

# THE TIDINGS



**LAKE MERRITT INSTITUTE**

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(Photo: Brian Nobel)

**NOVEMBER WEATHER** – So as not to disappoint, the month of November presented the Bay Area with the usual spectacularly beautiful fall weather. During the many balmy days, the lunch hours of the shores of the lake were occupied by crowds of local residents and office workers, many perching very close alongside of Lake Merritt’s wonderful winged denizens, all enjoying the glorious sun, sky, and over-all natural beauty of the jewel that Lake Merritt makes its self right here in the middle of our fine and up-coming city. The weekends drew even larger crowds with parked cars clogging surrounding parking lots and local streets. It was even hard for our Brown Pelicans to find parking in the Brown Pelican lot! Protester



(Photo: East Bay Express)

**PROTESTORS LINK HANDS AROUND LAKE MERRITT** - On Sunday November 6<sup>th</sup>, following the national election for America’s next president, and a remarkable full week of protest following announcement of the results, approximately 5,000 to 10,000 protestors (as estimated by the staff of the East Bay Express) peacefully linked hands and encircled the entire 3.4 mile circumference of the lake to protest Trump and the intensifying climate of hate and fear that his presidency is feared to generate.

The protest, named “Hands Across Lake Merritt”, appeared to be a spontaneous act of Oakland citizens. Further, most all protestors appeared to be determined to show that they will only support continuing progress towards equal justice, and kind and mutual respect toward all of the Bay Area’s many diverse cultures.

During the protest, the bird life at Lake Merritt seemed to be reminding, “Keep calm, stay together, work hard, and things will be alright”  **LOVE YOUR LAKE & LOVE YOUR FELLOW HUMANKIND**

## LAKE MERRITT INSTITUTE'S TOP "TUESDAY A-TEAM" VOLUNTEERS RECOGNIZED

Last Friday the 16<sup>th</sup> the Lake Merritt Institute hosted a reception of drinks and appetizers at the Lake Chalet Restaurant to recognize and thank the many years of loyal service provided by a key group of LMI volunteers. Further, thanks to The Chalet restaurant's general manager, Nichos Tzikas, LMI was able to celebrate at The Chalet without taking too big of a hit to its operational budget. Generous, Mr. Tzikas. Thank you!

(Left to right: Della Mundy, Tom Swain, Miriam Valesco, Ray Perman, and Janet Nobel; not pictured: Susan Campodonico)

That same evening, Oakland's Christmas Revels hosted the LMI by providing complimentary tickets to their Friday performance of "A Revels Christmas in Wales". The show was just excellent and all enjoyed the good holiday cheer.

In general, the "Tuesday A-Team" is a dedicated group of, retired professionals committed to helping care for the lake by reporting to the LMI office every Tuesday of the week at 10:30 AM and working until about 12:00 PM (Easy working hours!). The day starts with a meeting to review where there seems to be the most loose garbage, odd items, any abandoned turtles, dead wildlife, tossed syringes, etc.. (Some specific weeks just involve folding and stuffing LMI mailings, etc.). Then the group splits up into teams to go to the appropriate "U-Clean it Box" (4 are strategically located around the lake) from where they dawn their yellow safety vests and black rubber safety gloves, prepare their rolling trash cans, and select their greatest weapons of lake cleanliness: long pole nets. While cleaning, the volunteers entertain each other with light banter, great jokes, and the camaraderie that develops from their shared love of Lake Merritt. Come join the "Tuesday A-Team Volunteers". Contact LMI. Bask in the warm glow. 🌞



**EXPLAINING PRECIPITATION TO CHILDREN** – One of the best ways to explain precipitation to the children in your life is to use the "magic bucket" analogy.

First, explain that all atmospheres carry some water vapor. You just can't see the water, as it is in the gaseous form. Then explain that the capacity/ability for an air-mass to carry water is based upon air's temperature: the warmer the air, the more moisture it can carry; the colder the air, the less. Thus, when the air warms, the magic bucket grows larger; when the air cools, the magic bucket grows smaller.

Allow a given volume of air to evaporate and absorb half of the amount of water vapor that it could potentially carry and the magic bucket will be half full (expressed by meteorologists as having a relative humidity (RH) of 50%). Warm the same volume of air and the magic bucket will become larger. However, as it will be holding the same volume of water, the bucket may now only be one quarter full (with an RH=25%). Now cool the air way down so the magic bucket will shrink until it is perhaps three-quarters full (perhaps an RH=75%). No cool the air down further until the bucket shrinks even more and is now filled to the rim (RH=100%). Don't spill !!! The air at this temperature is fully saturate. This occurs at the temperature meteorologists refer to as the "dew point". Hang on! Cool the air further again and the magic bucket will shrink even further, and now the water will begin to spill over the rim. Ah – precipitation!

