

Supporting Readers, Wherever They May Be

The Mechanics' Institute Library supports readers not only within the beautiful confines of our historic building, but also in the broader community, from our annual Project Cicero book drive to Burning Man.

The Bard's Branch & Mechanics' Institute Library: Partners in the Sublime

This past Fall, circulation supervisor Jenny Huynh collaborated with the Bard's Branch crew, who built a desert library on La Playa at Burning Man 2019. Jenny selected worn books that the Mechanics' Institute Library had replaced with newer copies on our shelves, and we donated our duplicates to the group headed to Burning Man.

Pam Ward, intrepid leader of this group of desert librarians, reported back that she met many people who spoke of their favorite books, and that patrons of this beautifully-constructed library were delighted to read through the armchair gramophone at its peak to listeners on the desert floor. A father read *The Little Prince* to his child; people engaged in spiritual readings; a violinist accompanied readers; and an impromptu treasure hunt ensued, with bookish clues hidden in the Bard's Branch tree.

On the last day of Burning Man, the group gifted books to individuals and donated many to Black Rock Library. Pam says, "This could not have happened without your support and passion for books and imagination. You are an official part of the Bard's Branch crew!"

Mechanics' Institute Library collects books and materials that ignite curiosity and bring people together for inspiring conversations – whether in the comfy armchairs in our reading rooms or on the desert at La Playa!



The Bard's Branch library was erected at Burning Man 2019, using worn books from the Mechanics' Institute Library that were replaced with newer copies on our shelves.

*Photography by Plain Jane
(Jane Hu @ janehu.com)*

*Artist: Pam Ward
Pictured below: Bard's
Branch Crew*

Bay Area Students Thrive With Project Cicero Bay Area

Project Cicero Bay Area is a volunteer-run, annual children's book drive designed to create and supplement classroom libraries in under-resourced Bay Area public schools. Through the book drive, over 30,000 students gain access to reading material each year. Mechanics' Institute has participated as a donor to this program since 2017; look forward to an announcement of the dates for the next book drive in March. As readers, you know how essential books are to a person's well-being. Support Bay Area students by donating new and gently used books for toddlers, children, and young adults to teachers who struggle to resource their classrooms adequately to meet their students' vast appetite for learning.

Chess Club

San Francisco Scholastic Chess Championship

The 2020 San Francisco Scholastic Championship will return to Golden Gate Park this year on Saturday, March 28.

This free event for K-12 students will feature a USCF-rated open section and non-rated sections divided by grade level. The tournament is open to all, regardless of playing experience, and is a great opportunity for children from our community to learn and socialize with one another through chess.

More than 200 players participated in the event last year, and we expect an even larger turnout this year!



Pictured, a few highlights from the 2019 San Francisco Scholastic Championship

Chess Classes and Regular Events

The Mechanics' Institute Chess Club continues to broadcast events live via our Twitch channel, finding new ways to engage the community through chess.

We organized an online match with the Marshall Chess Club in New York, have expanded our scholastic programs in schools and tournaments, and are offering additional USCF and FIDE rated tournaments at the club.

Additionally, we offer free classes during the week and on weekends for women, kids, and players of all levels.

For more information on the chess club's offerings, please visit our website at chessclub.org.

Follow our Facebook page at facebook.com/mechanicschess for daily updates and new about our club.

Please visit our YouTube channel at youtube.com/mechanicschess to view past broadcasts and videos.

To receive notifications and watch live broadcasts, follow us on our Twitch channel at twitch.tv/mechanicschess.

We can always be reached via email at chessroom@milibrary.org.

Upcoming Chess Events

Tournaments

Jan 3-5: **Bob Burger Memorial** 5SS G/90; +30

Jan 7- Feb 18: **Wilkerson Memorial Tuesday Night Marathon (TNM)** G/120;d5 7SS

Jan 25: **Irving Chernev Memorial** 3SS G/75; d5

Feb 1: **Henry Gross Memorial** 4SS G/50; d5

Feb 15-17: **U.S. Amateur Team West National Championship** (Burlingame Hyatt)

Feb 29: **Jim Hurt Memorial** 4SS G/60; d5

March 7-8: **A.J. Fink Memorial** 5SS G/90 +30

Mar 22: **Max Wilkerson Memorial** 4SS G/60; d5

Scholastic Tournaments

Jan 18, 26, Feb 8, Mar 1 at 10 am: **Weekend Kids' Swiss**

Feb 16: **US Amateur Team West Kids** (Burlingame Hyatt)

Mar 28: **San Francisco Scholastic Chess Championship** (Golden Gate Park)

Monday Night Rapids

Last Monday of the month, G/15 +2

January 27, February 24, March 30

Recurring Free Classes

Wednesdays 5:30-7pm **Adult Class** by GM Nick de Firmian

Thursdays 5:30-7pm **Adult Class** by FM Paul Whitehead

Saturdays 11am-1pm **Kids Class** by Coach Andy Trattner

Sundays 11am-1pm **Women's Class** by Ewelina Krubnik and Sophie Adams

For more information and to register for events, visit the Chess Club website: chessclub.org.

