

Mechanics' Institute Awarded NEA Big Read: San Francisco



NEA Big Read is a program of the National Endowment for the Arts in partnership with Arts Midwest.

The National Endowment for the Arts (NEA), in partnership with Arts Midwest, is supporting the Mechanics' Institute to hold NEA Big Read programming in 2022-2023. The Institute is receiving a matching grant of \$20,000 to support programming around the book *Interior Chinatown* by Charles Yu from September 2022 through June 2023. Planned programs include:

- **Big Read: San Francisco Opening Night Celebration** with special guests
- **Several walking tours, film screenings, and exhibit tours** in partnership with local organizations whose work is centered on the Asian American experience
- **Dim Sum Book Group**, in each session welcoming Asian American authors to discuss the themes of *Interior Chinatown*
- **Big Read: San Francisco Grand Finale** with special guests and happy hour refreshments

The Mechanics' Institute will add several copies of *Interior Chinatown* 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 local non-profits serving the interests of Chinese American individuals, and printed and online materials to guide your reading and find other books that grapple with the subjects raised in *Interior Chinatown*.

Look for program details to come and join the Institute in celebrating this novel about becoming the protagonist of one's own story.

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 for more information about the NEA Big Read.

Meet Juliana Gallin

Juliana Gallin first began exploring chess online, but it was not until she attended the donor-supported women's chess class at the Mechanics' Institute that she developed a true passion for the game. Once enrolled, she began steadily improving her skills, participating in women's chess classes, the chess café, and members-only classes that provided deep dives into chess history and practice.

"I love the camaraderie and support of the students in the women's class. Sometimes when I'm feeling especially frustrated with how I've been playing I think of the two hours in their company as being part of a chess therapy support group. I always feel better afterwards," Julia says.

Mechanics' Institute empowers learners like Juliana to pursue their passions in their own communities as well. Juliana started a neighborhood chess club that provides opportunities for practice and friendship among players of all ages and levels.

Mechanics' Institute envisions a world in which curiosity is sparked, developed, and shared with the broader community. We strive to create space for all who are curious and want to pursue understanding and learning in a community of like-minded individuals. Whether you're a writer, a film connoisseur, an unapologetic bookworm, or a chess fanatic, there is a place for you at the Mechanics' Institute.

Since member dues cover less than 10% of operating costs, we rely on donor gifts to support these activities. Our mid-year appeal is underway, and your gift is important to help us meet our goal of raising \$40,000 between June 1st and August 31st, 2022. Juliana's experience is one example of how your gift can have an exponential effect and inspire meaningful change within our community. Please help us meet this year's goal today by [donating](#) and join the Mechanics' Institute in creating a world where all can devote energy to the things that bring joy and help us to connect with others in meaningful ways! Thank you for your support.



Online Chess Classes

Join 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.

Introduction to Chess, taught by Mechanics' Institute Chess Room Coordinator, Paul Whitehead

Wednesdays 5:00 pm

Current session through July 20

Virtual; Registration required

MI members only: Free

Find out more about chess – and yourself – by joining the Institute's free chess class for beginners on Wednesdays from 5:00 to 6:00 pm. Coached by Chess Coordinator and FIDE Master Paul Whitehead, this virtual class is open to any member of Mechanics' 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. Check the [class link](#) for additional details and to register.

Free Women's Online Chess Class, taught by FIDE trainer Sophie Adams

Sundays 10:00 am - 12:00 pm

Ongoing

Virtual; Registration required

MI members only: 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. Knowledge of piece movements and mates is expected. Check the [class link](#) for additional details and to register.

Chess Improvements for Developing Players, taught by Coach Colin Schober

Wednesdays 6:00 pm

Current session June 22 through August 24

Virtual; Registration required

MI members only: Free

Intermediate Players are encouraged to join to master expanding opening knowledge, middle-game strategy, and endgame tools. Check the [class link](#) for additional details and to register.

Supporting Members

The following individuals currently support the Mechanics' Institute by giving at the Associate, Patron, or Benefactor levels when they renew their memberships each year. We are grateful for the assistance of each of our supporting members, who provide reliable contributions to ensure that the Institute can provide members with services, programs, and materials that are important to them. [Upgrade](#) or [join](#) as a supporting member today!

