

THIS MONTH AT THE



# Mechanics' Institute

www.milibrary.org

VOL. 2, NO. 11 NOVEMBER 2012

## EVENTS & SPECIAL PROGRAMS HIGHLIGHT



**Thursday, November 1, 6:00 pm**

***The Big Screen: The Story of the Movies*** (Farrar, Straus and Giroux)

DAVID THOMSON

From 19th-century photographer Eadweard Muybridge's motion studies to the latest cable TV and video game offerings, this fascinating history of movies and their spinoffs celebrates and indicts the flickering image that beguiles. Film critic and historian Thomson concentrates on American movies, but also comments

on foreign cinemas and TV gems like *I Love Lucy* and other treasures of the small screen.

**Members Free; Public \$12**

Full listing on page 2

## AUTHORS' CARNIVAL

**Monday, December 3, 6:00 pm**

**Wrap It Up with Novelist Max Byrd**

4TH FLOOR BOARD ROOM

You've done it – written a novel in a month! Come celebrate with other NaNoWriMo winners and best-selling novelist and Squaw Valley Writers' Conference instructor Max Byrd who will share his insights into his historical fiction writing process, present his latest book, and rap about writing!

**Members and the Public, Free**



Full listing on page 6

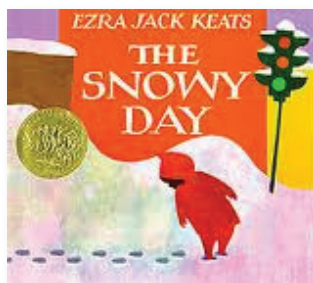
## WINTER STORY TIME

**Saturday, December 1, 10:00 am - 11:00 am**

4TH FLOOR MEETING ROOM

Bundle up and bring the children in your life to Mechanics' Institute to enjoy a reading of *The Snowy Day* by Caldecott winner Ezra Jack Keats. Even if your children have never experienced snow, this story of a boy's adventure in his neighborhood, made unfamiliar by the change in season, has resonated with children since 1962. Join us on Saturday morning for our own wintertime adventure! Crafts, cocoa, and cookies will follow the story.

**Members Only; Free**



## NEW NON-FICTION BOOK GROUP

### True Adventure

DIANE LAI, PUBLIC SERVICES  
LIBRARIAN

**T**here are several fiction Book Discussion groups at the Mechanics' Institute Library – mystery addicts are part of the popular *Brown Bag Mystery Readers* group and fiction devotees make up our *Fiction You Wish You Had Read* monthly gathering – and now (and for a short time only) non-fiction enthusiasts have their own Book Discussion Group called *True Adventure*!

**F**or six months ONLY, we will read and discuss books that were born out of true tales of adventure, tragedy, and heroism. While all of the books are not technically 'adventure' stories, they are all true, amazing and thrillingly told by some of the best non-fiction contemporary authors currently writing.

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# EVENTS

Attend these intimate and up close author programs and engage directly with local, national, and internationally known writers talking about their newly released books.

- Laura Sheppard, Events Director



**Thursday, November 1, 6:00 pm, 4th floor Meeting Room**

***The Big Screen: The Story of the Movies*** (Farrar, Straus and Giroux)

DAVID THOMSON

From 19th-century photographer Eadward Muybridge's motion studies to the latest cable-TV and video game offerings, this fascinating history of movies and their spinoffs celebrates and indicts the flickering image that beguiles. Film critic and historian Thomson concentrates on American movies, but also comments on foreign cinemas and TV gems like *I Love Lucy* and other treasures of the small screen. Thomson's stylish prose, simultaneously erudite and entertaining, captivates as it informs with his idiosyncratic approach, attention to detail, and a panoramic view of the industry.

