

Mechanics' Institute

ANNUAL REPORT 2017

This year the *San Francisco Chronicle* named the Mechanics' Institute "Best of the Bay" and stated that "the Institute stands as a beacon of what a cultural institution can be for all citizens."

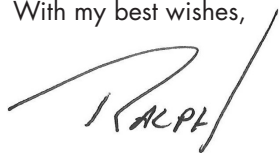
The writer of that article described our mission perfectly – true since our founding over 160 years ago. A valued supporter, you are essential to keeping Mechanics' a San Francisco treasure true to its mission: a beautiful refuge with dedicated staff, services tailored to your needs, the latest books and electronic resources, and an array of classes, activities, and events to keep your intellect growing and your understanding of the Bay Area strong.

As you turn the pages of this report you'll see a lively thoughtfulness in the work we do. You'll also notice a healthy financial report. For the first time in 10 years, MI is not running a deficit. Our strength only comes with your support, for which we are grateful.

One of my favorite parts of the day is talking with people at the Institute. I'm often stunned by the passion and joy with which people talk about this place. One member recently said the Mechanics' Institute is "a place of inspiration in the center of city storms." I couldn't agree more. We need Mechanics' and all that it represents as much as ever.

As we reflect on 2017, I ask that you think about what makes the Mechanics' Institute special to you, and remember us in your year-end giving and estate planning. With your generosity, we'll be able to achieve even more in 2018.

With my best wishes,



Ralph Lewin,
Executive Director



Executive Director Ralph Lewin (l) with DaDa Art Gallery & Bar owner Michael Gouddou shortly before the January opening in the Mechanics' Institute building.
Photo credit: Scott Strazzante/San Francisco Chronicle/Polaris

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INSTITUTE

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Year in Review

The 2017 Mechanics' Institute Member Survey revealed that members want the Institute to continue its historic role as a center for learning and cultural exploration and expression. While they want to see our landmark building retain its charm and character, they would like to see modern amenities added to our Library and Chess Room spaces. They also enjoy our expanded roster of programming on themes relevant to San Francisco Bay Area civic life, social justice, literature, entrepreneurship, and the craft of writing.

A Convergence of Community: Readers, Learners, and Doers at MI Library

If you've noticed that the Library seems more crowded recently, you're not imagining it. We indeed have more members and many of them spend a good deal of their days here working, writing, reading, and thinking rather than running in and out solely to check out library materials. We welcome the increase in activity, and are interested in the myriad ways our members use the Institute.

Chances are, you've made an appointment with a librarian at one of our Technology Office Hours or attended a Library Downloads Workshop. You may have attended a book group, knitted with fellow members, or discussed topics such as Kevin Kelly's *How AI Can Bring on a Second Industrial Revolution*, at TED Talk discussions. If you haven't, why not?

Mechanics' Institute librarians work hard to develop partnerships with local organizations such as the San Francisco Writers' Workshop, the SF-Marin Food Bank, the SF History Days annual celebration, and the *San Francisco Chronicle*. These relationships enable us to increase awareness of the Institute, provide professional-level "useful knowledge" to our members, engage with the community at large, and do good in the world.

Not only do library staff answer questions and help you find materials, our librarians also add an average of 300 new items to the collection each month! As a member, you have access to 160,000 print resources, more than 16,000 ebooks, eaudiobooks and emagazines and over 100,000 digital articles from our databases. Interested in learning more about Mechanics' Institute's history? We are collaborating with the Internet Archive to make our fair reports and other archival materials accessible online at the Internet Archive's MI page. More archival materials will be added, so check back often.

Book displays, classes, historical resources, discussion groups, digital materials... If it's been awhile since you visited the MI Library, come see what's new!



(Above): A cross-section of staff sporting our newest tee shirts with our earliest motto: Be Just and Fear Not!

(Below): Librarian Taryn Edwards staffing the MI table at SF History Days.



Festival Collaborations, CinemaLit Spectacular, and New Programming at MI

MI participated in two city-wide festivals this year – Litquake and American Institute of Architects SF's annual festival – providing members with stellar experiences while expanding our audience. The 6 Litquake events included author talks, panels, and literary lunches. For the *Architecture in the City: Secret City Festival*, we hosted the MI Treasure Hunt, which took place on four floors of our historic building, allowing participants to explore MI's literary, historical, and architectural riches with a traditional treasure hunt, artist-designed stamps, a literary café with historic personae, and a finale at the DaDa Bar. To cap the month, we presented "Hallidie: the Man, the Building, and the Restoration," a sold-out event featuring librarian Taryn Edwards, tour guide Rick Evans, and Hallidie Building Project Manager, Bruce Albert. Together, they revealed many little known facts about the famous San Francisco landmark and its namesake – inventor and MI past president Andrew Smith Hallidie.

