CREEK TO BAY DAY – SEPTEMBER 15TH

The Lake Merritt Institute will host its annual lake clean-up on Creek to Bay Day, September 15th under the direction of Director James Robinson, LMI staff and Volunteers. This event is part of the California and International Coastal Cleanup Day, the largest volunteer day in California and the world. In 2014, worldwide 560,000 volunteers in 91 countries removed over 16 million pounds of trash along 13,000 miles of beaches and inland waterways. Be a part of it! LOVE YOUR LAKE!

9:00 a.m. Sign in at the Lake Merritt Boating Center at 568 Bellevue Ave in Lakeshore Park.

*Orientation & Review safety rules.*

Join a work party and get the right tools - **RETURN WHEN YOU’RE DONE!

9:00-12:00 Pile trash in plastic bags and leave by path so it can be picked up by LMI and counted.

12:00 noon Wrap Up and help LMI put things away.

**RETURN GLOVES, TOOLS AND NETS!

Send a clearly identified photo of your group to The Tidings Editor (ktnoon@aol.com)

Volunteer Monitors find E. coli counts down in July from winter highs

The Lake Merritt E.P.A. Citizen Science monitoring team completed the first of 5 weekly water tests for E. coli in the dry season. During the rainy season, E. coli counts exceeded the E.P.A. standards at nearly all of 12 sampling sites chosen along the shores of the lake and channel (see map and data in digital issue). Lower counts occurred near the channel where the salinity was higher. The findings were presented by Rose Foundation New Voices Are Rising interns at a G.L.O.B. E. Pacific Science Symposium in April.

LMI IN JULY: 1,920 lbs. of trash were removed from the lake in July totaling 17,380 pounds total so far in 2018! LMI Director James Robinson and LMI Staff hosted 124 volunteers, made 2 educational presentations. (0.00” rain recorded LMI rain gauge)
At the end of July, students from St. Paul’s Episcopal Middle School repeated the tests at the same shore sites and at 5 sites in the middle of the lake where recreation boating takes place. All of the mid-lake samples and half of the shore samples had *E. coli* counts below the E.P.A. limit for recreational use. High counts occurred near major storm drain outfalls including at Glen Echo Creek where a contamination warning is posted.

People ask if increased levels of bacteria were detected near homeless encampments. They were not. This does not mean that sanitation is not an important need in those areas. Human waste contamination could occur locally in the water and on the shore. Lake Merritt’s water moves with tides and currents resulting in mixing over a few hours or days. Sunlight and high salinity kill *E. coli*. We did not test for salt-water friendly bacteria like *Enterococcus*. 
Citizen Monitoring Results – Wet Season Feb 21-Mar 21

The Standard for recreational waters is a geometric mean of 125 E.coli/100mL and ~ 400 E.coli /1 sample

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Station Location</th>
<th>19 St.</th>
<th>20 St.</th>
<th>21 St.</th>
<th>Glen Echo Br.</th>
<th>Glen Echo L.</th>
<th>Bandstand</th>
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<tr>
<td>E. coli (2/21/18)</td>
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<td>4100</td>
<td>1800</td>
<td>9800</td>
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<td>E.coli (3/1/18)</td>
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<td>130</td>
<td>4900</td>
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**Geometric Mean E. coli**

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<th>Bandstand</th>
<th>Dock</th>
<th>RNC-Out</th>
<th>TG inside</th>
<th>18 St.</th>
<th>1200 Lakeside</th>
<th>Laney</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>E. coli (2/21/18)</td>
<td>480</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>620</td>
<td>24000</td>
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<td>E.coli (3/1/18)</td>
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<td>&gt;2500</td>
<td>&gt;16000</td>
<td>&lt;230</td>
<td>&lt;190</td>
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Dry Season – July 26th & 30th, 2018 (4 more sampling dates to go).

The single-day sample draft protocol standard for E.coli in recreational waters is 320 E.coli/100mL.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sample Site</th>
<th>DATE</th>
<th>E. coli/100mL</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bandstand</td>
<td>7/30/18</td>
<td>880</td>
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<tr>
<td>LMBC dock</td>
<td>7/30/18</td>
<td>10</td>
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<tr>
<td>RNC Outlook</td>
<td>7/30/18</td>
<td>90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TG inside</td>
<td>7/30/18</td>
<td>24000</td>
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<tr>
<td>18th St</td>
<td>7/30/18</td>
<td>50</td>
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<tr>
<td>1200 Lakeside Sta 17</td>
<td>7/30/18</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20th St Outfall</td>
<td>7/30/18</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21st St Outfall</td>
<td>7/30/18</td>
<td>1800</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GE Creek Bridge</td>
<td>7/30/18</td>
<td>24000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GE Creek Lake side</td>
<td>7/30/18</td>
<td>20000</td>
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<tr>
<td>19th St. Dock</td>
<td>7/30/18</td>
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<td>Sta 17</td>
<td>7/29/18</td>
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<td>7/29/18</td>
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Conversation Overheard:
“Hey, folks, besides the garbage can and the electric scooter, do you know what that big stainless steel object is under the scooter? Either it’s a big BBQ with the legs missing, or we can now say that ‘they throw everything into Lake Merritt, including the kitchen sink!’

