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Amazon Trail: The Graphic Word

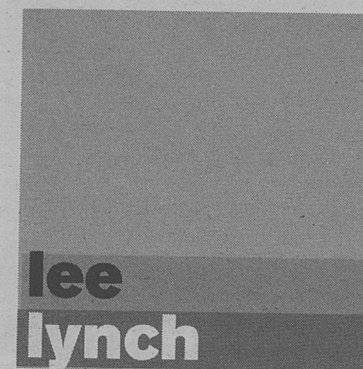
My dilemma, now that I am driving a small car, is where to put all the bumper stickers. These days, bumpers seem to be made of painted plastic. I don't want to risk damaging the car by using the bumpers as billboards. My windows will have to do.

I started with a sticker from my food coop. That took care of half of the available space on the back window. The required rainbow strip went across the top. A friend gave me a "Question the Answers" sticker, which took the other half of the back window. My gay flag sticker had to go in a corner of the front window and the rainbow triangle on a back side window. The rainbow squiggle and reflective strip are awaiting their turns in the glove box — their little closet. I was all set.

Then election season arrived. John Kerry sent me guess what: a bumper sticker! I stripped off the less urgent food coop and slapped him on. That worked fine until the Democratic convention when the chant "Help Is On the Way" moved me to hunt for a company clever enough to market the phrase. I found twounemployeddemocrats.com and seeyageorge.com. The sticker arrived with a note of apology for its lateness, crowing that the company was swamped.

Of course, I couldn't just order one thing. I sent for buttons for which depicted the letter W in a red circle with a slash through it. From the number of people who have told me — on supermarket lines, in the library, the post office — that they loved the button, I could have predicted a landslide victory for John Kerry in a town with more than its share of "Vietnam Veterans Against John Kerry" stickers. Of course it's also the town where some mischievous soul cut the names out of all the Bush/Cheney signs along the main highway. I tried not to chortle too much over the vandalism, because the guarantee of free speech was intended to cover Republicans too. I think. That point is a little unclear with John Ashcroft running the show.

I passed on "John Kerry — Bringing complete sentences back to the white house" and "Mission Accomplished my ass"



because I prefer to adorn my car with positive messages. But when a friend sent my girl a website where I could order "Birders Against Bush" I forgot my scruples. It was just too accurately me. Of course, then the Kerry sticker had to move, darn it, and I put it on top of the rainbow shazam on a side window. ^ did I forget to mention the rainbow shazam? A funny thing hap-

I left her to the nurses and the nausea long enough to snag a couple of stickers. Ballot measure 36 is the Oregon right-wingers' attack on the right of gay people to marry. I managed to slap the sticker on a curve of my rear window, barely out of my sight line. My girl went into the hospital before she could get one on her car. Since we can't marry, she, sick as she's been, has had to be explicitly clear with every physician and every nurse that I am her partner and am to be included in every phase of her treatment. This makes me mad enough to think about ordering 36 "Civil marriage is a civil right" stickers and plastering my car with them.

Maybe I should get more creative and find other ways to get out my messages. I heard a story last night that inspired me. It seems there is a little town in Maryland, a

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pened, though — the Kerry sticker disappeared. Maybe one of those people with "George Bush is my president" on his car couldn't take it any more and ripped mine off.

Seeyageorge.com sent me a freebie too. I had to lay this one across my dashboard in hopes passing pedestrians would be able to see it: "When in doubt, start a war."

I know after the fourth or fifth bumper sticker, people start to think the driver is a kook, but there are so many more stickers from northernsun.com I'd like to display! "Not rich enough for a tax break," "How many lives per gallon?" "Our national health plan — don't get sick!" and "I'm way over the rainbow."

The real crunch came when I got my "No on 36" sticker. No place local carried them, but my girl was having chemo in a town where there was an outlet, so

liberal town as it was described, which has an annual parade in the fall. Because the parade was held before the election, one gentleman marched with a bush he'd carefully decorated with beets and a sign that read "Beet Bush." I love liberals, we have such fun with our politics.

As I came out of the library today, my car was parked directly across the lot. Despite my attempts to be subtle, it looks like a kook drives it. At least I like this kook's messages. Maybe my little gas-saving car needs a bumper sticker all her own: "Draft SUV Drivers first." ▼

Copyright 2004 Lee Lynch. Lynch is the author of eleven books including *The Swashbuckler* and *the Morton River Valley Trilogy*. She lives on the Oregon Coast. Her web page is at <http://leelynch6.tripod.com>.

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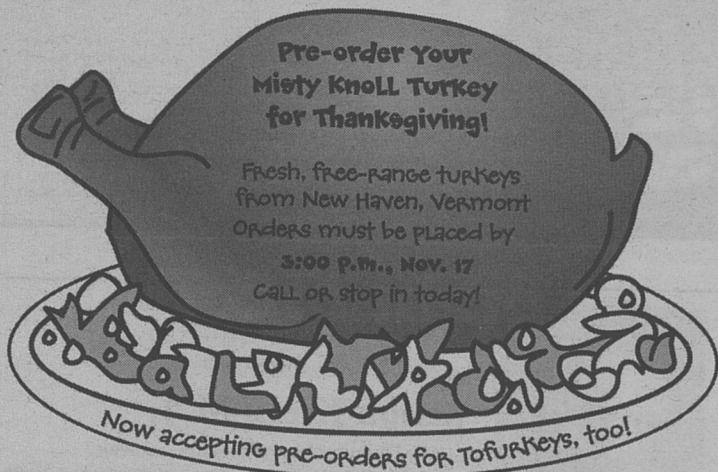
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