

As- crank these things out."

Prairie

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son.

Jim Madison likes the show for its "homey" quality and says, "It reminds me of things that have happened in my life."

For Lavon Farris, "It's like listening to Grandpa tell stories."

Still another fan, Bill Cleary, listens to it as a hometown fan.

"I grew up right outside Lake Wobegon," he said.

But you don't have to be from Minnesota to feel at home with Garrison Keillor.

"It's like he's from every little town in America," observed Martin Bingham, suggesting that the news from Lake Wobegon could just as easily be broadcast from Grand Junction or wherever else you've ever lived.

Jeanne Finch, an advertising saleswoman, even likes the Prairie Home Companion commercials.

"The powdermilk biscuit ads are wonderful, and the ones for the Fear Monger's Shop," she said. "You can get something for every phobia."

For Deedee Mayer, KPRN station manager, the Prairie Home Companion broadcasts are special because they appeal to all ages and are as well-received in New York City as they are in Smalltown USA. For New Yorkers, the broadcasts are an escape from a fast-paced and complex life.

"I think he appeals to the longing in all of us for the simple life," Mayer said. "He really touches a cord in me because of the way he strips away the complications of life."

Keillor makes the incidents he describes common experiences and those common experiences bind us together, she said.

"I think he's the Will Rogers of our time. He is as clever and insightful in his comments on the human state as anyone I know."

In his final appearance, Keillor was both clown and moralist, mixing sometimes earthy tales with devout renditions of hymns. Generally, the 44-year-old writer and raconteur looked on the funny side of farewell.

In a three-part song set to the music of Handel, Keillor elaborated on the Minnesota method: Stand at the back door and say goodbye, then stand around the car and say goodbye, and finally get in the car, roll down the windows and say goodbye.

"I'm going to miss baseball, I'm going to miss barbecues, I'm going to miss 'The New York Times,'" he said. "After a while, I'll even miss USA Today."

"But mostly, I'll miss these songs, these great songs."

Until January, KPRN will fill the Prairie Home Companion time slots with old editions of the show, some of them never broadcast outside Minnesota. Since KPRN has been on the air less than three years, there are more than a decade's worth of shows that will be "new" to local listeners, Mayer said.