

Obama calls in to bid Keillor farewell

Garrison Keillor signed off from “A Prairie Home Companion” for good on Saturday evening after 42 seasons, in a show recorded Friday in front of 18,000 people at the Hollywood Bowl.

A telephone call from **President Obama** was nearly the only thing to signal that the show wouldn’t just keep ambling along the way it always has (**Chris Thile** will take up the reins in the fall). There were pretty country-folk songs; an ad for Powdermilk Biscuits; a heartfelt version of “Every Time We Say Goodbye.”

The phone call was telling. The self-effacing Keillor refused to allow the conversation to be about himself. He praised Obama’s “dignity and wit and humor” and the fact he’d “never had an awkward moment in all these years.” When the president was finally allowed to speak about Keillor, he said, “One of the reasons I miss driving is that you kept me company.” “A Prairie Home Companion,” he said, “made me feel better and more human.” Keillor responded with awkward silence.

As his “Lake Wobegon” monologue neared its close, Keillor, 73, spoke about how he might be remembered, if at all. “I am at that age now where people start to use the word ‘legacy,’ although there is no such thing and we all know that,” he said. “Radio has the permanence of a sand castle.”

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