

Mechanics' Institute Says Farewell to CEO Kimberly Scrafano



Kimberly (center right) poses with Trustee IM John Donaldson (left), Grandmaster Christopher Woojin Yoo (center left), and FM Paul Whitehead, Chess Room Coordinator.

Mechanics' Institute shares our gratitude to former CEO **Kimberly Scrafano** for her four years of expert guidance, dedicated leadership and extensive strategic planning, and wish her the best in her new role as CEO of Shanti Project. We are thankful for Kimberly's efforts to keep the Institute operating during the pandemic, in helping to secure funding for capital projects, and for supporting and enhancing programming.

On June 1st, **Avi Rose** stepped in as interim CEO and the search for a permanent CEO is well underway. We thank Kimberly for her time and commitment, and we now warmly welcome Avi to our organization. We look forward to ensuring that we continue to expand upon our mission to create opportunities for people to enhance their lives by gaining useful knowledge, skills, and experience in sharing ideas in community.

Join Mechanics' Institute and enjoy all the benefits of membership.

Become a member today!

Scan this QR code with your phone camera
or [visit our website](#)

Want to Renew and continue

enjoying the library and other great benefits
offered by the Institute? [click here to renew](#)



What's Your Favorite Spot?

by Alyssa Stone, Senior Director of Programs & Community Engagement

Everyone has a favorite spot: a place of comfort, joy, activity, and rejuvenation. A favorite spot might be inside your residence, it might be an excellent restaurant, or it might be in the cool darkness of a theater before the curtain rises.

For many of our members here at Mechanics' Institute, I have a hunch that their favorite spot is right here at 57 Post Street, San Francisco. A "second home" if you will, a place to explore curiosity and connect with community. In this spirit, I took a wander around our beautiful and historic building to ask members about their favorite spots at Mechanics' Institute. Take a stroll to one of these spots and meet someone new!



David Grenell

Member since: 1985

Favorite spot: Library balconies

"My favorite spot is probably the same as most regulars, on the first and second balconies of the library: the two chairs that overlook the rest of the room. It's a nice place to be active in the library and reading a book. I've made friends with several regulars over the years, and we reminisce about the old times. There were six of us that did a complete inventory of the library before the pandemic and I feel like I've handled every book in the library and came across books I've never heard of before!"



Linda Mahony

Member since: early 1980s

Favorite spot: Magazine area and new books on the 3rd floor.

"I really like the magazine area and the new books on the 3rd floor. That's always a treat. For one thing, it's a very comfortable spot with the big, cushy chairs that are very nice. I can look at all kinds of things I wouldn't normally buy. I like having a rest spot downtown. It widens my world. I know downtown is going through great traumas, but Mechanics' Institute is still there and a great refuge of a place."



Tony Lama

Member since: 1972

Favorite spot: Chess Room

"I'm more comfortable in the Library and like to check out books, but in the Chess Room I see some characters. Since 1972, I've played so many players, but lately Guido Piccinini and Al Starr are after me. I like playing new people that come along. As long as I'm not studying a chess book or solving chess problems I'm happy to play anybody that comes into the Chess Room!"

[Join us](#) at Mechanics' Institute and find your own favorite spot today!

Chess

Ongoing Classes & Upcoming Tournaments

Chess Café

Mondays, 4 pm

Chess Room; Registration Required

Members Free

The Chess Cafe is a meeting place to talk about chess, life and everything in between. Join FM **Paul Whitehead** and a revolving cast of chess players from around the country in a fun and casual atmosphere. This ongoing event is suitable for all levels of player. Register via [Jumbula](#).

Introduction to Chess

Wednesdays, August 2 - September 6, 5 pm

Chess Room; Registration Required

Members Free

Join us and learn the fundamentals of the Royal Game with Chess Room Coordinator and FIDE Master **Paul Whitehead**. Learn the basics, from how the pieces move and capture, castling and en-passant, to more advanced strategy such as checkmating patterns, how to think in the openings, middle-game strategy, and what to do in the endgame. The goal of the class is to open up a new world of fun and joy through the magic and beauty of chess! Please watch [the website](#) for upcoming details on how to register.

