

The Lake Merritt Institute

A COMMUNITY BASED, NON-PROFIT CORPORATION

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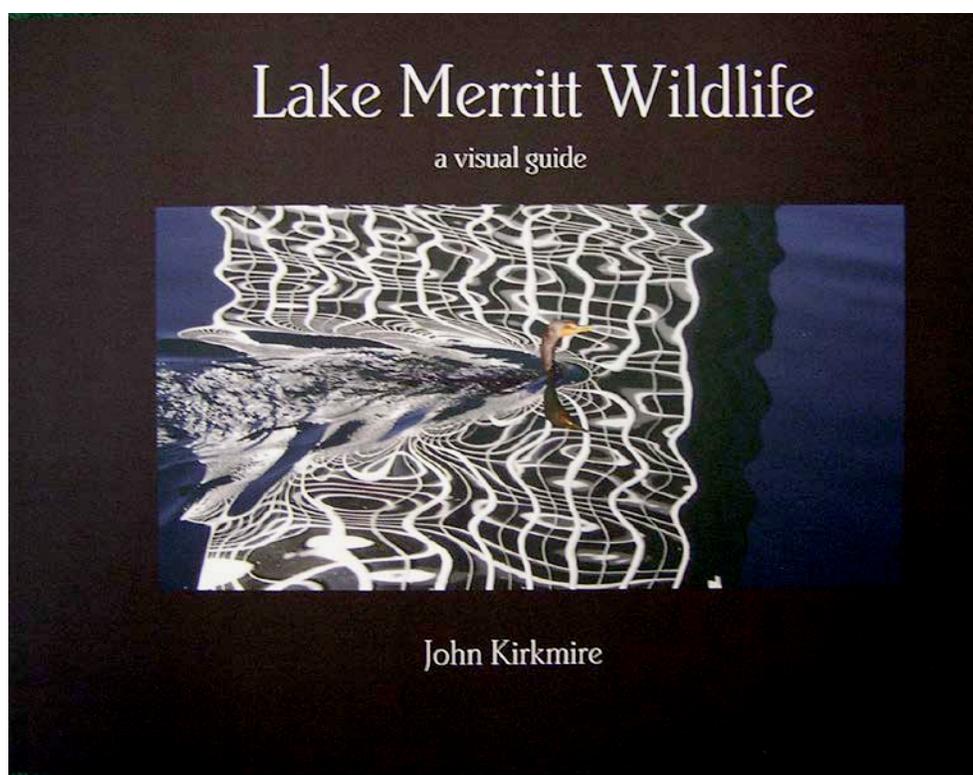
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ISSUE I

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

LAKE MERRITT WILDLIFE – A VISUAL GUIDE: This limited edition booklet is still available, but it won't last long. Featuring 57 color photos of birds and 19 of insects and squirrels on 20 pages, it is being offered as a fund raising drive by the Institute to donors of \$50 or more (membership not included). These funds are badly needed to replace dead fountain motors, and our outboard motor, and for the outdoor ash tray project that will help keep cigarette butts out of the Lake.



Each booklet will be signed by Dr. Bailey of the Lake Merritt Institute. The copyrighted photographs are by John Kirkmire, a local artist and author. To obtain your copy, send \$50 or more to: Lake Merritt Institute, 568 Bellevue Avenue, Oakland, CA 94610 and specify "Wildlife Guide." Thank you.

LAKE MERRITT BREAKFAST CLUB PROVIDES GRANT: We asked and they gave. That venerable early morning business/social/entrepreneurial/activist/do-gooder organization has provided \$700 for the Institute's outdoor ash tray project at Lake Merritt. Cigarette butts, look out! Now you will be confined to your proper place in a dark, smelly box where you cannot hurt anybody else any more. No, you will not be able to glide down the gutter to a storm drain inlet after a rain so you can infest our Lake. Be gone!

A hearty THANK YOU to the members of this club that meets every Thursday morning for bacon, eggs, coffee, music, prayers, speeches, and inspiration. Long may you reign at dawn in the Garden Center.

CLIMATE CORNER: To find out what is really going on, be sure to read:

Obama and the Climate: The Real Story. Why America is drilling for more oil and burning more carbon than ever. By Bill McKibben. Rolling Stone, Dec. 19, 2013 – Jan. 2, 2014. Did you know that: By the time by the time Obama leaves office, the U.S. will pass Saudi Arabia as the planet's biggest oil producer and Russia as the world's biggest producer of oil and gas combined.

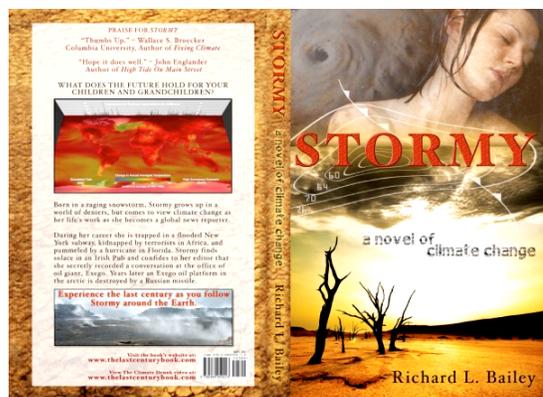
In a speech delivered at Cushing, Oklahoma, Obama said: "Over the last three years, I've directed my administration to open up millions of acres for gas and oil exploration across 23 different states. We're opening up more than 75 percent of our potential oil resources offshore. We've quadrupled the number of operating rigs to a record high. We've added enough new oil and gas pipeline to encircle the Earth, and then some... In fact, the problem is that we're actually producing so much oil and gas...that we don't have enough pipeline capacity to transport all of it where it needs to go."

