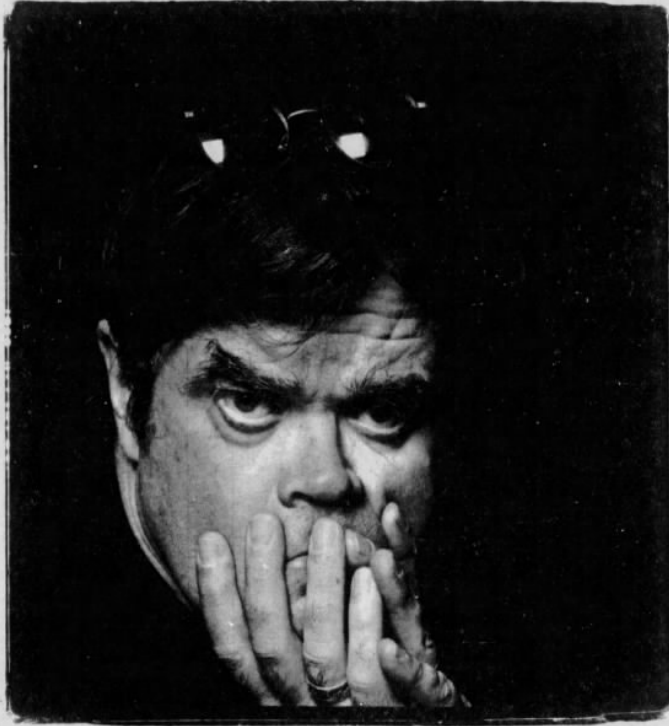


'HOME' VISIT

Garrison Keillor is said to write virtually all of his weekly national radio show, *A Prairie Home Companion*— and rewrite it right up until deadline. The humorist, author and singer appears to be pondering that approaching deadline for Saturday's show at Blossom Music Center to help celebrate the 50th anniversary of WKSU (89.7-FM). The broadcast begins at 6 p.m.



*The show's at Blossom:
That's some of the news
from Lake Wobegon*

By Jim Quire
Beacon Journal staff writer

It's been a hectic week in Lake Wobegon. The lunch crowd at the Chatterbox Cafe, the Norwegian bachelor farmers and the whole gang down at the Sidetrack Tap had to join the rest of the fictional inhabitants of the mythical town and prepare for a long trip.

Because their real residence is somewhere between the ears of their creator, Garrison Keillor, they have no choice but to drop everything and travel with him to Blossom Music Center on Saturday for another chapter of the story about the town of strong women, good-looking men and above-average children.

"Have you been on an airplane lately?" asks Christine Tschida, the nonfictional Minnesotan who produces Keillor's weekly radio show, *A Prairie Home Companion*. Tschida said the show goes on the road about a dozen times a year and the toughest part is uprooting the cast and crew—about 20 people—for long flights and airline delays.

"It's grueling to travel, but once we get to the theater, we're in our own little cocoon and can feel comfortable, whatever city we are in," Tschida said. "It's worth it, because when you travel, you find some unique things you wouldn't experience otherwise. It gives us a chance to experience other audiences."

It also gives audiences a chance to see how Tschida (pronounced Chee-da) and the cast stage a radio show that has been heard by millions of people, but is usually viewed only by folks at its normal venue, the Fitzgerald Theater in St. Paul.

What they'll see is a stage decorated with signs from the show's mythical sponsors, including the likes of the

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Details

Event: Garrison Keillor's *A Prairie Home Companion*
Where: Blossom Music Center, 1145 W. Steels Corners Road, Cuyahoga Falls
When: 6 p.m. Saturday
Cost: \$19.50, lawn (pavilion sold out). Tickets can be ordered from Ticketmaster at 330-945-9400 or 216-241-5555 or from ticketmaster.com on the Internet
Information: 330-920-8040.
Radio: Two-hour show will be broadcast live on WKSU (89.7-FM) and rebroadcast at 1 p.m. July 1



Live crowd tunes in early

By Regina Stone
Beacon Journal staff writer

If you are going to be late to Garrison Keillor's live broadcast at Blossom Music Center on Saturday, plan on wearing soft shoes.

You'll have to tiptoe in.

"Inevitably, there are going to be people who come in late. . . . We will try to seat them as quietly as possible," said Peter Karas, president of Karas

Production Co. of Peninsula. The company has been hired to oversee engineering of the show.

Latecomers to Keillor's last Blossom show in 1997 missed the most exciting part. Keillor walked out onto the lawn and serenaded people lying on blankets, said Bob Burford, public relations director for WKSU (89.7-FM).

Burford said those fans got a chance to see and hear what the radio audience couldn't.

Keillor fans are encouraged to arrive early. The gates open at 4 p.m. and the preshow starts at 5:45. The two-hour

Please see **Tune, C10**

Dan Camburn's portrayal of Sir beaconjournal.com.

Show

Keillor to recognize WKSU for its 50 years

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American Duct Tape Council, Powdermilk Biscuits and Bertha's Kitty Boutique.

They'll also see that in real life, Keillor is a lot taller than he seems on the radio and that sound effects guru Tom Keith creates most of his sounds using nothing but his mouth.

Tschida said one advantage of taking the show on the road is that it gives her a chance to book performers who aren't necessarily interested in traveling to St. Paul. In this case, bluesman Robert Lockwood Jr. will perform along with the show's regular musicians, the Guy's All-Star Shoe Band.

Also scheduled for the show is Walt Clarke, 90. Clarke happens to be the person who built WKSU-FM and was its first general manager. At the time, WKSU was a college-sponsored station given one of the broadcast licenses the federal government reserved for noncommercial, "educational" radio stations. The station's role changed after the creation of the Corporation for Public Broadcasting

in the 1970s; WKSU became affiliated with National Public Radio in 1974.

Bob Burford, public relations director for WKSU, said the station is sponsoring Keillor's show to celebrate WKSU's 50th anniversary. "We asked him (Keillor) to make a reference to the anniversary to the live audience at Blossom," Burford said.

Instead, Keillor asked for Clarke to appear on the nationally broadcast show. The two men share a common interest in old-time radio, Burford said.

Listeners can expect Keillor to add some regional flavor to this show's humor, Tschida said. Locals may remember that when the *Prairie Home Companion* broadcast from Blossom on June 7, 1997, he included information about Akron's downtown and that when he staged his show at the Akron Civic Theatre on Dec. 8, 1990, a highlight was his rewrite of the Beach Boys' tune *Help Me Rhonda* into *Why Akron?*, with lyrics about his decision to visit the former Rubber City.

Tschida said she expects the same kind of comedy this time, even though she has no idea yet what Keillor will say. She said he writes almost the entire show and he doesn't usually finish it and give it to the cast until the day before the broadcast.

Tune

'Prairie Home' making third visit to the area

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radio broadcast begins at 6.

At most programs, Blossom brings in the performers. For this show, WKSU, a National Public Radio affiliate, rented Blossom and asked Keillor back.

Karas said Keillor's show is a "little different than most shows to put together."

Don't confuse different with complex.

"Keillor's show is probably a lot simpler to put together than most concerts," Karas said.

A *Prairie Home Companion* doesn't call for any special effects, and it is broadcast to 470 radio stations across the country. The show has 2.7 million listeners.

"When he came to Blossom in 1997, he performed to his then largest crowd of over 8,200 fans," Burford said.

Keillor goes on the road only about 12 times a year. This will be his third appearance in the area.