

A DIFFERENT KIND OF

## WOMYN'S NIGHT

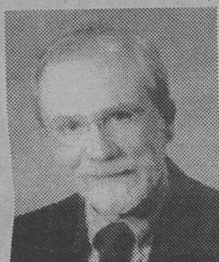
6-8 DESSERT BAR

8-10 ACOUSTIC PERFORMANCE:

SAM SHABER

10-CLOSE DJ EV ALL NIGHT

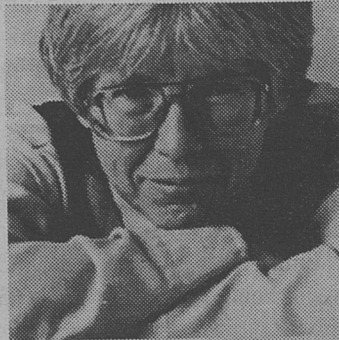
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# The Amazon Trail: One Queer Voter

**lee lynch**

**W**hy not be a one-issue voter? I hear this complaint about those of us who vote for the peace candidate or the green candidate or the gay-positive candidate. In these times when the fate of the earth itself is in danger from over-population, pollution, corporate greed and when fundamentalism produces terrorists from suicide bombers to anti-gay graffiti scribblers, I have to choose my priorities.

Lately there have been so many changes in my life I never thought to make what has always been for me one of the most important notifications – changing my address with the county clerk's office so I could vote. I haven't missed an election since I first registered thirty-five years ago. So a day past what I'd thought was the deadline I made a panicked dash to the court-

cratic system that third parties usually can't even get on the ballot, much less win an election. Sometimes I wonder how democratic America really is. Did the founding fathers really intend our choices to be so narrow? The people who want this particular job are an ornery white male, a black male who has held a state office with such a low profile he might be wishing about now that he'd generated a harmless scandal or two, a white woman rumored to have an attitude problem and another white male no one seems to know anything about. I'm really getting passionate about voting for – none of them.

Even the ballot initiatives are innocuous, but all want to amend the state constitution. Not likely, fellas. The only good thing about this election's crop of

November election because so much rides on the outcome. I gag on voting for a man who, in another office, trampled the rights of a skimpily protected group of Americans, victims of on-the-job injuries, in favor of the employers who will pull any kind of stunt not to compensate loyal workers who have lost careers, seniority, retirement assets and their livings to the great capitalistic bottom line.

I feel passionate enough about workers' rights to vote my conscience, but the Issues Maven had a point. Rather than vote for Ralph Nader in the last presidential election, I wanted the gay-positive candidate who had a chance to win. With Nader's green votes behind Gore there would have been no fooling around with Florida election results. Gore would have been the Prez right now and the so-called gay agenda would not be ignored or set back. My political conscience wants to vote for the greatest good for the greatest number, but even it agrees that my need to have my queer rights protected is greater. I simply can't risk a Republican governor.

Why not be a one-issue voter? What matters more to me than being queer? Nothing. As

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house to plead my case. The normally somnolent clerks were apparently so glad to see someone who cared about being able to vote, that they leapt to my assistance and had me out of there, a legal voter, in under five minutes. I felt relieved and mightily proud. The grammar school teachers who taught me my democracy lessons would have been pleased.

But when the ballot arrived in the mail I wondered why I had bothered. The paucity of selection was dispiriting. It forced one to choose among several mediocre gubernatorial candidates. I give the person in that office a good chunk of the money I earn every year and I would like to be sure s/he's got some outstanding attribute, belief system, intellect or even charisma to recommend her/him.

This is a primary election. As a registered Democrat, I get to help choose who will run against a Republican. There are no third party candidates in my state. It's an irony of this demo-

cratic system that the gay rights-crushing Oregon Citizens Alliance has not managed any sneak attacks. It's going to take an issue like adding sexual orientation as a protected category or recognizing animal rights as a government priority to get me behind making changes to any constitution. I'm about to put a new bumper sticker on my already well-festooned car – "Just Vote No."

The initiatives thus addressed, I turned to the candidate choices and did what any good American in an electoral quandary does: I polled my gay family to find out how to vote. More specifically, I asked the Issues Maven, the woman with the real skinny on who's who and what's what, the person who not only has opinions and is willing to voice them, but knows what she's talking about. We disagreed on one of the selections, but that's because there is no good choice.

She suggested the candidate most likely to win in the

long as I'm at risk for being who I am, as long as there is any chance that my democratic government, in the wrong hands, can punish me for my desires, I need to make my choices based on the fact that I'm still a second class citizen who needs as many gay advocates in positions of power as I can vote in to protect me. Of course I'm a one issue voter. ▼

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