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INSIDE:

Portland lesbian carries
(Olympic) torch, thanks
to her family
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PRIMARY PRIMER

**just out takes
an intimate look at
the gay and lesbian
candidates facing
opponents in the
May 21 primary**

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PHOTO BY LINDA KLEWER

Gail Shibley

It was time to play free association with Barry Pack, executive director of Right to Privacy, a statewide organization that supports gay, lesbian and bisexual rights through education and lobbying, and, through its political action committee, backs selected gay-friendly political candidates via campaign contributions and endorsements.

"I'm going to throw out a candidate's name, Barry, and you say the first thing that comes to your mind," I said to Pack, who was totally game. "Gail Shibley."

"Extremely competent. Gail clearly has broad-based public policy experience through her many years as a state lawmaker, plus she has direct experience with city government because she works for the city. Her race is one of the most important because if she wins, her constituent base would roughly be the

size of a congressional district."

"Frank Dixon."

"I think Big Man," laughs Pack, referring to Dixon's impressive 6-foot-6-inch, tree-like frame. "We could not have a more perfect match for the Senate. He's thoughtful and well-spoken. He's been walking the district and has been running a terrific campaign."

"Bob Duehmig."

"I'm very excited about Bob. He's quiet but determined. He's not a grandstander. He possesses a sense of civility that is needed, given the climate in the state Legislature last session. That's just one of the reasons it's critical we have Bob in the Legislature."

"Chuck Carpenter."

Pause. Pause. Even more pause. Finally Pack responds: "You know, I'm not sure what to say." More silence. "I

need to think about that one."

With the entire Oregon House of Representatives and half the state Senate up for election this year—as well as city council and congressional contests to consider, to name a few—Oregon voters also have lots to think about. Next month, voters will make their first round of candidate choices during the May 21 primary.

A handful of openly gay, lesbian and bisexual state legislative candidates are currently running for office. Two of those—Duehmig and Dixon—both first-time candidates for elected office, are vying for a House and Senate seat respectively, and face challenges in next month's Democratic primary. State Rep. Chuck Carpenter, meanwhile, is working to stave off an opponent in the GOP primary.

Shibley is running for a place on the Portland City Council, a citywide, non-partisan position. She faces two serious opponents from a total field of eight.

Among the other sexual minority candidates who are running: state Rep. Kate Brown (D-Portland), who is seeking the Oregon Senate District 7 seat; state Rep. George Eighmey (D-Portland), who is seeking re-election in House District 14; and state Rep. Cynthia Wooten (D-Eugene), who is making another bid for her House District 41 seat. Brown is unopposed in both the primary and general election; Eighmey and Wooten are unopposed in the Democratic primary, but will face opponents in the general election on Nov. 5.

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