

An Ode to Wichita Life

Unidentified Couple Inspired Songwriter's Lyrics

By DON GRANGER
Staff Writer

You don't need a lifestyle to live in Wichita, Kansas.

That's the message a Wichita couple sent to Garrison Keillor, producer and host of "A Prairie Home Companion," the National Public Radio show that has attracted a fast-growing, fanatically loyal Saturday night audience.

Keillor, a humorist of many talents, doesn't remember the names of the Wichitans who sent the message — but he was moved to compose a song based on their rejection of modern, plastic living.

THE SONG'S final phrase sums up Keillor's low-key but joyous philosophy, the approach that has brought him national attention.

"I'll get the car fixed tomorrow and you give away all the stuff. Then we'll take our chances in Wichita, Kansas . . . where being in love is enough."

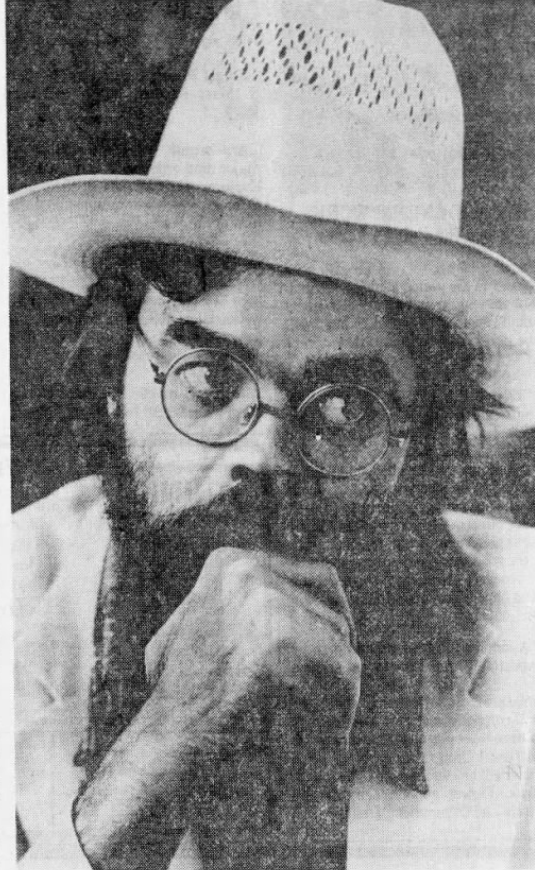
The song will be part of a program to be aired at 8 tonight by KHCC, 90.1 FM, Hutchinson Community College's public radio station.

The song about Wichita's livability, even without a lifestyle, was first broadcast live two weeks ago when Keillor and his "A Prairie Home Companion" was on its first national tour. The show originated that night at Georgetown University in Washington, D.C.

THE SONG WILL be repeated tonight in a special broadcast made by Keillor as a fund-raising effort by public radio stations. KHCC is one-third through a drive to raise \$30,000 for operating expenses.

Keillor is a low-profile type, even though nature gave him highly visible proportions. He is 6-foot-4 and weighs 225, and his lower face is consumed by a dense black beard. He has created a complete, fictitious community, Lake Wobegon, Minn., and his weekly show is devoted to reports from the town's businesses and churches, plus commercial messages for nonexistent products and music that varies among folk, country and ethnic.

PEOPLE WHO LIVE and function, after a fashion, in Lake Wobegon in-



HUMORIST GARRISON KEILLOR

. . . Producer, host of "A Prairie Home Companion"

clude Father Emil, of Our Lady of Perpetual Responsibility Church; Harold Star, publisher of the Lake Wobegon Harold Star; and Jack, who operates Jack's Auto Repair — "All Tracks Lead to Jack's."

The most frequent commercial messages are on behalf of Powder-milk Biscuits, a nonexistent product

with the slogan, "Heavens, they're tasty! And expeditious, too! Powder-milk Biscuits, the biscuits that give a shy person the nerve to get up and do what has to be done."

The commercials are marvelously convincing. The station in St. Paul gets calls from persons seeking the
(See WICHITANS, 3B, Col. 1)

Darling, We Don't Need A Lifestyle

Darling, let's turn off the tape deck;
let's dump our decor in the lake.
These imported chairs never fit me;

the Beta Max was a mistake.
I don't feel good about jogging
in these \$95 shoes.

I'm tired of this mustache, this
blow comb.

I feel like I'm in TV news.
I don't care if the guys down at the
factory wear Calvin Klein
work shirts and pants;
my rear end's too big for these
fashions, and the house is
too small for these plants.

Let's drain the water bed, darling;
and take back
those butcher block boards.
Let's cancel our New York sub-
scription, and head down
to Montgomery Wards.

Darling, we don't need a life-
style.

The amenities simply won't do.
I'm not a quality person —
I'm just an old guy who loves
you.

We don't have to try all the options,
or buy everything that we're
sold.

We can try to be 18 forever, but
we
don't learn to live 'til we're old.

I'm going to be 40 next summer,
with who knows how many to go.
And if I'm going to spend them in
costume; I want it to be my own
show

(Repeat refrain)

Well, we did our best to be mod-
ern.

We read all the books we could
read.

We turned our home into a ware-
house.

But, darling, that's not
what we need.

I'll get the car fixed tomorrow
and you give away all the stuff.
Then we'll take our chances in
Wichita, Kansas
where being in love is enough.

— Garrison Keillor
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