CinemaLit continues to attract a loyal following. *Marie Antoinette* (1938) was the highlight of the summer, coinciding with the always popular Bastille Day Celebration. The Fall season featured *Hollywood Divas*, *Writers in Action*, and *Au Revoir, Jeanne Moreau*, featuring guest speakers at salon discussions.

MI's newest thematic program series continues to explore the Bay Area's innovative spirit, social and cultural trends, and pressing political issues. Recent events analyzed Trump's impact on the Bay Area, examined the issue of housing in San Francisco, and delved into topics such as the future of privacy and security, cannabis, and virtual reality – all moderated by local experts. In March, we began broadcasting selected events via Facebook Live, bringing our programs to remote viewers in real time. If you aren't able to join us "IRL" (*In Real Life*), check out our live feeds and find archived videos on our Facebook page. In 2018, look for stimulating and thought provoking programs to keep you informed and engaged.



(Top - Bottom): Rick Shelton as Gertrude Stein, Joe Christiano as Bret Harte, and Bruce Bierman, one of the Dada poets performing during the MI Treasure Hunt.



(L-R): Margaret Wilkerson Sexton and Rachel Khong in Litquake's "First Fiction: Ties that Bind"; Erik Lax and David Thomson in a special CinemaLit presentation of Lax's book, *Start to Finish: Woody Allen and the Art of Movie-making*.

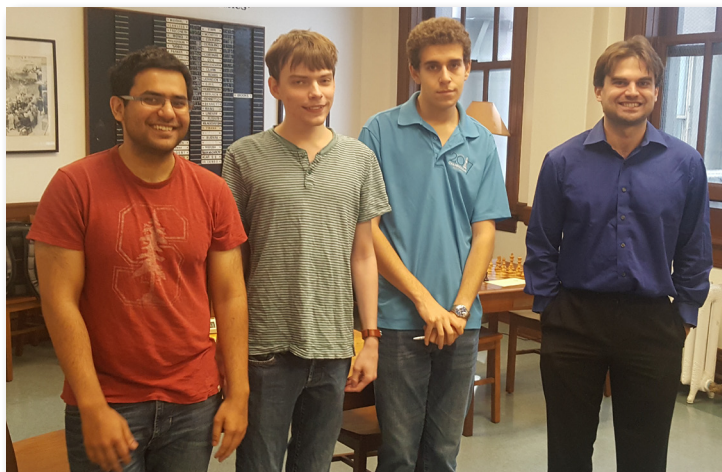
Chess, Outreach, Marathons, and Record-Breaking Tournament Play

The Mechanics' Chess Club is home to players of all abilities, from beginner to Grandmaster. Many of the Club's activities – classes, weekly tournaments, and lectures – are aimed at amateur players with a hunger to learn “the royal game”.

The Imre Konig Memorial, held in September, was an exception to the regular events held in the MI Chess Room. The four-player double round robin tournament was the highest-rated competition in the history of the Mechanics'. Stanford student Parimarjan Negi topped the all-Grandmaster field with a score of 4-2 followed by Sam Shankland at 3 ½, Conrad Holt at 3, and Daniel Naroditsky with 1 ½.

MI's Youth Chess Outreach Program is in 19 schools reaching more than 500 students each week, helping them to improve their cognitive reasoning skills while learning strategy. This year's Scholastic Chess Tournament attracted 238 elementary, junior high, and high school participants. Grandmaster Daniel Naroditsky played 41 opponents simultaneously, following the tradition of Capablanca, Spassky, and Schapiro in allowing his fans to have a shot at victory over a champion. They all lost, but had great fun trying!

The Tuesday Night Marathon series continues to be the heart and soul of our chess community. The TNM attracts a diverse range of competitors ranging in age from 6 to 86 who come from as far away as Santa Rosa, San Jose and Vacaville. Elementary school students, tech workers, and retirees play together and converse, not only in the universal language of chess, but also in Mongolian, Russian, Armenian, Polish, German, Chinese, Tagalog, Farsi, Thai, Spanish, Dutch, Tamil, Hindi, Urdu, and English. Who knew the United Nations of chess is located here at 57 Post Street?



(Above, L-R): Parimarjan Negi, Conrad Holt, Daniel Naroditsky, Sam Shankland were high scorers in the Imre Konig Memorial Tournament.

(Middle): Elliot Winslow converses with young chess enthusiasts during SF History Days.

(Below): Sophie Adams oversees a game between two Scholastic Chess Tournament participants.

