

## **PROGRAM ON A PAGE (or two)**

### **WOMEN'S EQUALITY DAY**

#### **What is Women's Equality Day?**

At the behest of Representative Bella Abzug (D-NY) in 1971 the U.S. Congress designated August 26<sup>th</sup> as "Women's Equality Day." The date was selected to commemorate the 1920 passage of the 19<sup>th</sup> Amendment to the Constitution, granting women the right to vote. This was the culmination of a massive, peaceful civil rights movement by women that had its formal beginnings in 1848 at the world's first women's rights convention in Seneca Falls, New York.

The observance of Women's Equality Day not only commemorates the passage of the 19<sup>th</sup> Amendment, but also calls attention to women's continuing efforts toward full equality. Workplaces, libraries, organizations, and public facilities now participate with Women's Equality Day programs, displays, and other activities.

For the past two years AAUW of Michigan and a number of other women's organizations have partnered to celebrate this auspicious occasion at the Women's Historical Center and Hall of Fame in Lansing. This year an event is being planned in Livonia on August 22<sup>nd</sup>. The committee is planning a program that honors our foremothers, while inspiring us to continue their goal of full equality with equal rights under the law, equal pay, and equal representation. A key note speaker has been selected and two other participants will address the importance of running for political office and pay equity.

This year AAUW of Michigan is encouraging branches, which are not able to attend the WED event in Livonia, to foster commemoration of this day by planning a program in August to recognize our foremothers. Following are some potential ideas that could be incorporated:

- Choose an inexpensive site for a luncheon or tea.
- Encapsulate the history of the ERA to this date.
- Read short vignettes about the courageous acts of our foremothers
- Invite a local legislator to speak about a particular woman's issue.
- Request a proclamation from your local mayor.
- Gather for a viewing of *Iron Jawed Angels* with a discussion following.
- Ask other women's groups to participate.
- Encourage the local press to cover the event.
- Wear white in honor of our foremothers.

The courage, audacity, and perseverance of our foremothers should be honored and their work continued. Celebrate the 89<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the 19<sup>th</sup> Amendment!!

PoP: Women's Equality Day