

# Mechanics' Institute

## ANNUAL REPORT 2016



# Executive Director's Message



*Bobbie Monzon, Director of Operations, Don Meyer, Board of Trustees, and Ralph Lewin, inspecting work on 57 Post*

The Mechanics' Institute is a place that awakens the human longing for beauty, connection and excellence. Here, we are surrounded by great stories, big ideas, and people who care.

In this annual report you will see what a tremendous year we have had. Membership levels haven't been this high in over fifteen years. The front of our building has been transformed. The library is thriving with readers, writers, and digital nomads. Our programs are varied and lively, and our chess program is more popular than it's ever been - both at Mechanics' and in twenty public schools in San Francisco.

If you look at the budget, you'll also notice a remarkable increase in donations. To me, this reflects your appreciation for and commitment to the Mechanics' Institute. Please remember us in your year-end giving and estate planning.

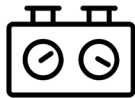
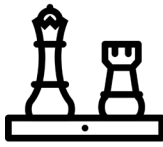
On behalf of the board and staff, please know that we are deeply grateful for your support.

With best wishes,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "RALPH".

Ralph Lewin, Executive Director

# By the Numbers



## Chess

The Chess Room averaged 1815 visitors per month in 2016, with 40 Tuesday Night Marathons attracting 120 players per round.

The library includes 2500 chess books in its collection.

Our Scholastic Chess Outreach Program reaches 500 students every week, in 20 Title I schools across the city.

In its 3rd year, The San Francisco Scholastic Chess Championship attracted 300 participants, and earned a Mayoral Certificate of Honor.

## Events

The Events Department hosted 70 social gatherings, panel discussions, author talks, and CinemalIt Salons in 2016, as well as co-sponsoring offsite gallery talks and presentations, with more than 60 members and members of the public in attendance for each.

Last year's annual holiday gathering was attended by 200 members and guests, and the Events Department also hosted or supported donor receptions, staff events, member meetings, and chess receptions throughout the year.

## Library

More than 3800 visits per month are made to the library by members. Library staff answered more than 17,000 reference and instructional queries during the year, checked out 59,000 print and 2754 electronic materials to members, and averaged 34 attendees at each of 55 Library-sponsored programs, including walking tours, TED Talks, Writers' Lunches, and discussion group meetings.

Librarians...

- ...taught 50 classes in 2016, averaging 7 students at each class meeting.

- ...offered 10 long- and short- term monthly book groups during the year, serving 876 readers throughout the year.

- ...facilitated 6 writers' groups and a monthly writers' lunch. Combined, writers' services reached 110 member writers every month.

- ...led 60 weekday and evening building tours, for a total of 898 curious attendees.

## Membership

The Institute's website was accessed 144,348 times this year – an average of 400 visits per day!

At 4880 members, the Institute has seen an increase of 12% in total membership over the last seven years, including 16 new lifetime members. The fastest-growing demographic for Mechanics' Institute membership is people under the age of 40.

During the past year, 17% of members made at least one donation above and beyond their annual dues. Nearly 30 members volunteered their time to foster and sustain the Institute, and more than 60 members donated materials to support the Institute's mission.



# Chess Club Wins the Gold!

The Mechanics' Institute houses a well rounded library, thriving chess club and stimulating program of events and activities which support and inspire our members' creative achievements and intellectual growth. Through our services we aim to build a contemplative, curious and creative community that will inspire a bold future for the San Francisco Bay Area.



(L to R) Ralph Lewin and Scholastic Chess Tournament participants accept the Mayoral Certificate of Honor from Derick Brown on behalf of Mechanics' Institute; gold-winning U.S. Chess Team; Chess Room volunteer Renate Otterbach

## Chess Club wins the Gold!

The Mechanics' Chess Club carries on its charge as a home for all chess players from beginners to Grandmasters, with two of its members – Sam Shankland and Daniel Naroditsky – having made the entire journey as members of the MI Chess Club. Each of these players joined as a novice and is now ranked in the top 100 hundred chess players in the world. In September, the U.S. Chess Team brought home the gold medal at the 42nd Chess Olympiad in Baku, Azerbaijan – for the first time in 40 years. Captained by MI Chess Room Director John Donaldson and anchored by Sam Shankland, the U.S. team finished the competition undefeated.