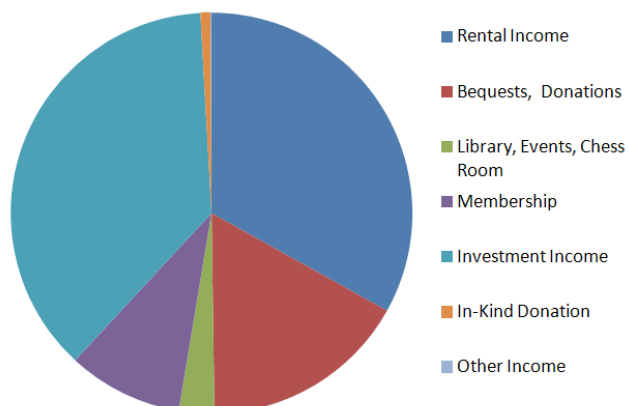
Financial Highlights

Financial Summary (Audited), Fiscal Years Ended August 31, 2017 and August 31, 2016

Total Assets (cash, accounts receivable, prepaid expenses, investments at fair market value, deferred rent, building and equipment) \$17,115,151

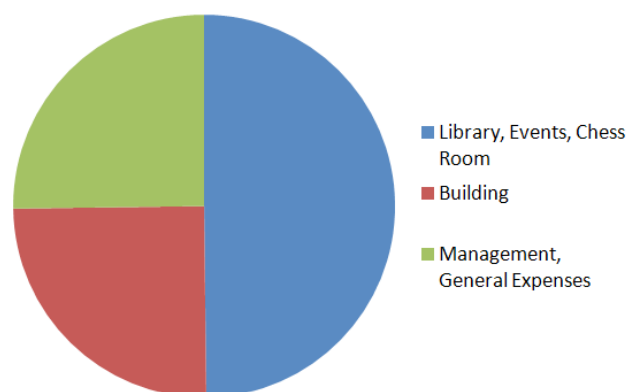
Total Liabilities (accounts payable, other liabilities, unearned income, tenants' deposits) \$417,307

Net Assets \$16,697,844



Changes in Total Support & Revenue

2017	\$3,593,100
2016	\$2,968,497
Increase:	\$624,603 (21%)



Changes in Total Expenses

2017	\$3,197,652
2016	\$2,961,058
Increase:	\$236,594 (8%)

Income

Rental income	\$1,188,053
Bequests, Donations	\$600,304
Library, Events, Chess Room	\$102,793
Membership	\$333,080
Investment Income	\$1,336,968
In-kind Donation	\$29,123
Other Income	\$2,779

Expenditures

Library, Events, Chess Room	\$1,593,250
Building	\$798,400
Management, General Expenses	\$806,002

Total Income \$3,593,100

Total Expenses \$3,197,652

Many Thanks: 2017 Donors

The Mechanics' Institute thanks the generous individual, foundation, and corporate donors who make our continued growth possible. The following listings reflect gifts made between September 1, 2016 and August 31, 2017. We strive to make the listing of names as accurate as possible. Please contact Jessica Neaves, Development Director, if there are any discrepancies or if you would like your name listed differently in the future at jneaves@milibrary.org.

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Did You Know?

Membership dues cover 10% of the Mechanics' Institute's operating costs; building rents and investments cover the next 62% of expenses. Contributions are essential to sustaining programs and services.

What Your Gifts Support

- 1) The purchase of library materials
- 2) Necessary repairs to our landmark building
- 3) Upgrades to MI facilities, such as classrooms and archival storage
- 4) Furniture for the Library, Chess Room, and Event Space
- 5) Programming, i.e., Scholastic Chess Outreach

How You Can Contribute

- 1) Join the James Lick Legacy Society
- 2) Make a one-time gift
- 3) Take advantage of your company's matching funds program
- 4) Donate library materials
- 5) Volunteer for events and chess programs, or as a library helper

Donors: Time, Materials, and Gifts

Thank you to all of those who donated their time to the MI in 2017. More than 30 volunteers have helped at chess programs, hosting special events, and in the library.

Thanks to those who donated materials to the Library this year. Librarians added a record number of 1,288 donated items to the collection in 2017.

Thank you to the 270 MI members who contributed \$5 - \$99 in 2017. Every dollar counts!

Tribute Gifts

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MEMBERS' MEETING

December 7th
4th Floor Meeting Room
Reception 5:30 p.m.
Meeting 6:00 p.m.

Join us for the 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.

Free; MI members and their guests

MEMBERS' HOLIDAY GATHERING

December 14th
2nd Floor Library
5:30 p.m. - 7:00 p.m.

Celebrate the winter holidays with your
Mechanics' Institute community. Enjoy hors
d'oeuvres, gourmet cheeses, delectable
desserts and tempting libations!

Advance registration required; \$15 for MI
members and their guests