

## Mechanics' Institute Hits "Best Of" List on *SF Weekly*

The Mechanics' Institute (MI) was recently voted the best "alternative coworking" space by [SF Weekly](#), nominated by member Benjamin Schneider. As the article states, "If you're a struggling writer, a starving artist, or just somebody who wants a quiet, beautiful place to catch up on emails, the Mechanics' Institute Library is the place for you....[though] there's no ping-pong table or kegerator."

While MI is not technically a co-working space, the designation reflects one of the distinguishing characteristics of the Institute that members throughout our history have valued — that the Mechanics' Institute is a place where important social connections can be made.



View of Montgomery at Washington streets circa 1856, several years after the Mechanics' Exchange closed.  
*Courtesy OpenSFHistory.org/wnp71.1977*

The idea for our Mechanics' Institute was born 170 years ago, in an innocuous storefront on the east side of Montgomery Street between Merchant and Washington Streets, the current location of the Transamerica Pyramid. In 1851, an enterprise known as the Mechanics' Exchange opened. This was a firm similar to a modern co-working space, crossed with an employment office and a business center. It provided facilities for mechanics who had no fixed place of business to find employment, meet potential staff, and conduct business. The Mechanics' Exchange offered its members desk space, private offices, and meeting rooms, with free stationary and post office boxes available for rent.

It is at the Mechanics' Exchange that San Francisco's mechanics, artisans, and laborers congregated as a social group. Here they could get together — outside of the saloons, gambling houses, and exclusionary social clubs — to talk about wages and the conditions that impacted their livelihood. Despite being in the thick of the gold rush, many San Francisco residents were not striking it rich. It was here, and places like this, where MI's founders met and exchanged the ideas and opinions that would lay the foundation for the Mechanics' Institute.

For Mr. Schneider to describe today's Mechanics' Institute as an "alternative co-working space" conveys the kind of place MI strives to be: a place where dreams that change the future are hatched. We are proud to be on *SF Weekly's* "cheat sheet for being a San Franciscan."

## Featured Events

### ***Deep Hanging Out: Wanderings and Wonderment in Native California***

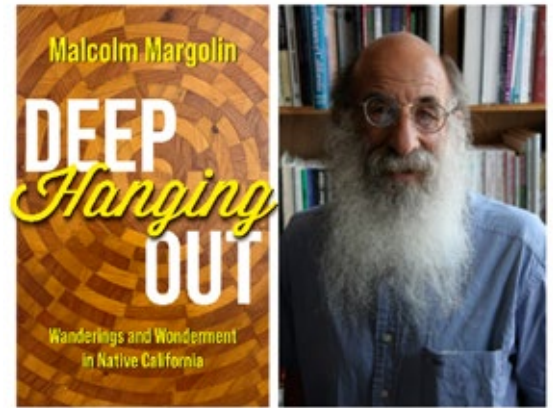
An Evening with Author Malcolm Margolin & Friends, Cosponsored by Heyday and California Institute for Community, Art & Nature

October 7, 6:00 pm PDT

Online; Registration required

MI and Cosponsors' Members Free; Public: \$15

Writer and publisher emeritus of Heyday, Malcolm Margolin has been “deep hanging out” – immersing himself in a social, informal way – with California’s Indigenous people since the 1970s. He will discuss this volume, which collects 30 articles, introductions, and other pieces he has written about California’s diverse tribal communities. Margolin shares the experiences, knowledge, and cultural renewal that Native peoples of the state we call California have generously shared with him in the course of years of friendship, drawing on both archives and interviews with elders in longer reports about leadership traditions, pedagogical techniques, and conservation practices in various parts of the state. Filled with insight and affection, *Deep Hanging Out* will inspire respect and honor for the Indigenous people of California. Please check our website for additional details and to register.



### ***White Space: Essays on Culture, Race, & Writing***

Author Jennifer De Leon in conversation with poet Norma Liliana Valdez, moderated by writer Sara Campos, Cosponsored by Mesa Refuge and LatinX in Publishing (and TBA)

October 14, 5:30 pm PDT

Online; Registration required

MI and Cosponsors' Members Free; Public: Sliding Scale \$5 - \$10

Jennifer De Leon's parents fled Guatemala when the country was in the grips of genocide and civil war. As an adult, she returned to their homeland to relearn the Spanish that she had forgotten, unpack her family's history, and understand her identity. This powerful collection follows De Leon's coming of age as a Guatemalan-American woman learning to navigate the space between two worlds. Join this provocative conversation with Jennifer De Leon and noted Bay Area LatinX writers who will discuss issues of assimilation and the cultural, economic, and creative challenges that immigrants grapple with. Please check the [event link](#) for additional details and to register.



