

The Lake Merritt Institute

A COMMUNITY BASED, NON-PROFIT CORPORATION

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TORPEDO PORT FROM THE USS MAINE REPLACED: It was built onto the side of a U.S. battleship more than a century ago, sunk in Havana in 1898, recovered and cut out to be sent to parks around the states, on display for decades at Lake Merritt, stolen by vandals in 2011, recovered by the City, and is now installed at a new location by the Veteran's Memorial Building at Grand & Harrison. Some things keep coming full circle, and for this unusual monument, that is good.



Cuba, "Porto" Rico and the Philippine Islands, sites of the Spanish American War from 1898–1902, are inscribed in the inset plaque. Children now crawl where once deadly weapons passed.

WHICH OF THE FOLLOWING LIFE FORMS CAN LIVE IN LAKE MERRITT? Finding two crayfish in the Lake has prompted us to ask this question. You, among the most literate of knowledge about Lake Merritt will doubtless know the answers, and will educate those who remain ignorant.

Goldfish _____ Muskrat _____ Crayfish _____ Frogs _____

LM monster _____ Sharks _____ Barnacles _____ Sponges _____

Salmon _____ Water lilies _____ Mosquito larvae _____ Aquatic insects _____

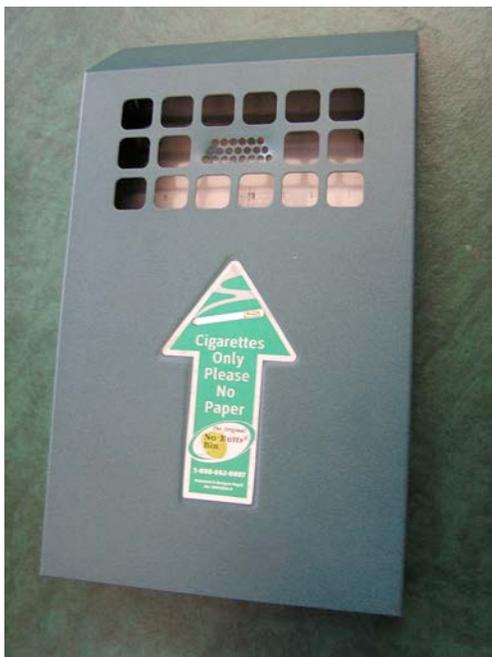
Cattails _____ Striped bass _____ Pond turtles _____ Clams _____

HINTS: Lake Merritt is connected to the ocean. What do you put on your eggs in the morning?

NINTH CIRCUIT COURT RULLING ON STORM WATER POLLUTION: In *Natural Resources Defense Council vs. County of Los Angeles* (Case No. 10-56017) the Ninth Circuit Court ruled on August 8, 2013 that the county was liable as a matter of law due to pollution levels detected in its storm water monitoring data. The Ninth Circuit ruling was in reaction to a reversal of their previous ruling by the U.S. Supreme Court in January, 2013.

Los Angeles storm water, like the storm water that flows into Lake Merritt, is regulated by a permit required by the federal Clean Water Act. For the Bay Area, regulations stipulate a 10% reduction of trash in storm water per year, leading to zero trash by 2022. This ruling is a reminder that Alameda County, which administers the permit for Oakland, can be held liable for violations of the permit. The 1st checkpoint is next year.

WHO WANTS AN ASH TRAY? One of the ways to remove pollutants from storm water is by installation of outdoor ash trays in the watershed. Why? Because thousands of cigarette butts pollute Lake Merritt. We pick them up every time we clean the Lake. Sixth grade students at St. Paul's School have counted and removed thousands of them at the McElroy fountain in Lakeside Park and at businesses along Grand Avenue. Even though the students remove them, the butts are continually replaced, as documented by their data. Their project will continue this year.



The models shown here can be purchased for as low as \$75.



So the Institute, in conjunction with St. Paul's School, is offering to purchase and install outdoor ash trays (some of which are shown here) for businesses in the Lake Merritt watershed. A variety of designs, colors and models are available. Signs can be attached atop of some to honor sponsors (donors to the program) the business, the Institute and St. Paul's School, and to include an anti-littering – urban runoff message.

Initially, the ash trays will be available only to businesses on Grand and Lakeshore Avenue. Based on future funding, we hope to expand the program further to locations where butts are a major problem (including Lakeside Park if City approval can be obtained). Costs will be shared by the Institute and cooperating businesses based on a ratio to be determined, and on contributions from Institute members, who can be honored on the attached signs. The trays will be emptied by St. Paul's students and by the Institute: Plans are to send the butts to a recycling facility where the filters are made into plastic pallets.

So, we are making a list. What businesses want an ash tray? Who wants to sponsor an ash tray? Costs range from about \$50 to \$250. Contact the Institute by email for details and a page showing sample designs.

