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*Creatures Beneath, cont.*



*Dead Man's Fingers*

source of food to aquatic life. In the early mornings or late evenings, the plankton's bright reflections are visible from those rowing boats. As the boats glide through the water, a glowing wake is left behind by the drifting organisms.

Another example of aquatic life in the Lake is sea squirts. They look like globs of clear jelly, but unlike jellyfish, they are oblong, do not have tentacles and are classified between vertebrates and invertebrates.

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**Creatures Beneath: How Warm Waters Affect Aquatic Life**

*By Kaletha Patterson*

As seasons change throughout the year, one expects to witness the birth of flowers in the spring, kelly green grass in the summer, autumn's kaleidoscope of colorful fallen leaves and winter's powdery fallen white snow. Seasons are an expression of the ever-changing planet upon which we live, so it's only natural that earth's inhabitants have grown accustomed to these terrestrial occurrences.

Interestingly enough, land is not the only environment upon which nature has had an effect.

Changing water temperatures in lakes, ponds and oceans also have significant effects on aquatic habitats.

On a seasonal basis, the water temperatures in Lake Merritt are warm enough for different types of sea life such as shrimp, algae and occasionally crabs.

According to Dr. Richard Bailey, Executive Director of the Lake Merritt Institute, during the months of August and September one is likely to see algae such as clumps of "dead man's fingers". Dead man's fingers are coral-like colonial animals which inhabit a branched, toughened skeleton. Colors vary but the ones seen in the Lake are greenish-brown. When they feed, numerous tiny polyps arise resembling a bunch of fingers.

Aside from dead man's fingers, Dr. Bailey said the Lake always has a significant number of grass shrimp which are no bigger than an inch long, too small for catching and eating but fishermen may find them suitable for bait. If people were to sift through trash, they may see these little guys hanging onto plastic bags or bottles.

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*A sea squirt*

As the earth's climate continues to change, aquatic life will continue to shift. Certain animals and fish will adapt to warmer climates. Fish that are commonly seen in Southern California will extend their range and swim north to unfamiliar areas. The aquatic life which have used Lake Merritt as their home for many years will more than likely have to move north to cooler waters and climates if the water temperatures of the Lake continue to rise. These changes have been occurring for over 20 years but observations have been more in-depth over the past 10 years.

Plankton are exciting organisms in the Lake. They are microscopic animals that leave a neon glow when touched in the water, and they provide a crucial

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# Reconstruction of the Historic East 18th Street Pier Recreates Lake Merritt's Past

By Douglas Brooks

With the approval of Measure DD almost six years ago by the voters of Oakland, some had begun to wonder where in fact the improvements had been taking place. With the recent completion of the reconstruction of the historic East 18th Street Pier located at the terminus of 18th Street and Lakeshore Avenue, we again conjure up what the measure was meant to accomplish, that of course being the beautification and improvement of Lake Merritt.



The ornate décor on one of four columns accentuates the East 18th Street Pier and returns it to its history.

The original pier that stood at East 18th Street was built a century ago in 1908 during the infancy of the City Beautiful movement. The pier was constructed as part of improvements to Lake Merritt led by then-mayor Frank K. Mott and designed by the well-known Bay Area architect Walter Reed at an original cost of \$4,500. The original design of the pier was meant to highlight the Park Boulevard Creek tributary as the inlet to the Lake, while simultaneously providing a pleasant public space for residents to be proud of.

When onlookers glance at the overall layout of the reconstructed East 18th Street Pier, it may take a meticulous eye by the novice Lake-goer to notice the renovation. However, more frequent visitors to the Lake are sure to notice this careful improvement. Functionally, the pier is more of a plaza than a useable pier. The pier only extends a few feet into the Lake and only descends enough to provide the user a closer lake experience.

The reconstruction effort was restored under the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties, as the East 18th Street Pier is part of the City of Oakland Landmark and Historic Landmark District. The City of Oakland's assessment of the preexisting pier had determined that the pier which had previously extended into the lake bottom was failing and had to be reconstructed. The construction renovation was able to salvage some of the old pier in building material. The overall appearance of the East 18th Street Pier is not overwhelmingly dissimilar from its predecessor. The original historic architectural elements on the pier that were replicated and installed were the ornamental lights, mounted on top of four detailed columns on the west side of the pier, low-pitched stairs on the west side of the pier that descend to the Lake's edge, and a seven-foot wall on the pier's eastern side.

From an urban design standpoint, the pier has returned to the character and charm of its past. The user-to-lake connectivity of the pier's western edge is much improved as the pier steps downward using a shallow step pattern. In turn, this pattern allows for easier accessibility while allowing adequate visual access to the Lake. On the eastern side of the pier, a narrow concrete wall is used to somewhat buffer the intersection at 18th Street and Lakeshore from the pier. The intricate details of the lamppost are one of the most noticeable aspects in the project, returning the pier to its architectural history of a century ago and framing the Oakland skyline for picturesque lake sunsets.

With the reconstruction of the East 18th Street Pier,

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# Park Landscape Projects to Begin Construction

The Oakland City Council recently awarded two construction contracts for street and park improvements at Lake Merritt. At the newly-renovated Municipal Boathouse, two parking lots will be removed and rebuilt farther from the Lake. In their place will be landscaping, seating areas and a multi-use pathway. Lakeside Drive will be narrowed from four lanes to two, and a bike lane will be added. Runoff from the street and parking lot will be filtered through a landscaped bio-swale to remove pollutants before entering the Lake. Lakeshore Avenue will also be reduced from four lanes to two, with new bike lanes in each direction. Pathways will be improved and the park landscaping completely renovated with new lawns, ground cover and many new trees. The eastbound leg of El Embarcadero will be closed and made into a pedestrian promenade, and the westbound leg will be made two-way. Work will begin within the next month and take about one year to complete.

These improvements, funded by Measure DD, will make Lake Merritt more pleasant for walkers, bicyclists and other park users. Traffic will continue to flow smoothly, but instead of a high-speed commute route, the surrounding streets will be calmer scenic parkways, as befits the jewel that is Lake Merritt.

*Reconstruction of East 18th Street Pier, cont.*

the City has recreated its historic past while simultaneously creating a quaint public space for people at Lake Merritt. With the passage of Measure DD, improvements and projects are in line and coming on fast. Residents of Oakland are in for a real treat with other equally well-thought-out projects on the horizon.



*El Embarcadero Photo Simulation*



*Lakeshore Avenue Plan B Photo Simulation*

## Municipal Boathouse Rehabilitation and Park Improvements Lake Merritt Park Master Plan Implementation



*Existing*



*Proposed (Approx. 8-10 years)*