



Everything Jersey

Women hope their 'Second Act' show in Ringoes will inspire others to make dreams a reality

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Renee Kiriluk-Hill/Hunterdon Democrat

By



Key of She members Amy Raditz of Lambertville, Sue Jaques, Carol Heffler, Sheila Truncillito and Cheryl Wnek perform in a recent show.

EAST AMWELL TWP. — If you're a woman, what's your "second act?" For a Harvard educated-attorney it's comedy on stage and in print. For an Alexandria Township mom it's a book inspired by travel to her native Italy with her then-young son. For a saleswoman and entrepreneur, it's stand-up routines in New York City.

Women will meet them all, and others who are making dreams come true, at an event that started with a book club's reading of "The Alchemist" by Paulo Coelho.

It will start with hors d'oeuvres and beverages in a 45-minute "connecting." Co-organizer Carla Kruck says, "We didn't want to call it networking, that's too business-like. Fellowship is for church. Connecting is the new buzz word."

It's also what she hopes will happen, on multiple levels. Kruck, a Delaware Township resident, and friend Ginia Jones of Branchburg, say the decided to "put on a show and get women to support us while we try something new."

They wanted it to be fun, affordable to all and pressure-free — no one will pass around an order form at the end of the evening for makeup, plastic containers, candles or anything else. Jones will emcee.

They also hope it inspires women — sorry guys, you're not invited — to think about and get started on their own second act. That's the name of the event on Friday, April 20 at 7 p.m. at Living Waters Lutheran Church at 11 Old York Road.

Tickets cost \$8. Sales are limited — **reserve online** — and are going quicker than the women expected.

Kruck is the kind of person that describes her new puppy this way: "We just rescued him. He's supposed to be collie, but he may have some beagle in him. How big is he supposed to be? They said 20-80 pounds. It's like 'when is the cable guy coming?'"

She has been urged for years to give comedy a try. A year ago she'd even tucked away information about a once-weekly evening course on stand-up in New York City. "I said, 'I'm going to take this class,' then I didn't want to. It was scary, I could fail and all of that," she says.

But she told friend Penni Palis — also a wife and working mom — about it. Palis offered to share the fear and the fun. "Had Penni not been the catalyst, I wouldn't have done it," she said.

For graduation on Feb. 22 the class performed at a comedy club in the city. Kruck loved it and has since performed a second comedy routine before an audience.

She, in turn, inspired fellow book-club member Olga Vannucci to finish her book, "Travels With George," which the women describe as "touching and funny, you will find yourself longing to travel and smiling just because."

Both women will take the stage at "Second Act," along with Karen Bergreen — Kruck's comedy teacher who started as an attorney. She has appeared on Comedy Central, The Oxygen Network and TV shows and wrote "Following Polly," which was praised by The New York Times and Oprah Magazine "and her mother-in-law."

The evening's rounded out with "Key of She" an all-female pop-jazz-country a cappella group that started in 2001 and continues today with two of its five founding members. In 2002, Key of She opened for Ray Charles, and in 2004, they appeared on The Jane Pauley Show. The group has released two CDs and now has Amy Raditz of Lambertville, Sue Jaques, Carol Heffler, Sheila Truncillito and Cheryl Wnek.

Jones and Kruck say their goal was to sell 100 tickets to Second Act. They've reached that goal and are now worried about turning women away. It is like 'The Alchemist,' they say: "When you want something, all the universe conspires in helping you to achieve it."

Says Kruck, "Our only goal was a fun, special night for women. We're amazed by how many people want to get involved and support us."

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