



# MECHANICS' INSTITUTE MEMBERS' NEWSLETTER

57 POST STREET • SAN FRANCISCO

WWW.MILIBRARY.ORG

FALL/WINTER 2012

## INSTITUTE

### NEIL FALCONER RETIRES

#### PORTRAIT INSTALLED IN BOARD ROOM

*The following caption will appear alongside the portrait (on right) to be installed in the Board Room on the fourth floor.*

“The longest serving trustee in Mechanics’ Institute history, Neil Falconer first visited the Chess Room in 1938 as a high school student. He joined the Institute in 1945 while still in the U.S. Army, stationed in the East Bay. Neil soon established himself as one of the strongest chess players in California, finishing third in the state championship in 1946 and winning the California Open title at Atascadero in 1951. He won the US Senior Champion title in 1992.

When Neil retired from the board of Trustees in 2012 he had served 39 years (1973 to 2012). Of the 408 trustees in 158 year history of Mechanics’, only 22 Trustees have served more than 20 years. Neil also served as President, first in 1988 and again from 1993 to 1995.

Neil is an avid reader and a steady proponent of maintaining the quality of the library’s collection. In 1949 he joined a prominent San Francisco law firm where he would later become a name partner – Steinhart and Falconer.”

— Jim Flack  
Executive Director



Photo credit: Mechanics’ Institute Library Archives

## LIBRARY

### LIBRARY PROGRAMMING IN FULL SWING



Our stalwart bartenders at Book'toberfest. From left to right, Dana Edwards, Bill Webster, and John Miller. Photo by Aren Boerhave.

If you haven't attended a Library program in the past year you have missed a terrific opportunity to network with fellow members, and learn something at the same time. In the past year the Library staff have orchestrated over seventy book discussions, taught four or five classes every month, and designed over a dozen programs highlighting the creativity of the writers in our midst. In September we produced the second annual Book'toberfest celebration of local publishing and beer, moving to a Friday night and filling the Library's second floor with interested writers, readers, and beer lovers.

Many programs throughout the year are of interest to members of our seven writers' groups and indie-publishers, as well as authors working on their own. Sharing with other writers lessons learned in self-publishing, or the research involved in making a film, or creating poetry in a “flash” are all topics that brought in members and guests to one-of-a-kind programs. Librarians worked with professionals from our membership to offer workshops on editing, writing book proposals, and a field trip to a publishing house.

This year we expanded the opportunities for members to talk

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## LIBRARY

**Library Director** Sharon Miller  
(415) 393-0113  
**Circulation** (415) 393-0101  
**Reference** (415) 393-0102  
**Website** www.milibrary.org  
**Email** reference@milibrary.org

### Hours

**Mon. - Thurs.** 9 am - 9 pm  
**Friday** 9 am - 6 pm  
**Saturday** 10 am - 5 pm  
**Sunday** 1 pm - 5 pm

## ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICES

**Executive Director** James M. Flack  
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**Building** (415) 393-0106  
**Events** (415) 393-0114  
**Membership** (415) 393-0105  
**Fax** (415) 421-1770

## CHESS ROOM

**Chess Director** John Donaldson  
(415) 393-0110

### Hours

**Weekdays** 9 am - 9 pm  
**Weekends** 9 am - 5 pm

## HOLIDAYS

The Library and Chess Room  
will be closed on:

November 22 – 23	Thanksgiving
December 25	Christmas
January 1	New Year's
January 21	MLK Jr. Day
February 18	Presidents' Day
March 31	Easter Sunday
May 27	Memorial Day
July 4	Independence Day
September 2	Labor Day
October 14	Columbus Day

57 POST STREET • SAN FRANCISCO • 94104

## EVENTS

# A BOOK COLLECTOR'S PASSION

A slender Hogarth edition published by Virginia and Leonard Woolf, with a brown, art deco cover by artist Vanessa Bell; a lavishly illustrated children's book with pink pages; an especially rare edition of a Random House book (only 1,000 were printed, 800 of which were pulped) that opens with a preface from Bennett Cerf admitting he has no idea what the author is saying. These were just a few of the Gertrude Stein treasures collector Hans Gallas shared with an intimate audience on the evening of October 16th.



Photo credit: Patricia Lundberg, Executive Director, Humanities West; Hans Gallas, book collector; Laura Sheppard, Events Director, Mechanics' Institute on October 16, 2012.

