

The Lake Merritt Institute

And CENTER FOR URBAN RUNOFF AND WATERSHED RESEARCH

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EARTH DAY A SUCCESS: Almost 60 volunteers gave up their Saturday morning recently to clean Lake Merritt, scrub & paint fountains and spiff up Lakeside Park. We had firemen from the City of Oakland, we had scientists from the American Chemical Society, we had volunteers from the Obama campaign, we had girl scouts from Union City, and we had lawyers from the state Attorney General's office.



Miriam Rose wins top honors for Catch of the Day for her find of a bird cage and a picnic basket. Thanks Miriam!

We also had folks from:

- Piedmont
- Berkeley
- El Cerrito
- Crockett
- Fremont
- Lafayette and
- Pleasant Hill,

which just proves that Lake Merritt is a *regional* attraction and a resource for the whole East Bay.

Earth Day – continued: Recent rains had brought in fresh trash from the storm drains, so there was plenty to pick up. Unfortunately, the rains continued Saturday night, bringing in more trash. On the following three days, Institute staff and volunteers removed 24 more bags of plastic, Styrofoam, cigarette butts and general litter from the water. Cleaning Lake Merritt really IS a continuous job.

CLIMATE ACTION DAY A SUCCESS: One of three Oakland Climate Action-Day events took place at Lake Merritt where about 25 folks braved the rain to hear “An Inconvenient Truth” slide show by Paul Valva, ranting by “The Friends of Global Warming” and warnings from “The Climate Drunk” who staggered from hot to cold to wet to dry and everywhere in between after drinking too much CO₂.



Three colors of CFL bulbs were displayed

Thanks to Jim, Hilary, Dick, Lee, Dean and Dave for their portrayal of Exxon, Apathy, Senator In-Huff, Ignorance, Self Interest and Greed, who is accepting money from Exxon.



The Message of a Drunken Climate: Global warming is not just about heat waves and steadily rising average temperatures. It is about climate change, and that includes more extremes of every kind of weather. More drought in some areas, more rain in other areas, more winter storms and an increase in duration and strength of hurricanes. Like a drunk who staggers from one extreme to another, our climate is staggering in ways that we are only beginning to understand. Unfortunately, the mathematical models being used to help us understand generally do not include positive feedback loops or dynamic melting of the ice caps, which are melting a century ahead of schedule. In the Bay Area, much of the impact will be centered around sea level rise and reduced snow pack in the Sierra mountains, which are a big part of our water supply.



Thanks to Susan Porter for a stirring rendition of what the climate is doing.

Dick Bailey reads from “Climate Crash.” By John Cox.



“GOOD CENTS FOR OAKLAND” TEAMS UP WITH THE MONTCLAIR ELEMENTARY SCHOOL – LAKE MERRITT BENEFITS: As mentioned in our March newsletter, the Institute was chosen by students to be the recipient of their fund raising campaign. And what a campaign it was. On April 5th they presented us with a check for \$1,454.60. Wow – that’s a lot of pennies! For more information on this premier program that empowers students, go to <www.goodcentsforoakland.org>

ROCKCORPS event participants line up to get their task instructions. Dozens performed community service at Lake Merritt and Lakeside Park, and were treated to free concert tickets as well.



MONTHLY BIRD REPORT – By Correspondent Hilary Powers:

So What Happened to the Egrets?

Big news from today's 4th-Wednesday Golden Gate Audubon trip was who wasn't there: Instead of the hundred or so Great Egrets and Snowy Egrets - bigger and smaller white herons - we expected to see dancing and nesting on the islands, only two snowies showed up. One was sitting on the bushes and looking around for the party; the other flying across the lake. That's just Not Right, and no one on the trip had any idea why.

The Double-Crested Cormorants were still going strong in the trees, and the Black-Crowned Night Herons in the bushes, so the islands aren't uninhabitable this year. They just don't have any egrets on 'em. We also looked all over for the two Green Herons (tiny brownish herons with bright rust-colored necks) I'd seen there Tuesday, but no luck.

We did see five different kinds of grebes, including Eared Grebes in their full party dress - looking like beaten copper and steel, with gold fans behind each beady red eye. We also had Clark's and Western Grebes - almost identical species of large, long-necked birds - close enough together to tell them apart (by beak color, bright or dark yellow, and eye placement, outside or inside the black cap). The remaining Ruddy Ducks were really ruddy - the males anyway, with black and white heads and bright blue bills - and many of the Greater Scaup (black, gray, and white drakes; brown hens) hadn't yet flown off for the summer.

The trees across Bellevue had their usual complement of small birds, and we saw the first swallow of the summer. In one of the eucalyptus trees outside Children's Fairyland, a male American Goldfinch was swinging, all brilliant yellow except for black wings and forehead, and orange corn-kernel beak.

Though we saw only 32 species all told, it was still an interesting morning. But then, every morning is an interesting morning, at Lake Merritt....

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