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So what are the mechanisms for cooling a volume of air until you have precipitation? Wind can blow it across the land to an area of lower temperature. Wind can also blow it against a mountain and up its side to elevations of colder temperature. Most precipitation in the Bay Area comes from frontal activity. In a warm front, warm air runs up against a much more dense and heavy body of cold air, causing the warm air to push its way upward and onto the cold air, climbing ever higher to elevations of cooler temperature. In a cold front a relatively fast moving, lava-like flow of high density cold

air shovels in underneath the existing warm air mass and rapidly elevates it to altitudes of cooler temperatures. The highest and steepest rate of elevation is usually very close to the leading edge of the flow. Thus lines of magic buckets form along the leading edge. Hence, cold fronts tend to cause the most severe episodes of precipitation – rain by the magic buckets full! 🌧️



## **TWO MERGANSER DAY AT LAKE**

**MERRITT – Hilary Powers** – November's 4th-Wednesday Golden Gate Audubon walk drew a near-record of 25 participants, enjoying brilliant sun after a rainy dawn and celebrating the return of most of the winter migrants. The high-point - while scanning to re-find a Red-breasted Merganser (an uncommon sighting at the lake) - was the discovery of a female Hooded Merganser (something seen only twice on these walks since 2009). We finally had good looks at three or four of the Red-breasted, but only the one Hoodie, and she spent most of her time cruising in meat-loaf mode, with her beak buried in her shoulder feathers and her beautiful gold-auburn crest folded but still flaring along her neck.

(Photo: KuwaitBirds. Org)



The total species count jumped to 45, up almost 10 from October, even though we missed both large grebes, and we didn't see even a single robin. Three pairs of Barrow's Goldeneyes (drakes black and white with a crescent marking on the face) were swimming around the islands and in the area below the Nature Center, and there were almost as many Common Goldeneyes (ditto, except with a full moon on the face) as scaup. That was partly due to a lack of scaup – the population seemed way down - but even a small population of scaup amounts to a lot of birds on the lake.

(Photo: Wikipedia)

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The egrets and the herons were out in force- uncountable Snowy and Great Egrets, two Great Blue Herons (one adult and one streaky-breasted juvenile), several Black-crowned

Night-Herons, and one lone Green Heron (the latter being harassed by a party of crows, apparently because they hadn't found a raptor to torment). Hank-the-rescue-pelican had three visitors left, and several Brown Pelicans were in the Fairyland arm of the lake with a fishing flotilla of 200 or 300 young Double-crested Cormorants.



We skunked on woodpeckers, and the only two warblers we saw were both butter-butts (Yellow-rumped Warblers). Lots of sparrows, mostly White-crowned. The best sighting in the park was at the flat-rock fountain in the Sensory Garden, where several male House Finches and Lesser Goldfinches (respectively bright red and lemon yellow) were bathing, shining like holiday ornaments. It clouded over briefly around mid-morning and a few drops of rain fell, but that didn't dampen anyone's spirits or keep it from being yet another wonderful day at Lake Merritt, where every day is a good day. 🌧️

## HAPPENINGS AROUND THE LAKE -

**AUDUBON BIRDWALKS AT THE LAKE:** Join bird expert Hilary Powers any fourth Wednesday of the month for a free "Birdwalk" at the lake. Muster at the geodesic bird cage near the Nature Center at 9:30 for what are always fascinating introductions to lake birdlife.

**CAMRON-STANFORD HOUSE:** "Slough, Cesspool, City Jewel" Exhibit. See: <http://www.cshouse.org/>

**OAKLAND HERITAGE ALLIANCE:** Lectures/Tours: Two interesting events this December. See: [www.oaklandheritage.org/](http://www.oaklandheritage.org/)

**OMCA (Oakland Museum of California):** "Bees: Tiny Insect; Big Impact"; through June 2017. See: <http://museumca.org/>

**EDITOR: Ray Perman** - "The Tidings" is published by the Lake Merritt Institute (LMI) for the purpose of publicizing the work of the organization, as well as providing articles of interest regarding the environment, and natural and anthropological history of Lake Merritt, and its surroundings. Comments and contributed articles are welcome. Please feel free to contact me directly: ["rgperman@gmail.com"](mailto:rgperman@gmail.com) 📧

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