

The Lake Merritt Institute

A COMMUNITY BASED, NON-PROFIT CORPORATION

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VOLUME XIX

"TIDINGS" – DECEMBER, 2014

ISSUE XII

"Tidings" is an editorial newsletter. Opinions expressed are not necessarily those of the City of Oakland.

INVERTEBRATES? IN LAKE MERRITT? It's a dirty little secret (no wait, a clean secret) that nudibranchs live in our tidal lagoon. What, you don't believe it? Well here is the proof, found by a five year old budding naturalist and his dad on an expedition to Lake by the channel inlet/outlet.



These creatures are most likely to survive near the channel inlet where low oxygen is less of a problem, pollutants from storm drains are minimized and tidal flow from the bay is greatest. In fact, divers cleaning the pump station in the channel recently recorded native oysters growing on the grates. In recent years, oysters were only found attached to aeration devices (a fountain and an aeration bubbler) where oxygen levels were higher.

CHRISTMAS REVELS WELCOME YULE: Once again the California Revels will be making merry at the Scottish Rite Temple across from the Lake. This year's Revels opens in the in 1930s Appalachia then travels westward through the bayous of Louisiana toward the Pacific coast. It's a crazy quilt of many colors creating the fabric of the holiday traditions we still share. Filled with Cajun music, Appalachian clogging, old folk tales and holiday rituals that some of us still remember being passed down from parents or

grandparents, the 2014 Christmas Revels will see a return to familiar American carols and folksongs, toe-tapping music and of course, plenty of laughter. With Rene Collins, Kevin Carr, Tristan Cunningham, James Galileo, Shira Kammen and Euphonia. Directed by David Parr.



The spirits of Haddon Hall.

David Bazemore

Revels is a family-friendly production sure to please all age groups. Celebrate the old winter traditions that join us together in humanity and community. Please join them to welcome the Yuletide. Dec 12th-21st. Fridays at 8:00pm; two shows on Saturdays and Sundays at 1:00pm & 5:00pm.

RBC WEALTH MANAGEMENT DONATION: Volunteers from this wonderful Canadian bank recently volunteered to clean Lake Merritt, and then donated \$500 (with more to come) to the Institute as part of their Blue Water Project. Since their incorporation as a Canadian chartered bank in 1869, RBC has grown to become one of North America's leading diversified financial services companies providing banking, wealth management, insurance and capital markets services on a global basis (and volunteering on a local basis).



CLIMATE CORNER: Republicans, Democrats; there is no need to fight over the proposed EPA coal regulations. There is a better way: A better way to create jobs, reduce air and water pollution, and a better way that you can both support.

Simply charge companies such as Peabody Coal and Shell Oil a fee on fuel at the point of origin only (at the coal mine, oil well, or shipping port). Note that this would not be collected at the gas pump or cash register, and it would not come from us, only from companies that bring oil, coal, and natural gas out of the ground.

Where would the money go? Divide all of it up equally among all US citizens and send it out in a monthly dividend check. Because no money goes to the government, it is a fee, not a tax (The Supreme Court has described a tax as an enforced contribution to provide for the support of government). Since this money would not go to any government, it is a fee, not a tax.

Both the fee and the dividend would increase annually. For almost all of us, the dividend would more than offset price increases, compensating for any increases at the gas pump (which go up and down any way). In fact, 80% of Americans would be better off. After a few years, a family of four would receive a monthly check of a few hundred dollars. That will provide a tremendous stimulus to the economy and create jobs while the fee would gradually reduce pollution from dirty coal, oil, and fracking. Energy companies like it because it reduces uncertainty in the market place. Conservatives like it because it stimulates the economy and lets the free, competitive market decide which fuel is best because we all have a choice on where to spend the dividend, and there is no complicated cap, trade, or regulations.

This proposal (now included in several bills being considered by Congress) is called the Carbon Fee and Dividend as supported by the Citizens' Climate Lobby. There is no better way to bring our two political parties together and avoid a costly fight over EPA regulations. You don't even have to believe in climate change to support this. It is a simple way to use the economy to create jobs and reduce pollution.

If we cannot agree on how to slow the use of fossil fuels, there will be more maps like this, only worse.



The dots on this image represent weather stations that experienced a heat record (top=daytime; bottom=overnight) between June and August 2011—almost perfectly covering the entire United States. 2012 was even hotter: the hottest year ever recorded for the U.S. Image credit: ClimateWatch/NOAA. (Editors note: So far, 2014 is even hotter).

NO CALENDARS THIS YEAR: A shortage of funds due to \$1,800 in higher rent during the seven months that the boating center office is closed due to construction, and other fountain expenses, prevent production and mailing of a Lake Merritt calendar for 2015. We apologize for any inconvenience to those who have counted on them in the past (but then again, not everybody wanted one).

BIRD COLUMN: Thankfulness Before Thanksgiving at Lake Merritt.

The weather was clear and warm, and the determination of the Golden Gate Audubon trip leaders to meet on the *4th* Wednesday even when right before a holiday paid off - a near-record crowd of 30-35 people joined us to celebrate the winter migration, now in full swing. We had grand views of almost all the usual suspects, including a wonderful session in front of the nature center with both Greater and Lesser Scaup and Canvasbacks milling around at our feet pursuing a few handfuls of grain. They were close enough to see the field marks on the bills (big black triangle on the end of the bill, narrow black nail, sweeping black beak like a ski jump), and to watch the birds swimming under water.

Over in Lakeside Park, we found the Magic Tree near Children's Fairyland - the tree that was being visited by the mixed flock of chickadees, titmice, a couple of warblers, and a woodpecker at the time we got to it, so we could stand and watch the birds going about their business and popping from branch to root and back.

Wound our way back through the garden, enjoying a steady stream of hummingbirds, and so back to Bellevue near the globe cage, having seen (or heard) a total of 40 species for another in the endless string of lovely days around Lake Merritt.

TURN UNCLE SAM INTO SANTA CLAUS: It's that time of year again; time to reduce tax burdens by donating to your favorite nonprofit (which we hope is The Lake Merritt Institute). We are a 501 (C)(3), charitable corporation and donations are deductible to the fullest extent of the law. See below for our address.

Make a donation to the Institute, but don't put it in the Lake or drop it down the chimney.



RECENT SCENES FROM THE LAKE



The Migrants are coming, the migrants are coming!

Foreign Goldeneye ducks were seen at the Lake this week, having evaded the border crossing guards again. Although President Obama is poised to grant them immunity, Boehner the goose urged their deportation, saying they will remove jobs and fish that should only be for American birds.

Thousands of such birds are expected to arrive in the next few weeks, creating quite a flap of feathers.

Should they be allowed to stay? Come on down to the Lake Chalet, have some Christmas cheer and contemplate their plight.

This edition of "Tidings" was published entirely with private funding donated to the Lake Merritt Institute, and not with funds from the City of Oakland. To contribute to the Institute, use PayPal at our website or send a check to: The Lake Merritt Institute, 568 Bellevue Avenue, Oakland, CA 94610. Mail will go to a P.O. box, but it is going through.