Alexander Abreu	Priscilla Lore
Joel Bauman	Bridget Maley
Carol Brownson	Arthur Manzi
George J. Burwasser	Jennifer March Soloway
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Ralph Frederick Caspersen	Thomas Maser
Bruce D. Celebrezze	Marsha McBride
Bernard Choden	Paul McCauley
John Coffey	Kevin Patrick McGee
Lindsey Crittenden	Thomas O. McLaughlin
James Dorsch	George A. Miller
Calvin Doucet	Susan O'Brien
Thomas W. Dougherty	Ann Parker
Judith Duncan	John C. Paxton
John Engell	D. A. Powell
Christian Erdman	Charles Primich
Abigail Fiattarone	Pascal Renucci
Richard & Ann Frobose	Simon Richard
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Morgan Hough	Michael Shpizner
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Jennifer Lindsay	Louis A. Williams
Tom Lockard	Dave Yeske

Recent Major Gifts

The Mechanics' Institute is grateful for the support we receive from the following individuals and foundations who make our continued growth possible. Thank you!

The following contributions of at least \$100 were received between March 1 and June 30, 2022.

Zubin Beesla
Robert Benson
Sheryl Bize-Boutte
Philip Bowles
Sidney Dietz
Abigail Fiattarone
Richard and Ann Frobose
John K. Hanft**
Joan Hockaday
 In honor of Frederick Law Olmsted's
 200th birthday
Annette Kassis
Ellen W. Leroe
 In memory of Bernard W. Leroe
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Jerrold Moskowitz
Nell Newton
Susan O'Brien
Charles Primich
Robert Renfield
Stephanie Schreiner
Emily Sellers
Richard Smith
 In memory of Barbara McMillin
Charles T. Sullivan
 In memory of William Daniel Sullivan
Peter & Gail Todd
Patrick M. Torre
Sally J. Towse

To support the Mechanics' Institute, **donations** may be made any time of year [online](#), by mail to PO Box 577, San Francisco, CA 94104-0577, via your company's **matching gifts** program, or directly from your **retirement or other investment account**.

Library Programs

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.

What's Streaming on Kanopy – Great Courses, Cinema, Documentaries, and More!

Friday, July 15, 2022 - 3:00pm to 3:45pm

Virtual; Zoom; Registration Required

MI Members free

Take a tour of what's available on MI's robust streaming service: Great Courses, cinema, documentaries, and more! Please check the [event link](#) for additional details and to register.

Listen to Your Next Book!

Wednesday, July 20, 2022 - 6:30pm to 7:15pm

Virtual; Zoom; Registration Required

MI Members free

Learn how to download eAudiobooks from MI's growing collection. Please check the [event link](#) for additional details and to register.

Email Basics – Messaging Made Simple

Friday, August 05, 2022 - 2:00pm to 2:45pm

3rd Floor Classroom A

MI Members free

Proof of Vaccination and Masks Required

Are you using a free email service such as Yahoo Mail, or Gmail? Learn helpful tips that will increase your effectiveness when using email in this in-person class. Please check the [event link](#) for additional details and to register.

Understand Your iPhone!

Wednesday, August 31, 2022 - 6:30pm to 7:30pm

Virtual; Zoom; Registration Required

MI Members free

Learn settings and features to extend your battery life and protect your privacy. 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 [our YouTube channel](#) to enjoy some of our recent events!

The Hesperian, by Taryn Edwards

In our early days, when our library was small and our book budget even smaller, the Institute relied on donations to keep the collection growing – books back then were hard to come by and very expensive! San Francisco's thriving literary scene instead found expression in the plethora of newspapers and magazines published locally. One title that was donated to the Library was *The Hesperian*, a semi-monthly literary magazine for women. Edited and published by Hermione Ball Day (1858-1862), a member of the Mechanics' Institute, *The Hesperian* was a welcome addition to our collection.



The *Hesperian* was “designed for the dissemination of useful knowledge and for the cultivation of literary taste” and included biographies of California personalities, recipes, dress and embroidery patterns, poems and short stories, essays on natural history, health, domestic management, California life and culture, and most importantly, impassioned discussions of issues related to women's equality and employment.

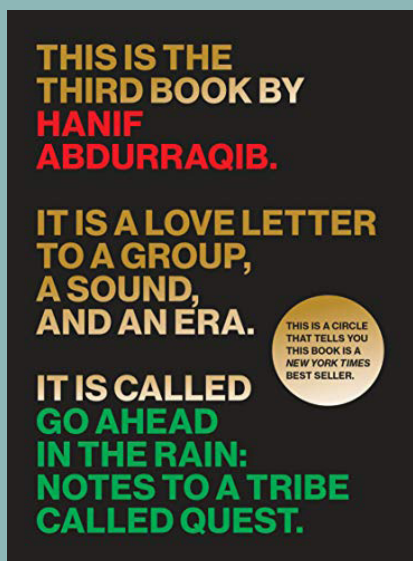
Mrs. Day started editing *The Hesperian* around 1850. While Mrs. Day also wrote much of the content, other literary luminaries contributed to the magazine's breadth including essays on politics and culture by Alonzo “Old Block” Delano, poems by Frank Soule (newspaper publisher and author of *The Annals of San Francisco*), and illustrations by Charles Nahl, all three of whom were part of the Institute's extended community at the time.