Women's Chess Class

Sundays, 10 am

Zoom; Registration Required

Members Free

Come join FIDE Trainer **Sophie Adams** in a class for women and girls looking to develop their chess skills with a community of likeminded women. Optional links to participate in online platforms like [chess.com](#) will be provided. Register via [Jumbula](#).

WIM Ruth Haring Memorial Tuesday Night Marathon

Tuesdays, July 11 - August 22, 6:30 pm

Chess Room; Registration Required

Members \$65; Public \$95

For the first time, Mechanics' Institute will memorialize WIM Ruth Haring (1955-2018) as the named honorific for the Tuesday Night Marathon. This is a seven round G/120;d5 tournament with four sections for 2000+, 1600-1999, 1200-1599, and under 1200 and unrated players. Come early for the pre-TNM lecture at 5:45 pm covering some of the exciting news from the chess world as well as reviewing interesting games from famed players or our own tournaments. Register via [Jumbula](#).

One-Day Open Tournaments

Saturdays, July 29, August 19, and September 30, 10 am

Chess Room; Registration Required

Members \$40; Public \$50

Join a monthly One-Day Open Tournament at Mechanics' Institute. These are 4-round, Swiss System tournaments with G/40;d5 time control with four sections for 2000+, 1600-1999, 1200-1599, and under 1200 and unrated players. Please watch [the website](#) for upcoming details on how to register.

Fall Tuesday Night Marathon

Tuesdays, September 5 - October 7, 6:30 pm

Chess Room; Registration Required

Members \$65; Public \$95

Welcome the best season in the Bay Area and join the Fall Tuesday Night Marathon at Mechanics' Institute! This is a seven-round G/120;d5 tournament with four sections for 2000+, 1600-1999, 1200-1599, and under 1200 and unrated players. Come early for the pre-TNM lecture at 5:45 pm covering some of the exciting news from the chess world as well as reviewing interesting games from famed players or our own tournaments. Register via [Jumbula](#).

Join Us for a Chess Social

First Fridays of the month, 5 pm
Chess Room; No Registration Required

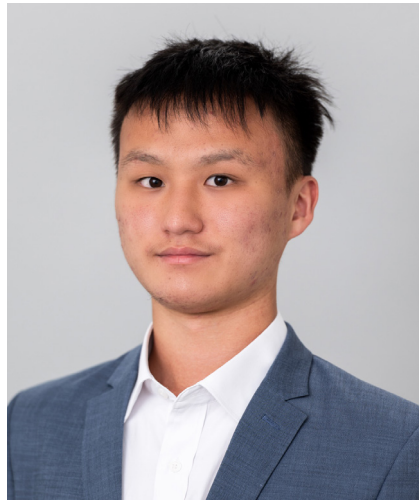
Unwind from the week with fellow chess players. Join us for rousing game replays on the big screen, snacks, and lively conversation. Wine will be available for purchase in the Meeting Room.

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



Chess

Falconer Award 2023 Highlight



Grandmaster Christopher Woojin Yoo

[Neil Falconer](#)'s engagement with Mechanics' Institute spanned nine decades, from his first visit in 1938 as a Berkeley High School student to the end of his life on April 5, 2014, just after celebrating his 91st birthday.

A native Californian, Neil first joined the Institute in 1945 after finishing his service in the U.S. Army and soon after established himself as one of the strongest chess players in California. In 1973, Neil joined Mechanics' Institute Board of Trustees. He immediately became a member of the Chess Committee and also served as board president, first in 1988 and again from 1993 to 1995. Neil performed his role with distinction and was so successful that the events were able to attract players of the caliber of former World Champion **Mikhail Tal**, the great **Viktor Korchnoi**, and Womens' World Champions **Zsuzsa Polgar** and **Xie Jun**.

In 1999, Neil established the Falconer Award, which grants a cash prize to the highest-rated junior chess player under age 18 in Northern California. Grandmasters Vinay Bhat, Sam Shankland, and Daniel Naroditsky are among those who have won the Falconer Award, which has awarded more than \$35,000 to support excellence in chess.

This year's Falconer Award was presented to Grandmaster **Christopher Woojin Yoo**, a 16-year-old American grandmaster from Northern California. He was the highest-rated player under 18 by his December 2022 rating, with a rating of 2664.

