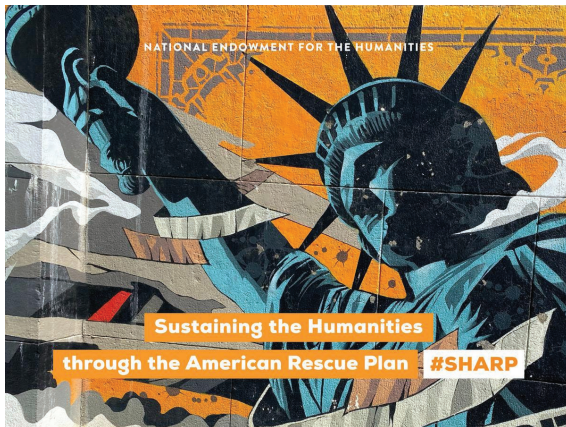


National Endowment for the Humanities and Mechanics' Institute: Civil Rights, Artistic Diversity, Historical Reckoning



The National Foundation on the Arts and the Humanities Act of 1965 identified the need for a national cultural agency that would preserve America's rich history and cultural heritage, and encourage and support scholarship and innovation in history, archaeology, philosophy, literature, and other humanities disciplines. The **National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH)** was created to fulfill this mission.

In 2021, Mechanics' Institute submitted a competitive grant proposal in response to the NEH's **Sustaining the Humanities through the American Rescue Plan** funding opportunity, and the Institute is honored to have been awarded a significant grant to fund programming in our **Civil Rights, Artistic Diversity, Historical**

Reckoning: Exploring the Film, Literature, and Lives of Marginalized Communities* series of events.

The Mechanics' Institute hosts authors, speakers, and experts with the ability to create dialogue through cultural exchange and discussion about literature, film, and historical artifacts and events. This grant from the NEH will enable the Institute to create more opportunities to engage in critical thinking, sharing of ideas, and learning by engaging a diversity of presenters on topics related to marginalized artists, writers, and thinkers. The grant also provides funding to develop sustainable hybrid options so we can continue to expand access to events for all Mechanics' Institute community members, whether they live down the block or across the globe.

Covering a one-year period from October 2021 through September 2022, the Institute has thus far hosted three programs supported by this grant. The first was ***Deep Hanging Out: Wanderings and Wonderment in Native California*** with author Malcolm Margolin; Paul Hawken, author of *Regeneration*; Native rights attorney Michelle La Pena of the Pit River Tribe; and Indigenous leader Susan Masten of the Yurok Tribe. They spoke to a virtual audience of more than 200 about drawing on traditional cultures to reverse climate change. Cosponsored by organizations promoting writers of color, including Mese Refuge, Latinx in Publishing, Puente, and CinnamonGirl, author Jennifer DeLeon discussed her book, ***White Space: Essays on Culture, Race, & Writing*** with poet Norma Liliana Valdez, and moderated by writer and immigration lawyer Sara Campos. In ***Not a Nation of Immigrants: Settler Colonialism, White Supremacy, and a History of Erasure and Exclusion***, author Roxanne Dunbar-Ortiz and San Francisco Poet Laureate Tongo Eisen-Martin discussed the role that negative attitudes about immigration — past and present — play in citizenship, civil policies, and our democracy.

This grant award recognizes the continuing efforts of the Institute to celebrate the voices of the great thinkers, writers, and artists who are often overlooked, and will help ensure that we are able to welcome new audiences — both those in the Bay Area and beyond — into our community. This support will enable us to continue to build the partnerships and programs that speak to the diversity of our members and communities.

*Any views, findings, conclusions, or recommendations expressed in this programming stream do not necessarily represent those of the National Endowment for the Humanities.

Featured Events

Back to Japan: The Life and Art of Master Kimono Painter Kunihiro Moriguchi

Author Marc Petitjean, moderated by Laura Sheppard, Mechanics' Institute Director of Events

January 13, 12:00 pm PST

Online; Registration required

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

Back to Japan is a fascinating, intimate portrait of one of Japan's most iconoclastic textile artists by critically acclaimed Paris-based filmmaker and author Marc Petitjean. Moriguchi, who left Japan at a young age to study at the École des Arts Décoratifs in Paris, adapted the cutting-edge techniques of Optical Art and became a protégé of the French-Polish painter Balthus and friend of Joan Miró, Marc Chagall, Max Ernst, and others. He is known for innovating the craft of yuzen (a 17th-century resist-dyeing method) through his visionary designs, understanding that the centuries-old Kimono is not just an object to wear but a canvas on which to create art. Please check our website for additional details and to register.



