

things are my inspiration, and walking in the woods, she says.

people a chance to have them, she

'Prairie Home' show goes on the road



Garrison Keillor

Heather McGregor
Daily Sentinel

LARAMIE, Wyo. — Garrison Keillor is a shy man who says his religion is "a profound belief in the great silence of the world."
Every Saturday, however, Keillor charms the country with his radio variety show "A Prairie Home Companion." Many public radio listeners plan their weekends around the program.
The show, he told his audience in Laramie, is "the other side of show biz, people who write songs in the afternoon and do them in the evening."

Usually broadcast live every Saturday night from the World Theater in St. Paul, Minn., the show is touring the nation this fall while the theater is being restored.
A broadcast from the West, said Keillor, "is very romantic to some-

one listening in New York City, Chicago or Washington." From Laramie, the show will travel to Seattle, Honolulu and Los Angeles.
Keillor's "Prairie Home Companion" mixes an eclectic collection of live music, comedy and his 20-minute monologue, the news from mythical Lake Wobegon.
It's always been a quiet week in Lake Wobegon, yet the shy, lanky man manages to weave a heartwarming tale about his imaginary neighbors, reminiscent of the hometown we all wish we had.

"There's a point to make about small towns," he told reporters before his Friday evening show.

"I wish more people had a choice" about where to live, he said. "The economy tends to not care about people's feelings. It uproots people and moves them from place to place as the job mar-

ket dictates.

"But even as people live with portents and dangers, night thoughts and fears, life still goes on, in a large city or a small town.
"You can go home again," he added, "but they don't have to take you back."

This fall, Keillor is spending little time at Lake Wobegon. His new book, "Lake Wobegon Days," is the nation's No. 2 fiction bestseller and Keillor is on the cover of Time magazine this week.
His show is pure entertainment, and includes no politics or issues of the day. Keillor prefers talking about Norwegian bachelor farmers, gospel doves and his make-believe sponsor, Powdermilk Biscuits: "Heavens, they're tasty, and expeditious too."

Keillor's monologue centers on people, their habits, quirks and relationships, partly because Keillor

is curious about people and partly because his listeners "deserve a break on Saturday night, something a little silly."

He resists the idea of taking the show to television. "Our show is heard in thousands of kitchens amongst fabulous aromas by people dizzy with pleasure at the prospect of a good dinner."

"I'd hate to replace that happy gang with a bunch of people lined up facing one way and eating Kraft or Stouffer's."

Nor is he eager to gather more listeners.
"We can't afford a massive audience, because of the greater costs of power if more people tune in," he says, tongue-in-cheek.

The two-hour show is broadcast on Saturdays at 6 p.m. and broadcast Sunday at noon on KPRN-FM, 89.5 (89.1 on cable), the public radio station in Grand Junction.

Laramie radio show features red socks, rhyme about Time

Heather McGregor
Daily Sentinel

LARAMIE, Wyo. — The road tour of "A Prairie Home Companion" came just at the right time for Garrison Keillor, the show's host.

"A week when your picture appears on the cover of Time magazine is a week when you want to get away, to a place where fewer copies are read," Keillor told his audience.

Dressed in a tuxedo, black running shoes and red socks, the 6-foot, 4-inch humorist brought his Laramie audience "back to the golden age of radio."

When the show's rough edges showed, he added, "You can see why they don't do it this way too often anymore."

The musicians Keillor brought together were outstanding: Nashville guitar great Chet Atkins, Texas fiddler Johnny Gimble, show regulars Butch Thompson and Peter Ostroushko and Oregon singer Rose Maddox.

Their country music and cowboy songs were perfect for Laramie, especially a fiddle trio by Atkins, Gimble and Ostroushko that nearly set the house on fire, and a guitar medley of cowboy songs lovingly

played by Atkins, smooth as butter.
Keillor was clearly the star, however, stirring up the show with improvisations.

In a duet with Atkins, Keillor advised him to "follow the dots," got stuck on a line himself, and sang

"I can't think of a rhyme.

But we're on stage.

And you're all the rage." He

paused, then added

"And I'm on the cover of Time."

The audience howled, hooted and clapped like mad.

In another tune, sung to a classical music theme, Keillor croons,

"Strong and pure.

Cow manure.

I know where I am.

I am home again."

And he sends a message to cow-

boys "discovering their maleness."

"Feelings are dad-blamed complex, that's why.

It's OK for a cowboy to cry."

Later, he describes his last, miserable Halloween, when his teacher insisted the children collect money for UNICEF instead of candy for themselves.

"It was my last year to get a major

harvest," he recalled. "I was still small enough to be appealing, but big enough to really cover some territory."

Wandering the neighborhoods, dark and cold, "it was easy to believe the stories of wild dogs out there. Cougars. Sick animals, lurking out there, waiting to make the jump, make a break for it and take a kid with them."

Other fears could include the ever-present possibility of brain damage and sudden death if a hair on your head grew in instead of out.

"Then I sometimes find a hair in my mouth," he says, with a familiar gesture of retrieving the nuisance. "Somehow this one has missed my brain, and I've bitten it off in my sleep."

But these were nothing compared to the constant belief among his strictly religious family that Christ would return at any moment. "the trumpets and angels would cut through all we think is important."

With an encore of a few old songs everyone could sing and harmonize with, the show ended.

Yes, it's definitely something to plan your weekend around.



Host Garrison Keillor, in the light suit, leads a varied band of musicians in his weekly radio program, "A Prairie Home Companion." Performers in Laramie, Wyo., included guitarist Chet Atkins, fiddler Johnny Gimble, show regulars Butch Thompson and Peter Ostroushko and Oregon singer Rose Maddox.