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## A Staller home companion

Garrison Keillor goes solo at Stony Brook

**BY STEVE PARKS**  
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**1** Garrison Keillor, radio raconteur and host of "A Prairie Home Companion," takes the stage at Stony Brook University's Staller Center tonight.

He declined to enlighten us about what he's up to in his solo appearance, though we suspect he'll plug his latest Lake Wobegon novel, "Liberty." Here are a half-dozen enlightenments — things you may not know about GK.

**2** Although he rarely gives interviews (such as for this story), Keillor does answer questions from fans of "A Prairie Home Companion." Here's one from a young mother: "Do you offer internships in sound effects? [My daughter] is 18 months old and does a pretty good fish and a mean chicken." GK replied: "I've heard all sorts of ploys to get free baby-sitting. . . ." He went on to advise that the little girl study math.

**3** Keillor was an advice columnist for Salon.com, under the name Mr. Blue. He gave it up in a posting one week before 9/11, after heart surgery that summer.

**4** Keillor has been married thrice, including currently to violinist Jenny Lind Nilsson, with whom he has a daughter. He encountered, or rather re-encountered, his second wife-to-be, Ulla Skaerved, at a high school reunion. She attended his school as an exchange student from Denmark. Keillor has a son by his first wife, Mary Guntzel.

**5** His "Lake Wobegon" monologue is not credited to Keillor, nor is his name heard on "Prairie Home" unless a guest mentions it. Keillor rarely reads his monologue from a script. Usually it's delivered more or less extemporaneously from notes.

**6** Keillor, who splits his time between St. Paul, Minn., where his show is broadcast, and Manhattan's Upper West Side, was the first recipient of the Moth Award, presented last year by The Moth, a New York City not-for-profit storytelling organization. The award honors "the art of the raconteur."

**7** Don't be surprised if he gets political. Keillor endorsed Democrat Barack Obama for president in February. In 2006, he got into a controversy during a visit to the United Methodist Church in Highland Park, Texas, for suggesting a connection between his audience and proponents of torture. He'd been warned by security guards that "this is Bush's church and that it would be better if I didn't talk about politics." He did, of course.

**8** Also this: The worst joke ever, as heard in "A Prairie Home Companion," the movie: "Why do horses make lousy philosophers?" "Because you can't put Descartes before the horse."

**WHAT** Garrison Keillor

**WHEN | WHERE** Tonight at 8, Staller Center, Stony Brook University

**INFO** Sold out

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