photo credit: John Hughes-Berrou

Reimagining Sustainable Cities: Strategies for Designing Greener, Healthier, More Equitable Communities

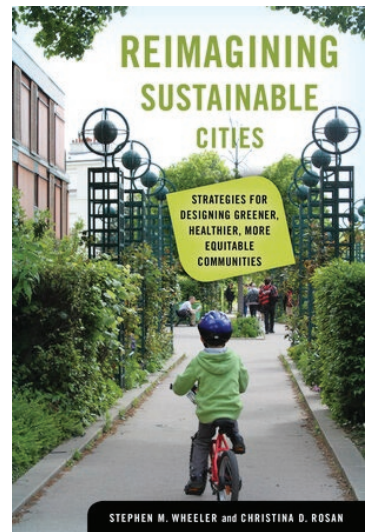
Authors Stephen M. Wheeler and Christina D. Rosan with Louise Mazingo, Chair and Professor of Landscape Architecture and Environmental Planning (UC-Berkeley), moderated by Professor Christopher Jones, CoolClimate Network and the REAL (Renewable and Appropriate Energy Lab) (UC-Berkeley)

January 20, 5:30 pm PST

Online; Registration required

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

What would it take to make urban places greener, more affordable, more equitable, and healthier for everyone? In recent years, cities have stepped up efforts to address climate and sustainability crises. If communities are to thrive in the future, we need to quickly imagine and implement an entirely new approach to urban development: one that is centered on equity and rethinks social, political, and economic systems as well as urban designs. With attention to this need for structural change, *Reimagining Sustainable Cities* advocates for a community-informed model of racially, economically, and socially just cities and regions. The book aims to rethink urban sustainability for a new era. Please check our website for additional details and to register.



Read Until You Understand: The Profound Wisdom of Black Life and Literature

Author Farah Jasmine Griffin (Columbia University) in conversation with Bay Area author Julie Lythcott-Haims, Cosponsored by Museum of the African Diaspora (MoAD)

February 16, 5:30 pm PST

Online; Registration required

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

This new book is a moving and deeply necessary celebration of Black life, art, and literature. Through autobiographical meditations and literary analysis of selected works by Toni Morrison, Frederick Douglass, Phillis Wheatley, James Baldwin, Jesmyn Ward, Barack Obama, Marvin Gaye, and others, Professor Griffin honors the experiences of Black Americans. What results is an elegant and ambitious exploration of the ongoing project of American democracy that shows how Black writers and thinkers "have been working, building, creating, envisioning, showing us how to live like the future we are hoping to build is already here." Please check our website for additional details and to register.



photo credit: Peggy Dillard Toone
(Copyright, used with permission)

Programming in "Civil Rights, Artistic Diversity, Historical Reckoning: Exploring the Film, Literature, and Lives of Marginalized Communities" has been made possible in part by [a major grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities: Democracy demands wisdom.](#)

CinemaLit Special Guest

Sitting Down With the Stars

Author Ruthe Stein, moderated by Matthew Kennedy, CinemaLit Curator, Writer, and Film Historian

January 7 *A Single Man* (2009) 101 min
Directed by Tom Ford; Colin Firth, Julianne Moore

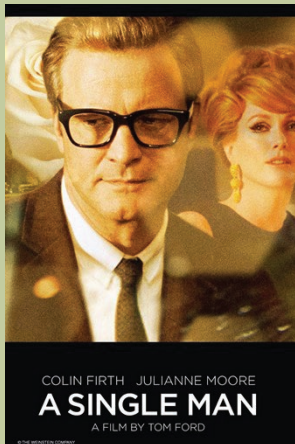
Program begins at 6:00 pm
Due to public health conditions, this program will now be held online via Zoom; Registration required



Former *San Francisco Chronicle* film columnist Ruthe Stein will be joining us to discuss her new book, *Sitting Down With the Stars*, which includes an interview with Colin Firth during the release of *A Single Man*.

Fashion designer Tom Ford made his directorial debut in this adaptation of a Christopher Isherwood novel. Firth plays a professor in Southern California suffering paralyzing grief over the death of his longtime partner. Set in the deeply homophobic era of the early 1960s, his loss is barely acknowledged.

The film is predictably stylish, while Firth's breathtaking performance earned him a Best Actor Academy Award nomination.