Always something new at (and in) Lake Merritt!”

Replies DOC BAILEY: “We had a kitchen sink before, and a bowling ball, and an assault rifle, etc. etc. Never a dull moment. Keep track of all the items; someday it will be a modern day archaeological record.”

......Nothing new under the scum, it seems. Thank you to LMI Staff & Volunteers who remove it all.

A Destructive Tradition Must Stop-- Feeding the birds can kill them.

Speaking of cleaning the lake, here is a fond childhood memory of many Oaklanders that should become history: feeding the birds at Lake Merritt.

Feeding the wildlife can cause overpopulation of certain species and disruption of ecological relationships. Uneaten bread and other foods can cause water pollution and the growth of bacteria harmful to birds such as avian botulism. Artificial feeding of wild birds and mammals is expressly prohibited by Dept. of Fish and Wildlife regulation section 251.1 of Title 14 of the Cal. Code of Regulations.

THE PROBLEM:

Staged bird feeding in the 1930’s. A man feeds pigeons in 2007. 2018 - a large bag of rice is opened -most ending up in the lake.

THE SOLUTION?
At the July Measure DD Coalition meeting, Project Manager Lesley Estes unveiled prototypes of new signage to be installed near the nature center at Lake Merritt to discourage the practice. LMI applauds the move and would like to see the simpler and more direct signs posted. But, perhaps the best approach is to stop the practice the same way it was started in the 1930’s – through appropriate naturalist programs and displays at the Rotary Nature Center (still closed ☹). Bringing a 21st century understanding of conservation and stewardship, the nature center can engage and educate the public. People walk by signs, but they respond to inviting naturalists, docents and modern displays. A polluted lake costs Oakland in tourism, public health and possible fines. Opening the nature center would be a cost-effective investment.

THANK YOU TO OUR JULY VOLUNTEERS! Volunteer groups in July included International Bird Rescue, Holy Names High School and Kaiser Permanente, Our U-Clean-It self-organized teams, and LMI A-TEAM regulars. We appreciate your efforts and community spirit.

ROTARY NATURE CENTER UPDATE:

LOVE YOUR LAKE!.......☺
Team Oakland North with Mike Perlmutter, Oakland Public Works.

Whiteboard designed by Adrian Cotter for the students highlights the role of pollinators in the garden.

Team Oakland students removed several bags of Bermuda grass and planted native pollinator-friendly plants in the empty and overgrown troughs. Mike showed them how to plant the plants that were donated by the Garden Center.

Comments from two Tidings readers: “Behind the windows of the Closed Rotary Nature Center remain lovely posters- in several languages announcing a long-past meeting in January 2018 to determine the mission, repair and re-opening of the RNC. These should be replaced this week and regularly with updates on what is happening with regard to the City of Oakland’s keeping this building closed “Until Further Notice.””

“The Rotary Nature Center is a valuable scientific resource for all Oaklanders, and I’d like to see it reopen for the benefit of the scientific community and the general public as soon as possible.” LMI agrees.

LOVE YOUR LAKE!........

September 15th, there will be an Adopt-a-Spot Clean-up at the RNC from 9 am-1 pm. hosted by The Community for Lake Merritt
Lively Summer’s Day at Lake Merritt  By Hilary Powers – Golden Gate Audubon Society

Nineteen happy birders and a raccoon enjoyed perfect – clear and not hot – weather for the July 4th-Wednesday Golden Gate Audubon walk. The Double-crested Cormorants had well and truly finished with their nests for the season (a couple of months earlier than in recent years), but many of them were still fishing the lake and sunning themselves on the floats. Half a dozen American White Pelicans joined them in pursuit of fish, and what might have been a family of Brown Pelicans (a couple of white-headed adults and several mousy juveniles) monopolized the far corner of the floats.