Recent Major Gifts

We are grateful for the support we've received from the following individuals and foundations, who make our continued growth possible. Thank you! The following contributions were received between September 1, 2019 and November 30, 2019.

James M. Canty **

Jean and Lindsay MacDermid *

Fritz L. Maytag

Marie Tilson **

Charles Sullivan *

In Honor of Patrick Wolff **

* **James Lick Legacy Society Member**
****Life Member**

Ways to Give

Do you love the library? Can't get enough of author events, cultural events, or CinemaLit? Is your game benefiting from the chess club's educational programs and myriad opportunities to practice with others? Are you eager to support the continued repairs and upkeep that go into maintaining our Beaux-Arts building?

You can give to a special project or department of the Mechanics' Institute at any time throughout the year. Just tell us what you'd like to support and we'll make sure the funds are directed to that department's operations, or to a specific program that you designate, such as the Scholastic Chess Outreach Program or our Library Outreach Program for homebound members.

You can give online, by mail, in person, via your company's matching gifts program, or directly from your retirement or other investment account.

You may also wish to leave Mechanics' Institute a gift in your will. Joining the James Lick Legacy Society signals that you are committed to the ongoing mission of Mechanics' Institute so that future generations may benefit from your generosity.

Contact us at membership@milibrary.org to request more information or a call to discuss these opportunities further.

CinemaLit

CinemaLit Welcomes New Curator, Matthew Kennedy



Matthew Kennedy, CinemaLit's new curator, has written biographies of Marie Dressler, Joan Blondell, and Edmund Goulding. His book *Roadshow! The Fall of Film Musicals in the 1960s*, was the basis of a film series on Turner Classic Movies.

"I don't have a favorite film," Matthew says. "I find that my relationships to films, actors, genres, and directors change as I change over the years. Some don't hold up. Some look more profound, as though I've caught up with their artistry. I feel that way about Garbo, Cary Grant, director John Cassavetes, and others."



Donna Rifkind will discuss her book (above) at the CinemaLit screening of *Queen Christina* in February.

The films Matthew will introduce this winter include *Scarface: The Shame of the Nation* for January's film theme **Speakeasy: Prohibition at 100**. *Queen Christina* opens the February series, with special guest Donna Rifkind, author of *The Sun and her Stars: Salka Viertel and Hitler's Exiles in the Golden Age of Hollywood*. March will be dedicated to pre-code Barbara Stanwyck films. "Classic films have historical context, something only time can provide," Matt observes. "They become these great cultural artifacts, so revealing of tastes, attitudes, and assumptions."

Please join us in welcoming Matthew as he engages members and the public through our ongoing series of Friday night film screenings.

As we welcome Matthew Kennedy to lead Mechanics' Institute's popular CinemaLit program in 2020, we thank Michael Fox for his fourteen years as curator. His insights, expertise, film selections, wit, and rapport with CinemaLit audiences are much appreciated.



CinemaLit Presents: Speakeasy! Prohibition at 100

CinemaLit screenings are on Fridays.
Doors open at 5:30 pm; Program begins at 6:00 pm
MI members free; Public \$10 Suggested Donation;
Registration is required. Popcorn and refreshments are available.



January 10
Scarface (1931) 93 min
Directed by Howard Hawks
and Richard Rosson
Paul Muni, Ann Dvorak



January 17
A Slight Case of Murder
(1938) 85 min
Directed by Lloyd Bacon
Edward G. Robinson,
Jane Bryan



January 24
The Roaring Twenties
(1939) 106 min
Directed by Raoul Walsh
James Cagney, Humphrey
Bogart



January 31
The Untouchables (1987)
119 min
Directed by Brian De Palma
Kevin Costner, Sean
Connery

Upcoming Events and Programs

Joan Didion: The 1960s & 70s

Editor David L. Ulin in conversation
with Oscar Villalon, Managing Editor
of ZYZZYVA

