

Kendall County Area Democratic Women

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UPI, Alexis S. Glenn

From the President

Bill and I would like to start this issue of the VOICE with a large **Thank You** to ALL of you for your thoughts, words and prayers for Bill's speedy recovery from his heart attack. Thanks to the great care we received at Boerne Urgent Care and Wilford Hall, Bill is doing very well and busy with his recovery. Thanks also to Sarah White, the Board and our February hostesses for assuring that business went on as usual. I understand that I missed an outstanding and most enjoyable speaker. Thank You, Susanne, for bringing Ms. Richardson to us. If you were unable to hear Ms. Richardson and the history of Leon Springs, it is my understanding she will be giving another lecture at the Boerne Library in April. Our Ms. Susanne assisted in the development of this book by being a proof reader. Way to go, Susanne.

Hazel McElroy spent the month of January busy with her rehab of a new knee. John Carpenter is working hard to recover from a recent cardiac hospital stay. News has been received from Florida that Dorothy Ellis recently passed. Julie Fisher has stayed in touch with Dorothy and Bob over the years. Dorothy was one of our early members and club supporter. Bob can be reached at 3333 NE 34th St, Apt 311, Fort Lauderdale, Fl, 33308. Helen Burstein's sister, Alice, whom many of you know, was recently visiting while on a book tour. Alice continued her tour before our club meeting, but if

you would like to hear about Africa, please check with Helen. Alice lived there many years with the Peace Corps and worked directly for the Nigerian government.

The following business was discussed: We now have two Brainstorming committees working. The first, on fundraising, will have a report at the March meeting. The second group is focusing on the October ER dinner. The Vice President's position for leadership of the dinner is open. If you are interested in chairing this project, please contact me. By starting early and having a sound committee to work with, this is a very exciting club position. Please give it your consideration.

John Weir, County Chair, is already looking to the state elections in 2010. Daniel Boone has announced his candidacy for the State Board of Education. This has always been an important agenda item in Daniel's campaign and one for which he is well suited. We look forward to throwing our support and energy behind him. John is also looking for Precinct 2 and 4 candidates for the County Commissioner's Court. If you are interested or know of someone please contact John. We need to continue last year's success in having local candidates.

"Yes We Can!"

Jean

March Program

Our March program will be another *do not miss* program. Carmen Sameniego will be with us to speak on the topic "Are you ready to rely on others? What you need to know about finances, powers of attorney, and guardianships." Guests are welcomed, so if you know of someone who might enjoy this topic, please bring her (or him) along.

KCADW Officers

President	Jean Robitaille
First Vice President	Committee (Gwen King, Cindy Offutt)
Second Vice President	Sarah White
Treasurer	Marcy Branham
Secretary	Judy McMillan
Past President	Gwen King
Board Members	Helen Burstein, Cindy Offutt, Joellen deBerg, Susanne Rupp, Mary Chapel
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Voice Managing Editor	Claire Oxley Gluck
Voice Tech Editor	Janice Shoemaker
Proofreaders	Cindy Offutt, Susanne Rupp
Distribution Team	Margaret Sanchez, Jean Robitaille, LaVerne Peterson, Stu Adamslundy

Phone numbers and email addresses available in club directory

Mark Your Calendar:

March 5, 7:00 p.m.: Kendall County Democratic Club, BISD Administration office on Johns Rd.

March 12, 10:00 a.m.: KCADW meeting at the Holiday Inn Express (see program note above).

March 17, 6:00 p.m.: Celebrate **St. Patrick's Day** at the Dodging Duck on River Road (a party room has been reserved). Blue Tuesday will henceforth take place on the **third Tuesday** of each month instead of the first Tuesday, so we spread out the various Democratic activities.

March 26: Planned Parenthood fundraising luncheon: PP Trust of San Antonio and South Texas annual fundraising luncheon, Grand Hyatt Hotel in downtown San Antonio.

May 16: KCADW day-long Retreat

SAVE THE DATE! Our 11th annual Eleanor Roosevelt Dinner will be held on October 17, 2009!



This newsletter is intended to reach people interested in the work of the Democratic Party in general and of Kendall County Area Democratic Women specifically. To be removed from this mailing list, please contact the editor at clairegluck@gvtc.com or 210-426-7749.



Spunk, Strawberry Scones, and Parades

Order your copy today of the History of Kendall County Area Democratic Women, published by Gwen King, one of KCADW’s founders. Read how a group of six women became KCADW with a membership of over 180. It is an interesting read about what KCADW has accomplished in ten years, as well as an excellent guide to forming a club and achieving its goals. It is a tribute to what a group of dedicated women can accomplish, even in a less than welcoming environment. The price is \$10.00 with no tax. To order your copy, call 830-755-4434.