**Members Free; Public \$12**



**Cosponsored event with the World Affairs Council and Asia Society**

**Wednesday, November 14, 7:00 pm, World Affairs Council, 312 Sutter Street, Ste. 200**

**Lecture: Shedding Light on Afghanistan**

***Games without Rules: The Often-Interrupted History of Afghanistan*** (PublicAffairs)

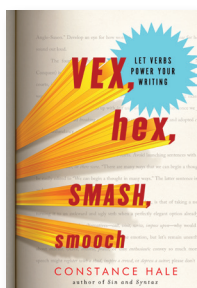
TAMIM ANSARY

From the outside the conflict in Afghanistan has been painted as a war between pro-democracy forces and Islamist fanaticism. It is, however only one small part of the larger and much older conflict—between Kabul and rural Afghanistan, between the attraction of the modern world on the one hand and traditional Afghanistan on the other. Drawing on his Afghan and Muslim roots, Tamim Ansary reveals a centuries-old internal Afghan struggle the world has never fully understood. Ansary sheds light on a country desperately trying to find its identity, while undermined by its own demons, plagued by a 40-60 year cycle of invasion by outside forces, and constantly at the center of an ill-informed international political debate.

**Admission: Members of MI & AS \$7; Public \$15**

**MI members:** <http://engage.worldaffairs.org/Afghanistan> or 415.293.4600

**Asia Society:** <http://engage.worldaffairs.org/LightonAfghanistan>



**Thursday, November 15, 6:00 pm, 4th floor Meeting Room**

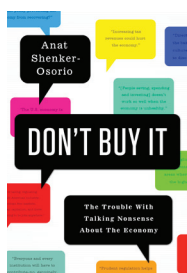
***Vex, Hex, Smash, Smooch: Let Verbs Power Your Writing*** (W.W. Norton & Company)

CONSTANCE HALE

Bringing the same witty, relaxed approach that made *Sin and Syntax* such a sensation, Hale reminds us in her new book that great writing harnesses the power of verbs. At the heart of every great sentence, Hale shows us, beats a great verb. Blending pop culture, history, literature, linguistics, and grammar to answer how verbs entered English and why they're so central to writing well, *Vex, Hex, Smash, Smooch*, is sure to spark a mini-renaissance in the untapped potential of verbs. This is more than just a writing handbook; it's a key to unlocking every writer's innate creativity by offering countless paths to verbal expressiveness.

**Members Free; Public \$12**





**Thursday, November 29, 6:00 pm, 4th floor Meeting Room**

***Don't Buy It: The Trouble with Talking Nonsense About the Economy***

ANAT SHENKER-OSORIO

Both sides of the political spectrum focused on the economy during the past few months of this 2012 presidential election. How the media and politicians talk about this issue is important because using the wrong metaphors can send the wrong message. Shenker-Orsorio's new book explores how language shapes public perception and opinion of the global economy and what effects it will have for the future. This is a must-read for anyone who wants to make a case for changing tax rates, regulations, wages, social services and economic inequities. It clarifies how we've landed in our current predicament and how to get out of it.

**Members Free; Public \$12**



Events continued on page 8

# CINEMALIT

## RESTLESS INTELLIGENCE: THE FILMS OF ROBERT DOWNEY, JR.

CURATED & HOSTED BY MICHAEL FOX

**Fridays: Cafe 5:30 pm; Program 6:00 pm**  
**Members Free; Public, suggested donation \$10**

For twelve 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.



**Friday, November 9**

***Restoration* (1995)**

Directed by Michael Hoffman  
Sam Neill, David Thewlis

A young physician falls in and out of the graces of King Charles II in this vibrant, bawdy portrait of 17th century England. **Special guest: actor-writer-director J.P. Allen, Centaur.**



**Friday, November 16**

***The Soloist* (2009)**

DIRECTED BY JOE WRIGHT  
Jamie Foxx, Catherine Keener

This drama based on actual events revolves around an L.A. Times columnist and the mentally ill street musician he befriends.



**Friday, November 30**

***Two Girls and a Guy* (1997)**

DIRECTED BY JAMES TOBACK  
Heather Graham, Natasha  
Gregson Wagner

A two-timing New York actor is caught and confronted by his girlfriends in this charged and intimate Shavian skirmish, shot in just 11 days.



