

League represents past leaders

EDITORIAL

A century after women's right to vote was secured after a decades-long fight, leaders of the modern movement wonder why every woman doesn't vote.

Members of the League of Women Voters of the Lewisburg Area and their counterparts across the nation continue the mission and message. They do so because of the personification of who they are — the likes of Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony — fought for decades and never secured the rights they so desperately sought and deserved.

In November 1872, Anthony voted for incumbent president Ulysses S. Grant. Two weeks later she was arrested and fined for casting an illegal ballot. "It was we, the people; not we, the white male citizens; nor yet we, the male citizens; but we, the whole people, who formed the Union. And we formed it, not to give the blessings of liberty, but to secure them; not to the half of ourselves and the half of our posterity, but to the whole people — women as well as men." Anthony said in a speech afterward.

"I cannot understand why any women would not vote now after knowing the history of what these women did for us," League member Janice Bigelow said last week. "They put up with an awful lot of abuse for what they wanted."

On this International Woman's Day, it is important to recognize the work of those who have come before us.

The League of Women Voters does so by emphasizing the same things it has since its founding a century ago, stressing voter education, equal access and non-partisan influence on public policy.

The League of Women Voters is an invaluable tool for all voters, not just women. It hosts candidate forums before every election. Locally, its Union County voters' guide is virtually an encyclopedia for Valley

voters. We wish it was still allowed in polling places.

The League is a nonpartisan entity. Do its members have individual political affiliations? Sure they do. But the underlying theme of what they do is create a more informed electorate, not to push candidates.

The organization was part of a lawsuit that forced the quick redistricting of the state's Congressional districts two years ago. For some, that decision unfairly pegged the League as a partisan entity.

Gerrymandering is a non-partisan issue. We trust the same suit would have been filed if the Democrats were in charge because a look at district maps across the nation show both parties certainly have creative geography and math skills.

Today, the league celebrates its accomplishments, recognizing the past and pointing toward the future with a free, public event at the Campus Theatre. If you can, find the time to honor them by stopping in from 1 to 3:30 p.m.

■ *NOTE: Opinions expressed in The Daily Item's editorials are the consensus of the publisher, top newsroom executives and community members of the editorial board. Today's was written by Managing Editor Bill Bowman.*