



News-Sun/Teesha McClam

GARRISON KEILLOR shares his stories at Kuss Auditorium as part of the Clark County Public Library Speaker Series on Wednesday.

Garrison Keillor: How great thou art

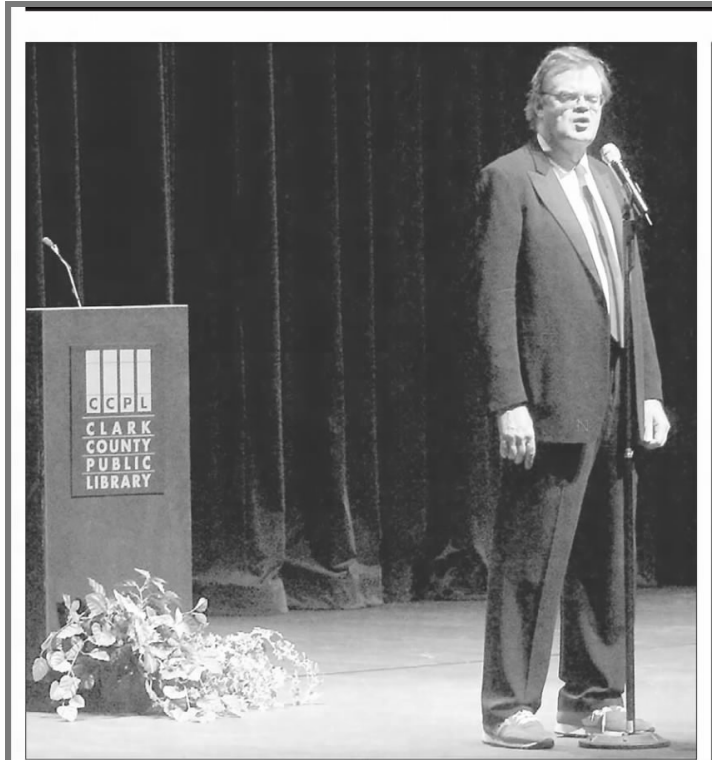
By **CLAIRE BUSHEY**

News-Sun Staff Writer

For fans of his radio program, hearing humorist Garrison Keillor's voice emanate from an actual body undoubtedly began as a surreal experience.

Listeners are used to hearing but not seeing Keillor host "A Prairie Home Companion," a variety program airing on National Public Radio. So perhaps they experienced some initial shock Wednesday night when a person, not a disembodied voice, walked on stage at Kuss Auditorium wearing a suit and red sneakers, squinted into the lights and slid

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GARRISON KEILLOR shares his stories as a part of the Clark County Public Library Speaker Series at Kuss Auditorium on Wednesday. Keillor is well known for his radio program "A Prairie Home Companion".

KEILLOR

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into a 90-minute monologue. Keillor was one of this year's big names in the Clark County Public Library's Speaker Series. His radio show features music, folksy humor and Keillor's mellifluous voice reading the "News from Lake Wobegon." It is broadcast live from the Fitzgerald Theater in St. Paul, Minn.

He brought gentle humor and tidbits of free advice, including this nugget: "There's almost no problem in marriage that cannot be solved by more fun. Including, if necessary, taking off your clothes." Keillor said he was happy to speak to support a public library, because he likes libraries.

"It's about more than books," he said. "It's about quiet ... Where thinking is possible to whatever

extent we're still able."

The man's stories melted into each other, with tangents spawning more tangents. He talked about the "cooking island" in his kitchen, then canning in his mother's kitchen, then picking tomatoes for canning with his sister and pegging her with one as large as a volleyball.

Then it was back to the cooking island. For years he banged his head against an expensive, long-handled French pan that hung from a rack above it, until one day it occurred to him he could get rid of the pan.

"The way to get something done is to do it," he said. "I sent it to the Salvation Army so now homeless people can make souffles, too."

Keillor talked about growing up. There was privity tipping, hand-me-down clothing and conversations with gravediggers. Children weren't supervised so much as "pushed out

the front door and raised by other children."

"Parenting was not a verb back then," he said.

Eventually, the monologue turned to Lutherans, as Keillor's humor often does. Someone asked him to tell a story about Lutherans in honor of Wittenberg University's religious tradition, he said.

"I am a little bit reluctant to talk about Lutherans in front of Lutherans," he said. "But they are a forgiving people. Because they've been commanded to be."

And he launched into a tale involving Moet champagne, giant fiberglass ducks and 24 Lutheran ministers.

The evening ended with Keillor leading the packed auditorium in singing the (Lutheran) hymn, "How Great Thou Art."

Reach Claire Bushey at cbushey@coxohio.com