

## Coming Attraction: New Activities for Writers



Linda Lee (L) and Laurie McLean (R) will teach Saturday workshops at Mechanics' Institute.

The Mechanics' Institute has always been a magnet for writers – indeed several of our earliest members wielded a pen more often than a hammer to earn their living. Today, I'd hazard a guess that a third of our membership claim to be writing something. To serve this population, the Library has hosted writers groups for twelve years, collected an admirable assortment of books to

help its members learn to write their best, and gradually increased activities that focus on the craft of writing. The interest in these activities has been growing steadily, and I am thrilled to announce a new partnership with the organizers of the **San Francisco Writers' Conference**. This partnership will involve the joint hosting of writing classes taught by professionals involved with the Conference. Look forward to hands-on experiences that will impart useful knowledge about the craft and help you progress with your writing projects.

Our first date, **July 29**, will be a complete exploration of the blogging platform WordPress with two classes in one day that cover the fundamentals of an author website and how to create a website with WordPress. Future classes will cover topics relevant to all genres and writer needs including crafting a memoir, writing perfect pitches and query letters, and the art of storytelling. The classes will be competitively priced with Mechanics' members enjoying a discount over the public rate.

In order to kick off this partnership in fine style, join us the evening of **August 2** for a grand celebration! Meet the writing professionals who will be teaching the classes, the San Francisco Writers' Conference organizers, and fellow writers from the local community.

Meanwhile, please take advantage of some of the other writers' services offered at M.I. (see page 2). The aim of the Institute is to provide its members with the tools to grow intellectually and creatively. The aim of our writers' programs is to help you learn to write better! Happy scribbling!

*Taryn*

Taryn Edwards, Librarian and Strategic Partnerships Manager

### **WordPress 101** **July 29**

Linda Lee, web designer and founder of WordPress Bootcamp

10:00 a.m. - 11:30 a.m.  
4th floor Meeting Room  
**The Author Website:  
Building a Site That Works**

1:00 p.m. - 5:00 p.m.  
3rd floor Classrooms  
**WordPress Bootcamp:  
Creating a WordPress  
Website and How to Use It**

### **The Perfect Pitch & The Quintessential Query** **September 30**

10:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.  
4th floor Meeting Room  
**Secrets of the Perfect  
Pitch & the Quintessential  
Query**

1:00 p.m. - 4:00 p.m.  
4th floor Meeting Room  
**Workshopping Your  
Perfect Pitch & the  
Quintessential Query**

Register for these classes at  
[milibrary.org/events](http://milibrary.org/events)

# The Writing Life: Services to Sustain Your Practice



Above: Paul Drexler will discuss writing about true crime in July.



Below: Rick Homan will present "The Right Writer's Group for You".

**Indie Publishing Working Group** has a long history, dating back to 2007. After a hiatus, the group resumed meetings in 2016 and has since enjoyed a robust following, hosting speakers, discussion, and topics of interest to independent publishers and writers.

Third Tuesday of each month | 4:00 – 6:00 pm | Library 3rd floor classrooms  
Open to drop-ins

**Writers' Lunch** arose from the desire of member writers to interact on a more casual basis. During these monthly brown-bag BYO lunch events, member authors and guests with expertise in the field speak on topics – from sustaining a fledgling practice to monetizing your writing. You'll hear from a mix of established and emerging writers, enjoy coffee, tea, and snacks provided by the Mechanics' Institute, and mingle with fellow Mechanics' Institute writers. July will feature *Writing True Crime* with crime journalist Paul Drexler. In August, Rick Homan will advise on finding *The Right Writers' Group for You*. The Indie Publishers Working Group will present their work in September.

Third Friday of each month | 12:00 – 1:00 pm | 4th floor Meeting Room  
Open to drop-ins

Members of individual **writers' groups** are governed autonomously by their members, and have the option to meet in library classrooms or the 4th floor board room. Members decide on the protocol for reading and critiquing one another's work at each meeting; the operation of these groups is entirely under the leadership of the member writers who belong to each group. We currently host seven active writers' groups each month. If you would like to be considered for vacancies in existing groups, or to start your own, you can contact Taryn Edwards or Heather Terrell with your inquiry.

