

Bugs, riot fodder for Keillor's humor

By Muneera Naseer
Journal and Courier

Lillian Bacher, of Normal, Ill., thought she would have to trek to Minnesota to see the creator of the radio show she listens to weekly, *A Prairie Home Companion*.

But Saturday, Bacher only had to drive 2½ hours to Purdue University to see Garrison Keillor star in a live broadcast of his show in a sold-out Elliott Hall of Music.

Nearly 6,000 people came to see Keillor, known for his

comic sketches, musical scores and rambling stories about life in the fictional town of Lake Wobegon, "...where all the children are above average."

Purdue wasn't spared from Keillor's wit as he joked about the university's annual Bug Bowl, the Purdue women's loss to Notre Dame in the NCAA basketball championship game a week ago tonight, and the campus riot that followed.

"I'm a Democrat," he said.

"I know what it's like to lose. It's painful. After the presidential elections, I would have gone out and burned some Dumpsters too, overturned some cars. But by the time the results were in..."

Prior to his monologue, Keillor walked up to the audience and asked them to sing the Indiana state song, which he described as "one of the few state songs that has vegetation."

"Is this the long-term memory loss aisle?" he said

after prodding a few people to sing with him.

His silence, too, invoked laughter, especially when Tom Turpin, professor of entomology, came on stage with a bowl of giant cockroaches.

When Keillor asked about the roaches, Turpin squeezed their bellies, and the roaches made a hissing sound. Keillor was momentarily speechless.

"There's not a lot to do in Indiana this time of the year," Turpin responded.

On the Air

A Prairie Home Companion airs 3 p.m. today on WBAA 920-AM.

The show's other guests included the Purdue Shaker Chime Ensemble and the Purdue Varsity Glee Club.

Keillor poked fun at the lack of social life for Purdue's engineering students. He sang a song that went: "There is now a course called Romance for Engineers, too. It covers friendship and use of your lips. And after that, it's up to you."



By Frank Oliver/Journal and Courier
LIVE FROM PURDUE: Garrison Keillor and his *Prairie Home Companion* made a stop Saturday.