## Books

# 'Wobegon' is woe so good

By Michael Schlemper Staff Reporter

In "Lake Wobegon Days," Garrison Keillor writes about the people of the mythical town of Lake Wobegon, Minn. They're people we all know - waitresses, high school teachers, kids, parents and bachelor farmers - who

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go to places we all go - Our Lady of Perpetual Responsibility Church, the Chatterbox Cafe, Ralph's Pretty Good Grocery and the Sidetrack Tap. These people face the problems we all face

going after cigarettes.

Keillor is a gifted storyteller, a natural gossip who tells us everything, often relying on wonderful footnotes. Some of them meander along, attempting to explain some vague point, then strike out in other directions, flowing off the page until the footnote is longer than the original story and far away from the point to be clarified.

But it is entertaining.

He treats Lake Wobegon with thoughtfulness and humor, though not always with respect. Reading him makes me feel closer to the folks back home. Sometimes, when Keillor removes -being the last one picked for the himself from the story as storyteller baseball team, growing up without air and starts writing straight fiction, we

conditioning because it builds charac- lose the authority of his voice and ter and getting lost in a blizzard while perspective. He does this throughout a chapter entitled "New Albion," a boring history of the founding of Lake Wobegon. He probably intended it to give the book credibility, but it's so full of bears, small colleges and eccentric old men that it ends up sounding like John Irving at his worst.

Mechanics get in Keillor's way at times, too. Shifts in tense and person interrupt his natural flow and could throw the reader off course. Because of this (and the hard-cover price of \$17.95) I advice you to wait until "Lake Wobegon Days" comes out in paperback. The stories are timeless. They'll keep that long.

**Review copy courtesy of Uni**versity Bookstore.

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## Movie books top list

"Out of Africa" and "The Color Purple," most probably because of the success of the films based on those books, still dominate the top two positions at the Nebraska Bookstore and the University Bookstore. Other bestsellers for last week from the two bookstores are as follows:

#### Nebraska Bookstore

1, "Out of Africa & Shadows on the Grass," by Isak Dinesen (Vintage, \$4.95) 2. "The Color Purple," by Alice Walker

(Pocket, \$3.95) 3. "World Almanac & Book of Facts, 1986,"

(Newspaper Enterprise Association, Inc., \$5.95)

4. "Talisman," by Stephen King & Peter Straub (Berkley, \$4.95)

5. "Breaking with Moscow," by Arkady N. Shevchenko (Ballantine, \$4.95)

6. "The Road Less Travelled," by M. Scott. Peck (Simon & Schuster, \$9.95)

"Third Garfield Treasury," by Jim Davis (Ballantine, \$8.95)

8. "Comet," by Carl Sagan (Random House,

9. "Surely You're Joking, Mr. Feynman," by Richard P. Feynman (Bantam, \$4.50) 10. "Old Farmers Almanac, 1986," by Robert B. Thomas (Yankee, \$1.95)

#### **University Bookstore**

1. "The Color Purple" - Alice Walker (Pocket, \$3.95)

2. "Out of Africa" - Isak Dinesen (Vintage, \$4.95)

3. "Neil's Book of the Dead" - Nigel Planer (Harmony Books, \$7.95) 4. "So Long, and Thanks for All the Fish"

- Douglas Adams (Pocket, \$3.95)

5. "Late Night with David Letterman: The Book" - Merill Markoe, ed. (Villard, \$8.95) 6. "Mexico Set" - Len Deighton (Ballan-

tine, \$4.50) 7. "Lake Wobegon" - Garrison Keillor

(Viking, \$17.95) 8. "Valley of the Far Side" - Gary Larson

(Andrews, McNeel and Parker, \$5.95) 9. "World Almanac & Book of Facts 1986'

- (Ballantine, \$5.95)

10. "The Road Less Travelled" - M. Scott Peck (Simon & Schuster, \$9.95)



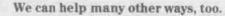
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