

OPINIONS

Real climate change versus fake climate change

BY ALAN VOETSCH

I see we're starting to have the same old political propaganda show up here again. I had originally decided to let it slide as I have been having great fun responding to ridiculous alarmist articles on Yahoo daily, but I now know that a response is needed here also. Why? Because this subject is being used to alarm voters into electing politicians who are willing to raise taxes on everyone who lives in the Applegate Valley based on bad computer models, lies, and confusion.

Alarmists seldom define the version of "climate change" they're referring to. Why? They want to take advantage of our perceived ignorance of the subject, and they believe that if something is repeated often enough, it will be believed.

Alarmists believe that global warming has happened only recently and only because humans burn fossil fuels. This is untrue, and anyone who says this is ignorant. Global warming (or cooling) can happen for a variety of reasons and has happened many, many times without our help. This excludes human-caused greenhouse gasses as the only culprit.

Let's define climate change by giving an actual example that most of us should be familiar with. There have been several ice ages over the last million years, separated by warm interglacial periods. Ice ages last 80 to 100 thousand years, interglacial periods from 15 to 20 thousand years. Until about 12,000 years ago, we were in an ice age with ice sheets thousands of feet thick where Chicago is now.

What happened, you may ask? Real climate change happened. Our planet warmed and melted the ice, which raised sea levels over 400 feet. Ice sheets receded, and we were left with a welcoming climate and a beautiful continent, all without an increase in CO₂ from fossil fuels.

Since then there have been many smaller warmings and coolings, including the Roman, Medieval and Modern warmings, with the last two separated by the Little Ice Age. The Dark Ages coincided with a global cooling period. These were difficult times for many. This is real climate change that happens due to natural variability that humans can never control. Milankovitch cycles are the major driver of ice ages. These are variations of our orbit, including eccentricity, axial tilt, and precession of Earth's orbit that result in cyclical variation in the solar radiation reaching the Earth.

Then there are many various solar cycles that also help to drive our climate. CO₂ is not a major climate driver, just an essential trace gas and mild greenhouse gas.

Fake climate change information is all around: on the internet daily and from the mouths of people who call the other side "science denier" or "climate deniers." And they like to say that 97 percent of scientists believe blah, blah... That lie is easily refuted—just do a quick online search. Or they ask, "Do you believe in climate change?" This is not only idiotic, but it's also a trick question.

Most of our politicians do not understand this subject well enough to answer intelligently. What the alarmists do understand is how to make the other side look bad because they know how to take advantage of political theater: if they attack first, they hold the advantage. I know *real* climate change happens, and only a fool would swear that there is no way we have zero impact on our surroundings.

My point: If this subject is important enough to you to make it a deciding point in whom you will vote for, then it is imperative that you do your own research and not listen to anyone with an agenda.

Alarmists have an agenda: increase taxes, regulations, and government power, and attack corporations in general and fossil-fuel companies in particular. The belief that CO₂ is a primary driver of global temperatures is ludicrous. It starts losing effectiveness above 100 parts per million (ppm). We are slightly above 400 ppm, and each additional unit loses even more effectiveness. We do, however, have a larger impact locally than globally, and we must be thoughtful with farm and agricultural methods.

My agenda is to get as many people as possible to do their own research, so they can form their own opinions independent of those who like to bully others into "believing."

Please recycle and leave every place you visit cleaner than you found it.

Good read: *Lukewarming: The New Climate Science that Changes Everything* by Patrick J. Michaels and Paul C. Knappenberger. Covers every base.

Note: Be prepared for an avalanche of new propaganda blaming fires and hurricanes on climate change.

Alan Voetsch

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Appreciate the Applegate life

BY SANDY SHAFFER

I first read about the Northern California wildfires in October as we were driving home from a week-long vacation on the Washington coast. I was rendered frozen and mute. Hubby and I had both spent our working years in the San Francisco Bay Area, and we have many friends who still live in that area. We discovered wine in the Napa-Sonoma regions. I worked with several clients building new businesses in Napa. An architect friend from Calistoga visited Buncom to help us design our home in the Applegate in the late 1990s.

