



# League of Women Voters of the Monterey Peninsula



## VOTER



January 2010, Volume 82, No. 4

### ***THE PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE***



This president's message is not about policy or action. I need to mention a number of people before 2009 slips entirely away from memory.

#### **Milestone**

The League lost several members in 2009 not yet acknowledged: **Anita Arellano**, **Dorothy Hunt**, and **Natalie Eberly**. Anita and Carl Pohlhammer were household members of the League. When I was treasurer, Anita liked to give me a hard time over the fact that the LWVMP didn't take credit cards for payments. Sorry Anita, I never got around to it.

Natalie Eberly was an active community volunteer. The League was only one of her many activities. Dorothy Hunt led a quiet life at a Pacific Grove retirement home. When she died no obituary was published. Like her last years, she passed on quietly.

#### **Jobs Well Done**

Since the new board took office last July, three board members have had to resign: **Pris Walton** (Social Policy), **Bob Evans** (Co-webmaster), and **Harriet Mitteldorf** (Vice President for Administration). All contributed their ideas and energy to the board.

Since one of the goals of the League is to train members for greater community responsibility, no one can begrudge Pris for resigning from the board so that she can run for political office. Bob is teaching mathematics and statistics at Monterey Peninsula College. Best wishes Bob in improving numerical literacy on the Central Coast.

Fortunately Bob will continue with his work of putting the monthly meeting presentations on local access television and on the Internet. Harriet would say that the spirit is willing but her back is not. She needs time to care for herself.

#### **Election Workers**

League volunteers provided the staff to operate the polling places for two Pacific Grove precincts during the November 2009 election. The intensity may have been much less the November 2008 Presidential election because the Pacific Grove ballot only contained a single contest. But the job of conducting the election remained the same: greeting voters, checking them off the roster, knowing the rules, protecting the integrity of the voting process, and handling special situations with always a positive attitude.

While the League receives benefit from this activity (League workers donate their compensation from the Election Department to the League as a fund raiser), I think it is of greater importance that the League does its part to insure that the last step of an election is done correctly and with courtesy.

Thanks to League members and friends of the League for working at the polling places: **Beverly Bean**, **Anne Bell**, **Virginia Chomat**, **Mary DeBartolo**, **Jean Donnelly**, **Bob Evans**, **Julie Gage**, **Alice Ann Glenn**, **Candace Ingram**, **Judy Lind**, **Lorri Lockwood**, **Betty Matterson**, **Duane Matterson**, **Sari Wolf Powles**, **Anton Prange**, **Janis**

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## **The LWVMP Board of Directors**

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Vacant

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#### *VOTER Editor*

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## **Appointed Positions**

### *Executive Committee*

Bev Bean, Janet Brennan,  
Dennis Mar, Marilyn Maxner,  
and Jeanne Melaugh

### *Luncheon Logistics Chair*

Lorita Fisher 375-8301

GLFisher@redshift.com

### *Video Webmaster*

Bob Evans 372-8323

BobEvans13@me.com

*President's Message, continued from Page 1*

**Prange, Sylvia Shih, Darold Skeriff, Philomene Smith, Robin Tokmakian, Margaret Troutman, Sue Woodburn, and Heidi Zamzow.**

And special thanks to **Marilyn Maxner** for serving with me as a precinct inspector. That's a 16 hour day.

## **Training for Candidates**

Leadership Monterey Peninsula and Leadership Salinas Valley have organized a seminar for anyone interested in running for public office or working on a campaign. The LWVMP is a co-sponsor and a financial supporter of the program.

Four 2-hour sessions will address the challenges and the skills needed. Topics will include application timeline, filing of required documents, campaign team, finance laws and reporting, fundraising, working with the media, getting endorsements, and impact on family and work

The sessions are 6:00 to 8:00 pm, February 11, 18, 25, and March 4, 2010, at York School. The cost is \$20. For more information or to register, e-mail [info@leadershipmonterey.org](mailto:info@leadershipmonterey.org) or call 831-649-8252

**DENNIS MA**

## **REDUCE YOUR CARBON FOOTPRINT**

Carbon dioxide is the primary greenhouse gas in our atmosphere. We lead the world in carbon emissions, accounting for 22 percent. One ton of CO<sub>2</sub> is released when you drive 2,500 miles in a medium-sized car. If we all used the following tips the savings would be huge.

1. **Recycle and use recycled products.** You will save two pounds of carbon for every 20 glass bottles that you recycle. It takes 70 to 90 % less energy to make recycled paper.
2. **Buy locally.** Meat, fruits, and vegetables are transported on trucks that drive an average of 1,500 miles from field to supermarket.
3. **Run weekly errands all at once.** Drive during non-peak hours. In the U.S., automobiles produce over 20 percent of total carbon emissions. Avoiding just 10 miles of driving every week would eliminate about 500 pounds of carbon dioxide emissions a year.
4. **Maintain your car.** When just 1% of car owners properly maintain their cars, nearly a billion pounds of carbon dioxide are kept out of the atmosphere. Proper tire inflation can improve gas mileage by

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The League of Women Voters of the Monterey Peninsula publishes the **Monterey Peninsula VOTER** September through May. Submission deadline is the second Saturday of each month. Send copy to the **VOTER** Editor Jeanne Melaugh (622-0892) by email to [JMelaugh@comcast.net](mailto:JMelaugh@comcast.net) or mail to:

LWVMP, P.O. Box 1995, Monterey, CA

# Carbon Offsets: A Cautionary Tale

**By Eleanor Revelle (LWVIL and LWVUS Climate Change Task Force Member)**

The voluntary carbon offset market is booming. Dozens of companies are ready to help eco-conscious consumers compensate for their personal carbon emissions by contributing to projects that reduce greenhouse gas emissions elsewhere.

