

# The Amazon Trail: I Want My Country Back

I've been reading a much-circulated story about a national stronghold of anti-gay sentiment in Colorado, Focus on the Family. The poor babies are having a hard time staying afloat. The focus of America is definitely not on us gay folk any more, but somehow I get the feeling that this is only part of the reason why the purveyors of hate are losing their jobs. Could it be that their supporters feel they've finished their work? Wasn't it their flock who gave Bush and his band enough votes that all they had to do was steal one state in order to occupy the white house?

It's not that the bigots can retire - we're much too uppity for their peace of mind. And it's certainly not time for us to let down our guard - homophobia is too strong in them to fade away.

**For the first time in my life I believe there really is such a thing as evil and that it has enthroned itself in our nation's capitol.**

So what is going on with these folks? Are they glued to their TVs, watching reality television Iraqi style? Are they donating to the Veterans of Foreign Wars instead of to Focus on the Family? Are we forgotten or just pushed to a dangerous back burner, hovering above a very low, but not extinguished, flame?

We are such a gentle people - and so understanding with non-gays. It's incomprehensible to us that our love is considered wrong. We simply and innocently expect that those unfortunate enough to be straight will, with time, patience and education, see the light. We've worked so hard, surely we've won?

That'll be the day. This

**lee  
lynch**

is no time to put our deflector shields down, rebel troops. This is no time to be lulled into trust, to feel safe. For the first time in my life I believe there really is such a thing as evil and that it has enthroned itself in our nation's capitol. It's time to build on our gains, not to take a vacation. And as dismal a prospect as it may seem, it is time to coalition with the Democratic Party as we never have before. I believe we're fighting for our lives with every election.

I don't for a minute think we've been forgotten. I think the war against us - and we're not alone, the American people of color, poor people, non-Christians and others who get in the way of WASP imperialism - will eventually be waged on an even higher, more sophisticated and lethal level if the current administration stays in power. These guys in D.C. are serious. If they're going into other countries and grabbing with impunity anything they believe should be theirs, if they are defining what is right and wrong, deciding who should do what and how, what do they have in mind for their own country? They have big brother himself, Mr. Ashcroft, in mind.

Nor do I believe that the war with Iraq is only about oil. What is the media displaying - unchecked looting, disorder, dark-skinned guys in funny head gear - sound familiar? Is there a little race hatred going on over there too? There is certainly no respect for the ransacked culture of Iraq. At home our weapon is neglect; our bomb, the slashing of entitlement programs for the disenfranchised. Is Iraq just another ghetto we'll abandon?

I almost despair when I

think about who runs this country and much of the world today: bullies who can send us to war and tempt warriors to our shores; insurance companies that have too much say over whether we live or die; agribusiness that poisons our food with genetic engineering and pesticides, bankrupts small farmers and enslaves poor farm workers; giant food processors who dilute our nutrition with additives and fillers for profit; religions that insinuate themselves into government to proselytize and accrue power; pharmaceutical companies that promote products which could be used to take the edge off a people too angry, too restive and smart enough to connect the dots; heterosexuals who, whatever their level of tolerance, inside are convinced their way is right.

Helen Thomas, a respected journalist who has covered eight presidents, is quoted as saying, "This is the worst president ever. He is the worst president in all of American history." And the most dangerous - the purveyors of hate love him.

The Green Party appeals strongly to me, and I could not vote with them. The Democratic Party is our best chance to hold back the belligerent hordes within. The good legislators need encouragement to keep sticking their necks out. They need the protection of our numbers and our allegiance. It would be criminal to allow four more years of greedy men apparently intent on world domination and the financial and moral gutting of this country. No one is more of an American chauvinist than I. No one could be more grateful than I to have the privilege of living here. I have a responsibility to defend my country against those who would do it harm. I want my country back. ▼

*Lee Lynch is the author of eleven books including The Swashbuckler and the Morton River Valley Trilogy. She lives on the Oregon Coast and comes from a New England family.*

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name I won't disclose, but - coincidentally - rhymes with "Quears." If I were on the marketing team of that corporation, I would suggest offering free couples counseling for their lesbian customers.

I am proud to say my sweetheart and I managed to buy our new fridge without requiring any crisis intervention at all. Despite the stress of making a major purchase, we were pretty happy once we realized that getting a new fridge - even the basic

no-frills model - meant we wouldn't have to clean the encrusted mustard smears and desiccated romaine wilt out of the old one.

Content as we were with our purchase, it was still hard to walk past the tool belts and tape measures on the way out. ▼

*Sally Sheklow lives domestically with her partner in Eugene, Oregon. Comments can be sent to sally@wymprov.com*

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They could go on like this for the rest of the Bush administration." But they were actually very nice and treated us the same as any other normal, mainstream, everyday source of revenue. We felt perfectly welcome there, so I would like to take a moment to personally commend the employees in the appliance section of this big department store whose



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