

NEA "Big Read" Program Debuts at the Mechanics' Institute



Mechanics' Institute is proud to have been chosen as the San Francisco NEA grantee for the nation-wide Big Read project. Our Big Read programming, which takes place from September 2022 through June 2023, will center around the book *Interior Chinatown* by Charles Yu.

"All across America, in communities small and large, the NEA Big Read connects neighbors and inspires creativity," Torrie Allen, president & CEO of Arts Midwest, says. "We're excited to support this year's grantees as they bring the pages of these wonderful books to life through inventive programming."

Our planned programs include the following:

- Our film program kickoff with *Hollywood Chinese* and director Arthur Dong, Thursday October 7 at 6 pm PT onsite at the Institute
- Featured author event with Charles Yu, author of *Interior Chinatown*, Thursday October 20 at 6 pm PT via Zoom
- Walking tours, film screenings, and exhibit tours in partnership with local organizations centered on the Asian American experience
- Dim Sum Book Group, a book group focusing on Asian American authors, to discuss the related topics and themes of *Interior Chinatown*
- Big Read: San Francisco Grand Finale in June 2023 with special guests and happy hour refreshments

The Mechanics' Institute has added several hard copies of *Interior Chinatown* as well as e-book and audiobook copies to our collection for checkout. Throughout the program series, there will be book giveaways, opportunities to discuss the work and get to know fellow community members, occasions to visit and explore the work of organizations serving the interests of Chinese-American individuals, and printed materials to guide your reading and to find other books or films that center on the subjects raised in *Interior Chinatown*.

About the National Endowment for the Arts Big Read

The National Endowment for the Arts Big Read, a partnership with Arts Midwest, broadens our understanding of our world, our communities, and ourselves through the joy of sharing a good book. Since 2006, the National Endowment for the Arts has funded more than 1,700 NEA Big Read programs, providing more than \$24 million to organizations nationwide. In addition, NEA Big Read activities have reached every Congressional district in the country. Over the past 16 years, grantees have leveraged more than \$56 million in local funding to support their NEA Big Read programs. More than 5.9 million Americans have attended an NEA Big Read event, with 97,000 volunteers participating at the local level and 40,000 community organizations have partnered to make NEA Big Read activities possible. Visit [arts.gov/neabigread](https://www.arts.gov/neabigread) for more information about the NEA Big Read.

Upcoming Events

Misanthropic Moralists: Author Vladimir Sorokin in Conversation with translator Max Lawton

Co-presented by Litquake, Mechanics' Institute, Dalkey Archive, and New York Review of Books

Thursday, October 11, 6 PM PT

4th Floor Meeting Room; registration required

MI members and cosponsors \$10; Public \$15

Proof of Vaccination and Masks Required

Celebrated as a literary heir to Turgenev, Gogol, Nabokov, and even Pynchon, Vladimir Sorokin is widely considered one of Russia's most iconoclastic and imaginative writers, as well as one of their most controversial. His postmodern fiction both reflects and reacts against the farcical bleakness of life in Russia, combining elements of satire with Soviet history and dystopian environments, and liberal helpings of sex, scatology, and violence. Virtually unknown in the West until recently, the New York Review of Books is in the midst of translating eight of his novels. His newest, *Telluria*, offers a cautionary tale set in a future feudal dystopia filled with warring zealots and urban tribalists, partisans and princes, peasants and party leaders, and a drug called tellurium.

Please check the [event link](#) for additional details and to register.

Hidden Stories: Illuminating the Marginalized in Historical Fiction

Moderated by Gini Grossenbacher

Thursday, October 13, 2022, 12:00pm to 1:00pm

Zoom; Registration required

MI members and public: Free

This free event is produced in collaboration with the San Francisco chapter of the Womens' National Book Association.

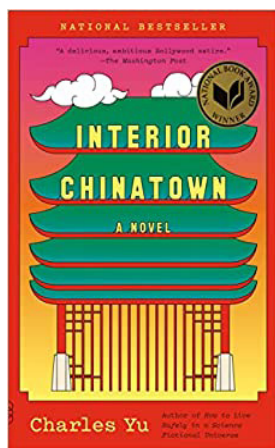
Join us for a compelling panel discussion with four noted historical fiction authors. Learn how the writers create fresh, authentic tales that mesmerize readers, engage their curiosity, and give them in-depth historical understandings. These narratives transform readers' hearts and minds about the unsung peoples of history. Each author will share their wisdom, tips, and techniques for conjuring historical persons and their struggles in fiction. Writers may adapt these approaches to any genre that seeks to spark interest in the marginalized of the past, present, or future. Panelists include Sheryl Bize-Boutte, Diana Giovinazzo, Connie Matsumoto, and Mary Volmer.

Please check the [event link](#) for additional details and to register.



