



# Coming home again

## Fans willing to give Garrison Keillor second chance

**D**ear Garrison, Some of us are having a bit of a hard time figuring out just what we think about you being back in Minnesota and back with *A Prairie Home Companion*.

We were bummed when you left six year ago, and we didn't quite know what to think when you were back a year later with the second annual *Prairie Home* farewell.

But then, we moved on. You set up shop in New York City and began a new life. For us, *The American Radio Company* never felt the same. But we all know ties are harder to maintain when friends are far away.

So people like me drifted. Fans like Marty Davidsohn say they're glad you're back. She thought your New York show and the music on it were too slick. But she doesn't know if she'll be a regular again. Maybe it's a trust thing: "I'm intending to listen again and see what it's like," she says.

Jeff Freeman, who's from Vermillion, feels that way too. He hopes you'll be teaching us to talk Minnesotan again. And he's looking for a return to *Prairie Home*'s folk and bluegrass roots, instead of the more uptown Coffee Club music.

"I think New York City is the wrong place for that kind of show," he says. He knows you're a "literary and cognizant individual" who can keep up with the best of the New Yorkers. But you're tied to people here.

Greg Boris, who was a faithful fan and went to see you live in Minnesota, doesn't care if he gets the habit back. "I sort of dropped out. I'm not sure — even if it is like it was — I'm not sure I want to go back 10 years and say, 'Yeah, I want to relive those times.'"

So many of us are in a quandary. The memories of those Saturday evenings gathered around the radio have a golden glow. But for many of us, those are just memories. We're busy with other things now.

You said you decided to go back to *Prairie Home* while driving through Wyoming over the Fourth of July: "It's a name I'm fond of, and it's the name most people know this radio show by, even though I tried to make it be the *American Radio Company* for four years."

Well shoot, at 51, you'd had plenty of time to learn that Midwesterners were a bit stubborn before you left. You wrote in that note to fans: "I'm getting to be an old man, and it's an old man's duty to prove that decline and decay aren't inevitable. We don't do that by running off and changing our names and getting silicon implants. So it's back to *Prairie Home*."

"It's like he's coming home," Jocelyn Hanson says. "It's like he's coming back to his roots." She figures your stories will be tied to the Midwest again, as if you really are checking out the social columns from the small-town papers.

Don South and his family stuck with you through *American Radio*

and don't plan to switch now. "We just make sure, when it's 5 o'clock that's what's going on in our house," he says.

So now the rest of us have to decide what to do. Old habits are hard to break, but we broke this one. Time has mended our broken hearts.

So now it's our turn to make some choices. We're trying hard not to say "I told you so."

Now, you've got to give us a little time to adjust again and find the two hours to spend in Lake Wobegon. No matter what, it's good to know that roots do count and that you're back home telling stories about the rest of us.

Sincerely,  
  
A once, and possibly future, fan in Sioux Falls.

### IF YOU LISTEN

■ **WHAT:** A *Prairie Home Companion*, live.

■ **WHERE and WHEN:** 5 to 7 p.m. Saturdays, Minnesota Public Radio stations: KRSD-FM, 88.1, in Sioux Falls; and KRSS, 91.7, in Worthington; South Dakota Public Radio stations: KUSD-FM, 89.7, in Vermillion, and KESD-FM, 88.3 in Brookings.

The show is not broadcast on KCSD-FM in Sioux Falls.

### IF YOU'RE GOING

■ **WHAT:** A *Prairie Home Companion*, live.

■ **WHERE:** World Theater, St. Paul, Minn.

■ **WHEN:** Oct. 16 and 23; Jan. 8, 15, 22 and 29; Feb. 5, May 7, 14 and 21.

■ **ALSO:** Oct. 30 at the Ordway Theater in St. Paul.

■ **TICKETS:** Tickets cost \$22, \$20 and \$16 with a discount for Minnesota Public Radio members. In October, tickets remain only for Oct. 30 program. For reservations, call Ticket Master, 612-989-5151, or the World Theater, 612-290-1221. At 11 a.m. the Fridays before the shows, the World Theater releases an additional 50 tickets and the first callers can buy them.