More information on meetings of **Indie Publishing Working Group** and **Writers' Lunch**: [milibrary.org/events](http://milibrary.org/events)

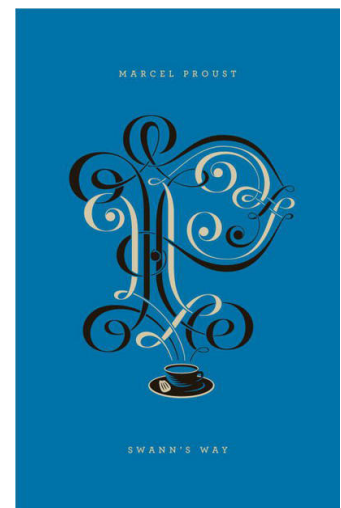
More information on **writers' groups**: [tedwards@milibrary.org](mailto:tedwards@milibrary.org) or [hterrell@milibrary.org](mailto:hterrell@milibrary.org)

## Proust Group: The Cycle Begins

Are you a Proustian? Are you a newbie intrigued by the seven-volume masterpiece, *In Search of Lost Time*? Whether you're a longtime scholar or an intrepid newcomer to the work, you'll find much to pique your interest in the Proust Group led by Professor Mark Calkins.

The reading and discussion group completes their reading cycle this summer, and will resume at the beginning in September with volume one, *Swann's Way*. This is a perfect time to dive into this challenging and rewarding novel. Members in the current group have developed camaraderie and a deeper appreciation of the seminal work.

Registration begins at the end of July, and when meetings resume in September, the group will meet bi-weekly on Wednesday evenings in the Mechanics' Institute's 4th floor board room. Check [milibrary.org/events](http://milibrary.org/events) for registration, or contact Heather at [hterrell@milibrary.org](mailto:hterrell@milibrary.org) for more information.



## Recent Major Gifts

We are grateful for support from the following individuals and foundations, who make our continued growth possible. Thank you! Contributions were received between March 1, 2017 and May 31, 2017.

Richard Laiderman\* and  
Jung-Wha Song  
Alexandra and Robert Lindsay  
Nancy and Bill Newmeyer\*  
Universal Service  
Administrative Co.  
Tibor Weinberger  
Dan and Marie Welch  
Wells Fargo Foundation  
Peter B. Wiley

\* James Lick Legacy Society Member

## Investing in the Future of M.I.

The Mechanics' Institute depends on generous donors to sustain its programs and services. As you may know, membership dues cover 10% of the cost of operating the Mechanics'. There are many ways that you can support the Mechanics' – and with the IRA Qualified Charitable Distribution, making a donation benefits you while making a meaningful difference to the M.I.

In 2015, legislation was passed to permanently extend the popular IRA Qualified Charitable Distribution provision. This law allows persons 70 ½ or older to make transfers directly from their IRA to charity and meet their annual minimum required distribution without incurring income taxes. The IRA Qualified Charitable Distribution is a great way to donate to a favorite charity.

How it works:

- You must be 70 ½ or older on the date of the distribution to qualify
- The distribution must be from a traditional IRA or Roth IRA and transferred directly from the IRA to the Mechanics' Institute, or other charity
- The amount transferred counts toward your minimum annual distribution
- IRA Qualified Charitable Distributions to all charities combined cannot exceed \$100,000 per person per year
- IRA Qualified Charitable Distribution gifts are not tax-deductible, but you avoid income taxation on the amount transferred

The IRA Qualified Charitable Distribution is a great way to make a big impact and help the Mechanics' Institute continue its mission. Contact your IRA Plan Administrator for more information, and to initiate a direct transfer from your IRA. Gifts must be made payable directly to the Mechanics' Institute from your IRA custodian.

## AIA - SF Architecture in the City: Secret City

In September, Mechanics' Institute will partner with the San Francisco chapter of the American Institute of Architects, hosting events in conjunction with their monthlong celebration of architecture, design, and city life.



**September 15, 7:00 -9:00 p.m.** Mechanics' Institute Treasure Hunt

Join us for a Treasure Hunt! In a self-guided, interactive tour of the Mechanics' Institute building at 57 Post Street, often called "San Francisco's hidden gem," participants will explore Mechanics' Institute's rich past, the architectural beauty of its Beaux-Arts building, and the resources within, culminating in discovery of a traditional pot of gold. Surprises and prizes await!

**September 28, 6:30 p.m.** *Hallidie: the man, the building, and the restoration*  
with Taryn Edwards, Rick Evans

Most San Franciscans have walked by Willis Polk's seven-story glass-clad blue and gold Hallidie Building on Sutter Street without giving a thought to the man for whom it is named. Join historians Taryn Edwards, Rick Evans, and restoration experts in a discussion about Hallidie, his namesake building, and its extraordinary renovation.



# Recent Happenings at Mechanics' Institute



Manjula Martin's (L) book *Scratch: Writers, Money, and the Art of Making a Living* served as the catalyst for the April panel discussion **Creating a Writer's Life: Career, Community, Capital**. Pictured with her here are authors Kevin Smokler (M) and Scott James (R). Literary agent Ted Weinstein (not pictured) moderated the discussion.



