

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

VOTER

March 2011, Volume 85, Number 3

General Meeting, Wednesday, March 9, 2011 “*Winning the Vote: Celebrating the California Woman Suffrage Centennial*”

Guest Speaker **Robert P. J. Cooney, Jr.**, is an award-winning editor and writer who has studied the historic drive to win the vote by American women for nearly two decades. Mr. Cooney is the author of the landmark history, “*Winning the Vote: The Triumph of the American Woman Suffrage Movement*,” full of facts and images documenting women’s early political achievements.

Mr. Cooney also designed and co-edited “*The Power of the People: Active Nonviolence in the United States*,” which traces nonviolent tactics and philosophy throughout US history from **William Penn** to **Martin Luther King, Jr.**, and awakened an interest in the woman suffrage movement.

Recipient of a research grant from **The Schlesinger Library on the History of Women in America at Harvard**, he served as a consultant on several suffrage-related projects including the PBS documentary, “*One Women, One Vote*.”

Filmmaker **Ken Burns** praised “*Winning the Vote*” as “... a wonderful chronicle of the untold history of our country---the story of the brave and remarkable women who changed our nation.” In 2009 it was also named one of the “Five Best” on the topic by the **Wall Street Journal**.

Mr. Cooney lives in Santa Cruz and serves on the board of the **National Women’s History Project**.
Linda Agerbak linda@agerbak.com

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

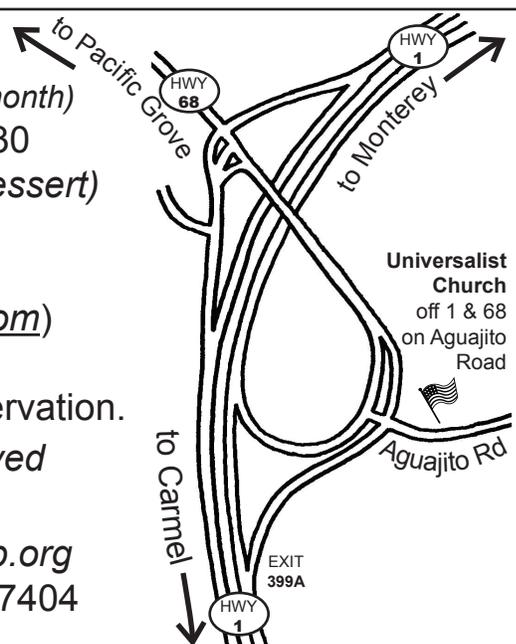
(phone 375-8301 or e-mail GLFisher@redshift.com)

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



The *PRESIDENT'S* Message

We are celebrating the centennial of women's suffrage in California. How many of us knew that? The 100th anniversary of the 19th Amendment isn't until 2020, but nine years earlier, California's male voters extended suffrage to women for state and local elections.

Women's Suffrage Passes by Slim Margin

This month's luncheon speaker, **Robert Cooney, Jr.**, will recall the events around the landmark October 10, 1911 election: a proposed amendment to the state constitution would extend suffrage to women, but the outcome was not a forgone conclusion. Women's suffrage only passed by 3,587 votes: the final state tally was 125,037 to 121,450.

Curious about how the election unfolded locally, I went to the **Monterey Public Library** (the League supports libraries!) and viewed the microfilm of the 1911 issues of the *Monterey Daily Cypress*, edited and published by **Hugh Porter**.

On this issue, Monterey County was evenly split with 1,186 voters for and 1,190 against. While only 42 percent of the voters in Monterey supported women's suffrage (141 for and 211 against), 78 percent of Pacific Grove's male voters overwhelmingly backed extending suffrage (223 versus 64).

Local Suffrage Group Shows Leadership

One local group working for passage of the amendment was the **Women Suffrage Club**. In the style of the time, the *Cypress* identified women by their husbands' names. Fortunately, the 1910 census was taken only a year earlier, and the women's given names can be found. The Women Suffrage Club was led by **President Carrie Waters** ("Mrs. William Waters Jr.") and **Secretary Esther Freeman** ("Mrs. J. E. Freeman"), whose husband worked as an undertaker.