Is this any way to slow climate change?

Local Author Writes Climate Change Novel: To find out where our headlong plunge into carbon chaos will likely lead us, read *STORMY*, a novel of climate change by Richard L. Bailey. Covering the period 2000 – 2100, each chapter begins with the Earth's atmospheric carbon level, temperature, sea level rise, and population. Characters include Stormy (a world news reporter), George (her congressman husband), Uncle Pierre (a climate activist), deniers, the Climate Posse and Boothby, a sage and mentor.

Published by TERRA publications, this 211 page (5 in color) paperback has been praised by prominent climate scientist Wally Broecker and John Englander, author of *High Tide on Main Street*. The book may be purchased via www.thelastcenturybook.com, from Book Shop Santa Cruz, at Walden Pond Bookstore, or from the Gondola Boutique at the Lake Chalet restaurant. While at the web site, be sure to watch "The Climate Drunk" video where Senator In-huff gets pied and rained upon!

Despite suffering the loss of family members, Stormy perseveres, creates a new political party in the year 2068, and then campaigns to become the president of the United States. In 2072, new NASA satellite technology recognizes distinct signs of civilization on Venus, raising fears that the Venus syndrome will repeat itself on Earth. Uncle Pierre joins the Climate Posse, Las Vegas is abandoned, and her congressman / husband George is held hostage by Washington politicians. It's all there, waiting for you to read.



BIRD COLUMN - Holiday Delight a Week Early:

The December 4th-Wednesday bird walk moved to the 3rd Wednesday, as the leaders and many probable participants had plans for the regular date, and people did manage to find us despite the first-ever change in the schedule. The crew of 13 birders, one here from Florida, began by beating feet for the El Embarcadero end of the lake, where the Tufted Duck was in residence and even condescended to pull his beak out of his back feathers so we could get a proper look. He's hard to spot at this time of year as his black pony-tail is only about half grown and his wings are more gray than white, but his back is as black as ever. (Why is he



A red-breasted sapsucker

All the winter regulars were here, both on the lake and in the garden, and Hank-the-rescue-bird still had one White Pelican to keep him company. All told, except for a bit of a chill when the sun ducked behind one of the numerous clouds, it was another very good day at Lake Merritt, where every day is a good day....

OAKLAND HIGH STUDENTS WORK IN THE WETLAND: Most high school students would not want to spend the Saturday before Christmas working in the mud, the Katie Noonan's Environmental Academy did just that on December 21st. Under the tutelage of Joel Peter (retired City Measure DD aficionado) they dug mud and planted wetland vegetation at the new marsh along the channel just south of Merritt Boulevard. To view scenes of this event, go to www.lakemerritt.org and check out the news section. Lake Merritt has its first new wetland in ages, along with a cadre of volunteers dedicated to make sure it will grow. Thanks to Joel, Katie and John Kirkmire.

FOUNTAIN MOTORS FAIL: Motors failed five times in 2013 and the manufacture began refusing to honor applicable warranties due to conditions at Lake Merritt. We replaced one with a fountain from a different company, but three nozzles proved inappropriate for the location and it will have to be moved. In addition our major source of funding has become limited and the nine year old outboard motor used for maintenance has died. When funds have accumulated to allow purchase of a new fountain from a different company, one will be ordered. Until then, fewer fountains will operate at the Lake.



Carl hoists a beleaguered fountain from the water

MEMBERSHIP CHANGES: A legend has retired. Many years ago (before Joshuan judges invented numbers and Leviticus committed Deuteronomy) Dean Galloway joined our Board of Directors. Then, more years ago than I can remember (somewhere in the '90's) Dean became our esteemed membership secretary, and he held that position ever since.

As membership chair, he has been responsible for bringing tens of thousand of dollars in annual donations to the Institute, without which you would not be reading this newsletter. Month-in and month-out he has persevered in keeping track of who paid what, who needed to renew and who was overdue. Based on this information, he has continually prepared letters to our more than 100 members, encouraging them to renew,

and prodding them that forgot. In June of 2009, the Institute presented Dean with an "Outstanding Service Award" for 12 years of dedicated service. Now however, he has decided to step down to spend more time with his lovely wife.

A new membership secretary has agreed to take over this highly important job, and as part of the transition, your renewal anniversary date will be shown on the envelope. There will also be some changes in renewal letters, and we will be better able to separate donations from dues. If we get anything wrong in this process, please let us know.

WHAT TO DO WITH A FALLEN GIANT? It stood there far too long to be just cut up and thrown away. How about letting it create its own monument by leaving several pieces of trunk in place, with a door and kids tunnel cut through? Such an art piece was created from a similar tree at the Country Mart mall in Larkspur: Why not in Oakland too? An additional option is to slice up several sections that show its 140 or so rings, then add a base to create coffee tables which could be sold to raise funds for maintenance of the new DD landscape. Surely there must be an artist out there, willing and ready.



And the Lake Chalet breathed a sigh of relief

WEBSITE UPDATES COMING: Somewhere in the near future, southeast of disorder (a line stolen from Jimmy Buffett) the Institute website will begin receiving more frequent updates. John Kirkmire of www.lakemerritt.org fame has volunteered to post our newsletters, trash data, and other important items on a more frequent basis. We even hope to get photos of our board members so you can see what we look like. Thanks to John for taking on this important task and to the wonderful Lizz of neontetra.com for creating this version of the site and updating it without breaking our bank account for all these years.

RECENT SCENES FROM THE LAKE



*Look out below: Red Tailed Hawk above.
Photo by Lee Aurich*



*A cedar waxwing strikes a Christmas pose.
Photo by Lee Aurich*

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.