Used with permission from
The Weinstein Company

CinemaLit: Pre-Code Film and Notable Black Directors

Café opens at 5:30; Programs begin at 6:00 pm;
MI Members free; Public \$10 Suggested Donation;
Registration required; COVID protocols observed
January CinemaLit Salons will be held online due to increased COVID transmission rates. Please check our website for February updates.

January: Barbara Stanwyck, Take Two

January 14 *Stella Dallas* (1937) 106 min
Directed by King Vidor; Barbara Stanwyck, Anne Shirley

January 21 *Meet John Doe* (1941) 118 min
Directed by Frank Capra; Barbara Stanwyck, Gary Cooper

January 28 *The Strange Love of Martha Ivers* (1946) 117 min
Directed by Lewis Milestone; Barbara Stanwyck, Van Heflin, Kirk Douglas

February: Black Lives, Black Directors

February 4 *Harriet* (2019)
125 min
Directed by Kasi Lemmons;
Cynthia Erivo, Janelle Monáe

February 11 *Selma* (2014)
128 min
Directed by Ava Duvernay; David Oyelowo, Carmen Ejogo

February 18 *Do The Right Thing* (1989) 120 min
Directed by Spike Lee; Spike Lee, Danny Aiello

February 25 *Get Out* (2017)
110 min
Directed by Jordan Peele; David Kaluuya, Allison Williams

Programming in "Civil Rights, Artistic Diversity, Historical Reckoning: Exploring the Film, Literature, and Lives of Marginalized Communities" has been made possible in part by [a major grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities: Democracy demands wisdom.](#)



Image used with permission from Focus Features

March: Elmer Bernstein

Check [CinemaLit listings](#) for more information on our March series celebrating the great movie composer Elmer Bernstein.



NATIONAL
ENDOWMENT
FOR THE
HUMANITIES

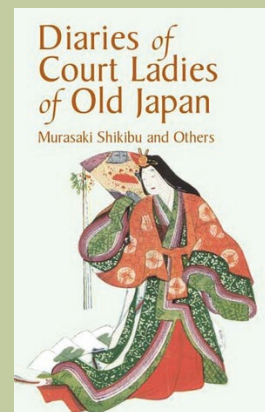
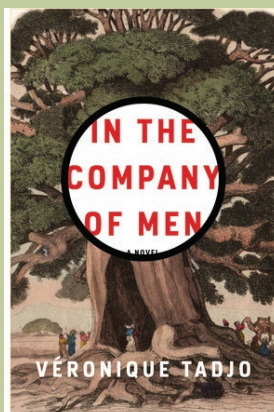
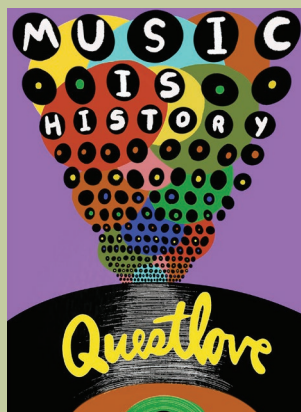
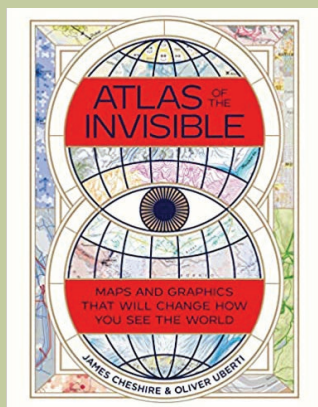
Donating Materials

Throughout our history, donations to the Institute have kept us going and helped us to thrive. Contributions come to us primarily in the form of financial gifts. However, some donations are non-monetary, or "in kind" gifts. A few of the earliest in kind donations were delivered to us from affiliated institutions on the East Coast in the wake of the 1906 earthquake and fires. In the past few years, we have received in kind donations that include a scoresheet for the simultaneous exhibition Alexander Alekhine gave at the Mechanics' Institute Chess Club in 1924, an historic partners' desk from the law firm of Briscoe Ivester & Basel, and several books added to the library's collection.

