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Amazon Trail: What is Their Problem?

What is their problem? Can't this Republican administration hear the poor call, "We're hungry!" Can't they see the middle class is drowning in layoffs? Can't they feel the groundswell of frustration about fighting wars in countries as hot and oil-rich as Texas?

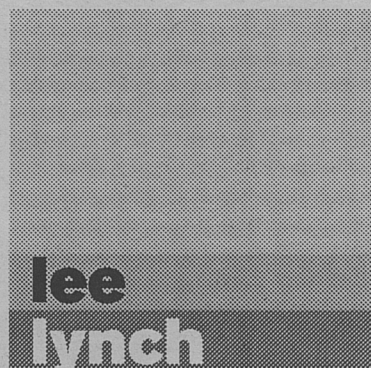
The answer seems to be yes, they can hear and see and feel all of it, but they're going to make hay while their sun shines and they obviously think it's going to keep shining. Do they have a hat trick the voting public can't anticipate? Is their confidence and arrogance based on further shenanigans at the voting booths or on something even more reprehensible? Do they think we're going to sit back and let them have their way again after four years of being trampled by the greediest herd of elephants ever to come down the pike?

What will it take to stop the stampede? Every week there is some insult to the trust of Americans. Last month it was the recess appointment of U.S. District Judge Charles Pickering to the 5th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals after senators responsive to the desires of constituents successfully blocked his confirmation.

And then there was the insult of the announcement of a \$1.5 billion election-year initiative to "promote marriage," especially among low-income couples and, one could assume, only among couples comprised of a woman and a man. People are homeless in the United States. Cancer and other killers are boring through our population. The old and ill are going without necessary medications. Millions of women and children are being abused inside the holy institution of marriage. Illegal drug use continues epidemic. And we're spending the country further into deficit to promote marriage?

Ask the young man who works at Burger King and Mailboxes ETC and pours cement on the side to support his new baby — ask him which he'd rather spend this money on, decent housing for his family or on a program to make sure he and the mother get to an altar, any Christian altar.

Ask the woman receptionist with three kids what she would rather the government



spend this loose change on — making day care centers available and affordable or giving her and her husband marriage lessons. Ask the runaway gay kids whether they'd rather be herded into two-gender relationships or have funding invested in street-kid shelters. Ask the soldier patrolling the desert in

American policy today. To those who believe that this is a Christian country, a boondoggle like this one is nothing more than a get-out-the-vote reward. Who else but the churches will be entrusted with shoring up marriage? \$1.5 billion is going to recruit a lot of new worshippers who in turn will vote for the party that gives the hand-outs to their churches. This tactic of buying religious votes is both insidious and seditious. I am appalled by the brazenness of the white boys who would ignore the safeguards put in place to discourage religious power grabbing. I am appalled at the misuse of funds so urgently needed elsewhere. But then I am appalled that such an administration has inserted itself into our corridors of power.

Is their confidence and arrogance based on further shenanigans at the voting booths or on something even more reprehensible?

Iraq if s/he would prefer to protect marriage or get a raise.

This is ridiculous! His Bushiness takes our tax dollars and squanders them on playing war and playing house. If everyone is settled in a honeymoon suite at the Baghdad Ritz Carlton, will our problems be solved?

I actually know what their problem is: they're running scared. One state after another is recognizing that it's the sanctity of love which should be recognized by society and that there is nothing inherently sacred about marriage. Whatever name is used to describe a commitment between two people, love makes the bond, and that can't be strengthened by any amount of money.

These reactionaries and their fear are driving too much of

I feel like the abused wife must feel — trapped by a conscienceless batterer. I feel like the shivering street kid and the old woman in pain, forgotten and despised by those who control the purse strings to entitlement programs. I feel as confused as the guy working three jobs who still can't afford to take his kids to the dentist. I feel helpless before the amoral decisions coming out of Washington, D.C.

But I am not helpless. I have a voice and a vote. ▼

Copyright Lee Lynch 2004. Lee Lynch is the author of eleven books including *The Swashbuckler* and *the Morton River Valley Trilogy*. She lives on the Oregon Coast.



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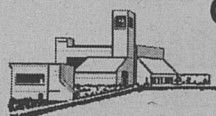
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8:00 Holy Eucharist & sermon
9:15 Holy Eucharist & sermon
with children's choir
10:15 Education for All Ages
11:15 Holy Eucharist & sermon
with full choir

GLBT Group

Monthly gatherings combine potluck
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All are welcome.
February gathering: Friday,
February 20, 6:30 to 9:00 pm.

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