I still chill at the thought of the damages, the loss, the enormous change in so many people's lives that a single weather event caused. Powerful winds were throwing power lines around like cooked spaghetti—so ferociously that multiple fires sparked and spread in minutes. Ten days later the count was over 100,000 acres burned and at least 8,700 structures destroyed, most being single-family homes. I was reminded of the Oakland Hills Firestorm in 1991, listening to the news coverage while painting a fence at home in the East Bay (not that far from the fire). Again, grieving for our friends who we knew lived in that part of town. At the time I thought it couldn't get any worse. Sonoma proved me wrong.

I've continued to read about the Sonoma fires to try and see if there are any lessons to be learned. Could something like this happen here in the Applegate? I started comparing the two areas physically. We have a lot more *natural* fuels, and our elevation is much higher than Sonoma's is at barely above sea level. However, their annual rainfall is *very* similar to ours!

After more research, I decided that the differences between Sonoma and the Applegate were more social than physical. An example: land-use regulations and ownership have spread *our* population out, with 20- to 100-acre parcels intermixed with federal lands.

Sonoma had historically *set aside* state parklands, nature preserves, and designated open spaces. However, after massive fires in 1964, things changed. The townsfolk began rebuilding, extending the city limits, and developing *all* lands. Vineyards were sold off despite protests from old-timers! Local land-use rules (such as an ordinance prohibiting building on hilltops surrounding the Santa Rosa Valley) were *ignored* as residents, builders, and county officials all embraced the development of their city's new economic life.

Decades later neighborhoods were packed, two-story homes were "crowded on 60-by-100-foot lots" ⁽¹⁾ and vegetation was overgrown everywhere. When the winds came up this August, conditions were ripe for disaster.

Here in the Applegate our land-use development codes address parcel sizes as a way to control population density and to protect federal lands. They also require we keep vegetation thinned and managed around the home and along access routes. So, *we can't do* what Sonoma did way back then, even if we wanted to, without bucking county government! As a result, we continue to have high rates of defensible space in the Applegate.

In August when the Miller Complex was burning in our area, our Fire Chief McLaughlin worked alongside *three* different Incident Commanders (ICs) on the numerous fires. Every one of the ICs commented on our defensible space efforts!

One of them told Chief McLaughlin that "I have never seen a community have such defensible space around their residences as I have seen here in the Applegate, and it sure saved us a lot of work, not to mention freeing up resources to fight the fire instead of prepping properties."

Friends and neighbors, this compliment is something *we all* should be proud of. We have learned from past fires and we've taken advantage of lessons learned from other communities, not to mention the grants made available over the years! We appreciate the environment in which we live. As a result, doing annual fuels maintenance has become second nature to us here in the Applegate.

In my opinion, the Sonoma fires in October were the result of many combined social and physical changes over time that ripened the landscape for fire. I truly hope Sonomans can and will change as they begin to rebuild their lives and their neighborhoods.

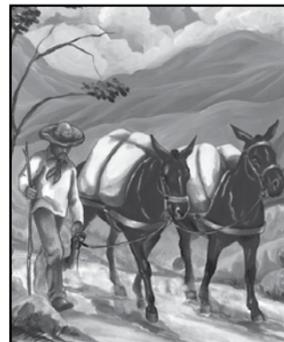
To you, my neighbors in the most beautiful place in the world, I say "Pat yourselves on the back!" We are extraordinary here in the Applegate—let's keep it that way!

Sandy Shaffer

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⁽¹⁾The Washington Post, October 18, 2017, Opinions: "Santa Rosa ignored nature's warning" by Gaye LeBaron, columnist for *The Press Democrat* in Santa Rosa, California.

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