Authors frequently come to the Mechanics' Institute to read from and discuss their latest works. On this night, Gallas examined not just the contents of Stein's books, but the books themselves, ranging from fragile, tenderly preserved early paperbacks to sturdy American editions designed by Ernst Reichl, to copies from Gertrude and Alice's own self-publishing house, Plain Editions. "Gertrude liked books to be small enough put in a pocket," Gallas observed, holding up a small Plain Edition tome about the size of a modern mass-market paperback. "Can't you just imagine her popping this into the pocket of one of her vests?"

In an era where books are being downloaded wirelessly onto iPads and Kindles, it's easy to forget the importance of actual bound books, and the brick and mortar stores that sold them in the early 20th century. Gallas' talk on literary American expatriates in Paris touched on Stein's tussles with editors, and her breakthrough with *The Autobiography of Alice B. Toklas*. And of course, no talk on 1920s literary Paris would be complete without mentioning Sylvia Beach's Shakespeare and Company, the store which served as a haven for writers and, as the first publisher of James Joyce's *Ulysses*, "Ground Zero" for the modernist movement.

— Pamela Troy  
Events Assistant

## JOIN US AT THESE 2013 EVENTS



Thursday, January 10, 6:00 pm  
*The Painted Word: A Treasure Chest of Remarkable Words and Their Origins*,  
Phil Cousineau



Thursday, January 24, 7:30 pm  
Music @ Mechanics': Paul McCandless & Antonio Calogero in Concert



Thursday, February 7, 6:00 pm  
*How the French Invented Love*, Marilyn Yalom

— Laura Sheppard  
Events Director



# THANKS TO OUR VOLUNTEERS

We appreciate our 2012 volunteers  
for their time, efforts, and enthusiastic support of  
the Events Department and Library activities.

Michele Anderson  
Paulette Aroesty  
Lori Austin  
Adele Behar  
Robert Benson  
Cassandra Clark  
Carol Dietrich  
Dana Edwards  
Charles Fracchia  
Joyce Frankenberg  
Owen Gilmore



Frequent volunteers  
Diana and Jade Greer at  
the 2011 Holiday Party.

Diana Greer  
Jade Greer  
Joann Hays  
Yvette Hochberg  
Judith Kahn  
Diane Maurice  
John Miller  
Karen Pearson  
Theodora Rossi  
Elena Sheehan  
Bill Webster

## LIBRARY

(continued from page 3)

about books with each other. In several of our groups participants take turns leading the discussion; two other discussions are more formal. Mysteries of all types have been discussed by a lively and opinionated group who never tire of suggesting new authors. Next spring we will celebrate the 10th anniversary of our *Brown Bag Mystery Readers* group.

More structured discussion groups include *Forgotten Classics*, facilitated by member Charles Fracchia who selects titles from a global list for the quarterly meetings, and the Proust *In Remembrance of Lost Time* reading group which is in its 11th year and more popular than ever. All of our discussion groups welcome new participants.

The librarians and IT staff are working together to prepare classes to instruct members in the use of our library digital resources and changing technology tools, as well as using library print resources. Consumer-related and financial newsletters are popular topics for classes, along with 30-minute individual appointments with our IT staff. Research tools in several subject areas are under development for members and will be available online and in the Library soon.

New this year was a four-week discussion series studying the Simpson-Bowles and Domenici-Rivlin solutions for reducing the national debt. More than a dozen members committed to the serious reading and discussion required to make this an opportunity for civic discourse, led by two members with expertise in public policy and finance.

Look forward also, on December 1st, to our first children's story time in recent years. Bundle up and bring the children to enjoy a reading of Caldecott winner *The Snowy Day* by Ezra Jack Keats. Crafts, cocoa, and cookies will follow the story.

Library programs create a network among our members that increases engagement with what we all love – books! We welcome readers, writers, and lifelong learners to participate in our community. Take time to browse our website for the full listing of the activities available to members.



Sharon Miller and Taryn Edwards introducing the panel at Book'toberfest. Photo by Aren Boerhave.

— Sharon Miller  
Library Director

SINCE  
1854



MECHANICS' INSTITUTE  
LIBRARY & CHESS ROOM

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# CHESS YOUTH PROGRAMS

The Mechanics' Institute Chess Club is a place where all lovers of the royal game are welcome, from beginner to Grandmaster. Some come to the 4th floor to meet old friends and play casual games, but others are more ambitious. They want access to the Mechanics' rated tournament play, lectures, and over 1500 books on chess. Even with these resources, progress for adult beginners has to be tempered with reality – they will improve but they will not become Grandmasters no matter how hard they study. Youngsters do not have these limitations and the recent crop of young talents that has appeared at 57 Post Street is ample proof of this.

20-year-old Sam Shankland of Orinda, third in the 2011 U.S. Championship, has already earned the Grandmaster title, and the player he shared first with in the recent Imre Konig Memorial, 16-year-old Daniel Naroditsky of Foster City, is not only rated number one in his age group in the entire country, but has nearly completed the necessary requirements for the GM title.