TIRED OF LITTER AND GRAFFITI? Then why not adopt-a-spot? Check out this video developed by the City of Oakland. <http://vimeo.com/65319736> then pick a spot you can keep clean.

CREEK TO BAY DAY ON SEPTEMBER 21: Once again from 9 am to noon the City of Oakland will sponsor clean up activities at creeks, watersheds etc. around the city, including Lake Merritt.

Details can be found at:

<http://www2.oaklandnet.com/Government/o/PWA/o/FE/s/ID/OAK024743>. Volunteers receive FREE reusable shopping bags and other freebies. So find a site on the map and decide where to volunteer.



Don't dump or litter. Dirty streets create dirty water, and bad monsters!

ART MOBILE NOW AT THE PARKWAY THEATER: Local businesses, you missed your chance to be the first to exhibit the Institute's art mobile of selected trash found in Lake Merritt. It is now hanging from the ceiling at the New Parkway Theater, which has new Institute business cards to hand out to those inquiring about it. But fear not; it will be available again in a couple of months.

CLIMATE CORNER: It was no surprise to see a recent notice in a local newspaper that fully half of the city of Manila was flooded, next to a full page ad warning that energy (and its emissions) should not be taxed because it would limit jobs. While climate change continues its irreversible march towards more extreme weather such as this flood, those who stand to see their profits cut continue to urge policies that would prevent a tax on carbon emissions that are creating more frequent, longer lasting and more intense floods. Yet such a price on carbon, applied world wide, is what is required to slow the insidious rise in atmospheric carbon concentrations, which have been increasing at 2 parts per million per year, a rate which is increasing. Preventing taxes on carbon will only make climate change worse, and the world will suffer for it.



Metro Manila, home to 12 million, is extremely vulnerable to floods.

Were it not for tide gates that protect Lake Merritt from sea level rise, a three foot increase (conservatively predicted to be here by 2100) would flood the bandstand beach, part of the Lake Chalet restaurant, the walkway between 18th and 12th Streets, and the Rotary Nature Center. *When these gates are required to be closed for increasingly longer time periods to prevent flooding, flushing in Lake Merritt will suffer, as will its inhabitants.*

Meanwhile, back in Manila where they don't have tide gates, people are stringing ropes across the water so they can safely get from house to house.

POLICE RECRUITS VOLUNTEER AT LAKE MERRITT: As part of a program to encourage recruits for Oakland's police academies to get to know their communities better, potential trainees are volunteering at local non-profits, including the Lake Merritt Institute. We welcome that. Not only do they do a great job cleaning up, we get to know them as real people, not just someone behind a badge. OPD is looking for other

non-profit organizations to which they can send the recruits, so if you know of any, contact Juan Sanchez, Background Investigator, Recruiting/Background Unit at 510-238-3339. It's a win-win situation.

BIRD COLUMN: UNEXPECTED SUMMER ACTION (AND INACTION) AT LAKE MERRITT

The Golden Gate Audubon 4th-Wednesday walk encountered some wonderful creatures in August, but missed some of the expected regulars, too -- for 28 species all told.

Twenty American White Pelicans were cruising in flotillas or lounging on the islands, providing Hank-the-rescue-pelican all the company he could want, if not at the best time of year for him, all the families having long since formed and raised their youngsters. And we saw two different Green Herons -- one first-summer bird and one full adult, neither (as is the way of the species) particularly green, but showing off handsome cinnamon-and-cream chests. One of the early returning American Coots brought a chick along -- 2/3 the size, dark gray-brown instead of black feathers, and dull beige bill instead of bright white -- not something often seen here.

The first Belted Kingfisher (or possibly the first two Belted Kingfishers; we weren't quite sure) were back in the trees on the islands, even though the Double-crested Cormorants haven't quite finished with the nests. Several of the nests are still occupied, and we saw one parent in full feeding mode, head deep in the beak of a full-sized fledgling. (The scavengers are out as well; several crows and a couple of gulls were prowling among the nests, looking for leftover goodies.)

The trees in Lakeside Park were unusually quiet, except for a lively flock of Chestnut-backed Chickadees. We saw exactly one American Robin and one House Finch instead of the usual dozen or so of each, and no House Sparrows at all. On the other hand, the tree with the lone robin in it also had an odd, broken-off looking lump on top, and that turned out to be one of the only Mourning Doves we've ever seen in the park. No idea why they don't hang out there, but they just don't.... No swallows, no jays, no raptors, but still a thoroughly worthwhile morning at the lake, where, come to think of it, every morning is worthwhile....

NOTE: The dead cormorant hanging from a tree on the islands is a reminder to not leave fishing line behind.

RECENT SCENES FROM THE LAKE



Why fountains fail (clogged by sea squirts).



The new fountain at 18th Street has diode lights.

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