The inclusion of *The Hesperian* to our Library's collection hints at the reading interests of our early membership, and the special mention of the Institute's “indebted[ness] to Mrs. Day” in the minutes of the Board (February 3, 1860) hints at the contribution of women and their value to the young Institute's success. While *The Hesperian* is no longer a part of our print collection it is a fascinating glimpse into pre-Civil War San Francisco society and worth a read! Find it online courtesy of the Internet Archive:

[Volume 1](#)
[Volumes 2 and 3](#)
[Volumes 4 and 5](#)
[Volumes 6 and 7](#)
[Volumes 8 and 9](#)

Staff Recommendations, by Heather Terrell

[Go Ahead in the Rain: Notes to a Tribe Called Quest by Hanif Abdurraqib](#)



No one writes about music as compellingly as poet, essayist, and cultural critic Hanif Abdurraqib. He makes the reader feel like they're in one of those memorable à deux conversations, leading one another to greater and more intoxicating heights as they think through a topic together – except that Abdurraqib is the one doing all the thinking while the reader sits back and nods enthusiastically with almost every paragraph, occasionally shouting out a “YES!” when something has extra resonance. Warning: there may be tears.

A Tribe Called Quest was the seminal rap group who brought jazz into the genre, creating masterpieces like *The Low End Theory*, *Midnight Marauders*, and *Beats, Rhymes and Life*. Part memoir, part critique, Abdurraqib fuses music history, experience, poetry, politics, and epistolary to weave a narrative with a jazzlike structure – full of complexity, call and response, verbal polyrhythms which at first read don't seem to be related, and plenty of polyphonic improvisation in this book about the group's roots and influence. Read it for the beauty of the writing; read it because you love A Tribe Called Quest; or read it because you want to know more about hip hop. You'll come away with a new appreciation of whatever you're approaching the book to glean.

[The Best American Nonrequired Reading 2018, edited by Sheila Heti and the students of 826 National](#)



The Best American Nonrequired Reading series differs from the other titles in its parent anthology series (Poetry, Short Stories, etc.) in that high school writers working with 826 National performed the initial selection from which the year's editor chose what would be included. Secondly all proceeds from each volume's sales went to 826 National to support the non-profit's writing and tutoring activities for K-12 students.

Students on the selection committee reflected the diversity of their communities and, in a way that feels much less perfunctory than many anthologies' inclusion of marginalized voices, the selections of work in *Nonrequired Reading* include stories about and by a wide range of people with different experiences and cultural heritage than the mainstream (i.e., white, male, cis) authors who seem to be the default in many other anthologies. Sadly, the publishers of *The Best American* series have discontinued this title, but the Mechanics' Institute has the run from 2007-2018 on our shelves.

Sheila Heti, author of the stellar *Motherhood* and co-editor of *Women in Clothes*, guest edits this 2018 edition. A few of many standout pieces include Diego Enrique Osorno's account of Festival del Mar at La Carbonera beach in “Come and Eat the World's Largest Shrimp Cocktail in Mexico's Massacre Capital,” “Artist's Statement” by MacArthur fellow and multi-media artist Kara Walker, and “Wave at the People Walking Upside Down” by San Francisco Poet Laureate Tongo Eisen-Martin. I suggest starting with the 2018 edition and working your way back. If you're up for it, you might even peruse other “best of” anthology titles to see which you prefer.

Upcoming Events

Every Vote Counts: Protecting our Voting Rights

Cosponsored by the League of Women Voters

Thursday, July 7, 2022; 6:00 pm

4th Floor Meeting Room; Registration required

MI members and public: Free

Proof of Vaccination and Masks Required

Join Danielle Deibler of the League of Women Voters of San Francisco, Harini Krishnan of South Asians for America, and attorney Brittany Stonesifer of the American Civil Liberties Union to discuss critical issues regarding the efforts of organizations and diverse communities to support, strengthen, and secure voting rights for all. Topics of discussion will include census and redistricting, community outreach and its impact on elections, and public advocacy for voting rights. Participate in this informative conversation, sponsored in part by the National Endowment for the Humanities. Please check the [event link](#) for additional details and to register.



