

'Companion' comes to prairie

By Stephen Buchholz
Journal Staff Writer

Garrison Keillor brought "A Prairie Home Companion" to Rapid City for two reasons.

First, he wanted to give South Dakota residents a chance to see the man who has been harassing the state for the past 25 years. Keillor tosses out the state's name during his Minnesota-based show whenever he needs a laugh, giving South Dakota the same reputation among entertainers as Peoria, Ill., another well-used laugh-getter.

Second, the "tax-and-spend Democrat" wanted to spend some time with West River's Republicans because the GOP is so much more fun than his party.

"They have a better time because they have no particular obligation to the truth," he said.

Keillor's live broadcast Saturday from Rushmore Plaza Civic Center was planted firmly in South Dakota. He used local musicians, covered the history of Rapid City in three minutes and sang a song to the farmers and ranchers having a tough time of it lately.



Keillor

He spent a good chunk of time at the beginning of the show making good fun of Rapid City's and the state's peculiarities.

Besides

China, he observed, South

Dakota is one of few governments that supports state-owned heavy industry, the state Cement Plant. Yugoslavia and East Germany have rid themselves of such things, but South Dakota seems

Review

determined to hang on to this slice of socialism, he said.

It didn't escape Keillor that South Dakota has more concealed-weapon permits than any state in the country or that Pennington County has the highest per capita in the state. That probably makes Rapid City the most heavily armed city in the United States. That makes people polite and keeps drivers from cutting you off, he said.

The Democrat in Keillor favors gun confiscation and has a plan to

See Keillor on page A2

Keillor: Dakota talent on stage

Continued from page A1

make Rapid Citians give up their weapons — computer V-chips that will render all guns useless at midnight Dec. 31. A second prong of the strategy is lacing the water supply with Prozac and tricking the most ardent gun owners into eating quiche.

"It's like kryptonite," he said.

The show had been reported to be sold out, but some tickets were being sold Saturday. There weren't many empty seats, if any, either on the theater floor or on the stage, where a few dozen people were seated. The set included a two-story house façade with a light on in the living room, several standing microphones and a table for sound-effects man Tom Keith. Keillor walked when he spoke to the crowd but stood at center stage during skits. Others came and went as their roles required.

Jesse Ventura, or actor Tim Russell playing the Minnesota governor, stopped in to talk about his trips to

the Sturgis motorcycle rally and "Jesse on the Rocks," the campaign to add Ventura's likeness to Mount Rushmore.

Mount Rushmore ranger "Parker Ranger" wasn't keen on the Ventura idea but did talk about other projects at the memorial. He said Mount Rushmore would be finished by 2027 after eight presidents, chosen by the Rapid City Council, are carved into the mountain riding ponies. Considering who is doing the selecting, it's not a surprise seven of the new carvings are of Republicans and one a Confederate.

Musical interludes were sprinkled between skits. The Cowboys, from the Black Hills, play every summer at Heritage Village in Custer. Saturday, they plucked a few of the cowboy songs that have gained them national attention.

Becky Schlegel and True Blue played some bluegrass and gospel tunes that earned them a spot at the Minnesota State Fair. The band re-

cently released a compact disc. Schlegel originally is from Kimball, but the band now is based in Minnesota.

After an intermission, Keillor sang a rewritten version of "Home on the Range" to reflect the show's location this week. The crowd joined in the chorus:

"Home, home on the Plains,"

"Here, in the grass we will lie,"

"When our day's work is done,"

"By the light of the sun,"

"As it sets in the blue prairie sky."

The show featured some of its best-known skits. A Ketchup Advisory Board spot described a biker gang gone good who reverted to their law-breaking ways after putting more ketchup in their diets. In "Lives of the Cowboys," the Break Wind Kid herded cattle from upwind and burned down a hotel in Rapid City after an incident in the kitchen of a saloon.

The show's finale was a weekly story from Lake Wobegon. The "Parable of the Deer" is too complex to summarize, but it included lesbian does, a buck stuffed with \$100 bills, a too-exuberant Lutheran woman, examples of how things change at home and in camp during hunting season and, as always, a happy ending.

That's fitting, because all left the theater with smiles on their faces.

The show will be rebroadcast at 11 a.m. today on South Dakota Public Radio, 89.3 FM.

DSU getting \$1 million for library

MITCHELL (AP) — Dakota Wesleyan University is getting \$1 million for its McGovern Library project.

The money is coming to the private college as part of the federal budget that is waiting for President Clinton's signature. The appropria-

tion is the largest amount received so far in a fund drive, said DWU President Jack Ewing.

The library will be named for former U.S. Sen. George McGovern. The Avon native graduated from and taught at DWU. McGovern was the Democratic nominee for president in 1972.

Lotteries