The Tuesday Night Marathon series continues to be a Chess Club cornerstone, held over 40 weeknights in 2016 and averaging 120 players per round. Competitors range in age from 6 to 86, come from as far away as Santa Rosa, San Jose and Vacaville, and have diverse backgrounds. It is not unusual to see elementary school students, tech workers, and retirees playing together and conversing, not only in the universal language of chess, but also in Mongolian, Russian, Armenian, Polish, German, Chinese, Tagalog, Farsi, Thai, Spanish, Dutch, Tamil, Hindi, and English.

The Chess Club hosts several activities including All-Ages and Women's Chess classes, and the Scholastic Outreach program. Now, in its fifth year, the Scholastic Outreach program concentrates on Title I schools, which serve students coming from low-income households, because studies indicate that the benefits of chess make a big impact on this demographic. Additionally, the Chess Club regularly provides space for pickup games, tournament play, and special blitz events.



Scholastic Chess Tournament players; photos copyright, Mark Pinto

# Learn, Engage, Discuss



Paul Freedman, Paolo Lucchesi, "Ten Restaurants That Changed America" author talk

## Learn, engage, discuss

In 2016, the Events Department presented more than 70 programs including author events, tours, gallery talks, lectures, and discussions on socio-political issues. These events enhanced the member experience, attracted new members, and increased the Institute's stature. Partnerships with institutions such as AIA, Irish Historical Society, Humanities West, and City Lights Books fostered diversity in audience, speakers, and themes. Popular presentations from the last year included the "Voices of the Easter Rising 1916" theatrical performance, a week of Litquake readings and discussions, and the "Cervantes and Shakespeare" lecture marking the 400 year anniversary of their death. Panels such as "The End of the Library (As We Know It)?" and "Power to the People" engaged audiences with topical discussions. The CinemaLit film series sustains a dedicated core of regulars who enjoy a Friday night out with fellow film buffs to view films, meet special guests, nosh on popcorn, and engage in thought-provoking conversation.

In the coming year, look forward to the introduction of thematic programming that will center the Institute as a literary hub, focus on today's "mechanics" – the craftsmen and artisans of our own era – and explore the historical and current transformations of San Francisco as a place, as well as a state of mind.



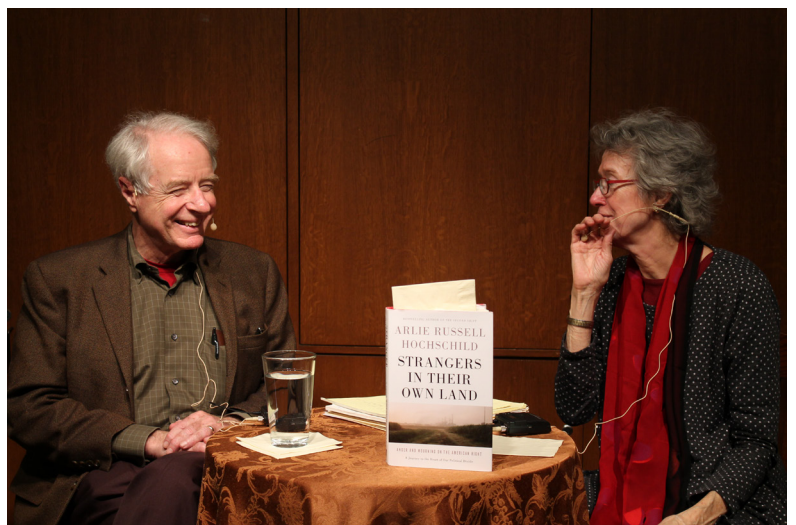
(L) Kim-Mai Cutler, "Power to the People" panel moderator



(R) Cathy O'Neil, "Weapons of Math Destruction" author talk



Litquake Panels *The Art of the Thriller*, *The Art of the Novel*



Adam Hochschild and Arlie Russell Hochschild, "Deep South Double Bill" discussion

