

The Lake Merritt Institute

A COMMUNITY BASED, NON-PROFIT CORPORATION

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VOLUME XVII

"TIDINGS" - APRIL, 2012

ISSUE IV

"Tidings" is an editorial newsletter. Opinions expressed are not necessarily those of the City of Oakland.

GOOD NEWS



A new, city stream gage will measure the flow of water in Glen Echo Creek.



A new storm drain filter (beneath the grate) captures trash below the Whole Foods loading ramp.

LAKE MERRITT HISTORY

If the history of Earth were scaled down to just one year, when would Lake Merritt appear?

“On that scale, the oldest rocks we know date from about late January. Living things first appeared in the sea in February, and continents began to assemble and drift about the globe in early March. All of the major phyla of marine life had evolved by mid-October and the generation of petroleum followed soon thereafter. Land plants and animals emerged in late November and the widespread swamps that formed the great coal deposits of the world flourished for about four days in early December. Dinosaurs became dominant in mid-December, but disappeared on the 26th, shortly after the time the Rocky Mountains were first uplifted. Manlike creatures appeared sometime during the evening of December 31st, and the most recent continental ice sheets began to recede from the Great Lakes area and from northern Europe about 1 minute and 15 seconds before midnight on the 31st (that is when Lake Merritt was formed). Rome ruled the western world for five seconds from 11:59:45 to 11:59:50. Columbus reached the New World three seconds before midnight and the science of geology emerged with the writing of James Hutton just slightly more than one second before the end of our eventful year of years.”

The preceding is copied from *A World Without Ice* by Henry Pollack, who slightly modified it from the original version in Don L. Eichers book *Geologic Time*, published by Prentice Hall, in 1968. So, our little lagoon precedes much of human history (but may not outlive civilization if sea level rises too much and it is swallowed by a rising San Francisco Bay) see details below.

ONCE UPON A TIME, HAPPILY EVER AFTER (An email from artist Scott Oliver)

Hello everybody,

As I mentioned in my last project update I was invited by United States Artists to use their new funding platform, USA Projects. I have recently launched a project there to raise finishing funds for the *Once Upon A Time, Happily Ever After* audio tour. Click [here](#) to view the project page and a video of me making my pitch (it's a new era!).

I hope you will consider donating to this vital, collaborative, and community-engaged public artwork. There are a number of thank you gifts from the series of Lake Merritt souvenirs, all donations are tax deductible and, of course, you'll have my deep gratitude. Whether you are able to give or not please help spread the word. I have only until midnight of April 27th to raise the entire goal amount.

Also, in case you missed it *Once Upon A Time, Happily Ever After* is discussed favorably in the recent post, "[Another Green World](#)" by Marie Doezema on the Oakland Standard blog.

Appreciatively, Scott

Editors Note: Please consider giving generously for to this project which has immensely improved our Lake environment.

SOMETIMES WE FIND MORE THAN TRASH

Sixth grade students who clean Lake Merritt every Thursday were ecstatic. They had spotted two canvas bags about two feet from shore, but were unable to pull them up because they were too heavy. Undaunted, Dr. Bailey put on hip boots, hoisted them up, then began wondering what all the shrieking was about.

Inside the bags was a treasure: Gold, silver, jewels and historical mementos. There were several pocket watches, numerous rings tied together on a shoe lace, silver candle holders, gold bracelets, necklaces, medals etc. As teacher Susan Porter, students and passers by marveled at the catch, we called the police non-emergency number and were soon joined by a channel 7 television truck that was in the neighborhood. It was agreed that it looked like stolen loot, and that it had not been there more than a day or so.

That afternoon and the next day the phone rang off the hook as KQED, several television stations, the AP wire service, Huffington Post, the LA Times etc. all called seeking details and photos. We even got an inquiry from the German magazine BILD and the story appeared in a Grass Valley newspaper. The police have the loot now, but if no one claims it and it cannot be linked to a known crime, the treasure will revert to St. Paul's School, who will probably get it appraised. Usually we just find trash, but in Lake Merritt, you never know.





