

VOTER

LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF KING COUNTY SOUTH

MARCH 2006

LWV Mission: The League of Women Voters, a non-partisan political organization, encourages the informed and active participation of citizens in government, works to increase understanding of major public policy issues, and influences public policy through education and advocacy.

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THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS

of King County South

invites you to a benefit performance of

"BLACK COFFEE"

by Agatha Christie, featuring the detective Hercule Poirot

presented by the **RENTON CIVIC THEATRE**
503 So. 3rd St., Downtown Renton

Thursday, March 23, 2006

7:30 p.m.

General seating Admission \$15 Complimentary refreshments

- *Easy parking on the streets surrounding the theatre.*
- *Join other members for dinner before the show. Plans now being finalized. Call Charlotte Sullivan at 206-242-1602 or Betty Colasurdo at 206-246-4097.*

RUG RAFFLE to benefit the LWV/King County South

Handmade rug from village of Teotitlan, Oaxaca, Mexico

Tickets are \$1.00 each or 12 for \$10.00

Tickets will be available at the Theatre party, the annual meeting and at most Unit Meetings. Drawing at the Annual Meeting in May. Or call the League office at 206-246-7161 and leave a message.



PRESIDENT'S MUSINGS

LWV of KCS was well represented at the "Good in Government" brunch at the Future of Flight museum near Paine Field. Miriam Helgeland was even brave enough to go on the "Boeing Tour" and lived to tell of it. The brunch honored two people who worked tirelessly on the Washington State Tax Structure Study Committee. The honorees were William Gates, Sr. and Hugh Spitzer, University of Washington. Both men are humble but passionate about their work for the State of Washington. The keynote speaker was Kay Maxwell, LWVUS president. As she spoke of election reform, I had the feeling that Washington is about two years ahead of the national League and the country, for that matter!

The other event I attended as a representative of our League was a diversity workshop sponsored by the South King Council of Human Services. The thing I came away with is that we (LWVKCS) need to go and meet with the people we are interested in reaching. If we wait for them, it may be a long wait! The make up of the group that attended the workshop was interesting, fairly multi-ethnic but mostly women. We have many ethnic groups in south King County and a zillion languages. We need to think of ways to help such groups become involved in the civic process.

National program go-around produced an agreement that I should support the LWV of Ill.'s position on abolition of the death penalty. National delegates go uninstructed but I hear you!

Looking forward to seeing all of you at our theater party, March 23rd. Check your calendar. We are having unit meetings, too.

Becky

Calendar

MARCH BOARD MEETING: Wednesday, March 1, 9:45 a.m. at our office location, 616 SW 152nd, Burien.

MARCH UNIT MEETINGS:

ENUMCLAW: *First Tuesday, March 7, 7-9 p.m.* High Point - 1777 Highpoint. Contact Cathy Dormaier, 360-802-6799

VASHON: *Third Thursday, March 16, 2:30 p.m.* at the Vashon Library. Contact Jennie Hodgson at 206-463-5408

HIGHLINE: *Third Monday, March 20, 1-3 p.m.* at our office site, 616 SW 152nd, Burien. Contact: Betty Colasurdo 206-243-4236

FEDERAL WAY: *Third Wednesday, March 15, 7 p.m.* Foundation House, 32290 1st Ave. So. Contact: Kathy Jorgensen - 253-859-8349 in the evening

SEATTLE LWV FORUM: March 2 from 7:30 to 9:30 p.m. Seattle First Baptist Church, 1111 Harvard Ave. "The Impact of Social and Political Policies on the Lives of Women"

HIGHLINE SCHOOL DISTRICT SPECIAL ELECTION - March 14

THEATRE PARTY: MARCH 23, 7:30 P.M.

RENTON CIVIC THEATRE - Agatha Christie's Black Coffee - "Starring" Hercule Poirot!!

ATTENTION, E-MAIL READERS!

The discussion topic for the March Unit meetings is “a mouthful,” as my mother would say!

NEUTRALIZING NUCLEAR TERROR

The Seattle LWV wrote the study you will be able to access by clicking on the following link -

<http://seattle.wa.lwv.org/pubs/Neutralizing%20Nuclear%20Terror.pdf>.

(I hope this will link when it is finally posted onto the website. Otherwise, be very careful typing in the address, or if that doesn't work for you, “google” the Seattle LWV website, and go to the Publications Index. You will find it there if you scroll down about 2/3 of the way through the index.)

Noticing something strange with our masthead?

The newly designed masthead, used last month and on the print VOTER for this month, is apparently very “byte” consuming, using up so much memory that the file will not easily download.

