

Mechanics' Institute Supports Bay Area Students and School Libraries



Thank you to the Mechanics' Institute (MI) members and friends for participating in Project Cicero Bay Area by donating more than 200 new and gently-used toddler, children's, and teen books. Project Cicero Bay Area is a volunteer-run, annual children's book drive designed to create and supplement school libraries in under-resourced Bay Area public schools. The Mechanics' Institute Library has been a key partner with Project Cicero Bay Area since its inception five years ago.

Since 2015, with the help of MI members, families at participating donor schools, and student volunteers, Project Cicero Bay Area has collected more than 125,000 gently-used pleasure reading books and distributed them to hundreds of teachers and other educators in the Bay Area's most under-served public schools. Through the book drive, more than 30,000 students have gained access to new reading material.



This year, in San Francisco alone, close to 25,000 books were donated and some 200 teachers came to the free book fair on March 7. The donated books were much needed, and therefore teachers and school librarians collectively took them all. These books helped public schools in many Bay Area communities including San Jose, Redwood City, East Palo Alto, Richmond, Oakland, Petaluma, Santa Rosa, Sonoma, Rohnert Park, and, of course, San Francisco.

A Tribute to Toni Morrison

On February 27, 2020, *A Tribute to Toni Morrison* culminated our programs for Black History Month in collaboration with the Museum of the African Diaspora (MoAD). This extraordinary evening honored one of America's most important authors who gave voice to the African American experience through the history of slavery, systemic racism, family, and community. The program was hosted by author Sarah Lapido Manyika, with author Natalie Baszile, poet Nia McAllister, and Professor Ato Quayson (Stanford University).

The panelists read their favorite selections and engaged in a lively conversation about the influence and impact of Morrison's life and work. Moderator Sarah Lapido Manyika spoke of Toni Morrison's poignant relationship with writer James Baldwin noting that, "his tenderness, courage, and language inspired her." Speaking to the secrets of authorship, Manyika quoted Morrison: "Writing a new book excites me ... after all the research, my job is to make it into music." Poet Nia McAllister stated "Toni Morrison inspired a black literary cadence," which can be seen in the poetic, narrative style of *Beloved* and her other great works. In *Jazz*, McAllister cautioned, the scale and horror of race slavery in America is documented but "language can never pin down genocide, slavery, or war." And yet perhaps Morrison's novels can shed light, reclaim, and bear witness to the African American experience.



Panel (left to right): Moderator Sarah Lapido Manyika, Natalie Baszile, Nia McAllister, and Professor Ato Quayson

Due to public health concerns regarding coronavirus 2019 (COVID-19), Mechanics' Institute has closed the library, chess room, and onsite events until further notice. We are offering a number of activities online and exploring ways to expand our virtual programming. Given these changes, our newsletter does not include our upcoming events. Please visit our [website](#) and [Facebook](#) for the latest information on the MI library, chess room, and virtual resources.

Chess Club

Recent Offerings



The chess room is full for our biggest draw, the Tuesday Night Marathon.

One of our youth coaches teaching our free kids' class on Saturday mornings, 11am-1pm.

IM Vincent McCambridge Steps Down



event. We wish him the best in his endeavors, and we look forward to his continued presence at MI.

IM Vincent McCambridge stepped down from the Mechanics' Institute (MI) Chess Committee at the end of 2019. He joined the Board of Trustees in 1997, served as Board President from 2000-2001 and then Vice President from 2002-2007. He attained the title of International Master in 1982 and has had a USCF rating in excess of 2500. To commemorate his long service to the Mechanics' Institute and his accomplishments in the chess world, we intended to hold a tournament in his honor. The IM Vincent McCambridge Championship was to be held on Saturday, March 21, with the intention of making it an annual event. We will do our best to reschedule this

Stay Connected with MI Chess

While the chess room is currently closed, we continue to find new ways to engage our community through chess such as broadcasting events through our Twitch and YouTube channels. We are always looking to innovate our broadcast and how we interact with our viewers, so stay tuned!



For more information on all our offerings, please visit our website: chessclub.org



Visit facebook.com/mechanicschess for daily updates and news about our club.



To watch our live broadcasts, follow us on our Twitch channel: twitch.tv/mechanicschess



To watch our past broadcast events, visit our YouTube channel: youtube.com/channel/UCw3dh9SwMBEq2zBb6AHMT9A

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



In Memoriam

It is with great sorrow that we announce the death of Louise Frankel (February 23, 1928 - February 29, 2020), a long-term Mechanics' Institute (MI) member, friend, trustee, and past board president. She led our institute in the expansion of literary programs, stewarded key library and chess room

enhancements, and helped make MI the vibrant cultural center that it is today, serving on our board of trustees for more than a decade and as a president of the board 1995-1998. Louise was born Louise Untermeyer in New York City and graduated from The Brearley School, Radcliffe College, and Yale Law School. In 1956, she moved to San Francisco and married James B. Frankel (1924-2015). Louise and James became lifetime members at MI. Their son recalls their time at MI – "She and my father were members as long as I can remember, and I have fond memories of spending hours in the library there in the 1970s in elementary school." Louise worked at the California Attorney General's office and the Continuing Education of the Bar, and also served on the boards of the Visiting Nurses Association of San Francisco and City Arts & Lectures. Louise will be greatly missed by everyone here at MI.