Gearing Up for 2010 Elections

The 2010 primaries are only a year away. U.S. Senator Kay Bailey Hutchison is expected to challenge incumbent Rick Perry for the Republican nomination for Governor, which puts her Senate seat up for grabs.

The good news is that a big-name Democrat is going to run against the eventual Republican nominee: **Tom Schieffer** (brother of newsman Bob Schieffer) former Democratic State Legislator from Fort Worth in the 1970’s and former Ambassador to Japan and Australia.

Competing in the Democratic primary for the U.S. Senate seat (presumably) being vacated by Hutchison are: **Bill White**, Mayor of Houston, **and John Sharp**, former state Comptroller.

Barbara Radnofsky, 2006 Democratic nominee for U.S. Senate, is running for Texas Attorney General in 2010.

Daniel Boone, Democratic nominee for Texas Legislature, district 73, is running for State School Board, District 5.

Hold Them Accountable

Whether we voted for them or not, our elected representatives are accountable to us. If you want to let them know what you think, call, write or e-mail them. Contact information will follow (cut it out and keep it handy).

Here are some votes by our U.S. Senators and Representatives:

Senate	Kay Bailey Hutchison	John Cornyn
1. Confirmation of Eric Holder as Attorney General	NO	NO
2. Confirmation of Timothy Geithner as Secretary of the Treasury	NO	YES
3. Children’s Health Insurance Program Reauthorization Act of 2009 (Bush vetoed twice in 2008)	YES	NO
4. American Recovery and Investment Act (stimulus bill)	NO	NO
House	(21st) Lamar Smith	(23rd) Ciro Rodriguez
1. Children's Health Insurance Program Reauthorization Act of 2009	NO	YES
2. American Recovery and Investment Act	NO	YES
3. Lilly Ledbetter Fair Pay Act	NO	YES

Clip and save this contact information:



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Political Books

With this issue we're reintroducing a feature of *The Voice*—book reviews by our members. We encourage you to write for this column about political books you have read recently.

This first article will summarize the thoughts of three researchers. Drew Westen is a psychology professor, political consultant, and author of several books including *The Political Brain*. George Lakoff is a professor of linguistics and cognitive science, political consultant, and author of numerous books including *Thinking Points*, *Don't Think of an Elephant*, and *The Political Mind*. Clotilde Rapaille, psychiatrist and corporate marketing consultant is the author of *The Culture Code* and founder/CEO of Archetype Discoveries.

The Reptilian Always Wins

By Claire Oxley Gluck



Why do we Democrats have such a tough time convincing middle-class voters (e.g., Joe the Plumber) to do what is in their best interest, i.e. vote for Democrats? We rationally explain why it would be in their best interest. We give them all the facts a reasonable person would need to conclude that we are right, yet they stubbornly pull that Republican lever. Why? Here is how Westen, Lakoff and Rapaille explain this “irrational” voter behavior.

The Political Brain is Emotional, not Rational

Drew Westen argues that the political brain is not rational and so when we Democrats patiently explain why our candidates' policies are in voters' best interest, we are speaking to the wrong part of their brain. Westen is not saying that a politician should give up discussing policies, but she must first connect with voters on an emotional level. “We do not pay attention to arguments unless they engender our interest, enthusiasm, fear, anger or contempt” (Westen, *The Political Brain*, p. 16).

Clotaire Rapaille states that there is a clear connection between learning and emotion: without emotion, learning does not occur. Rapaille works with focus groups to discover the “Code” the public has for cars, coffee or even presidents. He states that he never believes what people say in the first hour of his focus group work, not because they are dishonest, but because they are responding cognitively—from the brain’s cortex. Later in the session he uses a relaxation technique to access the “reptilian brains” of his subjects, “where the instincts are housed. It is in our reptilian brains that the real answers lie.”

Culture Wars

George Lakoff offers a similar explanation for the apparently irrational voting behavior of many middle-class voters. In *Don’t Think of an Elephant* (p. 86-87), he argues that the Republican intellectuals have waged a culture war that paints their party as the protector of morality against liberals who threaten the wholesome way of life that good Americans cherish. Conservatives have convinced the socially conservative Joe the Plumber (and Sarah the Hockey Mom) to feel such a strong emotional aversion to liberals that they vote for Republicans even though that party’s policies favor the rich and harm the middle class and the poor.

The Science behind the Claims

In *The Political Brain* (p. xiv), Westen describes how he and his colleagues used brain scans to show how the “emotional brain” trumps the “rational brain” as a person reads political material. The scientists scanned the brains of partisan Republicans and Democrats while showing them a series of slides. The goal was to present the partisans with a reasoning task that would lead a “dispassionate” observer to an obvious logical conclusion about a political candidate. The problem for the partisans was that the logical conclusion would be in direct conflict with the conclusion that a partisan would want to reach. The brain scan showed which parts of the brain were activated as the partisan dealt with the conflict.