So this is a temporary fix. We needed to get the VOTER to you ASAP.

Betty

Leveraging Political Polarization - by Donna Zajonc Printed here with permission of the author. *Donna Zajonc is a Political Leadership Coach, a former three-term Oregon Legislator and was her party's nominee for Secretary of State. Check out where website at www.politicsofhope.com*

“America is so polarized!” is a common statement these days. I often hear others say that political polarization prevents our leaders and our nation from working together.

In fact, the opposite is true. It is not our polarization that prevents us from working together. We are limited by our viewpoint of the purpose polarization serves. This viewpoint limits the effectiveness of our leaders and initiatives. If we can learn how to leverage different perspectives, we can successfully learn to work together.

All of life is based upon polarity—male and female, night and day, love and hate, life and death. From the beginning of time, philosophers, poets, sages, religious teachers and even song writers refer to the eternal dance between opposites.

The attraction between opposite forces delicately binds us together in dynamic tension similar to how a high sailing kite uses the brisk wind to soar. How do political leaders and citizens learn to leverage the natural law of polarity so that it is like the wind that flies the kite?

Consider three strategies that can help you leverage the power of political polarization and be a more effect person and leader:

1. **Shift your viewpoint** that polarization is bad and understand the creative forces that are available within opposing energies.
2. **Let go of resisting** what you don't want and focus on what you do want.
3. **Take a long term view.**

Shift your Viewpoint About Polarization

Polarization allows us to see contrasts. From the contrasts we can distinguish between what we want and what we don't want. This is progress. By celebrating the state of our political polarization, we see more clearly and are able to choose our direction. As citizens, when we leverage our political polarization, we often end up with better options and discover new directions! Rejoice in the polarizing politics you experience! It magnifies what you don't want so you are able to consciously turn your attention and actions toward what you do what.

Focus on What You DO Want

Gandhi's famous quote “Be the change you wish to see in the world” is based upon this principle. Yet, many citizens believe they must confront what they believe is wrong in the world with the same anger and tactics that created what they don't want. Going on the offensive against the “dark” forces we oppose will turn us into a mirror image of that which we oppose and wind up creating more polarizing energy. What we resist persists, and if we continue to focus on what we resist, we will attract more of it.

Many political activists have spent their lives marching against war. While ending conflict and suffering is a worthy goal, their energy is still focused on what they don't want: WAR. If they were to focus on what they do want, peace, they would create more peace in their lives. (*Continued on page 4*)

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Our political parties are classic examples of demonizing what the other party stands for rather than being clear about what their vision and programs are. Using these tactics the leaders of political parties cause an equal and opposite reaction, which results in more polarization.

If we lose the opportunity to learn from the contrasts that polarizing brings forward, nothing will be gained and the opportunity to leverage the polarity is lost. Leveraging political polarizations turns what we don't want into a forgotten memory.

Take the Long Term View

Veteran Hawaii State Senator Les Ihara says he acts based upon a personal 40 year plan. That's an eternity compared to most political thinkers, but pales in comparison to the Native American approach of leading based upon seven generations hence. Thinking and acting based upon the long view allows us to remove ourselves from the polarizing details of the moment. Boggled down in emotions and reactionary attitudes, we sometimes forget about the progress that has been made over the long run.

Rosa Parks' courageous act on a Montgomery, Alabama bus was only fifty years ago! Thinking in these terms, we can keep our eye on the vision and let go of some of the details that polarize us.

When you feel overwhelmed with details or are attached to your point of view, take a walk in nature. Notice a rock that is thousands of years old, or a nearby mountain that may be millions of years old. Then think again about whoever has you upset and angry. A new perspective settles in very quickly.

Challenging times present a choice to us. Do we want to act and lead from the human characteristics of judgment, fear and hate, or do we want the best of human nature to prevail based upon wisdom, vision, inspiration and love?

Abigail Adams, wife of President John Adams and mother of President John Quincy Adams, wrote this letter to her young son and challenged him to see that polarizing times can be a blessing:

“These are the times in which a genius would wish to live. It is not in the still calm of life, or the repose of a pacific station that great character is formed. The habits of a vigorous mind are formed in contending with difficulties. Great necessities call out great virtues. When a mind is raised and animated by scenes that engage the heart, then those qualities which would otherwise lay dormant wake into life and form the character of the hero and the statesman.”

Abigail knew that leveraging the polarizing perspectives of Revolutionary era politics formed a vigorous mind and nurtured the qualities of a great statesmen ... even heroes. Hear, hear, Abigail!