The library has received a recent influx of inquiries about donating books. We appreciate your recently published items in new condition that can be added to our stacks. Please refer to Institute [guidelines](#) on what the library has the capacity to accept. Materials which may be donated must meet the following criteria:

- * A donated item must be in **new condition**. This means that it would blend in on a bookstore shelf. If the book has turned pages, highlighting or margin notes, yellowing pages, mold, or stains, it is not considered to be in new condition and we are unable to add these materials to our collection.
- * A donated item must be **recently published**, with a copyright date within the past five years. We may accept materials which have archival value or are rare, when pre-arranged with the acquisitions librarian or archivist. In this case, materials need not be recently published, but must be subject in the Institute's areas of Special Collections.
- * Donated items will only be accepted if they **do not duplicate materials** already in the library's collection. Since our shelf space is limited, we cannot typically make space for backup copies of materials we already own.
- * Materials must meet **collection standards** set by the library in terms of subject matter. For instance, the Institute does not collect car maintenance manuals or textbooks.

A few books that have been added to our shelves most recently include *Atlas of the Invisible* (2021) by cartographer James Cheshire, *Music is History* (2021) by author and renowned musician Questlove, *In the Company of Men*, (2021) by visiting author Véronique Tadjo, and *Diaries of Court Ladies of Old Japan* (1920) translated by Kōchi Doi and Annie Shepley Omori:



Please note that damaged, outdated, or soiled books are an expense to the library because we must dispose of them safely. Receiving unusable books impacts our ability to get new materials onto the shelves in a timely manner because staff time must be prioritized to handle these materials so that they do not spread possible issues like mold or insects to our other books. Please do not attempt to donate materials that do not meet the criteria listed above.

Large donations of 10 or more books at a time should be pre-approved by the acquisitions librarian. For pre-approval, send a list of the materials you would like to donate — including condition notes, titles, authors, publication dates, and ISBN numbers for each item — to acjackson@milibrary.org.

You might also consider giving additional gifts in kind, such as gifting food and beverage for events, chess boards and equipment for our Scholastic Chess Program, or rare and archival materials in our Special Collections areas. To coordinate these gifts in kind, contact us at 415-393-0105 or membership@milibrary.org and we will be happy to arrange departmental approvals on your behalf.

Thank you for your enthusiasm about adding materials that can be shared with fellow members to the Institute's collection!

Featured Writing Programs and Readers' Groups

Writers' Lunch: Places We Write About

January 21, 12:00 pm PST

Online; Registration required to obtain meeting link

MI Members and Public: Free

Some novelists say the setting is a character. Some create fantasy worlds. Some readers choose books set in a favorite place. Some journalists make a career of chronicling a single place. Some bookstores have a section called "Armchair Travel." How does place inform your writing? At the Writers' Lunch, members of the Mechanics' Institute and visitors from around the world will "Zoom in" and share their experiences. Join us, share, and learn.

Beta Readers Exchange: Meet & Greet

February 2, 6:00 pm PST

Online; Registration required to obtain meeting link

MI Members and Public: Free

Have you written a novel or memoir and would like beta readers to give you constructive feedback about your writing style, pacing, dialogue, premise, plot, story arc, and character development? Beta readers review finished manuscripts before they're published, providing the author with feedback from the reader's point of view, such as pointing out things they liked and disliked and highlighting elements writers can become oblivious to during countless revisions. The Beta Readers' Exchange meets periodically to give writers the opportunity to "pitch" their novels or memoirs to other writers. This meet and greet event will help connect writers who are looking for readers. Manuscripts can be exchanged via email. Please [register](#) in advance for this meetup.

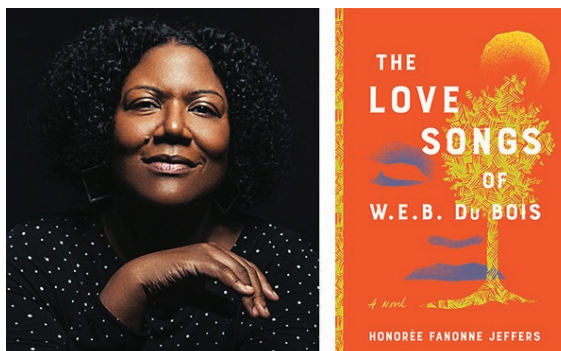
World Literature Virtual Book Group Upcoming Meetings

7:00 - 8:15 pm PST

Pre-registration required to obtain meeting link and for membership verification

MI Members Only; Free

Mechanics' Institute members are welcome to join fellow readers at World Literature meetings on the second and fourth Wednesdays of each month. December's selections included the classic *Things Fall Apart*, the debut novel by Nigerian author Chinua Achebe, published in 1958. In February, members will discuss the contemporary novel — another debut — *The Love Songs of W.E.B. DuBois* by acclaimed American poet Honorée Fanonne Jeffers. Keep an eye on our events listings for forthcoming details, or sign up for our weekly newsletter to receive reminders of upcoming meetings.