Researchers saw that when presented with “threatening information,” i.e., negative information about the partisan’s candidate, the neural circuitry associated with negative emotions (distress) lit up, as did circuitry associated with conflict resolution. The scans showed that the brain rapidly shut down distress through faulty reasoning—with little involvement of the neural circuits associated with reasoning. Once the partisan found a way to reason to a false conclusion, not only did the neural circuits involved in negative emotions turn off, but circuits associated with positive emotions (reward centers) turned on. Those reward centers are the same ones affected by drugs in an addict’s brain!

Building neural pathways

George Lakoff says, “Politics is not about changing minds through arguments and evidence. It is about configuring and reconfiguring neural pathways. Repetition; comforting, emotionally attractive and morally appealing narratives; metaphors; mottos and mantras are most likely to gain neural traction. Politicians who control brains win elections” (Lakoff, *The Political Mind*.)

Think of what Bush/Cheney were able to do in the name of “War on Terror.” They stimulated fear and loathing (emotions) by repeating “War on Terror” in every speech and press conference, and then were able to savage the Constitution with the “Patriot Act,” and carry on the war in Iraq even after failing to find WMDs, and even though a rational person would conclude from the evidence that Saddam Hussein had had nothing at all to do with 9/11 or Al Qaida.

When we understand the importance of connecting on an emotional level, we can understand why most voters were so enthusiastic about Ronald Reagan (previously a mystery to me). They didn’t care whether he was a smart policy wonk. They were inspired by “It’s Morning in America.” Bill Clinton *was* a policy wonk, but before people would listen to his plans, he had to convince them that he was “The Man from Hope.” He made the emotional connection.

Americans' Code for President is "Rebel"

Rapaille was hired by George H.W. Bush's campaign in 1988 to discover the Code (unconscious emotion-based imprint we attach to something) for "President" in America. He discovered that in America, the culture code is "rebel." George Washington had led the rebellion for independence. Reagan led a revolution to restore tradition, Roosevelt rebelled against the Depression. George W. Bush led a rebellion toward the conservative right. Rapaille writes, "As with everything else, the reptilian always wins. We don't want our presidents to think too much. The candidate doesn't need to be very reptilian, just more reptilian than his opponent is.... In 2000, Bush was not very reptilian but his opponent (Gore) was very cortex. In the 2004 election the difference was even more pronounced: John Kerry was a veritable Mr. Cortex."

Framing the Discussion

Only after a candidate has made an emotional connection is it time to pitch the policies. This is another area in which Democrats have, historically, lost ground, according to Westen and Lakoff. In this case, the fault is in failing to "frame" the discussion: i.e., describing detailed policy plans without first giving it context (framing it) in an overarching narrative.

Try this experiment:

Westen offers a demonstration of the need for framing. Try it! Read the following paragraph and remember as much of it as you can:

"The procedure is actually quite simple. First you arrange things into different groups. Of course, one pile may be sufficient depending on how much there is to do. If you have to go somewhere else due to lack of facilities, that is the next step, otherwise you are pretty well set. It is important not to overdo things. That is, it is better to do too few things at once than too many.... After the procedure is completed, one arranges the materials into groups again. Then they can be put into their appropriate places. Eventually they will be used once more and the whole cycle will then have to be repeated." (Westen, p. 145).

It is very hard to remember this paragraph because we lack a mental framework that would help us to store the information. Read it again knowing that the title (or frame) is "Washing Clothes." Ah! Now it's easy to remember.

Think back to John Kerry, Michael Dukakis or Al Gore giving campaign speeches. They rarely activated the emotional brain circuitry, and also failed to frame their policy proposals. They described how to do the laundry without first saying that the clothes were dirty and the family had nothing clean to wear. George H.W. Bush was derided for lacking the 'Vision Thing,' and it cost him his re-election in 1992. Obama, by contrast, evoked emotions with "Hope," "Change," and "Yes We Can." Both he and Hillary Clinton connected with voters by talking about families without healthcare, facing unemployment and foreclosures; and youth who needed good schools and safe neighborhoods. Then they laid out policy prescriptions. Yes, Democrats can connect emotionally and frame the debate; we just need to practice.

There is a great deal more to these authors' theories than I can cover here. If you want to learn more, I encourage you to read their books.



Do you have photos from local KCADW activities? We at *The Voice* would like to use more local photos in the masthead and throughout the newsletter, but we have a very limited number at our disposal, especially those from more recent events. Many club meetings and activities go unphotographed, but any of you can help if you're willing to snap some digital photos anywhere club members are getting together. Just email them to Janice at shoes@gvtc.com, and she'll figure out what fits and thank you for your contributions.

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