

Prairie Home Productions and American Public Media present

A Prairie Home Companion®

With GARRISON KEILLOR

National Underwriting by



FROM THE HOST

I started seventh grade the day after Labor Day, 1953, at Anoka High School, the old 1904 building on Monroe Street that all my Keillor aunts and uncles had attended, my dad too. You entered through an arched doorway past a plaque honoring graduates who had served in World War I, to a grand hall and a magnificent staircase up to the second floor, the floorboards creaking under you, and from the landing you looked out on the Anoka Dairy, Main Street, the First National Bank, Colburn-Hilliard men's haberdashery, Shadick's soda fountain, and the old fire barn. At the top of the stairs, two oak doors with glass windows opened onto the fine old library, where I discovered *Roget's Thesaurus*, which changed, transformed, and diversified my life, opening up rich veins of vernacular idiom, lingo, jargon, argot, blather, colloquialisms, officialese, patois, and phraseology.

I'd wanted to try out for the football team but failed the physical at Dr. Mork's clinic due to a "clicky heart," a mitral prolapse, and I promptly switched directions and walked into the Anoka *Herald* on Second Avenue and asked Mr. Feist the editor for a job and he looked up from his typewriter, a friendly bespectacled man, and asked if I knew about sports. I said I did, though I didn't.

So I covered Anoka football games and sat in the press box next to the play-by-play man from KANO and took my story to the paper and was paid three dollars per game.

The student body was a varied lot of townies and farm kids, oddballs like me, some prim and bookish girls, many cliquish social girls, a few rough boys. There was a great variety of body odors: the daily shower was far from universal, some people still went with the Saturday night bath. There were practical jokers around who would pull a chair out as you sat down or tie your shoelaces together. There was that scary day in gym class when, for the first time in your life, you stripped naked and took a shower in public. Yikes.

What I remember today is the kindness of teachers. My eighth-grade English teacher, Frayne Anderson, stopped me as I was leaving at the end of class and handed me a copy of *The New Yorker* and said, "I think you might find this interesting." I'd never seen the magazine before: we were a *National Geographic* and *Reader's Digest* family. I liked the typeface, the cartoons, and especially the writing: A.J. Liebling was in that issue and S.J. Perelman and John Cheever. I still have the copy he

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gave me. It struck a spark and at the age of 14, I decided to earn my living as a writer, an idea so grandiose that I never told anyone. My shop teacher, Orville Buehler, took me out of his class because I was careless and easily distracted, which is dangerous around power tools, and sent me up to LaVona Person's speech class. She stood, glamorous in white ruffled blouse and plaid skirt, in the back of the room beaming at whoever was on stage and her smile follows me still. Deloyd Hochstetter paced his classroom talking excitedly about Thoreau and Luther and Whitman. Charles Faust led us through 19th-century American history, particularly the Civil War. Lyle Bradley was continuously and joyfully curious about the biological world. Stan Nelson made us run and dive over a barricade and do a forward somersault on a wrestling mat, a good thing for a bookworm like me to have to do. It was a good place to grow up, where you were thrown in with people unlike yourself and were expected to tolerate and respect them.

I love Anoka. I was sad when the old Carnegie Library got torn down and the old courthouse and was worried when the downtown went through a bad stretch a few years back, but I was delighted to come back and visit the high

school and see the spirit of the students and the dedication of the teachers and the high aspirations of its arts programs. The school is here to offer every student the opportunity to make a beautiful life for himself and herself. The school was very generous to me and this tradition continues.

GK



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A Prairie Home Companion®'s 1,440th Show

Anoka, Minnesota

Garrison Keillor was born in Anoka and graduated from Anoka High (1960), as did his five brothers and sisters (Steven, Stanley, Judy, Linda, Philip) and many of his cousins, Keillors, Davises, Hunts, Bacon, His wife, Jenny Nilsson, grew up on Rice Street in Anoka. He has hosted *A Prairie Home Companion* since 1974. He is the author of numerous books, one of which is dedicated to his late classmate Corinne Guntzel.

The Anoka High School Pep Band, under the direction of **Tim Hauser**, follows a long tradition of bands providing music and school spirit for the Anoka community. Every school assembly starts with the Pep Band playing rousing tunes as the students file into the field house and ends with "Anoka Fight," the school song. Sometimes a small ensemble, sometimes more than 100 students, the Pep Band has a presence at many athletic competitions, whether a regular season game or a state tournament. Anoka High and the whole Anoka family are proud of the dedicated students and directors who spark excitement at events throughout the year.

The Anoka High School Seventh Avenue Singers, under the direction of **Michelle Hayes**, is an a cappella vocal chamber ensemble that has been in existence since the mid-1970s. Often wearing traditional Renaissance costumes — long dresses, capes, top hats — the group performs repertoire ranging from Bach to pop. During the winter season, they travel throughout the Twin Cities area, caroling and performing their show of holiday tunes intermingled with a written script. They often chalk up more than 25 performances during the month of December alone.