**Friday, December 7**

***Chaplin* (1992)**

DIRECTED BY RICHARD ATTENBOROUGH  
Geraldine Chaplin, Anthony  
Hopkins

Downey's phenomenal performance drives this epic biopic of the brilliant actor, writer, director and composer.

# CLASSES AT THE LIBRARY

Due to renovation of the classroom, our class schedule remains light until the new year. Watch our website, and signs posted on the Library's 3rd floor, for updates on the renovation process.

## Thursday, November 8, 10:00 am Standard & Poor's NetAdvantage



Get up-to-date and reliable answers to your tough business and investment questions and identify investment opportunities. This web-based Library subscription includes company and industry information covering publicly traded U.S. corporations, together with Standard & Poor's independent and highly sophisticated and unparalleled investment research, opinions, and analysis of companies' core business, corporate developments, performance, ratings, and outlook. Both stocks and mutual funds are covered. Learn how to access their authoritative publications including: Stock Reports, Industry Surveys, Bond Reports, Corporation Records, Register of Corporations, Directors and Executives, Trends & Projections, and Outlook. This class is ideal for researchers, individual investors, and job seekers.

## Wednesday, November 14, 10:00 am Shop Smarter

Are you skeptical about the reviews you find for the latest tablet computer? Are you hesitant to buy toys from an unknown website? As you prepare for the annual holiday shopping season, come to our Shop Smarter class to acquire the tools and tips that will prepare and protect you when shopping online and in stores. Learn from MI Library's wealth of up-to-date and comprehensive consumer information to become a savvy shopper this holiday season and beyond.



## Tuesday, December 4, 10:00 am How to Purchase "Tech Toys"

What are the questions you should be asking as you prepare to purchase a new gadget for yourself or as a holiday gift for another? Learn to analyze the information available from reputable websites and CNET reviews to find and compare laptops, smart phones, digital cameras, and tablets.

Classes are open to Mechanics' Institute members and guests, are free, and are held in the 3<sup>rd</sup> floor classroom unless otherwise noted. Advance registration is required for most classes, due to limited space: call 415.393.0102 or go to our website and click on the class title. <http://www.milibrary.org/class>

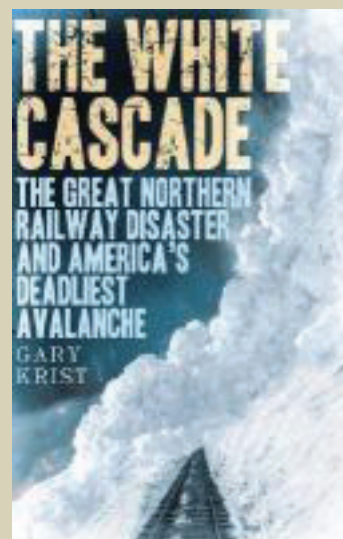
## New Book Group

(continued from page 1)

Our inaugural selection is *The White Cascade: the Great Northern Railway Disaster and America's Deadliest Avalanche* by Gary Krist. This book chronicles the immense effort that the Great Northern Railroad exerted to rescue two of their trains stranded during a blizzard in 1910 and the tragedy that occurred when an avalanche descended on the hapless victims and their rescuers.

The True Adventure Book Group will meet on the second Tuesday of each month from November, 2012 through April, 2013. The first meeting will be held on November 13th at 6:00 pm in the 4th Floor Board Room.

While walk-ins are welcome, we prefer that you reserve your spot now by visiting [www.milibrary.org/discussion](http://www.milibrary.org/discussion). Click on *The White Cascade* book cover to register.





# BOOK DISCUSSIONS



## Forgotten Classics

**Thursday, November 1, 6:00 pm, registration required**

### *Brideshead Revisited*

EVELYN WAUGH

A twentieth century author of international fame, Waugh is known as a “devastating and effective” satirist. This, his most controversial and Catholic novel, captures upper class Oxford life in the 1920s in an exquisite period piece. It was a best-seller when published in 1945, to an audience weary of war.