Co-sponsored by *Alta Magazine*

January 9, 6:30 pm

Meeting Room

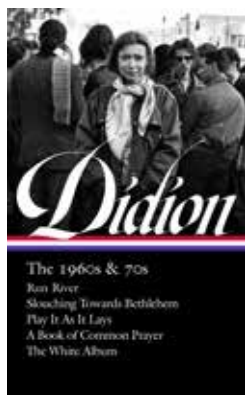
MI members and *Alta Magazine* readers free

Public \$15

Registration required

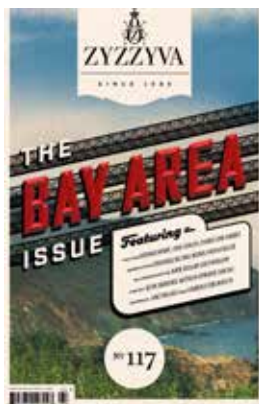
Cool, dispassionate, and incisive, Joan Didion's voice is electric on the page. Using autobiographical elements to stunning literary effect, she has captured the anarchic convulsions and anxious contradictions of the waning American century and the coming new millennium with incomparable clarity and force.

Please see milibrary.org/events for details.



A collection of Joan Didion's landmark works that established her as one of the most influential literary figures of our time, these essays still resonate today.

And More!



Check milibrary.org/events for additional programs, including the ZYZZYVA Winter 2020 Issue celebration on February 6, commemorating the journal's 35th anniversary with a night of short readings by W.S. Di Piero, Gloria Frym, Michael Sears, and Luiza Flynn-Goodlett.

Book Groups@MI

Check our website at milibrary.org/events/book-group-meetings for upcoming book group selections for Brown Bag Mystery Readers, Fast Fridays, and World Lit. You'll see selections ranging from classic to modern – something to read for every taste!

Librarian-Led Classes

Ancestry Library Edition

Library Director Deb Hunt will teach a new series of courses, each of which builds on what was learned in the previous session. Sign up for all three to gain a deeper understanding of your family history: **Getting Started with Family History Using Ancestry Library Edition**, **Ancestry Library Edition: Diving Deeper into Your Family History**, and **Using FamilySearch to Build Your Family Tree**.

Web-Smart

Programming Librarian Myles Cooper will teach the popular course, **Shop Smarter: Consumer Reports Online**.

He will also introduce a new course in his *Smarter* series, offering opportunities to join the class in either January or February:

Surf Smarter: How to Protect Your Privacy on the Web

Have you noticed that after a web search, ads mirroring your search begin to pop up and follow you around? You and your browsing history are a source of behavioral information shared with third parties. Learn to fight back and opt-out using tools and tactics that will help protect your data and, ultimately, your privacy.

Financial Literacy

Craig Jackson will teach his long-running series on making the best use of the library's financial resources. **Key Financial Newspapers & Magazines Every Astute Investor Should Read**, **Mergent Intellect**, and **Investment Information on the Web**.

Register in advance for free, librarian-led classes at milibrary.org/events/classes to prevent them from being canceled due to lack of interest! For complete program details and to register, check posters and flyers throughout MI, visit our website at milibrary.org, or call the reference desk at 415.393.0102 between 10am and 3pm, Monday through Saturday.

Classes, Workshops, and Programs

BURNING: a staged play reading by Phil Williams

On December 7th, 1776, an American sympathizer known by his alias as “Jack the Painter” attempted to cripple Britain’s Royal Navy by burning its Dockyards. *Burning* is the story of how his actions terrorized England at a critical time in the Revolutionary War, giving the British Government an excuse to pass the American High Treason Act; like the Patriot Act, it permitted arrest and indefinite incarceration of enemy combatants without trial. This dramatization draws on Jack’s published confession, his interrogation by Sir John Fielding – founder of the Bow Street Runners, Britain’s first detective force; and the transcript of Jack’s trial at the Winchester Great Hall.



Please see milibrary.org/events for details and to register.

January 16, 6:00-8:00 pm
Meeting Room
MI members and public \$5
Registration required

Create a Professional Literary Resume



Ready to elevate your writing career to the next level, but not sure how to present your background in an appropriately professional fashion? Whether you have a long list of publication credits or just a few, you need a literary resume that both adheres to professional standards and encourages panelists, editors, and reviewers to learn more about your work. When done properly, this resume helps you:

- land funding for your writing projects
- get invitations to present work at conferences
- obtain reading opportunities
- present a strong residency application
- get editors' and publishers' attention
- be taken seriously as a writer, and not a hobbyist.