On September 30, the *Cypress* reported that the club held two card game parties as fundraisers to pay for campaign expenses. At the card parties, guests played bridge, five hundred, and whist. Carrie Waters acted as hostess, assisted by **Florence Henry** ("Mrs. C. D. Henry"), whose husband's occupation was listed as bank cashier. Florence's eldest daughter, **Louise (Lou) Henry**, had graduated from Stanford and married fellow student **Herbert Hoover**. The future First Lady (1929-1933) was the daughter of a suffragette.

The committee member with the most recognizable name was **Maude Work**, whose husband was **T. A.**

Work, a prominent local businessman, banker, and landowner.

A Local Mystery

A puzzle arose as I read about the 1911 election: one of the statewide leaders of the woman's suffrage campaign was **Katherine Philips Edson**. She went on to become the first woman appointed to a major state government post (Chief of the California Division of Industrial Welfare). Katherine Edson served on the LWV National Board from 1932 until her death in 1933. She lived in southern California and died in Pasadena.

Yet in our handbook, we list a "Katherine Edson" as LWVMP president from 1931-1932. Is this the same person? Here is a tantalizing hint: in the archive of her papers at UCLA is correspondence addressed to **Hester Schoeninger** and identified as "*Budget for Monterey Peninsula League of Women Voters, 1933-34.*" Hester Schoeninger was LWVMP president from 1933 to 1935.

Does anyone know if our fourth LWVMP president was *the* Katherine Edson? If so, what was she doing in Monterey for that short time?

Dennis Mar

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photo collage: League of Women Voters of California

“Water Buy-Out Bid Draws Crowd”

So the Monterey Herald announced on its front page the day after the **February LWVMP Lunch and Learn** program focused on a renewed local effort to promote a public buyout of **California American Water**. CalAm is a wholly owned subsidiary of **American Water Works**, the largest corporate water utility in the United States.

LWVMP does not have a position on the current proposals for a community purchase of CalAm. The presentations were intended to provide information to the public.

More than 100 jammed the **Unitarian Universalist Church** to hear the discussion, moderated by **George Riley, Natural Resources Committee Chair**. Speakers were: **Adam Scow, California Campaigns Director of Food and Water Watch**, a national advocacy organization focused on protecting the commons and challenging corporate power in food and water issues (www.foodandwaterwatch.org); **Barbara Sprenger**, a leader in the unincorporated community of Felton’s buyout of CalAm in 2007 (www.linkedin.com/pub/barbara-sprenger); and **Ron Weitzman**, leader of **WaterPlus**, which plans to initiate a petition to purchase CalAm (waterplusmonterey.com).

Scow spoke of efforts to gain federal funding for infrastructure improvements, and supported the option of local ownership to reduce costs for water service operations. He identified the business model for a corporate utility as “very sweet,” with a complete monopoly, guaranteed profit, captured customer base, and a regulatory overseer (**California Public Utilities Commission**) that assures business success.

Sprenger challenged recent CalAm comments that Felton’s purchase had been a failure. She compared rate increases for CalAm and Felton’s public agency provider, **San Lorenzo Valley Water District**, that proved that, even with the cost of purchase added in, the water rates were about

equal to CalAm projections. Sprenger argued that the use of eminent domain in taking over a private utility was appropriate, and should be used because the pressure of litigation would probably lead to a settlement. She said the great majority of Felton residents were pleased that CalAm facilities had been purchased.

Weitzman presented a short history of the local effort, beginning seven years ago with a request to the **Monterey Peninsula Water Management District** to initiate procedures to purchase. This led to a ballot measure for a study, but the public vote was defeated 2 to 1.

The latest effort by WaterPlus seeks to reorganize the Water Management District through a petition to the county Local Agency Formation Commission (LAFCO), with a priority to purchase CalAm. Weitzman cited reasons to purchase CalAm that included: return of local control, avoiding expenses (including profits, taxes, public relations, litigation, regulatory and rate setting procedures at CPUC, surcharges that support CPUC), and preventing these costs from leaving the community. WaterPlus’s appraisal suggests the value of CalAm is about \$100 million, and thinks that about half is payment of debt already being paid by ratepayers.

