

## Columns



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## Famous men

By [Tom Gascoyne](#)

## Walking down Second Street

back to work last Tuesday, I was about to cross Wall Street when I happened to look to my left and saw a tall, lanky gentleman wearing a gray jacket and black T-shirt standing in front of North Rim Adventure Sports and slipping coins into the parking meter. It was Veterans Day, and my first thought was, "He doesn't have to do that. This is a parking-meter-free holiday." But then I noticed the man looked familiar in a famous kind of way. I told myself that he was either **Garrison Keillor** (pictured) or **Jello Biafra** (I get those guys mixed up all the time). I crossed the street, and as I got closer I realized it was Keillor making sure his rented white Cadillac DeVille was not vulnerable to our local meter-man. I walked up to the famous radio man and introduced myself, sort of butting in on a conversation he was having with longtime Chicoan **Jim Graydon**. I stuck out my hand, and Keillor reciprocated by putting forth his hand while turning his head away and looking toward the Diamond W Western Wear store across the street. It was a bit disconcerting.



**I told Keillor I was** the editor of the local alternative newspaper. "Alternative to what?" he asked. I shrugged my shoulders and said, "I'm not sure." He then said he was glad to see Chico has a downtown--this was his first visit here. "When I drove in through that shopping area, I thought, 'Oh, boy,'" he said a bit sadly. He asked if those were walnut orchards he'd driven through, and I said, yes, and he probably saw almond and pistachio trees as well. Graydon told him the locals say "amond." He thought about it for a second and said, "I think I'll continue to pronounce it 'almond.'" He said goodbye and walked toward Main Street, stopping briefly in front of Peet's Coffee.

**Later, Keillor made** an appearance at the newly opened Lyon Books on Fifth Street and entertained about 50 listeners with his well-known radio voice--"It's been known to put small children to sleep. Very often parents will put the radio next to their children's beds." Keillor was gracious and funny and said he'd come to Lyon Books rather than Barnes & Noble because he'd been invited by the owners via e-mail. "I have nothing against Barnes & Noble," he carefully pointed out. Lyon Books, by the way, is located in the old Mustang Jones building and is worth a visit. Owners **Heather** and **Aaron Lyon** have sunk some money into the place, which fills a void in downtown Chico created when Tower closed its bookstore.

**We've gotten word that former Chicoan Khaled Dudin**, a member of the 82nd Airborne and stationed in Falluja, one of the most dangerous cities in Iraq, was recently wounded. He spent some time in the hospital. He is apparently OK and back on duty, serving as a medic and translator between American commanders and Iraqi tribal chieftains. According to the New York Times, the Americans are trying to get the chieftains to exert their authority and stop the guerrilla attacks.

"The American commander's adviser on tribal and religious affairs is a young Arab-American medic in his unit, Pfc. Khaled Dudin, a Californian who spent part of his childhood among the Bedouin tribes of Saudi Arabia," a Times story says. "Private Dudin has taken to warning local Sunni clerics that they will have 'blood responsibility' under Islamic law if they incite their followers to attack American forces. 'I am a paratrooper and an American Muslim,' the soldier declared, 'and I can quote Koran as well as anybody.'"

November 13, 2003

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