

# The Lake Merritt Institute

A COMMUNITY BASED, NON-PROFIT CORPORATION

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**BOATING ON LAKE MERRITT:** The Lake Merritt Boating Center, at 568 Bellevue Ave, presents its Sail into Science program to local schools seeking educational field trips for their students. In the mornings, the four-day long, field trip program has students in the center's classroom and around the lake's shoreline for experiential learning in the fields of nautical science, life science, earth science and physics as it relates to the local environment. In the afternoon, students venture out on Lake Merritt in pedal boats, dragon boats, kayaks and canoes.

For more information on dates and how to sign a school up for the field trips, contact Kyle Winslow, Boating and Science Coordinator, 238-2196.



*On your mark, get set, paddle!*

**LOST YOUR KEYS?** In the spirit of community and good karma, Children's Fairyland has volunteered to be the gathering place for all keys lost in Lakeside Park.

C.J. Hirschfield, Executive Director of Fairyland said "Since our hours are somewhat more regular than that of our neighbors, we figure it just makes sense. We'll be getting the word out to all of our partners and workers at Lakeside Park, as well as to the public at large, and we hope we can increase the return rate. And although Tora's idea of melting down the keys for an art installation is a good one, we would prefer to reunite them with their proper owners if possible." (Reprinted from *Oakland Local*, Oakland's daily non-profit news & community hub).

**CLIMATE CORNER:** <http://eyes.nasa.gov/earth/launch2.html>

This fantastic website from NASA shows current and recent satellite images of our planet. It takes a few seconds to load onto your computer and you may need to download some Java software, but when it starts, you can view recent, planet wide data for air temperature, carbon dioxide, carbon monoxide, sea level, ozone, ice and water. Click on the globe and you can spin it around for a polar view, one from Antarctica or centering on the U.S. NASA's satellites are shown whizzing around, and you can speed them up or slow them down on your screen, even viewing real time motion. You can also choose images from various dates and a slide button on the right lets you zoom in on the planet.

Clicking on the carbon dioxide button, we see that levels of CO<sub>2</sub> are remarkably similar across the entire planet. This gas is quickly mixed and dispersed; what you exhale today or your car emits tomorrow can be in Moscow or India next week. Measured continuously by the “Aqua” satellite, the images tell us that we are all on this Earth together; what is done in one nation effects us all. This means that to solve world problems, world cooperation is needed. Huge corporations have managed to go global: hopefully governments will be able to do the same someday, but it better be soon.



### National News Coverage of Blue-green Algae Blooms this Summer

Source: ABC News, Sept 30, 2012, <http://abcnews.go.com/WNT/video/algae-lakes-toxic-swimming-blooms-us-17362157>

Based on the number of media stories, this summer's hot, dry weather pattern across the country seemed to have caused more algae blooms and fish kills than normal. The news across the Midwest has been reporting on lakes where algae blooms cause problems with recreation and fishing.

At the end of September, ABC News reported a story about Petenwell Lake in Wisconsin and provided some level of explanation for the increased algae blooms across the country, including the recent algae growth in the newly renovated Reflection Pool in Washington D.C. This 2 minute news video may be something that we see more of in the near future.

(Editors Note: Fortunately, blooms of toxic blue green algae are not typically seen in Lake Merritt, and the increased tidal flushing from measure DD adds insurance that temperatures will be cooler and such blooms less likely).



**MR. JORDAN EXPLAINS THE MYSTERIES OF THE LAKE:** Professor Kevin Jordan of Oakland High School teaches lake science to the Environmental Academy every Tuesday at Lake Merritt. Students cruise the waters in a pontoon boat, sampling the water and life, then bring it back to the laboratory for analysis. What a great way to start a career in marine biology. Thanks Kevin!

**AND A MARSH IS BORN:** October, 2012: More than a century after Lake Merritt's wetlands were systematically dredged, filled and otherwise destroyed to create land for urban development, a new marsh has been created. Situated adjacent to and over what had originally been part of the inlet / outlet channel, the

soon to be planted mudflat can be seen next to the old convention center, between the new 12<sup>th</sup> Street bridge and 10<sup>th</sup> Street. Kudos to all those who worked to make it a reality.



*Former fill was removed from the area to the left of the channel. The new marsh will be exposed at low tide.  
(photo courtesy of Joel Peter)*

#### **BIRD COLUMN:** Winter Springing at Lake Merritt

The year's first scaup (all probably Greater) were on the Lake for the October 4th-Wednesday Golden Gate Audubon walk, and the trees in the garden were full of Yellow-rumped Warblers (also known, to those in the know, as Butter-butts). We were up to four of the five grebe species that winter at the lake: the Pied-billed (who have been back in substantial numbers for a couple of months), plus several Western and one Clark's (the big ones with the snaky white necks), and a couple of the tiny dark Eared variety.

The big news was on the fish front - we watched a female Belted Kingfisher (recognizable by having both a dark belt and an orange one) snarf down a sculpin-looking critter that seemed bigger than her head, and a Snowy Egret working hard to line up a similar finny monster that was easily three or four times as wide as its black beak. Or it looked like work, anyway - but perhaps it was play; the fish went down the hatch fast enough when a Western Gull (one of the big white-headed ones with black wingtips) came over to try for a grab.

On the floats, this year's young Double-crested Cormorants lined up with almost military spacing, just far enough apart to spread their wings to dry - apparently in shifts, as almost as many others of their kind were out in the water, fishing in gangs. Along with thirty or forty egrets, mostly more Snowies, a few Great Blue Herons, a couple of Green Herons, and the usual pack of Black-crowned Night-Herons of all ages. Hank-the-rescue-pelican had one wild friend still visiting, but it looked like he'd soon be alone for the rest of the winter (and into the breeding season next spring, poor guy).

Notable for the lake though common elsewhere, we spotted a Brewer's Blackbird - your basic parking-lot blackbird, for some reason almost never seen near the nature center - and a Mourning Dove, also on the we-never-see-that-here list. And a Scrub Jay, which ought to be common in Lakeside Park but somehow isn't.

And lots more besides - forty-three species in all, the highest tally in months - for a very good day at Lake Merritt, where every day is a good day.

**ONE ALMOST DONE - ANOTHER TO GO:** New vehicle and pedestrian bridges over the channel have eliminated one bottleneck to tidal flow. Note the culverts at 10<sup>th</sup> Street (below the bridges) which are also a bottleneck. They are scheduled to be replaced with a new bridge by about 2015.



## RECENT SCENES FROM THE LAKE



*Merrily we pedal along, pedal along.*

*Note how this fence keeps geese (and geese feces) off of the sidewalk. Because they need open access to the water, geese will not roost by a shoreline where access to water is blocked.*



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