

The Lake Merritt Institute

A COMMUNITY BASED, NON-PROFIT CORPORATION

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LOVE OUR LAKE DAY ON SUNDAY, JUNE 9TH: It was, someone said, the best day ever around Lake Merritt. Thousands of folks showed up to express their support for our beloved lagoon, which never looked better. Streets were closed, vendors vended, music played, politicians speeched, and artists arted. City staff were out in force, removing graffiti just a few hours before the event started. The governor was there (ably dismissing the lone prankster in the crowd) as were Danny Wan, Pat Kernighan, James Vann, Joel Peter, and many other city employees, citizens, volunteers and contractors who made the dream a reality.



It doesn't seem that long ago that we were walking the neighborhoods with yard signs, one of which now hangs in garage 9 at the Boating Center. More than 80 percent of you voted Yes to raise taxes for this grand endeavor known as bond measure DD, and I'll bet you're glad you did.

The best news is that measure DD projects will continue for several more years. This summer, culverts under 10th Street will give way to an open channel and new bridge, opening up even more of this bi-directional waterway to paddlers and sightseers. We can hardly wait.

TRASH MOBILE AVAILABLE TO FOR DISPLAY: Take a discarded bicycle wheel, add several yards of fishing line and dozens of items found in Lake Merritt and what do you get? Zippity boppity boo!



Among the former treasures featured in this unique, cultural icon are: an iPhone, a pacifier, a tiny bobcat, lost keys, a watch, a wooden bat engraved in Spanish, bones, a Kaiser pedometer, a whazit? and a yo-yo. It's colorful, it moves and it attracts attention.

Why did we make it?: To get our DON'T LITTER message across. Displayed with a sign describing where we found the items, information about how trash harms our Lake and a stack of Lake Merritt Institute business cards, this mobile can be hung in your business as a show of support for Lake Merritt. We will be providing it free to any suitable location and rotating it every month. For details, contact Dr. Bailey at lmi@netwiz.net.

THE LITTERATI: Do you want to see a world without litter? So does Jeff Kirschner, and he is doing something about it. You can too. How? Go to <http://www.litterati.org/index.php> and follow the instructions to post your photos of litter at the website, where they will be counted, cataloged and made available for those that make decisions on how to deal with the problem.

Which type of litter is most often found? If you guessed cigarette butts, you were right. Seven hundred thirty five photos of them are at the site, and the number grows daily as the photos pour in. In fact, three new photos of trash came in while Jeff and I were at the Lake Chalet discussing the phenomenon. Who is leading the one legged race to the bottom, Starbucks or McDonalds? Starbucks, with 376 photos of their logo sadly looking up from the gutter.



A Google map of the earth allows you to zoom in on the locations of these dastardly pieces of trash, including our own Lake Merritt, where you can see a hot spot near Perkins and Grand Avenue. St. Paul's School students have photographed hundreds of cigarette butts near here, including at the McElroy fountain.

So what are you waiting for? Get your camera and start clicking.



**HYDROCARBON
SPILL AT OUTFALL
49:**

Monday, June 24, 11 am

If you can prove who dumped this hydrocarbon (possibly oil or gasoline) onto the street, the Institute will reward you with \$100.

Call City inspector Craig Pon at 510-238-6544 to report illegal dumping.

Boom installed by
Oakland Fire Dept.



CLIMATE CORNER: Goodbye Miami! If you think the city of Miami will still be around in the year 2100, read this article in the current (July 4th) issue of *Rolling Stone* magazine, specifically <http://www.rollingstone.com/politics/news/why-the-city-of-miami-is-doomed-to-drown-20130620>. To quote from the article by Jeff Goodell:

South Florida sits above a vast and porous limestone plateau. "Imagine Swiss cheese, and you'll have a pretty good idea what the rock under southern Florida looks like," says Glenn Landers, a senior engineer at the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. This means water moves around easily – it seeps into yards at high tide, bubbles up on golf courses, flows through underground caverns, corrodes building foundations from below. "Conventional sea walls and barriers are not effective here," says Robert Daoust, an ecologist at ARCADIS, a Dutch firm that specializes in engineering solutions to rising seas.

