

The Lake Merritt Institute

A COMMUNITY BASED, NON-PROFIT CORPORATION

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12th STREET PROJECT ADVANCES: Don't hold your breath yet, but bids are due on November 19th for the \$45 million construction project to replace the 12th Street dam. In the works since the Feasibility Study Report prepared in 2002, this monumental undertaking will:

- Eliminate the maze of roads and tunnels that are no longer needed to carry traffic
- Widen the public beach and park area
- Establish a 6 lane, divided city street with two stop lights and landscaping
- Allow small boats to enter the channel from Lake Merritt
- Extend the Necklace of Lights
- Improve tidal flushing and thereby improve water quality
- Create a cul-de-sac at the end of Lakeshore Avenue.

If an adequate bid is received and negotiations are successful, construction could (as in maybe) start early next summer. Since the current Lakeshore to 18th St. project is set to wrap up in November, we will have a breather from all the construction activity that has been on-going for years, which will be very nice.

LAKE CRITTERS: "I'm a rouge, I'm a rouge" shouted Sarpin the poly cheat worm from the muddy bottom of Lake Merritt. "No you're not, you're a rogue. A rouge is a red something, like a red tide" said Salmon, the Solomon of knowledge. "Well, I don't know what a tide is, but I like red things" said Sarpin.



Sarpin, the worm

"What I don't like are those woof plankton. I'm going to kill as many of them as I can" said the worm. "But those are good zooplankton" said Salmon. "They eat phytoplankton and keep the base of the food chain healthy." Without them there would be too many herbivores and the food chain would be out of balance.

It's true. Sarpin was the worst of the worst rogue critters in Lake Merritt. That she was evil is shown by her mission statement (part of a song by Phil Ochs as sung by Glenn Yarbrough) inscribed on a plaque in her burrow. It reads:

"It's the burial of beauty, the victory of night,
Truth becomes a tragedy limping from the light,

The heavens are horrified, they stagger from the sight,
As the cross is trembling with desire.”

Salmon would have nothing of it. “Leave the woofs alone” he said. “And go back into your burrow. Rogue critters must not be allowed to take over the Lake.”



Valet Parking Often Fills Up

SOLVE THE CHALET PARKING PROBLEM FOR \$35,000: Even though City meters are no longer active until 8 pm, valet parking at the wildly successful Lake Chalet fills up on most nights (except for maybe Mondays and Wednesdays). It’s a problem. You arrive for a good dinner by the Lake and end up circling the block, hungry.

A solution has been offered by Gondola Servizio.

A commuter boat is available, and lots of parking is available right across the Lake at the other boathouse in Lakeside Park. A simple ten minute boat ride would bring you directly to the dock for a fee, perhaps less than the fee for Valet Parking (\$5.50). What better way to approach the Chalet than with a view of the skyline on the sparkling, gentle waters of Lake Merritt?

But, first a buyer for the boat must be found. If you know of anyone with \$35,000 to invest, contact April or Angelino at Gondola Servizio.

CLIMATE CORNER: 350. 350 .350. 350. 350 .350. 350.

That’s the amount of carbon dioxide (in parts per million (ppm)) that we need in the air to avoid the worst of climate de-stabilization. The problem is, you are now breathing in 390 ppm. This means the world, working together for the first time, must reduce atmospheric carbon levels to what they were in about 1983. It is an effort that will require massive reductions in emissions, and cooperation over a period of several centuries.



The world wasn’t always this way. During the last ice age, atmospheric levels of carbon dioxide were 160 ppm; in 1800 they were 280; in 1960, they were 315 ppm. That tells you something. If the difference between an ice age (think glaciers covering Chicago etc.) and the beginning of the industrial revolution (think climate as it was while civilization developed) is only 120 ppm ($280 - 160 = 120$) and we have now added an additional 110 ppm since the industrial revolution began ($280 + 110 = 390$) what does this mean for our future climate? It means the climate difference our children will experience will be as great as the difference between an ice age and climate as it was before 1800. Our present climate is not now unbearably different only because the earth responds much more slowly

than the rate at which we are adding carbon to the air. But it will catch up. And when it does, global average temperature will be high enough to create droughts, flooding, famine, sea level rise, disease and mass migrations much greater than humanity has ever experienced. If we want inter-generational justice, this problem will have to be solved.