Danielle Deibler

Harini Krishnan

Brittany Stonesifer

Bastille Day Concert with Le Jazz Hot

Thursday, July 14, 2022 7:00 pm

4th Floor Meeting Room; Registration required

Members \$15.00; Public \$20.00

Proof of Vaccination and Masks Required

After a long hiatus, come celebrate *liberté, égalité, et fraternité* with Le Jazz Hot of the Hot Club of San Francisco. Dress up or down or in tri-colour for this festive night of exuberant music embodying the passion and sizzle of French Gypsy Jazz – originally created by the guitarist Jean "Django" Reinhardt of the world famous Hot Club de France in Paris circa 1920. French wines and cuisine will be available throughout the evening for *une bonne soirée*! Please check the [event link](#) for additional details and to register.



San Francisco's Golden Gate Park: A Thousand and Seventeen Acres of Stories, with author Christopher Pollock

Thursday, August 11, 2022; 6:00 PM

4th Floor Meeting Room; Registration required

Members: Free; Public: \$5-\$10 sliding scale

Proof of Vaccination and Masks Required

San Francisco's beloved Golden Gate Park is one of the world's most spectacular urban oases. This 1,017-acre green space in the middle of the cosmopolitan City by the Bay is covered with grassy meadows, wooded bike trails, secluded lakes, open groves, formal gardens, and museums. The new edition of Pollock's stunning book – filled with color photographs as well as black-and-white historical photos documenting the park's illustrious past – captures these wonders in an elegant volume, perfect for visitors and residents alike. Please check the [event link](#) for additional details and to register.



CinemaLit

Fridays; Doors open at 5:30 pm, Program begins at 6:00 pm
4th floor meeting room; Registration is required
MI Members: free; Public: \$5-\$10 sliding scale
Proof of vaccination and masks required

July: Immigrant Stories



NATIONAL
ENDOWMENT
FOR THE
HUMANITIES

(image used with permission of Warner Brothers Pictures)

July 8

***The Joy Luck Club* (1993)**

139 minutes, directed by Wayne Wang

July 15

***My Beautiful Laundrette* (1985)**

97 minutes, directed by Stephen Frears

July 22

***Brooklyn* (2015)**

112 minutes, directed by John Crowley

July 29

***The Visitor* (2007)**

103 minutes, directed by Tom McCarthy

CINEMALIT SEASON FINALE:

Aug 5

***The Emigrants* (1971)**

191 minutes, directed by Jan Troell,
starring Max von Sydow and Liv Ullmann.

Watch our [website](#) for more information on CinemaLit's September series, **Depression Era Gems**, starting with ***Gold Diggers of 1933***, with its bravura Busby Berkley dance numbers, including the classic "Remember My Forgotten Man."

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

Member Profile

Sheryl Bize-Boutte



Libraries have been a part of Sheryl Bize-Boutte's life since childhood, when she would frequently visit her elementary school's library. She has been writing since she was twelve years old, prompting her parents to gift her a Smith-Corona typewriter for her stories.

Since retiring, Sheryl has been focusing more and more on her writing, embarking on a second career as a writer. She has published multiple poems, short stories, and one long-form novel titled *Betrayal on th Bayou*. Her poetry collection, *No Poetry No Peace*, is the namesake of the Institute's new biannual poetry event, inaugurated in April of 2021. She lets her story ideas – and whether they are written as poetry, short stories, or long-form novels – flow naturally from her muse.



Sheryl appreciates the Institute for its history and commitment to welcoming all to the stacks, at events, and in classes. She credits the Mechanics' Institute with being a boon to her throughout the pandemic. The Institute's quick pivot from in-person to virtual events helped Sheryl enhance her art, storytelling, and teaching practices. Her work with Mechanics' Institute has caught the attention of other institutions who have begun requesting her presence as a speaker and storyteller. Sheryl has taught and presented lectures on the craft of writing at the San Francisco Writers Conference, the American Association of Writers and Writing Programs Conference, and Toastmasters. She is currently working on her second novel and is a well-regarded teacher of writing who has received much positive feedback from individuals who have attended her classes at Mechanics' Institute.

Look for upcoming writing classes at the Institute taught by Sheryl Bize-Boutte. We appreciate her commitment to the art and craft of writing, and are working to continue building a community of writers whose work, like Sheryl's, makes great impact on the Bay Area and beyond!

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www.milibrary.org

Library Questions?

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Membership Questions?

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Library Hours

Monday-Friday 12-6

Saturday 10-3.

Closures

July 4, 2022
Independence Day

September 5, 2022
Labor Day