



# Voter

League of  
Women Voters of  
Bellingham/  
Whatcom County

January 2010

## Join the League at the January 16<sup>th</sup> Civil Discussion Workshop

Remember that argument you and your brother-in-law had at Thanksgiving over whether single payer health care was good or bad. You were so sure you were in the right, your heart began to palpitate when he made a negative remark about your position. Your reasoned arguments came out jumbled. He took offense. You agreed to disagree, neither of you learned a thing from the conversation, and you both walked away wondering how a smart person could be so stupid.

Let's try and change that dynamic. The time has come for us to go beyond partisan discussions and begin to talk with one another in respectful and meaningful ways, so that after civil debate we all compromise and get on with the work of our community. Everyone has good ideas—let's share them.

On January 16<sup>th</sup>, our League with the help of facilitators, Mary Dumas of Dumas Associates and Moonwater from the Dispute Resolution Center, will hold a **Civil Discussion Training Workshop**. Breaking into small groups Mary will teach us techniques for listening and talking. She will help us in developing a better understanding of how we approach conflict and work with us in learning strategies for productive discussions.

Our session starts at **9:30 am at the Bellingham Public Library, January 16<sup>th</sup>**. The workshop is for League members and invited guests. Invite that brother-in-law or someone else you know who holds some different view points. Let's learn together to promote productive discussions about the problems that face our community with the aim of working together for better solutions.

## Saturday, January 16, 2010

### "HOW TO HAVE CIVIL DISCUSSIONS IN UNCIVIL TIMES"

#### Training workshop for League members and invited guests

9:00 am-12 noon at the Bellingham  
Public Library Lecture Room

Facilitators: Mary Dumas of Dumas  
Associates and Moonwater

9:00 a.m.—Social Time  
Refreshments will be served. \*

#### 9:30 a.m. Presentation - Your Brain & Conflict

**Practice - Conflict Styles and Interaction Preferences.** Participants will work in groups of four to examine conflict styles.

**Presentation – Communication Strategies for Keeping it Civil.** Introduce participants to the use of open-ended questions

#### Break

**Practice - Using Open Questions.** Participants will work in small groups to discuss a community issue and develop a variety of open questions to stimulate discussion.

**Presentation - What are You Listening For?** Introduce participants to the function of neutral issue frames in helping to organize thinking & support forward movement in a difficult conversation.

**Practice - Listening & Speaking.** Participants, working in same groups and community issue topics will practice active listening and use of open questions.

#### Reflections & Questions

\*For Members Only—If your last name begins with N through Z, please bring cookies, sweet breads, or fruits/nuts to be served at this meeting.

## From Co-President Elsie Heinrick



Happy New Year to Bellingham/Whatcom County League members! As we pause to catch our breath before we start fresh with the calendar and our New Year's resolutions, I hope we all resolve to be active with

our League and participate in the programs that are planned for the coming months. I would like to thank our board members who make all this happen. Our variety of events and topics is made possible by the efforts of this dedicated group of individuals who along with many of our members follow their passion to get things done.

They are unified in their desire to see the league, and what it represents, remain a vital part of our community. They need everyone's help. The league is a grassroots, activist, political organization whose energy and strength come from its members. The board members contribute their time, personal skills, and political interest to organize activities that, in turn, create programs that make a strong, politically active community. Please check out our website <http://lwvbellinghamwhatcom.org/> for opportunities to volunteer.

Elsewhere in this Voter there is information about the upcoming Civil Discussion Skills Workshop for members and invited guests and I hope to see you all there. Mary Dumas of Dumas & Associates Inc. and Moonwater, Executive Director of the Whatcom Dispute Resolution Center will help us learn new skills to bring our best selves to the task of talking about challenging issues

The Washington State Legislature will soon convene for its short session. There are severe budget issues to be dealt with and the League will be monitoring the debate closely. The State League has scheduled the *LWVWA Lobby Day* for January 19 in Olympia. Cost is \$25

and the registration form can be downloaded [here](#) or call the state office at 206-622-8961. Another way to keep informed is to Sign up for the League's 2010 *LEGISLATIVE NEWSLETTER* [here](#). It is written by League Lobby Team members and sent weekly during the session, and the newsletter gives current information on bills, hearings and Calls to Action on issues that the LWV is following.

