

Taking Off Our Party Hats

By Mary Jane McCormick

I had a dream. There is a lot of that going around. I had a dream that for one day, we Americans took off our party hats. For one day, we agreed we were neither Republicans nor Democrats. We were neither conservatives nor liberals. We were not even Independents or Greens. We didn't live in Red or Blue or even Purple states!

In my dream, we decided we'd 'had it!' We were tired of the anger and angst within us and around us. We were weary of the rhetoric that only divided us. We wanted 'out of the box' of political discourse and name-calling.

It was as if we each drank from a magical spring and the water opened our eyes, minds and hearts. In an instant we decided to do something different. We decided to look at each other as people; as individuals, different from us but yet the SAME!

Yes, we were different in size and shape, different in gender and age, different in the color of our skin, and different in our likes and dislikes. This list went on and on.

But in my dream, we were able to drop all the perspectives, attitudes, thinking and behaviors that interpreted differences as 'better than' or 'less than,' right or wrong, good or bad. And this list also went on and on.

In my dream, for this one day, we were comfortable with 'difference.' We dropped all telltale signs of elitism, that tribal way of seeing 'difference' as something to judge, to fear and even avoid. For this one day, we willingly challenged ourselves to stop thinking in terms of superior and inferior. It was as if scales fell off our eyes and we stepped out of our learned box of judging others with regard to intellect, talent, power, wealth and position in society.

And then the alarm clock sounded and I was pulled back into the real world. I was tempted to fall back to sleep and re-visit the one day lived outside the box. But duty called for me to start just another ordinary day. Maybe not, I thought. I think I'll leave my party hat at home.