

THE 26th OF AUGUST

BY LEONORA MURRAY

August 26 is not just another summer day. It is a day of remembrance, a special day honoring three generations of American women who successfully campaigned for 72 years and finally won the basic right of citizenship — the right to vote.

The 19th Amendment became a part of the United States Constitution on August 26, 1920. After 72 years of struggle, American women have had suffrage for 75 years.

One wonders how long it will take to pass the Equal Rights Amendment. Susan B. Anthony went to jail because she attempted to vote. A federal judge told her "citizen" did not mean woman; "If we meant woman we would say woman." (So who says we don't need the ERA?)

I think all of us on the North Coast have feminist ancestors who endured ridicule, derision, distortion, verbal and physical assaults to gain equality. We all have grandmothers, mothers, aunts, sisters, wives, daughters, sweethearts and cousins, women who got thrown in jail for joining strikes, who got fired when asking for equal wages, who were denied access to training and education on the basis of sex, who marched and demonstrated — who still march and demonstrate. Will you remember them on August 26?

Let's remember our folk heroes, the women who attended the first equal rights conference in New York and published the Seneca Falls Declaration 1848; the women who joined the Women's Party that Alice Paul founded; the women who were blue-collar workers and union organizers. Let's remember them all with love. Let's celebrate!

Let's celebrate the gutsy Dr. Mary Wright, Congressional Medal of Honor winner; she was a battlefield surgeon for the Union Army. (Fifty years later Congress decided she hadn't been brave enough, so they requested the medal be returned. She refused, so Congress denied her military pension. Unfortunately, nobody bothered to take down her exact words but they must have been dillies to make Congress take such strong action against her. After all, she was still a veteran, entitled to her pension.)

Let's celebrate ex-slave Sojourner Truth. Her speech "Ain't I A Woman" made history when she asked, if women were frail and weak, how come nobody kept her from working as a field hand? And if motherhood and women's sensitivity precluded them from public life — then where was everybody when her five children were sold into slavery? Nobody worried about her sensitivity; and "ain't I a Woman?" She sure was, and in another instance she faced down a bible-quoting mob saying she did indeed believe in Jesus "but you men didn't have nothing to do with Jesus...that was between God and Women; no men anywhere!" A very nice lady. A very tough lady.

And let's not forget Sacajawea, pathfinder for Lewis & Clark; or Luch Stone who made up her own wedding vows and kept her own name; or Jane Addams, not only a great humanitarian but first American to win the Nobel Prize, and who insisted that her husband realize that more than just men were equal; or Elizabeth Cady Stanton; or Abigail Adams; or Oregon's own.....; or Amelia Bloomer, who tried so damn hard to make sense out of fashion (now that lady would be in rat heaven to see jeans as an acceptable garment). I think our libraries need at least one set of American Women of History (Herstory?); without it the women I mentioned are just a splash in the ocean.

And most of all let's celebrate the Grand Old Lady, Susan B. Anthony, who said "Failure is Impossible!" We believe it! If it takes another 72 years to get women written into the national Constitution (and consciousness) we're ready; but I don't think our politicians are. Stanton didn't forget men, either. On Men's Liberation, she said, "Of course, for are not men the children of women?" And most heartening and solemn of all, Susan B. Anthony said, "Until women have the same rights as men on this green earth, there shall never be another season of silence." Amen.

Let's all support our local daycare centers, join the local chapter of the National Organization for Women (NOW), support our Women's Crisis Centers, and best of all, celebrate our gallant women.

August 26, celebrate the 75th anniversary of Women's Right to Vote!



BOB LONDON

Leonora Murray divides her time between Cannon Beach and Portland.

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SYNDROME

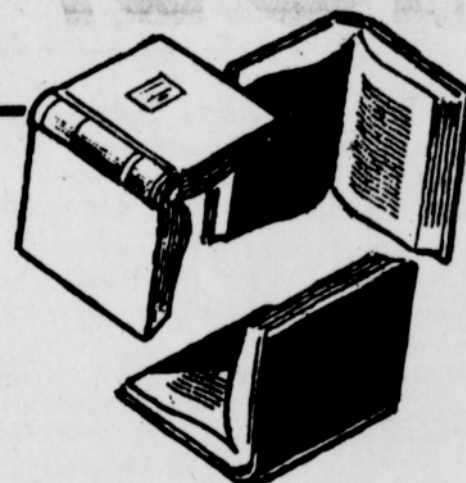
BY JIM McCAFFERTY

— Pipsissewa.
— I beg your pardon?
— Pipsissewa.
— Pipsissewa? Why do you say Pipsissewa to me?
— I must. I have to. Pipsissewa. Pipsissewa.
— Pipsissewa. I don't understand. What is a Pipsissewa?
— It's a small evergreen plant whose leaves are used in medications. Pipsissewa.
— Great. I needed to know that. Pipsissewa.
— Yes. It's Algonquin. Pipsissewa.
— Algonquin? Pipsissewa?
— Yes. Algonquin.
— Well. Reminds me of a story about this gentleman who went into a travel agency and spoke to the agent: "I'm going to Honolulu," he said, "and I must know if it's pronounced Hawaii or Havaii. I've heard it both ways." "It's pronounced Havaii," the agent said firmly. "Thank you so much," the gentleman said. "You're welcome," the agent said.
— That is a total non-sequiter. Has nothing to do with Pipsissewa.
— Algonquin?
— You're welcome.

* * * * *

— What is your prognosis, Doctor? Is there any hope?
— Doubtful. Grave. Very grave. Grave. Tried everything.
— Did you separate them? So they don't feed on each other?
— Yes. Mistake. Accelerated the spread. Now we have several wards with the virus. Starts off mildly, rapidly becomes acute.
— Have you diagnosed the cause? Named the disease?
— Can only study and analyze. Don't understand it at all. Named it the Pipsissewa Syndrome.
— Pipsissewa?
— Yes. Pipsissewa. Algonquin.
— Pipsissewa? Algonquin?
— You're welcome.

Jim McCafferty lives and Pipsissewas in Astoria. His sleepless in Astoria story *Insomnia* appeared in the May '95 NCTE.



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