

'Prairie Home' goes to Red Wing

By GARY RADLOFF
Winona Daily News

RED WING, Minn. — Garrison Keillor, host of "Prairie Home Companion," the popular weekly public radio show, rose to fame with his folksy tales of the imaginary small town, Lake Wobegon, Minn. But how would it play in Red Wing?

For the next six weeks, Red Wing's T.B. Sheldon Auditorium will be the "summer vacation home" for the two-hour live radio show.

Saturday was opening night and Keillor told the crowd he knew he couldn't get by in Red Wing with a couple stories about small towns.

"You've got enough small town stories of your own here."

But he won them over with his small town stories of Lake Wobegon.

The show is a mix of musical en-

tertainment, ranging from Spanish guitarists to New Orleans jazz, commercials that turn into humorous skits and, of course, Keillor's stories about Lake Wobegon.

Keillor says inspiration for "Prairie Home Companion" comes from the original "Grand Old Opry" radio shows that carried over the airwaves in the decades before the TV generation took over.

Borrowing from his predecessors, Keillor interweaves ads for products, all which are made up. "Whole-wheat goodness that gives the shy persons the strength to get up and do what needs to be done," goes the pitch for Powdermilk Biscuits.

Or there is Ralph's Pretty Good Grocery ... Remember, if you can't find it at Ralph's, you can probably get along without it.

One of Saturday night's highlights was the offer for the cassette tape and guide book for the Minnesota

Language System. In essence the saying "You Bet" was the blanket reply for most statements. In any other situation the typical Minnesotan says "That's different." The final pitch for the lessons was "Why take a chance of sounding like a stranger."

Keillor has been called America's favorite storyteller. But he doesn't strictly rely on a nostalgic imitation of radio's yesteryear. His stories are clever, witty and always entertaining.

He told a long story about a Lake Wobegon class of 1960 reunion. When describing the high school yearbook photo of the basketball team, it was "Guys with hair cuts you just don't see anymore ... except maybe now on girls."

Or one of the mock commercial breaks for "Pork Brand Shoes," the

Continued on Page 4
'Prairie Home'

'Prairie Home'

Continued from Page 1
official shoe of the space shuttle.
"They may squeak a little, but they
don't sweat."

Another character from Lake Wo-

Police report

Burglaries

WINONA

Saturday

Eva Savoy, 227 W. 2nd St., re-
ported that her room was entered
within the last several days, and

begon, Mr. Aucklander, came to
America to form the Norwegian
American Socialist Temperance
Suffrage Equals party. He was dis-
traught that people refefred to the
party as the nasty's.

Keillor usually likes to sing a
song or two during the evening. At
this show he sang a song about Red
Wing, which he crooned in the style
of Frank Sinatra. The arrangement
borrowed from "old blue eyes"
classics such as "My Way" and
"New York, New York."

"Prairie Home Companion" will
remain on the road until work is
completed at its normal St. Paul
home, Minnesota Public Radio.