



# MECHANICS' INSTITUTE

## MEMBERS' NEWSLETTER

57 POST STREET • SAN FRANCISCO

WWW.MILIBRARY.ORG

FALL/WINTER 2013

### INSTITUTE

## DEB HUNT: OUR NEW LIBRARY DIRECTOR



July 15, 2013 was the first day on the job for Deborah Hunt, the 17th Library Director of the Mechanics' Institute. Deb had Sharon Miller's counsel for two weeks as we transitioned between Library Directors.

Deb comes to us with 26 years experience as a librarian, teacher, and consultant to the library industry. She managed the Library Technology certificate and A.S. degree programs at Diablo Valley College, headed the Learning Commons library at the Exploratorium, and was the principal of her own consulting firm, Information Edge for 26 years. In addition, she is the current president of the international Special Libraries Association and the former president (two times) of the Bay Area Library and Information Network (BayNet). Her resume lists 23 professional presentations, 11 published papers, 5 professional awards, and 10 teaching and trainings assignments. She is the coauthor of the just published book *The Librarian's Skillbook: 51 Essential Skills for Information Professionals*. She has a Master of Library Science degree from UC Berkeley and has lived in the East Bay for decades.

I think of her as a "rock star" in the library world but I'm sure you will find her very approachable and available; I certainly do.

— Jim Flack  
Executive Director

### INSTITUTE

## LIBRARIAN BROUGHT BASEBALL TO JAPAN

It was a typical day in March when a young librarian from Japan's Baseball Hall of Fame and Museum knocked on the door of the 3rd floor. "Have you heard of Horace Wilson?" he asked. Taku Chinone, a librarian himself, was here to see the place where his hero, Hall of Famer Horace Wilson, worked for sixteen years. Never heard of Horace Wilson? Well, Wilson was Head Librarian of MI from 1878 to 1894 and later a trustee. He is credited for bringing the sport of baseball to Japan and was inducted into the Tokyo Baseball Hall of Fame in 2003.

Born in Gorham, Maine in 1843 to a family of farmers, Horace Wilson came to San Francisco with his wife Mary in 1868 after serving in the Civil War. He worked as a bookkeeper and teacher. Meanwhile, Japan, eager to modernize its university system, offered attractive salaries to American instructors and artisans who would teach English and western ways. On September 1, 1871, Wilson sailed for Yokohama

to accept a position at what is now known as Tokyo University. Loving baseball so much he brought with him some bats and gloves and during breaks from their studies taught his students the finer points of the game.



The brass plaque depicting Horace Wilson that hangs in the Tokyo Baseball Hall of Fame  
<http://www.baseball-museum.or.jp>

Horace Wilson's time in Japan was over by December 1877. By then he was back in San Francisco and certified to teach first grade. Shortly thereafter he would assume duties as Librarian at the Mechanics' Institute. His wife Mary was a cultured woman who lectured on art and literature and was a president of the Century Club. The Wilsons were good friends of Andrew and Martha Hallidie and were members of the Unitarian Church. Horace Wilson died in 1925. While perhaps a forgotten name in this town, Wilson is certainly now recalled fondly here at MI.

— Taryn Edwards  
Member Relations and Marketing Specialist

## LIBRARY

<b>Library Director</b>	Deborah Hunt (415) 393-0113
<b>Circulation</b>	(415) 393-0101
<b>Reference</b>	(415) 393-0102
<b>Website</b>	www.milibrary.org
<b>Email</b>	reference@milibrary.org

### Hours

<b>Mon. - Thurs.</b>	9 am - 9 pm
<b>Friday</b>	9 am - 6 pm
<b>Saturday</b>	10 am - 5 pm
<b>Sunday</b>	1 pm - 5 pm

## ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICES

<b>Executive Director</b>	James M. Flack (415) 393-0117
<b>Accounting</b>	(415) 393-0108
<b>Building</b>	(415) 393-0106
<b>Events</b>	(415) 393-0114
<b>Membership</b>	(415) 393-0105
<b>Fax</b>	(415) 421-1770

## CHESS ROOM

<b>Chess Director</b>	John Donaldson (415) 393-0110
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### Hours

