Lake Wobegon comes to life

Garrison Keillor has (sort of) revealed the location of his fictional town of quiet weeks and above-average children.

By Chuck Haga Star Tribune Staff Writer

FREEPORT, MINN. — The anecdotal evidence lined up at the Pioneer Inn bar is overwhelming: Alice Sand is strong. Lornie Middendorf is good-looking. And, Dennis Heidgerken says, all four of his children are above average. This is Lake Wobegon.

Garrison Keillor himself says so. In the December issue of National Geographic magazine, the Minnesota Public Radio storyteller writes about the inspiration he took many years ago from small towns in Stearns County - from Holdingford's "fine little downtown of elderly brick build-ings" to the stately Catholic church in New Munich.

And the Sidetrack Tap in his mythical Lake Wobegon was modeled, he says, after the Pioneer Inn.

KEILLOR continues on A16: — Garrison Keillor wrote that people appear disappointed when he tells them everything about the town is fictional.

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A white picket fence adorned with hand-painted red hearts graces Main Street in Freeport, Minn. Garrison Keillor says he modeled his fictional Lake Wobegon after such small towns in Stearns County.

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KEILLOR from A1 Lake Wobegon is a fictional town built on solid truths

iddendorf, 57, said he this little

t he describes, it's like it be here," he said. "But it's same interesting people, trying to put anything on. here are very set in their very opinionated. But

e are always asking the f the village he chronicles ekly "News From Lake "segments. They always appointed when he tells provide the tells of th en the county established t-community bike path and called it the Lake n Trail, Keillor decided to d a few days roaming the e if it was there or not."

It's still there

e was moved again by the New ich church, with its "high mns with figured capitals, the windows in the transepts, the y statues with the compassion-'s a little much, actually, for Wobegon's Our Lady of Per-

More information:

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ponsibility, "I could see I the baroque feeling at ites, "If I'd put it in Lake nobody would have at she's

nk he's talking ab out the ning, er th verybody o ventila-ly. People nd it was es of watching a mai e writes of watching a ... a the Post Office in Freeport. "a in a brown porkpie hat and blue polyester suit and green d shirt with a string tie with an a clasp and wearing white re was no

bsbach, Lake Wobegon's t dealer, he said. tor on Monday asked Mid-and Heidgerken whether a dressed might commonly departing the Post Office med confused by the oues-

elf back the pla

The people-watcher "I did," Heidgerken said, not rs he's a really quiet per-ets a glass of beer, sits in a d watches people," she

alls in his article that at listening to the locals, a't include him in their he Di

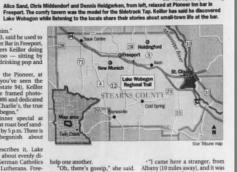
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Chuck Haga can be crhaga@startribune.c from the Associated P cluded in this article

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