Young chess players are captured deep in thought while participating in this summer's **Chess Camp for Beginners**. The annual summer camp was hosted June 5th through 9th from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m., where instructors Nick de Firmian, Emilia Krubnik, and Elliot Winslow taught students the basics and coached them as they built their skills.



Founder and editor of *The Threepenny Review*, Wendy Lesser (L) discusses ***The Mighty Franks*** with author Michael Frank (R). When he was nine, Frank overheard his aunt tell his mother "he's simply the most marvelous child I have ever known and I love him beyond life itself." The consequence of being loved beyond life itself is at the heart of this riveting memoir set in Frank's hometown of Hollywood.



In May, as part of Mechanics' Institute's **Transforming SF** series of discussions, M.I. Trustee Lindsey Tonsager (L) moderated a discussion about ***The Future of Privacy and Security: For Your Eyes Only*** between panelists Jeanne Sheahan, Jacob Rogers, Whitney Merrill, and Nate Cardozo (L-R), during which the experts discussed keeping online information both private and secure.

# A Selection of Coming Events

The Mechanics' Institute offers a host of chess events, classes, reading and discussion groups, series events, and special author engagements each week. For program details and to register for programs, check posters and flyers throughout the M.I., visit our website at [milibrary.org](http://milibrary.org), or call the reference desk at 415.393.0102 between 10 a.m. and 5 p.m. Monday through Saturday. Below, find a partial list of offerings.



## Chess



### **Tournaments 10:00 a.m. – 8:00 p.m.**

July 8th 17th Charles Bagby Memorial G/45

August 5th 17th Vladimir Pafnutieff Memorial  
G/45

August 19th and 20th 11th Bernardo Smith  
Amateur open to players under 2200

September 9th 17th Howard Donnelly  
Memorial G/30

### **Tuesday Night Marathon and Lecture By International Master John Donaldson Lecture 5:15 p.m. – 6:15 p.m.**

#### **Marathon Play 6:30 p.m. – 10:30 p.m.**

July 11, 18

August 8, 15, 22, 29

September 5, 12, 19, 26

### **Wednesday Night Blitz**

**Directed by Jules Jelinek**

#### **6:30 p.m. – 8:50 p.m.**

August 30

September 6, 13, 20, 27

### **Sunday Morning Chess Class for Women**

**Taught by Ewelina Krubnik and Sophie  
Adams**

#### **11:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.**

July 2, 9, 16, 23, 30

August 6, 13, 20, 27

September 3, 10, 17, 24

### **Saturday Morning All Ages Chess Class**

**Taught by International Master Elliott Winslow**

#### **11:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.**

July 1, 8, 15, 22, 29

August 5, 12, 19, 26

September 2, 9, 16, 23, 30



## Programs



**Brown Bag Mystery Readers** meet on July 10, August 14, and September 11.

The **World Literature Book Group** meets on July 12, 26, August 9, 23, and September 13, 27.

The member-led **Dwelling Dreamers** discussion group will convene on August 1 and September 5.

**Technology Office Hours** are scheduled for July 13, August 10, and September 14.

Drop in to the **Library Downloads Workshop** on July 19, August 16, and September 20.

M.I.'s **Bastille Days** celebration will be hosted on July 14th.

Join us for the **Mechanics' Institute Night Tour** on July 24th.

***Floodpath: The Deadliest Man Made Disaster of 20th Century America and the Making of Modern Los Angeles*** with author **Jon Wilkman** will take place on August 9th.

**"Beneath Yon Moonlit Dome": The 160th Anniversary of the Mechanics' Institute's First Industrial Fair** will be hosted on September 7th.

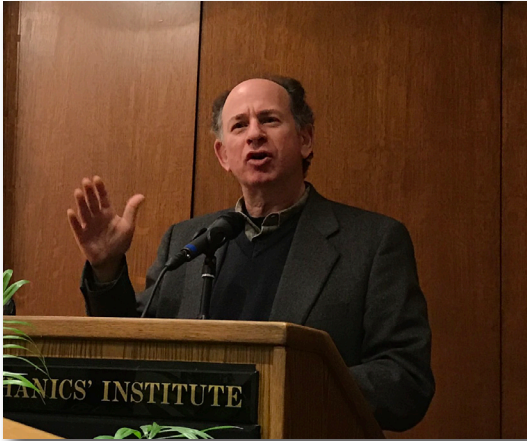
**Circling the Square: A Walking Tour of Union Square** will take place on September 23rd.