Bring your laptop, and leave with a shiny new resume that makes your accomplishments – whether large or small – stand out!

Please see milibrary.org/events for details.

January 18, 12:00-4:00 pm
Board Room
MI members \$39; Public \$49
Registration required

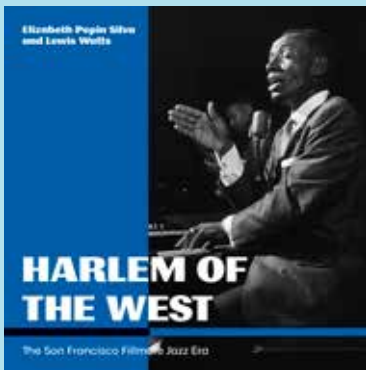
February: Black History Month Events

Harlem of the West: The San Francisco Fillmore Jazz Era

Presented by award-winning filmmaker and writer Elizabeth Pepin Silva and photographer Lewis Watts

Co-sponsored by MoAD and City Lights

Booksellers & Publishers



**February 13, 6:30 pm
Meeting Room
MI members, MoAD members, and Friends of City Lights Booksellers free; Public \$15
Registration required**

In the 1940s and 50s, a jazz aficionado could find paradise in the nightclubs of San Francisco's Fillmore

District: Billie Holiday sang at the Champagne Supper Club; Chet Baker and Dexter Gordon jammed with the house band at Bop City. The Fillmore was one of the few neighborhoods in the Bay Area where people of color could go for entertainment. With lovingly restored images and oral accounts from residents and musicians, *Harlem of the West* captures a joyful, exciting time in San Francisco, and reveals a momentous part of the country's African-American musical heritage.

Join us for a slide show and talk, featuring a special jazz performance with Sam Peoples – son of Fillmore legend Sammy Peoples – on keyboard and Jacore Baptiste on electric guitar.

Please see milibrary.org/events for details.



Elizabeth Pepin Silva and Lewis Watts (L-R)



Sam Peoples (left), Jacore Baptiste (right)

A Tribute to Toni Morrison

Co-sponsored by MoAD

**February 27, 6:30 pm
2nd Floor Library
MI members and MoAD members \$5; Public \$15
Registration required**

Toni Morrison's influence on literature and culture is immeasurable. Join us for an extraordinary evening dedicated to the work and life of one of America's greatest authors.

Hosted by author Sarah Lapido Manyika (*Like a Mule Bringing Ice Cream to the Sun*) – with guests including Michael Chabon (*Book Ends, Pops, Moonglow*), Natalie Baszile (*Queen Sugar*), Professor Ato Quayson of Stanford, and others – this celebration of Morrison's legacy is sure to inspire you to re-read her work with new eyes.

Watch our website at milibrary.org/events for additional details forthcoming.



Sarah Lapido Manyika (above), Michael Chabon (left), Natalie Baszile (below), and Professor Ato Quayson (below left)



Past Events; Coming Soon



LITQUAKE@MI: Carolina De Robertis



On October 17, author Carolina De Robertis (*left*) spoke about her new book during a Litquake event hosted at Mechanics' Institute.

Of her novel *Cantoras*, she said, "...when writing historical fiction—you need to have two different kinds of consciousness ... one in in this time and one in the world you are creating. Each informs the other."

57 Post Street
San Francisco, CA 94104
www.milibrary.org

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Library Hours

Monday - Thursday: 9 am - 8 pm
Friday: 9 am - 6 pm
Saturday: 10 am - 5 pm
Sunday: 1 pm - 5 pm

Closures

January 1
New Year's Day

January 20
Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Day

February 17
Presidents' Day

Proust Seminar with Dr. Mark Calkins



Marcel Proust's *In Search of Lost Time* (also known in English as *Remembrance of Things Past*) is a monumental, multi-volume masterpiece that Edmund White calls, "the most respected novel of the twentieth century."

SFSU Professor of Comparative & World Literature, Mark Calkins has led the Proust Seminar at the Mechanics' Institute Library since 2001. In February 2020, the Seminar continues with the sixth volume of the novel, *Time Regained*.

- The group meets on the 2nd and 4th Wednesdays of the month from 5:30pm to 6:30pm at Mechanics' Institute.
- The upcoming session will begin in February and end in August.
- Registration is open to all.
- You may use any translation of the book that you prefer.



Please watch our website at milibrary.org/events for forthcoming details and to register for the next session of the Proust Seminar.