Kate Beahen grew up in Anoka and sang in Anoka High productions of *Annie*, *Get Your Gun* and *Les Misérables*. She earned a degree in music theater from Florida State University, spent several years acting in New York, and returned to Minnesota to perform at the Guthrie, the Ordway, and Theater Latté Da.

Lyle Bradley taught biology at Anoka from 1953 to 1985. A native of Dubuque, he was a Marine Corps fighter pilot in the Korean War. He instituted summer field trips for students to study nature out in nature. He is an active bird-watcher, firewood chopper, and writer.

Soprano **Ellie Dehn** is the daughter of an Anoka piano teacher, the granddaughter of a symphony flutist. She sang in choir at Anoka High and played flute in the band, went off to Oberlin Conservatory and the Academy of Vocal Arts in Philadelphia. She has sung leading roles at the Metropolitan Opera, Teatro alla Scala, Bayerische Staatsoper, Covent Garden, and the San Francisco Opera, and now lives in San Francisco. At the piano: **Mary Jo Gothmann**.

Pam Leindecker is in her 32nd year at Anoka High, the past 12 as school librarian, the previous 20 teaching Social Studies. A native of Olivia, Minnesota, the Corn Capital of the World, she is the mother of two Anoka High graduates.

Stan Nelson taught physical education at Anoka from 1953 to 1983 and coached football and baseball. A native of Dawson, Minnesota, and an Augsburg alumnus, he lettered in football, basketball, and baseball. In his retirement, he golfs with his daughter Cheryl at least once a week, enjoys fishing with some of his former players, and attends many football games at Minnetonka High, where his son Dave is the head coach.

Make Plans ...

On **November 7**, *A Prairie Home Companion*'s live broadcast comes from Bemidji, Minnesota. Then it's on to Cleveland, Ohio, on **November 14** and Waterbury, Connecticut, on **November 21**. Stay tuned.

Anoka High School Fieldhouse

Saturday, October 24th, 2015

Keyboardist, composer, and arranger **Richard Dworsky** is APHC's music director. He leads the band, composes themes, improvises script underscores, and collaborates with such diverse guests as Yo-Yo Ma, James Taylor, Brad Paisley, Kristin Chenoweth, and Sheryl Crow. He has released many recordings of original material and has provided music for documentaries on HBO and PBS.

Bernie Dresel has been in the percussion game since he got his first drum kit at the age of two. After graduating from the Eastman School of Music, he headed to Los Angeles. He's worked with countless artists, from Chaka Khan and Maynard Ferguson to David Byrne and Brian Wilson, and spent 15 years with the Brian Setzer Orchestra. He currently plays with Gordon Goodwin's Big Phat Band and heads up his own 12-piece funk band, BERN.

Bassist **Larry Kohut** has played on dozens of albums and many film scores, as well as performing with jazz artists such as Patricia Barber, Mel Tormé, Vincent Colaiuta, and Tony Bennett. In addition, he is an adjunct faculty member at Columbia College Chicago, where he teaches acoustic and electric bass.

When **Richard Kriehn** turned 10, his mom bought him a mandolin; at 19, he'd won the Buck White International Mandolin Contest. He went on to play with the Nashville Mandolin Ensemble and bluegrass group 1946. On the classical side, he has performed with numerous orchestras and was principal second violin for the Washington/Idaho Symphony.

Bluegrass to big band jazz, **Chris Siebold** knows his way around a guitar — or a bunch of other instruments, for that matter. Based in Chicago, he draws from a deep well of influences and styles, and has put his talents to work in ensembles such as Howard Levy's Acoustic Express and Kick the Cat. In 2010, he formed the band Psycales, whose album *Live at Martyrs* was released the following year.

One minute he's mild-mannered **Tim Russell**; the next he's George Bush or Julia Child or Barack Obama. We've yet to stump this man of many voices. Says fellow APHC actor Sue Scott, "He does a better Ira Glass than Ira Glass." A well-known Twin Cities radio personality and voice actor, Tim appeared in the Robert Altman film *A Prairie Home Companion* and the Coen brothers' *A Serious Man*.

On APHC, **Sue Scott** plays everything from ditzzy teenagers to *Guy Noir* stunners to leathery crones who've smoked one pack of Camel straights too many. The Tucson, Arizona, native is well known for her extensive commercial and voice-over work on radio and television, as well as stage and movie roles, including the part of "Donna" in Robert Altman's *A Prairie Home Companion*.

Sound effects man **Fred Newman** is an actor, writer, musician, and sound designer for film and TV. Turns out, no one is more surprised than Fred that he's made a career out of doing what he used to do behind the teacher's back — crossing his eyes, making sounds, and doing voices. He readily admits that, growing up, he was unceremoniously removed from several classrooms, "once by my bottom lip."

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A Prairie Home Companion is produced by Prairie Home Productions and distributed nationwide by American Public Media.

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