Plus, check the web for info about upcoming **Think & Drink**, **Transforming SF**, **Mechanics' Today**, and **author events**.

Please note that **TED Talks** and **librarian-led classes** will be on hiatus during the summer months. Check the web for September offerings!



# CinemaLit: A Brief History



Once a week at the Mechanics' Institute, around 4:00 p.m., the scent of freshly popped corn begins to drift into the fourth floor hallway. By 5:15 p.m. the volunteers are in the meeting room, pouring wine and juice, setting up plates of snacks, and lighting the little electric candles decorating the café tables. The doors open at 5:30 p.m., and the crowd files in. Another Friday night of CinemaLit, one of Mechanics' Institute's most enduring and popular programs, has begun.

A Friday night movie at the Mechanics' has become such a tradition it's easy to forget it didn't start until 17 years ago, when the brand new "CinemaLit Film Series" was curated by Terrance Gelenter. "I was the bilingual film critic at El Mensajero and 5 other Latin newspapers around the country when Laura (Sheppard) reached out to me in 2000," Terrance explains. "The Mechanics' Institute had a library of

videos and wanted to find a way to use them to form a Cinema Club. I loved the idea and began to develop monthly Friday night programs around directors, actors and themes. I would love to claim credit for the name 'CinemaLit,' but although a passionate reader, that was Laura's inspired choice." With the support and assistance of M.I. Board members Vincent McCambridge and Jim Friedman, the program launched on September 15th, 2000 with Lubitch's *The Shop Around the Corner*. Film critic David Thompson was guest speaker.

In 2006, Terrance, an avowed "Francophile Francophone," fulfilled a lifelong dream of moving to Paris, and the reins were handed over to our current curator, film critic Michael Fox. "Terry was a film critic, raconteur and friend who invited me to introduce a film or two on the occasions he was off living the high life in Paris. Events Director Laura Sheppard kindly invited me to present a series of creative documentaries about artists, and, some time later, asked if I would assume Terry's duties. This is my 11th year, incredibly, and I'm beyond grateful to have had this forum for talking about film with the Mechanics' knowledgeable, curious and iconoclastic members."

"Talking about film" is really what it's always been about. CinemaLit is not just a screening but a salon. Discussions follow each movie, often with guests including critics and writers David Thompson, Eddie Muller, Matthew Kennedy, Emily Leider, Jeffrey Anderson, Ruthe Stein, Richard Von Busack, and Mick LaSalle. It started out as and remains a venue for people who are passionate and often opinionated about film.

As Michael Fox puts it, "I am unshakeable in my belief that movies are more than entertainment, and I relish the opportunity every week to watch a film with an audience through the lenses of history, politics, sociology, human nature and, of course, art."

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## CinemaLit: Upcoming Programs

### Summer of Love and

**Death** Celebrating the 50th  
Anniversary of San Francisco's  
Summer of Love

July 14 Marie Antoinette  
July 21 Love and Death  
July 28 Across the Universe  
August 4 Medium Cool

### Golden Age Divas

September 8 Strawberry Blonde  
September 22 Humoresque  
September 29 Marked Woman



## Featured Upcoming Events

### Gold Rush Tales

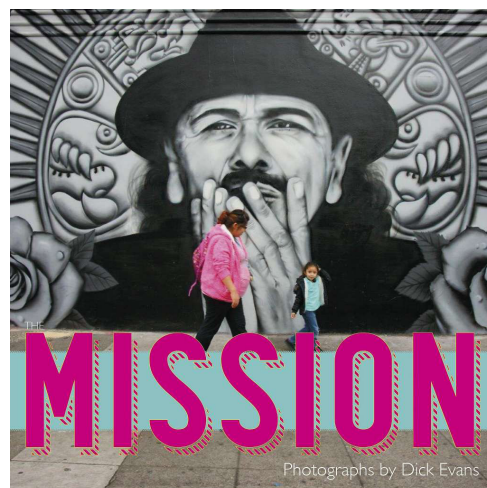
In less than ten years, more than 300,000 people made the journey to California, some from as far away as Chile and China. Many of them were dreamers seeking a better life, like Mifflin Wistar Gibbs, who eventually became the first African American judge, and Eliza Farnham, an early feminist who founded California's first association to advocate for women's civil rights. Still others were eccentrics—perhaps none more so than San Francisco's self-styled king, Norton I, Emperor of the United States. As *Gold Rush Tales* relates the tumult of the world rushing in, so too does it unearth the environmental consequences of the influx, including the flood of yellow ooze (known as "slickens") produced by the widespread practice of hydraulic mining. In the hands of a native son of the Sierra, these stories and dozens more reveal the surprising and untold complexities of the Gold Rush.

