

Humorist stops in Winona

By GARY RADLOFF
Winona Daily News

The Garrison Keillor gospel road show rolled into Winona Wednesday night.

At least that's how it seemed. Keillor had singing, dancing, and of course, a little preaching. The capacity crowd at the Somsen Hall on the Winona State University campus loved every minute of it.

You might say Garrison Keillor is on top of the world. With the current best-selling book in America ("Lake Wobegon Days"), a radio program with 2 million listeners a week ("Prairie Home Companion") and his mug on Time Magazine last week, Keillor is not with out his "true believers."

But he deserves the success. He's clever, bone-tickling funny and has captured the imagination of the land with tales of good old down-home Minnesota.

Keillor has put the Midwest back on the map in ways Walter Mondale only dreamed of.

The Winona show was a little looser and more folksy than the radio program.

But the format of music, High N' Outside (bluegrass and country), entertainment, The Wild Goose Chase Cloggers (one of the highlights of the evening) and Keillor's story telling, mirrored the radio program.

The man has reached such a peak of popularity that he's even the subject of gossip. He joked about his marriage plans and the "behind the scenes" story that ran recently in a major Midwest newspaper.

But good humor prevailed for the evening.

For example why isn't Lake Wobegon on the Minnesota map? "These 942 people of Mist County were left off the map due to the surveyors. These people were drunk."

"The four teams of surveyors proceeded from the four corners of the state and found there was no more room in the center of the land... so you won't find Lake Wobegon on the map."

He had more than a few stories and jokes about being in love. His recently announced marriage plans were twisted into most of the songs and tales.

He wondered out loud how he could continue to cover up his life "thinly disguised as fiction."

He thought maybe one of his Lake Wobegon characters, Sen. Knute Thorvaldson, might be the vehicle to "disguise" his tales of love.



Daily News photo by Jim Galewski

Garrison Keillor entertains the crowd Wednesday night at Somsen Hall on the Winona State University campus.

Keillor to wed old friend

ST. PAUL (AP) — Garrison Keillor, humorist and creator of public radio's "A Prairie Home Companion," says he will marry a Danish woman he met 25 years ago when she was an exchange student at his Minnesota high school.

Keillor, author of the best-selling "Lake Wobegon Days," said he and Ulla Skaerved will wed on Dec. 29 in a Lutheran church in Copenhagen. It will be the second marriage for both.

As befits the chronicler of small-town life in mythical Lake Wobegon, Keillor, 43, was reunited with Skaerved in August at his 25-year high school reunion in Anoka, near Minneapolis. They had not been in touch since 1964, he said.

"My true love doesn't know anything about 'A Prairie Home Companion,' she doesn't read the New Yorker (where some of his fiction has been published), and she doesn't read English well enough to know I am a humorous person," Keillor said.