Missed any of our recent events or programs? Many of them are recorded and available online. Please visit the [MI YouTube channel](#) to enjoy some of our recent events!

Upcoming Events



***Interior Chinatown: A Novel* - Author Charles Yu in conversation with writer Bonnie Tsui**

Co-presented by the Mechanics' Institute and Litquake

Thursday, October 20, 6 PM PT

Zoom; Registration required

MI Members and Litquake free; Public sliding scale \$5-\$10

This infinitely inventive and deeply personal novel explores the themes of pop culture, assimilation, and immigration. It is the winner of the 2020 National Book Award for fiction and optioned for an upcoming limited Hulu series starring Jimmy O. Yang

Willis Wu doesn't perceive himself as the protagonist in his own life: he's merely Generic Asian Man. Sometimes he gets to be Background Oriental Making a Weird Face or even Disgraced Son, but always he is relegated to a prop. Yet every day, he leaves his tiny room in a Chinatown SRO and enters the Golden Palace restaurant, where *Black and White*, a procedural cop show, is in perpetual production. He's a bit player here, too, but he dreams of being Kung Fu Guy—the most respected role that anyone who looks like him can attain. Or is it?

Written in the form of a screenplay, *Interior Chinatown* is Charles Yu's most moving, daring, and masterful novel yet.

Please check the [event link](#) for additional details and to register.

Library Programs

The Mechanics' Institute offers a host of classes as well as reading, activity, and discussion groups each week. For program details and to register for programs, visit our website at milibrary.org, where you will find complete listings and information.

Surf Smarter: How to Protect Your Privacy on the Web

Zoom: Wednesday, October 5, 6:30 pm PT

Onsite: Friday, October 7, 2 pm PT

Registration Required

MI Members free

Proof of vaccination and masks required for onsite events.

Have you noticed that ads mirroring your recent web searches begin to pop up and follow you around? Your browsing history is being shared with third parties! Learn to fight back and opt out of your information being shared by taking this class. You'll learn to use tools and tactics to protect your privacy, including ways to protect your data.

The presentation will be followed by a question and answer session.

eBooks Made Easy

Zoom: Wednesday, October 19, 6 pm PT

Onsite: Friday, November 4, 2 pm PT

Registration required

MI Members free

Proof of vaccination and masks required for onsite events.

Not sure how to borrow an eBook from the Library? Are you perplexed by e-readers? Let Mechanics' Institute librarian Myles Cooper answer your eBook questions in this class! You'll discover what titles are immediately available to borrow from the MI Library's growing collection as well as how to access them from an app on your phone, tablet, or e-reader.

Flip Through Digital Magazines

Friday, December 9 2 pm PT

3rd Floor Library - Classroom A

MI Members free

Proof of vaccination and masks required for onsite events.

Did you know that your MI membership unlocks access to nearly 4,000 digital magazines? You'll find member favorites like *Country Life*, *The Economist*, *The New Yorker*, *Cook's Illustrated*, and much more. Check out the latest issues before they arrive by snail mail, and access back issues with only a few taps. With features like zoom-in and search, you'll find out why eMagazines rock!

Stay tuned for our Book Group selections planned for October and November! Watch [our website](#) for

The 165th anniversary of the Institute's first industrial exhibition

by Taryn Edwards

The decision to host the first industrial fair came about two years after our founding in December of 1854. At the time, the Institute was struggling to get members to pay their quarterly dues and the stock they had purchased. The Board of Trustees was hopeful that hosting a fair would not only jumpstart the city's flagging economy by highlighting San

Francisco's home-grown industry, but also serve as a fundraiser for the Institute's continued operation.



The first step in the fair planning process was to find a venue. Henry Fairfax Williams, the Manager of the Fair, approached landowner James Lick in June 1857 about the lot on Montgomery Street between Post, Sutter, and Kearny. Williams showed Lick a drawing of the proposed fair building and Lick agreed to rent the land for \$1 a month.

By the summer of 1857, the Institute had erected this fair building. It was the largest building then in California, encompassing 18,000

square feet. The first fair opened on September 7th and lasted for nearly four weeks. More than 10,000 people visited (roughly 25% of the adult San Francisco population at the time) and there were 650 different exhibitors showcasing the products, handiwork, and inventions of the region.

Ultimately the Institute would host 31 fairs between the years of 1857 and 1899. These expositions bolstered California's early economy, encouraged the demand for local goods, and were a manifestation of what today we consider to be quintessential "San Francisco" traits: optimism, outstanding creativity, and the courage to innovate the answers to our region's problems.

Librarian Taryn Edwards will be hosting a virtual illustrated lecture that explores the story of the first fair on November 2 at 6:00pm. To find out more information and to register, see [our website](#) or call 415-393-0101

Join us at our Biannual Member Meeting!