LAKE MERRITT MIGRATION UNDER WAY:

In October, the 4th-Wednesday Golden Gate Audubon walk found more than half the winter visitors in residence - at least by species count; the population was still smaller than it will be. Lots and lots of Ruddy Ducks (known to hunters as stiff-tailed ducks), some still vaguely ruddy, joined by lots of Greater and Lesser Scaup (females brown with white around the beak; males black with gray sides and backs; when you can tell the two species apart, you know you're a birder). Hiding in plain sight among the scaup were a Tufted Duck (black back and white wings; long pony-tail high on his head) and a Ring-necked Duck (black back and gray wings, with a white racing strip along the front of each shoulder and a bright white ring around his bill). We also had a whole flotilla of Bufflehead (males brilliant black and white, with bronzy foreheads and bright white patches across the back of the head; females brown and hanging out with the males).

Once again we had four kinds of heron - Great Blue Heron, Black-crowned Night Heron, Great Egret, and Snowy Egret - and I was hoping for a fifth, having seen a Green Heron (actually mostly rust and cream streaks) on the near island a few days ago, but no such luck. We did have five kinds of grebe - Clark's and Western (the big grebes with the snaky white necks; again, if you can tell them apart, you know...), plus lots of Pied-billed Grebes (round and brown with a heavy triangular head), and one Horned (like a miniature Western) and one Eared (gray powder puff with a brilliant red eye) Grebe.

The rescue White Pelican still has one of the summer visitors hanging out in the bird paddock; who knows - we may become a regular spot for them. No Brown Pelicans, though there was one there on Tuesday afternoon.

The garden was jumping with White-crowned and Golden-crowned Sparrows, Lesser Goldfinches, and House Finches, and buzzing with Anna's Hummingbirds (the green ones that stay around all year). We also saw a first-of-season Ruby-crowned Kinglet there, giving a goldfinch a hard time but without the usual typewriter chatter - and without showing the ruby crown (they have to be really irritated for that to be visible; mostly they're little and greeny-gray and bouncing from branch to branch to branch with a flash of a big, bright eye).

A perfectly beautiful morning, clear and wind-swept but just warm enough for comfort, and 43 species of birds (plus a tern and a flycatcher who flicked past too swiftly to identify for sure)... yet another great day, as all days are great at Lake Merritt....

OAKLAND LOCAL TO FEATURE LAKE MERRITT:

www.oaklandlocal.com is a new, on-line news outlet featuring “News For The People.” Check them out for a soon to be published feature on your favorite Lake, its trials, tribulations and triumphs.

INSTITUTE TRUCK TO BE RETIRED: After 20 years of work, eight of them hauling trash from Lake Merritt, our truck with the mural is giving up, a victim of its own transmission (which will not go into 3rd gear). Cost estimates are more than double the value of the vehicle, and do not include correcting its many other inoperative features. So the 1990 Dodge will be replaced by a 1999 Dodge, somewhat smaller but much more reliable.

Donations Needed: But the newer truck will be naked; well, compared to the mural truck. It will not have the LMI signs on its doors; nor the “Only Rain Down the Storm Drain” and “Littering is a Social Disease” on its fenders; nor the painting of a cop chasing a litterbug and storm drain dumper on its truck bed. If you would like to contribute to getting our truck appropriately clothed for its job, please donate to the Institute. It will also need a new rack to carry the nets, an alarm and a new battery. Checks are accepted at 568 Bellevue Avenue, Oakland, 94610.

THANK YOU MERRITT LAKESIDERS:

Shortly after our truck began its death throes, an old friend stepped in to help. The Merritt Lakesiders, a coalition of nearby residents that love the Lake, agreed to donate funds to help replace our vehicle. We welcome their generous contribution, which signifies their continuing dedication to protecting Lake Merritt (and helping us get rid of its trash).

COMING SOON – TEETH FOR STORM WATER RULES:



On a 5-1 vote, the Regional Water Quality Control Board recently required local cities to reduce storm water trash by 40% before 2014, 70% by 2016 and 100% by 2021. As you can see by the trash flowing in during October’s first flush, the rules are needed. Penalties from \$25,000/day or \$10/pound of trash could be imposed for violations. The storm water clock is ticking.

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