

THE 26TH OF AUGUST

BY LEONORA MURRAY

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

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 that *citizen* did not mean women. "If we meant 'woman' we would say 'woman'." So who says we don't need the ERA?

I think all of us on the Oregon coast have feminist ancestors who endured ridicule, derision, distortion, and verbal and physical assaults to gain equality. We all have grandmothers and 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.

On August 26 we should remember our folk heroes, the women who attended the first Equal Rights conference in New York and published the 'Seneca Falls Declaration' of 1848; the women who joined the Women's Party that Alice Paul founded, the women who were blue-collar workers and union organizers: we should remember them all with love and celebration.

We should celebrate the gutsy Doctor 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 and requested the medal be returned. She refused so Congress denied her military pension. Unfortunately no one bothered to take down her exact words but they must have been dillies to make Congress take such strong action against her.

We should celebrate 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 were those who worried about her sensitivity when her five children were sold into slavery? In one instance she faced down a bible quoting mob saying that she did indeed believe in Jesus but that the men in the mob had nothing to do with Jesus — that was between God and women, no men anywhere. A very nice lady. A very tough lady.

And we should not forget Sacajawea, pathfinder for the Messers. 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 the first woman to win the Nobel Prize. Or Abigail Adams who insisted to her husband, the great revolutionary and signer of the Declaration of Independence, that more than just men were created equal. Or Amelia Bloomer who tried so hard to make sense out of fashion. Or Elizabeth Cady Stanton who spent her life struggling for the rights of women.

And most of all we should celebrate the grand old lady, Susan B. Anthony who said, "Failure is impossible." We must believe it, even if it takes another 72 years to get women written into the national Constitution (and consciousness). She didn't forget the men, either. On men's liberation she said, "Of course, for are not all 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."

We should all support our local daycare centers. We should join the local chapter of the National Organization of Women (NOW) or start one. We should support our Women's Crisis Centers. And best of all, we should celebrate our gallant women.

Leonora Murray lives in Portland. She originally wrote this article for the *Times Eagle* in 1979. The 19th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution, which was ratified on August 18, 1920 and became law on August 26 that year, declares, "The right of citizens of the United States to vote shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any State on account of sex."

Although he opposed the ERA, Ronald Reagan as President in 1982 declared August 26 as "Women's Equality Day" in recognition of the success of women's suffrage more than 60 years earlier.

THE PURSUIT OF HAPPINESS BY GERALD MAZZARELLA

Life, as it applies to a society, is defined as a mode or manner of existence. Liberty as freedom from arbitrary or despotic government or control, interference, obligation, restriction, etc. — the power or right of acting according to choice. Happiness as a state or quality of pleasure or contentment.

My observation is that Life, Liberty and the Pursuit of Happiness are, one and all, subjective references and no matter how well intended, high sounding or defined by further subjective means, limited by vision and intent.

We may speculate as to intent, but I feel the final analysis must consider its design (beyond assumption of intent) and implementation. Is a society defined by its mission (declarations) or by a select few in power who coin the statement and redefine it infinitely by inheritance of that power?

Not unlike the assumed purity of the Socratic dialect (which professes to provide equal effort to the analysis of the pros and cons of a specific issue), we must first accept the premise that participants are not marginalized by their experience and are of no opinion or capable of transcending all such marginalization. This assumed impartiality in my opinion has no basis in truth (ignoring the potential of this as well as other assumed or implied intents established as truths) that should be seen as subjective rationalizations.

Our disappointment and sense of betrayal generated from these subjective rationalizations lies in a lack of awareness of — or distinction between — that which we aspire to in its truly idealistic state, and that which is attainable given the prevailing and consequently less than idealistic circumstances.

In this light, freedom can be said to be limited to the vision of its progenitors and their specific agenda, having little or no intrinsic value.

Does this justify those who deliberately move to limit the greatest of possibilities or suggest we should settle for the lesser of evils rather than aspire to the grander potential? In fact, what I intend is to generate a clear understanding of the two so that no one accepts one believing it to be another.

If the law of the land states that all its citizens are free and equal under its protection and subsequently allows slavery and rampant unfair privilege, it contradicts itself, having no integrity by design or implementation. As to history, when government conspires with any faction of its constituency to undermine or prevent any or all of its remaining constituents from their rights to equitable treatment as specified in its declaration of intent, or acts in such ways, as Thomas Jefferson put it, "becomes destructive to these ends," (regarding life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness), such government and those in collusion with it are, in my view, guilty of treason in as much as treason is defined as the betrayal of a trust. Unaffected citizens having knowledge of these tribulations, refusing aid and support to the afflicted and ultimately the condemnation of such practices, are guilty of treason by omission.

The evils of a society are equal to the betrayal of its governing body towards the least of its citizens.

Regarding our rights, Jefferson goes on to say that "Whenever any form of government becomes destructive of these ends, it is the right of the people to alter or to abolish it, and to institute new government, laying its foundation on such principles and organizing its power in such form, as to them shall seem most likely to effect their safety and happiness." It seems evident that Jefferson was aware of the possibilities of all experiments in government to "become destructive" and what the rights of the people are when faced with these circumstances.