Weitzman reported that WaterPlus supports the Regional Desal Project, that buying CalAm will not cause any delays, and mentioned the possibility of resurrecting plans for an additional facility in Moss Landing. When LAFCO confirms that they have the jurisdiction to dissolve the MPWMD, among other things, WaterPlus will disclose contributions from supporters for and against the reorganization, provide detailed plans of the reformed agency, and provide financial and environmental analyses. After public hearings on the matter, WaterPlus will circulate a petition to get voter support. Weitzman’s ambition is to have this done in time to place it on the ballot this November.

Representatives from CalAm and the Water Management District also made brief statements. **Kevin Tilden, CalAm External Affairs Director**

said that: Cal Am was not for sale; eminent domain would be very expensive; that this initiative would delay the Regional Desal Project; CalAm has a transparent process within the CPUC; the Division of Ratepayer Advocates provided good oversight on behalf of customers; and that the actual value of CalAm might be two to six times the value suggested by Weitzman.

Bob Brower, Chair of MPWMD, said it is too early for the Board to take a position, but they are closely following the issue.

A lively audience participation session followed the presentation. Among the questions were:

What is the value of CalAm (what will it cost each ratepayer to buy them out)?

Who is WaterPlus (what are the names of the people and organizations that are members)?

How is this effort being financed now and in the future?

What priority does protection of the environment, conservation, and sustainability have in this plan?

What are the procedures in eminent domain condemnation?

What are the details of the ballot initiative?

General responses from Weitzman were that it is early in the process, many legal issues were still under review, and that more details would be forthcoming. As always, water is a hot topic, and will surely get more attention for the rest of 2011 ... and beyond!

Sunday March 20, 3-5pm

"There's a New Sheriff in Town ..."

The League of Women's Voters of the Salinas Valley presents:

Sheriff Scott Miller

on the challenges facing Monterey County; priorities; and cooperating with other agencies.

First United Methodist Church
(corner Lincoln/San Luis), Salinas

Free and Open to the Public

Contact Nancy: (831) 484-1318

The Larger Story is Democracy

*Excerpt from an article by Robert P. J. Cooney, Jr.
(Copyright 2005 by Robert Cooney)*

You need not be a feminist, female, or even political to enjoy learning about the suffrage movement. For while the subject is woman suffrage, the larger story is about democracy, and how a powerless class in America won concessions and guarantees from those in power without threatening them with violence or death. We approach this topic not as women or men but as students of American history. We see the woman suffrage movement as a topic of its own, worthy of study and rich with content, apart from the whole field of women's history, notable women, women of achievement, feminist theory or other more general topics where it has previously resided.

Men were suffragists. The suffrage movement both included men as supporters and depended on men for their votes. Even when state measures were lost, the suffrage question often received tens of thousands of male votes of approval, and ultimately, a virtually all-male Senate and House had to approve the amendment, along with 36 virtually all-male state legislatures. Courageous men risked ridicule and worse to actively support women's rights, and they offer far better role models today than many better-known political and military figures.

The suffrage movement holds a particular relevance now as it has helped lead us as a country and a people to where we are today. It celebrates rights won and it honors those who helped win them.

Harriot Stanton Blatch summarized the movement's legacy best when she wrote: *"Perhaps some day men will raise a tablet reading in letters of gold: 'All honor to women, the first disfranchised class in history who unaided by any political party won enfranchisement by its own effort alone, and achieved the victory without the shedding of a drop of human blood. All honor to the women of the world!'"*



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of the *Monterey Peninsula***

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Lunch & Learn with the League

Date: Wednesday, March 9, 2011: 12 noon lunch / 12:30 panel

Topic: “*WINNING THE VOTE: Celebrating the California Woman Suffrage Centennial*”

Speaker: Robert P. J. Cooney, Jr.
Author / National Women’s History
Project Board Member



Photo By Bob Fitch

In celebration of The LWV being formed 91 years ago, and of the women of California having the right to vote for 100 years, Mr. Cooney will discuss the history of women’s suffrage.

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