

Sheila Kay: A comic in waiting



Sheila Kay is part of a nucleus of Detroit comics who earned their wings during the early days at the Comedy Castle.

By Bob Sadler
Special writer

Sheila Kay is yet another transplanted Detroit comic seeking limelight in La-La land — not to mention maybe a part in a decent sit-com or even a husband.

"God knows I'm waiting for the perfect marriage," Kay said. "I just want to take care of somebody and be a domestic goddess like Roseanne."

Maybe the former Southfield resident is pulling our legs a bit. She'd probably like the weekly television show and notoriety that a certain Ms. Barr now enjoys, but that domestic goddess stuff may not exactly be her cup of tea.

"I've been married so many times I don't remember," Kay said.

In actuality, it's only been twice, but she's certainly not that far removed from the realities of domestic life. She was washing dishes at the beginning of the interview.

She only uses her first and middle names for her stage moniker, because the way comic doesn't "want people to find her." Standing about five-feet tall, Sheila describes herself not as another Roseanne, but as Carla from "Cheers" plus another 20 pounds.

The majority of her humor is of the self-deprecating variety — the kind of "how do I look to you" stuff

that has spelled stardom for people like Gary Shandling.

SHE FOCUSES on her appearance (particularly on her ongoing diet and exercise battles), her history of relationships (for "dating and the lack thereof" as she put it) and the family that provided both material and support through the years.

"I hate watching me perform," Kay says in her typical self-deprecating way. "I've got all these tapes of myself, and I never see them. I never like me as much as I hope everybody else will."

It's been a long road to full-time comedy and Los Angeles for Sheila Kay. Born in Detroit, she spent the

first six years of her life in the old Dexter-Davison neighborhood. Later, her family moved to Oak Park, where she grew up playing the clarinet and taking dancing and singing lessons.

"I always had that show biz thing around me, my uncle used to be on the 'Soup Sales Show,' doing skits and other stuff," she said. "I had a lot of background in the family, but I never really thought about show business as a career."

"I got married right after high school (she graduated from Ferndale High School), and it threw a monkey wrench in my entire life!"

In March 1979, she joined the nucleus of Detroit comics who all

earned their wings during the early days at the Comedy Castle. This illustrious group includes people like Bill Thomas, Van Gunter and Tony Hayes — people who have been able to stay alive on the comedy circuit ever since. Kay remembers those days well.

"WE HAD A real camaraderie. It was really tight," Kay said. "All the comics helped each other, critiqued each other."

Kay worked at various day jobs while learning the comedic ropes and actually ran a club in Bloomfield Hills for a short time. The experience gained booking a club and emceeing shows gave Kay the confidence to take her act on the road

COMEDY CLUBS

Here are some listings of comedy clubs in our area. To let us know who is appearing at your club, send the information to: Comedy Listings, Observer & Eccentric Newspapers, 36251 Schoolcraft, Livonia 48150.

● **Bea's Comedy Kitchen**
Skeeter Murray, Keith Ross, Tim Costello and Downtown Tony Brown will perform Friday-Saturday, March 9-10, at Bea's Comedy Kitchen, 541 Larned, Detroit. Show times are 8:30 and 11 p.m. For information, call 961-2581.

● **Chaplain's East**
Lowell Sanders will perform along with Joey Novick and Pete Demoyne Wednesday-Saturday, March 7-10, at Chaplain's East, 3424 Grosbeck, Fraser. Show times are 8:30 p.m. Wednesday and Thursday and 8:30 and 10:30 p.m. Friday and Saturday. For information, call 792-1902.

● **Chaplin's West**
Steve Seagren, along with Gary Stephens and Jennie McNulty, will perform Tuesday-Saturday, March 6-10, at Chaplin's West, 16890 Telegraph, south of Six Mile, Detroit. For information, call 533-8866.

● **Comedy Castle**
George Miller will perform with Ruben Guajardo and Peter Berma on Tuesday through Saturday, March 6-10, at the Comedy Castle, 269 E. Fourth, Royal Oak. For reservations, call 542-9900.

● **Mainstreet**
Jon Ross will perform Friday and Saturday, March 9-10, at Mainstreet Comedy Showcase, 314 E. Liberty, Ann Arbor. Show times are 8:30 p.m. Wednesday and Thursday, 8:30 and 11 p.m. Friday and 7, 9 and 11 p.m. Saturday. For information, call 996-9080.

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● **Joey's Livonia**
Ken Sons will perform Thursday-Saturday, March 7-10, at Joey's Comedy Club, 36071 Plymouth, east of Levon, Livonia. Show times are 9 p.m. Thursday and Friday and 8:30 and 10:30 p.m. Saturday. For reservations, call 261-0555.

● **Joey's Allen Park**
Roger Kabler will perform Thursday-Saturday, March 7-10, at Joey's Comedy Club and Sports Emporium, Southfield Road, Allen Park. Show times are 8:30 p.m. Wednesday and Thursday and 8 and 10:30 p.m. Friday and Saturday. For information, call 382-7041.

● **Holly Hotel**
Tim Butterfield will perform along with Ken Brown and Ross Amelisee Thursday through Saturday, March 8-10, at Holly Hotel, 110 Battle Alley, Holly. Show times are 8:30 p.m. Thursday and 8:30 and 10:30 p.m. Friday and Saturday. For information, call 634-1891.

● **Miss Kitty's**
Paul Diguillo and Ken Severa will perform Thursday-Saturday, March 8-10, at Miss Kitty's Comedy Club, Long Branch Restaurant, 595 N. Lapeer Road, Oxford. Show times are 8

p.m. Thursday, 8 and 10:30 p.m. Friday and Saturday. For information, call 628-6500.

● **Looney Bin**
Bill Thomas will perform with special guests Mike Green and Dan Borza, Thursday-Saturday, March 8-10, at the Wolverine and Looney Bin Restaurant and Comedy Club, 1655 Glengary, Walled Lake. Show times are 9 p.m. Thursday and Friday, and 8 and 10:15 p.m. Saturday. For more information, call 669-9374.

● **Looney Bin Too**
Keith Ruff will perform Friday and Saturday, March 9-10, at The Roxy Looney Bin Too, 11175 Hagerly, Belleville. For reservations, call 699-1829.

● **Jerry Lewis**
Jerry Lewis will perform Thursday through Sunday, March 8-11, at the Fox Theatre in Detroit. Show times are 8 p.m. Thursday and Friday, 4 p.m. and 8 p.m. Saturday, and 7 p.m. Sunday. Tickets are \$37.50-\$10. For information, call 567-6000.

● **Sam Kinison**
Sam Kinison will perform 8 p.m. Friday and Saturday, March 16-17, at Fox Theatre in Detroit. Tickets are \$20. For information, call 567-6000.

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