



# NOTES

VOLUME 16, NUMBER 1, SPRING 2009

## FROM THE CHAIRMAN OF THE BOARD

In these perilous economic times, the Library faces challenges, but also opportunities. As with so many charitable institutions and other investors, we have suffered significant losses in our portfolio. We are fortunate to have avoided catastrophic losses and to have reduced our equity exposure last summer. However, our investments are still down by over one-third over the past year, and this will affect our ability to meet our budget in the coming years.

We have a spending formula, common with non-profit organizations, whereby each year we draw from our endowment 4.75% of the rolling average of the past three years' year-end principal. This pays for about 65% of our annual operating budget. When the markets were strong and our portfolio growing, we more than replenished the amounts drawn down; with the steep decline in the market, however, we face both a decrease in our endowment and a diminished draw for operating purposes. For now, the effect of the economic downturn is softened by the three-year averaging of our spending formula. The primary effect of our investment losses will be felt in 2010, 2011 and possibly future years, depending on how deep and long the recession is.

We recognize the need to reduce expenses, but we are determined not to reduce the quality of our services. We are blessed with a talented and dedicated staff and loyal and appreciative members. We will continue to take a disciplined approach to our expenses, as we did in the annual budgeting process recently completed. In the present circumstances, we do not intend to institute layoffs, salary freezes, closures, or reduction in our book-purchasing budget. But we are doing what we can to reduce expenses, increase revenue and, if possible, build a reserve for use in the years ahead when our permissible draw from endowment will be reduced. We will continue to be attentive to the increasing financial constraints under which we operate, and we will be asking our members to support us in our efforts.

As I mentioned to the Library's staff at a meeting with them this month, we have already experienced a modest growth in our membership, and I expect there will be increased usage of the Library during these times when our financial resources, and those of our members, are diminished. We are fortunate to have a recently refurbished and well-maintained building and to have made important capital improvements in our elevator, façade renovation and remodeling of the Members' Room and Peluso Family Exhibition Gallery. But we continue to face significant limitations on the space available for members, writers and books. We ask that all of you show consideration, patience and good humor to help our staff address the increasing demands on our facilities.

One of the bright sides of the economic downturn, I believe, is that it has shifted the emphasis in our great commercial metropolis from the trappings of status and consumerism to the values that the Library has embodied for centuries. Ideas, culture, broadening of intellectual horizons,

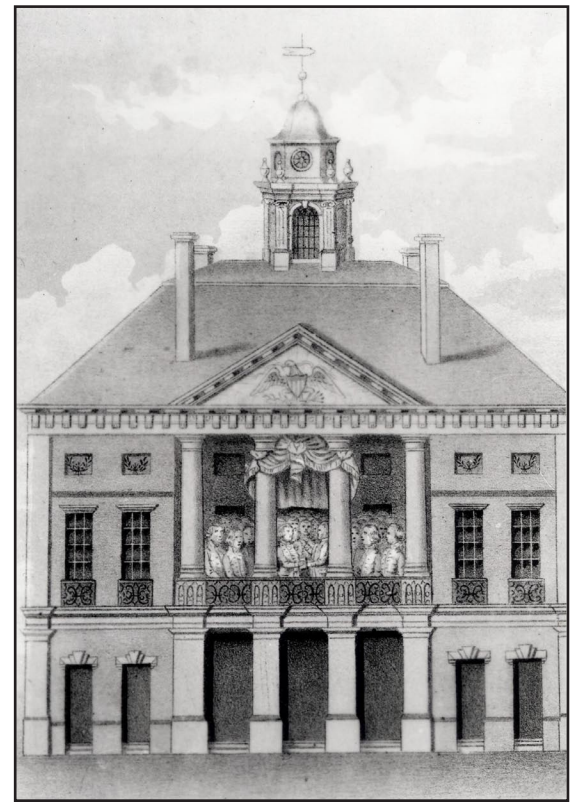
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## THE NEW YORK SOCIETY LIBRARY