A moderate few hundred molt migration Canada Geese wandered the lawns and the lake surface, and we watched a group of half a dozen or so stroll up one of the concrete ramps built onto the wall to get from the water to the grass – a great convenience since they still couldn’t fly. They and a lot of Mallards in eclipse plumage (no green heads, among other differences) and various states of mongrelization (from the relatively tiny wild types through larger and larger birds with stranger and stranger markings, ranging up to a pure white barnyard ducky) accounted for almost all of the web-footed population, joined by a couple of early American Coots and a few Pied-billed Grebes.

Snowy Egrets fished or sat on the islands (evoking standard meep #101: WHY won’t they come back and nest here?), and we had one Great Egret – the first seen on the walk since last October – plus a Great Blue Heron and a few Black-crowned Night-Herons. No Green Heron, unfortunately, but the raccoon was circling the near island on the heron’s favorite water-line rocks.

A Forster’s Tern (first since last May, and the first in July since 2015) patrolled the lake, and four species of swallows (Barn, Tree, Violet-green, and Northern Rough-winged – also unusual for July both for numbers and variety) did the same for the lawns. In the park and garden we had most of the usual suspects (titmice, chickadees, robins, juncos), but surprisingly no Bushtits. Western Bluebirds of all ages crowded the stretch of lawn along Bellevue toward El Embarcadero, and another pair of adults was working the bowling green near Children’s Fairyland.

But the runaway favorite sighting of the day was the pair of Brown Creepers that were working the catalpa trees across Bellevue from the Garden Center building. We’d stopped there to admire the horizontal rows of holes left by sapsuckers in seasons past – those trees look like someone has tried to perforate their trunks like rolls of tickets, so they make a nice shady spot to stop and chat about natural history even in months when the hole-makers are not just unlikely but totally implausible. Then someone said, “Is that? Nooo....” – and there was a palm-sized brown bird with a long curved bill walking straight up the bark, and (what joy!) another one a little farther up on another trunk. Long, satisfying looks, even more welcome than the ones in June for coming almost at the end of the walk when it had begun to seem as though we’d seen all there was to see.
Not totally the end – the garden itself had treats to offer, including House Finches and a Lesser Goldfinch on the fountain rock – but nonetheless a fitting climax to a 33-species day at Lake Merritt, where even in high summer every day is a good day....

***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 a.m. for what are always fascinating introductions to lake birdlife.***

**CLIMATE CORNER: Invest in the Future**
A Guest editorial by Dr. Richard Bailey

As the joke goes: Jesus saves, but Moses, he is the wise one. Moses invests. We all know investments are wise, and most of us do so, but what is the best thing to invest in?

I write here today not of financial investments, but of those that will not only help insure our future, and also the future of everyone alive today, and those now being born, everywhere on planet Earth.

Wow. How can one individual do that, and make a difference? Consider what is most important, and how you can influence it. Is it your retirement account? Your family, home or friends? The environment? The Climate? Or, given the perilous times we live in, is it the future of democracy in the United States and elsewhere? Are these things related? Of course they are. Can you influence one while simultaneously influencing others? Yes. Yes you can.

Getting back to the question of what is most important, a long term view must be taken if we are to truly be an agent of change. Today, in November, next year, and onward to 2020, environmental justice, the housing supply far too many people, economic wellbeing for the lower class, and our climate are all threatened. Given the recent kidnapping of migrant children, policies favoring the super wealthy, curtailment of environmental regulations, impairment of our elections by foreign powers, and the loss of even common decency by some in public office, it can be argued that your investments should be made in our political future. This can, and must be done by more than just two votes in four years. That is what got us into this mess in the first place. To really make a difference, to bring about the change you want to see, financial pressure by millions of people must be brought to bear in the political arena. But what if, as for many in the Bay Area, your members of Congress already agree with you? The answer is to support candidates in other areas, especially where there is the greatest possibility for change. If enough people, in the Bay Area, and every other state, propel someone into office that will fight climate change, close the gap between the super wealthy and everyone else, and prevent the abuses of civil rights, political change can happen in 2 – 4 years. Political will is a renewable resource.

While it is highly possible to successfully invest in such short term political change, what about climate change?

Unfortunately, the problems of wild fires, drought, floods, sea level rise, water shortages, and the related world problems of famine, diseases, mass migration, and war manifest themselves on much, much longer times scales. Even if all carbon emissions were to magically cease today, carbon in the air, and heat now stored in the oceans would insure centuries of future warming and sea level rise of many meters. If you don’t believe that, tell me how to re-freeze the planetary ice caps, or cool the ocean, or take so much carbon from the air that levels drop from todays 411 to 350. Our planet is large, and while technology can help slow climate change, investing in an electric car, solar panels, recycling, eating vegan, and other great things
cannot quickly reverse the inertia from a century of rising carbon levels. Such investments are great, but we are still paddling down a river of unknown length, to a terribly high waterfall.

