

# The Lake Merritt Institute

And CENTER FOR URBAN RUNOFF AND WATERSHED RESEARCH

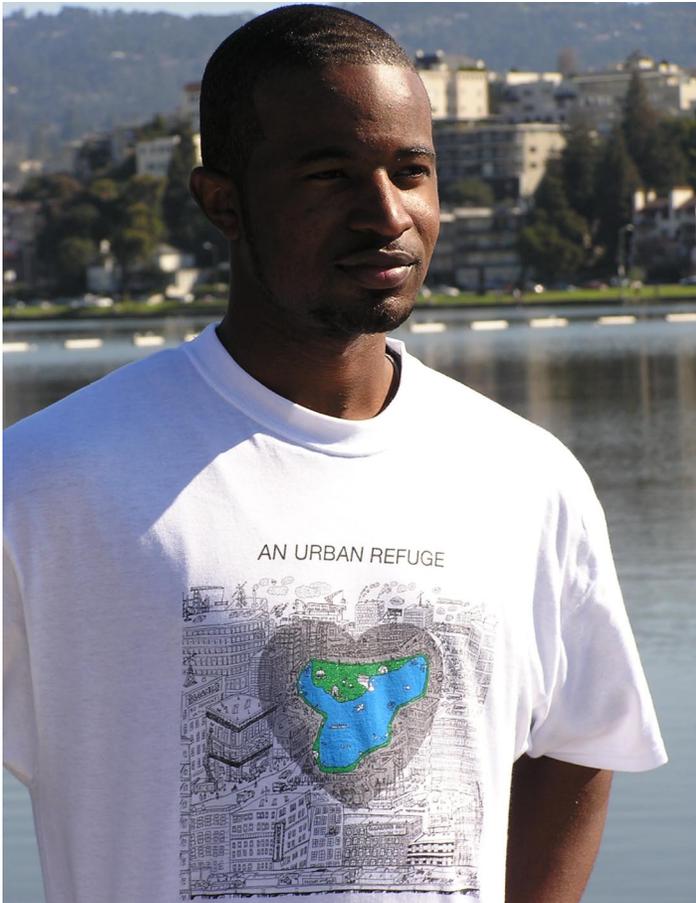
568 Bellevue Avenue, Oakland, CA 94610; 510/238-2290; [lmi@netwiz.net](mailto:lmi@netwiz.net); [www.lakemerrittinstitute.org](http://www.lakemerrittinstitute.org)

VOLUME XI

"TIDINGS" - MARCH, 2006

ISSUE III

LIMITED EDITION T-SHIRT ART FOR SALE TO SUPPORT THE LAKE MERRITT INSTITUTE:



Designed by local artist Peter Lee, these unique shirts are being sold to raise funds for the Institute. If you believe that our tidal lagoon is an island of beauty in the clutter of an urban metropolis (note the cat on the roof, Godzilla, the traffic accident and all the “commercialistic” signs) then this shirt is for you. If you think Lake Merritt is the heart of Oakland, this shirt is for you. If you support clean watersheds, this shirt is for you. Made locally of 50% cotton/polyester, only 10 extra large, 25 large, 9 medium and 5 small shirts are available. To obtain your shirt, call or email your order (first come – first served) then send \$25 to the Institute. They will be available for pick up at our office, or will be sent to you by mail.



*And ...  
on the other  
side: Clean  
Watersheds -  
Clean Water*

*Model James Robinson shows off the new shirt, which features original art by Peter Lee.*

**DD WATER QUALITY PROJECTS. PAST, PRESENT & FUTURE:** The Oakland multi-agency water quality committee is charged with allocating the 4.5 million Measure DD dollars for water quality projects in our Lake (which are in addition to funds for channel improvements). At the recent third Tuesday meeting, the committee reviewed what has been accomplished, what is on-going, and what should be addressed in the future. In summary:

Accomplished: Two CDS storm drain filters have been installed, a third is under construction and several other sites were evaluated but rejected. A pilot aeration mixer project was installed in April of

last year. The underground cable for the Embarcadero fountain was repaired. Daily feeding of the birds by City staff has been discontinued.

Earlier, non-DD funded work includes: Increased street sweeping, more catch basin cleaning, removal of trash by Institute volunteers, installation of five new, floating trash booms, and funding electric power to the aeration fountains.

Underway: Funding has been approved for a pilot Restorer Island project. Funding has been approved for “Do Not Feed the Birds” signs. A new aeration fountain is being installed next month at Grand & Harrison Streets. Projects to remove the tidal flow restrictions at 12<sup>th</sup>, 10<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> Streets are being designed. Funding has been approved to install and monitor a pilot tide valve project, which may allow more storm drain filters to be installed in the park.

The Potential Future: In addition to the above, the following projects & concepts have been/are/may be considered: Modification of flood control practices (e.g. tide gate closures); creating a wetland; trash nets at storm drain/creek outfalls; catch basin insert filters; dry flow diversion; increased volunteer clean-up events; more permanent signage at all stormdrains; a storm drain fee; roof gardens, increased water quality monitoring; landscape based infiltration; landscape based filtration; Solarbee technology and programs to reduce input of organics (such as education).

**STATUS OF THE GOOSE MANAGEMENT PLAN?** A Request for Proposals to hire a consultant for preparation of a goose / pigeon management plan has been written and will hopefully soon be published. Given that goose numbers rise dramatically beginning about Memorial Day, *it will be important to have the consultant on board and working by that date*. Without a working knowledge of goose number dynamics, it will be difficult to assess the situation and develop appropriate plans.