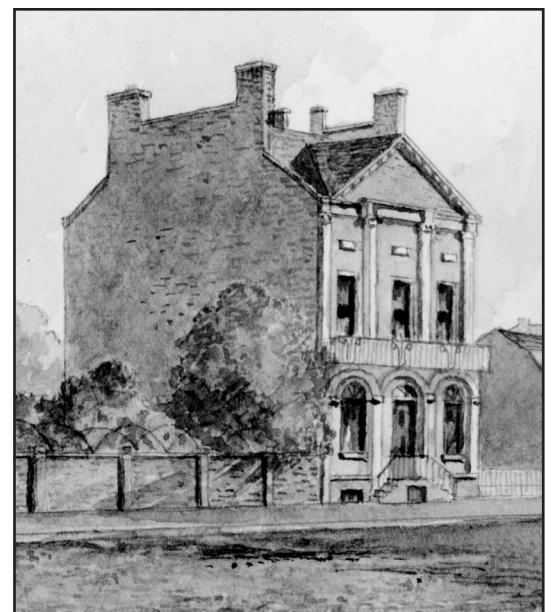
255 YEARS OLD

APRIL 1754-APRIL 2009

### THE LIBRARY'S FIVE HOMES



*City Hall (1754-1795)*



*Nassau Street (1795-1840)*

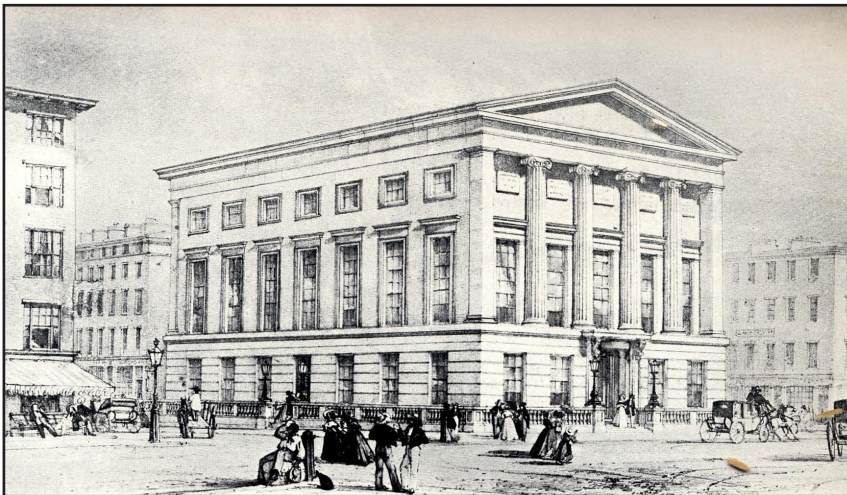
understanding and sympathy for one another—"Cosmopolitanism," in the meaning explained by our recent distinguished speaker, Kwame Anthony Appiah, Professor of Philosophy at Princeton and author of a book with that title—these are what have made our Library great and enduring, and I am confident that they will continue to do so during these difficult economic times.

When over the years I have seen signs of the greed and economic excesses that appear to have driven our economy to its current state, I have been reminded of the closing scene of Balzac's *Père Goriot*, where the old miser lies dying in his dreary apartment and calls for a bag of gold to be set by his side. Reaching his hands over the coins as if at a fireplace, he exclaims, "*Ah, ça me réchauffe.*" ("That warms me up.") How much greater warmth and nourishment we all can, do and should derive from a book, a lecture, an exhibition that engages our minds and our souls.

Appreciation for the values our Library instills and nourishes has led so many of our members to be so generous in these challenging financial times. Listed in this newsletter are those who contributed to our 2008 annual appeal, which surpassed all prior appeals. We are greatly indebted to all of these supporters, whose generous help is ever more crucial as we deal with the financial challenges ahead. Thank you very much for recognizing the unique value of our institution. May all that the Society Library has to offer continue to provide true warmth and nourishment for us all.



Charles G. Berry  
Chairman of the Board



*Broadway at Leonard Street (1840-1856)*



*University Place (1856-1937)*



*79th Street (1937-present)*

## CELEBRATION OF FORTY YEARS OR MORE OF MEMBERSHIP

Remarkably, there are more than 100 members who joined the Library forty or more years ago. The Library proudly fêted many of them at a reception in their honor on December 8. Organized by trustee Barbara H. Stanton and a distinguished planning committee, the evening featured remarks and reminiscences by Chairman of the Board Charles G. Berry, Head Librarian Mark Bartlett, and authors Shirley Hazzard and Thomas J. Fleming. The event was profiled in the *New York Times* on December 14, in an article by member Barbara Ascher.

*Photos by Karen Smul, left to right: Mr. Berry with his mother, Nancy Berry, who joined the Library in 1940; Lisa Woods and Ann-Pringle-Harris; Beverly Jablons, Daniel Rose, and Joanna Rose; Ann Raymond; speakers Shirley Hazzard and Thomas J. Fleming; Leonard and Gillis Plaine; Mary L. Bundy and trustee Jenny Lawrence; Margaret P. High; Barbara H. Stanton, Sheila Biddle, and Benita Eisler; Harriet Aufses and Dr. J.L. Gabrilove; Peggy and John Edsall; Reily Hendrickson; Edward L. Jamieson and Ann Jamieson; Elizabeth de Cuevas and William Banks; Shirley Hazzard; Janet Fenton.*



## PLANNING A TRIP? VISIT A MEMBERSHIP LIBRARY

Your membership in the New York Society Library entitles you to reciprocal privileges in other membership libraries around the country. Membership or subscription libraries were common in the nineteenth century; today there are only approximately sixteen remaining, each one a vibrant institution where past and present meet. More information about our sister institutions is available at [www.nysoclib.org/links.html](http://www.nysoclib.org/links.html) or in the 2007 book *America's Membership Libraries*, which can be purchased at the circulation desk or found at 026A Oversize.