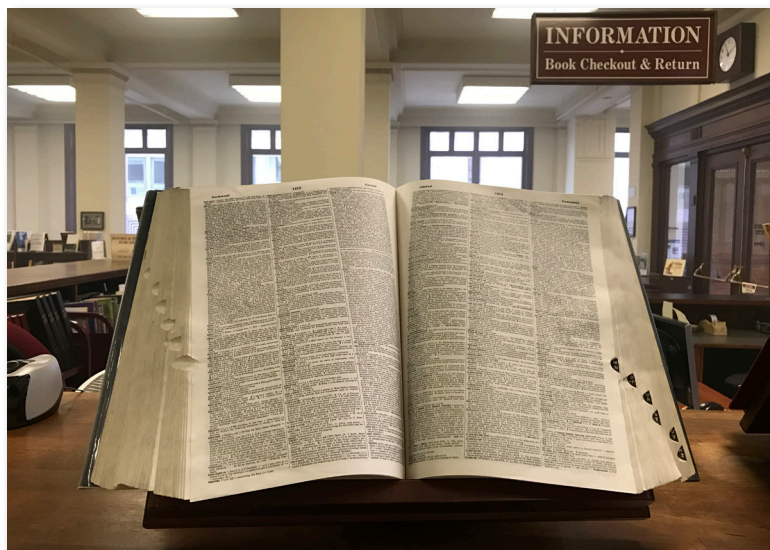


# A Library Full of Useful Knowledge, Classics, and Contemporary Works



## A Library full of "useful knowledge", classics, and contemporary works

The Library is proud to announce the award of a 2016 Preservation Assistance Grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities to develop a plan for the preservation, digitization, and indexing of our archives and special collections. The goal is to make these resources available publicly via a partnership with the Internet Archive. In November, the Library hosted "Reinvention: Thriving in the 21st Century", the fourth in a series of international conferences for leaders of mechanics' institutes and independent libraries. The conference's speakers presented on topics of practical skill with the aim of helping these organizations effectively plan for the future. On the heels of this conference, the Library hosted the annual meeting of the American Membership Libraries Group, of which the Mechanics' Institute is a member.



By popular demand, Tech Office Hours appointments

have increased from quarterly to monthly; members can meet one-on-one with a librarian to discuss topics related to any number of technology-related issues. The Library also hosts a variety of book groups, classes, and other library amenities that members love. The Library works hard to maintain a collection that stimulates and complements our members' interests – and our members seem to be interested in a variety of topics! Librarians answered more than 17,000 member questions in 2016, such as:

- "I've been reading Schopenhauer. Can you tell me more about 'the porcupine's dilemma'?"
- "How do I attach my resume to an email I'd like to send to an employer?"
- "My great-great-aunt exhibited work at one of your industrial fairs – can you tell me more?"

The Library staff continues to host popular building tours every Wednesday at noon and evenings once per quarter. They are a great way to introduce the public to the Institute, so please consider bringing a group of friends!



# An Institute Wired for the 21st Century; The Member Experience

## An Institute wired for the 21st century

Many of our members use MI's virtual services, as we actively grow our presence online. Last year we were wired with fiber-optic cable; staff and members now enjoy a 100Mbps connection. In the coming year, our IT department will spearhead a project to upgrade the Institute's wiring further, which is expected to increase speed tenfold! Additionally, the Library has launched a mobile friendly library catalog and makes our class materials and program information available online. You can learn about and register for our classes, events, book groups, and rent meeting room space on our website. Furthermore, selected recordings of our events are now available on the MI YouTube channel.



Library Inventory Project volunteers (clockwise, from top left): Vesna Leroic, Karina Amin-Salehi, Lily Hoshi, David Grenell, Judy Heggie, Jo Falcon, Michael Williams

## The member experience

Mechanics' Institute's robust membership represents a broad spectrum of ages, a blending of newcomers, lifetime members, and a fair number of second (or even third) generation members.

Volunteers are a vital element of the Mechanics' Institute. They perform essential functions at events, in the Chess Club, and in the Library. Our squadron of dedicated volunteers includes both longtime and brand new participants. Members also show their generosity by donating materials to the Chess Club and Library, and through funding special donor appeals such as the Event Space and Chess Room Chair Appeal. Among this year's donations, MI received a full set of Chronos digital chess clocks, as well as nearly 1,000 books, DVDs, CDs, and audiobooks to be circulated as part of the Library's collection or sold to fund operations. Members add to our community by initiating interest and discussion groups, such as the Women's Investment Club, Indie Publishing Working Group, Dwelling Dreamers, and the Member Art Exhibit. Member participation – volunteering, donating, or leading initiatives – is a vital part of MI's mandate. When members invest in the life of the Institute, all benefit from this engagement, and MI staff is able to focus their work on what matters most to those who benefit from our services.