<b>Weekdays</b>	9 am - 9 pm
<b>Weekends</b>	9 am - 5 pm

## HOLIDAYS

The Library and Chess Room  
will be closed on:

November 28 – 29	Thanksgiving
December 24 – 25	Christmas
January 1	New Year's
January 20	MLK Jr. Day
February 17	Presidents' Day
April 20	Easter Sunday
May 26	Memorial Day
July 4	Independence Day
September 1	Labor Day
October 13	Columbus Day
November 11	Veterans' Day

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## EVENTS

# AN HISTORIC BEAT REUNION

One of the most exhilarating events last Summer was the **Ginsberg Beat Reunion: A Celebratory Night of Performances, Panels and a Beat Café** held on Friday, July 12, 2013. Over 200 people attended the second night of **The Allen Ginsberg Festival** co-produced with the Contemporary Jewish Museum and City Lights Books and Publishing.

This provocative four-day festival was created to animate the life and work of Allen Ginsberg and compliment the exhibition, **Beat Memories: The Photographs of Allen Ginsberg** at the CJM (May 23 to Sept. 8, 2013). The exhibit featured black and white photos taken by Ginsberg portraying his life-long friendships with writers such as William Burroughs, Neal Cassidy, Jack Kerouac, Philip Lamantia and Lawrence Ferlingetti.

Mechanics' Institute member Alan Kaufman, author of *Drunken Angel*, co-curated and moderated the **Beat Reunion** panel. Local authors and experts on the Beat era and its literature were brought together including Neeli Cherkovski, Jerry Cimino, Brenda Knight, Don Lattin, Regina Marler, Gerald Nicosia, David Talbot, archivist Steve Silberman, documentarian Kush Cloudhouse, and other special guests.

The Beat Café opened with dramatic readings of Ginsberg's seminal poems performed by actors Bruce Bierman and Naomi Newman. "Goddess of the Beats" ruth weiss, accompanied by Hal Davis on drum, presented her unique poetry jazz which she first brought to the cafes of North Beach in 1952. Her poems pulsed with the undercurrents and mind-set of the time.

In the Library, Alan Kaufman remarked that Ginsberg was an engaged and ever-evolving person from his interests in Buddhist meditation to speaking truth to power. "He out-famed Robert Frost in his day... and was the first poet in post WWII America to look inward at a time that America was looking outward."

The first panel, **The Prophetic Voice: Blake, Whitman and Ginsberg**, connected Ginsberg back to his poetic "mentors." Neeli Cherkovski stated that "Ginsberg loved William Blake's *Songs of Innocence*." Blake's visionary and mystical themes of "oneness" and "collective consciousness" are infused throughout his work. Whitman's epic *Leaves of Grass* with its universal, political, personal voices also inspired Ginsberg as seen in *Howl* and *America*. In *A Supermarket in California* Ginsberg summons his muse, "What thoughts I have of you tonight, Walt Whitman....Ah, dear father, graybeard, lonely old courage-teacher..."

After intermission, the actors returned with a choral reading of the *Sunflower Sutra*, Ginsberg's fiery meditation on the "American industrial complex", materialism, and the essence of self. Then Kaufman invited Kush Cloudhouse to offer a spontaneous reading. Kush had the audience on their feet – arms outstretched – reciting Blake in jubilant recitation with him.



Photo credit: Dennis Hearne.

The next panel explored **The Life and Times of Allen Ginsberg**. Journalists David Talbot and Don Lattin commented on the political context that surrounded Ginsberg and how as an outspoken anti-war activist and gay man,

SEE PAGE 3



Poet Ruth Weiss accompanied by Hal Davis.  
Photo credit: Dennis Hearne.

he influenced the zeitgeist of his time and the subsequent political and social movements of the '60s and '70s. Brenda Knight commented that Ginsberg's influence spread to other countries and that he had a major impact on the student uprising of the Prague Spring.

Ginsberg was the "heart-beat" of the Beat Generation. He gave expression and momentum to the youth of his day. He was a catalyst and leader among his fellow poets and artists throughout his life. His unwavering honesty, compassion, and self-determination are the

great and lasting qualities of his work and legacy.

