



BROOKLYN
HISTORICAL
SOCIETY

June 2009

Dear Members & Friends:

This year the Brooklyn Historical Society has delivered a rich offering of programs and exhibits. We have opened three community-curated exhibits, of which the last was *Living and Learning: Chinese Immigration, Restriction & Community in Brooklyn, 1850 to Present*, which opened on May 8th. Another exhibition, *Pages of the Past: The Breukelen Adventures of Jasper Danckaerts*, opened on June 5th. This extraordinary exhibition features an important Dutch manuscript, written and illustrated between 1679-1680. The show was curated by nineteen local high school students, working in collaboration with BHS staff, and several world renowned scholars. The student curators are all participants in our after school Museum Studies program, Exhibition Laboratory.

The staff and Board of the Brooklyn Historical Society (BHS) are very proud of these achievements and all the work that we continue to accomplish, making the history of Brooklyn accessible to scholars, students and the general public. But we must also acknowledge the serious financial challenges facing the organization at this time. Both BHS staff and our visiting public will feel the effects of these challenges as BHS manages our budget in the midst of the economic downturn that is confronting all businesses and nonprofits, regardless of their size or mission.

The following measures are being taken to cut costs, in order to remain financially responsible in the coming fiscal year. Starting in January 2009, the BHS staff has been furloughed for 20% of their fulltime hours; and this furlough will continue in 2010. In addition, the BHS building will be closed to the public on weekdays for the last two weeks of June; Monday – Friday, June 22-26 and Monday – Saturday, June 29-July 4. The museum will remain open on June 27-28 and Sunday, July 5. Regular public hours to the museum and library resume on Wednesday, July 8.

Library hours were also reduced beginning in January. While we had hoped to reinstate Saturday Library hours after June, we will not be able to do so at this time. The library will be closed during the month of August for normal maintenance of the Collection. This annual closing period is a regular and necessary occurrence that facilitates the Collections staff's ongoing work with the library and archives and makes it possible for staff and researchers to better utilize our great resources. During August, requests for research appointments will be considered on a case by case basis, and accommodated when possible.

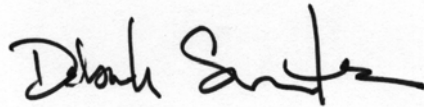
All steps to reduce the organization's expenses are difficult measures that staff as well as BHS members and friends will face together. Departmental budgets have been frozen and the organization is suspending contributions to employees' 401(k) plans. In addition to the reduced hours mentioned above, cuts that further affect members include the suspension of the quarterly printed and mailed member newsletter and several new exhibitions have been delayed, until full funding is secured.

Continued

We are sending out information about programs and events via e-mail blasts, so if you have not been getting this information, it may mean that we do not have your e-mail address. Please call us at 718 222.4111, ext. 246 with that information and we will be delighted to add you to our e-mail list.

I would like to take a moment to thank the staff publicly for their dedication to this marvelous institution, for their hard work, and unflinching spirited determination to bring the history of Brooklyn into the public eye, making our collections accessible to all of you. I regret the inconvenience that these service reductions will have on the public who attend our programs, research in our Library and visit our exhibitions. Rest assured that all service changes will be temporary and that as quickly as the financial climate allows it, we will restore services and programs to their regular availability. Our commitment to the communities of Brooklyn remains unchanged and I hope that in the coming year our financial strength can more accurately align with this organization's immense energy and dedication to serve as a central hub of cultural and educational activity in the borough.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Deborah Schwartz". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Deborah F. Schwartz, President
The Brooklyn Historical Society