So what to do? What is the best outcome for your investments? How can you leverage short term political will into long term climate relief? The answer is to support political candidates who will pass effective, ethical and efficient legislation in Congress. To be most influential, your investments must be in close races which will make a difference, e.g. those that can swing control of the House, or especially the Senate. To do this, because many of our local legislators are already on our side, you might want to support candidates outside of your district (but hey, fossil fuel lobbyists do!). Who are these people? This you will have to research yourself.

So, it is your choice. If you believe that slowing climate change is where your investments should be, choose carefully, then support the (climate friendly) candidate of your choice, where ever he or she may be.

Or, keep on rowing like we are doing now.

RIVER WATCHER: THE LAST FEATHER
Guest essay by Rex Burress, Supervising Naturalist at the Rotary Nature Center 1980’s-1990’s

The one feather rested on the ground under my bird bath like a screaming indication of what had happened.

Then I saw one tiny down-wisp of a feather floating on the water, and in my mind’s eye I could see the bird-killing, next-door yellow cat sailing through the air, fanged mouth open, a fierce gleam emanating from the transformed eyes, and the sharp claws easily ending the life of one of my favorite bird-friends—the soft, gray, ring-necked dove!

A pair of the doves had been making a daily trip to the bird bath to drink and flutter in the water. One of the beauties would sit on the clothes line, watching, while the other bathed. If all was clear, they would peck for weed seeds on the brown lawn before taking off in a thunderous flutter even though the lift-off was cumbersomely slow, like a space rocket. To be sure, the cat took that all in from across the fence.

Chances are, you've never seen your loveable family cat, so purring and cuddly, take on a fierceness with a wild glare in its eyes—a fire of the jungle brought out of hiding by a kill-opportunity. Every muscle is tensed for a slow stalk, the intense focus—and then the leap—full of power and viscous agility! I have seen that scenario several times, and there is usually contact, and then it’s over. I can visualize that yellow cat with the dove in its mouth sneaking away to the brush.

The cat is smart and knows my backyard refuge is off limits. It sits on the step next door overlooking its
sterile yard with no weed patches in it, seemingly staring at me, longing to be over in that cool brush
catching a bird. “But the man shoots with a water hose at me, and I don't want to get sprayed on,” the cat
might say. “So I'll wait till he's not there.”

The cat's lady-owner died, and her husband now goes on week-long journeys leaving the two cats uncared
for, and that's bothersome. If you've got a pet, you're bound to care for it, Like on a farm, you provide and
care for each animal all of the time.

The next day, I saw one lone dove return, landing on the bird bath, fearful-looking eyes open wide as if
searching for her mate. She didn't take a drink and quickly flew away. I suspect she saw the cat attack and
fled, probably not seeing the bloody end, but you can only speculate.

LMI Note: See The Moral Cost of Cats (Smithsonian Magazine). Also, Wikipedia: Eurasian Collared Doves
are not native to California. They were introduced to North America in 1974 and have spread rapidly. Their
diet overlaps that of native Mourning Doves, but they are not more aggressive and no negative impacts have
been reported.

REFERENCES for the August Newsletter articles

Feeding wild birds:
https://www.atlasobscura.com/articles/lake-merritt-bird-islands-oakland – Beautiful historical photos
https://www.onegreenplanet.org/animalsandnature/feeding-white-bread-to-wild-birds-is-killing-them/
https://www.wildlifecenter.org/sites/default/files/Consequences-of-feeding-wild-ducks-in-public-
parks.pdf

Goose count - http://www2.oaklandnet.com/government/o/PWA/o/EC/s/MeasureDD/OAK025955

Rotary Nature Center Update:
See all accepted proposals for Rotary Nature Center Programming here:

Team Oakland:  http://www2.oaklandnet.com/Government/o/PWA/o/FE/s/VO/OAK031986
Online Petition to Re-open: https://www.thepetitionsite.com/374/189/581/reopen-the-rotary-nature-
center/

Conversation Overheard:
https://www.legendsofamerica.com/more-california-treasures/Bird feeding ground 1930

International Bird Rescue (Volunteers)
https://www.mercurynews.com/2018/07/19/herons-and-egrets-released-back-into-the-wild-after-
lifesaving-care/

The last feather by Rex Burress
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Eurasian_collared_dove

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