

30 Weekend

It's Saturday Night at Lake Wobegon

By ALBERT M. SUKOWASKI

*Well look who's coming, thru that door,
I think we've met somewhere before
Hello Love, Hello Love
Well where in the world, you been so long
It hurts so bad since you've been gone
Hello Love, Hello Love*

And so starts another week of "A Prairie Home Companion" hosted by Garrison Keillor, brought live by Minnesota Public Radio. It's a radio the way it used to be when folks would gather 'round the radio on Saturday nights after the hard week was behind them.

The show is the brainchild of Keillor, who began the show in 1974 after writing a non-fiction piece for *The New Yorker* about the Grand Ole Opry. The show took residence in St. Paul's World Theater in 1978 and each Saturday night people pack the 800-seat iron-and-chewing-gum auditorium to watch the show.

The show centers around the mythical town of Lake Wobegon, Minnesota, "the little town that time forgot and the decades can't improve. Where all the women are strong, all the men are good-looking and the children are above average."

The show combines music with homegrown advertisements. Regulars on the show aside from Keillor include: the Butch Thompson trio, fiddler/mandolinist Peter Ostroushko and oftentimes bluegrass band Stony Lonesome. Each week also brings special guests such as Greg Brown, John Hartford, Robin and Linda Williams and Sally Rogers, to name only a few of the past guests on the show.

Some listeners prefer the ads. After thanking the opening band, Keillor notes that the first half hour is "brought to you by Powdermilk Biscuits, in the big blue box with the picture of the biscuit on the cover, made from whole wheat raised in the rich bottomlands by Norwegian bachelor farmers. Whole wheat gives a shy person the strength to get up and do what needs to be done."

Then there is the Chatterbox Cafe where Dorothy presides; also, Skogland's Five & Dime where you really do find things that only cost a dime. There's also Ralph's Pretty Good Grocery: "If you can't find it at Ralph's, you can probably get along without it." Or else the Sidetrack Tap where Wally and Evelyn wait to serve you, but, remember, "Don't sleep at our bar, we don't drink in your bed."

Keillor also includes a weekly monologue called the "News From Lake Wobegon." He starts out, "It's been a quiet week in Lake Wobegon, my hometown..." and continues on about things that happened in his childhood or even present-day happenings such as the Christmas service at one Lake Wobegon Church, Our Lady of Perpetual Responsibility. The monologue keeps listeners glued to their radios with its witty remarks, most of them true.

After a few more songs and a new section called the Department of Folksong where listeners send in song or parts of song, they at least partially remember as children, the show closes.

Locally, "A Prairie Home Companion" can be heard on WVIA-FM (90 on the dial) Saturdays between 6 and 8 p.m.



Host Garrison Keillor



Scene from 'A Prairie Home Companion'

Commercial Signs Subject Of New Brandywine Exhibit

Commercial signs advertising an establishment or product have always been around — they are so commonplace, in fact, that we sometimes don't even really see them.

Today's fast pace requires signs which are larger than life, brighter than bright, and often aren't very attractive, just to catch the eyes of busy passersby.

A new loan exhibit, "The Art of Enterprise: A Pennsylvania Tradition," is on display at the Brandywine River Museum through May 28. It offers a refreshing view of commercial signs from another era. About 40 examples of 19th and early 20th century trade and tavern signs, professionals' shingles

CURTAIN CALL: When celebrity hounds from around the world want to make sure mail gets to a favorite star, they frequently send it to The Russian Tea Room, a popular "Beautiful People" meeting place.

The New York hot spot was the scene of an impromptu performance Wednesday when Dustin Hoffman came in to collect some mail from Japan. The actor was still dressed as Willy Loman, his character from "Death of a Salesman."

and carved figures are displayed throughout the modern glass tower area of the Chadds Ford museum.

The special loan exhibit will conclude with the Antiques Show and sale, held annually each Memorial Day weekend. Inn and tavern signs, cigar store figures, including several wooden Indians, shingles of doctors, dentists, veterinarians, apothecaries and taxidermists will be seen. The display gives visitors insight into the lifestyles of small town and rural Pennsylvania in the late 18th and 19th centuries and reveal the skills inherent in sign production.

Also on view in the Brandywine Heritage Gallery is the permanent art collection, including work by three generations of the Wyeth family and scores of other artists. Brandywine River Museum, a lovingly preserved century-old gristmill, is 12 years old. It is a stunning repository of art and illustration.

Visitors will see the construction which is underway

on a new \$3 million addition to the museum, planned to open in September. It will include a new art gallery with the most modern lighting of any museum in the country, an expanded museum shop and a 120-seat restaurant. The new museum shop will be open for the Antiques Show.

Located on Route 1 in Chadds Ford, the Brandywine River Museum is open daily throughout the year (except Christmas) from 9:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., with hours extended to 8 p.m.



Sign of the Times

This commercial sign depicting the office of a veterinary surgeon is one of 40 examples of 19th and 20th century trade & tavern signs on display at the Brandywine River Museum.