

LWV[®] League of Women Voters *of the* Monterey Peninsula

VOTER

January 2011, Volume 85, Number 1

General Meeting, Wednesday, January 12, 2011 “The Healthcare We Deserve?”

At our January Lunch and Learn meeting, **David Whipple, PhD**, will speak about how healthcare can be improved in this country.

Dr. Whipple believes in healthcare reform. As a continuation of his long-term research program, he conducts a healthcare dialogue on **Facebook** with his many correspondents. Often he hears that the US has “the best healthcare in the world”, and he is at pains to challenge this assertion. He asks, “How do we measure quality? Is it by longevity? Child mortality? By outcomes multiplied by cost per head?” Whichever way, the answer is often that Taiwan or Switzerland or France deliver better healthcare for a lower cost.



Why is it that we seldom hear about other national healthcare systems, to compare with our own? Dr. Whipple says, “There’s an arrogance here—an attitude that if it’s not invented here, it’s not worth looking at.”

Since the 1970s, Dr. Whipple has been trying to figure out how our healthcare system works, and how it can work better. Looking back on his career decisions, he notes that he changed from law to economics when he realized that he preferred “figuring things out” rather than memorizing facts. He is interested in social problems and how organizations work, especially how incentives affect (and distort) productivity and outcomes.

LWVMP General Meeting Luncheon

(General Meetings are held the 2nd Wednesday of each month)

Lunch begins 12 noon / Presentation starts 12:30

\$20 per person for lunch (salad buffet, beverage, dessert)

Reservations are a must for lunch!

Contact Lorita Fisher

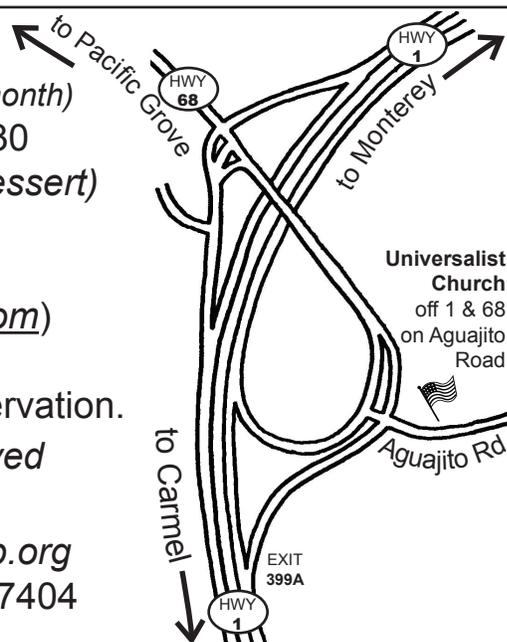
(phone 375-8301 or e-mail GLFisher@redshift.com)

Please pay at the door for lunch:

Lecture at 12:30 is **FREE** and does not require a reservation.

LWVMP General Luncheon Meetings have moved from the Elks Lodge in Monterey to

Unitarian Universalist Church <http://uucmp.org>
490 Aguajito Road / Carmel CA 93923 (831) 624-7404



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In 1971, Dr. Whipple was an economist teaching at the **Naval Post-graduate School (NPS)**. He began researching the Navy's single-payer healthcare system, especially its cost and allocation problems. He says that if you add up Medicare, Medicaid, and the armed forces, government already delivers healthcare to more than half the nation. From there, he became special advisor to the Navy Surgeon General, and later, to the Secretary of the Navy.

Clearly, Dr. Whipple is a hard worker: he gets up at 4:30 or 5am, works in the morning, hikes and bikes in the afternoon, and relaxes with family and friends in the evening. And clearly, "figuring things out" has developed into a talent for innovation and development, because he went on to contribute to the development of the current **NPS School of Business and Public Policy**, and became the Associate Provost for Innovation. Dr. Whipple is also no stranger to politics. He helped form **George Moscone's** proposed healthcare bill in Sacramento, as well as **Leon Panetta's** bill in Washington to revise military healthcare. Today he is president of a consulting firm that helps start-ups develop (dwhipple@StatconCorp.com).

Dr. Whipple believes we have a structural problem—our healthcare system has grown up haphazardly, through the pressure of one interest group and another. As consumers of healthcare, he points out that we have no way of comparing products and services in the usual way, because the workings of the market are hidden from us. In effect, we cede our power of choice to our doctors, and expect them to make decisions for us. And yet we are completely in the dark about the pressures and incentives that bear on the doctor. He says the **Obama** healthcare reform is the beginning of our effort to restructure the system to optimize costs, coverage and outcomes. In his talk, Dr. Whipple will attempt to respond to the audience's most pressing questions on healthcare reform.

