

The Lake Merritt Institute

LAKE TRASH REMOVAL, FOUNTAINS, EDUCATION, LAKE MANAGEMENT EXPERTISE
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CHRISTMAS POEM – UPDATE: In December of 2000 we first published the Lake Merritt version of the Night Before Christmas. It is reprinted below, with an update on how Santa (and the City) are doing in improving our downtown natural resource.



'Twas the night before Christmas, and all through the Lake,
The shrimp were a'scurrying, being chased by a hake!
The gondolier rowed, on his boat with great care,
In hopes that the weather, would still remain fair.

The fish in the shallows, and boatmaster in his cap,
Had just settled down, for a long winters nap.
When out on the water, there rose such a clatter,
We all dropped our nets, to see what was the matter.

The moon on the breast, of the tides now so low,
Gave a luster of mid-day, to mud flats below.
When what to my wondering eyes should delight,
But red and green lights, on a fountain so bright.

The feathered geese, so lively and quick,
Oh my goodness, they're chasing Saint Nick!
More rapid than eagles these birds they did fly
Then he whistled and shouted: "Don't Santa deny."

On Dasher, on Dancer, on Prancer and Vixen,
On Comet, on Cupid, on Donner and Blitzen.
To the top of the boathouse, to the crumbling wall,
Now dash away, dash away, dash away all.

As water from the storm drains does fly,
When it meets with an obstacle, splashes so high!



So all round the columns, his coursers they flew,
With a sleigh full of volunteers, and trash bags too!

And then in a twinkling, I certainly heard,
The cackling and cawing, of each little bird.
As I ran for my camera, away with a dash,
Into the water, St. Nicholas came with a splash.

But he wore a wetsuit, from his head to his foot,
And all round about, wasn't a trace there of soot.
Many gifts for the Lake, he carried in his sack,
Of things to delight, there wasn't a lack.

Good things he did sprinkle, like the Fairyland Fairy,
The City was delighted, and began to make merry.
New wetlands to be, and a plan that is master,
A shoreline path, made not of plaster.

More money for fountains, a new path for Jerry,
And steelhead in the Lake, old Santa did not tarry.
He spoke not a word, but made a DD sign,
And promised the water, sure would be fine.

And shaking a fish, from out of his hat,
He said to the birds, now don't get too fat.
He leaped in a rowboat, and said with a quiver,
To the Ladies of the Lake, this present I'll deliver.

But I heard him exclaim, as he rowed out of sight,
Happy Christmas to all, and to all a good night.

UPDATE: Wetland progress was stalled for a time, but the advisory committee has been re-formed with new vigor and an expanded vision of a Lake-wide habitat approach. We expect great things from them in the coming year. The Lake Merritt Park Master Plan of course was completed in July of 2002. In November of that year much of the plan was funded when Measure DD passed with a whopping 80.2% yes vote. Bonds were sold in the summer of 2003 and DD money began to flow in 2004. Plans are now underway for a new 12th Street roadway with an open channel (and increased tidal circulation); for more storm drain filters (only two small ones are in place); renovation of both boathouses; for a new shoreline path; possibly an aeration mixing system to solve our oxygen problem; a goose management plan and other master plan improvements.

So, it appears that we have been good. With all that going on, Santa's bag should be very full next year.



THE GIFT THAT KEEPS ON GIVING: Don't know what to give someone for Christmas this year? How about a membership in the Lake Merritt Institute? Then your special person will receive news from the Lake every month, and the satisfaction that they are part of the community that supports Lake Merritt.

Memberships start as low as \$25 and are an important source of revenue for the Institute. As a non-profit corporation, your gifts are tax deductible so if you need more for that column of the tax form, please consider a larger donation.

WATCH FOR US ON THE KPIX "EVENING MAGAZINE": A producer and cameraman from CBS (channel 5) accompanied volunteers as they cleaned the Lake on Saturday, November 20th. We were wired for sound and filmed as we picked up trash, including a lot of plastic, from the beach at 12th Street. Also filmed were many of the unusual items found in the Lake, such as part of a crutch, a message in a bottle and a horse jawbone. The broadcast date has not been set yet, but watch for it in mid-December. Thanks to KPIX for the opportunity to tell people that storm drain flows go untreated to the nearest body of water, and that we really should not put up with litterbugs.

Lake Merritt's First Submarine was launched last month at the boat ramp. Although it did not submerge, we suspect it may return and disappear beneath the waters.

*Boaters – Don't Worry
Torpedoes not yet activated !!!*



CAROLING ON THE LAKE returns to Lake Merritt this year after a dreadful absence. The Boating Center has announced that 30 minute Christmas tours will take place at 4, 5 and 6 pm on Saturday and Sunday evenings and at 6 and 7 pm on Fridays from December 3rd to December 19th. Although the Merritt Queen is long gone, tour boats (the water sleigh) will take her place for the festivities. Limit, fourteen passengers per tour: Cost - \$5/person. Gondola Servizio is also offering special Christmas tours for \$7.50/person (and you can ask Angelino how the new baby is doing!). Hot cider and cookies after the voyage: Song sheets will also be provided. Bring your family, friends and relatives and cruise out to the floating Christmas tree. For reservations and details, call the Boating Center at 238-2196.

EFFECTS OF A RAIN: Trash is not the only problem created by urban runoff. When 2.16 inches of rain fell between October 17th and 20th, Alameda County quite naturally kept out the high tides (to prevent flooding). When this happens, the Lake stratifies (forms separate layers of fresh water on top and salt water on the bottom). Because the bottom water does not drain out well and is not replenished by high tides, it loses oxygen. Water quality monitors placed by the Regional Water Quality Control Board in October documented this problem. For example, during a two week period, the median oxygen level at the bottom, mid-Lake station was 1.06 mg/L, which is not enough to sustain life. There was more oxygen at the surface however, and hopefully an aeration mixing system can be installed to prevent such problems in the future. Assuming the City can arrange for its installation, a temporary, pilot mixing system is scheduled for testing during the spring of next year.

The Lake Merritt Institute is sponsored and supported by the Oakland Public Works Agency and members like you.