Christopher has competed in a number of distinguished events, such as tying for first at the Memorial Day 2021 CCCSA GM Norm Invitational tournament, winning the Labor Day 2021 CCCSA GM Norm Invitational tournament, tying for third place at the 2021 US Masters and earning his third GM norm with a score of 2604. He achieved live FIDE rating of 2500.2 at the Marshall Chess Club Championship, fulfilling the last requirement for his Grandmaster title. He tied for first place at the 2021 Charlotte Open and won the US Junior Chess Championship, moving on to defeat GM Wesley So at the 2022 US Chess Championship and tie for first place at the 2022 US Masters with a rating of 2653. He then claimed the 2022 US Masters title after winning a blitz playoff.

Christopher was presented the Falconer Award in a ceremony at the Institute in April. He then gave a presentation and game analysis of his 2022 US Chess Championship victory game. Christopher joined the Spring Splash Blitz and handily took first place in the tournament, with much awe and admiration from the packed house of players.

Check out the wide range of ongoing chess classes and tournaments being offered by Mechanics' Institute. Class details can be found on the [chess classes](#) page of our website and tournament details can be found on the [tournaments](#) page.

CinemaLit



(image used with permission of 20th Century Fox)

Weekly on Fridays

**Café opens at 5:30 pm
Program begins at 6 pm**

Fourth Floor Meeting Room

Registration Required

Members Free; Public \$10

July: Classic Musicals

July 7

Gentlemen Prefer Blondes (1953) 91 mins

Directed by Howard Hawks

Starring Marilyn Monroe and Jane Russell

July 21

Cabaret (1972), 124 mins

Directed by Bob Fosse

Starring Liza Minnelli and Michael York

CINEMALIT SEASON FINALE:

July 28

Top Hat (1935), 101 mins

Directed by Mark Sandrich

Starring Fred Astaire and Ginger Rogers

CinemaLit's July picks highlight films based on classic musicals. The first film showing in July is *Gentlemen Prefer Blondes* on the 7th. Marilyn Monroe stars as Lorelei Lee, a beautiful showgirl engaged to be married to the wealthy Gus Esmond, much to the disapproval of his rich father. When Lorelei goes on a cruise accompanied only by her best friend, Dorothy Shaw, Gus's father hires a private detective to follow her and report any questionable behavior that would disqualify her from the marriage.

Check [the website](#) for more details.

Up Next:

September: Hollywood Renaissance

In September, CinemaLit screens four signature films from the fabled Hollywood Renaissance, otherwise known as the Hollywood New Wave.

September 8: *Serpico* (1973), 130 minutes

September 15: *The Last Detail* (1973), 104 minutes

September 22: *The Long Goodbye* (1973), 112 minutes

September 29: *Paper Moon* (1973), 102 minutes

Keep an eye on [the website](#) for the October "Shades of Gothic" and November "Full Color Historic Dramas" film lineups.

Summer Film Picks

CinemaLit's season finale is July 28th. While you wait for the new season to start in September, here are a few of CinemaLit Curator **Matthew Kennedy's** and CinemaLit Coordinator **Pam Troy's** recommended film favorites. Each of these extends recent themes explored at CinemaLit.

Tol'able David (1921): This fine piece of silent cinematic Americana is now more than a century old, but its simple renderings of good and evil, the pleasures of home and family, young romance, and the poignancy of growing up remain timeless. Richard Barthelmess as the callow David gives a great performance. [Available on Kanopy](#) with your Mechanics' Institute membership.

This Sporting Life (1963): A film to watch if you're up for a brutal, uncompromising, and exceptionally well-made drama set in the world of rugby. A key title of the British New Wave, *This Sporting Life* boasts career best performances from Richard Harris and Rachel Roberts. [Available in Mechanics' Institute Library collection.](#)

Playtime (1967): This French classic is a fantastic Jacques Tati comedy that pokes fun at the rampant technology and consumerism of modern times. The choreographing of so much human action will have you alternately laughing out loud or stunned in admiring awe. [Available on Kanopy](#) with your Mechanics' Institute membership.

Chan is Missing (1982): Wayne Wang's landmark indie comedy-drama is a droll and intriguing wander through San Francisco's Chinatown, and by extension Wang's artistic statement of the Chinese American experience. Locals in particular will delight in Chan's generous location filming and affection for place. [Available on Kanopy](#) with your Mechanics' Institute membership.

