



# *The Voter*

LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS<sup>®</sup> OF STANISLAUS COUNTY

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Serving the Citizens of Stanislaus County, California

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## ***President's Message***

As we wind our way through these hot summer days, I find my mind gets a little mushy. I tend not to read books more challenging than light mysteries; my entertainment choices revolve around whatever appeals to the 8–12-year-old set, and it is hard to generate enthusiasm for any endeavor that requires more effort than moving from the air conditioning to the pool. Thankfully, the League provides an intellectual antidote that keeps me interested and engaged. At our last Lunch and Learn, Dr. Don Ahrens provided the clearest scientific explanation of climate change I have ever heard. He was not advocating particular policies or political agendas, but simply laying out and explaining the scientific data. What to do with this information is an important public policy discussion we all need to have.

The same week that Dr. Ahrens spoke to us, the California legislature did take decisive action passing AB 398, extending California's cap and trade program until 2030. Cap and trade is a market-based approach to reducing greenhouse gas emissions. Rather than the government mandating actions, cap and trade encourages firms to reduce their overall footprint and generates revenue to fund other pollution reduction efforts. Cap and trade has proven to be effective and is the lowest cost alternative as described by the World Bank. The California Air Resources Board projects that this will allow us to reach our goal of 2030 emissions being 40% less than 1990 emissions. California produces 7% of the greenhouse gases in the US and is in 18<sup>th</sup> place in global emissions of greenhouse gases. Our efforts are not insignificant and are crucial models of what can be achieved. LWVC supported this legislation and actively lobbied for it. All of the legislators personally lobbied by the League voted yes on the legislation.

An important companion bill, AB 617, also passed. This bill increases the monitoring of pollutants and toxic contaminants not covered by cap and trade and requires installation of retrofit technology for sources not in compliance. It will not only improve air quality but will go a long way toward addressing concerns about the public health impacts on low income and minority communities. This is particularly important. As a friend who works for an environmental justice organization recently explained to me, what is good for the environment in general is not necessarily what is best for communities disproportionately impacted by major industrial polluters. LWVC also worked hard for the passage of this legislation. Once again, I was impressed 

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and pleased that the League is so aware of the nuance and range of climate change issues. Just an hour spent at Lunch and Learn and I am stimulated and energized — a great reason to be a proud League member. I hope to see you at the August Lunch and Learn.

*Mary*

**Voter Service Thank-You**

Thank you very much to Marsha Blomquist and everyone who participated at the Naturalization Ceremony on July 10. One hundred and sixty-seven new citizens were welcomed. Marsha and her crew gave voter registration forms and voting information to one hundred and thirty of them. Great work!

Marsha is always looking for opportunities to reach out and register voters. We are particularly interested in “out of the box” ideas to engage potential voters who might not be reached by typical registration drives. One of Marsha’s ideas is to be available to senior citizens at senior centers or in senior housing. Many of these people may have been previously registered to vote but in the process of downsizing and moving, re-registering may have been overlooked.

Other ideas? Please call Marsha; she is dynamic and determined to register voters.

**Calendar of Events**

**Lunch and Learn**

*Noon, last Thursday of each month, at Ridgway’s on Orangeburg (Century Center, Modesto)  
Chef’s Choice Menu @ \$13; vegetarian lunch also available at same price.*

Aug. 31 • Eric Lamoureux, Inland Regional Administrator, California Office of Emergency Services  
Topic: Climate Change Impact on Emergencies

Sept. 28 • Jim Stokes, Turlock Site Manager, International Rescue Committee  
Topic: The work of the IRC with Arriving Immigrants

## ***Climate Change: Fact or Fiction?***

At the July Lunch and Learn, Dr. Don Ahrens, textbook author and retired MJC instructor of earth science and meteorology, explained the science behind global warming and climate change. Climate is always changing and has been doing so for a million years. We are currently at the “cooling situation” or warm stage coming out of an ice age.

Dr. Ahrens said that among factors effecting the earth’s temperature are the shapes and tilt of the earth’s orbit around the sun. The sun’s energy is distributed differently on Earth at different times of the year and over time. Another factor is the “greenhouse effect.” In nature, energy coming from the sun and energy emanating from the earth would create a “radiated equilibrium” resulting in 0-degree Earth temperature, but it is actually 59 degrees. What is going on? Atmospheric gases, especially carbon dioxide, and water vapor trap heat by selectively absorbing energy. Since 1958, scientists have measured a 30 percent increase in carbon dioxide. In the big picture, there is a linear increase in Earth’s temperature. However, various events create blips so that a graphic representation would be jagged rather than straight; certain events — the industrial revolution, increased burning of fossil fuels, deforestation, paving over fields — add to the carbon dioxide and/or water vapor in the atmosphere and the greenhouse effect.

Scientists use computer models to calculate how Earth’s temperatures should change vs. actual temperatures. Whereas a natural increase in temperature might be 2 degrees C, it is projected that the temperature will rise 1–4 degrees C by the end of the century.

Dr. Ahrens suggested it is time to look at the impact of the rapid rise in temperature — water evaporates, ice melts, oceans expand. The greatest warming will occur in the polar regions. Polar warming impacts the jet stream — thus weather — which might bring increased dryness to California. It is difficult to predict whether or not there is a “tipping point” beyond which the effects of global warming can be reversed because of the many events and factors that contribute to global warming. Though there have been climate change deniers, most accept the fact that Earth’s temperature is rising. The disagreement is what is causing it as individual events and local effects differ: consider last year’s California drought and simultaneous East Coast severe cold spell.

When asked what can be done to affect a turnaround, Dr. Ahrens said that people need to be truly educated to understand what is happening in order to make informed and effective policy and practical decisions.

NOTE: Close to home • *The San Francisco Chronicle* (July 28, 2017) did an article on the impact of global warming on Lake Tahoe.

Marie Bairey

## ***Find us on Internet***

League of Women Voters US • <http://lwv.org>

League of Women Voters of California • <https://lwvc.org>

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**The League of Women Voters, a non-partisan political organization, encourages informed and active participation in government, works to increase understanding of major public policy issues, and influences public policy through education and advocacy.**