Andersen and Bradd Swank.

But Blasi supports the unneeded, unwanted, and unpaid for \$400 million third bridge proposal. Andersen and Swank oppose this massive waste of taxpayer dollars, which would significantly increase Salem’s carbon footprint and harm the viability of downtown.

I asked OLCV to explain why Blasi was deemed as endorsable as her opponents. Never got a decent response.

Ah...maybe the Chamber, which supports a third bridge, put brain implants in the OLCV endorsement committee members!

Strange Up Salem seeks to lift our city’s Blah Curse. Give us a Facebook like. Brian Hines blogs at hinesblog.com