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Garrison Keillor will record an audio book of Mark Twain's unpublished story, "A Murder, a Mystery and a Marriage."

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# Keillor talks Twain

By CHARITY VOGEL  
News Staff Reporter

A Mark Twain story with a Buffalo connection is getting attention from one of America's most famous radio voices — Garrison Keillor.

Keillor, known for his Minnesota-based radio program "A Prairie Home Companion," spent part of this week recording Twain's short story "A Murder, A Mystery and a Marriage" as an audio book that will appear in stores later this year, a Keillor spokeswoman said.

Keillor also has agreed to serve as a judge of entries in the Buffalo & Erie County Public Library's Mark Twain Writing Competition — joining a panel of literary celebrities that includes Lauren Belfer, Joyce Carol Oates and Leslie Fiedler.

"I'm very thrilled," said Diane J. Chrisman, director of the library. "I'm very pleased with the national judges and their national reputations."

In the Keillor camp, there was also excitement about the connection.

"There's something about Mark Twain's style and Garrison Keillor's voice that is a perfect match," said Sallie Neall, vice president of Highbridge, the company that produces Keillor's audio books, including the new Twain story.

Twain wrote "A Murder, A Mystery and a Marriage" in 1876 — around the time he began writing "Huckleberry Finn" — but never published the story.

The library unveiled the first half of the story last year, but rather than reveal the ending, it is asking writers to finish it. Library officials hope the contest generates worldwide attention about Twain and his connections to Buffalo, where Twain lived from 1889 to 1871, after his marriage to Elmira native Olivia Langdon.

Contest winners will be announced in October.

The rights to the story were acquired last year by the Buffalo & Erie County Public Library.

The new audio book will feature Keillor reading the entire story, plus an introduction and afterword recorded by writer Roy Blount, also a judge of the writing contest.

"Garrison Keillor is often compared to Mark Twain. He's very interested in Mark Twain," said Neall, the audio book producer. "And the whole story of the discovery of this unpublished story is great. We thought of the Keillor connection right away."

At the library, officials said Keillor's involvement is building excitement about the writing contest — and about Buffalo's Mark Twain connection.

"There is a Twain circuit, and Buffalo should be part of it, by all rights. That's what's happening here," said Patrick Martin, the library's attorney.

Other developments involving the Twain manuscript, according to Martin, include:

- Sale of foreign rights to the story, in-

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## Keillor: Twain's Buffalo connection is area asset

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cluding editions that will be published in Italy, Spain, Germany,

Brazil, Chile, Catalan, Turkey, Korea, and Japan, among other places.

• A request from documentary filmmaker Ken Burns to use images from the library's Twain collection for an upcoming documentary series on Twain that Burns is working on. The series is expected to air next January.

• A Buffalo stop by Michael Patrick Hearn on an upcoming au-

thor tour for his new book "The Annotated Huckleberry Finn." That tour stop will likely include a gala event at the library.

Martin, who is handling the sale of publishing rights to the Twain manuscript, said the author's connection to Buffalo is often overlooked.

But it is an important asset to the city and the region, he said.