



Natural therapy

Prairie Farm author Jay Gilbertson, above, drinks from a spring he discovered in a hillside on his land. "I play up here all the time," he said. "This is my therapy." Gilbertson reads from and signs "Moon Over Madeline Island" Saturday from 1-3 p.m. at Thyme Worn Treasures in Rice Lake. "Back to Madeline Island" is due in book stores this fall, and he is writing the third in the series that he hopes will include 10 books.

Writer ...

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scene, so Gilbertson begins his writing by rereading a few of the previous pages to pick up the rhythm.

REASONED WRITING

The story targets female baby boomers, but Gilbertson's heard from a few male readers who liked the book so much they gave it to their girlfriends or wives.

"Baby boomers are famous for soul-searching, and they're more resilient to change and not so spoiled," he said. "But baby boomers' kids, on the other hand, have been handed the world.

"It's not chick lit," said Gilbertson. "In chick lit you're in your 30s, you're looking for the man

and worried about whether the lipstick matches the shoes—pretty shallow."

Eve is beyond that. "She's more reflective," he said. "Eve's brilliant in her own loopy way.

"She has no fear. She follows through with her dream. I think that strikes a chord with a lot of people. They have that dream but don't follow through with it."

Gilbertson's message: "Stop dreaming and make it happen.

"People work too much—40-50 hours a week," he said. "I see that in all of my clients. They work way too hard."

Gilbertson and his partner, Ken Seguire, found their niche in 2001 when they purchased 80 breathtakingly beautiful acres near Prairie Farm and realized within a couple of months that it was where they belonged.

"The community spirit here is so rich. There's lots of like-minded people here," he said.

Today Gilbertson spends half of each week at his salon and the other half on the farm, where he and Seguire mindfully grow fruit and vegetables and share the land with a small flock of laying hens, their cat and assorted wildlife species.

"If I just wrote, I think I'd go totally crazy, because I like to do other things," he said. "I hear that from other writers. That they have lives, because how else can you write about people?"

But Gilbertson is never far from his characters.

"I'm always in Eve's head or she's in mine," he said. "I'm bits and pieces of all my characters."

He said that the writing process often continues even when he is weeding the garden or exercising, because those kinds of mundane activities free the mind to be creative.

MORE STORIES AHEAD

"Back to Madeline Island," is at Kensington Books and due out in October, and Gilbertson is writing Book Three for publication in October 2007.

"I write really fast," he said. "Book Two took about half a year."

Book Three is "rolling along" because of all the possibilities Gilbertson created in "Back to Madeline Island," including a 3-D map of the island that he said will appear throughout the series.

"I just think that would be a great thing to have," he said. "Madeline Island is full of secrets."

The two episodes follow Eve's transformation into a people helper.

"It fulfills her," Gilbertson said. "It doesn't take the place of a man, but she doesn't have time.

"And I think there are a lot of women like that who have really close friendships with their lady friends."

Gilbertson said that he enjoyed writing Book Two because it was a chance to expand on characters' backgrounds. In it, the women's relationship takes a "major shift," but remains "forever," he assured. And Gilbertson knows their forever.

"I have many, many, many books in my head. I'd like to do 10," he said.

Gilbertson is considering a screenplay and would like to write young adult books.

Readers may meet and visit with Gilbertson at a reading/signing event Saturday from 1-3 p.m. at Thyme Worn Treasures, 30 N. Main St., Rice Lake.

Gilbertson and his mother will also have a booth at the Bayfield Apple Festival Oct. 6-8.



Focused on the land

Above is Prairie Farm author Jay Gilbertson, whose novel "Moon Over Madeline Island" teaches readers about the importance of friendship and trust. Gilbertson's belief in relationships extends to the earth, and today the pond on his 80-acre farm is filled with lily pads, toads, frogs and snails because he and his partner spent two summers removing the cattails that ringed the body of water and restoring it to good health.