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Fashion-Incubator

Lessons from the Sustainable Factory Floor

Live from Las Cruces, it's a Prairie Home Companion!

JUNE 2, 2008

13.

Did any of you faithful National Public Radio listeners catch Saturday's live broadcast of a Prairie Home Companion from Las Cruces? I forgot to mention it beforehand but it wasn't something yours truly was going to miss. I've never attended a live broadcast and have been very curious what goes on behind the scenes. We got tickets on the floor in the third row. Eric thinks it would have been better in row 10 but I don't see very well anymore so I didn't mind having to look up.



The title of the episode is "Red or Green" in reference to our state's official question (what color chile do you want). If you want to hear the whole show, that's [here](http://prairiehome.publicradio.org/programs/2008/05/31/) (<http://prairiehome.publicradio.org/programs/2008/05/31/>). I don't have the right player for it so I can't listen to it.

It really is live, no time delay at all. Right at 4:00 PM, that “On Air” sign lit up. For the ten minutes previous to that, Garrison Keillor walked amongst the stands leading everyone through choruses of “Home On the Range”, followed by two verses of “America the Beautiful”. I was hoping for the third and fourth verses which I know since my fourth grade teacher in Germany (Mr. Bruhn) made us learn *all* of the verses to U.S. patriotic songs, in addition to the Gettysburg Address. Here’s a photo of the stage.



The featured artists were mandolin player Chris Thile of [Nickle Creek](http://nickelcreek.com/) (<http://nickelcreek.com/>), named BBC’s Musician Of The Year (2007) and Joe Ely, a local Austin favorite. He brought an amazing accordianist, Joel Guzman. This was in addition to the All Star Shoe Band (naturally). There was also a harmonizing duo, two girls from Albuquerque called “Sorela” and Prudence Johnson who wore a dress I wanted to take a picture of because (in my opinion) it wasn’t cut correctly and I was going to post the correction for it but she didn’t go to the after party so I couldn’t get a photo. Bummer that. It had a side zipper and a nicely shaped full back neck facing (acting as a stay over the shoulder to the armholes being sleeveless) so it wasn’t a cheap dress.

Of all the stars, the one I most looked forward to seeing was [Sue Scott](http://prairiehomevoices.com/) (<http://prairiehomevoices.com/>). No photo because she didn’t go to the after party either. She’s blond, late thirties and weighs all of 90 lbs (the collar of her jacket was almost bigger than she was). She’s the woman who plays opposite Guy Noir (or whatever) and often plays the role of a dried up old hag who smokes four packs of Camels a day. Other than her traditional role opposite Guy Noir, she did a 10 page skit of guilt-mommy. It was quite amazing. Never missed a beat. Held the sheets in her hand and dropped them as she finished reading the lines. It’s funny to watch the skits. Garrison will make faces or gestures at the others as they perform, either to egg them on or in an attempt to get them to trip up by laughing or missing their lines. I was curious as to what kind of star she was; before she left the stage, she got on her hands and knees and picked up all those sheets of paper she dropped. That’s a class act. I guess her dad lives in Cruces or at least close enough to drive here. She went off with him after the show. I can only imagine how tiring it would be to have to go to after parties in every town and mingle with locals who paid the big bucks to attend.

My favorite performer ended up being the sound effects guy, [Fred Newman](http://prairiehome.publicradio.org/about/cast/fred_newman.shtml) (http://prairiehome.publicradio.org/about/cast/fred_newman.shtml). Here’s a photo of him with Eric. He is much younger than he appears. His hair (the best in the room, in my opinion) went white before he was thirty.