Mechanics' Institute nurtures current members by offering materials based on our members' special interests, offering useful services, hosting exciting activities, and providing opportunities for engagement that satisfy existing members and attract new ones. We are committed to building a community both inside and outside of our historic building. Whether your passion is books, chess, or hobnobbing with the best minds of our generation, you'll find that the staff is working together to help you find your niche within our vibrant society.

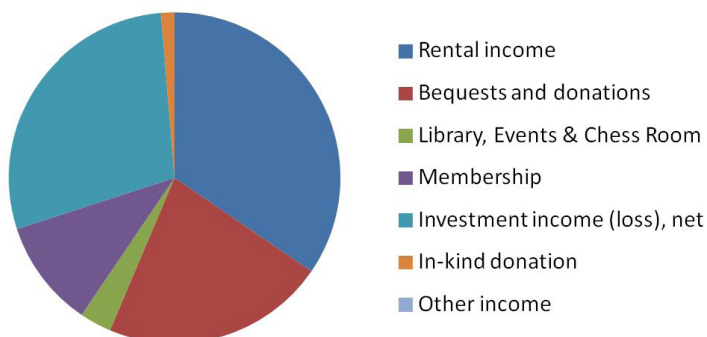
# Financial Highlights

## Financial Summary (Audited), Fiscal Year Ended August 31, 2016

**Total Assets**, including cash, accounts receivable, prepaid expenses, investments at fair market value, deferred rent, building, and equipment \$16,753,144

**Total Liabilities**, including accounts payable, unearned income, accrued expenses, and tenants' deposits \$450,748

**Net Assets** \$16,302,396

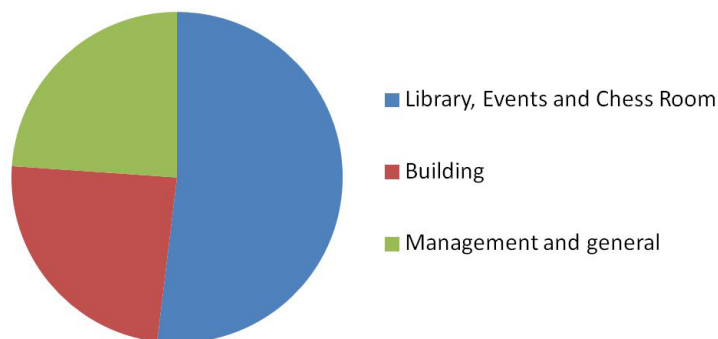


### Changes in Net Assets: Total Support and Revenue (Income)

2016 \$2,968,497

2015 \$1,356,174

**Increase of \$1,612,323 (119%)**



### Changes in Net Assets: Total Expenses

2016 \$2,961,058

2015 \$2,899,589

**Increase of \$61,469 (2%)**

## Income

Rental Income	\$1,025,245
Bequests, Donations	\$648,596
Library, Events, Chess Room	\$92,192
Membership	\$311,935
Investment Income	\$851,554
In-kind Donations	\$38,749
Other Income	\$226

**Total Income** **\$2,968,497**

## Expenditures

Library, Events, Chess Room	\$1,537,458
Building	\$715,615
Management and General Expenses	\$707,985

**Total Expenses** **\$2,961,058**



# Mechanics' Institute Community

## The James Lick Legacy Society

Have you included the Mechanics' Institute in your will or trust? If you do, your gift will enable us to continue as a welcoming and relevant institution.

You can remember the Mechanics' Institute in a variety of ways – many of which you can find in our free estate planning kit under the “donate” button on our website. For more information, please contact Ralph Lewin at [rlwin@milibrary.org](mailto:rlwin@milibrary.org) or directly at 415.393.0117.



*The Garfield McNamara Classroom*

## Member-Funded Projects

Donations are an essential part of the Mechanics' Institute budget and they come in many forms, including member gifts and foundation grants. Donations increased by 47% this year. We also saw a significant increase in bequests. Giving to the Mechanics' Institute is an important way for people to signal their support of our work. During this past year, 17% of members made at least one donation.

