



THE TIDINGS

THE LAKE MERRITT INSTITUTE

A COMMUNITY BASED, NON-PROFIT CORPORATION, ESTABLISHED 1995

568 Bellevue Avenue, Oakland, CA 94610; (510) 238-2290; "lmi@netwiz.net"; "lakemerrittinstitute.org"

VOLUME XX

DECEMBER, 2015

ISSUE XII

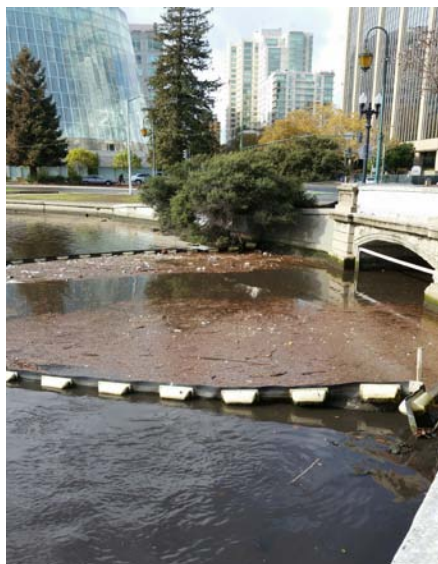
"The Tidings" is an editorial newsletter. Opinions expressed are not necessarily those of the City of Oakland.



FROM THE EDITOR: Dear Readers, Happy holidays. May the season fill your homes with joy, your hearts with love, and your lives with laughter.

I am honored to have been asked to take over the writing of the "The Tidings". As simple introduction, I was raised in Palo Alto and as a high school student in the late 60's, began crushing cans in the city's first recycling center. I later "defected" to UCB where I earned an AB degree in Geography; specializing in Urban-Sociology and Economics (AB 1975); and have remained in the beautiful East Bay ever since. I love all things in nature, and natural and earth sciences – as well as have been known to talk to the animals (and they answer!).

"The Tidings" will continue to feature Dr. Bailey's excellent "Climate Corner" column, Hilary Powers' fine "Bird Column", monthly reports, and word of upcoming events. Articles on the natural and anthropological history of Lake Merritt and its surrounding drainage basins will also be included. All ideas, comments, and contributed articles are welcome. Please feel free to contact me directly: rgperman@gmail.com.



CALLING ALL VOLUNTEERS – ARISE, ARISE !!! - The rainy season is here, or hopefully fast-approaching. So, this is the time of year that the rains flush out the sadly high volume of street litter that has been gathering on roadways and in storm sewers during the summer and fall months...and dutifully deliver it all to the lake!

Two arms! Two arms! Calling all volunteers with two arms (or even just one good arm is OK)! We will need extra helpers to assist us in keeping our beautiful lake in its natural, pristine condition.

Therefore, encourage your friends show their mettle by logging onto the LMI website and by joining our medal winning group.

Glen Echo Arm debris catch basin (near Harrison and Grand Ave.)
Photo by Chris Bailey, Co-Director LMI

CLIMATE CORNER – By Dr. Richard Bailey - In the Bay Area, there is not much doubt that the climate is warming, humans are the cause, and the impacts will be very costly. The recent attendance of many thousands at climate rallies in Oakland attest to that, as do the positions of our elected officials, new articles, the drought, the crab ban, etc. So it boils down to: **What to do about it?** AB 32 programs are helping, but California cannot do it alone, and are our efforts enough? It is true that renewable energy use is growing, but how do society's efforts compare to effectively solving the task? How do Oakland's efforts compare to what needs to be done to avoid the need to build sea walls to protect the airport, Jack London Square, and other low lying places?

Our effort, I fear, is not only inadequate, but pales in comparison to other places where funds are going. Cases in point can be found every day in the business section of any major newspaper: Millions proposed for a new Raiders stadium (I thought they already had one that we are still paying for), 500 million for Lyft, 35.5 million for fitness apparel, 200 million for biology software startups, and the list goes on. True, many of these are worthy ventures. But will the millionaires and billionaires be around to fund disaster relief when the next climate catastrophe hits (like Sandy, Katrina, drought in the Central Valley, raging fires, collapse of fisheries, or severe water shortages)? Or will costs be on the backs of city and state taxpayers? Needed is a public effort on par with what America spends for less critical endeavors. Needed is an effort like we mounted in World War II because given the rate of methane release from planetary permafrost, the stakes for civilization are now greater. Needed is bold leadership to spend billions not only for renewable energy, but also for a new grid, efficiency for everyone, and yes, even ways to remove greenhouse gases from our atmosphere. These are efforts that will reduce future climate costs, and they should be funded that way. 🌍

GONDOLAS IN BOTH THE LAKE AND THE SCOTTISH RITE – The California Revels, Oakland's holiday musical theater group is back once again with “The Christmas Revels 30th; *A Venetian Masque*”.