The Smallest Show on Earth (1957): The plot of this British gem is simple: a young couple inherits a decrepit movie theater, along with three employees who have been working there since the silent era. Intent on selling it to be converted into a parking lot, they pretend to want to reopen it as a theater in order to drive up the price. Highlights include a poignant moment after closing when the clips from silent films are screened to the haunting strains of a piano and a hilarious night when all goes wrong and parts of a film showing are played upside down. *The Smallest Show on Earth* is a joyful and irreverent celebration of watching films as they were meant to be watched – with an audience in a theater. [Available in Mechanics' Institute Library collection.](#)

The Dinner Game (1998): Pierre Brochant, the main character of this film, embodies the worst stereotypes about Parisians. He is sophisticated, intellectual, and snobbish to the point of cruelty, and he and his equally obnoxious friends like to amuse themselves with what they call le dîner de cons, "the dinner of idiots." Each friend invites someone they consider an idiot to a dinner solely to ridicule them, and at the end of the meal, the friends vote for the biggest idiot. Enter middle-class, earnest François Pignon, the pudgy civil servant Pierre has chosen for a dinner. François' good intentions, a bad back, and Pierre's own hubris combine to hilariously dismantle Pierre's carefully constructed marriage, apartment, and finances. [Available in Mechanics' Institute Library collection.](#)

Library News

Library Staffing Update:

After almost 16 years at Mechanics' Institute, Program Manager and Librarian **Taryn Edwards** left for a new position on May 5th. Taryn was instrumental in growing the Institute's writers' program and was a fierce advocate for the Institute's history and its place in the larger San Francisco's historical community. She helped organize big events in the library such as Book'toberfest; Wine, Women and Start-ups; and the costume party for Emperor Norton's 200th birthday celebration. Taryn also spearheaded the weekly and night tours bringing new faces – and new members – to our building. She has shifted industries, but will still be using her librarian skills on research and writing.

Earlier this spring, the Library promoted Librarian **Myles Cooper** to be the new library manager. Myles has been with the Institute for eight years and started as an on-call Library Assistant. He has since progressed into teaching classes and overseeing the book groups in addition to being an essential part of the programming team. He will be working with Senior Director Bobbie Monzon in the library and with the Library Assistants on projects to continue to enhance library services. Additionally, Myles will also be overseeing the archives to ensure the continued legacy of Mechanics' Institute history. He can be found regularly on the second floor of the library.

New and Improved Online Catalog:

The Library has implemented an improved online catalog, providing members with a new and better way to find the materials they seek. This new version lets users narrow their searches interactively and intuitively. The old "Classic" catalog will not go away – you will see links to the Classic catalog throughout the new one.

New Features:

- Users can check out eBooks and eAudiobooks from the catalog directly and see the electronic books you borrowed listed in your account.
- Fiction readers can explore what books we have by genre – for example, if those interested in a genre mix, perhaps historical fiction mixed with mystery will appeal.
- Users can narrow your search by "Place" – the geographic area related to the book (e.g.: where a story takes place, or the geographic attribute of a given nonfiction book).
- Other advanced search features available in the Classic catalog are also included in the new one.

Please keep in mind that our new catalog does not work on mobile devices. If you have not already, we suggest that you bookmark the [URL for our "Classic" catalog](#) in your mobile browser.

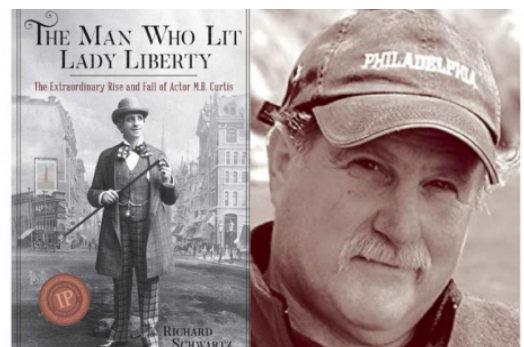
The Library would like to thank everyone who volunteered to beta test this new interface, and we did our best to act on your suggestions.

