



The Barbara McConnell Asilomar Great Books Weekend

Friday, April 17, 2026 at 6:00 PM

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Sunday, April 19, 2026 at 1:00 PM

Asilomar Conference Center, Pacific Grove, CA

One of the major events of the year for the Great Books Council of San Francisco is the Spring weekend at the Asilomar Conference Center in Monterey, California, named in honor of beloved Great Books leader Barbara McConnell. During the weekend there are discussions of poetry and works of nonfiction, drama, and fiction.

Join us at this uniquely beautiful retreat and immerse yourself in a weekend of provocative readings, engaging discussions, and in-person camaraderie!

Please check out the available special pricing and discounts!

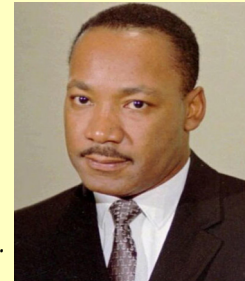


We'll kick off this Asilomar weekend with an evening of intense and challenging poetry discussions featuring works by **Lisel Mueller**, **Constantine P. Cavafy**, **Walt Whitman**, and **Wisława Szymborska**.

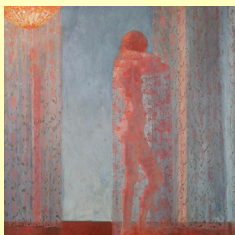
These poems will be provided as a PDF attachment with your completed registration in order that you can easily print them.

On Saturday morning, we'll continue with our non-fiction discussion of *The Declaration of Independence* by **Thomas Jefferson** and *Letter from Birmingham Jail* by **Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.** The combination of the 250th anniversary of our founding principles and the continuing relevance of this treatise on their application should lead to a lively session.

These essays will also be provided in the PDF attachment with your completed registration.



Before dinner, starting at 4:30 pm, we will be having a catered *Meet & Greet* where long-time bookies can welcome new attendees, and share experiences about their local groups, and best reads while enjoying local brews, bottlings, and a generous spread of snacks.

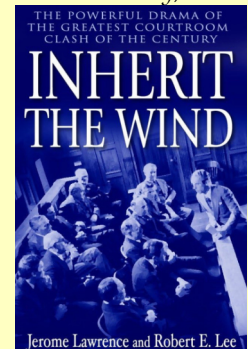


After dinner, we'll continue with our fiction discussion with **Shirley Hazzard's** *The Transit of Venus* winner of the National Book Critics Circle Award. This novel written in exquisite prose tells the story of the displacements and absurdities of modern life experienced by two sisters across continents and decades. Considered by The Paris Review as *one of the great English-language novels of the 20th century*, discover why Shirley Hazzard is considered one of Australia's greatest authors.



Wrapping up on Sunday morning, our play this year is *Inherit the Wind* by **Jerome Lawrence** and **Robert E. Lee**. Explore how this fictionalized enactment of the 1925 Scopes

Monkey trial could serve as more than the teaching of Charles Darwin's evolution theory put on trial.



Visit www.greatbooksncal.org/asilomar
For Further Details, Prices, and Registration

WEEKEND SCHEDULE

Please note the schedule for the April 17th to 19th weekend:

Fri. 4:00 - 5:30 pm	Check-in
Fri. 6:00 - 7:00 pm	Dinner
Fri. 7:30 - 9:30 pm	Poetry Discussion
Sat. 7:30 - 9:00 am	Breakfast
Sat. 9:30 - 11:30 am	The Declaration of Independence & Letter From Birmingham Jail Discussion
Sat. 12:00 - 1:00 pm	Lunch
Sat. 1:30 - 4:30 pm	Explore local area / Free Time
Sat. 4:30 - 6:00 pm	Meet and Greet Catered Social
Sat. 6:00 - 7:30 pm	Dinner
Sat. 7:30 - 9:30 pm	The Transit of Venus Discussion
Sun. 7:30 - 9:00 am	Breakfast
Sun. 9:30 - 11:30 am	Inherit the Wind Discussion
Sun. 12:00 - 1:00 pm	Lunch

WEEKEND NOTES

The poetry and essay will be provided to you electronically once your 2-step registration is completed. We will also provide you with the specific ISBNs of the novel and play for your separate purchase. We request that everyone acquire these specific versions as consistent translations and page numbers are critical to the discussion.

Check-in begins at 4 pm on Friday at the Registration Desk. Once checked in, please pick up your conference packet at Kiln across Asilomar Ave near Sinex Ave. Underground parking near your room is free and accessible from Asilomar Ave.

Check-out time is 11 am. Please check out before the Sunday morning discussion.

If you are staying offsite, you have the option to purchase meals individually. Meal tickets must be purchased online and in advance and not on site. You will receive an email after you have successfully registered and about a month before the event with purchase instructions and prices.

Discussions will be held in groups of 10-15 attendees including one who will facilitate the discussion. All must have read the work to participate. The discussion rooms have excellent overhead lighting as two of the sessions will be after dark.