



**CELENE POST
GFWC PUBLIC ISSUES
COMMUNITY SERVICE PROGRAM CHAIRMAN
Winter 2020 NEWSLETTER**

“NOW IS THE TIME” – WOMEN’S EQUALITY DAY

On August 26, we will be celebrating Women’s Equality, the Anniversary of the adoption of the 19th Amendment to the United States Constitution. With the ratification, 51% of the population in the United States, women had won the right to vote. The amazing story of that early grassroots campaign is a proud part of our shared history that is fascinating, full of brilliance, daring, and heroism. The Women’s Rights Convention held in Seneca Falls, New York in 1848, was led by Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Lucretia Mott. Their voices inspired women to seek changes in the legal and political systems that existed. What could have been so terrible? These women, who called their husband by the formal title of “Mr.”, also had:

**No voice in laws
No right to a college education
No opportunity to enter most professions
No independent rights after marriage
No custody of children in case of divorce
And...no right to vote!**

The convention framed a national discussion about women’s rights in America and marked the beginning of a massive civil rights movement

that would span the next seventy-two years. In 1869, two national organizations were established with both dedicated to advancing women's rights. Susan B. Anthony and Elizabeth Cady Stanton formed the National Woman's Suffrage Association that sought a federal constitution giving all women the right to vote no matter where they lived. In the same year, Julia Ward Howe and Lucy Stone formed the American Woman Suffrage Association that focused on state referendums and petitions.

2019 marked the start of Women's Suffrage Centennial Celebrations across America. Women want to ensure the suffrage centennial is appropriately recognized. Civic organizations, city and small town museums, community and individuals are also developing special ways to celebrate this historic advancement.

What can you do?

1. With energy, educate your club members!! Begin by making plans **NOW** to ensure you have planned an extraordinary event.
2. Contact community libraries, the local historical society, and museums – see what their plans are and offer to partner with them as you prepare for the 2020 celebration.
3. Engage your local and state representatives and ask that they begin with a proclamation for Women's Equality Day 2020. This is an easy win that can be duplicated each year.
4. Hold a Commemorative Tea – On May 9, 1848, five advocates for women's rights met for tea in New York. From that gathering, the five ladies planned the Seneca Falls Convention of July 1848. (The tea could be at a monthly meeting or how about April – when we celebrate Federation Day?)
5. Contact your local library or bookstore and ask if they could create a display that highlights women's suffrage for an entire month.

6. Does your community have a Fourth of July Parade? Have a float depicting Women's Suffrage! Don't have enough women to produce a float? How about a pickup truck with ladies dressed in white sitting in the truck holding signs celebrating the 100th Anniversary of Women winning the right to vote on August 26?

Remember, your activities do not have to fall on the actual day, August 26.

When the 19th Amendment was finally ratified, on August 26, 1920, Carrie Chapman Catt issued the public reminder about how long the first phase of the women's rights movement had taken – 72 years:

“Young suffragists who helped forge the last links of that chain were not born when it began,” she said, and “old suffragists who helped forge the first links were dead when it ended.”

As today's links in that chain we can forge the bonds of the past with the possibilities of the future. We can do it because we must....and because we must, we will!!

To those of you receiving this newsletter, some of these remarks were included in my 2019 message at our BOD meeting. Please feel free to use any of this information and share it with your club members. I know once I started reading and learning about the Suffrage movement, I was in awe of the determination of these women to have their voices heard. We cannot thank them enough.

I have also attached a skit for you entitled, “Failure is Impossible,” words spoken by Susan B. Anthony. This skit was written several years ago. If you choose to use any of it, you will want to update that information. My GFWC club is presenting this skit at our state convention in April. It can be done several different ways – with a narrator and 3 people who would read the “words” of several historical people. Or you could have different individuals for EACH historical person. I may be adding Arizona suffragists to the presentation as well. I am going to use my husband for the three male speaking parts – he just isn’t aware of that yet! Again, feel free to use any part of the skit for your members.

Here is a fabulous website for you. To honor the celebration of 100 years of women’s right to vote, Artist Mirelle Miller created a painting entitled **Women Leading the Way**. Women included in the painting made important contributions to the history of the Women’s Suffrage Movement and beyond. The painting can be seen on the website <http://www.suffragettes2020.com/the-painting>. Hover over one of the 100 women in the painting and you will get a short description of her suffrage contribution! Thank you again for all you do for our GFWC Clubwomen!

Hugs to All.....Celene