



Garrison Keillor autographs one of his books for a fan after Saturday's show.

Peter Stanley

PETER STANLEY
BANNER STAFF WRITER

STRATTON — On one of the mountains that helps make Vermont famous for skiing, nationally-acclaimed radio personality Garrison Keillor mocked the sport over the weekend in his appearance in a summer concert at Stratton Mountain Resort.

"Stratton is the name for the sound that a bone makes when it snaps," he said, tongue-in-cheek. It happens a lot on these slopes, Keillor said.

A native of Minnesota, Keillor said his upbringing in the flat lands taught him to favor the lower ground. So did his religion.

"The Bible does not recommend skiing," he claimed, bringing on laughter from an amused and confused audience. Explaining himself, he described the Bible's admonitions against "sliding downward," a reference to the degradation of sin.

While Keillor's monologues kept the large crowd laughing, his deep bass voice joined with the Hopeful Gospel Quartet kept them in awe during Saturday's show, part of a national tour for the quartet. Robin and Linda Williams and Kate MacKenzie made up the rest of the

quartet.

Currently the host for "The American Radio Company," carried on American Public Radio nationwide, Keillor is best known for its precursor, "A Prairie Home Companion." Both shows feature a variety of live folk music blended with Keillor's famous ability to tell stories about small-town life.

If Vermont were flat, Keillor noted, it would be the largest state in the union. But God made it hilly so that New Yorkers would have a harder time finding it. Some places in the state are so difficult to reach that the people who arrive decide not to go back, he added.

Religion was a strong theme in Keillor's monologues and music. His religious upbringing, which he described with stories from his fictitious youth, clearly influenced his view of the world.

Explaining the predominance of gospel songs in the show, Keillor said he grew up singing songs of guilt, sin and unworthiness — the only songs he knew. As a child, he was not allowed to dance or even walk in a rhythmic manner, because the adults feared it would wake carnal impulses.

Garrison Keillor takes on Stratton, all in jest

See GARRISON Page 14

Stratton hosts Garrison Keillor

GARRISON *from page 1*

Nevertheless, girls were on his mind both in Bible camp and while he sang religious songs on the street corner, he said.

During the show, Keillor led the audience in singing two simple melodies, both embellished with ad lib verses. "Tell my why the stars do shine," a familiar folk love tune, became "O beautiful for spacious skies," then the pledge of allegiance, and "Take me out to the ballgame," all to the same tune. Still on the same melody, Keillor sang solo, the airline verse: "In the event of a sudden loss of cabin pressure...."

Keillor said the bass line in music is a metaphor for the way things work in society: building up from the bottom.

That used to be the basis of the Republican Party, he added, switching the subject to politics, but now they proclaim economic theories one would hear from drunken cowboys.

"I'm tired of hearing about family values," said Keillor. "Politicians are supposed to run the government, and if they make a mess of government, they should not change the subject." Talking to him about family is a mistake "because my family is more complicated than the government," he said.

ide
Co
the
of
Ins
me
pre
Me
Ad
Co
Sco
of
Ad
me
stit
H
Jan
H
a b
Cyt
We
wif