The idea sounds promising. By purchasing carbon offsets, individuals can mitigate their climate impact and help finance projects that keep greenhouse gases out of the atmosphere. In addition, as more people demonstrate their willingness to pay extra for green initiatives, they send a signal to lawmakers that there is public support for tough climate legislation.

But critics consider promoting offsets to be a flawed approach. They argue that it encourages a business-as-usual attitude toward climate change by suggesting that people can neutralize their emissions without altering their lifestyle.

Compounding the problem, there are as yet no agreed-upon standards to ensure that offset projects deliver the promised carbon reductions.

Nonetheless, well-chosen offsets can be an important part of a broader strategy to address climate change. They provide an additional opportunity for individuals who have already curtailed their energy consumption to reduce their impact on global warming even further. And, fortunately, there are resources to help consumers find credible high-quality offsets.

## **How Much Does It Cost?**

Most offset providers have online calculators that allow potential customers to calculate their emissions and the cost of offsetting that amount. However, the various calculators frequently give quite different estimates of total emissions. This reflects differences in the level of detail that users are asked to provide and in the methodology used in the calculations. Estimating the climate impacts of air travel is particularly complex.

Moreover, the offsets which are offered range widely in price, from \$5 to \$25 per ton of emissions. For consumers trying to make a choice, analysts suggest that the quality of the offset project rather

than the cost should be the determining factor. It's better, they say, to invest in high quality offsets than to buy as many offsets as possible.

## **Choosing a High-Quality Offset**

Offset providers fund a wide variety of projects, but how can consumers be sure that the offsets they buy will result in real emissions reductions? A report published by Clean Air—Cool Planet suggests a set of characteristics to look for in an offset project:

- **Additionality.** Will the offset revenues make the project happen or would it have occurred anyway (e.g., because it is required by law)?
- **Baseline.** Has a credible emissions baseline been determined against which reductions will be measured?
- **Quantification.** Are rigorous accounting rules used to quantify the greenhouse gas reductions? Are emissions likely to increase elsewhere as a result of the project?
- **Verification.** Are emissions reductions independently verified and verifiable?
- **Permanence.** Will the emissions reductions be permanent or might they be subject to reversal in the future (e.g., if the trees in a carbon sequestration project burn or are cut down)?
- **Registration.** Are the offsets serialized and tracked to reduce the possibility that they could be sold more than once?

The bulk of the report focuses on the companies that sell the offsets. It evaluates the providers' understanding of carbon offsets and offset quality as well as the degree to which the information they offer enables consumers to make effective choices. The authors' longer term goal is to promote greater transparency in the retail offset market.

Another helpful resource for consumers looking for guidance is the Environmental Defense Fund's Carbon Offset Project, which identifies a small number of offset projects that meet the organization's quality criteria.

## **Renewable Energy Certificates**

Another way in which consumers are encouraged to offset their carbon emissions is to purchase

—Continued on Page 4

### ***“Carbon Offsets”, continued from Page 3***

Renewable Energy Certificates (RECs), also known as green tags. RECs are created when a renewable energy facility generates electricity. One REC represents 1,000 kilowatt hours of renewable electricity that is added to the nation's energy grid in place of conventional electricity generated from fossil fuels.

Buying RECs helps build a market for renewable electricity. As a general rule, however, RECs are not considered equivalent to carbon offsets because they cannot be assumed to be "additional." This is an important consideration for consumers whose goal is to become carbon neutral. Only if the sale of RECs is a decisive factor in a company's decision to pursue a

renewable energy project can the associated RECs legitimately be used to offset carbon emissions.

An important resource for potential REC purchasers is Green-e Energy, an independent certification and verification program. Green-e certified renewable energy options meet strict consumer protection and environmental standards.

#### ***The Bottom Line***

For those who are serious about reducing their carbon footprint, the primary focus must be on cutting their energy consumption. And for real impact, everyone's goal must be effective public policy on climate change.

—LWVUS

## **GLOBAL CLIMATE CHANGE**

Global climate change is one of the most serious threats to the environment, health and economy of our nation. The scientific evidence is clear that climate change, caused largely by human emissions of greenhouse gases, is here now, already causing increasingly severe droughts and heat waves in some areas, intensifying floods and hurricanes in others, and triggering more wildfires. Climate change can devastate crops, create drinking water shortages, displace millions of people because of floods and increase the spread of diseases like malaria.