### ***Red Comet: The Short Life and Blazing Art of Sylvia Plath***

October 21, 12:00 pm PDT

Online; Registration required

MI Members Free; Public: Sliding Scale \$5 - \$10

With a wealth of never-before-accessed materials, Heather Clark brings to life the brilliant Sylvia Plath, who had precocious poetic ambition and was an accomplished published writer — even before she became a star at Smith College. Refusing to read Plath’s work as if her every act was a harbinger of her tragic fate, Clark considers the sociopolitical context as she thoroughly explores Plath’s world. Along with illuminating readings of the poems themselves, Clark’s meticulous, compassionate research brings us closer to the spirited woman and visionary artist who blazed a trail that still lights the way for women poets today. Please check our website for additional details and to register.



# Experts Reveal Solutions for Cities' Unhoused

"Every large city has homeless problems, and every city thinks it's a unique problem that's the fault of local politicians, or local advocates, or local businesses, or local housing prices," said *San Francisco Chronicle* Design Critic John King, introducing a panel at the August 5 event discussing the book *Ten Global Cities Take on Homelessness: Innovations that Work*.



The panel consisted of co-authors Muzzy Rosenblatt, Chief Executive Officer and President of Bowery Residents' Committee in NYC, Tamiru Mammo, a consultant manager of Social Services at Bloomberg Associates, and Kristin Misner-Gutierrez, who spent more than 15 years working in New York City government where she was the Deputy Commissioner for Supportive Housing. What followed was an interesting, insightful and often hopeful conversation about how ten cities — Bogota, Mexico City, Los Angeles, Houston, Nashville, New York City, Baltimore, Edmonton, Paris, and Athens — have dealt with an issue that affects every San Franciscan. "In all of these cities, there was a common thread of systems-level thinking and good management," observed Misner-Gutierrez, "the ability to bring competing interests together for a common goal."

"It wasn't one person operating here and one person operating there," Misner-Gutierrez continued, "it was a real system... It's something that is essential in making progress and moving forward." How that cooperation can be achieved, the need for pragmatic goals, and the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on homelessness were discussed before a Zoom audience of over 70 attendees, followed by a lively Q&A session via chat.

For an energizing and encouraging discussion about a subject that often devolves into recrimination, check out the [recording of the event](#) on the Mechanics' Institute's YouTube channel.

# CinemaLit Live! Onsite Film Salons Return to Mechanics'

After more than a year of Friday night CinemaLit discussions on Zoom, MI will be hosting the series live again at the Mechanics' Institute Meeting Room. Join us Fridays at 6:00 for films followed by lively discussion. In October's series, **Classics with Wit**, we will highlight sophisticated comedies that sparkle with fantastic dialogue, peerless acting, and a few of the great screen teams of all time. In November, **She's a Character!** celebrates Beulah Bondi, Agnes Moorehead, and Thelma Ritter, three actresses usually appearing as supporting actors. In these films they shine in roles worthy of their talent. We finish the season with John Huston's elegiac *The Dead*, a profound film on life from a James Joyce short story.

**Café opens at 5:30; Programs begin at 6:00 pm PDT; MI Members free; Public \$10 Suggested Donation; Registration required; COVID protocols observed**

*Dinner at Eight poster used with permission of Warner Bros. The Mating Season poster used with permission of Paramount Pictures. The Dead poster used with permission of Lions Gate Films Inc.*

