A Moment of Truth: Confronting America’s National Debt

Are you disappointed with the lack of civic discourse in this election year?

Join fellow members in a Mechanics’ Institute Citizens’ Jury to wrestle with current issues of national interest. This moderated seminar, first in a projected series, will study the Simpson-Bowles and Domenici-Rivlin reports, debate and deliberate alternative solutions, and seek to arrive at statements of agreement for governmental action to reduce the national debt.

MI members Avery Chope, retired from a career in banking and finance that spanned the globe; and Steve

Wednesday, May 2, Noon - 8:30 pm
A Dickens Day Celebration
Celebrate Charles Dickens’s 200th Birthday Anniversary! Start with lunch at the Six Jolly Fellowship Porters Pub and hear talks on Discovering Dickens’s London. Then enjoy English Tea Readings with Charles Dickens in Residence (Robert Young). The evening features keynote speaker Jane Smiley, author of Charles Dickens (2002); followed by a panel, A Writer’s Life: Author, Celebrity, Social Reformer, Intrepid Traveler, Amateur Actor & Family Man and Dickens in the Digital Age. The finale includes a dramatic reading by Paul Whitworth and surprise Victorian guests!

Co-sponsored by the Dickens Project, UC-Santa Cruz; Litquake; and The Great Dickens Christmas Fair.

BRING YOURSELF ONLINE
Although we are pleased to bring you our news every month in print, we want to remind you of the constantly changing content of our website at http://www.milibrary.org/library. Reviews, highlights of the Library collection, links to recent lists of new books, and the ability to place holds 24/7 are all good reasons to keep active in our online community!

POETRY AND PARLOR GAMES
On Monday, April 16, MI members played a couple of rousing word-based parlor games to celebrate National Poetry Month, stimulate our creative spirits, and hang out with each other over lunch. Reprinted here are a couple of completely unedited examples of our good time! For more see www.milibrary.org/corpse. If you would like to see more low-key lunch-time activities, send your suggestions to Taryn Edwards at tedwards@milibrary.org.

(continued on page 8)
A Dickens Day Celebration  

Wednesday, May 2, 2012 from Noon – 8:30 pm

In Honor of Charles Dickens’s 200th Birthday Anniversary Year

Co-sponsored by The Dickens Project, University of California, Santa Cruz; Litquake; and The Great Dickens Christmas Fair

An Important Notice of (perhaps) the one and only all-day Dickens Day Celebration in San Francisco, hence, one that should not be missed on all account. Thus, a brief, description of what will occur by way of discourse and disquisition, literary enrichment, theatrical engagement, delectable fare, and, of course, sheer fun.

Afternoon Program - 4th Floor, Meeting Room

Discovering Dickens’ London

NOON - 6:00 pm

Six Jolly Fellowship Porters Pub

(hearty tavern fare & libations available)
12:30 pm - 1:30 pm

John Jordan - Arriving in Dickens’s London
1:30 pm - 2:30 pm

Murray Baumgarten - Reading Dickens, Writing London
2:30 pm - 3:30 pm

Peter Orner - Dickens and Melville: A Tale of Two Scribners
3:30 pm - 4:30 pm

Tea Readings with Charles Dickens (Robert Young): A Dramatic Reading by the Author!

“5-Minute Dickens” with audience participation - bring your favorite selection to share!

English Tea Service available!

Evening Program - 2nd Floor, Library

A Writer’s Life: Author, Celebrity, Social Reformer, Intrepid Traveler, Amateur Actor, & Family Man and Dickens in the Digital Age

6:00 pm

Doors Open - Victorian Guests & Surprises
6:30 pm - 8:30 pm

Keynote Address: Jane Smiley, author of Charles Dickens (2002)

Panel discussion, moderated by John Jordan with Murray Baumgarten, Edwin Eigner, Jane Smiley, Peter Orner, Jon Michael Varese

From Page to Stage—A Dramatic Reading by actor Paul Whisworth

Reservations Required: 415.393.0100 or rsvp@milibrary.org Members and Co-sponsors Free; Public $15

CINEMALIT

Thursday, May 17, 6:00 pm

Parks and Gardens in Greater Paris (Edition Axel Menges)

Jacqueline Widmar Stewart

For over 350 years Parisians have designed and preserved phenomenal public outdoor spaces. From the Jardin des Tuileries which opened in 1667 to a contemporary garden suspended over a train station, Jacqueline Stewart documents the tapestry of parklands throughout Paris with a keen eye to the city’s history and culture. Her identification of various hallmarks of park-building eras allows the reader and visitor to experience these grand green places in the way Parisians do.

