LOVE OUR LAKE DAY ON SUNDAY, JUNE 9TH: Come one, come all. Celebrate the official, grand opening of our new “Merritt Boulevard” (it’s no longer 12th or 14th Streets). Starting at 11 am with speeches at 2 pm by the pavilion overlooking the Lake and not concluding until 4 pm, this once in a lifetime event will feature live entertainment, lake trivia and fun for all. Officially entitled “Oaklavia by the Lake” it will include community booths, food trucks (near Snow Park and East 16th Street) and car-free streets. See oaklandnet.com for details.

Oaklavia by the Lake will close three miles of streets around Lake Merritt to vehicular traffic to make way for pedestrians and bicyclists to enjoy a day of family-friendly fun. Over 40 separate activities are planned throughout the day to get folks out of their cars and enjoy Oakland’s beautiful climate while exploring Lake Merritt, Lakeside Park and surrounding neighborhoods. A sampling of the performances and interactive activities includes salsa dancing, Taiko drumming, martial arts, sports, a bike rodeo, yoga, hula hooping, belly dancing and free bike rentals (with credit card deposit). Event goers can also paddle and pedal the lake in kayaks, pedal boats or just enjoy the ride on pontoons and gondolas. Some rides are free and some are for a small charge. Bring cash and ID’s to rent. Some of Oakland’s renowned food trucks will be on hand to provide tasty treats to fuel revelers as they progress around the lake.

BEST METRO AREAS FOR NATURE LOVERS: It should be no surprise that Oakland, with its famous estuary Lake Merritt right near downtown, makes the list as number 4 in the top ten travel destinations for nature lovers. With over 14.5% of its metropolitan area set aside for parkland and easy driving access to a whopping 11 national parks, Oakland welcomes all nature-lovers and adventure travelers. On top of that, Oakland has the cleanest air of all the Bay Area cities, so feel free to breathe in deep.

The list was compiled by Travelnerd. For details on this and other lists, go to: http://travelnerd.com.

ALGAE ELSEWHERE: If you think Lake Merritt has algae problems, check out what is happening at a Lake in China (below on left) and what happened last March in Lake Erie (right photo).
It is not rocket science: Just add fertilizer to water and warm it up enough, add light and algae will grow. Our lagoon of course, gets lots of fertilizer washed in from the 4,650 acre watershed. Our blooms peak around the summer solstice, which makes sense since that is when light intensity levels are highest and day length is the longest of the year. Heat waves intensify the growth; cool, cloudy days impede it.

Algae blooms in Lake Merritt used to be more of a problem. Nowadays, a harvester boat, under a contract with the City of Oakland, arrives and removes much of the green stuff, keeping it below nuisance level, but leaving enough to sustain residents of our wildlife refuge, many of whom rely on it for food and shelter. Thankfully, we don’t have over fertilized agriculture upstream or sewage discharges into Lake Merritt. If we did, it might look like the photos above.

**CLIMATE CORNER: From the Environmental Defense Fund.**

As a parent of two school-age children, I was shocked and outraged to learn that the American Legislative Exchange Council (ALEC), which is heavily funded by the Dirty Energy Lobby, has been peddling a bill in 11 states that would dictate children be taught a so-called “balanced” approach to climate change. Their “Environmental Literacy Improvement Act” has already become law in Louisiana, Texas, South Dakota, and Tennessee. Will California be their next target? Our kids are supposed to go to school to learn science and facts, not dirty energy-funded propaganda that rejects science and denies the basic reality of climate change.

**THE CLIMATE SCOREBOARD: So how are the people of Earth doing with regard to slowing climate change and avoiding the worst of it? To find out, go to [climateinteractive.org/scoreboard](http://climateinteractive.org/scoreboard) where you will see that the internationally recognized goal is to limit planetary temperature increase to 2.7° but that proposals (non-binding) would only limit it to 8.1° and our current business-as-usual activities (what is actually happening now) are leading us helter skelter to an 8.8° increase. In short, we are losing the war.**

**UPDATE ON CURRENT DD PROJECTS - Project highlights:**

Lake Merritt Channel Improvement at 10th Street: The contract was awarded to Gordon N. Ball Construction and the project is scheduled to start in mid-June.