## October: Classics with Wit

**October 1 *Dinner at Eight* (1933) 113 min**

Directed by George Cukor; Marie Dressler, John Barrymore, Jean Harlow

**October 8 *It Happened One Night* (1934) 105 min**

Directed by Frank Capra; Clark Gable, Claudette Colbert

**October 15 *The Thin Man* (1934) 93 min**

Directed by W. S. Van Dyke; William Powell, Myrna Loy

**October 22 *Theodora Goes Wild* (1936) 94 min**

Directed by Richard Boleslawski; Irene Dunne, Melvyn Douglas

**October 29 *Design for Living* (1933) 91 min**

Directed by Ernst Lubitsch; Fredric March, Miriam Hopkins, Gary Cooper



## November: She's a Character!

**November 5 *Make Way for Tomorrow* (1937) 92 min**

Directed by Leo McCarey; Beulah Bondi, Victor Moore

**November 12 *The Magnificent Ambersons* (1942) 88 min**

Directed by Orson Welles; Joseph Cotton, Agnes Moorehead

**November 19 *The Mating Season* (1951) 101 min**

Directed by Mitchell Leisen; Thelma Ritter, Gene Tierney



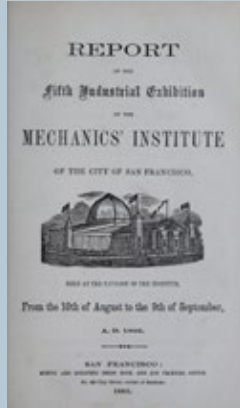
## Season Finale

**December 3 *The Dead* (1987) 83 min**

Directed by John Huston; Anjelica Huston, Donal McCann

# Mechanics' Institute Digital Archives

Since 2016, Mechanics' Institute has been quietly digitizing many of its archives and special collections holdings. This project was undertaken for several reasons – to preserve our history, to protect our fragile and unique documents, to improve the findability of our assets, and to promote the use of these resources for historical and personal research.



Earlier this year, we added an [Archives & Special Collections webpage](#) to MI's website to ensure that researchers could locate some of our oldest and most requested items in the archives (with direct links to the digitized versions), including:

- Board of Trustee Historic Meeting Minutes (1854-1923)
- Industrial Exhibition Reports (1857-1897)
- Chess Room Visitors Register (1913-2014)

However, these items are not the only documents that have been digitized. Many other records have been scanned and added to the Mechanics' Institute's two accounts on the Internet Archive's website which hosts our digitized content. Access to these records can be achieved by going to their website at [archive.org](#) and searching for "[Mechanics' Institute, San Francisco](#)" or "[Mechanics' Institute Library](#)", or, even simpler, by searching for the title of the item you would like to view. Below are some of the items on the Internet Archive's website:

- Chess Newsletters
  - California Chess News/Chess Digest (1947-1950)
  - Chess in Action (1953-1970)
  - The California Chess Reporter (1951-1955)
  - The Chess Reporter (1931-1933)
  - The Scacchic Voice/The Central California Chess Voice (1968-1985)
  - California Chess Journal (1986-2004)
- MI Constitution & Bylaws (1857-1967)
- MI Annual Reports (1867-1964)

Currently, approximately 75 historic photos of MI's buildings, Industrial Exhibition activities and pavilions, and chess club activities are in the process of being digitized at the California State Library and will be added to the "Mechanics' Institute Library" account on the Internet Archive website in the next few months.

As time and funds allow, we will continue to add to our digitized holdings and update the Archives and Special Collections webpage as needed. If you have any questions about the Mechanics' Institute's digitized holdings, or the archives and special collections in general, please contact Diane Lai, MI's archivist, at [dlai@milibrary.org](mailto:dlai@milibrary.org).

# Bi-Annual Meeting, Holiday Gathering, November Highlights

## Bi-Annual Member Meeting

December 2, 5:30 - 6:30 pm PDT

Online/4th Floor Meeting Room (TBA); Registration required  
MI Members Only; Free

Join us for our bi-annual Mechanics' Institute community gathering to hear from fellow members, staff, and trustees. Learn about new plans and programs, technology updates, and our efforts to improve your experience as members. Your participation is welcome. Please check our website for additional details and to register.

In advance of this meeting, Mechanics' Institute's 2021 Annual Report will be published online and emailed to members who have an email address on file with us. The Annual Report contains information about the Institute's year in review as well as plans for the future. You will find the results of our 2021 audit, as well as a list of those who have sustained the MI with their donations throughout the year. The 2021 report can be accessed at our website in late November.

