

! PAULA ! LIVE

Comedian Paula Poundstone comes to Greensboro

by Joshua G. Lewis

Paula Poundstone is a big kid. She lives with six cats, tells jokes for a living and eats only one kind of Pop Tarts, brown sugar cinammon-coated (she's burnt out on the rest.)

In her act, the 32 year-old comedian has the demeanor of a child with whom you are discussing a cool comic book. Poundstone's speech is straightforward and honest, as when she talks of Daryl Hannah ("She's a sucky actress.")

Her voice just sounds like a kid's, even on the phone. But talking from her home in Santa Monica, Ca., Poundstone reveals there is much more to her than jokes and ready-made breakfast food.

She is very close to her cats. They're not allowed outside generally, but one of them, Scout, has gotten out. Poundstone is almost pouting now that Scout has shunned her temporarily for the great out-of-doors.

"I'm supposed to have six (cats)," Poundstone says. "I have five and hurt feelings."

However, the comedian shows a more mature side as well.

Even though she never attended college (hers is an "incomplete education" she says,) Poundstone maintains a fairly formidable reading list.

For instance, she's now reading *1929: The Year of the Great Crash* by William K. Klingaman, a book detailing the beginning of the Great Depression.

"I figure we're just about to be back—

maybe not as a result of the stock market—in the same place," Poundstone says of the current economy. "I just thought I'd read up on the kind of activities we'll be having."

The recession definitely affects her job, she says.

"It kind of puts a damper on the crowd when you say to somebody 'What do you do for a living?' and they go 'I'm unemployed,'" she says.

The book Poundstone most recently finished is *The Souls of Black Folk* by W.E.B. Du Bois. And even her cats are named from classics. Scout got her name from the girl in Lee's *To Kill a Mockingbird*. Poundstone dubbed another of her cats Smike after the orphan in Dickens's *Nicholas Nickleby*.

In mid-conversation, she says another of her felines, Hepcat, just bit the little plastic piece off the end of her shoelace.

"Every time you come up with a good name, you have to get another cat," she continues. "Good thing I haven't come up with any good kids, names," she says.

But offspring won't be a problem for Poundstone, at least in the near future.

"You know I don't even date or anything. I don't know if I'm just like totally developmentally stunted," she wonders.



But Poundstone comes up with a more definitive answer right away: "I couldn't (date) this year because it's an election year and there's just so many things to think about. Who could clutter their life with that sort of thing anyways?"

Poundstone has politics on the brain, especially after her recent coverage of the Democratic National Convention for the Tonight Show with Jay Leno.

"Boy, I'd love to be a politician," she says. And while "Paula for President" is as unlikely to be seen, Poundstone says she has enter-

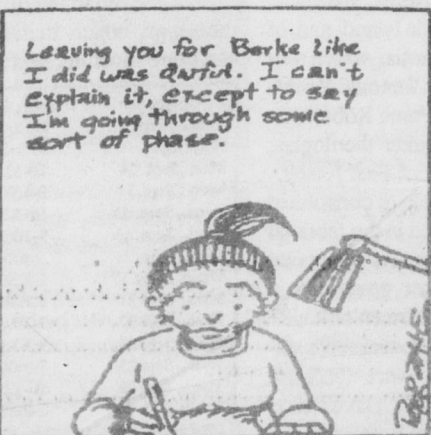
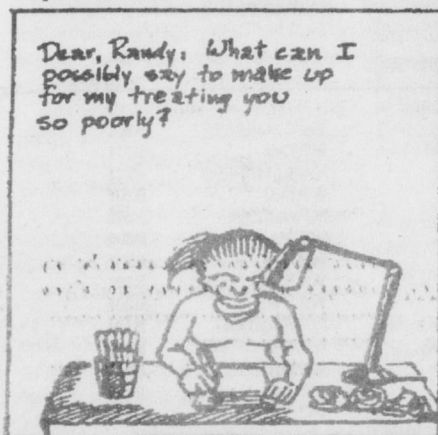
tained the thought of running for city council in Santa Monica.

"The only problem is I already have a seedy background," she says. "They wouldn't even have to dig for evidence."

But for now, Poundstone will stick to governing her cats, even though Scout is still outside and Hepcat continues to terrorize her feet. If she ever does attain office, Poundstone won't have any trouble laying down the law.

"If this cat bites these shoes one more time, she becomes a projectile!"

Spencer Green



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