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## Brown Bag Mystery Readers' Book Group

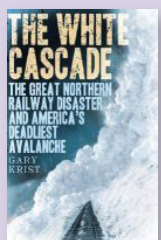
**Monday, November 12, noon; no registration required**

### *The Broken Shore*

PETER TEMPLE

Detective Joe Cashin is a big-city cop who moves to a small coastal town in Australia with hopes for correspondingly “small” problems. However, when a local philanthropist is murdered, Joe is embroiled in a crime involving family, politics and power. Award-winning author, Peter Temple, is known for his sophisticated crime procedural novels and is often compared to his peers, Michael Connelly, Lee Child and Robert Crais.

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## True Adventure Book Group

**Tuesday, November 13, 6:00 pm, registration required**

### *The White Cascade: the Great Northern Railway Disaster and America's Deadliest Avalanche*

GARY KRIST

In the early days of 1910, two trainloads of crew and passengers were stranded near the small town of Wellington in the Cascade Mountains during a horrific blizzard. While the men of the Great Northern Railroad did their best to rescue the trains, and very nearly succeeded, another catastrophe was headed towards those trains – a monstrous avalanche that was sweeping down the mountain! *The White Cascade: the Great Northern Railway Disaster and America's Deadliest Avalanche* is the first time that this tragedy has been fully documented with research from authoritative records such as telegrams, corporate archives, diaries and newspaper articles.

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## Fiction You Wish You Had Read

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

### *Cakes and Ale*

W. SOMERSET MAUGHAM

Maugham's novel is a satire of the English literary society in the 1920s. Alroy Kear is hired by the widow of a recently deceased and much-acclaimed novelist to write his biography. Complications ensue when Kear discovers that the famous novelist's first wife was a voluptuous one-time barmaid who willingly shared her favors with anyone who took her fancy.

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**Information & registration:** Visit our website <http://www.milibrary.org/events> or for more information 415.393.0118 or Diane Lai [dlai@milibrary.org](mailto:dlai@milibrary.org). All readings are available at the 2nd floor Circulation desk. All book discussions are held in the 4th floor Board Room.

## AUTHORS' CARNIVAL

Readings, workshops, and camaraderie for, by, and in support of our members who are writers.



November is National Novel Writing Month! Even if you don't plan to take part in the "50,000 words over 30 days" frenzy you can still take part in our month of fun-filled activities!

**Saturday, October 27**

**10:30 am - 12:30 pm**

4TH FLOOR BOARD ROOM

**Promote your book the easy, natural way with Carol Costello**



Are you ready to start marketing yourself and your book? This workshop takes the anxiety out of book promotion, and replaces it with a natural, authentic conversation between you and the people who most want to read what you have written. You will learn: the tools you need to promote your book and how to use them, how these tools work together in a flow to gather people and point them toward your book, and how to stay grounded and happy.

**Registration Required. Members \$35 / Public \$50**

**Tuesday, October 30, 5:30 pm**

**Get Ready to Write – Participate in NaNoWriMo**

4TH FLOOR BOARD ROOM

Come meet other MI NaNoWriMo participants and librarians Taryn Edwards and Jeremy Snell. Get help with the registration process (via NaNoWriMo's website), and find out what resources the Library has to keep you going, help you revise, and ultimately get published!

**Members Only, Free**

**Sunday, November 11, 1:00 - 4:45 pm**

**or Sunday, November 18, 1:00 - 4:45 pm**

**Get Your Blog On!**

4TH FLOOR BOARD ROOM



Are you ready to stake your claim in the cyber-world, but don't have a clue where to start? Look no further! Member Andy Haskins, Editor-in-Chief of *Mnemosyne* magazine, will walk you through it.