Projects funded by members and grants include the archival display case, new chairs for the Chess Room, and the gold leaf on our building's exterior, donated by the Victorian Alliance of San Francisco. Membership dues cover about 11% of our operating costs, so donations are vital to the Institute's continued sustenance. A bequest can sustain the Institute long after one has passed on. For instance, we're still buying books using the investment income from James Lick's \$10,000 bequest, received by Mechanics' Institute in 1884.

### Board

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*First Vice President*

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*Second Vice President*

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Lindsey Tonsager

### Staff

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Jessica Neaves  
Mohammed Shaikh  
Margot Sheffner  
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Deborah Hunt  
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Craig Jackson  
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Kristin McCarthy  
Ellen Mizuhara  
Matt Montgomery  
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Erik Sandall  
Heather Terrell

### Volunteers

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Colin Ma  
Renate Otterbach  
Peter Sherwood

*Events Volunteers*

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Colette Duncan  
Judith Fast  
Diana Greer  
Jade Greer  
Barbara Kadri  
Judith Kahn  
Helen Munch  
Theodora Rossi  
Eric Shanks  
Steven Simon  
Anne Symanovich  
Leigh Verrill-Rhys  
Mary-Ellen  
White-Vondran  
Mitzi Wortman

*Library Volunteers*

Karina Amin-Salehi  
Colin Cooper  
Jo Falcon  
David Grenell  
Judy Heggie  
Lily Hoshi  
Vesna Lerotic  
Michael Williams  
Michelle Zaffino



*Just a few of the volunteers who help our events run smoothly: (L to R) Robert Benson, Colette Duncan, and Diana Greer*

# 2016 Donors

Donations made between October 1, 2015 to September 30, 2016

\* includes Matching Corporate Gift from: Aon, Chevron, McKesson, Thomson Reuters, The Benevity Community Impact Fund (Google & Genentech)

## \$40,000 and Above

Anonymous  
Estate of Frederica Clough  
Estate of Wally Winslow

## \$10,000 to \$39,999

The Bothin Foundation  
Brewster West Foundation  
Lindsey Crittenden  
Mary A. Crocker Trust  
Sue Mary Healy  
Richard Laiderman  
Leroe Family Charitable  
Foundation  
Robert Lindsay  
Henry Mayo Newhall  
Foundation  
William & Nancy  
Newmeyer III  
The Morris and Alma  
Schapiro Fund  
Victorian Alliance of San  
Francisco

## \$5,000 to \$9,999

Melanie Craft  
David B. Goodwin  
Shelby Lyman  
The David Jamison  
McDaniel Trust  
Edwin C. Nagel  
National Endowment for  
the Humanities  
Wells Fargo Foundation

## \$2,000 to \$4,999

James M. Canty  
Fred Caspersen  
Earl Diskin  
Robert J. Eldred  
David B. Fecheheimer  
Paul Fisher  
Louise Frankel  
The Eugene Hale Family  
Paul Haahr & Susan Karp  
Patricia Hetter Kelso  
Jean MacDermid  
Bobbie McChristy  
Don Meyer  
Tim Muller  
Vladimir Naroditsky  
Mark Pinto  
Richard W. Reinhardt  
Richard M. Rosenberg  
Mrs. John Robert Shuman  
Alison Steel

## \$1,000 to \$1,999

Nathaniel C. Berkowitz  
Katrina Dodson  
Gene L. Edwards  
Jim & Betsy Flack  
Marilynne Fergusson  
Michael R. Hilliard  
Dwight L. Johnson  
Fritz L. Maytag  
Charles K. McCabe  
Paul McCauley  
Ana & Ed McCracken  
E. Craig Moody  
Jerrold Moskowitz  
Tim Muller  
Bart Nadeau

Rozell & Peter Overmire  
Margot Sheffner  
Charles G. Stephenson  
Peter B. Wiley

## \$500 to \$999

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Todd & Diane Baker  
Fred Bartig  
Thomas C. Benet  
Barbara Benjamin  
Matthew S. Blum  
Russell Brandwein  
Donald W. Brown  
Inday Myrna Cascarino  
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(Daniela) L.D. Kirshenbaum  
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Natalya Tsodikova  
Patrick Wolff  
A. Lee Zeigler