For additional information about health reform, Whipple suggests visiting the **Kaiser Family Foundation** website at <http://healthreform.KFF.org/the-animation.aspx> to view "Health Reform Explained," which he describes as a "...nine-minute objective summary that I've had excellent bi-partisan feedback on and which answers some of the questions sent in advance by League members."

Interview by Linda Agerbak
linda@agerbak.com

The League of Women Voters of the Monterey Peninsula

The Voter is published monthly September through May

Deadline: second Saturday of the month

Send e-articles information and/or updates to Regina Doyle,
LWVMP Voter Editor ReginaDoyle@aol.com
or mail to: LWVMP, PO Box 1995, Monterey, CA 93942-1995

The *PRESIDENT'S* Message

When I accepted the nomination for LWVMP President, the two things I didn't want to do were: moderate a candidates forum, and speak for the League before a government body. Due to illness and political exigencies I recently had to do both. When you become a League President, challenge and personal growth are unavoidable.

Candidates Forum

Our scheduled moderator was ill for the **Seaside Mayor and City Council Forum**. **Janet Brennan, Voters Service Director** called for help: good thing it was on short notice—I only had to be nervous for one day.

I've always admired people who can calmly conduct forums where everything runs smoothly and the audience focusses on the candidates, barely aware of the moderator. I'm used to public speaking, but in a speech, *you* are in control. At a candidates forum you don't know what will happen.

I've served as a timer and a question-sorter but now I was at the podium looking at the audience. Fortunately all candidates had "easy" names, so I didn't embarrass myself by stumbling over them. And as the forum started I felt lucky to have so many: six responses gave me time to pick the next question. But then I started to bemoan the decline of handwriting in America, and hoped I was reading the questions correctly. I thought, *"We should have had people text in their questions by cellphone, they would have been easier to read!"*

I listened to the candidates but couldn't concentrate on what they were saying: once I asked a question and the candidate said, *"I already answered that."* His response threw me—I should have said, *"Would you like to expand on your answer to this question?"* Another time, a candidate froze (didn't say a thing), and I thought I had misspoken.

Was this fun? Not for me! To all experienced League moderators who have volunteered in the past, thank you: I admire you even more now!

County Planning Commission

I was asked to represent the LWVMP at the public comment portion of the **Monterey County Planning Commission** hearing regarding the **Corral de Tierra Shopping Village**. We had previously sent a letter (www.lwvmp.org/action/CorraldeTierra_letter9-22-10.pdf) raising concerns on water, traffic, and leapfrog development.

Although I was advised that it was unlikely that the Commissioners would ask me follow-up questions, I worried that I had limited knowledge of the project, so I spent a day researching it on the Internet.

The hearing began at 9 am (I am not a morning person and much prefer the city council meetings that start at 5 pm). The County planning staff and the applicant made time-consuming presentations. Though it was interesting, it was long, like watching **C-Span** without the close-ups. I think we should praise public service volunteers who sit on committees and commissions: they devote an enormous amount of time digesting a lot of material, plus they have to look alert and interested while sitting at the dais during all of the testimony (I confess that I was napping in the audience during some of the proceedings).

When I was finally called to speak at the rostrum, I looked at the Commissioners and thought, *"How many thousands of people have they had to listen to? What can I do to make an impression?"* I know I always say that I don't want recognition as being the first male president of the LWVMP, but I was desperate and broke my own rule by saying, *"I hope you're not surprised that a man is representing the League of Women Voters. The League has admitted men as members since 1973. However, we are still a small minority, and to be a man in the League you have to be comfortable being around strong women."*

I think that helped make a positive impression!

Dennis Mar

DennisRMar3@yahoo.com

Election Transparency & Integrity Award

Since passing the Transparency Resolution at LWV California last year, I have worked with election integrity advocates in Northern California, including the Election Integrity Committee of LWV San Francisco. **Lori Grace** (LWV Marin County), proposed the idea and acquired funding from the **Threshold Foundation** to promote election integrity in California through an award for "Innovative Research in the Field of Election Transparency and Election Integrity." Efforts to involve the LWVC were unsuccessful.

Lori Grace, Mitch Trachtenberg, creator of the **Trachtenberg Election Verification Systems** (TEVSystems www.tevsystems.com), and others met with **Secretary of State Debra Bowen** regarding the award. Mitch gave background on the TEVSystems and how the Humboldt volunteers achieved their success. Bowen wanted nonprofits to carry the transparency effort forward and thought the award "intriguing." The idea is to recognize and publicize election officials who understand the problems and who are trying to improve election system transparency in their local communities. To encourage participation, the money will be used to fund education seminars for election officials.

The award ceremony, the first held in California, was on December 16, 2010 at San Rafael City Hall, Marin County. The honorees were: **Carolyn Crnich, Mitch Trachtenberg** and **Kevin Collins** from Humboldt County and **Freddie Oakley** and **Tom Stanionis** from Yolo County.

