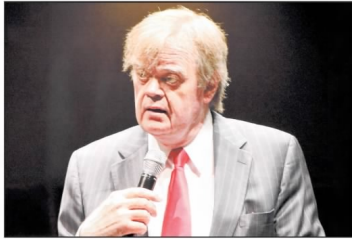


NEWS



GARY GIBULA/PHOTOS FOR THE TRIBUNE

Author Garrison Keillor spoke on the campus of North Central College last week but he insisted he was not promoting his latest book, "The Keillor Reader."

## Garrison Keillor brings wit, songs to Naperville

Host of 'A Prairie Home Companion' also a prolific author who introduced his 22nd book to audience of about 150 people

By GARY GIBULA  
Special to the Tribune

In a culture where films, television and comedy push the boundaries of what is considered new and edgy entertainment, Garrison Keillor has maintained the image of being a friendly neighbor full of observations that are clever, witty and a bit corny at times.

While Keillor might be best known for offering those stories as well as music in his long-running radio program "A Prairie Home Companion," he also is a prolific author.

His 22nd book, "The Keillor Reader," was published this month by Viking Press and Keillor was in

Naperville Tuesday evening to talk about it.

"I'm here with this book but I'm not promoting it," Keillor said to about 150 people on the campus of North Central College. "It's just a book. You all have unread books at home and you should tend to them."

The event at Mealey-Swallow Hall was made possible by Anderson's Bookshop.

"You probably have a new translation of 'The Aeneid' or have been trying for 40 years to read 'Moby Dick,'" Keillor said. "I know it's deceiving because it takes so long for them to get into the water. They came out with a comic book version of Moby Dick and I

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Watch video of Garrison Keillor's visit to North Central College at [triblocal.com](http://triblocal.com).

recommend it."

Keillor's homespun wit has earned him numerous literary awards. In addition to the 22 published works, he also has written five poetry books and anthologies and has been a voice-over actor in commercials, documentaries and animated shorts.

"This is a collection of stuff by an American writer who has a reputation as a writer of nostalgia about small-town America," Keillor said in his paced deliv-

ery. "So I felt that I had to clear my reputation."

Keillor's radio program has had a near-continuous run since the 1970s. As a result, he was inducted into the Radio Hall of Fame and has won a Grammy Award.

"It's a very old-fashioned idea of radio, which is almost completely gone now," he said. "And yet it still applies that people like to be talked to by an amenable person. The radio show is an achievement of personal discipline because I'm re-

ally a quitter by nature."

"The Keillor Reader" is a compilation of stories, fiction and nonfiction, "a collection that shows a certain breadth," he said.

"When you hear him speak, he has a voice and delivery unlike anyone else so you absolutely know who it is," said Gary Smith, of Naperville. "His style is a little cheesy, and I like that. It's a fun kind of humor that's not like the humor you generally hear from today's comedians."

Keillor said one fictional anecdote from his book was about a pontoon boat filled with 22 Lutheran pastors that went down in shallow waters.

"Nonetheless, they

achieved total immersion," he said, to laughs from the crowd.

As music is a large part of his radio program, Keillor led the audience in some unaccompanied songs, including "My Country, 'Tis of Thee," "Amazing Grace" and "How Great Thou Art."

Following a dramatic pause, Keillor then quietly sang: "Well she was just 17; you know what I mean." The audience laughed broadly as they joined in singing the popular Beatles song, which Keillor then altered with a new lyric about attending North Central College.

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