Members Free; Public $12

WHAT THE DICKENS: 200 YEARS YOUNG

Friday, May 4

David Copperfield (1935)

Directed by George Cukor

Freddy Bartholomew, W.C. Fields

A child’s painful journey to adulthood is beautifully limned in this stellar adaptation of the most autobiographical of Dickens’ novels.

Friday, May 8

The Old Curiosity Shop (2007)

Directed by Brian Percival

Derek Jacobi, Toby Jones

Tormented by a vile loan shark, a shop owner and his granddaughter flee London for the country.

Friday, May 11

Great Expectations (1998)

Directed by Afonso Cuaron

Ethan Hawke, Gwyneth Paltrow

A mysterious benefactor takes a liking to a working-class lad, opening the door to the wider world.

Friday, May 18

From Page to Stage—A Dramatic Reading by actor Paul Whisworth

Friday, May 25

Oliver Twist (2005)

Directed by Roman Polanski

Ben Kingsley, Barry Clark

A runaway orphan comes to London and falls in with a gang of child pickpockets.

For eleven years Mechanics’ Institute’s Cinemalit has offered a monthly mini-film festival/salon, showcasing directors, stars, film genres, and classics. Each film is introduced by film critic and Cinemalit curator Michael Fox, or by guests who include local film writers, critics and aficionados. Come for the movie. Stay for the discussion!

CURATED & HOSTED BY MICHAEL FOX

Fridays: Cafe 5:30 pm; Program 6:00 pm.

Members Free; Public, suggested donation $10

THIS MONTH AT THE MECHANICS’
**CLASSES AT THE LIBRARY**

**Monday, May 14 - Friday, May 18**

*Office Hours* with Our Technology Team

Are you stumped over a feature on your smart phone, or confused with the folder options of your email? Would you like to learn to use the saved lists feature on your MI Library account? Does the Library catalog seem to never give you what you are searching for? Are you having difficulty managing multiple online passwords? For these and other questions regarding email, eBook readers, making the best of our library online catalog, safely managing online accounts, we offer a week of office hours with our team of technology teachers: Sead Sehovic, Jeremy Snell and Matt Montgomery.

Reserve a 15-minute appointment during these times:

- Monday, May 14, between 3:00 pm - 4:00 pm
- Tuesday, May 15, between 4:00 pm - 5:00 pm
- Wednesday, May 16, between 1:00 pm - 2:00 pm
- Thursday, May 17, between noon and 1:00 pm
- Friday, May 18, between 10:00 am - 11:00 am

All consultations will be held in the 4th floor meeting room, with laptops available.

Appointments are advised, but drop-in consultations will be allowed if all times are not reserved.

Call 415.393.0111, or email jsnell@milibrary.org with your desired day/time and consultation question.

Web-based Tutorial

**Estate Planning Basics**

The Mechanics’ Institute has acquired a series of ten-minute video briefings on wills, living trusts, probate, trustees, charitable trusts, gift annuities, advance health care directives and other powerful estate planning tools. Viewed individually, they help clarify these complex subjects; viewed together, they’re like a private estate planning seminar, but without the time commitment. Free to you as a benefit of your Mechanics’ membership, you can start watching them right now by visiting our website: [http://www.milibrary.org/donate/](http://www.milibrary.org/donate/). For more information or assistance with viewing, contact Taryn Edwards tedwards@milibrary.org.

**AUTHORS’ CARNIVAL**

Readings, workshops, and camaraderie in celebration of our members’ creative achievements.

**FIELD TRIP TO HEYDAY!**

Tuesday, May 8, 10:00 am - 12:30 pm

Join us on a tour of Heyday, an independent, non-profit publisher in Berkeley. Since 1974, Heyday has promoted widespread awareness and celebration of California’s many cultures, landscapes, and boundary-breaking ideas through their well-crafted books. Meet executive director Malcolm Margolin and his skilled staff as they discuss their individual responsibilities, Heyday’s history and mission, and how this publisher has flourished for over thirty years to become one of the most coveted presses in the state.