**Bring your laptop with WiFi or cellular internet connection. Be prepared to purchase a web hosting account if you do not already have one.**

(continued next column)

**Get Your Blog On! (continued)**

- Learn about privacy, security and intellectual property issues
- Set up a hosting account (we will use [hostgator.com](http://hostgator.com); and install WordPress
- Administer your site using WP Dashboard and mobile apps
- Create posts and pages, customize with themes and plug-ins and optimize for search engine visibility.

At the end of the seminar you will have a basic WordPress site, and will possess the tools to build more complex sites.

**Fees: \$60, payable at registration. To register, log onto [www.milibrary.org/class](http://www.milibrary.org/class), and click on "Get Your Blog On!". For more information: contact Sharon Miller at 415.393.0113.**



**Monday, December 3, 6:00 pm**

**Wrap It Up with Novelist Max Byrd**

4TH FLOOR BOARD ROOM

You've done it – written a novel in a month! Come celebrate with other NaNoWriMo winners and best-selling novelist and

Squaw Valley Writers' Conference instructor Max Byrd who will share his insights into his historical fiction writing process, present his latest book, and rap about writing!

Max Byrd began to write detective novels in 1980, honing his craft for the historical fiction works to come. For many years he has given talks on the craft of writing at the Squaw Valley Community of Writers, an annual writers' conference where he is President of the Board. His latest book, the *Paris Deadline*, has been received with much critical acclaim. For more information about Max see his website, [www.maxbyrdbooks.com](http://www.maxbyrdbooks.com). **Members and the Public, Free**

**Information and registration: See our website: [www.milibrary.org/events](http://www.milibrary.org/events) or contact Taryn Edwards [tedwards@milibrary.org](mailto:tedwards@milibrary.org) or 415.393.0103.**

# Chess

## Stephen Brandwein retires as Chess Coordinator

INTERNATIONAL MASTER JOHN DONALDSON,  
DIRECTOR OF THE CHESS ROOM

**N**ational Master Stephen Brandwein retired at the end of September, after a dozen years on the Mechanics' staff, and another decade as a volunteer.

The 69-year-old Brandwein, who was rated over 2300 and ranked in the top 50 players in the country in the mid to late 1960s, retired early as a tournament player, but has maintained a life-long interest in the game.

He served the Chess Club in many capacities, including as a tournament director and guest lecturer, but his principal duties were planning the calendar of activities, processing entries and rating tournaments. This behind-the-scenes work is seldom observed, but absolutely essential to the successful running of a chess club. Steve did many other things for the Chess Club, including helping the Library order chess books (thank Steve for the historical McFarland biographies) and researching the history of the club pre-1930 by going through years of chess columns in old San Francisco newspapers.

Mr. Reliable, who came into the club seven days a week like clockwork, is looking forward to having more time to read (mostly history and literature) and hang out with friends, but the Chess Room is grateful that he has graciously agreed to stay on-call to help out at future Mechanics' events. You don't replace a guy like Steve.