## Mechanics' Institute Holiday Gathering

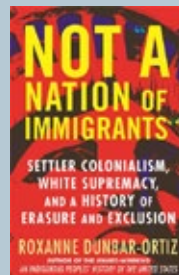
December 9, 5:30 - 7:00 pm PDT

Location TBA

Registration required; MI Members and Guests Welcome

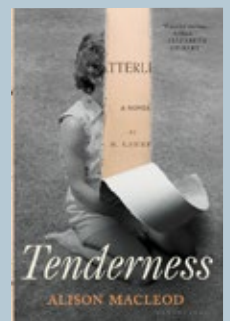
Join members and friends for some holiday cheer and lively conversation while relaxing to musical interludes. Public health recommendations will determine whether this celebration occurs online or onsite. Watch for details on our website as the date draws nearer.

## November Highlights



On November 10, Roxanne Dunbar-Ortiz with SF Poet Laureate Tongo Eisen-Martin tackles America's conflicted views and policies on immigration in *Not a Nation of Immigrants: Settler Colonialism, White Supremacy, and a History of Erasure and Exclusion*.

On November 8, Alison MacLeod will discuss her novel, *Tenderness*, the story of D. H Lawrence's writing of *Lady Chatterley's Lover* and the historic obscenity trial that sought to suppress it.



## Featured Library Programs

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### What's Your Heroic Archetype?

Discover your hero/ine in a personal story by identifying its parallel archetype

October 16, 10:00 - 11:30 am PDT

Online; Registration required

MI Members \$10; Public: \$15

Tales told throughout the ages and the contemporary ones we tell one another contain the same basic story elements. Your stories may not have princesses, magic, or dragons, but it's enlightening to discover how they fit: What motifs are you repeating, what tale types do you tell, and what archetypes do you choose? The future belongs to storytellers who evoke the past and forge a new direction. Identify your potential role by exploring an archetype that resonates with you. During this interactive 90-minute session, we will use simple prompts and exercises to stimulate memories and imaginations, then share our story ideas. This workshop is based on chapter five of *Story Power*, available to borrow from the Mechanics' Institute or to buy from your local retailer. Please check the [event link](#) for additional details and to register.



### Art Migrating Across Borders with artist Rene Yung

October 27, 6:00 - 7:00 pm PDT

Online; Registration required

MI Members and Public Free

Join artist Rene Yung on a journey that traverses visual art, civic engagement, writing, history, archaeology, and cultural activism, weaving together memory and belonging, community and place. In this talk, Yung will describe how her art migrates across borders to uncover the hidden and erased. Join her on the epic multiplatform project "Chinese Whispers" which brings to light overlooked contributions of the Chinese in the American West; share her voyage on a replica 19th century Chinese vessel to retrace the history of Chinese shrimping on San Francisco Bay. Explore "The City Beneath the City," an interdisciplinary collaboration that repurposed archaeological artifacts to narrate historical anti-Asian violence in San Jose's first Chinatown; feel the migrant's epigenetic longing in the "Written on Water" suite. Learn how to participate in the digital anti-memorial "#AskThePandemic." Please check our website for additional details and to register.



### Add Mechanics' to Your Year-End Tax-Deductible Giving Plan

We hope that our work to serve you during the pandemic has enriched your life during uncertain and troubling times. Whether you joined MI to learn or compete in chess; to make use of our extensive digital collections and library of books, CDs, DVDs, and periodicals; to join in community by attending lectures and programs about literature, pressing topics of the day, or chess studies; or to support our historic mission to support researchers, readers, technologists, chess players, and curious folks who want to understand our world better, there's a place for you at Mechanics' Institute.

As you might imagine, the pandemic has affected Mechanics' Institute's revenue as we continue to follow public health guidelines to keep members and staff safe, and are tentatively resuming select onsite events with appropriate precautions in place. Please consider giving to Mechanics' Institute as part of your year-end giving plan, which enables the work begun in 1854 to continue. The Mechanics' Institute is a 501(c)3 public charity, which means that membership payments and donations are tax-deductible as charitable donations. To support MI, donations may be made online at [milibrary.org/give](http://milibrary.org/give) or by mail.

# Chess Programming

## Mechanics' Institute Live/Online Events and Classes

The chess club continues its full range of USCF and FIDE rated events at the Mechanics' Institute, with a Tuesday Night Marathon, monthly quads, and weekend tournaments. We have successfully continued our online programs as well, including the Thursday Night Marathon online and specialty classes on topics which include *Middle Game Strategy Through the Lens of the TNM*, *The Art of Attack*, *The Art of Defense*, *Endgame Lab*, *Modern Chess Openings*, and — our newest class offering starting in September — *Zugzwang!*

Mechanics' Institute offers a members-only class designed for individuals of all ages who are new to chess. The free *MI Member Beginner's Class* is now in its 6th session with an average of 15 students, all of whom are members who are either learning chess for the first time or engaging in it more deeply. For more information on our events, please visit the [chess homepage](#). To find our list of class offerings, visit [milibrary.org/chess/online](http://milibrary.org/chess/online).