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J. Bem

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Mike Buckley  
Douglas & Stephanie Butler  
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Loris P. Davanzo  
Thomas O. Davenport  
Maria E. Dichov  
Adele Fasick  
John M. Ferreira  
Lester Fleming  
James H. Forsyth  
David D. Gale  
Fred C. Greaves  
\*Elizabeth Groenewegen  
\*John K. Hanft  
Bob Hopper  
Signa Houghteling  
Doug S. Huestis  
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S. Kelsey  
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\*Arthur Manzi  
Linda A. McBain  
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Wesley N. Mitchell  
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Willie Price Mundell  
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Charles Eley & Miriam  
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Harold Stoddard  
Peter Van der Naillen  
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Sallie Weissinger  
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David L. White  
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Leanne Williams  
Steven Winkel

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Judith Ayn Bernhard  
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Jeanette Borzo  
John Botsch  
Carol Brownson  
Deborah A. Celle  
Roger Dickerson  
Thomas Durbin  
Nathan Dwiri  
Asher Eastham  
Maurice & Marguerite  
Edelstein  
Paul & Emlen Ehrlich  
Patricia C. Ernsberger  
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Marshall M. Kilduff  
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Jason Macario  
Daniel Maguire  
John J. Mahoney  
Bridget Maley  
Richard A. Martin  
Ray E. McDevitt  
Phillip F. McNall  
Bruce Ira Cohen & Gale  
Mondry  
Jay Edward Morrissey  
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Christine C. Pagano  
Roger Parodi  
Michael Peevey  
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Jack M. Saroyan  
Greta Savage  
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Scott Simmons  
Ron Sires  
Leslie McCarthy & Tim  
Smartt  
Willis D. Sparks  
William E. Spears  
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Caroline S. Swenson  
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Richard L. Tower  
Eugene L. Valla  
Roger P. Van Craeynest  
Rosalie V. Weaver  
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Marshall White  
Nelson & Diana Morris  
Wild  
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\*Robert C. Yeager  
Alexander Yuill-Thornton

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Sarah Ballard  
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Richard Bauman  
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Roy E. Brakeman  
Jon L. Brown  
David Brownell  
Dennis Brydon  
Barbara E. Busch  
Everett L. Campbell  
Avery Chope  
Roger V. Christensen  
James Cohee  
Arthur H. Colas  
Richard Compean  
Al Crowell  
Gerald Ray Daniel  
Robert D'Arcy  
Chuck Darrah  
Lynne L. Dee  
William T. Espey  
Philip A. Fisher  
Bruce A. Fodiman  
Carmen J. Fuentes  
Genevieve S. Fujimoto  
Sarah R. Fuller  
Lucille E. & Gerald Gellin  
Cliff Gerrish  
Alfred E. Glassgold  
Frederic Golden  
Barbara Golumb  
Trisha Gorman  
James L. Grant  
Diane A. Green  
Edmund Green  
Sandra Green  
Daniel P. Gregory  
Donald M. Gregory  
Lawrence Helzel  
Abby E. Hergel  
Jennifer Holderness  
Marie A. (Bonnie) Howarth  
Raleigh E. Hughes  
John Hull  
Philip D. Humphreys  
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Stan Hutton  
Constance Ikert  
David E. Jacobs  
A. Roger Jeanson

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\* includes Matching Corporate Gift from: Aon, Chevron, McKesson, Thomson Reuters, The Benevity Community Impact Fund (Google & Genentech)

## \$100 to \$149

Eric P. Jensen  
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Ann Jorgensen  
Ralph W. Joy  
Stephen Kadyisewski  
Margaret Kavounas  
Bob Kossler  
John & Katherine K. Kriken  
Sue Kubly  
J.C. Laffranchini  
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Andrew J. Lazarus  
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John Luongo  
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Ynez Flo Olshausen  
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David G. Parker  
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Suresh Patel  
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Michael Rodriguez  
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Olivia Sears  
Richard L. Segal  
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**415.393.0101**  
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**BI-ANNUAL MEMBERS' MEETING**  
**THURSDAY, DECEMBER 1, 2016**  
**4TH FLOOR MEETING ROOM**  
**RECEPTION 5:30PM; MEETING 6:00PM**

Join us for our bi-annual Mechanics' Institute community gathering to meet fellow members, staff, and trustees. Hear about new plans and programs, technology updates, and our efforts to improve your member experience.

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October 1, 2015 to September 30, 2016

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