

# Locals Study Impact of Climate Change

By Margaret Jean Cannon And Roy Wysniewski

Climate change indeed is one of the world's greatest existential enemies. Following the Covid-9 protocol, the United States government asks all Americans to participate in and approve funding the fight against this enemy. Unfortunately, many Americans, including residents in Sarasota, take an apathetic stance towards this 'call to arms' because they believe climate change does not seriously impact them today, nor will it do so in their future. Not only do they ignore the call to action – the same people are less likely to believe the government should make funding the battle against climate change a priority at this time.

In retrospect, local apathy is understandable. For the better part of 2020 and the first quarter of 2021, while sequestering at home from Covid-19, we were spectators watching California burn, Texas flood, then 'freeze' in February, and the coastal sections of Louisiana and Texas devastated by an unprecedented number of dangerous tropical cyclones. Yes, we were safe, and we escaped the 'wrath' of Climate Change.

Nevertheless, here's the truth about climate change. While we were fortunate to escape the devastation seen afar, we are, in fact, deeply entwined in a serious climate change process. And, there's evidence suggesting that the ultimate consequences of this process may be at our doorstep right now. Based on recent results of a climate change outreach program underway in Sarasota, this truth is evident -- see Critical Times (3rd quarter 2020) article by Sarasota residents Jean Cannon and Roy Wysniewski.

The outreach program demonstrates to Sarasota residents the impact of local climate change through the lens of weather and climate. By tracking climate change locally (Graph #1), residents see first-hand how historical (record) increases in atmospheric temperature (weather) influence a sub-tropical to tropical change in our climate. Scientists substantiate this finding by reporting that surging record temperatures and increased rainfall during the next three decades are expected to increase Sarasota's average summertime temperature by 1.5 degrees Fahrenheit and annual rainfall by 10 inches. This brings our climate close to tropical Miami. In other words, Sarasotians are living through a significant climate change.

Another aspect of the outreach program is current weather monitoring. For example, Graph #2 illustrates the results of a recent seventeen-month atmospheric temperature study. Monthly temperatures are at or above the most recent six-year average every month -- this is quite striking! Unfortunately, as the atmosphere continues to 'heat' up, it becomes more volatile and historical weather patterns are less predictable. Now, factor in ongoing above-average Caribbean and Gulf of Mexico water temperatures -- and the ingredients exist for nasty weather-related events to become more prevalent in our future. Prolonged higher than average temperatures also lead to increased air pollution and water contamination – bad news for the health and well-being of all life forms.

Isn't now the time to join the worldwide movement to fight climate change? Submit comments and questions about this article to: [mjcannon@gmail.com](mailto:mjcannon@gmail.com); [roywys8@msn.com](mailto:roywys8@msn.com).

