

There was a startling Whoa! NELLIE moment while the manager of Cue was whipping up one of the naughty cocktails created for "Little House on the Prairie, the Musical," which made its world premiere at the Guthrie.

Right on Cue, Alison Arngrim showed up.

Arngrim is a comedian who has a cult following as a result of being the child actor who played Nellie Oleson, a non-homicidal bad seed on the TV show "Little House on the Prairie." She played the nemesis of Laura Ingalls, who was played by Melissa Gilbert. Arngrim came to the Twin Cities to support her best friend Gilbert, who is playing the role of Ma in the musical.

Gilbert and Arngrim were walking into Cue, just as manager Jeff Fisher was demonstrating how to make a "Nasty Nellie," a liquored homage to Alison's character.

"I'm on the elevator. The elevator doors open and there is Jeff training the bar staff with the ingredients sheet teaching them how to make said drinks. As I go out the doors, I swear right at that moment, is when he said, And this is how you make the Nasty Nellie. It's like I appeared in a puff of smoke when he said my name like I was Beetle Juice or something.

"I walked straight up, looked right at him and said, 'Well, what's in it?' in totally Nellie-tense. He looked up and I swear the color drained out of his face," said Arngrim, imitating stammering. "He couldn't talk. He almost dropped the shaker. The rest of the bar staff is in hysterics because they've never seen him lose it this fast. He stammered and stuttered, It's very nice to have you here. I said, 'Well, what's in the drink. I certainly have a right to know.'"

Somebody else ponied up the "Nasty Nellie" ingredients. "It's like vodka and Chambord, lemon sour mix and ginger ale. It's all pink and fizzy and tart, much like me," Arngrim said, adding, "Yes, I completely approve the drink." She also sampled other drinks concocted just for this production, including, according to Arngrim: "'The Prairie Flower,' like a lemon drop, pretty good. 'The Prairie Martini,' like a regular martini with an ear of corn in it. Ridiculous."

Together, in Minnesota

Although Alison Arngrim has no role in this production, she says her contribution to the play should be noted as "emotional support" in the play bill.

"I've been getting the blow by blows -- literally," she said. "You know, this is a very strenuous show. People are doing cartwheels and throwing people in the air. There's a big wooden set. People are getting hurt right and left." When Melissa Gilbert reported what was taking place, "I'm like 'I've got to come out there,'" Arngrim said.

Arngrim said she was encouraged by Gilbert to come to Friday night's first dress rehearsal and Saturday's first preview with an audience. "The other night, Melissa and I were walking back from the theater and it was like the middle of the night. I said, 'Did you ever think that when we were in our 40s we'd be walking the streets at midnight in Minneapolis together?' And she was cracking up. We've never been in Minnesota at the same time. We're having a great time."

Arngrim laughed when asked about those "Little House" residuals: "We do, thank God, get them. So many don't. It's not 'Friends' money, as we say. It pays the cable bill."

In addition to her stand up comedy, hgd.com/alison, Arngrim also does "a one woman show called 'Confessions of a Prairie Bitch,'" she said.

She hung with Gilbert and reconnected with ReVamp! Salon Spa owner and style book author Christopher Hopkins, who met Alison when he was in L.A. at a book expo promoting "Staging Your Comeback: A Complete

Beauty Revival for Women Over 45."

A bleach boy

Somebody had to call White Sox catcher A.J. Pierzynski OUT! for that glowing bleach blond do he's wearing at the Dome this week.

And that somebody clearly will not be the person who has been telling that boy he's sexy.

Is he trying to scare the Twins every time he yanks off his catcher's mask?

Whose audience is Peroxide Pierzynski trying to appeal to with this look: Brad Pitt's or Dennis the Menace's?

I sent word to him that I'm looking for enlightenment regarding what looks like accidental hair color.

KFAN's Dubai is MIA

"It's personal," is the official word from KFAN on the absence of Jeff Dubai.

The "P.A. & Dubai," morning show co-host has been gone two, maybe two and a half weeks, Gregg Swedberg, programming veep of Clear Channel Minneapolis, told me Wednesday, when conveying the official word on Dubai's whereabouts. "Jeff will be back Aug. 8."

A listener with "Galet" in his e-mail address was first to raise questions with me about Dubai in a July 24 missive: "Last week they explained he had an incurable case of the hiccups. This week he has been gone all week with them saying he's 'out,' not 'on vacation' or other explanation. Seems a bit fishy."

When I talked to Dubai's P.A., as in Paul Allen, Wednesday he told me, "Doobers will be back Aug. 8 for the Vikings' Fan Line against the Seahawks, after that preseason game. Then he'll be back the following Monday at training camp with me. Let's wait for Doobs to come back and I'll mention that you called."

P.A. obviously knows precisely why his friend has been gone but is keeping the particulars confidential. Since talking about the personal problems of professional athletes is part of what they do, Dubai needs to prepare a line of explanation.

I know that Dubai is not too far removed from a divorce.

C.J. is at 612.332.TIPS or cj@startribune.com. More of her attitude can be seen on Fox 9 Thursday mornings.