*Photo courtesy of  
Richard Shorman*

## Chess for Women

**Sundays, November 4, 11, 18, 25**

**11:00 am – 1:00 pm**

**Taught by Ewalina Krubnik**

FUNDED BY A GIFT IN MEMORY OF MARTIN  
WISKEMANN

## Tuesday Night Events

**November 6, 13, 20, 27**

**5:15 pm – 6:15 pm**

**Lecture by IM John Donaldson**

**6:30 pm – 10:30 pm**

**Fall Tuesday Night Marathons**

## Wednesday Night Blitz

**November 7, 14, 21, 27**

**6:30 pm – 8:50 pm**

**Directed by Jules Jelinek**

## Thursday Night Lessons

**November 1, 8, 15, 29**

**7:00pm – 9:00 pm**

**Taught by MI Grandmaster-in-Residence Nick de Firmian**

## Saturday Morning Chess Class for Kids Blitz

**November 3, 10, 17, 24**

**10:00 am – 12:00 pm**

**Taught by International Master Elliott Winslow**

## Tournaments

**Saturday, November 3**

**10:00 am – 8:00 pm**

**The 40th Carroll Capps  
Memorial**

**Sunday, November 4**

**10:00 am – 3:00 pm**

**Children's Quad**

**Saturday, November 10**

**10:00 am – 4:00 pm**

**Childrens' Quad**

**Saturday, November 17**

**10:00 am – 8:00 pm**

**12th Annual Saint Amant  
Memorial G/45**



Friday, November 2, 6:00 pm, 4th Floor Meeting Room

### **Carnivale Pataphysique**

Cosponsored by City Lights Booksellers & Publishers, Mechanics' Institute and the San Francisco Art Institute

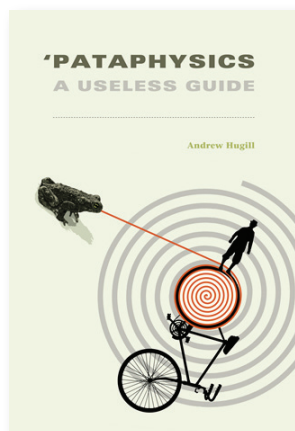
### **'Pataphysics: A Useless Guide - The Pataphysical Symposium**

WITH AUTHOR ANDREW HUGILL AND GUEST SPEAKERS NEIL SALLEY AND ROBIN WALZ

HOSTED BY PETER MARAVELIS

A round-table symposium to launch Andrew Hugill's new book *'Pataphysics: A Useless Guide* (MIT Press) with guest panelists Neil Salley and Robin Walz. Three separate pataphysical presentations will be offered and then followed by a discussion. The Pataphysical Symposium is part of a four day carnivale in San Francisco beginning on the 105th death day of Alfred Jarry, the seminal French novelist, playwright, agent provocateur, pioneer in absurdist literature, forerunner of surrealism, and influential figure upon the twentieth century avant-garde. Researchers, musicians, technicians, and poets come together from around the world celebrating the Science of 'Pataphysics, in pursuit of imaginary solutions, which symbolically attribute the properties of objects, described by their virtuality, to their lineaments. The laws of contradiction, cryptic meanings, and concealed subtexts are explored in depth through lectures, readings, demonstrations, performances, and circumambulation. For more information visit: [www.carnivalepataphysique.net](http://www.carnivalepataphysique.net)

**Members and cosponsors Free; Public \$12**



## **Save the date!**

**Wednesday, December 5, 2:00 pm – 6:00 pm**

### **Holiday Book Sale**

4TH FLOOR MEETING ROOM

Last minute holiday shoppers can come and select the perfect gifts for friends, family, colleagues, or significant others! A delightful and diverse selection of hard-covers, paperbacks, book art, posters, and more will be available for purchase. The café will be open for refreshments. *Your purchases benefit both Library programs and the Events Department.*

**Open to the public, Free**

**Thursday, December 6**

### **Bi-Annual Members' Meeting**

4TH FLOOR MEETING ROOM

**5:30 pm Reception, 6:00 pm Members' Meeting**

**6:45 pm Author event: *Mad Science* with Randy Alfred**

**Thursday, December 13, 5:30 pm - 7:00 pm**

### **Holiday Gathering**

2ND FLOOR LIBRARY

Musical interludes, gourmet cheeses, hors d'oeuvres, delectable desserts, and tempting libations! Advance Reservations Required. To reserve or for more information, see <http://www.milibrary.org/events/holiday2012>

**Members and Guests, admission \$10**



57 Post Street, San Francisco,  
CA 94104

[www.milibrary.org](http://www.milibrary.org)

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Reservation hotline: 415.393.0100

E-mail: [reference@milibrary.org](mailto:reference@milibrary.org)

Library Hours

Monday - Thursday: 9 am - 9 pm

Friday: 9 am - 6 pm

Saturday: 10 am - 5 pm

Sunday: 1 pm - 5 pm

Taryn Edwards, Interim Editor