**GFWC News & Notes** 

***GFWC — an international women's organization dedicated to community improvement by enhancing the lives of others through volunteer service***

**Carol Weldin, AWC Liaison**

**March 2018**

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**Join us for the Annual WHRC Women’s History Month Event**

**The Women’s History Month Event will be held on March 8 from 2-4 p.m. at GFWC Headquarters. The event will include a presentation, followed by a question-and-answer session, and a brief reception. Our speaker this year is Dr. Marjorie Spruill, a Distinguished Professor Emerita at the University of South Carolina. She specializes in women’s and gender history and the history of the American south. Dr. Spruill will be discussing her most recent book, Divided We Stand: The Battle Over Women’s Rights and Family Values That Polarized American Politics. Divided We Stand focuses on the women’s movements of the 1970s, particularly the federally sponsored International Women’s Year (IWY) conferences of 1977, in which GFWC participated.**

**GFWC has continually been a faithful supporter and advocate for women’s rights and equality. Over the decades, this support has played out through varying forms and with myriad voices. For women across the country and within GFWC, the 1970s focused sharply on women’s equality and welcomed increased activism for the recognition of women’s rights. In 1975, some of that attention turned to the United Nation’s International Women’s Year, which launched a series of women-centric conferences around the globe. Although GFWC deliberated over our participation, International Past President Margaret Arnold urged that “GFWC is mentioned as a forerunner of the women’s movement… long before Betty Friedan was heard from. We must not forget our longtime role in the women’s movement, or the achievement it marks.”**

**Legislative Corner**

**On Wednesday, President Trump met with a bicameral, bipartisan congressional delegation to discuss the Fix NICS Act of 2017. This bill will protect millions of Americans, especially victims of domestic violence, by improving the entry of domestic violence and other criminal records into the National Instant Criminal Background Check System (NICS). When these records are not entered into NICS, abusers and criminals can easily obtain illegal firearms by erroneously passing a background check.**

**GFWC recognizes this huge step toward preventing guns from falling into the hands of criminals. We also know that there is more work left to do. Last week’s action alert, sent through GFWC’s Legislative Action Center, also focused on mental health and bump stocks. Our efforts will continue forward until these remaining issues are also addressed, but Congress will not act unless they hear from YOU! The good news is that it’s not too late; you can still take action on this issue by contacting your members of** **Congress today! Use GFWC’s LAC to demand** **that your legislators address gun violence by imposing strict regulations on bump stocks, ensuring criminal acts are recorded in the National Instant Criminal Background Check System (NICS), and dedicating funds to address mental health concerns.**

**Track bills, contact your local representative, and take action on issues germane to GFWC Resolutions with the GFWC Legislative Action Center.** [**Click here**](http://link.bloomerang-mail.com/wf/click?upn=D9c4x7CNTKZDK9LLvkH1GjgrH-2FYPtJ6sHu9U7tdZvps6H0FGjImmqpQR-2BMrqKfD76XrWm-2F-2BBHnichEtDurzKb9ErChl-2B9a0NpVzrvqbvLKU-3D_a4ZyCjtkwnIfEsP7ECigyqsT48cwGvjsXYPXVCnj5dy6uLfJ1K3Lq1FBRrZ-2B-2B7RwLDH6W-2B4TiJcwZSr8UfeKsJFWCm6IQCxtbEZkT95Dfl3GXYCExnwEhzB2OkzSpnTA41AFhwSESrutlcpzIHPeHrEKJwAXwhqZKZg-2FOch0ruX3ArdmZ6c8d8zeZXkGRzyeWlypSStFgxPtGKEFz-2B-2BUSRdbOzADg2QZfizQVkaBQPcoY3gWN5XeZUYaWCkNusZCv54DFflo9MmC9f3inv2Wd5CqExqXDwNUg-2F-2BjwS3YwQeB-2FcR5c65eVnDWEoP1A-2BuGtmAU8nmDKopO41O-2FBuFWTus0eWGRxETTDNYHkcyHwZsGPrFp1errwIalZWpot0mRJLcqC2FlbXyyrvGisyif8A-3D-3D) **to utilize this powerful tool and to enroll to receive updates.**