Thursday, December 1, 5:30 pm PT
4th floor meeting room & Zoom; Registration required
MI members only

Join us for our biannual Mechanics' Institute member meeting, where you will hear from fellow members, staff, and trustees and learn about our new plans, programs, and technology updates. Presentations and a question and answer session will be held.

To find out more information and to register, see [our website](#) or call 415-393-0101.

Celebrate at our Annual Holiday Party!

Thursday, December 9, 5:30 pm PT
2nd floor Library; Registration required
MI Members and guests welcome: ticket prices TBA

Join members and friends for some holiday cheer, lively conversation, delicious cuisine, and libations while relaxing to musical interludes.

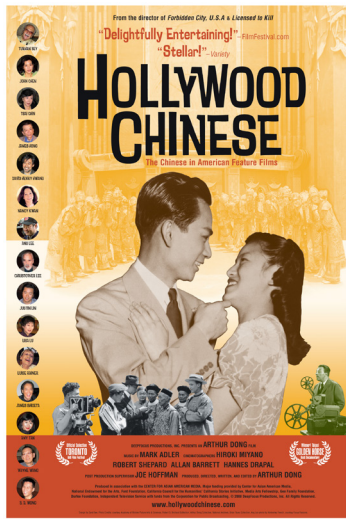
To find out more information and to register, see [our website](#) or call 415-393-0101.

October: Exposing Chinese Stereotypes in Film

Fridays; Doors open at 5:30 pm PT, Program begins at 6:00 pm PT

4th floor meeting room; Registration is required
MI Members: free; Public: \$10 recommended donation
Proof of vaccination and masks required

This series is part of our NEA Big Read program.



(image used with permission of Deep Focus Productions)

The Mechanics' Institute Library has been awarded a National Endowment for the Arts "Big Read" grant. The grant showcases a single book through a range of tours, discussions, seminars, and screenings. The honored book is Charles Yu's *Interior Chinatown* (2020), a remarkable novel exploring immigration and the limitations of Chinese identity in modern America. It's funny and sad, and creatively written to read like a screenplay.

In the spirit of *Interior Chinatown*, October at CinemaLit will feature **Exposing Chinese Stereotypes in Film**. Our opening film is *Hollywood Chinese* (2007), Arthur Dong's compelling documentary exploring the history of Chinese representation in American films. We follow that with three films featured prominently in *Hollywood Chinese*, each offering their own point of view on representation, identity, and stereotyping: *Shanghai Express* (1932), *The Good Earth* (1937), and *Enter the Dragon* (1973).

Watch [our website](#) for more information on this series.

October 7

Hollywood Chinese (2007)

89 minutes, directed by Arthur Dong
Arthur Dong, Academy Award nominated director of *Hollywood Chinese*, will join the post-screening discussion via Zoom.

October 14

Shanghai Express (1932)

80 minutes, directed by Joseph von Sternberg

October 21

The Good Earth (1937)

138 minutes, directed by Sidney Franklin

October 28

Enter the Dragon (1973)

102 minutes, directed by Robert Clouse

Stay tuned for our next series in November,
Marion Davies: Queen of the Screen:

Nov 4

Show People (1928)

83 minutes, directed by King Vidor

Nov 18

The Red Mill (1927)

74 minutes

directed by Roscoe Arbuckle

Watch [our website](#) for news about our CinemaLit Season Finale on December 2!

Chess Classes and Tournaments

Join the Mechanics' Institute to learn more about chess! Class details can be found on the [chess classes](#) page of our website. Classes are 60-90 minutes and pre-registration is required for access to the virtual classroom link. Zoom will be required to participate, and optional links to sign up for web-based platforms will be provided if players would like to compete online.

Chess Café, Mondays 4 pm PT Zoom; Registration required

Join us at this casual, virtual meeting to talk about chess, life and everything. Join Chess Coordinator Paul Whitehead and guests as they discuss games, learning strategy, and chess current events. The class is suitable for ALL levels of players. Register via [Jumbula](#).

Introduction to Chess Wednesdays 5 pm PT Current session through October 26 4th floor Chess Room; Registration required MI members only: Free Proof of Vaccination and Masks Required

Find out more about chess by joining the Institute's free chess class for beginners. Coached by Chess Coordinator and FIDE Master Paul Whitehead, this virtual class is open to any member of the Institute who has no knowledge of the game or who knows the basics and wants to improve, with the goal of learning piece movement basics, checkmate patterns, the importance of development, and general strategy. Register via [Jumbula](#).

Chess Improvements for Developing Players Wednesdays 6 pm PT Current session: September 28 through November 30 Zoom; Registration required MI members \$200; Public \$220

Join Coach Colin for another engaging online session to continue to work on your chess. Intermediate Players are encouraged to join to master expanding their opening knowledge, middle-game strategy, and endgame tools. Register via [Jumbula](#).

