

Looking for the Owner

BY JONN KARSSEBOOM

It was an awkward moment when I first met him because I was busy chit chatting with another dear customer I hadn't seen for some time. I could tell from the corner of my right eye though, he was a big guy and his back and forth pacing meant he was on a mission.

I hate to leave a good conversation but this seemed important.

"I'm looking for the owner." He said

It's a personal quirk of mine but I've never responded well to that term for two main reasons. "Owner" insinuates to me, anyways, that all the work we do is to my credit.

My staff knows this to be most untrue.

Secondly, "owner" also implies that I actually own the place. Judging by the amount in dollars I'm indebted to Pacific West Bank, "owner" would be a stretch of even the most basic math. Still, my bank seems happy I assume the responsibility... lest their money doesn't arrive promptly.

When I told the tall stranger that it was I he was in fact seeking he looked a bit disappointed.

"Oh? I remember him looking different."

I enjoy frank honesty even when it's accidental.

Turns out that Paul Morrison, an official candidate for Tualatin's City Council, had stopped by to chat, to ask for help (read support) and for permission that he may put up two lawn signs.

I've never been personally asked for a "politician's" vote, never have been told what their vision for the future is in person and lest I've been mistaken for a grown-up, never been asked for support. Paul had me curious and intrigued and well, a bit flattered too.

It's gotta be tough though.

Paul is a change. It's his first time running for city counselor though I learned not his first time serving. Not by a long shot in fact. He's been part of the Ibach CIO and was a member on the city's Budget committee and also on the PSO board at Hazelbrook. Serving, helping, pitching-in seems to be in his very nature.

Yet, he's also running for the only position on the council that has a challenger. (His



honesty let that fact slip in too.) For supporters of Sonya Ambuehl you'd be glad to know that Paul had only wonderful things to say.

Here's the thing though. As Paul chatted about his view of the future of the city I couldn't help think that the world of a future counselor isn't that much different than that of a gardener.

They're both in the business of transformation.

How should we plan this area of the garden? (How should we zone the Basalt Creek area?) How do we view our garden and be able to enjoy the most of it? (How do we have "smart" traffic on Boones Ferry?)

And both politics and gardening can sometimes be a patient battle.

So I let Paul put up the signs. Like a true gardener he put them there himself. I noticed while he did that, the summer air had changed

to feel more like fall. The sunshine had a slightly different cast too. And so began the battle of every gardener (and in a way every voter) to either cling to the last desperate measure of summer or to leap head long into the next new season.

To be certain, Paul is running for a seat to help create change in the city. From his short visit with me I've been given a small glimpse into this thing called a democracy. I'm excited to see it all unfold in real life.

Often times in gardening and I suppose politics as well it isn't just the garden (or city) that's being transformed. It may well be just the reverse. In fact, as I toil away in the garden change and transformation is upon me as well. For the both of us I'm hoping it may be a transformation for the better.



Jonn Karsseboom works and toils and meets new people everyday in Tualatin. Sign up for his newsletter (and let him know what you really think) at www.thegardencorner.com.