In Memoriam

Vladimir Naroditsky (1955-2019) served on the MI Board of Trustees as Chess Committee Chair from 2015-2019. Dr. Naroditsky had more than 33 years of experience in portfolio management and mathematical modeling of financial markets, and co-authored the books *Modeling Complex Phenomena* and *Artificial Intelligence for Trading Stocks, ETFs, Cryptocurrencies & Forex: Trend Prediction Engine*.



Trustee Mike Hilliard remembers his first meeting with Vlad:

During the Mechanics' Institute Tuesday Night Marathon, I was paired with someone named Naroditsky. I was sitting at the chess table waiting for my opponent when I looked up and saw a middle-aged man holding a bright orange booster seat. After he placed the booster seat in the chair in front of me, I remember thinking, 'How's he going to fit on that chair?' My middle-aged opponent turned around, picked up a small child and placed him in the booster seat. Six-year-old Daniel Naroditsky easily won the game in under 20 moves. Daniel shook my hand, Vladimir Naroditsky picked up the booster seat, and the victorious Naroditskys headed home.

Vlad will be missed by all at MI and will be honored with a commemorative plaque in the chess room.

Recent Major Gifts

We are extremely grateful for the support we have received from the following individuals and foundations, who make our continued growth possible. Thank you! The following contributions were received between December 1, 2019 and February 29, 2020.

Anonymous	Bobbie McChristy
Joel Bauman	David Jamison McDaniel
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Richard Laiderman and	Tonsager
Jung-Wha Song*	Peter B. Wiley
Charles K. McCabe	* James Lick Legacy
Paul McCauley	Society Member

Ways to Give

Do you love the library? Can't get enough of writers' activities, author and 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 our Beaux-Arts building?

You can give to a Mechanics' Institute special project or department any time throughout the year. Just tell us what you would like to support and we will make sure the funds support the program you designate, such as the Scholastic Chess Outreach Program or our Library Outreach Program for homebound members.

Donations may be made online at milibrary.org, by mail, in person, via your company's matching gifts program, or directly from your retirement or other investment account. Gifts using Visa and MasterCard may also be made by calling our new Development Department at 415.393.0115.

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

Contact Tony at tadessa@milibrary.org to request more information or call him at 415.393.0115 to further discuss these opportunities.

Mechanics' Institute Celebrates 165 Years

On December 11, 1854, a group of blacksmiths, builders, carpenters, masons, and hardware merchants met in the city tax collector's office for the purpose of establishing a Mechanics' Institute. The ringleaders included George Karkeek Gluyas, a native of Cornwall who chaired the meeting; the political firebrand Benjamin Heywood; the stalwart Peter Donahue; a ship carpenter named John Sime; and the dashing, soon-to-be Civil War hero, Roderick Matheson.



Vue of San Francisco from the Clay Street Hill (circa 1854) by Isador Laurent Deroy (Library of Congress)

Their bold plan was to create a Mechanics' Institute similar to ones existing in the Eastern United States, Australia, and Great Britain. They endeavored to do the following:

- Build a library with open stacks (a then modern idea).
- Include a game room where members could spread out their chess and checker boards.
- Offer classes that would stretch the mind and teach new skills.
- Create an organization that welcomed everyone regardless of race or gender.
- Cost as little as possible.

More than 165 years later, our Mechanics' Institute is one of the few surviving in the world that still operates on its original model of providing opportunities for educational advancement. It is one of the oldest libraries in the West and more importantly, one of the first truly "public" institutions of the San Francisco Bay Area. Today it is a thriving community enriched by cultural events, a comprehensive library, and a vigorous chess program that allows hundreds of local students each year to discover the joys of the game. We thank our current members and wider community for their continued support, and we look forward to continuing to build on MI's programming over the next 165 years.



The Mechanics' Institute motto "Be Just and Fear Not" was first depicted on our seal designed by architect and MI member Thomas Boyd upon our incorporation in 1855. The symbols are very common to mechanics' institutes in general, especially the arm and hammer – a universal symbol of labor. The beehive connotes industry and the plumb line and leveler, compass, square and rule are all symbols of the craftsman.

The cornucopias represented California's agricultural potential, and the anchor its role as a port. The scales remind us to lead a balanced life and the motto "Be just and fear not" admonishes one to act according to his principles. The motto, common to Mechanics' Institutes, comes from Shakespeare's play *Henry VIII*.



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Library Questions

Call: 415.393.0101

E-mail: reference@milibrary.org

Membership Questions

Call: 415.393.0105

E-mail: membership@milibrary.org

Support the Institute today

Donate: milibrary.org/give

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Library Hours

The Library is currently closed. We will post our operating hours on the website as soon as we are able to re-open.

Holiday Closures

Monday, May 25

Memorial Day