Upcoming Events

***The Man Who Lit Lady Liberty: The Extraordinary Rise and Fall of Actor M.B. Curtis* with Author Richard Schwartz**

Thursday, July 6, 6 pm
Fourth Floor Meeting Room; Registration Required
Members Free; Public sliding scale \$5 - \$10

Join the Institute for a talk with Richard Schwartz, author of *The Man Who Lit Lady Liberty*, the story of immigrant actor M.B. Curtis who saved the Statue of Liberty in 1886. Curtis' rise and fall from grace is a dramatic arc that rivals anything created for stage. M.B. Curtis's life encompassed the highs of celebrity and fame as well as the lows of failure, illness, and a faltering career. The book was the winner of the 2018 Bronze IPPY for biography. Please check the [event link](#) for additional details and to register.



Bastille Day Concert with Le Jazz Hot Quartet

Friday, July 14, 7 pm
Fourth Floor Meeting Room; Registration Required
Members \$20; Public \$25

Come celebrate *liberté, égalité, et fraternité* with the fabulous music ensemble Le Jazz Hot Quartet featuring band leader Paul Mehling (solo guitar, vocals), Evan Price (violin), Daniel Fabricant (string bass), and Jordan Samuels (rhythm guitar). Le Jazz Hot Quartet brings to the stage all the passion and sizzle of French Gypsy Jazz created by guitarist Jean "Django" Reinhardt of the world-famous Hot Club de France circa 1920. Dress up, down, or in red, white, and blue for this festive night of exuberant music. Dessert will be served and French wines will be available for purchase throughout the evening for *une bonne soirée*! Please check the [event link](#) for additional details and to register.



Summer Espionage with Authors Linda Joy Myers and Leslie Absher

Thursday, July 20, 6 pm
Fourth Floor Meeting Room; Registration Required
Members Free; Public Sliding scale \$5 - \$10

Join authors Linda Joy Myers and Leslie Absher in a discussion about their two new espionage novels – one fiction, one non-fiction. Linda Joy Myers' novel *The Forger of Marseille* undertakes topics not often covered in WWII fiction: life in Marseille, forging documents, and details of escaping on foot over the Pyrenees. Leslie Absher's memoir *Spy Daughter, Queer Girl* examines the cost of professional and family secrets. Please check the [event link](#) for additional details and to register.



**Save the Date for Christina Garcia, author of *Vanishing Maps*, on September 21st.
Watch the [website](#) for more details.**

A Selection of Upcoming Recurring Programs

Scholastic Summer Camps

Mondays-Fridays; July 10-14, July 17-21, July 24-28, July 31-August 4, & August 7-11

9:30 am - 3:30 pm (half days available)

Chess Room; Registration Required

Half Day \$250; Full Day \$500

Mechanics' Institute scholastic chess camps are an opportunity for beginner chess players to join and start a lifelong appreciation of the royal game of chess while playing with other kids. Intermediate students will learn tactics, how to defend common opening traps, and review famous games. Please check the [event link](#) for additional details and to register.



Family Story Time

Third Saturday of each month, 10 am

Second Floor Library; Registration Required

Members & Public Free

Come with your family to hear stories and make crafts nestled in the library of Mechanics' Institute. Two to four stories appropriate for children age six and younger will be read. Bring your family and grandchildren for a story-filled morning. Please watch [the website](#) for additional details and to register.



The Writers' Lunch moderated by author and Insitute member Sheryl Bize-Boutte

Third Friday of each month, 12 pm

Zoom; Registration Required

Members & Public Free

The Writers' Lunch is a casual, virtual brown-bag lunch activity on the 3rd Friday of each month. Look forward to craft discussion, informal presentations on all forms of writing, and excellent conversation. Please watch [the website](#) for additional details and to register.



Out & About at the CAAM Film Festival

by Director of Events Laura Sheppard



On Thursday, May 13th, CinemaLit cinephiles enjoyed attending the CAAM Film Festival as part of our NEA Big Read series, which focuses on the themes of *Interior Chinatown* by Charles Yu. *Big Fight in Little Chinatown*, directed by Karen Cho was shown at the beautifully restored Great Star Theatre in the heart of Chinatown. This poignant documentary focused on Chinatown in five cities including New York, Montreal, Toronto, Vancouver, and our hometown of San Francisco.