Fred is downright certifiable. He performs with shoes tied around his neck, sandpaper affixed to the soles. At his feet is a box full of an odd collection of noise makers, a repertoire of soda cans, polystyrene plates, paper cups, key chains and who knows what else. What was funniest about his performance isn't obvious over the radio. Garrison Keillor is in his face egging him on saying "a big dog" (Fred woofs) but it's not enough because Garrison then says "a *really* big dog" (bigger woof from Fred) and finally, "a really really BIG dog" for which Fred drags out the big guns -or woofs. Fred got his start the least obvious way possible, graduating with an MBA from Harvard. He also wrote a [book \(http://prairiehome.publicradio.org/about/cast/fred_newman.shtml\)](http://prairiehome.publicradio.org/about/cast/fred_newman.shtml). I guess he's the point person for noise effects, he had a crowd of groupies around him at the party. He had an interesting tip for Eric. He says that when you're having your picture taken with a famous person, you should point to their chest. That way they can't crop you from the photo. The guffaw below is staged but looks pretty good (Fred's idea).



Fred said Las Cruces was a great audience, that in some places people don't respond well to them. Based on response is whether they do additional improv (the Republican joke wasn't in the script). Well of course they were

going to say we were a good audience. It wouldn't do to say we were awful!

Oh, the way they make the sound effect of talking on the phone is by placing a 6oz styrofoam cup halfway between their mouths and the microphone (cup faces the microphone).

Below is a photo of me flirting with my favorite KRWG host, Carrie Hamblin. I'm going to be interviewed for a local segment soon.



See my Amy Downs hat? It was a hit, I got a lot of compliments on it. I even wore my pearls. I never dress up. I had to pick out an outfit just to match my hat. I didn't have anything but luckily, we'd been to my (ex) step mother's house in El Paso earlier in the day to fix her air conditioner and I got some clothes she didn't want anymore. That was scary. That I'd actually want some of her clothes I mean. I guess I'm getting old. Even ten years ago I wouldn't have worn anything she'd buy. She has always been a clothes horse. I'd forgotten that she spent a lot of time shopping for clothes. I spent as much time sewing as she spent shopping. I made her take back some of the items, the plaid pants with matched seaming all around and pockets too. I told her they (we) don't make those anymore and she'd regret giving them away. Anyway, I picked up several new if not nearly new outfits. I'll have to visit her more often!

Here's a photo of Eric with Chris Thile, the mandolin player. He lives in New York now. He's quite talented. I love mandolins anyway. I'll have to pick up his newest CD. Eric is wearing his wooden Frida Kahlo tie that we got in Mexico City last January. His tie was also a hit. First and probably only time he'll wear it.



And of course, here's the obligatory photo with the star himself, Garrison Keillor. Garrison loved Eric's tie. You can see he's holding it in the photo. Notice that Eric is jokingly following Fred's tip of pointing at his chest. As if I'd crop him from the photo.



Well, that's all for this edition of the performing arts on Fashion-Incubator. I guess most blogs cover real musicians and performers. Sorry, around here the closest you'll get is whatever is on NPR which is all I listen to in spite of my dad who says they're a bunch of communists with a Marxist socialist agenda. You can listen to the segment [here \(http://prairiehome.publicradio.org/programs/2008/05/31/\)](http://prairiehome.publicradio.org/programs/2008/05/31/).

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by [Kathleen Fasanella](#)

Kathleen started production patternmaking in 1981. Starting in 1993, she began providing consulting and engineering services to manufacturers, small companies, and startups with an emphasis on developing owner-operator domestic cut-and-sew operations. In 2015 she opened a 5,000 sqft. fully equipped sewing factory: The Sewing Factory School. Kathleen is the author of *The Entrepreneur's Guide to Sewn Product Manufacturing*, the most highly rated book of any topic in the garment industry. She's been mentioned numerous times in the *New York Times*, *Wall Street Journal*, *Forbes*, *National Public Radio*, *Boston Globe*, *LA Times*, *Vogue*, *French Vogue* and has at least 15 *Project Runway* alums at last count. Kathleen writes nearly all of the articles on *Fashion-Incubator.com* and hosts its forum, the largest private online community for apparel manufacturers on the web.

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13 comments



[June 2, 2008 at 1:57 PM](#)

Josh says:

OMG I love your hat! You don't how much I love *Prairie Home Companion*. Have you seen the movie about the show starring Meryl Streep and Lindsey Lohan? It was a good movie. I hadn't listened to the show in a while, I was under the impression they didn't do it anymore.

