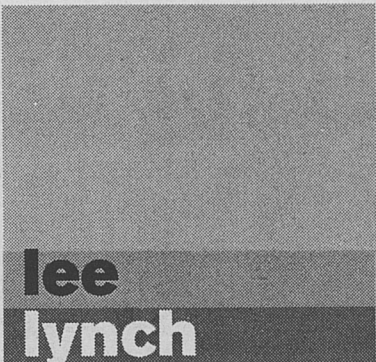


Amazon Trail: I Do ... Not!

What if I don't want to get married?

Well, of course, it's my choice. I don't have to marry my girl. But then again, I only have the one choice: I can either not marry her or — not marry her. What's wrong with this picture?

As it happens, neither of us is champing at the bit to hear wedding bells; we hear bells whenever we're together, it's that good between us. I have to confess that I feel that what we have is sacred, and I worry that formalizing it would expose it to the profane. When I tried to picture us standing in line in Portland, Oregon, with the religious zealots threatening divine wrath and the media filming us, I didn't want to expose my girl to marriage at all. At the same time I was terribly excited about the opportunity and completely supportive of those



that impulse; part of me wanted to join the lineup because marriage is a language I understand. It's fine to know that my girl and I have a deeper, truer bond than any piece of paper can bestow, yet I am the marrying kind, a one-woman woman, a nice middle-class girl. The temptation to seriously propose is great. It's how I learned to express my love: by

it's right for a couple, it's right.

Then I think of people like Mary Cheney, the vice president's daughter. How confusing it must be, in the midst of all the hullabaloo, to try to stay loyal to both her father and her lover, to the political party that is scapegoating us once again and to the platform that denies her rights. I applaud her for keeping her unsanctioned marriage together under such stress. I also applaud her for being out to such parents. I can't believe part of her wouldn't also love to wait in that four-and-a-half-hour line.

I've tried to imagine what bothers non-gays so much about us getting married. Their protests are thin and passionless when couched in words like "destroying the institution." No, it's got to be more visceral than that, like disgust or horror or fear. I wonder if they know what bothers them. I think they've been brainwashed by obsolete religious beliefs. Somebody needs to tell them, hey, we have enough people in this world, guys. There's no need to keep marriage laws written to insure that men go forth and multiply — and keep track of their progeny. Or maybe they need to hear: Can't imagine a feller in a wedding dress? Gay people love, we're getting married, get used to it!

The urge to marry, rather than being a perversion, shows just how very normal we are. If committed relationships are to be encouraged by tax breaks and benefits, family and peer support and sincere pledges to one another, then let's make sure these rewards are available to everyone who wants to make the move. Gay marriages haven't destroyed civilization in Canada, Belgium or the Netherlands — what's holding the U.S. back?

My girl and I don't want to get married today, but you'd better believe we want the option tomorrow. ▼

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.

When I tried to picture us standing in line in Portland, Oregon, with religious zealots threatening divine wrath and the media filming us, I didn't want to expose my girl to marriage at all.

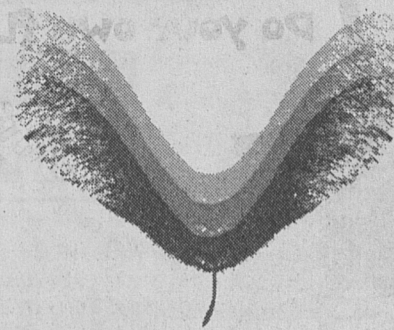
women and men who thus publicly proclaimed their love.

What a big step. It seems very sudden to an old gay who remembers when we had to disguise ourselves — checking our walks, dressing like hets (for women this meant appealing to men) and deleting most references to our lives from conversations. In those days it was really special to recognize someone by her pinky ring or to find gay people to socialize with. Now, we're registering with government agencies, testifying on paper that we're gay and signing our names to make it official. Given that there are still people in this country who shudder when they think about us, I think that's pretty darn good.

Is this an efficient way to get on the list many gays still fear? We're so brave, so trusting, so eager for acceptance, so hungry to belong that we lined up by the thousands to sign on for whatever. I understand

my parents' example as well as from the books I read and from the enthusiastic movies I watched.

I admire Phyllis Lyon and Del Martin for being first in line. I also admire my friends the hotelier and her poet lover who made a statement by waiting four-and-a-half hours to get a certificate — and that's all. They are not following it up by finding a little wedding chapel or turning the thing in signed; they just wanted to be counted. I was impressed when a gay man in town wrote a proud letter to the editor about how he wanted to marry his partner right here at home. I just ran into him and his young son at the Co-op and he said he hadn't heard a thing from our county commissioners. Surprise. A few days ago, two musician friends, who have been together at least twenty years, did go the whole route and were married by the minister father of one partner. That brought tears to my eyes. When



s a m a r a
foundation of vermont

Our Mission

The Samara Foundation of Vermont is a charitable foundation whose mission is to support and strengthen Vermont's gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgendered communities today and build an endowment for tomorrow.

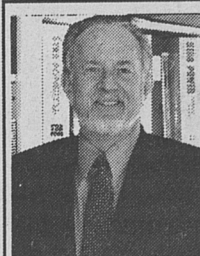
How To Contact Us: 90 main street
p.o. box 1263
burlington, vermont
05402-1263
p. 802-860-6236
f. 802-860-6315
info@samarafoundation.org
www.samarafoundation.org

Todd Lawrence

Sales & Leasing Consultant

Please call 802-865-8226
(1-800-833-6017 x-8226)
for information or appointment
1620 Shelburne Road
South Burlington, Vermont 05403

Heritage Toyota & Scion



George Brewer
REALTOR,
CRS, GRI, CRB, ABR
langmidd@sover.net

Buying or selling a home?
Because our team is dedicated to providing the best possible service to all people, we are proud of our ties to the GLBT community.

Specializing in
Addison County
www.langteam.com
(802) 388-1000