— *Laura Sheppard*  
Events Director

## CHES

# YOUTH OUTREACH CHESS PROGRAM

At the beginning of the Mechanics' Institute in 1854, education was the high priority of the library. The resources of practical knowledge helped transform the rapidly expanding gold rush city. Yet from the start the Institute thought it important to include the leisure activity of chess for its members.

Now in the 21st Century there is a national trend to help school children's education by introducing chess into the classroom. This helps the early development of children by promoting logical thinking. While this educational method had been extensively developed in many urban centers of the U.S., San Francisco had been neglected. Hence, a natural decision for the Mechanics' Institute was to step in to fill the void.

The origins of the Mechanics' Youth Outreach Chess Program date to the 1990's, when our long standing trustee Neil Falconer began the program. In March 2012, I was hired to expand the program. We are now serving 16 schools (or youth centers) and will reach our interim goal of 20 by the end of 2013. While we try to help any school that asks for our program, the main focus is on inner-city elementary schools, and thus we seek out schools in the disadvantaged districts.

The current program provides classes in the Mission District to Marshall Elementary School, Buena Vista-Horace Mann K-8 school and 7 Teepees Youth Center; in the Tenderloin to Tenderloin

Elementary; in Hunter's Point to Bret Harte Elementary and Malcolm X Elementary Schools; in the Castro to Everett Middle School; in the Portola district to Alta Vista Elementary; in Potrero Hill to Potrero Hill Neighborhood House; in Glen Park to Glen Park Elementary School; in the Merced district to Lowell High School; in North Beach to Yick Wo Elementary and Francisco Middle Schools; in downtown San Francisco to Notre Dame de Victoire Elementary School; in the Excelsior to Cleveland



Kids learning chess under Grandmaster-in-Residence  
Nick de Firmian

Elementary; and in the Western Addition to Wallenberg High School.

SEE **CHES** PAGE 8

SINCE

1854



MECHANICS' INSTITUTE  
LIBRARY & CHESS ROOM

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# DANIEL NARODITSKY - GRANDMASTER AT AGE 17

The big news for the Chess Room the past six months was the awarding of the Grandmaster title to Daniel Naroditsky by F.I.D.E. (Federation Internationale des Echecs ) in mid-October. This is a supreme accomplishment for any chess player let alone one who has yet to celebrate his 18th birthday! To put things in perspective, less than forty native-born Americans have received the title since F.I.D.E. starting awarding it in 1950.

Daniel first started playing at the Mechanics' ten years ago and almost immediately started making rapid progress. He first showed hints of greatness with his victory in the World Under 12 Championship in Turkey in 2007 and he has gone from strength to strength with this past summer witnessing a spectacular breakthrough. A victory in the U.S. Junior Closed (an elite event open to the top eight juniors under 21) this past June was followed by Grandmaster results in two Spanish tournaments and a very strong event in Riga, Latvia.

Now Daniel is helping the Mechanics' Institute Chess Club entry in the United States Chess League, an Internet-based competition involving 16 major cities across the country. The Mechanics' has won the Pacific Division with one round to go and Daniel is one of the team's top scorers with five points from six games.

There are ten players on the roster and typical of the Mechanics' Institute Chess Club's emphasis on fostering young talent, Daniel is actually the fifth oldest player. The youngest, Siddarth Banik, who recently turned 12, is a perfect four from four this season. The Mechanics' hope to qualify for the playoffs and then repeat as league champions as they did in 2006.

— John Donaldson  
Chess Director



Daniel Naroditsky playing in the U. S. Junior Closed.  
Photo provided by the Chess Club and Scholastic Center of St. Louis.

## INSTITUTE

# UPCOMING EVENTS

### ANNUAL HOLIDAY GATHERING

Thursday, December 12

5:30 pm - 7:00 pm • 2nd floor Library

Join members and friends for holiday cheer and lively conversation while relaxing to musical interludes. Enjoy gourmet cheeses and hors d'oeuvres, delectable desserts and tempting libations!

Admission \$10. Open to Members & Guests.