**July 6, 6:30 p.m.**

*Gold Rush Tales: 49 Tales of Seekers, Scoundrels, Loss, and Luck* with author Gary Noy

### Murals and the Mission

San Francisco photographer Dick Evans captures the soul of San Francisco's Mission District through its quintessential art form—the community mural—along with quotes, poems, and essays from



the Mission's own artists, writers, and leaders. These murals display a rich heritage through timeless portraits of the area's martyrs, icons, and unnamed faces. The book also includes an original and creative foreword by Juan Felipe Herrera, the current United States Poet Laureate, and offers a look at how local murals have reflected the surrounding community, forming a visual history of free expression.

**August 3, 6:30 p.m.**

*Mission* with photographer Dick Evans

## Got Lit? Celebrating Bay Area Literary Magazines



Join Bay Area's literati including Oscar Villalon, Managing Editor and Laura Cogan, Editor of ZYZZVYA, Manujula Martin and Michael Ray, Editors, *Zoetrope*, and Wendy Lesser, Founder and Editor, *Threepenny Review* for a lively conversation on the mission and vision of three long lived literary journals and the state of the arts in San Francisco.

**July 26, 6:30 p.m.**

A Celebration of Bay Area Literary Magazines moderated by Kevin Smokler



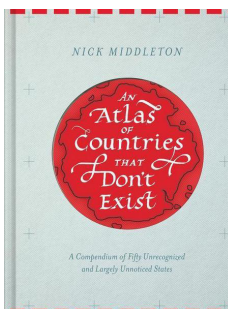
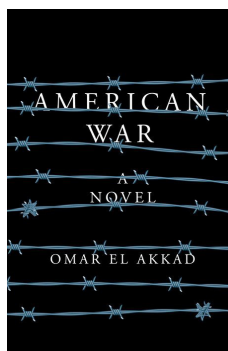
# End Notes



## Staff Updates

This August, Membership Manager **Margot Sheffner** will be retiring from the Mechanics' Institute. In her six years at M.I., Margot has expanded the department, overseeing the growth of the membership and working with IT staff to implement online application, renewal, gift membership, and donation options. She also readily took on additional tasks for M.I., including fundraising. Thank you to Margot for all of her hard work during her tenure! If you'd like, stop by the membership office to say goodbye before her last day on August 18.

**Janette Maurer** will be joining Mechanics' Institute as our new Membership Manager, coming from PG&E's Pacific Energy Center's Workforce Education & Training program. There, she was an integral part of the daily operations of the Tool Lending Library, a free resource to help homeowners and commercial building professionals reduce their carbon footprint. Prior to her experience at PG&E, she spent many years building partnerships in the hospitality industry. Janette is passionate about M.I.'s core values, sense of place, and its wonderful team that has provided pathways for enriching its members' interests. Welcome Janette beginning in mid-July!



## Book Notes

**Fiction** books recently added to the library's collection with the highest rates of checkout include:

*Earthly Remains* by Donna Leon

*American War* by Omar El Akkad

*Dirk Gently's Holistic Detective Agency* by Douglas Adams

**Non-Fiction** books recently added to the library's collection with the highest rates of checkout include:

*An Atlas of Countries That Don't Exist: A Compendium of Fifty Unrecognized and Largely Unnoticed States* by Nick Middleton & Sarah Greeno

*The Destruction of Hillary Clinton* by Susan Bordo

*The New Urban Crisis: How Our Cities Are Increasing Inequality, Deepening Segregation, and Failing the Middle Class -- And What We Can Do About It* by Richard Florida

## M.I. Around Town

Librarian **Taryn Edwards** delivered the lecture, "**Uncertain Friends: James Lick and the Mechanics' Institute**" at the Society of California Pioneers in April. Attendees tried the Society's **#looklikeJamesLick** beards on for size!



## Chess Room News

The **11th Annual Ray Schutt Blitz**, hosted May 7th at the Mechanics' Institute Chess Club, may have attracted the largest field ever for a stand-alone blitz tournament held in the United States. Seventy nine players, including two Grandmasters, three International Masters and fourteen National Masters, competed in the event which was won by Grandmasters **Daniel Naroditsky** and **Conrad Holt**. Pictured at right is a partial view of the action (Photo: Kerry Lawless).



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## Questions?

Call:

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## Library Hours

Monday - Thursday:

9 am - 9 pm

Friday:

9 am - 6 pm

Saturday:

10 am - 5 pm

Sunday:

1 pm - 5 pm

## Closures

July 4

Independence Day

September 4

Labor Day

## Editorial Staff

Cherilyn Banson

Heather Terrell