

January 8, 2024

Contact: Pamela Dewell – director@operahousearts.org

For Immediate Release:

ISLAND WOMEN SPEAK

The 2024 edition of ISLAND WOMEN SPEAK will be presented on January 25th at the Stonington Opera House and features an all-new cast of seven local women. Spanning seven decades, the featured storytellers will share some of their life experience with the common theme of “A Hot Mess.”

This will be the sixth time that Debbie Weil, 72, has directed ISLAND WOMEN SPEAK and said, “Working with these extraordinary women to help them tell their stories is always an honor and a high point of the year for me.” Weil moved to Deer Isle from Washington, DC a decade ago and has been living a busy, unretired life ever since. In addition to being a storytelling director, and a grandmother of six, she writes and podcasts about [B]OLD AGE.

This year’s cohort of storytellers includes:

Hallie Lartius, 23, moved to Deer Isle from Iowa corn country three years ago as an Island Institute Fellow. When she isn't working with Healthy Island Project's Salt Air Seniors, or the after-school cooking program, she explores the Island: walking, running, and swimming all year round.

Liz Lincoln, 38, is a mom of five children, ages three to 13. She recently started a full-time job as director of the after-school program for the Union 76 schools. With her partner of 22 years, she's lived in Deer Isle for a decade. She never imagined how deep her roots would grow in this community. She spends as much time as possible by the ocean and in the woods, swimming and standing barefoot in the moss, with a child's hand in hers.

Leslie McDonald, 44, was born and raised on Deer Isle. She manages Fin & Fern Restaurant and is the mother of four, ages six to 23. She loves her big beautiful family, travel, planting flowers, and most wild critters (which will likely lead to her eventually needing a rabies shot).

Julie Moringello, 56, is an artist and designer. Despite her love of hot weather, she has steadily moved north all of her life. She was born in Florida, grew up in New Jersey and landed in Stonington after meeting her husband while teaching at Haystack. She is a dedicated yoga practitioner and a lover of art, music and languages. She is currently having a blast learning about basketball from her 7th grade daughter.

Susan Oliver, 65, recently retired as co-owner of Island Fishing Gear/NAPA. She was one of the founding members of the Island Fishermen’s Wives Association. She swore she’d never marry a fisherman and has been married to one for 41 years. She became a grandmother two years ago and spends as much time

as possible with her granddaughter, Lula. She loves golf, plants, children, travel, family and fun foods. And happy people.

Donna Brewer, 70, was born in Castine and raised in Stonington. She has four children, 12 grandchildren, and one-and-a-half great grandchildren. She has worn many hats in her life, including Stonington Selectman, running an upholstery business, and working on her family's scallop and goat farms. She loves to read, travel and spend time with family and friends.

Donna Stinson, 83, was born in Stonington and has lived in Sunshine on Deer Isle ever since. She worked at the Stonington Packing Company (known as the Sardine Factory) as a packer, where she was an activist advocating for more flexible unemployment benefits. She also worked at the French Camp, as a cashier at the Galley for 25 years, and at Harbor Ice Cream in Deer Isle, a job she loved because she got to see so many children grow up.

Local band Along for the Ride will play in the Opera House lobby beginning at 6 pm and during intermission.

For more information and to purchase advance tickets, please visit the Opera House website <https://operahousearts.org>

Opera House Arts, a 501 [c] [3] nonprofit organization, was founded in 1999 to restore the 1912 Stonington Opera House, on the National Register of Historic Places, and its original purpose as a performance space and community cornerstone. Professional theater, movies, variety acts, music and dance, educational programs, and special events are offered year-round.

Hancock County students are invited to attend live performances for free thanks to the generous supporters of Opera House Arts.

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