Capitalism without concern or caution has resulted in a resource devouring menace wherein the wanting of bigger and more (the existing production/consumption at all cost paradigm) outweighs all other considerations and reduces us to an unevolved species unaware of our potential, aspiring to the least of our possibilities.

Any system that by design creates an adversarial relationship among its citizens — only pretending at a level playing field while ultimately betraying its masses — defines irresponsibility, taking its place in a critically evaluated perspective as a social failure.

Those who by virtue of wealth and privilege speak of the poor and homeless as persons who choose to be in the predicament, implying laziness or predisposition to drugs and other illegal activities, should be advised that large numbers of people choose to reject the inherent evils of these systems and wish to live marginally sustainable lifestyles for the sake of integrity and knowledge of a greater good.

Those who claim the backlash of such systems are the result of victimization at the hands of so-called criminal elements, might do well to understand the natural instinct to strike back at oppression, which is generally admired during revolutions against oppressive governments when heads roll and palaces are stormed in response to the same kinds of insensitivity.

THE WORLD SAVERS

Some trample hope with apathy
in pursuit of their own greed.
Few really see what's happening.
Confusing their wants with need.

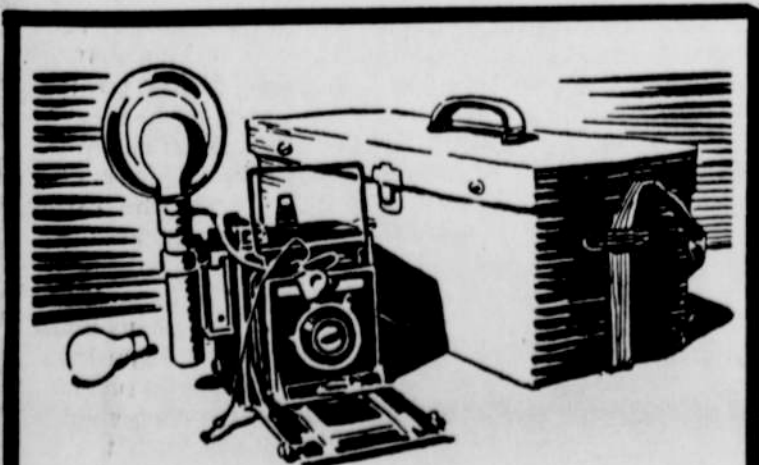
But woe unto the World Saver,
trying to raise consciousness levels.
For you, no opposition waiver,
from those whose greed names you all devils.

Summing your life up as sorrow;
wondering whose plan you'll borrow.
Knowing you'll never achieve;
yet, granting yourself no reprieve.

Wishing every human could see,
that which you've always known to be.
Watching with absolute horror while those,
pursue the suicidal path they chose.

Good luck with the pain, just pray that you'll die before
your poor brain finds the answer to why.
Express it in anger, release it in rage!
Poor little World Saver; they never will change.

—JERROLD A. FORSYTH



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Many marginalized people without benefit of privilege or good council, believing they have little or no options, fall through the cracks to the waiting arms of subversive groups spawned by their own dissatisfaction with the status quo. Escaping into the delusions of drugs and condemned for those addictions by those addicted to wealth, power, pleasure and the general greed of the day, they strike out in what I see as legitimate recoil and are policed into submission and further victimized and stigmatized when the real responsibility for their actions is to be found in a government that cares so little as to ignore these obvious cracks (except in lieu of a profitable ever-growing penal system where the "offenders" are forced into labor at nominal wages).

Reductions in aid to needy families and the general poor, as well as denial of unemployment claims, forces large numbers of people into temporary, on call, part time, low paying jobs without medical or retirement benefits, and while this looks good on paper, it creates an ever larger number of desperate working poor who, when their shaky bottoms fall out, turn to whatever means available for their survival.

A few charity meals during the holidays and toys for the tots in concert with the \$70 billion in contributions to religions (in a single year alone) might assure some good nights sleep and a slice of heavenly pie in the sky for the charitable, but are of no value to the less fortunate when the winds of deprivation blow the remaining eleven months of the year.

I fail to see this America having any similarity to the one Jefferson hoped and intended would become a beacon to mankind, saying in a letter to Hunter in 1790: "It is indeed an animating thought, that while we are securing the rights of ourselves and our posterity, we are pointing the way to struggling nations, who wish like us to emerge from their tyrannies also."

It is incomprehensible that a society can become so immersed in its greed that it would fail to recognize and sustain its humanity — but I am guilty of assuming there is an implied humane characteristic to yet another subjective rationalization, not unlike the elusive pursuit of happiness. Yet, as William Greider writes, "Who will tell the People (a) language of Democracy?"

Perhaps this language is subjective in nature and that is as it should be. As the noble hearts of humanity speak of their aspirations, rising to the cause of life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness (these greater goods) this "Language of Democracy" remains our hope. With faith and renewed courage and ingenuity toward the possibility that all of the people regardless of class can define their experience, these ideals and the promises of democracy can survive.

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