The film revealed the essence and issues of each neighborhood: the immigrant history and legacy businesses and their families, and the threats of urban development that could eradicate these vital communities. Leaders in each city organized residents from across the neighborhoods together with the Chinese community, holding protests to bring awareness to their cause and seeking to designate their neighborhoods with landmark and heritage status. They proved that Chinatown neighborhoods bring vitality and diversity to each city. The businesses and restaurants of Chinatown serve both residents and tourists, promote commerce and exchange, and foster deep intergenerational connections through family, culture and traditions.

Big Fight in Little Chinatown offered an inspiring and thought provoking afternoon for our CinemaLit outing. As we here at Mechanics' Institute wrap up our NEA Big Read programming for *Interior Chinatown*, we reflected on the many experiences we engaged in over the year with San Francisco's Chinatown and the creators, artists, writers, activists, and residents with whom we have partnered.

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

A Selection of Upcoming Library Programs

The Writers' Lunch: Telling Forgotten Stories

Friday, July 21, 12 pm
Zoom; Registration Required
Members & Public Free

How do you find, choose, and research histories that have been forgotten? How do you decide which medium to write in, whether that is as an article, nonfiction book, fictional story, or poetry? And how do you engage readers who might not be history buffs? Join three award-winning writers – poet Heather Bourbeau, journalist Alissa Greenberg, and author Julia Scheeres – as they discuss writing overlooked histories. Please check the [event link](#) for additional details and to register.

Understand Your iPhone with Library Manager Myles Cooper

Wednesday, July 19, 6:30 pm
Zoom; Registration Required
Members Free

This class is designed for iPhone users who want to take greater control of the device and learn how it can best fit into their daily lives. Participants will learn about apps, iPhone updates, privacy settings, and more. Please check the [event link](#) for additional details and to register.

Surf Smarter with Library Manager Myles Cooper

Wednesday, August 2, 6:30 pm
Zoom; Registration Required
Members Free

Have you noticed after you've been searching for information on the web that ads mirroring your search begin to pop up and follow you around? Learn to fight back and opt-out by taking this class. You'll learn to use tools and tactics to protect your data and your privacy. Please check the [event link](#) for additional details and to register.

Listen to Your Next Book with Library Manager Myles Cooper

Wednesday, August 16, 6:30 pm
Zoom; Registration Required
Members Free

Learn about the joys of audiobooks! Library Program Manager Myles Cooper will take attendees on a tour of Libby, our one-tap reading app, and teach you how to download e-audiobooks for your listening pleasure. Please check the [event link](#) for additional details and to register.

Member Profile: Sebby Suarez



Sebby Suarez (right) faces off against Mechanics' Institute Chess Coach IM Elliot Winslow (left)

Sebby Suarez is a student, lover of chess, and member of Mechanics' Institute since 2020. His parents found out about the Institute's Chess Club when his then scholastic chess program went out of business.

He enjoys that the Chess Club offers lots of tournaments, and in particular he is a fan of blitz tournaments. He also loves the environment of the Chess Club and how players are surrounded by historical photos of players and games and various chess artefacts. He says the wooden tables and chairs in the Chess Room, complete with inlaid chess boards, are a nice touch and feel much more permanent than the foldable chairs and tables common in many other tournament spaces.

One of his best chess memories is when he attended the 2021 US Chess Grand Championships. It was his first national event. He finished in the top 20 and performed above his level – he was rated at 1400 using the USCF rating system. The Championships motivated him to do even better in future tournaments. In the future, he would like to reach 2200. He would also like to learn even more new openings to help improve his game.

57 Post Street
San Francisco, CA 94104
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

Support the Institute today!

Donate: milibrary.org/give

Join: milibrary.org/join

Renew: milibrary.org/renew

Library Hours

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

Closures

July 4

Independence Day

September 4

Labor Day

Support Our Summer Campaign.

We are enjoying days of warmer weather and sunshine and a host of new and exciting programs at Mechanics' Institute. As always, your support helps make our outstanding programs successful and possible, and we are grateful for your contribution in any amount to our summer campaign. Donations may be made [online](#), by mail, via your company's matching gifts program, or directly from your retirement or other investment account. You can also double your donation through your company matching program.

For members who would like to include Mechanics' Institute in their trusts or wills, joining the [James Lick Legacy Society](#) signals your commitment to the Institute's ongoing mission so that future generations may benefit from your generosity.

Contact Membership at membership@milibrary.org or call 415.393.0105 to make a contribution today.