

The Lake Merritt Institute

A COMMUNITY BASED, NON-PROFIT CORPORATION

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

INSTITUTE PRESENTS TO A DELEGATION FROM CHINA: They came from the Jiangxi Poyang Lake Eco-Economic Region to learn about Lake Merritt and the environmental improvements made here. Poyang Lake is the largest fresh water lake in China, and shares issues such flood control, environmental degradation and enhancement, development, recreation etc. with our Lake Merritt. Splendidly hosted by the Lake Chalet on March 19th, the 20 member delegation saw a power point show by Institute director Dr. Bailey during their visit, which was coordinated by the United States – China Exchange Council. Gifts were exchanged and Oakland's bi-lingual plaque honoring Mr. Andrew Wong, benefactor of our fountains, was featured. Council president Pat Kernighan attended and welcomed the delegation on behalf of Oakland.

We look forward to more exchange regarding information on the programs and initiatives for habitat restoration and flood control strategies, including the role of volunteers and responsibilities for habitat restoration and water quality control.

CLIMATE CORNER: Greedy, Lying Bastards - The Movie: Do you ever wonder who is responsible for the absence of any national climate policy in the United States? Then go see the movie Greedy, Lying Bastards, which has been recently showing at the Grand Lake Theater. This documentary, winner of several film festival awards, examines the power, corruption and greed within the fossil fuel industry and the impact it has on people and on the Earth.

The aftermath of Hurricane Sandy



Some folks say they do not want to see it because it will make them angry. But if you do go, you may also find yourself chuckling at the ridiculousness of answers given by those who seek to cast doubt on what has been happening to our climate, and why. There are scenes of disaster, but few projections of the future. Those would be too scary to include in the movie.

Jacques-Yves Cousteau on Climate Change: But if you are tired of mean people, consider the thoughts of a more honorable man. Based on an interview with him, here are the thoughts of Jacques Cousteau as reported by John Englander in the book "High Tide on Main Street."

We are on the verge of some environmental and climate disasters, which could demonstrate humans capacity for greatness or lead to our demise.

We have an obligation to improve the quality of life for people throughout the world.

Mankind has little choice but to use technology to try to fix the problems we have created.

It is up to citizens and organizations ... to advocate political solutions or at least to identify principles and goals. If we set the agenda and build support for it, the politicians will want to “join the parade.”

The book continues: “If not us, who? If not now, when?”

EARTH EXPO AND EARTH DAY: As the blossoms bloom, birds sing and shorelines turn green with algae, so also do Earth Expo and Earth Day happen. Join us on April 10th from 10 am – 2 pm in the plaza outside of City Hall (14th St. & Broadway) where dozens of earthy, environmental organizations will be displaying their messages and wares for all to see at the Expo. Details are at www.oaklandearthexpo.com. It is free and you can:

Reuse...

- win a free reusable bag! • DIY activities • learn to repair your bike •

Reconnect...

- meet other local businesses • join a volunteer group • learn about car-sharing •

Rediscover...

- five new ways to go green • local shops • bay-friendly gardening •

Reimagine...

- greening your workplace • your home with energy upgrades • a healthy environment for you and your family •

Renew...

- your commitment to a cleaner, greener, healthier Oakland for all!

Then, on April 20th from 9 am to noon, rain or shine, volunteer at one of the City’s many sites to make our corner of the planet a little bit better. For details, find a site near you at www.oaklandearthday.org or check out [Oakland Earth Day](#) on Facebook, or call 510-238-7611. About 100 sites will be available. Several hundred Starbucks volunteers are expected at Lake Merritt.



Cleaning Lake Merritt on Earth Day

*The Oakland Public Works Agency
wants you to Clean It, Green It
and Mean It!*

RAIN BRINGS TRASH: It was only about a third of an inch of rain, but none had fallen for several weeks and the trash was lying in wait. Down it came through the storm drains and into the Lake, causing our trash clean up totals to double from about 2.5 bags/day to about 5 bags per day. Special thanks to Ameri-Corps, St. Paul's 6th grade, Hands On Bay Area, Jack & Jill and the Tuesday crew (Tom, Beverly, Lloyd, Tony, Della, Laura, Wade, John, Charles and Amie). According to regulations now in place, by 2021, this is not supposed to happen (that is when there is to be zero trash in storm drain runoff).



Bottles, cans, wrappers, balls, plastic, you name it; we got it.



Colorful, but nasty.

BIRD COLUMN: Bluebirds Over Bonsai

The March 4th-Wednesday bird walk saw almost everyone we were expecting — Double-crested Cormorants with their bunny-ear crests on display, about half of the peak-population scaup flock, plus some really ruddy Ruddy Ducks and a lot of Eared Grebes, many of them in their wonderful steel, copper, and gold party outfits. And one lone lorn female Canvasback snoozing by the near island, apparently having missed the departure of her brothers and sisters and cousins and aunts.

About a dozen Snowy Egrets were lounging on one of the far islands — teasing us with the idea that they might start up the rookery again, but they probably won't. No Great Blue Herons and no Great Egrets, but we saw a lovely little Green Heron mooching along the rocks, almost invisible except for the screaming yellow legs, plus hot and cold running Black-crowned Night-Herons of all ages from full adult to very young juveniles.

Hank-the-rescue-pelican was all alone. Apparently his snowy crest and the fine gold calling card on his beak weren't enough to persuade his winter friend to stay on. Or perhaps the other bird was just off somewhere on business of its own; time will tell, but it looks like Hank's out of luck again this year.

We searched the bowling greens for last month's Western Bluebirds and didn't see them, though the lawns were jumping with American Robins, plus several European Starlings in their amazing speckled breeding plumage. (It's always a surprise to see how lovely they can be, given their usual ratty appearance and loud aggressiveness. Springtime makes a big difference to a starling.) But then we worked our way around to the garden, enjoying the sight of a juvenile Cooper's Hawk swooping down to perch on a post at eye level, and found the bluebirds after all — perched at the top of the half-bare trees at the back of the scent garden and near the bonsai collection. They made a perfect finish to another perfect day at Lake Merritt, where every day is its own sort of perfection....

RECENT SCENES FROM THE LAKE



*Is it migrating through or sticking around?
Photo by Lee Aurich.*



*Spiderman and the butterfly bicycle through the park.
Photo by John Kirkmire.*

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