



## Where all the children ...

It was none other than Garrison Keillor on stage at the Mabel Tainter Theater on Wednesday night. Keillor was appearing at a benefit for Senator Alice Clausing. A full house enjoyed more than two hours of songs and humorous stories. It is the first time in many years that Keillor has appeared in the area. — Staff photos by Peg Zaemisch

# Garrison Keillor admits cheeseheadedness

By Peg Zaemisch  
News Editor

It was a political rally quite unlike any other.

A tall, angular man, wearing red socks, sauntered onto the darkened stage of the Mabel Tainter Memorial Theater on Wednesday evening. He perched on a stool and leaned forward and began to spin humorous yarns to a full house.

The predictable campaign yammerings were held in abeyance at this unusual event, which was a \$100 a seat fundraiser for the campaign of Senator Alice Clausing.

Clausing is facing Republican challenger Jay Griggs for the 10th Senate District seat.

A staunch Democrat, Garrison Keillor was doing his part to support Clausing, whom he said played a role in the preservation of peace near the "extreme eastern part of Minnesota."

"The issue she stood up for that truly won my heart was the Hastings International Airport," Keillor said. "Which had been proposed by the visionaries over in Minnesota, who were perhaps inspired by the success stories of the new Denver airport."

The controversial airport proposal continued to pop up over and over again for a decade of feasibility studies

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Garrison Keillor

and ad hoc committee reports, Keillor said.

"My house in the woods on the St. Croix River would have been within two miles off the north-south runway," Keillor said. "I might have had to move back to New York for some peace and quiet."

Keillor said "expensive government boondoggles" finally get built when its opponents wear out.

"But Alice Clausing is a fighter," Keillor said. "She did not wear out. She organized the Wisconsin opposition to that route, which required Minnesota to get approval from Wisconsin. It was one of the things that sank that project, and I am so grateful to her."

Keillor said the issue restored his faith in representative government.

"Some people have to be working on novels and they don't have time to go to meetings and those people are so grateful to those who do," Keillor said.

"Alice Clausing fought the good fight." Keillor is a highly acclaimed author

and the originator of public radio's Prairie Home Companion program.

Keillor, who has been Minnesotan-mostly, told the mixed crowd of Clausing backers and fellow politicians that he was "coming out" before God and everyone.

"I am finally admitting that I have moved to Wisconsin," Keillor said. "It has taken me some time to admit this and to admit I actually live in Alice Clausing's district."

Keillor told the crowd that he intended to give a political speech, but in Minnesota political parties were not chosen, but rather inherited.

"Back where I come from, there are certain lines to follow," Keillor said. "It's like churches. You are either Lutheran or Catholic and that's decided while your still a bead of sweat on your father's forehead."

Keillor said Minnesotans and Wisconsinites have a bond.

"We're northern people," Keillor said. "The weather has had an effect on our characters. We're basically

gloomy people. We enjoy being gloomy."

The harsh winters, Keillor said were Mother Nature's reminder to "get serious and remember that you don't have as much artistic potential as you thought."

"As northern people, we have serious matters to consider. Like jumper cables," he said. "You'd think we'd remember from year-to-year whether it is positive to positive or negative to positive. If we're wrong we know we can immediately go from a solid to a gaseous state."

Keillor typically regales in stories of a mythical (or mystical) town of Lake Wobegon and Wednesday night was no different.

With Halloween approaching in Lake Wobegon the children were beginning to work on costumes, Keillor said. The top choices were much the same as when he was a child — costumes relating to fear or death or destruction.

"In my town there were only a few kids who dressed as royalty," Keillor said. "Those who had mothers who were extremely proud of their sewing skills."

Most kids chose the time honored hobo costume or Count Dracula.

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