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Local Action for the Climate Summit in Paris

By Sophie Braccini



Wei-Tai Kwok, left, and Steve Richard want to do their part. Photo provided

Kyoto protocol.

On Thursday, Nov. 12, a few weeks before the launch of the summit, Kwok and Richard will facilitate a Climate Talk where they will discuss the latest science on climate change and what is at stake with the Paris conference. The Nov. 12 presentation is free and will take place from 7 to 8:30 p.m. at Our Savior's Lutheran Church, 1035 Carol Lane in Lafayette. Both Richard and Kwok were trained at The Climate Reality Project, a three-day seminar led by Al Gore.

"I had never been in such a diverse international environment," says Richard about the Miami training. "Top scientists were presenting to leaders from all over the planet, sharing knowledge and practices; it was exhilarating." Kwok went to Miami in 2013 for the same training and presented an abbreviated version of his experience last year at the Lafayette Library.

For Richard, it has been an almost 10-year journey since the first time he saw Gore's documentary, "An Inconvenient Truth," in 2006.

"As (my family and I) were coming back from the theater, we discussed what that meant for us," he remembers, "and the idea came to me of reducing our own carbon emission by 50 percent." Around the same time he met Bart Carr, another passionate Lafayette resident, and together they founded Sustainable Lafayette, a movement that is now involved in many projects and initiatives around the city.

Kwok and Richard feel that the Paris summit may be a turning point in the consciousness of world leaders, with the United States and China having both made public commitments to reduce their carbon emissions. "The purpose is to reach an international agreement for all countries with the objective to limit the climate warming to 2 degrees Celsius (3.6 degrees Fahrenheit)," says Steve Richard.

Two additional events are scheduled in the days leading to the summit. The public is invited to a buffet dinner to watch Gore streamed live from Paris to discuss how countries are being affected by the climate crisis, as well as solutions on hand at 6:30 p.m. Friday, Nov. 13 at T's Firehouse Indian restaurant in Lafayette. Advanced tickets are \$15 and may be purchased online at sustainablelafayette.org or \$20 at the door. Then on Saturday, Nov. 21, Sustainable Lafayette will participate in the Northern California rally of the People's Climate March, a global solidarity effort in hundreds of cities around the world. Marchers will meet at Lafayette BART at 10 a.m. and travel

The United Nations climate summit, which will take place Nov. 20 to Dec. 11 in Paris, will include representatives from 195 countries (196 adding the European Union) who will work toward an agreement with individual commitments to reducing greenhouse gas emission. Sustainable Lafayette board member Wei-Tai Kwok says, "This might be one of the most important international negotiations in our lifetime."

Kwok and Sustainable Lafayette president Steve Richard have planned a series of local events to inform residents and to help them feel part of the international event. The two will share what they have learned about climate issues with the community in the weeks leading to the international conference, and discuss the importance of the upcoming Paris talks - what they see as the world's first major step to reduce carbon pollution and address climate change since the

together for the noon march at Oakland's Frank Ozawa Plaza. For more information, visit sustainablelafayette.org.

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