

# The Indiana Jewish Historical Society holds 38th annual meeting

The Indiana Jewish Historical Society held its 38th annual meeting on Sun., Oct. 24, 2010 at the Broadmoor Country Club in Indianapolis.

The following members were elected by mail ballot to serve a three-year term on the Board of Directors, expiring in October 2013: Irit Boukai, Sheila Greenwald, Garry Mervis, David Piser, Joan Wolf, and Carol Kempler. Earlier that morning the Board of Directors elected the executive officers: President, Alan Gilbert, Fort Wayne; First V.P., Trent D. Pendley, Chesterton; Second V.P., Garry Mervis, Kokomo; and Treasurer, David Piser from

South Bend. Lindsey Mintz who resigned in May 2010, was thanked for her years of service on the IJHS Board.

Executive Director Eileen Baitcher reported that membership in the IJHS increased in 2010. Membership drives will take place in all geographic areas of the state to continue the upward swing in membership. She also reported that this year's publication of Indiana Jewish history titled *The History of Indiana's Jewish Scrap Dealers* has many people excited and has created new interest in the organization.

Guest speaker, Dr. Susan Brin Hyatt, associate professor

of anthropology and director of the MA program in applied anthropology at Indiana University-Purdue University in Indianapolis, gave a presentation based on her research of the history of the near Southside neighborhood of Indianapolis. Hyatt and her students, have begun carrying out oral history interviews with both African Americans and Sephardic Jews, who once lived side-by-side in the neighborhood. She explained that a majority of the Sephardic Jews who arrived in Indianapolis beginning in 1909 had immigrated from Monastir or from Solonika. Dr. Hyatt showed wonderful pictures of many of these early Sephardic families and explained how Sephardic Jews involved themselves in the Indianapolis community, many as garment workers employed by the large German-Jewish owned venture, Kahn Tailoring, and others as fruit and vegetable peddlers and small business owners.

Gladys Nisenbaum and Lee Mallah, both of whom grew up in the Southside community, added their own comments and personal remembrances, which enhanced Dr. Hyatt's presentation. Gladys explained that all the children in the neighborhood, black and white, played together. Everyone was welcomed in each other's homes. Although few of the Sephardic families kept in active contact with their former African American neighbors following their move north, over the past year, the two communities have begun coming together on a regular basis to work on the oral history project about their neighborhood.

The old Southside neighborhood was unique because it was the gateway to Indianapolis for many of European immigrants coming to the United States during the early part of the 20th century, and was once home to non-Jewish Greeks, Italians, Irish and others along with African Americans and Sephardic and Ashkenazic Jews.

Both the African American and Jewish elders, who recall life in the old neighborhood, often say that there was no

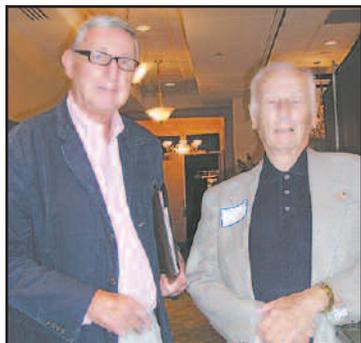


## Menorah spreads its light and warmth on cold winter's night

Ellen Shevitz and Martha Karatz enjoyed the menorah lighting at Celebration Plaza in front of the BJE on the last night of Hanukkah on Wed., Dec. 8, 2010.



(L-R) Gladys Nisenbaum, Dr. Susan Hyatt, Lee Mallah, and IJHS Board member Irit Boukai attended 38th annual meeting.



Others in attendance included (people clockwise from top left) Judy and Bob Koor, Jeannie Regan-Dinius and Executive Director Eileen Baitcher, Lynne Shiffriss and Carolyn Lickerman, and Bill Lurvey and Jerry Abrams.

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place like it and that the sense of community and the warm contacts shared among the different communities has continued to be a source of strength for them throughout

their lives. Gladys and Lee have always said that despite the poverty and hardship that many of them endured in those years, they wouldn't have had it any other way. ✨