The League believes that now is the time to act on global climate change. We can reduce global warming pollution by using existing technologies to make power plants and factories more efficient, make cars go farther on a gallon of gasoline, and shift to cleaner technologies. Cities, states, and individuals are already adopting many of these solutions, which also reduce our dependence on

oil, reduce air pollution, and protect pristine places from oil drilling and mining. State and local initiatives are proving that answers exist.

As the world's largest per capita source of greenhouse gas emissions, the United States must set a firm limit, or cap, on greenhouse gas emissions. The cap must decline over time to meet pollution-reduction goals based on the best scientific information. Enforceable interim and long-term goals are needed to compel early and effective action and guard against irreversible damage.

Establishing the declining cap, based on science and without loopholes, is the single most important issue in climate change and energy legislation. It is our nation's responsibility to take immediate action to curb the environmental and public health damages we are already experiencing from greenhouse gas emissions, as well as those that threaten the future vitality of the Earth.

—LWVUS

### ***—Carbon Footprint, continued from Page 2***

3%, saving 300 pounds of carbon dioxide for every 10,000 miles you drive. Check your tires monthly.

5. **Replace any incandescent light bulbs with compact fluorescent light bulbs.** You will save 100 pounds of carbon for each incandescent bulb that you replace with a compact

fluorescent, over the life of the bulb.

6. **Turn off your lights** when they aren't being used, even when you leave a room for a short period of time.
7. **Unplug your electronics or turn off their power strip.** Most electronics still use some energy even when turned off. This "standby mode" drains up to 5 percent of electricity used in most homes.

# **RESERVATION FORM**

## **January 2010 General Meeting**

**WHEN:**

January 13, 2010, 12 noon

**WHERE:**

Elks Lodge, 150 Mar Vista Drive, Monterey, CA

**COST:** \$18.00 per person

**DEADLINE FOR RESERVATIONS:**

Friday, January 8, 2006

After this date call Lorita Fisher at 375-8301

**SEND CHECK TO:**

LWVMP, P.O. Box 1995  
Monterey, CA 93942

**NAME:** \_\_\_\_\_

**GUEST:** \_\_\_\_\_

(Please print.)

### **WE'D LIKE YOU TO JOIN THE LEAGUE!**

Any person of voting age, male or female, may become a League member.

Please clip this coupon and mail it with your dues to:

**LWVMP, P.O. Box 1995, Monterey, CA 93942**

Name(s) \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Email, etc: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_ Send me more information about the League.

\_\_\_ I want an email reminder for the luncheons.

\_\_\_ I want a phone reminder for the luncheons.

\_\_\_ Email League news to me.

Enclosed is my check for the following level of membership:

- \$250 Carrie Chapman Catt
- \$200 Sojourner Truth
- \$150 Elizabeth Cady Stanton
- \$100 Susan B. Anthony
- \$ 75 Household (2 people at the same address)
- \$ 50 Single
- \$ 25 F or young persons and non-citizens

*Dues and contributions are not deductible for Federal Income Tax purposes. Contributions to the League of Women Voters of California Educational Fund (LWVCEF) are deductible to the extent allowed by law.*

### **The LWVMP**

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**Mailing Address**

P.O. Box 1995, Monterey, CA 93942

#### **DIRECTIONS TO THE ELKS LODGE**

From Munras Avenue turn on to Soledad Avenue. Go approximately two (long) blocks. Turn left, uphill, on Monte Vista. Continue another long block and turn left on Porta Vista. Turn right into the Elks Lodge parking lot.

### **PROGRAM CALENDAR**

#### **January 2010**

**January 6, Wednesday, 12 noon – 1:30 P.M.**

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

**January 13, Wednesday, 12 noon – 1:30 P.M.**

*General Meeting:*  
"Implementing Climate Change Legislation"  
Elks Lodge, Monterey  
Contact: Lorita Fisher, 375-8301

**January 20, Wednesday, 12:30 P.M.**

*Election Integrity Meeting*  
Mariposa Hall, Monterey  
Contact: Bev Bean, 484-2451

**January 27, Wednesday, 2:00 P.M.**

*Board Meeting, Mariposa Hall, Monterey*  
Contact: Dennis Mar. 372-9388



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## ***LUNCH AND LEARN WITH THE LEAGUE***

**DATE:** Wednesday, January 13

**TOPIC:** Implementing Climate Change Legislation

**SPEAKER:** Jason Burnett

Mr. Burnett will speak on implementing climate change legislation with an update on current state and federal legislation. He is the founder of Burnett EcoEnergy (renewable energy and energy efficiency financing). He served as Associate Deputy Administrator of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and as an EPA Senior Policy Advisor, Office of Air and Radiation. Mr. Burnett was previously with Evolution Markets (carbon market brokering) and continues to actively engage federal and state policy leaders on managing greenhouse gases under the Clean Air Act. Mr. Burnett has an MA in Earth Systems and a BA in Economics from Stanford University and lives in Carmel, CA, with his wife, Melissa Burnett.

**LOCATION:** Elks Lodge, 150 Mar Vista Drive, Monterey

The \$18 hot lunch is at 12:00 noon and requires a reservation. The program is free, is from 12:30 to 2:00 p.m., and does not require a reservation.