**BENITA ZAHN, NEWSANCHOR,**

***ALWAYS ASKING QUESTIONS***

SALEM, NY — Fort Salem Theater kicks off its tenth summer season June 18-19 as perennial favorite, Newschannel 13 anchor and health reporter, Benita Zahn, debuts her first-ever full-length solo cabaret act, *Always Asking Questions.*

The musical inquisition begins with a Farm-to-Table Dinner Theater Cabaret at Gardenworks Farm, 1055 Route 30, Salem NY, at 5:30 PM on June 18. After a cheese buffet, with wine and beer available for purchase, dinner guests gather under the arbor for a three-course dinner of grilled pork tenderloin, roasted potatoes with early summer salad and a fresh strawberry dessert. Following dinner, guests will adjourn to a mini-cabaret on premises, where Miss Zahn will explore the Great American Songbook, sharing songs and stories that ask and answer some of life’s most provocative questions.

*Benita Zahn: Always Asking Questions* then moves, Sunday at 2 PM, to the Cabaret at Fort Salem Theater for a matinee performance.

Miss Zahn has performed with musical director Jay Kerr at Fort Salem Theater since Kerr took over the reins at the Washington County venue in 2007. She starred in three Mainstage musicals, and brought her broadcasting friends Jerry Gretzinger and Jessica Layton to the cabaret in 2009. The trio fit together so well that, as The Singing Anchors, they have since performed their Broadway and Hollywood revues throughout the region at countless benefits, as an annual Christmas feature at the Saratoga Racino, at Mac-Haydn Theatre, and are set to deliver their swan song this September (Layton is moving to WCBS-TV in New York City) at The Wood Theater in Glens Falls.

In her past cabarets, Benita Zahn has shared the stage and the bill with comedians or her fellow anchors. This new outing features the singing anchor using her singing and acting skills to add unique interpretations to familiar songs by composers including Burt Bacharach, Irving Berlin, George Gershwin, and Stephen Sondheim.

Benita's work as a veteran in broadcasting has garnered her numerous awards over the years, including the 2015 Resourceful Woman Award (Troy YWCA), 2014 Arthur Kapner Spirit of the Chamber Award (Albany-Colonie Regional Chamber), named one of the 100 Women of the Century (Albany-Colonie Regional Chamber), seven-time Emmy nominee, NYS Broadcasters award recipient, Gold Medal and Bronze Medal - New York Festival's International Television, Distinguished Communicator Award/ American Women in Radio and Television, Women Against MS honoree, the NYS Health Education Week Award, media awards from the American Cancer Society, the American Lung Association and the American Heart Association, 2014. She earned her Doctorate in Professional Studies/Bioethics in 2014 from Albany Medical College/Alden March Bioethics Institute, where she also earned a Masters in Bioethics.

A 1976 graduate in theatre at SUNY Oswego, Ms. Zahn recently endowed the department with a fund to “take away a little bit of the worry” from theatre students who are struggling financially. The endowment supports full-time students majoring in theatre who show exceptional levels of dedication and involvement in the department. “The study of theatre gives students the ability to dream and the support to act on their dreams,” Zahn says. Her own time as a student of theatre significantly influenced her approach to life.

*Benita Zahn: Always Asking Questions* plays at Gardenworks with a Dinner Theater package for $65 on June 18, and at The Cabaret at Fort Salem Theater on June 19, with dessert and coffee, for $25. Reservations are necessary for the dinner, and recommended for the cabaret; for both venues, go online at *[fortsalemtheater.com](http://fortsalemtheater.com)* or call the theater box office at (518) 854-9200.