## Scholastic Chess at Mechanics' Institute

MI's Scholastic Chess Program focuses on social aspects of chess, allowing students to build self-confidence, learn sporting conduct, and develop decision-making skills that can be applied in other areas of their lives and in their communities. The program cultivates critical thinking skills, helps students practice perseverance through adversity, fosters a practice of fair play, allows students to practice losing gracefully, and to learn from mistakes. If learned at an early age, these skills can enhance many other areas or activities in a child's life, including academics and emotional intelligence. The MI chess team has continued to host programs for scholastic players throughout the pandemic, and has recently been able to resume hosting live events.

In July, the in-person Scholastic Chess Tournament attracted 38 players, including a visit from Women's Grandmaster Carla Heredia, the 2021 US Women's Open Champion. One aim of the Scholastic Chess Program is to create space for girls to engage in chess, as they have been excluded in the past. Grandmaster Heredia attended MI's tournament to support the 10 girls playing that day, who constituted 26% of tournament participants.

We continue to offer weekly online tournaments for players, enabling children everywhere to experience a Mechanics' chess event and extend our outreach into communities who have not traditionally been given opportunities to learn and excel in chess.

## Chess Newsletter

Can't get enough of chess news and articles? Did you know that Mechanics' Chess Club offers a newsletter each week? You can find the latest issue on our website, and you can sign up to receive the newsletter via email by entering your preferences on [our email sign-up page](#). The [current issue](#) features former MI Chess Director and US Olympiad team coach IM John Donaldson whose *Bobby Fischer and His World* was recently published. Check out the back catalog on the [chess newsletters page](#) of our website.



77 players participated in person during the Charles Bagby Memorial in June



WGM Carla Heredia with the girls who competed in the July Mechanics' Institute Scholastic tournament



Students in action at the Mechanics' Institute

# Youth Outreach: Live and Virtual Chess Enrichment Programs

Mechanics' Institute's free Youth Outreach Program seeks to use chess instruction as a learning tool, benefiting students who would not normally be able to participate in extracurricular activities due to financial constraints. We are committed to expanding our programming in schools, focusing on diverse and less advantaged San Francisco communities to help level the playing field for children whose families may lack the resources afforded those in more privileged communities, and creating pathways for children to continue learning and developing through the Mechanics' Institute.

Virtual learning environments, while necessary during the public health pandemic, have reduced extracurricular opportunities, and many students have experienced academic and social setbacks. The COVID-19 public health crisis and resulting school closures have demonstrated the unique benefits of enrichment programming. Since March 2020, Mechanics' has been providing online opportunities for students to engage in chess activities using Zoom and chesskid.com platforms. We will be resuming a full slate of onsite enrichment programming in at least 20 schools this Fall, as well as continuing to provide after school online learning options for students through our in-house virtual classes.

To kick off the 2021-2022 school year, Mechanics' will offer weekly scholastic events for kids of all levels to continue to develop and apply what they learn. From our daily free tournaments on chesskid.com to our weekly USCF rated events, students will find a variety of opportunities to learn and grow their game.

Visit the [scholastic chess page](#) of our site for information regarding our offerings. Please reach out to us for information on scholarships by emailing [chessroom@milibrary.org](mailto:chessroom@milibrary.org).

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This program is donor-funded. If you would like to support our efforts, please consider giving a back-to-school gift via our secure [online giving portal](#) and selecting "Youth Chess Outreach" in the donation type section of the form.

You may instead send program donations by mail. In your mailed instructions, please indicate that the gift is for the Youth Chess Outreach Program. Donations to this program are tax-deductible, and our students appreciate your support.

## Recent Major Gifts

We are grateful for the support we receive from the following individuals and foundations, who make our continued growth possible. Thank you! The following contributions were received between June 1 and August 31, 2021.