Lake Merritt Channel Bridge and Bay Trail to Laney College: Design scope of work is complete and the contract for design will go to council for approval on May 28, 2013.

Snow Park-Lakeside Green Street Project: Design is 100% complete. The bid still on hold until the dog park issue is resolved. PWA applied for a $7 million Alameda County Transportation Commission One Bay Area Grant and has been recommended for a $7M award. To comply with grant requirements, the project will have to be federalized, which takes 12-18 months.

Sailboat House - Shoreline Area: Design is 100% complete. The project will be bid in June.

12th Street Reconstruction. Lesley Estes reported that the bulk of the project will be complete by April, with a few more months needed to complete all work and fully open the park.

**BIRD COLUMN: Moving Toward Summer at Lake Merritt**

The Double-crested Cormorants nesting in the trees still think it's springtime - one pair has even kept their bunny-ear crests, even though the neighbors are slick-headed as snakes. But the Canada Geese figure it's summer already; the population is up, and the ground is starting to be strewn with feathers. (A month from now, every third Canada Goose in northern California will be here, shoulder to shoulder to shoulder, grazing on the lawns and dropping feathers and other things with wild abandon, but NOT raising families - they do that elsewhere.) What seem to be all the geese that did breed here this year have teamed up, with four adults...
shepherding nineteen goslings in three sizes - an impressive flotilla.

Almost all the winter visitors are gone, leaving behind two Lesser Scaup drakes (black head, white wings, gray back) who look like they're thinking of just skipping the migration thing this year. "We didn't pick up girls of our own; why should be flap all that way when we can be comfortable and no lonelier here...." We also saw several Pied-billed Grebes (the other four regular grebes were gone) and a couple of American Coots bobbing their black heads and white beaks around.

Hank-the-rescue-pelican had a friend again, which was good to see even though the friend was Not In The Mood - perfectly smooth beak with no sign of the breeding bump that Hank still sports. We saw a couple of Brown Pelicans, too; one cruising over the lake and the other bundled up on the floats with head and feet and all tucked in, looking like a large brown paper parcel. Meanwhile, the little brown Northern Rough-winged Swallows are nesting again in the lake wall between the playground and El Embarcadero. It's interesting to look down on a swallow....

It was a little too windy to see much in Lakeside Park - we could hear birds and occasionally get a glimpse of one, but with all the branches moving, we couldn't tell which moving branches to look at. But it was lovely all the same, on the pleasant edge of cool, and all in all another fine day at Lake Merritt, where every day is fine in its own way.

A Snowy egret in full breeding plumage.

They can be seen at the egret nesting site across from the Post Office near Harrison & Alice Streets. Look for the white spots on the pavement below the trees and listen for the squawking.

Photo by Lee Aurich

GRAFFITTI ABATEMENT
Vandals have been increasingly attacking our new facilities at Merritt Boulevard, including the pedestrian bridge, park benches lamp poles, and Institute “U-Clean-It” boxes with their graffiti.

To report graffiti in the public right-of-way, please do one of the following:

- Contact the Public Works Call Center at (510) 615-5566, M-F, 8:00am to 4:30pm
- Download SeeClickFix to your smart phone and report via mobile application
- Send an email to PWACallCenter@oaklandnet.com
- Online, visit our website at www.oaklandpw.com
CITY GETS NEW VACUUM CLEANER TRUCKS

Looking spiffy, complicated and competent, this new city vacuum truck is ready to take on cleaning out storm drain filters, drain inlets and many other tasks.

It can lift up a manhole cover and the boom is big enough to pick up a storm drain filter net and deposit it into a waiting truck for disposal.

RECENT SCENES FROM THE LAKE

By the light of the Silvery Moon…

Photo by Lee Aurich

No words needed.

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.