January 12 [The Friend](#), by Sigrid Nunez

An unnamed narrator recalls the life of her best friend and mentor, recently lost to suicide, while she makes a new friend who shares her grief: his dog.

January 26 [Ironweed](#), by William Kennedy

In the wake of the Great Depression, Francis Phelan returns to New York, encountering ghosts from his past that he cannot escape, in this Pulitzer-winning book.

February 9, 23, and March 9 *The Love Songs of W.E.B. DuBois* by Honorée Fanonne Jeffers

Ailey Pearl Garfield delves deeply into her family's history in an epic intergenerational story of personal growth and historical reckoning. This poetic novel interweaves the experiences of multiple generations of an African-American family in the American South.

March 23 *The Moon and the Bonfires (La Luna e i Falò)*, by Cesare Pavese

Eel returns to his hometown in northwestern Italy 25 years after he left — finding it changed deeply by the events and the aftermath of the Second World War.

Chess Programming

Tuesday Night Marathon Continues to Grow

Mechanics' Institute's flagship chess event, the Tuesday Night Marathon (TNM), continues to grow in numbers as players return to live over-the-board play. In 2022, we will be celebrating our 50th year hosting this historic weekly event. We offer an engaging experience for players and spectators by broadcasting the top boards online and providing live commentary on our Twitch stream for viewers to follow from home, with staff performing customer service throughout the broadcast. Find more information on the Tuesday Night Marathon via [our TNM web page](#). Follow [Mechanics' Institute's Twitch channel](#) to watch live event broadcasts.

Weekend Events for Players: Live at Mechanics'

There are now live chess events to suit every player at the Mechanics' Institute, including 1-day USCF rated events, Championship Quads series, and 2-day FIDE rated events. We continue to host monthly USCF rated scholastic tournaments, as well as near-weekly USCF rated online scholastic tournaments.

In 2022, we will host a variety of events — including the 2022 San Francisco Scholastic Championship. The Championship is a free event for K-12 students held in Golden Gate Park, with rated and unrated sections. The event was held online in 2021. Thanks to COVID vaccines for children 5 and older, we look forward to seeing students back in action at Golden Gate Park on March 19th, 2022. Mark your calendars and register in advance!

Chess Classes for Players of All Skill Levels, Including Adult Beginners

We offer a wide range of classes for players of all levels. For Institute members who are new to chess, we offer a free adult beginner class, hosted online via Zoom. This class introduces members to chess in a fun and pressure-free setting. We also offer a free online women's class on Sunday mornings, and specialty classes for more experienced players such as **The Art of Attack**, **Modern Chess Openings**, and **Zugzwang!**, just to name a few. Please see our course offerings and dates by viewing the [chess page](#) of our site.

Women's Chess Classes Supported by a Gift from the Lindsay Family

Thanks to a generous gift from Alexandra and Robert Lindsay, Women's Chess Classes at Mechanics' Institute will remain free to members in 2022. In the past, this class has been supported by US Chess Federation. This year, the Lindsay family has underwritten the costs associated with continuing the class free of charge to Mechanics' Institute Members. We are grateful for gifts that sustain our operations, and welcome members to avail themselves of this safe space for learning, camaraderie, and improved play, taught by Sophie Adams each Sunday from 10 am to 12 pm via Zoom. [Register online](#).

Please check our website for chess programming updates; live events may be held online based on public health conditions related to COVID-19.



Players compete over the board at Mechanics' Institute live events.



Players may also opt to join the action online, via classes and lectures taught by Institute staff, including FM Paul Whitehead, pictured here.

Upcoming Events

[Bob Burger Memorial Championship](#).
January 8, 10 am. 4SS G/45;d5

[Mechanics' Institute Championship Quads](#).
January 22, 3 pm. 3 Games G/30;d5

January-February [Tuesday Night Marathon](#).
January 4th-February 15th. 7SS G/120;d5

San Francisco Scholastic Chess Championship. March 19, 9 am. Golden Gate Park, more information coming soon.