[Reply](#)

[June 2, 2008 at 2:58 PM](#)



Karen C says:

What fun, to see PHC live. I'm a big fan.

But just love the Frieda tie, Eric!

[Reply](#)



June 2, 2008 at 4:02 PM

Marguerite Swope says:

Thanks for the report. I got an email from a high school friend (good old LCHS) telling us all to listen to it because Keillor made an announcement for my friend's daughter at the beginning of the second hour. Last time I was in the Pan Am Center was to hear Bill Cosby and that was a REALLY REALLY long time ago, really long.

So you were my second reminder today of this show. I also only listen to NPR, but I didn't get the heads up on this show in time (don't listen to it every week). I'll go listen.

Marguerite

[Reply](#)



June 2, 2008 at 5:34 PM

LisaB says:

I'd love to see this show in person. I once saw From the Top in person and recently saw the Grand Ole Opry show. Being a radio person and not a TV person, I love seeing how they do everything!

Eric and you look terrific! I'm glad you had the chance to attend.

[Reply](#)



June 2, 2008 at 6:54 PM

Lisa says:

Nice write up about your PHC evening. I haven't been to see their show, but have been to see the Capital Steps perform live. (They usually do a political program, Politics takes a Holiday) I couldn't hear all the script because of the audience laughter! Did you have that problem? It was lots of fun however.

I do love his tie. If he doesn't want to wear it – I would! Your hat would look great at the Kentucky Derby.

[Reply](#)



June 2, 2008 at 7:06 PM

[Eric H](#) says:

This was, in fact, the second time I have worn it. The other was on the way back to the hotel from buying it. It really is a pretty cool tie.

[Reply](#)



June 2, 2008 at 7:30 PM

[BenO](#) says:

What a wonderful experience!! I saw the 'Rubarb Tour' a couple years ago and loved it. Thank you for sharing this.

[Reply](#)



June 2, 2008 at 8:52 PM

Birgitte Mutrux says:

Your hat is now officially THE hat and must be worn on all special occasions. Same goes for Eric's tie. Looks like this was an overall success :-)

[Reply](#)

June 3, 2008 at 6:05 AM

colleen says:

After party?! What after party? I just saw PHC in Bangor, Maine, in early May. The show was great (I purchased the tickets in August '07 for the May '08 show). If only I had known about the after party...

Back in the day, when Lands' End sponsored PHC, Garrison traveled to Dodgeville, WI, (LE HQ) once a year to give a one-man show for the employees. What a treat! Prior to living in WI, I thought his Lake Wobegon stories were fiction. Once there, though, I grew to appreciate the Lutheran, midwest penchant for understatement. And, my all-time favorite neighbor was a Norwegian bachelor farmer named Bob.

[Reply](#)

[June 3, 2008 at 1:23 PM](#)

[deirdre](#) says:

I really enjoyed reading this. Thank you!

I got to attend a taping of the [David Dye](#) show. It was wonderful.

I'd love to see a Prairie Home Companion, but I don't think they tape in East Nowhere by the Sea, which is just about where I live.

[Reply](#)

[June 6, 2008 at 10:08 AM](#)

Lesley says:

Love the show and heard it all. Wish I could see them perform. My mom and I laughed and laughed at the mother guilt trip, since my mom had to admit she has it down pat, only her alternative has always been to find Dr. Kevorkian. It was so much more self-reliant to simply walk into the lake with weights on your feet. Ha ha!

[Reply](#)

[June 7, 2008 at 12:33 AM](#)

[Kevin Carson](#) says:

Glad to know you're both PHC fans. Listening to them in my truck, during lunch breaks on Sunday afternoon, used to be a ritual for me—until the radio went out in my truck. I still reread Lake Wobegon Days every year or so.

[Reply](#)

[June 23, 2008 at 3:44 PM](#)

Helen (not Other) says:

!!! I am jealous. What a fun time!

[Reply](#)

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