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| **Empowering Women through Self-Defense Courses****Many GFWC clubs recognize the importance of self-defense courses and have offer women in their community free instruction. For example, the GFWC Woman’s Club of Point Pleasant (West Virginia) and GFWC Point Pleasant Junior Woman’s Club (West Virginia) have been joining forces to provide self-defense classes to women in their area for several years. Teaching the Point Pleasant courses is Jennifer Starcher, a self-defense instructor with more than 30 years of experience. Starcher teaches a basic version of self-defense, including five essential moves every woman should know. When asked what self-defense tips she could offer, Starcher stated “there are little things that can help a woman in a potentially dangerous situation, such as having a phone in hand with 911 keyed in; having a car key in the other hand to quickly unlock a vehicle door; and placing a key beside your bed to be able to hit the car alarm in case of a break-in.”****The fact that Jennifer Starcher is discussing more than physical strategies to evade a potential abuser is an indication of the high-quality instruction she provides. A well-managed self-defense course covers a broad range of topics including critical thinking about self-defense strategies, assertiveness training, communication skills, and easy-to-remember physical techniques. Instruction should be based on the belief that women can act decisively and take action in their own defense. Essentially, a good course is based on intelligence and not muscle.****It is also true that self-defense courses have many benefits beyond increased safety. Training in self-defense enables women to develop more confidence in themselves and makes them more aware of their surroundings. Knowing they have the ability to defend themselves often aids women in more fully exploring the world, meeting new people, and finding new ways to engage with others. Self-defense classes are also a great opportunity for women to bond. In fact, the GFWC Brookline Women’s Club (New Hampshire) offers a self-defense course as part of their monthly “Ladies Night” programming. The Ladies Nights draw not only established club members, but also local residents who may not have considered joining a Woman’s Club prior to attending.****Taking a self-defense class is one of the most positive acts a woman can do for herself! If your club is looking to improve the lives of women in your area, sponsoring a self-defense course is well-worth considering.** |

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| **We Have a Voice Because They Used Theirs****Where would women be today without the American Suffragists? That’s the question the Turning Point Memorial Association has asked, and it is the driving force behind their campaign to build a monument in honor of these brave women. Additionally, the campaign will fund educational programming to raise awareness of the Suffragists’ contribution to passing the 19th Amendment to the Constitution.****The year 2020 will mark 100 years since the ratification of the 19th Amendment. The Memorial Association has created the #Donate20By2020 campaign to allow everyone to participate in building the Memorial. Donate for yourself, in memory of heroic women, or in honor of women you love. The Association wishes to include all women because when we work together, we can move mountains!****Your $20 or greater tax deductible donation comes with perks! A $20+ donation will be acknowledged on the Association’s website dedication page and the perks only get better from there. [Click here](http://link.bloomerang-mail.com/wf/click?upn=gmJLoea7OfYdLr0LFIX5QQVJsJw2k3K-2Bf5srq6rG4atKPgxn6PEVzdMceGylXkh3nAG3-2FEWte-2F3C05AkV5-2BaqA-3D-3D_a4ZyCjtkwnIfEsP7ECigyqsT48cwGvjsXYPXVCnj5dy6uLfJ1K3Lq1FBRrZ-2B-2B7RwLDH6W-2B4TiJcwZSr8UfeKsLV5zzsgz8vTdRTNEiZnjA9z1pdH-2FGF1qO6lcW5XvYNCAUthpWZ-2FuP9ejRQTgKNZw0H-2F8Dm5o3mq1wuR-2FhIUjdVCL-2FOY3DKg2j-2FJ-2Fl7EaMA8Ch3p67xdzsU3f-2FtebYN1ixD7rjK6iijtAVh9VA09vuR6OSBMWVwOmI39hDkWp98SDpBYPYuw-2BQcTbklj63yO0aJOgq4bRHwsVgk6S2zonLSUgTVOMZHdTmGZn8qV5SYvRjOoQBs7z2JNkKZcWeDjIQ6pmMhTI7QU4hh59el1QNJmuadJlPK7cH5-2F1mYUuS0tc2NL3rxLpfinR5PVm84apw-3D-3D" \t "_blank) to view the full range of acknowledgements offered and to contribute to building a lasting monument to America’s Suffragists**. |

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**Babs graduated!**

**Babs, the Canine Companions for Independence (CCI) puppy named in honor of our 5oth GFWC International President Babs J. Condon, graduated on Friday, February 16, 2018. With her training** **complete, Babs will** **become a fulltime member of the Mt. Washington Pediatric Hospital staff in Maryland. She will be working with children from 6 to 16 years of age. The children will play fetch with her, groom her, ask her to retrieve things, and they will go on field trips together. Babs is the second Canine Companions dog to be placed at the hospital. What a wonderful placement for this special dog!**

**A Thank You from GFWC California**

**California experienced the most destructive wildfire season in its history in 2017. It destroyed over a million acres of land and thousands of homes, including those of clubwomen. To help the state and its people through the devastation, the GFWC California Disasters Relief Fund was established, and GFWC generosity came through.**

**Clubwomen across the country came together in support of the fund. At the last State Board Meeting, $22,000 was allocated to aid fire victims, and it was distributed to five clubs whose communities were seriously impacted. The money will be used to assist both GFWC members and their communities by helping with food, shelter, personal items, first responders, and reforestation.**

**“Thank you from the bottom of our hearts for this show of love from our Sisters in Federation,” said Dori Kelsey, GFWC California President-elect. “You all showed that you are special. Thank you for the love.”**