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No Conan for this retired nurse

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By **Seth Kabala**, seth@sethkabala.com

Churches as open-mic venues? My sample is pretty small, but if Loretta Black, a member at New Hope Presbyterian Church in Davenport, and veteran food pantry volunteer, is any indication, Last Comic Standing might have to change audition locations.

Q: What are you doing here on this wonderful cold Thursday?

A: I'm at the food pantry.

Q: What's your function here?

A: My function is to register (people), and so I get their name and their address and how many adults and how many children and if they're in the right food bank area.

Q: How long have you been doing this?

A: Two years.

Q: Is it a lot of fun, a lot of work?

A: It's eye-opening as far as people who need help. How many. We get a lot ... of families with four or

five children, six children.

Q: What do you do when you're not here?

A: Well, I am retired.

Q: From where?



Photo: Seth Kabala
Loretta Black

A: Trinity hospital.

Q: What did you do there?

A: I was a nurse, and I worked ... at least 19, 20 years (in) the operating room.

Q: Do you live here in Davenport?

A: Yes.

Q: Have you lived here your whole life?

A: No, my hometown is Burlington, and then I went to school in Moline. The nursing school in Moline. I lived in Michigan for a while. I came back to Rock Island. I moved to Davenport, and I've been back in Davenport, oh, I don't know, '75, 1975, something like that.

Q: Do you have any hobbies outside of this?

A: No, I really don't. ... I'm retired. I get to run around.

Q: Do you watch any tv?

A: Not during the day. ... I would sit there and watch it.

Q: Do you watch Conan?

A: Absolutely not. I don't like that man. (whispering) I don't like him.

Q: What don't you like about him?

A: I don't know. It's just his arrogant attitude. I mean ... (trailing off in disgust). My favorites are the CSI's.

Q: What about books?

A: Oh, I read a lot of books. The last thing I've really been doing consciously is reading ... some of the old classics. I've re-read things like "Moby Dick", "20,000 Leagues Under the Sea." My last one was "Gone with the Wind."

Q: Do you prefer the literary-type stuff?

A: I don't like the romances. ... They tend to all be the same. I mean, you know, the poor little girl, she finds the rich man, she goes through a bunch of duhluhduhluh (speaking nonsense) whatever, and then everything turns out alright. No, I get tired of it.

Q: What's your favorite food?

A: I have some un-favorites.... It's getting to be all this Chinese stuff. Some of it I like, but I'm certainly not going to be going out of my way to get it. And I've never tried sushi, and I don't think I will be able to.

Q: Why not?

A: Well, they start talking about raw fish, and how you have to be careful what fish it is and what have you. Why push my luck? What if I get a little piece of blowfish or something and I DIE?!?!

Each week, The Dispatch and The Rock Island Argus send out a reporter to interview a Quad-Citian found at random. Look for Totally Random Q&A, Mondays in Neighbors.