

government? The hostility of the Iraqi people may be the ruin of the new government.

If the U.S. rebuilds and runs Iraq, the money to do so will come at the expense of desperately needed programs here. With U.N. support, the possibility of other countries helping in this rebuilding greatly increases, but they will need to feel included in the decision-making process.

How much more alienation can the U.S. with-

stand? We cannot afford to lose our standing with our friends any more than we already have.

The Pentagon does not have the expertise to distribute food and medical aid effectively. Major relief organizations are the experts.

Let your voices be heard. We didn't stop the war from happening, but we still have work to do.

Susan Onaclea
Leaburg

LIVING OUT BY SALLY SHEKLOW

Wattle World

Leave it to lesbians to enjoy aging.

Florida's coastal communities have nice weather – between hurricanes – if you like hot and humid. Their muggy climate is famous for sustaining primitive life forms such as mildews, cockroaches, vacationing college students, and people who voted Republican in the last election – thanks a lot.



But, Florida's year-round warmth appeals to old people, and, hang on to your hat, lesbians get old, too. Even Sweetie and I are noticing the effects of gravitational pull. According to www.PlanetOut.com (and, by the way, not one newspaper in this town) two pushy old homo retirees want to enjoy their golden years in a Florida resort community that doesn't want to let them in. And it doesn't have to.

Florida, as most of our great country, is legally entitled to discriminate on the basis of sexual orientation. Those two nervy old dykes in Florida want to change that. They want equal access to the Bingo tables and they're putting up a fight.

But don't give up on traditional family values yet. Unlike our thighs, Florida is holding firm. What's their deal, anyway? Is there a shortage of mashed peas and carrots? Do two old dykes gumming each other without their dentures somehow threaten America's moral fiber?

Speaking of gumming, Florida is also one of the 16 states in the U.S. that still has – and enforces – anti-sodomy laws. You can do 60 days in a Florida jail and be fined \$500 for breaking the cunnilingus, fellatio, or anal coitus prohibition. That goes for heterosexuals, too, so next time you're "down there" be thankful you're not in Florida!

I wouldn't live in Florida for all the fresh grapefruit in, well, Florida. Speaking of citrus, orange juice spokeswoman Anita Bryant's "Save Our Children" crusade – mother of all "modern" (and I use the term loosely) anti-gay campaigns – originated in Miami's Dade County.

Florida's proud history of homophobia keeps slithering right along like a gator in the everglades. Under the benevolent rule of Brother Bush, Florida continues to roll up its diversity welcome mat. The Sunshine State is no more friendly to lesbian and gay people than to the African American and Jewish Democrats who tried to vote in the 2000 elections. Florida's queer-hating is like gray hair: We can cover it up, we can dye it purple, but we can't get rid of it.

Sweetie and I plan to enjoy an uninhibited old age right here in our own town. Our flesh is already showing age signs, prompting our newest athletic endeavor, Wattle Ball™. So far our game invention has one rule: the only body part you can hit the ball with must be devoid of bone or muscle. Leave it to lesbians to enjoy aging. We practice being our alter-elders, "Lefty and Shekkie." Last night, Lefty pulled her lips in over her teeth (still her own), smacked her tongue and asked, "So, Shekkie, how are you, sweet-hawt?"

I squeezed up my face for maximal wrinklage. "Oy, Lefty, yah still such a beauty. And what a wattle!"

Lefty's under-chin jiggled like an excited waterballoon. "Shekkie, sweet-hawt, show me those fabulous wing dangles of yours."

I raised my arms and flapped the loose meat. The ready position for Wattle Ball™.

We're hoping to market our Wattle Ball™ invention someday, but it's still in the R&D phase. Should the slow-flying foam ball come in bright varicose blue or neutral liver-spot brown? We're perfecting the chin, arm, and thigh Wattle Ball™ whapping technique. Loose flesh is one resource whose abundance we can count on without invading another country.

Our target market is the non-age-phobic who won't be squandering their limited incomes on botox. Lefty and Shekkie will be the happy lezbo geezers photographed on the game's package. We'll rake it in.

Then we can build a Florida retirement resort and admit whomever we choose. If we're really lucky, Wattle Ball™ will get us rich enough to buy our own governor.

Sally Sheklow's column "Living Out" got its start in EW in 1999 and now appears regularly in over a dozen publications. Sally teaches writing at LCC in Eugene.

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