**BOOK DISCUSSIONS**

**Thursday, May 3, 6:00 pm; registration required (see below)**

**FORGOTTEN CLASSICS**

**Mrs. Dalloway**

Virginia Woolf’s impact on English literature is still being weighed. This book, following the events in the single day of an upper-class Englishwoman, is known for her unique perspective on sexuality, feminism, life and death, madness and sanity.

**Monday, May 14, noon; no registration required**

**BROWN BAG MYSTERY READERS’ BOOK GROUP**

**At Risk**

Following her retirement as director-general of the British Security Service known as MI5, author Rimington began writing novels featuring a M15 operator, Liz Carlyle, introduced in At Risk.

**Tuesday, December 20, noon; no registration required**

**FICTION YOU WISH YOU HAD READ**

**The Age of Innocence**

Edith Wharton’s portrayal of 1870 New York upper class life is considered one of her best novels, and resulted in a Pulitzer Prize in 1920. She was the first woman to win that literary prize.

**THE PROUST SOCIETY OF AMERICA:**

**SAN FRANCISCO CHAPTER**

operates two bi-weekly groups, Proust: In Search of Last Time and the World Literature Group which continues reading pre- and post-Proustian novels. **Enrollment for both groups has closed for this semester but will open to new members in September. For more information contact Mark Calkins at mark@hempservdu.com.**

**Wednesday, September 5, at 6:00 pm; registration required**

**Proust: In Search of Lost Time**

Edith Wharton

For a full description of the seminar structure and application information, see the website, or contact Sharon Miller at smiller@milibrary.org or 415.393.0113.

**Participation is limited; please apply early.**

At the completion of the seminars, the group will present a program for all interested members on Wednesday, September 5, at 6:00 pm in the 4th floor Meeting Room.

**A Moment of Truth**

Weiner, retired Associate Dean of the Graduate School of Public Policy, UC Berkeley, are preparing a four-session seminar to offer members of differing opinions an opportunity to study the issue and discuss the merits of proposed solutions. Participants who wish to do so will be encouraged to write a personal opinion statement for possible publication. The Library will make copies of the reports for all participants: *The National Commission on Fiscal Responsibility and Reform: The Moment of Truth (Struphorn-Bowles)*; and *Restoring America’s Future: Reviving the Economy, Cutting Spending and Debt, and Creating a Simple, Pro-Growth Tax System (Donnenwitz-Rivlin)*.

The seminars will be held on Mondays, from 4:00 pm - 6:00 pm, on July 9, 16, 23, 30.

For a full description of the seminar structure and application information, see the website, or contact Sharon Miller at smiller@milibrary.org or 415.393.0113.

**Participation is limited; please apply early.**

At the completion of the seminars, the group will present a program for all interested members on Wednesday, September 5, at 6:00 pm in the 4th floor Meeting Room.
The Mechanics’ Institute lost one of its most loyal and hard-working friends with the passing of Valdemars (Val) Zemitis early on the morning of March 22 in Davis, California. The cause was prostate cancer.

Born April 11, 1925, in Riga, Latvia, Mr. Zemitis learned to play in his early teens. He and his sister Rita were taught the game by their father, Martins Zemitis, a master violin maker.

Chess was to become a lifelong love of Val’s.

Mr. Zemitis immigrated to the United States in 1951, first settling in Salem, Oregon. Less than a year later he moved to Berkeley where he studied at the University of California. This was a golden time for chess in Northern California and Mr. Zemitis soon found himself good friends with many of the leading lights of Bay Area Chess including Neil Falconer and Bob Burger. These three would serve as games editors for the newly founded California Chess Reporter which was published by Guthrie McClain who was an inspiration to chess players throughout the state and region. All four men were devoted to the Mechanics’ Institute Chess Club of San Francisco and the Castle Chess Club, an East Bay institution comprised of UC Berkeley graduates.