**THE SOLUTION TO GOOSE POLLUTION:** Editors note: We received this proposal by mail from an interested reader in Albany.

The papers are reporting that you’re in a quandary about all the goose excrement that’s peppering the grass around Lake Merritt. I’d like to propose a possible solution for you to present to the Committee On Such Things.

Here are the givens: you can’t stop the birds from eating, and therefore you can’t stop them from pooping. People would likely frown on a plan that involved going around snuffing every umpteenth goose. The only logical solution as I see it is: bird diapers! If you are not already familiar with this fabulous invention, bird diapers look like little leotards that the birds wear. You’ll probably have to custom order them in a large size for those enormous geese, but it will be worth it. People will come from afar just to see the geese wearing these things.



You are probably wondering who will change these diapers. The children! I’d estimate that at any given time there are three to five geese for every child under twelve at the lake. Now, I have encountered these geese and yes, I know they’re a bit surly and some could probably eat a smallish child whole. This is where the potentially controversial part of my

plan comes in. You'll have to somehow get the geese to ingest a mild sedative to make them more docile. Then they'll be almost like dolls for the kids to play dress-up with!

Good luck – let me know how it goes. (!!! exclamation marks added).

**DOG WALKERS – BEWARE:** New “NO DOGS” signs have been installed around Lakeside Park and Oakland police / park rangers have been issuing \$150 citations to those bringing their dogs into the Park. Based on a state law passed in 1870, the Park is considered a “wildlife refuge.” This law addresses hunting, not dogs, but City policy has been to prohibit them here. Recently, enforcement has been increased.

**STEFEN CREATES NEW LAKE MERRITT MURAL:** Berkeley artist STEFEN (who has been creating interior and exterior art since 1970) has completed a new view of Lake Merritt for the Lake Park Retirement Residence at 1850 Alice Street. It includes numerous suggestions made by residents as they watched him work in the dining room of their building, which overlooks the Lake. The mural also duplicates the real floor tiles, and creates the illusion of being able to walk right out on the balcony. The Gondola, Ladies of the Lake, fountains and geese; they're all there, creating more of the “There” in Oakland. Thanks STEFEN!



**INSTITUTE PROVIDES EDUCATIONAL PRESENTATIONS:** In January, Institute director Dick Bailey made free educational presentations on Lake Merritt, the watershed concept, litter and urban runoff to eight organizations, including: High school participants in the “Otter Bowl;” Elizabeth Terry’s high school classes (2); Hands On Volunteers; St. Paul’s 6<sup>th</sup> grade; The Street Academy (2); and the East Bay Conservation Corps.

*Students watch a power point presentation on Lake Merritt*

**GOT DAFFODILS?** If not, then you didn't sign up for the “Keep Oakland Beautiful” (KOB) daffodil campaign last fall. These bright yellow flowers are popping up everywhere after the second year of planting, which will be repeated again next year. Limited to public spaces such as parks and medians, the bulbs are donated at no cost by Home Depot. The mission of KOB is to create opportunities through education and community involvement for a more beautiful, clean and green Oakland. For more information, call KOB at the Public Works Agency; 434-5126.



## MONTHLY BIRD REPORT – By correspondent Hilary Powers. Cormorants Nesting!

The Double-Crested Cormorants (black, snaky-looking, fishing birds) built their first nests last night or very early this morning, February 21-22, in the bare trees on the farthest island from the nature center; there'll be lots more by the time you read this. For the next couple of months, you can actually see their crests - each grown-up bird has what look like a pair of black or white bunny ears tacked on its head. The rest of the year, they'd be better named "Orange-Nosed Cormorants" - they always have orange around the beak, but you can watch for years and see nothing but smooth serpent heads on these birds unless you're near a rookery at the right time.

Other highlights of the February Golden Gate Audubon trip included a female Red-Breasted Merganser (a thin grayish duck with a very narrow bill and a bad haircut) near the shore and a lot of Great Egrets and Snowy Egrets (large and small white herons) in their party clothes, but not yet dancing - wait till next month for that!

A lone Spotted Sandpiper (shorebird with a fawn back and a mostly white breast) was working the rocks on the rightmost island, pumping its tail up and down the way its kind always do. All in all, we saw 42 different kinds of birds and enjoyed a purely beautiful morning!



*The after school club from the Bay Area Technology Charter School struts their stuff during a Friday afternoon clean up. Normally the girls attend too, but on this day it was all guys. Teacher Man Scott Roosevelt leads the charge.*

**TREE REMOVAL UPDATE:** The following quotes a flyer from the February Town Hall Meeting on Measure DD Park Improvement Projects: “The original proposal called for the removal of 307 trees. As part of an extended public comment period on the proposed improvement projects, over a two-month period Public Works Agency officials conducted four guided tree tours attended by about 150 people and hosted a Town Hall meeting attended by about 150 community members. Based on the input received throughout this period, project managers re-evaluated the design of all three projects with the intent to preserve as many trees as possible.”

“As a result, about a quarter of the trees originally proposed for removal (81) were removed from the list and are proposed to remain in place. The city will implement a phased approach to tree removal around Lake Merritt wherever feasible, meaning that the Tree Services Division will remove a tree when it dies or becomes a hazard. The Public Works Agency’s revised proposal now requests removal of a total of 226 trees.”

This edition of “Tidings” was published entirely with private funding donated to the Lake Merritt Institute. To contribute to the Lake Merritt Institute, contact us at 510-238-2290 or 568 Bellevue Avenue, Oakland, CA 94610.