Game Analysis Series

Thursdays 5 pm PT

Current session: October 13 through December 1

4th floor Chess Room; Registration required

MI members \$200; Public \$220

Proof of Vaccination and Masks Required

By analyzing missteps, broadening strategic knowledge, and strengthening personal style and beneficial chess habits, we can all improve our game. Each session of this new class includes reviewing game theory and assessing participants' games as well as improving tactics, strategies, and techniques for opening, middlegame, and endgame play. This class will take your game to the next level. Ideal for TNM and club players who want to improve their game and perhaps get a few plans in place for their next match. Students will be expected to send .pgns or bring in scoresheets to the class. Register via [Jumbula](#).

Free Online Chess Class for Women & Girls

Sundays 10 am PT

Current session through December 18

Zoom; Registration required

MI Members and public: free

Coached by FIDE Trainer Sophie Adams, Mechanics' Institute's free women's chess class is for women and girls looking to develop their chess skills within a community of learners. There is no age restriction to participate in the class, but knowledge of piece movements and mates is expected. Register via [Jumbula](#).

Join us for a discussion of the United States Women's Chess Champions (1937–2020)!

Thursday, November 10, 6 PM PT

Zoom; Registration required

MI members free; Public sliding scale \$5 - \$10

As late as 1950, many chess clubs in America excluded women.

However, The Marshall Chess Club in New York City was an exception. It organized the U.S. Women's Chess Championship beginning in the late 1930s, and since the 1980s, the average rating of the players has increased. The Saint Louis Chess Club has been organizing the championship since 2009, with record-setting prizes.

Drawing on archives and original interviews with the living U.S. Women's Chess Champions, this book examines their careers with biographies, photos, and 171 annotated games, most of which are from the 60 championships between 1937 and 2020. Join this compelling conversation with Alexey W. Root, Ph.D., who is a former United States Women's Chess Champion, in conversation with Paul Whitehead, Chess Coordinator.

Please check the [event link](#) for additional details and to register.

Chess

The Institute Welcomes Our New Chess Program Manager



The school year has started up again, and along with that comes the Mechanics' Institute Scholastic Chess Program! This year, we are excited to provide classes at schools all across San Francisco and to expand our programming for Scholastic Chess.

Recently, we have grown our staff to bring on three new chess coaches as well as Alex Robins, our new Chess Program Manager. Previously, Alex worked as a Doctoral Candidate and Associate Instructor in the Department of Anthropology at UC Davis. Alex is excited to bring his experience in education to the scholastic programs here at the Institute.

In September, we hosted our annual San Francisco Scholastic Championship online and attracted over 100 young players. The tournament was accompanied by a live broadcast over Twitch, which included many of our chess room staff and several alumni of our Scholastic Chess Program offering live analysis. This annual tournament is usually held in person in Golden Gate Park. We hope to hold this tournament in person next year.

Thanks to all of the participants and their families for keeping the tournament a vital piece of San Francisco's chess culture during the pandemic!

Introducing Chess Socials!

First Fridays of the Month, 5 pm PT

Unwind from the week with fellow chess players! We'll have rousing game replays on the big screen, snacks, and lively conversation. Wine will be available for purchase in the Meeting Room.

Contact the Chess Room at chessroom@milibrary.org or call (415) 393-0110 with any questions!

Proof of vaccination and masks required.



Member Profile Richard Hack



Richard Hack, one of our newest Chess coaches, was first a longtime member of the Mechanics' Institute. He first came to the Institute because an old friend of his gifted him a membership. From there, he became involved in our Chess Club and became an avid user of the library. In addition to our chess offerings, he loves using the library and finds the architecture and location of the building inspiring.

Originally, he was asked by the Institute's former grandmaster-in-residence, Nick De Firmian, to help teach three different school classes. After a break from that, he is now getting back in to teaching chess to children as well as writing for the monthly chess newsletter. He loves how excited children get about learning chess, and he aims to help them learn how to win as well as learn how to lose games. Chess is unlike other board games in that players could be winning up until the very last move – it requires a certain level of dedication. He likes to say that chess players are immortal because when they lose in chess it is like dying, but they come back to life each time for a new game and a new opportunity to learn.

Richard encourages people come to the Mechanics' Institute, where you will meet a lot of interesting people and be able to participate in our longstanding social and cultural institution. And of course, to come play chess!

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www.milibrary.org

Library Questions?

Call:
415.393.0101
E-mail:
reference@milibrary.org

Membership Questions?

Call:
415.393.0105
E-mail:
membership@milibrary.org

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Library Hours

Mon/Weds/Fri 10 - 6
Tues/Thurs 10 - 8
Sat 10 - 5

Closures

October 10
Indigenous People's Day

November 11
Veterans Day

November 24
Thanksgiving

November 25
Day after Thanksgiving

December 23
Christmas Eve (observed)

December 24
Christmas Eve

December 25
Christmas

December 26
Christmas (observed)