

ASHEVILLE CITIZEN-TIMES

KEILLOR: Fans came from miles away for show

Continued from A1

The show had an old-time feel, with the band staying onstage and a floor-to-ceiling banner hanging behind that read "Rhubarb."

During the show, Keillor talked about looking down at the Thomas Wolfe house the night before from his hotel room at the Renaissance and thinking of how the author portrayed the home in his novel "Look Homeward Angel."

He thought of the house as a prison, Keillor said, "But of course teenagers have always felt that way."

The audience was enthusiastic, whooping and laughing and clapping along to the Powdermilk Biscuit song. The show sold out in less than four days, said Michelle Keenan, director of listener support and audience services for WCQS. The event is a fund-raiser for the station. A capital campaign is under way to put five new translators in Western North Carolina, including Bryson City, southern Henderson County and Black Mountain, said Uri Neren, capital campaign coordinator.

The show will make other stops in South Carolina and Florida and then arrive in Spartanburg, S.C., on Saturday for a live, national broadcast.

Contact Ingram at 232-5864 or
JIngram@CITIZEN-TIMES.com.

Keillor's Rhubarb Tour brings 'Prairie Home Companion' humor to Asheville

By Jill Ingram
STAFF WRITER

ASHEVILLE — Direct from Minnesota and brought to you by Powdermilk Biscuits and the American Duct Tape Council, radio host Garrison Keillor and his "Prairie Home Companion" gang made their first stop in Asheville on Monday night.

Keillor brought his variety show to downtown's Thomas Wolfe Auditorium, treating the enthusiastic crowd of more than 2,400 to monologues, jokes, songs and skits. He poked fun at Asheville as a place of tattoo artists, guitarists and vegetarians driving VW vans with Howard Dean stickers.

"Santa Fe is advertising itself as the Asheville of the Southwest," he said.

Web Extra
CITIZEN-TIMES.COM

Log on to CITIZEN-TIMES.COM for a photo gallery of Monday's Rhubarb Tour show in Asheville.

The show, with its gentle, romantic humor, attracted families, sometimes two and three generations of them.

Betsy Browning, 33, of Asheville, attended the show with her fiancé, parents and brother and his wife. Her mom had given everyone the tickets for Christmas. She grew up listening to Keillor's show, she said.

"When we took road trips we used to listen to him a

lot," she said.

And after years of listening, a lot of people wanted to put a face with a name.

"It paints a picture of what you listen to," said Larry Nebles, 42, of Greenville, S.C., who drove to the show with his wife, Christa, 35. "You want to see what it is you listen to. It fills in the colors." The couple said they came to Asheville after unsuccessfully trying to get tickets to performances in Florida and Spartanburg and Charleston, S.C.

What fans saw Monday was Keillor, a tall man with glasses and disheveled hair, wearing a dark suit, red tie, red socks and a baseball cap. They saw him pacing, gesturing, clapping and nodding his way through songs and



John Fletcher/STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Garrison Keillor, host of "A Prairie Home Companion," and sound effects man Fred Newman perform a skit Monday during their show's stop at the Thomas Wolfe Auditorium in Asheville.

skits. With Keillor onstage were sound-effects man Fred Newman, mandolin and fid-

dle player Sam Bush, pianist Rich Dworsky, guitarist Pat Donohue and dobro player

On the radio

Monday's show was not for national broadcast, but public radio station WCQS-FM 88.1 plans to air the show later.

Cindy Cashdollar:

The show was part of "A Prairie Home Companion's" Rhubarb Tour, stops at smaller venues that aren't scheduled for national broadcast. The format varied somewhat from the shows intended for broadcast. Keillor performed songs interspersed with monologues for most of the first hour, including a few duets with Bush.

Please see **KEILLOR** on A4