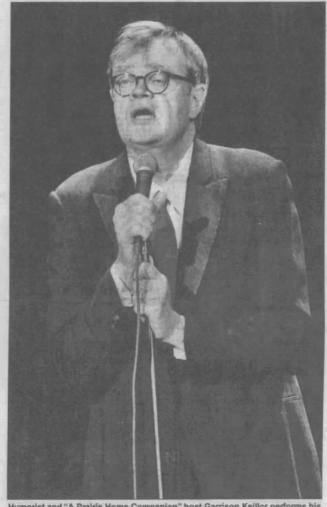
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Humorist and "A Prairie Home Companion" host Garrison Keillor performs his one-man show Wednesday for a sold-out Midland Theatre in Newark. (Eric George, The Advocate)

FOR ONE NIGHT, KEILLOR BECOMES

County's compani

Comedic yarn-spinner captivates Midland Theatre audience

By ABBEY ROY Advocate Reporter NEWARK — Garrison Keillor likely could have entertained an audience for hours with the pleasantly distinct, velvety voice that every kid wishes his dad would sound like, come time for a bedtime story.

But two hours that culmi-nated in Aunt Evelyn's ashes being carried away by her lover, Raul, who was wearing a coat made from the skins of a hundred rainbow trout, as Evelyn's grandson and 24 tipsy Lutheran pastors watched, was enough to keep The Midland Theatre rolling with laughter even as they

filed out into the night. Keillor, an author and radio broadcaster known for his "A Prairie Home Companion" radio series featuring sketches from Keillor's fictional home-town of Lake Wobegon, town of Lake Wobegon, Minn., brought a lively bit of Wobegon flavor to Newark on Wednesday in the sold-out appearance. Although the show was solely Keillor, his well-loved red tennis shoes and a harstool on o special

a barstool - no special

"My father believed if you could not see your breath when you talked, you were wasting fuel."

- Garrison Keillor

guests or broadcasts — Keillor drew from Wobe-gon and his own history to keep the audience smiling. The tales started out real-istically accords with Keil

istically enough with Keil-lor's account of Tuesday's inauguration of President Obama, which he attended

Obama's message of hope evolved into Bible-reading, then to cold Minnesota winters, when Keillor said he and his siblings retreated to the "little cotton en-velopes of our beds," foregoing showers because the cold was simply too excruciating.

See Keillor/10A

| can s a ear ney ray t to t a | "My father believed if you could not see your breath when you talked, you were wasting fuel," he explained. It got better, however, in the morning when the children would awaken to hot cereal, prayer time with their "dark Lutheran" parents and, finally, catch a sleigh down the frozen Mississippi River to school in the bowels of a torch-lit under- | Through vivid character descriptions he seemed to be envisioning as he leaned back in his stool, eyes closed, Keillor introduced players such as Aunt Evelyn and Uncle Jack, whose last words were spoken as he gripped a parking meter downtown and argued with a man called Mr. Bergey. That's not to mention Cousin Kate, who, according to the story, managed to pin Keillor down pantsless in the boys' rest- | on Lake Wobegon, with Starflower Moonbright as the officiant, until Debbie invited her ex-lover to participate in the ceremony by flying in on a hotair balloon. Somehow, each character was seamlessly woven into a plot that culminated in increasingly lengthy stretches of laughter by the audience. Whatever did happen to Aunt Evelyn's ashes inside the bowling ball? |
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| ic r- | ground cave. Keillor related all of this in a subdued yet alluring tone, rarely | room while she hid from an ad- ministrator who was mad at her for a suggestive talent show per- | Well, it's likely that only Raul knows. |
| i- n- of | cracking a smile at scenarios that required him to pause as the audience collected itself. | for a suggestive talent show per- formance. Or Debbie, who had planned to get married on a pontoon boat | Abbey Roy can be reached at (740) 328-8546 or amroy@newarkadvocate.com. |