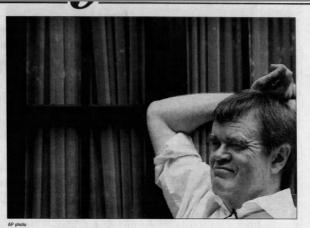
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Writer Garrison Keillor pauses during an interview outside his St. Paul, Minn., home. In his new book, "Love Me," Keillor abandons his fictional hometown of Lake Wobegon for a funny, sometimes racy story that he says is about 15 percent autobiographica.

'Love Me' isn't typical Keillor

Writer Garrison Keillor writes about the mafia, a killing and 4-letter words

ST. PAUL (AP) - Yes, Garrison Keillor once wrote for The New Yorker magazine, just like the narrator in his new book, "Love Me."

ove Me. But no, Keillor has nev-

on that.
"The New Yorker is real, but everything about it in the book is fiction. It's not really run by the Mafia," Keillor said during an interview on the porch of his stately home in a leafy neighborhood of St. Paul. Looking fit two years.

Looking fit two years after heart valve surgery, the famously shy Keillor is barefooted and wearing barefooted and wearing blue jeans and a white shirt with the sleeves rolled up. He scrunches his bulldoglike face as he sips coffee and discusses everything from his new book to his decision to unit drinking.

book to his decision to quit drinking. In "Love Me," Keillor abandons his fictional hometown of Lake Wobe-gon for a funny, some-times racy story that he describes as "about 15 per-cent autobiographical, same as with most novels."

Rise of a writer

then returns to Minnesota

— a path followed by
Keillor, who quit his pop-ular 'A Prairie Home
Companion' radio show
in 1987 before reviving it

in 1987 before reviving it years later.

Larry Wyler, the book's narrator, writes a best-seller, "Spacious Skies," and realizes his dreams when he joins the staff of The New Yorker, a glossy, stylish magazine that Keillor calls 'the Valhaha for all English majors in America, or was at one time."

But Wyler's wife, Iris, a liberal Democrat, refuses

time.

But Wyler's wife, Iris, a liberal Democrat, refuses to leave their blue-collar neighborhood in St. Paul. Wyler goes to New York alone, has several affairs, then suffers writer's block when his second novel, "Amber Wawes of Grain," flops.

Wyler turns to writing a newspaper column, "Mr. Blue," dispensing advice to the lovelorm, such as the man who plans a romantic evening, only to discover his griffriend is Amish.

Along the way, Wyler

Amish.
Along the way, Wyler discovers The New Yorker is controlled by the Mafia and ends up accidentally killing the publisher, mobster Tony Crossandotti (a joke Italian name

GARRISON KEILLOR LOVE ME

Some similarities

While Keillor said mo While Keinor sain most of the book is fiction, there are similarities: Keillor did write for The New Yorker, had a Manhattan apartment with a big terrace like Wyler's and for a couple of years wrote a 'Mr. Blue' advice column for Salon.com. Wyler lists arrogance. Wyler lists arrogance, the column for Salon.com. Wyler lists arrogance, an ungrateful among his flaws restlessness, an ungrateful among his flaws to the column for Salon.com. Wyler lists arrogance. And like his main character, Keillor said he also went through a period of drinking before stopping about a year ago.
While be definit have a

about a year ago.
While he didn't have a drinking problem, Keillor said, "I decided to stop for the same reasons that

On the Net

"A Prairie Home
 Companion": www.prairie
 home.org.
 Penguin: www.
 penguinputnam.com.

penguinputnam.com.

If you listen ...
"A Prairie Home Companion" can be heard in the St. Cloud area at 5 p.m. Saturdays on KSJR-FM 90.1 and KNSR-FM 88.9. The show is rebroadcast at noon Sundays on KNSR-FM.

If you buy ...
Garrison Keillor's new book, "Love Me," is available locally at Barnes and Noble, Media Play and Waldenbooks.

I stopped smoking about 20 years ago, which were that I was tired of think-ing about it."

'Prairie' birth

'Prairie' birth
Keillor says his first
piece in The New Yorker
—"a timy, tiny piece of fic-tion," titled "Local Family
Makes Son Happy" — ap-peared in 1969 or 70. Af-ter he began work on an article for the publication about the Grand Ole Opry in Nashville, Keillor was inspired to begin a radio show with musical guests

See GARRISON, 4C

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