

## Congrats, Crazy Council Candidates

I admire people who do crazy things. Not riding a motorcycle at 100 mph drunk out of your mind sort of craziness. That's just stupid.

I'm talking about the smart crazy wonderfully manifested by five city council candidates in the recent primary election: Tom Andersen, Bradd Swank, Scott Bassett, Xue Lor, and Christopher Proudfoot.

Only Andersen won. But all of these guys are winners of A Fine Madness award. Dudes, what you did was freaking crazy!

You spent countless hours campaigning for a public service position that pays precisely nothing. You went up against the Salem Powers That Be — Chamber of Commerce, Statesman Journal, City Hall — who way outspent, out publicized, and out back-room dealt you.

It's interesting, and more than a little disturbing, how the City of Salem appoints certain people to committees and commissions to pad their resume just before they are anointed by the Powers That Be to run for city council, after which they get endorsed by the Chamber and Statesman Journal.

This makes running for office in Salem akin to what those hobbits faced in entering the dark realm of Mordor.

Each of the aforementioned good-guy candidates went up against the dreaded PAC monsters, multi-headed political action committees that channel money from here, there, and everywhere so special interests continue to win out over the general public interest at City Hall.

Crazy thing to do. Yet they did it. Why?

Because when craziness feels so right, it's the only path to pursue. When I hear, "You're crazy," this often is a sign I'm on the Robert Frost'ish road less traveled that leads to the pleasurable place of No Regrets.

Life is most emphatically lived on the uncrowded edge. Here change happens, growth occurs, tipping points are reached. Win or lose, each of the five crazy candidates who challenged the Powers That Be brought Salem closer to governmental sanity.

They chipped away at the increasingly flimsy scaffolding currently holding up city officials who represent what's been aptly termed the Chamber of the 1%. Eventually misdeeds at City Hall will become so obvious to voters, a complete political housecleaning will occur.

Until then Salem needs crazy truth-tellers, people who rejoice in honestly speaking their minds without regard for light-fearers who want to keep the open government curtain tightly closed.

Last week the City Council had a work session where the public couldn't speak, but could watch the messy business of back-room decision making reveal itself in a burlesque show fashion: bit by bit, the skin public officials had been hiding was exposed to view.

The naked reveal was shocking: a plan is afoot to convert the much beloved Salem Public Library into a new police facility. Nothing settled yet, the Mayor assured us. City staff simply are being asked to look into this. Yeah, right.

No public hearing. No public discussion. The Goodbye Library notion just suddenly popped into view. Crazy. And not in a good way.

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