*The Redwood Library and Athenaeum, founded in 1747.*

Society Library members have membership privileges at the following other libraries:

- The Boston Athenaeum (Boston, MA)
- The Charleston Library Society (Charleston, SC)
- The Mechanics' Institute Library (San Francisco, CA)
- The Redwood Library and Athenaeum (Newport, RI)

You may use their reading rooms, browse their stacks, and even check out books while you are in town.

If you are going to the Boston Athenaeum, please inquire at our reference desk first for an ID card. The other libraries may call us to verify your membership here, since we do not issue library cards.

All four of these institutions are lovely facilities well worth a visit and especially useful if you need a place to read and relax while you are out of town.

**Questions?** Contact Assistant Head Librarian Jane Goldstein at 212-288-6900 x205 or [jgoldstein@nysoclib.org](mailto:jgoldstein@nysoclib.org).

## EVENTS REGISTRATION

For **Children's Events:** please contact the Children's Library at 212-288-6900 x234 or [children@nysoclib.org](mailto:children@nysoclib.org). Fees for children's events should be paid at the door.

**For All Other Events:** Advance registration and payment is required. Advance registration will be taken up to two hours prior to the stated event start time. On the day of the event, please phone the Events Office at the number below.

The form on the following page can be dropped off at the Circulation desk, faxed to 212-744-5832, or mailed to

The New York Society Library  
Events Office

53 East 79th Street, New York, NY 10075.

Please include credit card information or a check made out to

The New York Society Library.

Online registration and payment through PayPal is available at [www.nysoclib.org/events\\_registration.html](http://www.nysoclib.org/events_registration.html).

**For single-session events:** The Events Office will contact you only if you are on a waitlist. Reminders will be sent to registrants in advance of events.

**For multi-session events:** The Events Office will contact you with further information.

**Refunds** will not be given except in the case of waitlisted reservations for which no space becomes available, or cancellation of the event.

If you have reserved places for an event but are unable to attend, you are welcome to donate the fee as a tax-deductible contribution. Please indicate this by calling the Events Office up to two hours prior to the start of the event.

**For past events,** see "Events: Recordings" at [www.nysoclib.org](http://www.nysoclib.org).

**Questions? Please contact the Events Office at 212-288-6900 x230 or [events@nysoclib.org](mailto:events@nysoclib.org).**



*Edith Kermit Roosevelt*

## UPCOMING SPECIAL EVENTS

For full information and listings for multi-session events, see our Events newsletters, available at the front desk, or visit [www.nysoclib.org/notes.html](http://www.nysoclib.org/notes.html).

### **Bakerloo Theater Company: Anton Chekhov's *The Three Sisters*, directed by William Addis**

Thursday, March 26, 6:30 p.m., Members' Room

A tradition in the Albany region, Bakerloo brings to life Chekhov's aching masterpiece.

### **Exhibition Opening: *The President's Wife and the Librarian***

Thursday, April 2, 5:30 p.m., Peluso Family Exhibition Gallery

Newly discovered letters introduce the friendship between First Lady Edith Roosevelt and NYSL staff member Marion King.

### **B.J. Rahn: Out of the Past: Mystery and Crime Novels—fully registered**

**Technology Workshops—see a full listing at [www.nysoclib.org/tech/index.html](http://www.nysoclib.org/tech/index.html)**

April 9, April 22, April 30, and May 5, 10:00 a.m. and 2:00 p.m.

### **The Writing Life: Panel: Marketing and Publicity**

Tuesday, April 14, 10:00 a.m., Whitridge Room

A panel of veteran authors and publishers shares advice on the realities of book marketing today.

### **Lola Rein Kaufman with Lois Metzger on *The Hidden Girl* (for children and adults)**

Tuesday, April 21, 5:30 p.m., Members' Room

Holocaust survivor Lola Kaufman speaks about her experience and the process of transforming memory into writing.

### **The Big Read 2009, in cooperation with the Mercantile Library Center for Fiction**

#### **James Kraft: A Conversation on Henry James' *Washington Square***

Wednesday, April 22, 6:30 p.m., Members' Room

A distinguished scholar leads discussion on James' insightful classic.

#### **Metropolitan Playhouse: *The Heiress*, a play by Ruth and Augustus Goetz, directed by Alex Roe**

Saturday, April 25, 2:00 p.m., Members' Room

The acclaimed company presents a creatively staged production of the 1947 play based on *Washington Square*.

