

loans this spring. fourth of the possible applicants.

Rush on for 'Prairie Home' seats

ST. PAUL (AP) — For the thousands of fans trying to get tickets for one of the last shows of "A Prairie Home Companion" at the World Theater, the box office manager has some advice: think creatively.

Audrey Gaard says tickets are not sold on a first-come, first-served basis. The process is subjective, and there's fierce competition among fans to be chosen.

"We thought of putting together a little booklet, just as an example of how people try to get tickets," she said as telephones rang constantly in the background. "A wedding anniversary, a birthday. That helps. We do like funny letters."

The box office received about 1,000 calls for ticket information during business hours Monday, two days after Keillor announced that his live radio show will close June 13. The Connection, a telephone service that also gives ticket information, received about 3,000 calls, Gaard said.

Members of Minnesota Public Radio, which produces the show, or members of public radio stations in other states get top priority for tickets, she says.

But others can get lucky. Gaard says a good poem accompanying a ticket order helps.

Someone who received tickets and good seats was a woman who listed 12 reasons why she should get front-row seats. Among the reasons were that she played the cello, loved cats and was a fan "before anybody knew of Garrison Keillor."

The World usually fills orders for groups of two or four before groups of six or eight, because there's less chance of smaller groups being split up in the theater, Gaard said. The theater gives preference to people who've tried for tickets several times without success, although priority also is given to loyal fans who've attended the show regularly.

Tickets are sold by mail order only, and Gaard encourages people to send letters with their checks listing optional dates. Tickets are sold a month in advance. For instance, the theater begins filling orders for all April shows on March 1, but selects recipients only from among those who order tickets during the two weeks before March 1.

In brief

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