For more information, visit the Mechanics' Institute chess homepage at <https://www.milibrary.org/chess>

Scholastic Enrichment Programs: Thriving...and Growing

Mechanics' Institute has resumed in-person scholastic enrichment programs, currently serving 18 schools in San Francisco, Burlingame, and Hillsborough. Students have exhibited enthusiastic engagement, and our coaches promote life skills that chess can impart, such as sporting conduct, critical thinking, persevering through adversity, and winning and losing with grace. Learning these beneficial skills through chess allows students to practice them in an environment conducive to lifelong application.

Please 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.



In classes and chess play, students learn valuable life skills that will serve them throughout their academic careers and help them, not only to improve their critical thinking skills, but also to build stronger relationships with their classmates and competitors.



This program is donor-funded. Please consider giving a gift via our secure [online giving portal](#) and selecting "Youth Chess Outreach" in the donation type section of the form.

You may also send program donations by mail, to:

Mechanics' Institute
Attn: Development
PO Box 577
San Francisco, CA 94104-0577

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 September 1 and November 30, 2022.

Anonymous
Bruce D. Celebrezze
Lindsey Crittenden
David and Stella Goodwin
Arnold T. Grisham
Hannah T. Hale
Jennifer P. Harding
Doug S. Huestis
Sukey Lilienthal and David Roe
Alexandra and Robert Lindsay
Fritz L. Maytag
The Morris and Alma Schapiro Fund
Jerrold Moskowitz
Mark and Lisa Pinto
Wallace Samuelson, Jr.
Peter B. Wiley

Designate a Gift to Services & Projects that Matter Most to You

Did you know that you can direct your Mechanics' Institute gifts to specific services you want to support? These include:

- Maintenance of our historic **Building**
- **Chess** collections, classes, and tournaments
- **Youth chess outreach programming**
- **Events** — including CinemaLit salons, author presentations, topical discussions, and celebrations
- **Library** collections and services
- Library **Outreach Services** for members who live with conditions that prevent them from leaving home

Your gifts always support these services in the capacity where they are most needed. We appreciate all-purpose gifts immensely; they allow us to allocate funds to the most pressing financial needs of the Institute at a time when our need is great. However, we want to ensure that you are able to show your support for the services that matter most to you, and we also welcome gifts designated toward the programs and services you use most.

When sending a check, indicate the designation in a written note, using the stated areas bolded in the list above. When donating online, indicate your interest by using the drop down menu in the payment portal to select your choice.

No matter how or how much you are able to give, **thank you!**

Meet a Member: Emily Sellers



Emily Sellers was first introduced to the Mechanics' Institute by a coworker in the early 1980s when she was working on her Master's degree, and became a member in 2015 when seeking an obscure documentary DVD for her research. Formerly an adjunct professor in the academic English department at the University of San Francisco where she taught English as a second language, Emily is a birdwatcher and certified California Naturalist. While writing takes up plenty of her time now, she would like to go back to teaching on a volunteer basis in the future.



Emily has had a lifelong love affair with libraries, even working at one during her college years. She loves the space and feel of the Mechanics' Institute building as well as the sense of community the library fosters. In particular, she enjoys attending

author talks and writing classes at the Institute. She appreciates that Mechanics' Institute has offered these events throughout the pandemic via Zoom and continues to do so, though she is looking forward to being able to safely connect with fellow attendees in person, whenever that may be.

Recent Member Gatherings

Mechanics' Institute invited members to join in celebration at two events in December — a hybrid Bi-Annual Member Meeting where we saw equal numbers of online and onsite attendees, and the Mechanics' Institute Member Holiday Gathering (*volunteers Colette Duncan and Wendy Hall are pictured below*).



At both events, proof of full vaccination and masks were required; capacity was reduced to promote social distancing. Our own Myles Cooper, Programming Librarian and DJ, provided the tunes. Caterer Genie Mosey and Sweet Relish served delicious boxed cuisine and dessert. A palpable sense of delight filled the room as members, staff, and volunteers mingled and caught up with one another after being apart for so long. Mechanics' Institute looks forward to responsibly welcoming members to hybrid and onsite programs as we continue to work toward a COVID-safe world for all.

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

Library Questions?

Call:

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reference@milibrary.org

Membership Questions?

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membership@milibrary.org

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Mail Membership Dues and Donations to:

Mechanics' Institute
PO Box 577
San Francisco, CA 94104-0577

Library Hours

Monday through Friday 12:00 pm - 6:00 pm
Saturday 10:00 am - 3:00 pm

Closures

January 1, 2022
New Year's Day

January 17, 2022
Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr Day

February 21, 2022
Presidents' Day