...solutions are not likely to be forthcoming from the political realm. The statehouse in Tallahassee is a monument to climate-change denial. "You can't even say the words 'climate change' on the House floor without being run out of the building," says Gustafson (a former Florida speaker of the House). Florida Sen. Marco Rubio, positioning himself for a run at the presidency in 2016, is another denier, still trotting out the tired old argument that "no matter how many job-killing laws we pass, our government can't control the weather." Gov. Rick Scott, a Tea Party Republican, says he's "not convinced" that global warming is caused by human beings.



Flooding is already occurring in Miami

"Miami, as we know it today, is doomed," says Harold Wanless, the chairman of the department of geological sciences at the University of Miami. "It's not a question of if. It's a question of when."

"There is no serious thinking, no serious planning, about any of this going on at the state level," says Chuck Watson, a disaster-impact analyst with longtime experience in Florida. "The view is, 'Well, if it gets real bad, the federal government will bail us out.' It is beyond denial; it is flat-out delusional."

The San Francisco Bay area will be hit hard by sea level rise this century too, but thank goodness there is some serious planning going on to mitigate the impacts.

BIRD COLUMN: Jumping June at Lake Merritt

June is usually one of our quietest months, but this year's 4th-Wednesday walk was enlivened by about 15 American White Pelicans who'd dropped by to visit Hank (our rescue pelican) and a couple of skeins of them wheeling high overhead. We also had a returning Pied-billed Grebe showing off the brilliant black-striped white bill of the breeding season, and a pair of black-headed Greater Scaup drakes who seem to have decided to skip that tedious migration business. "Well phooey," it looks like one said to the other, "we didn't pick up chicks this winter, so why should we hike up to the breeding grounds?" (At any rate, I've heard that they mostly pair off before leaving us, though we don't see them doing any obvious courting....)

Molt migration was well under way, with perhaps half the expected Canada Geese in residence - say, a thousand or so. Almost all have lost their wing feathers, and some have started shedding their tails. By the end of July, they'll mostly have regrown their flight suits and gone on their way. FYI, only half a dozen pairs of geese - out of the couple of hundred that spend the year here - actually breed at the lake; the huge summer

population is made up of visitors drawn by large lawns, easy access to water, and relative lack of harassment. There's nothing Oakland can do to stop them without changing any of those factors....

Among the molt-migration crowd, we spotted one wild/domestic hybrid - probably a quarter-breed back-cross. At any rate, its neck was brownish instead of pure black and blended into the body tone rather than stopping at a sharp line. It was a bit bigger than the rest of the flock, had a clear white border around the upper bill, and - the key element defining it as part domestic - had a notably fat tail end. (But much less than half the watermelon-sized hindparts of a domestic goose - hence the quarter-breed call.)

Under the trees across Bellevue, the most notable sight was a crowd of Dark-eyed Juncos (the little ground-hugging birds that show two bright white tail feathers when they fly), many in the speckled juvenile plumage instead of the crisp, black-headed adult version. We rarely see juncos here - so where they bred is a mystery.

So Lake Merritt continues to keep us guessing. It was yet another beautiful day at the lake, where every day has beauty of its own....

STUDENTS PRESENT BUTT DATA: School was already out for St. Paul's Episcopal School sixth grade students, but that didn't stop them from returning to present their cigarette butt data to the City Water Quality Technical Committee. They found 6,699 of them, including 921 at Lake Merritt's McElroy fountain in the park. And, they plan to solicit businesses to install outdoor ash trays along Grand Avenue. More later.

RECENT SCENES FROM THE LAKE



No, it's not paint. This natural bacterial growth occurs every year at Lake Merritt (and elsewhere) when algae is trapped in the shallows. There, as water evaporates, temperatures rise and the water becomes saltier, this pink microorganism can be seen digesting the dead algae.

No, it didn't visit a hair salon. This "blonde" raccoon lives in Lakeside Park and is a lighter version of its normal, darker colored cousins. Please, no blonde raccoon jokes. Photo by Lee Aurich.



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