

Virginia, MN - July, 2010

L'Dor V'Dor – From Generation to Generation

By Dianne Siegel

Oh what a weekend we had! Over 350 people shared the beautiful centennial celebration of B'nai Abraham, once a synagogue, now a museum and cultural center.

The first ceremony was attaching a special mezuzah to the front doorpost. This mezuzah once hung on a doorpost at Mount Sinai Hospital in Minneapolis. Mount Sinai closed in the 1980s, but something of it now lives on in Virginia. A mezuzah appears on the doors of many Jewish homes and buildings and contains a prayer indicating that God is One.

Our Friday night event featured the Northern Lights Musicians, a group of talented young performers from many countries, who played gorgeous classical music concluding with a rousing God Bless America.

Friday night also saw the unveiling of a plaque indicating that in 2010 we rededicated this building a century after the original dedication. Present at our Friday night celebration were people who had gathered from as far away as London and California and as close as the surrounding towns and many places in-between. Many local residents attended each of the events. We made many new friends and renewed old acquaintances. All were deeply moved.

On Saturday morning, Bonnie Resnick and Alan Milavetz and family organized a beautiful service with lovely accompaniment played on a guitar by David Milavetz. The Milavetz family now has the honor of having six generations who have prayed in this building.

Many others participated in the service. Just before the Kaddish, the memorial prayer, all of the names on the Memorial Board that existed when the building was a Synagogue were read aloud by Charlie Ostrov and Alan Milavetz. Many of their descendents were present. This was truly "L'Dor V'Dor", which means from generation to generation.

Jeannie Ostrov Steiger and Barry Steiger, who were celebrating their 49th wedding anniversary, sponsored the kiddish lunch, which was served outside on the lawn. Everyone stayed and visited.

In the afternoon, Marilyn Chiat spoke about the history of the Jewish community and Mike Blehert, our project director and Larry Rude, the glass artisan, spoke about how the windows were restored. Mike explained the meaning of the Hebrew and the symbols in each window, about which he had done a great deal of research.

Our culminating event, on Saturday night, included two Klezmer concerts by Millie and the Mentshn. Both concerts played to enthusiastic, full houses. It was hot, but no one left. The music made you tap your feet and want to sing. It was beautiful and joyous and a perfect ending to a perfect weekend.