

The Lake Merritt Institute

A COMMUNITY BASED, NON-PROFIT CORPORATION

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INSTITUTE CONTRACT TO BE EXTENDED: As of July 1, paperwork to extend the Clean Lake Contract for two years was being processed (bravo)! Our dedication to the Lake and low costs were cited as reasons for allowing us to continue our work in trash removal from the water, maintenance of the aeration fountains and education about urban runoff & the tidal lagoon we call Lake Merritt. Thanks to the City for entrusting us with these responsibilities: We will do our best to fulfill them.

OUR JOBS ARE:



Lake Clean Up



Fountain Maintenance



Education

CONTRIBUTIONS NEEDED: For 16 years the Institute has championed Lake Merritt, removed trash from its waters and kept the fountains flowing as best we can. Over these years, costs have increased and now threaten to limit how well we can serve the Lake. Although the city contract pays most of the bills, our budget this year is more than ever dependent on memberships and contributions from our sponsors, but these have been declining. Donations allow us to enhance what the city can pay for and support things like this newsletter. Recently, we replaced the water pump on our soon to be antique truck and built a new “You-Clean-It” box from scratch. Now, many of our nets need to be replaced.

So if you are renewing, consider a higher membership category. If you know someone who would like to help, buy them a membership. And if you can spare some change, we could sure use it. Donations are tax exempt and may be made by mail to:

The Lake Merritt Institute, 568 Bellevue Avenue, Oakland, CA 94610.

FLOTSAMETRICS: You must read this book. Curtis Ebbesmeyer, who coined the term “garbage patch” (no, not the one in Lake Merritt, the one in the central Pacific Ocean) has written a splendid, informative and funny book called “Flotsametrics and the Floating

Other chapters reveal how approximately two thousand shipping containers are lost at sea every year. The most famous of these released tens of thousands of Nike sneakers into the currents. Others littered the oceans, then the coasts, with rubber duckies and other bathtub toys, computer monitors, hockey gloves, etc. How long these objects stay at sea and where they go has been carefully analyzed, including a piece of plastic from a Navy bomber lost at sea in 1944.

To commemorate this book, we offer our own, local version of flotsam and jetsam. Shown above are some of the objects that volunteers have plucked from the waters of Lake Merritt. My goodness, what will we find next?

STURGEON OBSERVED IN LAKE MERRITT: Although never before reported in our tidal lagoon, a sturgeon was seen near the Embarcadero columns on Tuesday, June 23rd by seven volunteers cleaning the Lake and by Institute director Dr. Bailey. It was observed again by volunteers on Saturday, June 27th by the playground near the Rotary Nature Center. The fish was at least 4-5 feet long, making it the largest fish ever recorded from Lake Merritt. Sturgeon are often caught near the Richmond Bridge in San Rafael and may have swum into the Lake from the Bay (assuming it can squeeze between 7.5 inch openings in the trash rack at 7th Street). Or, it may have been released here by a fisherman who caught it elsewhere.



An ancient species, sturgeon have a cartilaginous skeleton and bony plates instead of scales. They feed on the bottom using a suction like mouth that has no teeth. The green sturgeon is known to frequent marine waters but moves upstream into fresh water to spawn. Our fish may have been looking for a fresh water stream, or may have merely been feeding on the millions of yellow snail eggs that were seen in the Lake during June (see next page).

Its fate in Lake Merritt is uncertain. If unable to pass through the trash rack into the ocean, it might not survive the rainy season when tide gates keep high tides out, oxygen levels in the bottom waters approach zero and urban runoff pollutants flow into the Lake from storm drains. Many of our largest fish die at these times but hopefully this new monster will be tough enough to stick around.

If you can get photos of it, please email one to the Institute.

PLEASE...SAVE PAPER – USE ELECTRONICS: If you are one of the 196 people who are receiving a paper copy of this newsletter, we strongly urge (actually, we beg you) to have it delivered via email. This change will not only save trees, it will save the Institute money for stamps, paper, ink and envelopes. Over 60 of your fellow members have converted; why not you?

To make the change, simply send an email to: lmi@netwiz.net. We promise not to share your email with anyone else.



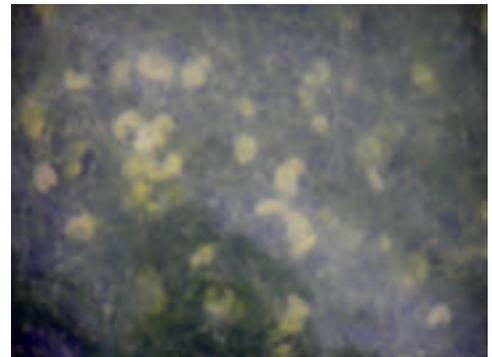
Conversion of your newsletter issue from paper to email delivery will be an Rx for the Institute.

Those who are not converting and are not members (pay an annual membership fee to support the Lake) are very likely to be dropped from our lists – no more free hard copy about Lake Merritt.

So please, do it now. Email the Institute and request that your newsletter be delivered electronically.

EGGS IN THE WATER: Those tiny, yellow dots embedded in the millions of gelatinous blobs you may have been seeing in the water are eggs, possibly from a type of marine snail. Sticking to almost every hard surface, the blobs are about an inch long and are clearly visible in shallow water. Omelets anyone?

These eggs may be the reason our sturgeon is in shallow water.



EDITORIAL CHANGE: The “Tidings” newsletter is now written and produced by staff and volunteers of the LMI. We thank PMC for their work in producing the newsletter during the last two years.

This edition of “Tidings” was published entirely with private funding donated to the Lake Merritt Institute. To contribute to the Institute, contact us at 510-238-2290 or 568 Bellevue Avenue, Oakland, CA 94610.