During his undergraduate days Mr. Zemitis enjoyed his greatest competitive success, tying for third in the 1954 California Open where he scored 5.5 from 7, drawing with Grandmaster Issac Kashdan and International Master Herman Steiner. Held in Santa Barbara over Labor Day weekend, the event had all the best players in the state competing and the eighty-one competitors was a record setting turnout for the time.

The Zemitis family returned to California in 1959 and the following year, with the assistance of future Mechanics’ Trustee Bob Burger, Mr. Zemitis published his first book, The Unknown Tal. This was quite possibly the first book dedicated to the Wizard of Riga.

During the last decade of his life Mr. Zemitis continued his productive work, first as the publisher and a contributor to the journal Latvian Correspondence & Latvian Gambit Magazine and later as its successor Latvijas Saha Vestnesis. As important as these publications were they were dwarfed by the completion of his Encyclopedia of Latvian Chessplayers. This massive two volume work, over 800 pages in length, can be found at the Mechanics’ Institute and the principal public repositories of chess books—the John G. White Collection in Cleveland, the Royal Dutch Library in The Hague and the Anderson Collection at the State Library of Victoria in Australia. There is no other publication like it devoted to the chess players of one small country; albeit one that has produced giants the likes of Tal, Nimzovitch and Shirov.

In Memoriam Val Zemitis, 1925-2012

International Master John Donaldson, Director of the Chess Room

Chess

Chess for Women
Sundays, May 6, 13, 20, 27
Taught by Ewalina Krubnik
Funded by a Gift in Memory of Martin Wiseman

Tuesday Night Events
May 1, 22, 29
5:15 pm – 6:15 pm
Lecture by IM John Donaldson
December 6
6:30 pm – 10:30 pm
Spring Tuesday Night Marathons

After 6: Wednesday Night Chess for Adults
May 3, 24, 31
7:00 pm – 9:00 pm
Taught by Ewalina Krubnik
4 sessions. Members $40; Public $50
For questions or reservations please contact Taryn Edwards at 415.393.0103 or edwards@milibrary.org

Tournaments
Saturday, May 5
10:00 am – 3:00 pm
12th Annual Charles Powell Memorial G/45
Saturday, May 12
10:00 am – 3:00 pm
Children’s Quad

For information and registration, contact the chess room at 415.393.0110 or chessroom@milibrary.org
Spring Members’ Meeting and Author Program
Thursday, May 24, 2012
5:30 pm Reception; 6:00 pm Meeting
6:45 pm Jonathan Haidt
4TH FLOOR MEETING ROOM

Join us for our bi-annual Mechanics’ Institute community gathering to meet fellow members, staff and trustees. Hear from the staff about new plans and programs, technology updates, and our efforts to improve your experience as members. The meeting will be followed by a program with author Jonathan Haidt.

The Righteous Mind: Why Good People are Divided by Politics and Religion
(Pantheon) JONATHAN HAIDT

Why can’t our political leaders work together as threats loom and problems mount? Why do people so readily assume the worst about the motives of their fellow citizens? Are the divisions between political groups truly based on self-evident truths, or is it driven more by differences in culture? In this intriguing book, social psychologist Jonathan Haidt examines the manner in which moral intuition is shaped by culture, the role it plays in the polarization of politics and religion, and how we can reconcile ideology and civility so that diverse religious and political groups can work together for common goals. With the National Party conventions and debates starting this summer, this topic will be timely!

Members and Guests free; Public $12

Parlor games
Continued from page 1

The heron runs his rusted fingernails down the tortured windowpane, Outside a phantasmagoria galumphs as he emits five staunch plumes, In tearful freedom he scampers past a chaotic oleander.

—Sylvia, Ellen, Jerome, Judith

The deli, like a morgue on Mondays, is filled with cadaverous hams hung haphazardly, hamfistedly, by the butcher.

—Regan, Jeremy, Sybil, Allegra

Jonathan Haidt was recently featured at the TED (Technology, Entertainment, Design) conference in conversation with the Dalai Lama for panel on Secular Ethics. He is a professor of psychology at the University of Virginia and a visiting professor of business ethics at New York University’s Stern School of Business. He is the author of The Happiness Hypothesis: Finding Modern Truth in Ancient Wisdom.

Reservations Required: 415.393.0100 or rsvp@milibrary.org