

# THE LAKE MERRITT INSTITUTE

June, 2005

(Lake Trash Removal, Fountains, Education, Lake Expertise)

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## VOLUNTEER LETTER

**TRASH LEVELS FINALLY BEGIN TO DECLINE:** Rainfall and trash totals were higher than average for a typical May, but definitely less than in previous months. Seasonal changes vary in their arrival dates, but they do arrive. We are now at the beginning of the dry season when trash totals are typically only 1,000 pounds per month (still too much but better than winter's load). Salinity levels are rising, algae is growing, fish are spawning, birds are nesting and the boating center is getting ready for summer's classes. All is well... except for that bloody soda bottle floating around. Go get it!

Collecting trash on 17 of 31 days, we (164 people) brought 3,060 pounds to the Davis Street Transfer Station, including 107 bags and other items too large to fit into a bag. Most of this was brought into the Lake via storm drains from the 1.38 inches of rain that fell during the month.

Catches Of The Day included: A hose reel box, a cash drawer, a bat, several turtles, a doll, clothing, and several birds.



*Taken from a jetliner, this photo shows how closely Lake Merritt is related to the Oakland Inner Harbor, San Francisco Bay, the Pacific Ocean... and an urban metropolis.*

*There is probably no place else in the world where such a large tidal lagoon is located in such an urbanized area.*

*Urban runoff? We got it. And as you can see, what we don't remove from the Lake flows out with the tides to bigger public waters.*

**DUMPERS GO TO JAIL:** Finally, its official. Two painters responsible for dumping 42 gallons of paint in Glen Echo Creek (and thereby in Lake Merritt) in August of 2002 pleaded "no contest" to the charges and were sentenced to: • 45 days in jail; • 3 years probation; • \$1,120 in penalties. Thanks to the Alameda County District Attorney's Office, the Oakland police and Glen Echo Creek neighbors, especially Lizz Milota. So, if YOU see anyone doing it again, collect a water sample, take photos, write down details, and call the police (911 if it is hazardous).

**COUNCIL APPROVES CLEAN LAKE CONTRACT:** On May 24<sup>th</sup> the Oakland City Council approved a two year contract with the Institute to keep on doing what we have been doing (cleaning the Lake, educating about urban runoff, maintaining the fountains and pushing for capital improvements and better maintenance of our downtown tidal lagoon). Council approval is a major validation that your volunteer efforts are essential to Lake Merritt, and to Oakland. Congratulations!

**Not a member? Join the Institute and support your Lake!**

The Lake Merritt Institute is supported and sponsored by the Oakland Public Works Agency and people like you.