Robert Mailer Anderson and Nicola Miner  
Douglas and Stephanie Butler\*  
James M. Canty  
Lindsey Crittenden  
Robert J. Eldred, CFP  
Estate of Neil E. Falconer\*  
Dean L. and Vena P. Flint  
Susan Karp and Paul Haahr  
Estate of Jesse M. Levy, III  
Estate of Janet Livingstone\*  
Jerrold Moskowitz  
Peter A. Reque\*

\* James Lick Legacy Society Member

## Stock Transfers and IRA Distributions Provide Tax Benefits

Do you own appreciated stocks? Transferring stock affords you the opportunity to contribute to the work of Mechanics' Institute without dipping into your annual income. Donating stock to a nonprofit allows you to avoid capital gains tax and deduct the stock's full current value, regardless of the price it was purchased at.

If you are 70.5 or older, you are eligible to make a tax-free gift from your IRA — a Qualified Charitable Distribution. Giving directly from your IRA reduces future tax burden and allows you another way to make an impact without impacting your annual income.

Contact your tax adviser or a financial representative at your stock, mutual fund, or IRA account for details on how to initiate these types of gifts.

Transferring stock and making a gift from your IRA are two ways to maximize your savings and your impact at a time when it's sorely needed. Please consider these tax-friendly gifts to ensure Mechanics' Institute can continue to provide members with chess instruction and play, literature and information, and unique programs.

# Member Profile: Joan Hockaday



Joan Hockaday has been a member of the Mechanics' Institute since 2014. She has written two books, one of which is about the gardens of San Francisco and is available for checkout in the library's collection. She discovered Mechanics' Institute through one of her late husband Peter's old friends and roommates, who told her that MI was "the best library in San Francisco."

You can often find Joan sitting at the big desk in front of the 3rd floor window to admire the view and study Frederick Law Olmstead, the man who designed Central Park and, later, Golden Gate Park. She loves spending hours in the stacks learning more about links between New York and San Francisco as well as all the connections between the history of the library and the history of our parks and gardens. In particular, she enjoys Dick Reinhardt's *Four Books, 300 Dollars, and a Dream, an Illustrated History of the Mechanics' Institute*, which is available for purchase at the second floor library desk or for checkout.

She has especially appreciated Mechanics' Institute's services during the pandemic and is glad we were able to start allowing members back inside the building this March, calling the library a "wonderful retreat." She loves to introduce new people to the library and many new members have listed her as their referral source or have been gifted new memberships by her. Joan hopes MI is able to continue offering our services to the San Francisco community for decades to come.

## A Gift Your Loved Ones Can Enjoy All Year

Did you know that the number one reason new members say that they join Mechanics' Institute is because a friend recommended us to them? If you, like Joan, would like to give the gift of membership to a loved one on your holiday gift list this year, please complete the [gift membership form](#), and let us know whether you'd like to deliver the membership welcome packet yourself, or if you'd like us to mail a surprise to the recipient. You can also purchase a membership for someone you care about in-person at a service desk.

Giving a gift membership is a great way to support the Institute and to encourage your loved ones to gain the same benefits that you enjoy with your own membership — a vibrant library, a renowned chess club, invigorating events, classes, and workshops, a thriving writers' community, and the fellowship of others who want to learn and grow together. We offer in-person and remote services, as well as onsite, virtual, and hybrid events. Whether your loved ones live near or far, [give a gift membership](#) today!

To support our work, donations may also be made online at [milibrary.org/give](#), by mail, or via your company's matching gifts program.

Joining the [James Lick Legacy Society](#) signals your commitment to the Mechanics' Institute's ongoing mission in the form of a bequest made via your will.

57 Post Street  
San Francisco, CA 94104  
[www.milibrary.org](http://www.milibrary.org)

### Library Questions?

Call:

415.393.0101

E-mail:

[reference@milibrary.org](mailto:reference@milibrary.org)

### Membership Questions?

Call:

415.393.0105

E-mail:

[membership@milibrary.org](mailto:membership@milibrary.org)

### Support the Institute today!

Donate: [milibrary.org/give](http://milibrary.org/give)

Join: [milibrary.org/join](http://milibrary.org/join)

Renew: [milibrary.org/renew](http://milibrary.org/renew)

### Library Hours

Please see our [website](#) for details.

### Closures

#### **October 11**

Indigenous Peoples' Day

#### **November 11**

Veterans' Day

#### **November 25-26**

Thanksgiving

#### **December 24-27**

Winter Holiday

#### **December 31-January 1, 2022**

New Year