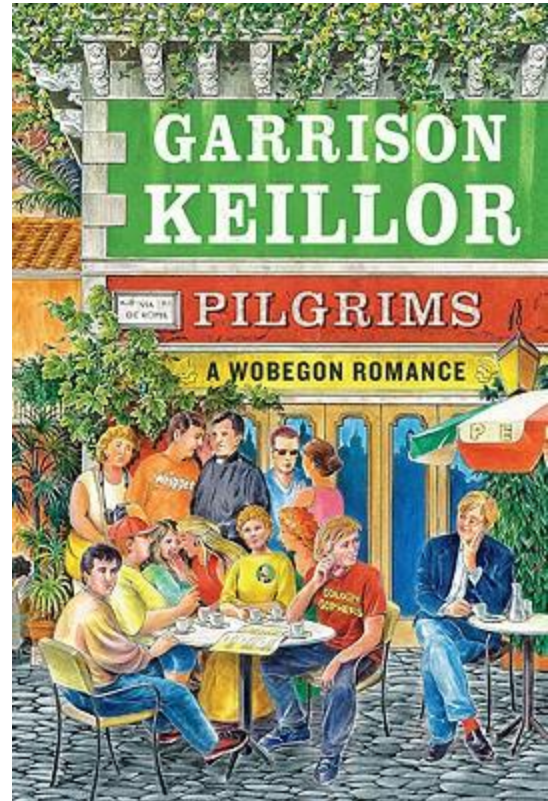


“Pilgrims: A Wobegon Romance” by Garrison Keillor. Penguin Group, 2009. \$25.95, 297 pages.

How many of you have ever made a road trip with a group of friends? There is usually so more to the trip than just arriving at the destination. Anyone who has listened to “A Prairie Home Companion” knows this author for his charming portrayal of small town humor when life was a lot simpler. For more than 20 years, Keillor has drawn us into imaginary settings with a story filled to the brim with hope, wistfulness, and wonder. The premise of the book is a pilgrimage to Rome instigated by a promise Norbert Norlander made to his mother, to find the WW II grave of his brother and affix a picture to the tombstone. Norbert, now on his deathbed in Tulsa, recruits shy Margie Krebsbach to lead a group of “pilgrims” on this mission. Gary Keillor, in town for a speaking engagement, decides to underwrite the cost of the trip and joins the group. He is hoping to write a book about the adventure. He soon discovers that even the \$57,000 he is paying for the trip has not enticed the “pilgrims” to be nice to him. Contemplating their insults, he wonders why he came.

The story opens with the group landing at Da Vinci airport in Rome. Margie Krebsbach has undertaken this mission, not only for Norbert, but she has a goal to reignite her marriage. Margie’s role as trip leader is putting her in uncharted territory but she is bound and determined this group will experience joy on this trip. Her vision of Audrey Hepburn in “Roman Holiday” has given her inspiration to awaken a lifeless marriage. Keillor has written a condensed synopsis of the story as a poem in the preface. No one tells a story better than Keillor because his realistic descriptions make you smile broadly. During these stressful times, don’t we need more laughter and fun? The characters are well developed and you will discover why each of them made the decision to come on this trip.



Garrison Keillor is the author of numerous books and magazine articles. He is recovering from a minor stroke which occurred in September. Check out his other novels including “Pontoon: A Lake Wobegon Novel,” “Wobegon Boy,” and “WLT, a Radio Romance.” Many of his titles are available in audio format.

Susan Benning is the Head Librarian at May Memorial Library. Visit us on the web at www.alamancelibraries.org.