

# The Lake Merritt Institute

A COMMUNITY BASED, NON-PROFIT CORPORATION

568 Bellevue Avenue, Oakland, CA 94610; 510/238-2290; [lmi@netwiz.net](mailto:lmi@netwiz.net); [lakemerrittinstitute.org](http://lakemerrittinstitute.org)

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

**A BIRD'S TALE; By James Robinson:** Many of you have seen "Hank" the White Pelican at Lake Merritt. Well, there is a story here, and Mr. Robinson has told it eloquently in his recently published book, now available at Walden Pond bookstore on Grand Avenue. Beautifully illustrated from cover to cover and inside, the story will grip you until the end. Although this is a children's book, this adult writer found the tales of learning to fly, finding family and escaping from... well, you need to read it yourself. Discover the incredible story of one pelican who refused to give up.

There is education here, cleverly told with references to places and people you may recognize from Lake Merritt, including things that Mr. Robinson learned during his more than ten years of teaching science and boating safety to children and adults at the Boating Center. James also works for the Lake Merritt Institute in his "spare" time. Details: 92 pages; ISBN 978-0-615-58681-6; website at [www.abirdstale.com](http://www.abirdstale.com); you may also purchase the book for \$6.99 directly from the website, which contains a truly cool video.

## **ALL HALE THE OPEN CHANNEL:**



*Dignitaries gather and boats enter the channel for the first time in about 140 years to celebrate the Measure DD 12<sup>th</sup> St. Project, which is rapidly nearing completion. A formal celebration will be held in June. Note the new tidal wetland behind the speakers.*

**FREE WATERSHED WORKSHOP:** AT the [Redwood Heights Recreation Center](#), Sunday March 17th 10 am - 12 noon. Want to be a better watershed steward? Learn the essentials of onsite stormwater management from conception to construction! The FREE workshop offers a comprehensive overview of Low Impact Design (LID), and how to incorporate this form of landscaping on your own property. LID uses nature as a model for managing rainfall with runoff prevention and mitigation strategies, as well as treatment controls to remove pollutants. The workshop will be hosted by Redwood Heights Recreation Center and led by Oakland Rain Barrel Program contracted partners: The Watershed Project, ESA, PWA and DIG Cooperative Inc.

Participants will leave this workshop equipped with knowledge to begin planning their own rain garden/earthworks system or rainwater catchments project. We are holding this educational event to expand LID and rainwater harvesting throughout the city and to support residents and organizations in Oakland in watershed stewardship. To learn more about rainwater harvesting with barrels and gardens and further information about the Oakland Rain Barrel Program, visit the city web page: [www.oaklandcreeks.org](http://www.oaklandcreeks.org).

To attend the workshop, register here:

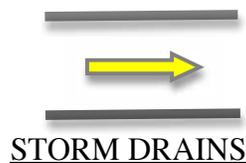
[March 17th, On-site Stormwater Management Workshop @ Redwood Heights Recreation Center](#)

For more information, email us: [oakland.rain.barrel.program@gmail.com](mailto:oakland.rain.barrel.program@gmail.com)

**AWARD PRESENTED TO JOEL PETER:** Recently retired but still active in the community, former measure DD commander Joel Peter was given an outstanding achievement award for his Extraordinary Service and Dedication to Lake Merritt” by chairperson Andy Young of the Institute. Now we hope he will join the board to continue providing his expertise.



**MR. A. C. ACIA STRIKES AGAIN:**



STORM DRAINS



No people, nobody dumped paint into the Lake. It's just Mr. A. C. Acia (acacia) shedding his pollen again. And as you know (being members of the Institute), what ends up on the street is washed to the Lake via storm drains when it rains.

**JOHN KIRKMIRE JOINS THE BOARD:** Photographer, playwright and author John Kirkmire was welcomed as a member of the Board of Directors at our meeting last month. A local resident, John's photos have graced these pages and he is a welcome addition to those who serve the Lake by volunteering. His name will soon be added to the list of board members, which may be found at [www.lakemerrittinstitute.org](http://www.lakemerrittinstitute.org).



**CLIMATE CORNER:** "High Tide on Main Street" was published in late 2012, just a few weeks before Hurricane Sandy slammed into the east coast. On page 121, this fine book by John Englander pointed out that, yes, such a hurricane would flood Manhattan. The source was a 1995 study by Erik Larson, featured in a September 25, 1999 New York Times article. Especially interesting is the summary of ancient sea levels, including the regular change of up to 390 feet every 100,000 years. More recently (125,000 years ago) sea level was about 26 feet higher than today. The fastest rise recorded in the fossil record was *more than a foot per decade during four centuries*. It was warming up then, but as Englander points out "we are warming much faster than that natural warming period."

**BIRD COLUMN: BLUE BIRDS AND HAPPINESS AT LAKE MERRITT**

The prize of the February 4th-Wednesday Golden Gate Audubon walk was a pair! of Western Bluebirds! working the bowling lawn that fronts on Bellevue. None of us had ever seen them in the park before, and here were a male and female flittering between the fences and the little nearby tree, looking for all the world like they might set up housekeeping.

Lotta housekeeping in the air, of course. The first of the Double-crested Cormorants had staked out nest spots in the trees - picking the ones with leaves this time, somewhat surprisingly. In past years, the bare trees were fully claimed before anyone moved into the shade. But the leafy trees aren't doing too well, so perhaps they've thinned out to the point where the remaining shade isn't unwelcome. In a tree by the scent garden, an

American Crow sat crooning and making the most un-Crow-like klop-klop sounds, though we couldn't see who it was talking to. Meanwhile, down on the lake, Hank-the-Rescue-Pelican may get lucky this year: one of the summer visitors has stayed with him overwinter, and now they're both growing breeding bumps on their beaks. (In the past, he's put up his calling card and seen it start to melt away before the first visiting pelicans arrived in June.) Wouldn't little pelicans be a treat?!

Most of the winter visitors are still around, though we missed the single individuals representing a few of the rarer species. But the lake was jumping, with four Red-breasted Mergansers paddling about, a whole lot of Bufflehead drakes displaying their white crowns for a single female, and rafts of scaup and grebes.

All round, a very good day at Lake Merritt, where every day....

**INSTITUTE FEATURED ON NBC NEWS:** Bay Area Proud, an NBC news program broadcast every Tuesday and Thursday, honored the Lake Merritt Institute on February 21<sup>st</sup> with an exemplary display of what we do, how we do it and why. Host Garvin Thomas creates “inspiring stories of people making a difference” and Institute director Dr. Bailey and the Lake volunteers were chosen for their efforts in removing trash from our urban lagoon. If still posted in the internet, the video may be seen at: <http://nbcbayarea.com/news/local/Oakland-Non-Profit-Sees-Success-Cleaning-Up-Lake-Merritt-192512311.html>> The good news is, trash levels removed from the Lake have been declining. Thanks to Garvin for a great job and to all the volunteers who make it possible.

## RECENT SCENES FROM THE LAKE



Lee Aurich

*Squaaaaaaaak! Buy the book, buy the book.*



*A continuous, in-line, storm drain detention device, recently installed at the 12<sup>th</sup> Street project.*

*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.*