The LWVWA has initiated a two year **Civic Engagement Project** you will be hearing lots about. A committee headed by transfer member Annette Holcomb is planning several programs related to civic engagement to learn and teach others about the state budget and tax system. The **Project Strategy** is to develop and carry out a statewide educational program centered around the state budget and state tax system by:

- relating public policy issues (for example, health care, education, environmental protection) to real-life state budgeting and tax policy considerations
- demonstrating the connections between public policies and peoples' lives
- using the League's experience and expertise to help inform and empower a new wave of citizens who want to participate in governmental decision-making.

Please contact Annette at 318-7551 or [anholc@clearwire.net](mailto:anholc@clearwire.net) if this is a project you would like to work on.

We have a lot of opportunities to get involved during the coming year including hosting the League's State Council meeting in May. Please contact a board member if you want to help.



## Kudos

Eighty people and counting schmoozed with their city and county officials at our 2<sup>nd</sup> annual **Conversations with Elected Officials** on Dec. 2<sup>nd</sup>. A great big thank you goes to chairperson **Kathy Gablehouse** and her committee **Marsha Riek, Kay Ingram, and Tanya Baumgart** for doing such a great job pulling it all together. We've had wonderful feedback from all who attended.

Also helping the night of the party were **Lynne Rein, Bob Reik, Bill Freudenberger, Georgia MacGregor, Bill and Jo An Agnew, Pat Maden, and Dorothy Davis.**

And oh, those wonderful trays of food from members **Deborah Middaugh, Pat Woodke, Rosemary Woodyard, Joan Airoidi, Martha Burns, Martha Mills, Janice Keller and Robbin Naylor**, whose 16 yr. old daughter made the snacks so her mother could get to the party after work—way to train new League members!!!



Once again **Trader Joes** provided cheese, crackers and a great price on wine for the event. We are very grateful for their recognition of the need for dialogue between citizens and public officials and their generosity in helping us put on a fun and productive event.

## New and Returning Members

We welcome three new Bellingham/Whatcom County League members. They are:

Mary Dumas  
8415 Carl Road  
Everson WA 98247  
(360) 966-4565

Karen Summers  
401 Hillcrest Way  
Bellingham WA 98225  
(360) 733-4836

Sue Appel  
285 Sudden Valley  
Bellingham, WA 98229  
360-656-5788  
e-mail is sueapp@gmail.com

And welcome also to renewing members:

Darlene McLeod  
3422 Pinehurst Court  
Bellingham WA 98226  
(360) 733-2032

Louise Bjornson  
2829 Birchwood  
Bellingham WA 98225  
(360) 733-7756  
Dale-Louise@msn.com

The official count for the LWVUS is January 31 so on that date, all those members who are still unpaid will be marked as inactive. Our per member payments (PMP's) to LWVUS and LWVWA will be calculated as of that date.

At the January meeting we will hand out a revised membership list.



**League of Women Voters of  
Bellingham/ Whatcom County**

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## **Felon Voting Rights**

### **January 16 Martin Luther King Jr. Celebration Addresses Felon Voting Rights**

League of Women Voters and American Civil Liberties Union representatives will address the new statute in Washington State that restores the voting rights of felons who have completed their sentence. The 9<sup>th</sup> Circuit just ruled that prison inmates have the right to vote in the State of Washington.

The 12<sup>th</sup> annual Martin Luther King Jr. celebration is at **Whatcom Community College** and the session led by ACLU's volunteer attorney, **Hannah Stone** and LWV board member, **Robbi Ferron** will begin at **2 PM on January 16 in the Syre Center.**