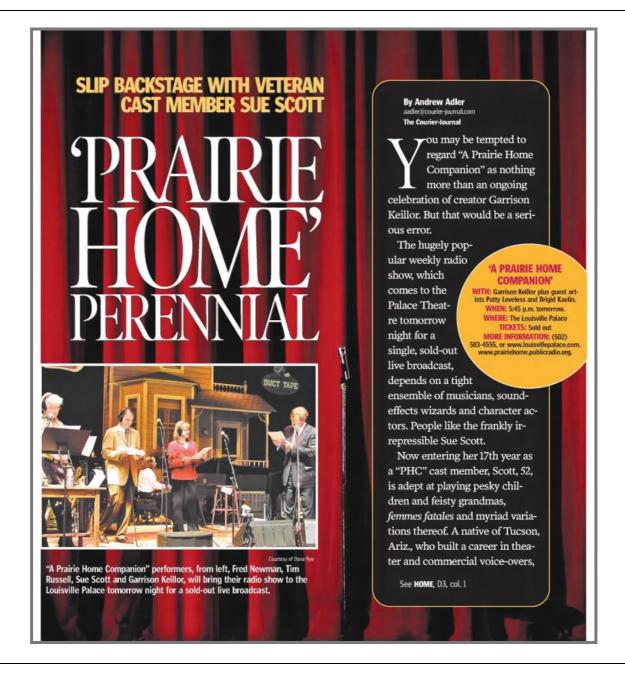
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## **'HOME'** Slip backstage

Continued from D1

she has an ear for the defining (and sometimes-arcane) elements that separate characters from caricatures.

acters from caricatures.

"Part of it is that I'm a mimic — I can mimic you if I know you," Scott said in a recent phone in the Minneapolis area, where the temperature stood at a delightful Il degrees below zero. "Once I get to know you, I can pick up personality traits and body language."

Indeed, while Scott isn't literally a voice impersonator (she cedes that particular expertise to her longtime "PHC" performing partner, Tim Russell), she prides herself at shaping complete alternate personas.

Take, for example, Hillary Clinton: "I was really concerned about sounding like her," Scott recalled, "but then I realized that if I pick up her patterns, her phrasing, her physical and vocal style, I was convincing people."

While calling herself "a card-carrying bleeding-heart liberal" — akin to Keillor's own oft-expressed perspective — Scott says that "PHC" doesn't get too wrapped up in politics. The show's appeal, evident from its humble beginnings in Minneapolis some 35 years ago, lies in its canny evocations of radio's Platinum Age.

Robert Altman's 2006 film treatment, which riffed on the notion of a "PHC" look-alike facing imminent demise—confirmed that the show had achieved iconic

American Public Media, which distributes "PHC," estimates that about 4 million listeners tune in each week to catch up on the adventures of Guy Noir and the doings from Lake Wobegon. An hourlong condensed version is heard in Britain, and "PHC's" marketing/merchandising has a reach that would do the New York Yankees proud.

Still, the show is fundamentally, unabashedly about old-fangled entertainment. And although it's a radio program, much of its appeal comes from the fact that it's performed live, in front of thousands of neonly

"We can't do it without an audience," Scott emphasized. "We are fed by the audience."

Keillor and staff writer Laura Buchholz flavor their scripts with local references, typically tweaking content until the day before a performance.

"Garrison is not a big proponent of lots and lots of rehearsal," Scott acknowledged. "He wants to write based on whatever is happening in pop culture or current events — to be very, very fresh."

Each year "PHC" does 33 or 34 shows, Scott says, including close to a dozen at Minneapolis' historic Fitzgerald Theatre and another seven or eight during an annual stop at New York City's Town Hall. "PHC" has toured widely across the U.S., often playing outdoors in warm-weather venues like the Holly wood Bowl—where the event sold about 17,000 of 18,000 available seats.

"Our staff was lamenting that we didn't sell out," Scott remembered, "and the Hollywood Bowl people were saying, 'We don't believe there are 17,000 people here to see a radio show."

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