(left) 16-year-old Daniel Naroditsky of Foster City;  
(right) 20-year-old Sam Shankland of Orinda.

Right behind Daniel is Sam Sevia of Santa Clara. While Sam doesn't have any Grandmaster norms yet he does have two of the three necessary results for the International Master title – not bad for an 11-year-old!



As good as the recent group of juniors is there might be a stronger bunch coming up in the next few years thanks to the expanded M.I.'s Youth Outreach Chess Program. Led by Mechanics' Institute Grandmaster-in-Residence Nick deFirmian, this program is bringing chess to more and more San Francisco children who are taught the rudiments of the game at their school. Soon they are coming to attend Saturday Classes for Children at the Institute and check out chess books with serious tournament play to follow.

The cycle of learning at the Mechanics' Institute is stronger than ever.

— John Donaldson  
Chess Director

## INSTITUTE

# UPCOMING EVENTS



### MEMBERS' MEETING AND AUTHOR PROGRAM

**Thursday, December 6, 2012**  
**4th floor Meeting Room & Cafe**  
**5:30 pm Reception**  
**6:00 pm Meeting**  
**6:45 pm Program with Randy Alfred**

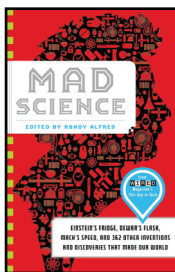
Join us for our bi-annual Members' Meeting and hear from the staff about new plans, technology updates, and our efforts to improve your experience as members. The meeting will be followed by speaker Randy Alfred, presenting his new book *Mad Science: Einstein's Fridge, Dewar's Flask, Mach's Speed, and 362 Other Inventions and Discoveries That Made Our World*.

**Members' and Guests Free.**

Randy Alfred is Editor of "This Day in Tech." He joined Wired.com as a copy editor in 2007. He also worked as senior news writer at Paul Allen's Tech TV cable channel. He lives in San Francisco.



(photo by Jim Merithew, Wired)



### HOLIDAY GIFT, BOOK & POSTER SALE

**Wednesday, December 5, 2:00 pm - 6:00 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.

### ANNUAL HOLIDAY GATHERING

**Thursday, December 13**  
**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. Reservations Required: 415.393.0100 or [rsvp@milibrary.org](mailto:rsvp@milibrary.org)

# NET ASSETS INCREASE

From the summary financial statement below, you can see that the Net Assets, made up primarily of the investment portfolio, increased almost a million dollars during the fiscal year ending August 31, 2012. We started the year with Net Assets of \$14.1 million and ended the year with \$15.1 million. The most significant difference between 2011 and 2012 was an improvement in the value of our endowment's investment portfolio.

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 \$536,000 of support for the fiscal year ending August 31, 2012. Due primarily to increased personnel expenses providing increased member services, we ran an additional operating deficit of \$82,000.

For the third 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, 2012 and 2011  
Summary Statements of Changes in Net Assets**

	<u>2012</u>	<u>2011</u>
Revenues and Support		
Member dues	\$260,854	250,304
Library, Events & Chess Room	91,159	83,270
Rental income	1,083,132	997,811
Bequests and donations	355,310	275,089
Dividend and interest income	19,413	11,216
Net realized gains from sales of investments	171,275	114,272
Increase in fair value of investments	1,462,460	1,260,441
Other income	4,310	1,788
Total Revenues and Support	<u>3,447,913</u>	<u>2,994,191</u>
Expenses		
Library, Events & Chess Room	1,272,875	1,204,656
Building	679,695	705,845
Management and general	516,564	520,226
Other expenses	8,042	9,953
Total Expenses	<u>2,477,176</u>	<u>2,440,680</u>
Changes in Net Assets	<u>\$970,737</u>	<u>553,511</u>

**Summary Statements of Financial Position  
August 31, 2012 and 2011**

Assets		
Cash, accounts receivable and prepaid expenses	\$165,375	307,216
Investments at fair value	14,816,636	13,638,822
Building and equipment at cost	568,032	593,809
Total Assets	<u>15,550,043</u>	<u>14,539,847</u>
Liabilities and Net Assets		
Accounts payable and accrued expenses	\$328,156	290,435
Tenant deposits	141,322	139,584
Total Liabilities	<u>469,478</u>	<u>430,019</u>
Net Assets	<u>15,080,565</u>	<u>14,109,828</u>
Total Liabilities and Net Assets	<u>\$15,550,043</u>	<u>14,539,847</u>

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



# THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT

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