

COMEDY

# Hey, Hey Paula

A fan of stand-up Poundstone considers her unique brand of funny

BY AIMEE GENTER

Before you say anything, yeah... I'm an art director, not a writer. Let's just get that out of the way right now. When a press release for Paula Poundstone's January 29 show at the Aladdin Theater showed up in my inbox, I had a mission. I immediately ran over to the editor, begging, pleading for her to let me write something about this historic occasion.

"Go get that interview," she said. And believe me, I tried. But you try to get in contact with anyone the week between Christmas and New Year's and tell me how it goes, okay?

To say I'm a fan is an understatement. As a baby dykeling, I was obsessed with my holy trinity of stand-up royalty: Rosie O'Donnell, Ellen DeGeneres and Paula Poundstone. Now, you may see Ms. Poundstone in my holy trinity and jump to an assumption or two. And who would blame you? Those ties. Those gaudy suits. Her liberal political humor. They all point to one conclusion.

But you know what happens when you assume, right?

"I'm totally an asexual human being. I haven't dated anyone," Poundstone told the *Dallas Voice* in 2007. In her memoir, *There is Nothing In This Book That I Meant to Say*, she wrote, "The idea that I'd get to my bed and there'd be someone in there with whom I was supposed to have an activity is horrifying to me. It's a safe bet that I'm not good at sex, that I do it wrong."

How, then, did she become a gay icon?

Most likely it is her masculine fashion sense, mixed with a sardonic sense of humor. I, personally, pick my gay icons based on who makes me tingle. It's not scientific, but it's right 9 out of 10 times. Paula Poundstone is the anomaly—the woman who lives her life as she wants to, not as she thinks people want her to be.

This is most likely proven by the "success" of *The Paula Poundstone Show* in 1993. An insane television producer gave her a series to do whatever she wanted, in the hopes it would entertain others. In one segment, she sent a group of economists to the Santa Cruz boardwalk and asked them business questions while they were spinning in the teacup ride.

In another, she sat by a fireplace, snuggled up, listening to Sam Donaldson as he read *Where the Wild Things Are*. I looked forward to every show. It lasted two episodes.

So she went back to what she knew. And she hit a few snags along the way. An incident in 2001 led to charges of child endangerment and a lewd act on a child. The lascivious part of the charges was dropped, and after going through alcohol treatment she got custody of her children back and moved on with her life. Now 51, she's spent the last 10 years touring as a stand-up, lending her voice to various animated series, acting as a panelist on NPR's *Wait Wait... Don't Tell Me!*, writing and even more touring.



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-PAULA POUNDSTONE

me feel more uncomfortable at a comedy show than laughing at a joke I've already heard.

Perhaps that is why Paula Poundstone has staying power as an "old guard" stand-up. While others have moved on to acting or fading into smaller nightclub acts, Poundstone continues to fill large venues with fresh offerings of funny.

I, for one, salute her for keeping the art form alive. ☪

PAULA POUNDSTONE performs January 29, 7 p.m., at the Aladdin Theater, 3017 SE Milwaukie. Tickets, \$30, are available at [aladdin-theater.com](http://aladdin-theater.com).

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## Beat the Winter Blues

Fundraiser for Esther's Pantry  
and Soup Cook-off.

January 15, 2011, 4-9p.m.

Join us in raising money and non-perishable food items for *Esther's Pantry*. Esther's Pantry was founded in 1985 to provide financially challenged individuals living with HIV/AIDS access to food and personal care items.

Start your evening with the Soup Cook off and wine tasting from 4- 6pm with MC Poison Waters . If you fancy yourself a good cook and make a mean pot of soup, then register for the cook-off! It's all in good fun but there will be judges and prizes.

Applications can be obtained by emailing [winegoddess@hipchicksdowine.com](mailto:winegoddess@hipchicksdowine.com).

From 6-9p.m. our delightful entertainment will be *Galynne Davis*. Admission is \$15 and includes a tasting of 6 wines and appetizers. You are encouraged to bring non-perishable food or hygiene items for \$5 off admission.



Both tasting rooms  
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