**ADVANCE RESERVATIONS REQUIRED**

Call 415.393.0100 or online at [www.milibrary.org/events](http://www.milibrary.org/events)



Scene from the 2012 Holiday Gathering.  
This event always sells out, get your tickets early!

### HOLIDAY BOOK SALE

Wednesday, December 4

11:00 am - 4:00 pm

4th floor Meeting Room & Cafe

Last minute holiday shoppers—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. Café open for refreshments. **Free to All.**

### MEMBERS' MEETING

Thursday, December 5

4th floor Meeting Room & Cafe

5:30 pm Reception and Refreshments

6:00 pm Meeting

Join us for our bi-annual Members' Meeting.

Meet our new Library Director Deb Hunt and hear from the staff about new plans, technology updates, and our efforts to improve your experience as members. **A vote will be taken to amend our Articles of Incorporation.**

**Members and Guests Free.**



# NET ASSETS INCREASE

From the summary financial statement below, you can see that the Net Assets, made up primarily of the investment portfolio, increased more than \$1.7 million dollars during the fiscal year ending August 31, 2013. We started the year with Net Assets of \$15.1 million and ended the year with \$16.8 million. The most significant difference between 2012 and 2013 was an improvement in the value of our endowment's investment portfolio due in part to receipt of slightly more than \$1 million in bequests. Each year we have an operating shortfall that is covered by the endowment. By policy, we budget this support at 5% of the investment portfolio, which resulted in \$597,000 of support for the fiscal year ending August 31, 2013. Due primarily to increased personnel expenses providing increased member services, we ran an additional operating deficit of \$60,700.

For the fourth year in a row, I am relieved that we made it through these difficult years with so little financial damage operationally while at the same time improving our balance sheet.

— Jim Flack  
Executive Director

**Mechanics' Institute  
Summary Financial Data  
For the Years Ended August 31, 2013 and 2012  
Summary Statements of Changes in Net Assets**

	<u>2013</u>	<u>2012</u>
Revenues and Support		
Member dues	\$258,089	260,854
Library, Events & Chess Room	102,633	91,159
Rental income	1,105,388	1,083,132
Bequests and donations	1,397,082	355,310
Dividend and interest income	14,279	19,413
Net realized gains from sales of investments	2,445,176	171,275
Increase (decrease) in fair value of investments	(1,006,332)	1,462,460
Other income	118,128	4,310
Total Revenues and Support	<u>4,434,443</u>	<u>3,447,913</u>
Expenses		
Library, Events & Chess Room	1,444,526	1,272,875
Building	715,022	679,695
Management and general	550,247	516,564
Other expenses	11,257	8,042
Total Expenses	<u>2,721,052</u>	<u>2,477,176</u>
Changes in Net Assets	<u>\$1,713,391</u>	<u>970,737</u>

**Summary Statements of Financial Position  
August 31, 2013 and 2012**

Assets		
Cash, accounts receivable and prepaid expenses	\$254,186	165,375
Investments at fair value	16,197,913	14,816,636
Building and equipment at cost	688,541	568,032
Total Assets	<u>17,140,640</u>	<u>15,550,043</u>
Liabilities and Net Assets		
Accounts payable and accrued expenses	\$301,302	328,156
Tenant deposits	45,382	141,322
Total Liabilities	<u>346,684</u>	<u>469,478</u>
Net Assets	<u>16,793,956</u>	<u>15,080,565</u>
Total Liabilities and Net Assets	<u>\$17,140,640</u>	<u>15,550,043</u>

Please contact the Executive Director for a complete set of financial statements.

# THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT

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The classes average 15-20 kids for each of the fall and spring semesters, thus currently serving over 500 kids per year. The chess program has become very popular with the kids and earned us much gratitude from the teachers, principals and school district officials.

The program is free for the schools thanks to the support of the Mechanics' Institute itself, several foundations and individual donors.

— Nick de Firmian  
Grandmaster-in-Residence



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Contact Executive Director Jim Flack at 415-393-0117 to learn how to become a member of the James Lick Legacy Society and help to ensure the future of the Mechanics' Institute's library and chess room.

