



Author, poet and radio host Garrison Keillor speaks with students of Sarah Shotwell's modern world history class on Wednesday at SLO Classical Academy High School.

Garrison Keillor shares stories, advice with SLO students

“GOOD THINGS WILL HAPPEN. THEY AREN'T NECESSARILY WHAT YOU HOPE FOR.”

BY LINDSEY HOLDEN
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Radio host and storyteller Garrison Keillor brought his trademark humor and wit to the San Luis Obispo Classical Academy during a Wednesday visit.

Keillor, best known as the creator and former host of public radio show “A Prairie Home Companion,” stopped by the school before performing at the Performing Arts Center as part of his national tour.

Development Director Cozy Faber said SLOCA puts on a yearly speaker series and administrators felt Keillor's reputation as a storyteller fit well with the school's literary mission.

“This year, we were



Kate Bischoff, 17, and Brigitte Rein, 16, react to comments by author, poet and radio host Garrison Keillor.

really trying to get someone who would appeal to the community,” she said.

Teacher Sarah Shotwell said she was glad her students got to interact with an “iconic American voice.”

“He represents what

our school wants to be about,” she said, “which is getting excited about learning and excited about literature.”

Shotwell's modern history class had the chance to chat with Keillor for about an hour, asking him

Garrison Keillor

▶ VIDEO

Watch a clip of Garrison Keillor's discussion with students at sanluisobispo.com.

questions about everything from his childhood to his thoughts on puns.

Keillor said his mother's enjoyment of radio comics Jack Benny, George Burns and Gracie Allen first inspired him to give humor a try. He said he'd try out his material in a closet, using the handle of a Hoover vacuum as a microphone.

“I told jokes to make my mother laugh,” Keillor said.

Although his initial ambitions were to “write dark poems and be bril-

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liant and die young,” Keillor said that didn’t work out, so he “went into radio instead.”

When asked what he’d tell his high school self, Keillor said, “Be prepared to be lucky.”

“Good things will hap-

pen,” he said. “They aren’t necessarily what you hope for.”

Keillor described not being able to play football in high school, which led to a job as a sports writer for his local newspaper.

“I love to sit and write — that’s what I do,” Keillor said. “I wanted to do it at 7 or 8 years old, and here I am doing it at 120.”

Student Elias Simons, 15,

said he’d read some of Keillor’s work prior to his visit and found it “amazingly interesting.” After Keillor’s visit, Simons described him as “the coolest old person I’ve met.”

“I was thinking, ‘How could I convince you to be my grandpa?’” he said.

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