These registrars and their associates introduced the TEVSystems open source method to verify computer tabulation of ballots, provide observer access and create safer and more transparent elections in their counties. The evening also featured a demonstration of the TEVSystems. Several other counties have accepted the offer of a free seminar/demonstration by Mitch Trachtenberg at their departments. At this writing, Monterey County has yet to show interest.

Beverly Bean beverlygb@gmail.net

THE LEAGUE REMEMBERS



Jane Jewett

Jane died in November 2010. She was an avid water watcher, pursuing State water issues for the Natural Resources Committee with a passion. Those who had the fortune to meet Jane may remember a classic woman with crisp white shirts and gold bracelets. Those of us who knew her well will miss her humor and her punctuated phone calls. She leaves behind her husband Joe, two children, and grandchildren.



W.K. (Bill) Stewart

Bill died in December 2010 at the age of 92. He earned his law degree from Harvard and was admitted to the California bar in 1943. He last practiced with two other League members, Nancy and Anne, at the Carmel firm of Stewart, Green & McGowan.

LWV California Convention

May 13-15, 2011 (dates to be confirmed)

Ventura Crowne Plaza

450 E Harbor Blvd, Ventura CA 93001

Contact: **Trudy Jarratt**, Vice President LWVC

Convention offers top-notch guest speakers, instructive workshops, hot-topic caucus discussions, and networking opportunities. See how hands-on work leads to real change in The League and in the State of California.

Delegates will indicate what issues they believe the State League and all local and regional Leagues in California should focus time, talent, money, and reputation on in the next two years. They also vote on issues for emphasis and studies, pass our budget, elect the board, pass resolutions, and give advice to the board.

Visit <http://ca.lwv.org/lwvc/aboutlwvc/convention/2011/index.html> for more upcoming and past Convention information.

January 2011 Program Calendar

General Luncheon Meeting

January 12, noon to 1:30pm
(General meetings are held the second
Wednesday of each month)

Unitarian Universalist Church
Junction Hwys 1 & 68, 490 Aguajito Road
Contact: Lorita Fisher, 375-8301

Guest Speaker David Whipple (see page 1)

Program Planning Meeting

January 19, 12 noon to 1pm
(LWVMP Board Meeting to follow
immediately)

Conference Room, Mariposa Hall
801 Lighthouse Avenue, Monterey
Contact: Dennis Mar, 372-9388

**FREE brown bag lunch to be provided
if you contact Dennis Mar in advance!**

The LWV Monterey Peninsula will provide LWV of California (LWVC) with our input regarding priorities for the coming year, specifically, 1. New issues which should be studied by LWVC; 2. Our top three priorities for education or advocacy in California; and 3. Any existing LWVC position which should be changed.

We will repeat this process for our local LWVMP program. For more information, see <http://ca.lwv.org/lwvonly/progplan/index.html>.

LWVMP Board Meeting

January 19, 1pm to 2:30pm
(Program Planning Meeting to be held just
ahead of this meeting)

Mariposa Hall, Monterey
Contact: Dennis Mar, 372-9388
DennisRMar3@yahoo

Natural Resources Committee

No meeting in January: first meeting
February 1, noon to 1:30pm
(first Wednesdays of the month)

Mariposa Hall, Monterey
Contact: **George Riley**, 645-9914

Guest Speaker **Steve Shimek, Executive, Monterey Coastkeeper** (www.otterproject.org), to focus on the **Salinas River**: new data on agricultural runoff, its impact, the issues of source and responsibility, and the lawsuit to designate accountability.

LWV Salinas Valley members are especially encouraged to attend.



A Note from the LWVMP Membership Director



All the renewal messages/reminders are over for the season and won't begin again until July 2011. LWVMP lost a few members and gained a few. As organizations go, we are holding pretty steady. **Hooray to those of you who bring a friend as guest to a luncheon meeting and talk positively about League to others.** We can all help recruit new members whenever we can. Call me if I should send League material to someone who is interested in the organization. I'm happy to follow up with a telephone call.

Meanwhile, please add these names to the roster in your handbook and smile and say hello to new faces when you meet them:

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Lunch & Learn with the League

Date: **Wednesday, January 12, 2011: 12 noon lunch / 12:30 speaker**

Topic: ***"The Healthcare We Deserve?"***

Speaker: **David Whipple, PhD**
President, StatComCorp

Dr. Whipple will speak on healthcare reform and answer audience generated questions about the optimization of costs, coverage, and standards, special interests, comparisons with other national systems, and other issues of interest. He has been a researcher of the Navy's healthcare system, and has advised the Surgeon General of the Navy, the Secretary of the Navy, **George Moscone** on a proposed healthcare bill, and **Leon Panetta** on a bill to revise military healthcare.

See page 1 for a speaker's profile and details for attending the lecture & luncheon.