The performance portrays the end of 1620 when a troupe of ragged Commedia dell'Arte players arrive in Venice. They are fleeing a less-than-successful European tour and are hoping for an upturn in their fortunes. The Doge, Antonio Priuli, is preparing an elaborate festival to celebrate the new year. It is to feature the finest of elegant Renaissance music and courtly masque drama as well as guest performers invited from around the Mediterranean. There is no place in his plans for the low comedy of the players. Relying on their wit and ingenuity, the Comedians manage to infiltrate the festivities, and before long the Most Serene Republic of Venice is reduced to comic chaos. The show brings together high and low art with vibrant costuming, multiple masks and even a gondola race as audience and performers join together in an uproarious Revels celebration of the turning of the year. Featured performers include Jeff Raz and Robert Sicular, last year's female lead, Tristan Cunningham, newcomer Slater Penney, and Revels regulars Shira Kammen, James Galileo and Brass West. Website: http://californiarevels.org/2015_christmas-revels



PERFORMANCES: Scottish Rite Theater, 1547 Lakeside Dr.
December 11th-13th, and 18th-20th
Fridays at 8pm, Saturdays & Sundays 1pm & 5pm 🌍

BIRD COLUMN: Under the Magic Tree at Lake Merritt – By Hilary Powers



The lake was its usual active self, but the big discovery of the 4th-Wednesday Golden Gate Audubon bird walk was the Magic Tree -- the one tree in Lakeside Park where the roving flock of little birds happens to be at the moment the group arrives. (If you don't find The Tree, you can spend a lot of time wandering around the park looking at empty branches....) Anyway, we saw too many Yellow-rumped Warblers (the streaky gray little birds affectionately known as Butter Butts; above, right) to count, plus three brilliant yellow Townsend's Warblers with their dashing burglar masks and a jauntily crested Oak Titmouse (above, left) all in one place, plus some White-crowned Sparrows, a couple of dust-brown California Towhees, and a robin, and we heard a Nuttall's Woodpecker give its police-whistle flying call.



Almost all the lake's winter regulars were back, including lots of Common Goldeneyes (dashing black and white ducks with a full moon on each cheek) but, sadly, none of the rarer Barrow's variety (notable for crescent moons instead of full). Both types of scaup (black heads and gray backs; wings mostly not yet white; at left), four kinds of grebes (including one of the big long-necked Western Grebes side by side with a Horned Grebe looking like its Mini-Me), Canvasbacks (mostly auburn-headed males), and a host of others too numerous to list with the number of

errands your correspondent needs to run this day-before-Thanksgiving.

Forty species all told, on the sort of crisp and cool sunny day that Lake Merritt is best at providing....



WELCOME, EMMANUEL – Please welcome LMI's new Clean Lake Supervisor Emmanuel Entes. Entes is a local guy, born in Hayward, raised in Oakland, and now living in Berkeley. He has always enjoyed working in the community, working with youths, and helping to make a difference. With the help of two classmates he founded the organization "Recycle Trash Assoc.". He considers himself an outdoorsman and enjoys camping, with Lake Comanche at the base of the California foothills as one of his favorites. With LMI, he enjoys working with our volunteers and is already showing himself to be a valuable member of the LMI team.

LAKE MERRITT SURF ‘N’ TURF - Remarkably, two weeks ago, during a routine cleaning of the 7th Street Pump Station intake vault and grills, one of a team of scuba divers doing the work in what was almost zero visibility, felt something bump into his hand. An instant grab (brave fellow!) and quick trip to the surface revealed that he had captured a juvenile lobster.



This is the first lobster found in the lake and definitely most unusual. The California spiny lobster is normally found in parts of the Gulf of California, and along the Pacific coast the length of the Baja California peninsula, extending as far north as about San Luis Obispo Bay. There have been rare finds the Monterey Bay, but the water there is normally too cold for the lobster to breed. Thus, it is generally believed that any adult found farther north arrived as a larva during El Niño years. Thus, our little “Spiny” could be considered a local El Niño baby. Had Spiny not been removed before the pumps were reactivated, he surely would have been ingested. Instead Spiny was returned to the lake in an area perfect for lobster “kids”: water of about 10 feet in depth and well protected by aquatic plant cover. Hopefully he will not end up as a dish at the Lake Chalet restaurant. 🍷

THANK YOU GIRL SCOUTS OF NORTHERN CALIFORNIA! – On Sunday, November 8th, LMI was blessed to have Lake Merritt included in the Girl Scout’s event “Amazing Race Edition”. Barb Herrera, Program Director for the event, reported that Girl Scouts from all over Northern California participated, comprising 19 teams, totaling 77 girls and 25 adults. The “Race” went to 6 counties and 20 cities in the Bay Area during the weekend, including Lake Merritt where teams had to collect at least 10 pounds of trash. The teams were instructed to go to the LMI boxes at both the Trestle Glen and Glen Echo Arms, and were given clues to the needed lock combinations to open the boxes. Once the combination lock puzzles were solved, they used LMI nets, trash bags, and gloves, along with a few of their own supplies to start collecting. The weirdest item pulled from the lake was a large piece of carpet weighing in at over 100 pounds. Nice work! 🍷



THUMB YOUR NOSE AT THE TAX MAN - It’s that time again; income taxes will soon be due. But if you donate to the Lake Merritt Institute, a 501(c)(3) non-profit corporation, you can lower the amount you owe. Who would you rather pay, the Institute that takes care of your Lake, or the IRS? Contributions are deductible to the fullest extent of the law, and will be used to further the mission of the Institute, including coordination of volunteers to remove trash, maintenance of the aeration fountains, providing educational presentations, support for improvement projects, our monthly newsletter, website, and bulletin boards. 🍷

Remember: Uncle Sam wants you - to pay taxes!

This edition of “The Tidings” was published entirely with private funding donated to the Lake Merritt Institute (LMI), and not with funds from the City of Oakland. To contribute to LMI, use PayPal at our website or send a check: Lake Merritt Institute, 568 Bellevue Ave., Oakland, CA 94610. LMI is a California State non-profit corporation; IRS Code 501(c)(3): EIN 94-3214160