

Iowa Jewish Historical Society Patron Dinner to Feature Karin Pritiken

Mark Sunday, October 25 in bright red on your calendar and join the Iowa Jewish Historical Society for our Annual Patron Dinner. This year, our **featured speaker will be Karin Pritikin**, a remarkable woman with a delightful sense of humor who devoted more than 1,000 hours of volunteer time to researching, designing, and constructing ***From Distant Places to Dubuque Shores: 175 Years of Jewish Presence***, the very special traveling exhibit that will open in the Library of the State Historical Society of Iowa on September 9.

As Vice President of Temple Beth El in Dubuque and volunteer Director of the Alexander Levi Heritage Project, Karin led the team and personally did a lot of the work that brought Alexander Levi's story and the history of Dubuque to life. It was Karin who secured several highly-competitive grants that made the exhibit possible. And it was Karin, a former musician who enjoys singing 17th through 20th-century cantorial music and chanting from the Torah at Temple Beth El services, who wrote and performed the Judaic music that is an integral part of the exhibit. When several members of the Iowa Jewish Historical Society Board of Directors journeyed to Dubuque last fall to see the exhibit and to meet Karin, we knew immediately that we wanted to share her knowledge, expertise, and entertaining stories with the Jewish community in Des Moines.

In her talk "**Jewish History Writ Large and Small**," Karin will explore the theme of family history in the context of her work on the Alexander Levi exhibit as she reveals some of the surprises she encountered in researching and designing the exhibit. As Karin states:

All of us, to some extent, want to know where we come from, literally and metaphorically. But the intensity with which we, as individuals, pursue our connection to the past depends on a combination of personal propensity and serendipity. The Alexander Levi Project feels very strongly that the onus is on all of us to not lose the connection to our founders' stories—whether of our religious or civic leaders or our family matriarchs and patriarchs. Their lives and accomplishments can be distilled into teachable moments that not only help us understand who we are and where we came from but also give us the stuff and substance with which to create bridges of understanding and collaboration with other.

Karin believes that the story told in ***From Distant Places to Dubuque's Shores: 175 Years of Jewish Presence*** appeals to people of all backgrounds, regardless of their faith affiliation. Alexander Levi was a French-speaking immigrant of Spanish origin, whose religion required strict observation of dietary laws and prescribed numbers for services, and whose liturgy was celebrated in a combination of archaic Spanish, German, French, and Hebrew. As a newcomer to the upper Mississippi region, he would have to adapt to new surroundings while creating a viable community for those who followed.

Come join us on Sunday, October 25 in the Bookey Lodge at The Caspe Terrace to hear more of this fascinating story and to see the exhibit, which we bring to the site from the State Historical Society for this occasion. Watch your mail for your invitation and let Karin guide you through this important piece of Iowa and Jewish history.