

The Progressive Forum

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Garrison Keillor to Start Second Year of Events for The Progressive Forum.

Others in Spring: Tim Flannery, Joe Klein, and Anna Deavere Smith

PHOTOS ATTACHED

The Progressive Forum, Houston, will present “An Evening with Garrison Keillor” on Monday, February 19, 2007, at 7:30 p.m. at The Wortham Center to kick off its second year of events. Keillor is the host and writer of *A Prairie Home Companion* heard by 4 million listeners each week on over 580 public radio stations. He will be in solo performance at The Progressive Forum, not doing his radio program. His presentation is entitled “Lake Wobegon Days.”

He will be followed by the renowned Australian scientist Tim Flannery on Monday, March 19. Flannery is author of *The Weather Makers: How Man is Changing the Climate and What It Means for Life on Earth*. Then Joe Klein, senior columnist for *Time* magazine, will speak on Thursday April 12 on the critical subject of “Islam, Iraq, and The War On Terror.” The spring season will finish with author, playwright, and actress Anna Deavere Smith on Monday, May 21, who *Newsweek* called “The most exciting individual in American theater.” An African American, Smith explores the issues of race, community, and character in America. Her program is called “Snapshots of America In Change.” All programs are at The Wortham Center and begin at 7:30 p.m.

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Randall Morton, president of The Progressive Forum, said, “This season is characterized by timeliness. Garrison Keillor recently played himself in the movie adaptation of his radio show. Joe Klein, an astute observer, will provide insights on the Iraqi war whose developments are accelerating. Tim Flannery has written what many call the finest, and most readable, account on the pressing issue of global warming. And Anna Deavere Smith is always timely with her insights on human nature and her singular brand of theater.”

Last year in 2007, The Progressive Forum presented Jared Diamond, Seymour Hersh, Molly Ivins, Al Gore, George Soros, Edward O. Wilson, and Frank Rich. The Progressive Forum premiered in June 2005 with Robert F. Kennedy, Jr. and Houston Mayor Bill White.

Morton said that Keillor’s February presentation includes hilarious anecdotes about growing up in the American Midwest, the aging process, late-life fatherhood, and comments on current affairs. Keillor’s *A Prairie Home Companion* is heard in Houston on KUHF 88.7 Saturday from 5:00 to 7:00 p.m. and Sunday from 12:00 to 2:00 p.m. His *Writer’s Almanac* is heard daily on KUHF 88.7 at 8:35 and KPFT 90.1 at 6:40 a.m.

Garrison Keillor hosted the first broadcast of *A Prairie Home Companion* on July 6, 1974, in St. Paul. The show ended in 1987, resumed in 1989 in New York as *The American Radio Company*, returned to Minnesota, and in 1993 resumed the name *A Prairie Home Companion*. In the movie of the same name, directed by the late Robert Altman, Keillor plays himself along with Meryl Streep and Lily Tomlin as the singing Johnson sisters, Lindsay Lohan as Streep’s daughter, Woody Harrelson and John C. Reilly as signing cowboys Lefty and Dusty, and Tommy Lee Jones as the ax-man who is dispatched by the radio station’s new corporate owners in Texas to shut down the show.

Keillor was born in Anoka, Minnesota, in 1942 and graduated from the University of Minnesota. He is the author of twelve books including *Lade Wobegon Days* (1985); *The Book of Guys* (1993); and *Homegrown Democrat* (2004). Keillor has won numerous

awards including a Grammy Award for his recording of Lake Wobegon Days. He has also received two Cable ACE Awards and a George Foster Peabody Award. He is a member of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, and recently was presented The National Humanities Medal by the National Endowment for the Humanities. In 1994, he was inducted into the Radio Hall of Fame at Chicago's Museum of Broadcast Communications.

"Tim Flannery is one of the most important scientists on global warming," according to Morton. Houston Mayor Bill White is quoted on the inside front cover of his book, saying "We have to shift the debate on global warming this year, and this book is going to help make that happen." Flannery's book, *The Weather Makers*, which recently surpassed 1 million in sales, presents the powerful connection between climate change and human activity, and lays out a game plan for halting and eventually reversing the damage that we "weather makers" are doing. A native Australian, Flannery is a regular contributor to *The New York Review of Books*, *The Times Literary Supplement*, ABC radio, NPR, and the BBC. He spent a year at Harvard as professor of Australian studies in the Department of Organismic and Evolutionary Biology. He is currently director of the South Australian Museum and the National Geographic Society's Australasian representative.

On Joe Klein, Morton says, "He's one of the most astute observers of domestic politics and international affairs, known for his valuable insights and analysis." Klein is a member of the Council on Foreign Relations and the author of many books including his latest, *Politics Lost: How American Politics Was Trivialized By People Who Think You're Stupid*, about the disservice rendered by political consultants; and *Primary Colors*, inspired by the 1992 presidential race, a book which was on *The New York Times* bestseller list for 25 consecutive weeks.

Anna Deavere Smith, in her singular brand of theater, slips in and out of roles during her presentation, creating a diversity of viewpoints. She was awarded a "genius" Grant from the MacArthur Foundation for creating a "new form of theater." She is

perhaps best known as the author and performer of two one-women plays about racial tensions in American cities, *Fires In the Mirror*, and *Twilight: Los Angeles*. She is a tenured professor at New York University. She founded the Institute on the Arts and Civic Dialogue at Harvard (now at NYU), which explores the role of arts in relation to vital social issues. She is the author of *Letters to a Young Artist: Straight-up Advice On Making a Life in the Arts*, as well as *Talk to Me: Travels in Media and Politics*.

The Progressive Forum is a nonpartisan, nonprofit 501(C)(3) civic speaker organization presenting seven events a year in Houston's finest theaters. Its purpose is to enrich our democracy and culture by presenting the greatest minds from all the fields of human endeavor, the sciences and the humanities, as well as politics and public affairs. Its progressive viewpoint is rooted in the mainstream constitutional, enlightenment, and egalitarian values of America's founding fathers, a bedrock of moderate values that need affirming, now more than ever.

The Progressive Forum is pioneering a new model in the field of public affairs to deliver a higher quality experience to much larger audiences than typically attend speaking events by operating like a performing arts company. It uses the finest theaters, pays speaker fees to attract the world's top cultural stars, and offers convenient box office services.

Founder and president Randall R. Morton has owned Randall Morton International, Inc., for 31 years, an advertising and public relations agency whose clients have included leading oil equipment companies in the U.S., Japan, Mexico, and Europe. Morton created and hosted the Oilfield Breakfast Forum, which became the largest speaker platform in the oil industry whose surplus went to Houston's SEARCH Homeless Project. While earning a degree in government from Georgetown University in Washington, D.C., he served as an issue writer for the Democratic National Committee.

Tickets for all events range from \$19 to \$59 with further discounts at certain price levels for students, seniors over 65, and groups of fifteen or more. Patron tickets of \$110 include a private reception with the speaker, autographed book, and preferred seat

location. Tickets are available on line at www.progressiveforumhouston.org which allows you to print your tickets at your computer. For tickets by phone, call 832-251-0706.

There is no physical box office to purchase tickets in advance. Tickets will be available at the events for \$5 more. For more information, call The Progressive Forum office at 713-664-0020.