

## Folksy wit Garrison Keillor brings homespun style to area

By Lila Misuraca  
Record-Journal staff

"I'll just sit and think real hard about what people want to hear," Garrison Keillor said when asked how he would prepare for his upcoming 19-city tour. He will be at the Oakdale Musical Theatre in Wallingford on July 7 at 6 p.m., appearing with his longtime friend, Chet Atkins.

Once on the stage, he confessed, "I'm very reluctant to leave. It's a terrible weakness. People find out sooner or later. I'll talk until I hear the jingle of car keys."

Transplanted from St. Paul, Minn., to New York City, Keillor is the host of the "American Radio Company of the Air" broadcast from Brooklyn and heard Saturdays on public radio. He also writes for the Atlantic and The New Yorker magazines.

For five years, he was the host and founder of "A Prairie Home Companion" heard Saturday nights on nearly

300 National Public Radio affiliate stations from 1982 to 1987. It won numerous honors, including the George Foster Peabody and Edward R. Murrow awards.

In 1985, he appeared on the cover of Time magazine, in recognition of his sensational success with his book "Lake Wobegon Days." It was on the New York Times best seller list for 44 weeks.

He won a Grammy for his recording of excerpts from "Lake Wobegon Days" and two awards for cable excellence. In 1987, he was named the "Best Music Host" for the Disney Channel production of "A Prairie Home Companion with Garrison Keillor," and in 1988 he was chosen "Outstanding Entertainment Host" for "A Prairie Home Companion: The 2nd Annual Farewell."

His most recent book, "We Are Still Married," was published in 1989.

In a recent telephone interview from his west side apartment in New

York City, Keillor contemplated leaving the city for his tour. He remarked that "New York is a wonderful city to leave and it will be wonderful to come back."

His Minnesota-based Prairie Home Companion show used to give lessons on how to speak Minnesotan. Keillor observed that "Minnesotans are too laconic. Persons who tell stories or who write can go with an understatement just so long before you have to run the risk of talking too long."

"I find New Yorkers very civil. They have to be, you know. However, if you go to a dinner party and sit next to someone, and you are boring, they will interrupt."

"Minnesotans, out of politeness, will endure all sorts of miseries, and you come out worse for it. I've observed that myself," he chuckled.

Claiming to be a shy person, Keillor said of show business, "These days, comedy has turned misogynistic and

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Garrison Keillor contemplates summer tour.

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cruel. Then there are those of us who work in a different section of town."

The Oakdale's theater-in-the-round interested him. But those of us who fear not seeing him from the front are assured that "I'll keep walking around the stage."

Soft and slow spoken, Keillor chooses his words very carefully, using some of his self-made cliches throughout his conversation.

"This is a family show," the Oakdale management assures us, thus the early showtime hour.

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