Early street sweeping machine. It seems litter is not a recent invention.

CLIMATE CORNER: ICE

Further reflections from Dr. Pollack's book on ice: "Glaciologists ... are only now learning how dramatically the loss of ice can be affected by the incursion of sea water beneath." (Editors note; this is now happening in Antarctica). "The implications of rapid acceleration in ice loss from Greenland or Antarctica are profound. The ice in each region alone could contribute more than twenty feet of global sea-level rise; together they could raise sea levels over forty feet, enough to submerge a three story building. ... and transform New York into Venice. Only 120,000 years ago, in the warm interval before the last ice age, Greenland lost half its ice and sea level rose to fifteen feet. ... An ominous message comes from coral reefs that were living 120,000 years ago, during the very final stages of the warm interglacial interval that existed prior to the most recent ice age. These reefs experienced an *eight-foot rise of sea level in only fifty years*, most likely due to extremely rapid sloughing of ice into the sea."

Eight feet in fifty years: If it happened now, sea level would be only one foot below the Oakland Airport in the year 2062.

BIRD COLUMN

Hearsay reports that Hilary was out of town the last week in March, but has heard that most of the winter regulars were still here. The grebes and Ruddy Ducks were in breeding plumage - well worth seeing, and likely to be here through mid-April. (more details next month).

YOUR NEWSLETTER

If you formerly received your newsletter via email and are now reading as this paper copy, it may be because we don't have your current or correct email address.

If you are not receiving "Tidings" by email, please consider switching so you can see Lake Merritt in color, save us a stamp, save paper, save money and save time. Just send your current email address to lmi@netwiz.net. Thank you.

TREASURE DETAIL

On the back of one pocket watch found in the Lake was inscribed the name Thomas F. Graham, President, St. Joseph's School for Boys, Mother's Day, 1931 (or 1932). We have been trying to locate a descendant of Mr. Graham, but with no luck so far. Perhaps this refers to Judge Thomas F. Graham, born 1865 and who is buried at the Holy Cross Catholic Cemetery in Colma, California.

Now you know what you are missing by not cleaning Lake Merritt, so come on out and join us some Tuesday or Saturday.



CITY PLANS TO REDUCE TRASH

To meet the requirements of the Regional Water Quality Control Board order R2-2009-0074 to reduce trash in urban runoff 40% before July 1, 2014, the City of Oakland has submitted a draft "Baseline Trash Load and Short-Term Trash Load Reduction Plan. Although too detailed to enumerate numbers here, the plan relies on the following control measures, listed in order of highest to lowest load reduction credit: • Partial Trash Capture (e.g. inlet screens, litter booms etc.) • Creek Clean Up (Creek, Channel, Shoreline Clean-ups) • Single-Use Carryout Bag Policy, • Polystyrene Foam Food Service Ware Policy, • Public Education and Outreach Programs, • On-Land Clean-up (Earth Day, Adopt-a-Spot, Keep Oakland Clean & Beautiful events and clean-ups of illegal dumping areas) • Full Trash Capture (e.g. CDS units) • Anti-littering and Illegal Dumping Enforcement, Inlet Maintenance, • Reduction of Trash from Uncovered Loads and • Improved Trash Bin/Container Management. The final plan is due in September, 2012. The plan is a working document and can be revised (if approved) as needed to include on-going collection of data on how well various strategies and devices are working.

RECENT SCENES FROM THE LAKE



Feeding the birds is fun, but people food is not good for them. Please let them find their own food.



If you see a gray, floating, rock like object, it is really man made material, used as support under the new 12th Street roadway.

This edition of "Tidings" was published entirely with private funding donated to the Lake Merritt Institute, and not with funds from the City of Oakland. To contribute to the Institute, use PayPal at our website or send a check to: The Lake Merritt Institute, 568 Bellevue Avenue, Oakland, CA 94610.