

The Lake Merritt Institute

LAKE TRASH REMOVAL, FOUNTAINS, EDUCATION, LAKE MANAGEMENT EXPERTISE

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RESCUED TEDDIES TO PARENTAL STRESS SERVICE:

There was a pink teddy bear, several dolls, a teething ring and many miscellaneous stuffed animals in the Institute office lately, but no more. They have been given to Parental Stress Service Inc. in Oakland to gladden the hearts of needy children. Rescued from Lake Merritt, the toys were washed and are now on their way to new homes. But with spring approaching and exuberant babies whizzing around the Lake in strollers, we suspect our stock of toys will soon be expanding again. Splash! Oh no!



EBMUD POLLUTES LAKE / FIXES PROBLEM: Twice last month the sediment from an EBMUD construction crew was seen to flow past St. Paul's School on its way to Glen Echo Creek and Lake Merritt. And twice sixth grade teacher Susan Porter accosted the perpetrators but was told it was an accident. But where were the required BMP's (best management practices) to protect water quality? Unfortunately, they were missing in action, and as the water utility, they should have known better. But after a quick call and photo fax to City Inspector William Madison, the proper storm drain protection appeared the next day.



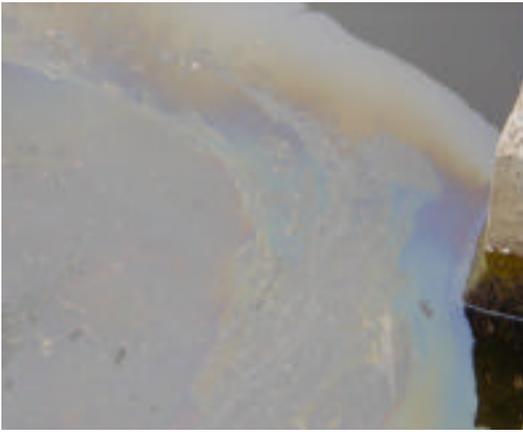
Left: Sediment is washed from EBMUD construction to streets and storm drains, where it flowed to Glen Echo Creek and Lake Merritt.

Right: After complaints were made to the City inspector, the proper control devices were installed to keep sediment from entering the storm drain.



The moral of the story is: You can make a difference. If you see anyone allowing sediment, paint, cement, plaster et cetera to flow down the street to an unprotected storm drain, call 238-6544. And if it is hazardous material (oil, anti-freeze et cetera) call 911. If the responsible parties are prosecuted, you may receive a \$100 reward.

DIESEL SPILL CONTAMINATES LAKE: Michael is not a happy homeowner. For at least three weeks in March (and perhaps continuing today) he and his family have been forced to breathe strong vapors from what the laboratory says is diesel fuel flowing down the Indian Gulch / Trestle Glen Creek and storm drain. This drain enters Lake Merritt at outfall # 8, where we have been cleaning up oil soaked debris since the last rain. The odors are not intermittent; but continuous, and have apparently been traced all the way upstream to the City of Piedmont.



One probable source is a leaking, underground storage tank, possibly at a gas station or construction yard. But with much of the drain underground, such leaks are difficult to find, and a remote controlled camera may have to be used. These motorized devices snake their way up the pipe looking for the source of contamination. Also, Piedmont's inspectors should take up the chase, and if anyone has a tank with fuel mysteriously disappearing, they need to get it fixed before legal action is taken.

DD UPDATE: Although no determination has been made, City officials are considering two bond issues rather than four. This would allow more funding in the first round. Priority of projects for Lake Merritt would be as determined in the Master Plan (pages V-12 to V-16). The top five projects (out of 54 listed) are: 1) Establish A Park Conservancy (is this happening?); 2) Landscape renovation, nodes & multi-use path for 19th to Grand Avenue; 3) Intersection reconfiguration & Snow Park renovation; 4) Central control irrigation system for the entire park and 5) Dock renovation near the Essex high rise.

For other projects, priority would be determined by the status of the project, ability to generate additional funding and balance across city council districts. Children's Fairyland, Studio One, Union Point Park and the East Oakland Sports complex were mentioned as possible priority projects at the recent DD Community Coalition meeting. Fairyland hopes to solve its drainage problems, which include untreated runoff (with animal waste) to Lake Merritt. A priority list of projects may be submitted to Council in early May of this year. The next Community meeting will be April 12th from 2:30 - 4:30 in the Temescal Library basement.

EARTH EXPO – CELEBRATE & LEARN: Want to learn more about: Alternative Fuel Vehicles; Energy Conservation; Creek Restoration; Home Composting; Recycling; Environmental Art; Community Gardens and Parks and Trails? Then come to the ninth annual Oakland Public Works Agency Earth Expo on Wednesday the 16th at Frank Ogawa Plaza. From 10:30 to 2:30 you can browse the exhibits, pick up informative literature, hear speakers and enjoy entertainment. The Institute will have an exhibit, and there may even be a reverse storm drain!

EARTH DAY – 2003: Volunteers, whom I have often led, volunteers, whom for Lake Merritt have bled, welcome to your gory bed, or to victory! Now's the day, and now's the hour, that we face the storm drain's power, pollution base and sour. Chains, and slavery!

Who will be a traitor knave? Who will fill a coward's grave? Who so base as be a litterbug's slave? Let him turn and flee. Who for Oakland's mayor and law, freedom's net will strongly draw? Volunteer stand, or volunteer fall, let him follow me! Lay the dirty litterbugs low, trash will fall in every blow, we will defeat the mighty foe. Volunteers.... let us do, or die!
(Adopted from Robert Burns, based on the speech by Robert the Bruce in 1314).

With an invitation like that, how can you refuse. Saturday, April 19th, 9 am – noon at the Lake.

DOCK RENOVATION: Robert Kidd (no relation to Robert the Bruce as far as we know) of the Lake Merritt Breakfast Club informs us that he is expecting news from the City regarding the Essex dock project "any day now." We are counting the days.

The Lake Merritt Institute is sponsored and supported by the Oakland Public Works Agency

FOUNTAIN MAINTENANCE IS EXPENSIVE !



You may have noticed that our three fountains have been running more often lately, and that the lights are usually on rather than usually off. These improvements however, have not been cheap. This year alone the Institute has incurred the following major expenses:

\$ 636.00 for a nozzle and intake screen.

\$ 33.00 for a portable water pump.

\$ 465.00 for a new main float structure.

\$ 69.00 for overload switches.

\$ 451.00 for a power washer.

In 2002, we paid more than \$ 4,783.00 for parts and labor, including two new motors, underwater cable, splice kits, paint, lights and electrical control components. Although we have received some generous donations, our fountain fund is in the red, and badly needs to be replenished.

To keep the fountains running and lighted, I am asking you to donate to the Lake Merritt Institute fountain fund. With your help, we can pay old bills, replace worn out parts and improve the electrical control boxes to make them more reliable. Please send your check in the enclosed envelope.



As shown to the left, James and David are scraping barnacles and other encrusting organisms from the intake screen. But with the new, portable power washer, we no longer have to remove the aeration units from the water for this type of cleaning, nor use hand scrapers.

Improvements like these are expensive, and we need your help to cover the costs of such equipment, as well as for spare parts and labor.

Donations are tax deductible.