*The Big Read is an initiative of the National Endowment for the Arts in partnership with the Institute of Museum and Library Services and Arts Midwest.*

### **Jim Dale: *The Shoe Bird* (for children and adults)**

Wednesday, April 29, 5:00 p.m., Members' Room

The Grammy-award-winning actor and narrator brings to life Eudora Welty's fantastical story, recently scored for orchestra.

### **Sylvia Jukes Morris: *Edith Kermit Roosevelt: Portrait of a First Lady***

Thursday, April 30, 6:30 p.m., Members' Room

The author of Mrs. Roosevelt's definitive biography shows the world of the First Lady's influential life and tumultuous era.

### **The New York City Book Awards Ceremony**

Wednesday, May 6, 5:30 p.m., Members' Room

A reception and ceremony honors the authors and publishers of the best 2008 books about New York City.

### **The Writing Life: Poetry and the Blending of Voices**

Tuesday, May 12, 10:00 a.m., Whitridge Room

Poet Brian Bartlett reads from his most recent collection and talks about his experiments blending his voice with those of others.

### **Jean Parker Phifer: *Public Art New York***

Tuesday, May 12, 6:30 p.m., Members' Room

A distinguished architect, Ms. Phifer enriches everyday experience with inside knowledge on works of public art.

### **Lynne Sharon Schwartz: *Not Now, Voyager***

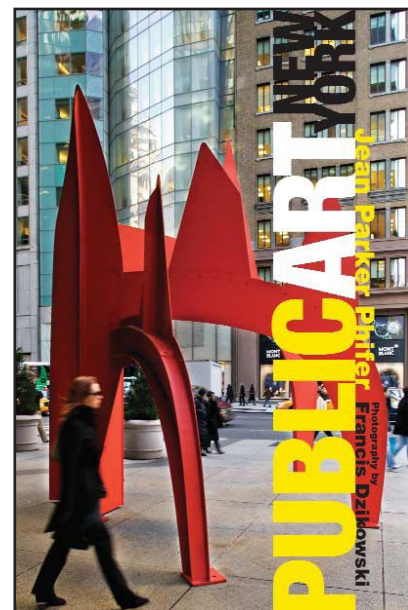
Wednesday, May 13, 7:00 p.m., Temple Israel

The notable fiction author takes the reader on a voyage of self-discovery, tracing how travel has shaped her sensibilities.

### **The Young Writers Awards Ceremony and Reception**

Thursday, May 14, 6:00 p.m., Members' Room

Authors honor excellent writing by entrants in grades three through twelve.



## REGISTRATION FORM

NAME OF PRIMARY REGISTRANT (PLEASE PRINT)	E-MAIL ADDRESS
DAYTIME TELEPHONE	

# OF SPACES	EVENT
	Anton Chekhov's <i>The Three Sisters</i> , March 26 (\$20)
	Exhibition Opening Reception, April 2 (free)
	B.J. Rahn, Mystery and Crime Novels, 3 Sessions (free)
	Workshop: Basic Backup, April 9 (free)
	Workshop: Digital Images, April 9 (free)
	Writing Life: Marketing and Publicity, April 14 (free)
	Workshop: Google Docs, April 22 (free)
	Workshop: New York Public Library Databases, April 22 (free)
	Big Read: Conversation on <i>Washington Square</i> , April 22 (\$10)
	Big Read: <i>The Heiress</i> , April 25 (\$20)
	Workshop: Introduction to Blogging, April 30 (free)
	Workshop: Buying and Selling on eBay, April 30 (free)
	Sylvia Jukes Morris, <i>Edith Kermit Roosevelt</i> , April 30 (\$10)
	Workshop: Introduction to MS Excel 2003, May 5 (free)
	Workshop: Introduction to MS PowerPoint, May 5 (free)
	The New York City Book Awards Ceremony, May 6 (free)
	Writing Life: Poetry and the Blending of Voices, May 12 (free)
	Jean Parker Phifer, <i>Public Art New York</i> , May 12 (\$10)
	Lynne Sharon Schwartz, <i>Not Now, Voyager</i> , May 13 (free)
	The Young Writers Awards Ceremony, May 14 (free)

TOTAL FEES	Check	Card:
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CARD NUMBER	EXPIRATION DATE
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THE NEW YORK SOCIETY LIBRARY  
 53 EAST 79TH STREET  
 NEW YORK, NEW YORK 10075

This newsletter is available  
 in electronic form  
 at [www.nysoclib.org/notes.html](http://www.nysoclib.org/notes.html).

Or register online at [www.nysoclib.org/event\\_registration.html](http://www.nysoclib.org/event_registration.html)