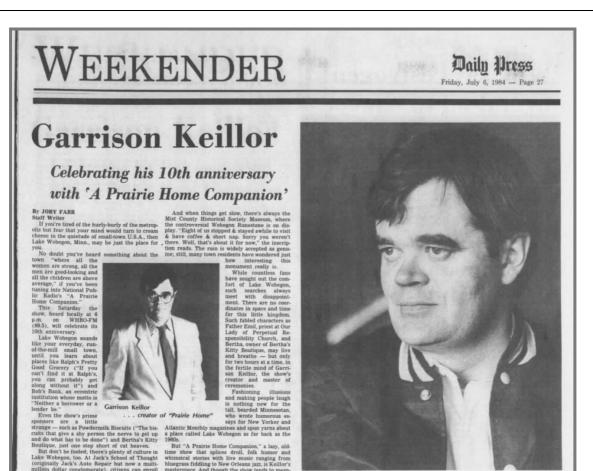
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eillor

lines, the program has grown steadily more popular. Since its beginning, the show hasn't changed much, except that Lake Wobegon has become that Lake Wobegon has become more real in the minds of listen-ers, and the show has added more musical entertainment. Keillor still delivers the news from Lake Wobegon for up to 30

from Lake Wobegon for up to 30 minutes, working only with a sketchy script. "If I read it and made a mistake, people would know instantly," he says.

His voice is still a cozy, molasses-smooth instrument that has been described as "sexy" by more than a few female listeners.

ers.

But nowadays, "A Prairie
Home Companion" goes out over
235 stations to an estimated 3
million listeners — a far cry
from the times when the show
was broadcast live from a 440seat theater in St. Paul where 20
to 30 people showed up.
What's more, the program —
now broadcast from the old
World Theater in downtown St.

now broadcast from the old World Theater in downtown St. Paul — has brought Minnesota much fame and turned the Minnesota Public Radio into something of a direct competitor with National Public Radio. In short, Keillor's show has become a huge cult success.

All the notoriety has left Keillor, who says he is painfully shy (he founded the Shy Liberation Movement) a bit befuddled, albeit delighted. The recipient of more than 100 letters a day, he knows that boatloads of folks

he knows that boatloads of folks listen to his campy, twisting sto-ries. But he is quick to point out that people often misinterpret the meaning of the program.

So recently he and a few members of his crew held a radio press conference for the benefit of member stations who might want to know more about the show and its creator. What follows are some facts and bits of trivia that Lake Wobegon ad-mirers should know. A warning, however: Like all information about the strange town that time forgot, this should be taken with a grain of salt.

Q: Why don't they sell dogs at Bertha's Kitty Boutique?

GK: Well, dogs are common nothing you'd have to charge for. You only need to go to the lower end of town to know that But the kinds of cats Bertha sells are rare. Even Bertha's cemetery only allows cats."

Q: Any thoughts about how



Keillor (center) clowns onstage with some of his guests on "A Prairie Home Companion."

the show might evolve in the coming years?

GK: No, I don't have any

Q: What do you normally eat for breakfast? GK: A little whole wheat toast holds me most of the time.

GK: A little whole wheat toast holds me most of the time.

Q: What is the secret ingredient of Powdermilk Biscuits?

GK: Mostly the whole wheat grown by Norwegian bachelor farmers. There's also some of the wheat stalk in the recipe, and a little dirt, too.

Q: What's the role of religion in your life?

GK: I go every Sunday.

Q: What's the status of the Shy Liberation Movement?

GK: Well, the Shy Liberation movement is about where it's always been: In a state of waiting quietly in the back shadows for someone to step forward and take charge. Which probably isn't going to be any one of us here. So if you are volunteering to be a national executive director, someone who is willing to be contacted by the press, then you should speak up and say so now.

Q: What do you think has contributed most to the show's success and longevity?

GK: Well, we do the show

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Q: What kind of beer do they serve at the Sidetrack Tap in Lake Wobegon?

GK: They serve all the Minnesota beers. There's Iron Range beer, which is made from the copper-colored waters up there in the iron country. One bottle would be the minimum annual adult requirement for iron, practically. There's also a new beer they've gotten in — although I don't so much care for it. It's called Greenwald Mentholated Light. It's green-ish, and some people have had it there because the light is dim. But I don't like it much.

Q: What do you have planned for the 10th Anniversary Show?

GK: I'm still working on it downstairs. But early this morn-ing I did write what I consider to be — and I say this with all modesty — the world's greatst song about fishing. So that'll be song about fishing. So that'il be in the show. There'll be a med-ley of great tunes, and somehow-we'll be able to move and dance a bit onstage with the Night Ar-rest Motel Orchestra and Dancers. It's going to be a great show. I think it's safe to say that this will be the greatest show in the history of radio."

