

# L. Frank Baum's great-grandson finds there's no place like Oz

■ **Book signing:** Long lines of people came to wonder at Roger S. Baum and his SillyOzbul's at Dillard's Tuesday afternoon.

**By Karla Price**

The News-Leader

When L. Frank Baum put pen to paper and wrote "The Wizard of Oz" in 1900, he likely had no idea that the book — and the movie that followed — would become perennial favorites.

His great-grandson, Roger S. Baum, didn't think he would carry on the tradition of transporting readers to that magical kingdom, but he is.

Baum, who has written five Oz books, autographed copies of his latest, "The SillyOZbul of Oz and the Magic Merry-Go-Round" at Dillard's Tuesday afternoon. SillyOZbul's, sweet, fuzzy creatures that live in Oz, are the latest addition to the stable of characters.

A former banker and stockbroker, Baum first wrote a non-Oz book, but soon decided to try his hand at his ancestor's legacy.

"I've found that people have such a wonderful enthusiasm for Oz. Because of all the heritage of the last name, we have a tremendous obligation to the Oz fans to retain the quality of the books," he said.

That gamble has been successful. Baum, who lives in Westlake, Calif., has sold more than 75,000 Oz books since 1989.

Long lines of people waited patiently for autographs at the front of the store. Many were purchasing them for gifts — often for other adults.

Dee Hollenbeck, 59, of Shell Knob, bought six books, some for her 32-year-old grandson, a longtime Oz fan, and some "for future grandchildren."

Nancy Rubino, 36, of Aurora, bought a book for her 3-year-old son, but she also came for advice — bringing a 1914 first edition of "Little Wizard Stories of Oz," one of 14 books written by L. Frank Baum.

"I'd been to a lot of dealers and they couldn't tell me anything about it, so I thought, 'this is the man to see,'" she said.

Baum told her it was likely worth \$300 to \$400. Rubino had bought it for a quarter at a garage sale.

"I'm definitely glad I came," she said.



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**Author Roger Baum** signs one of his books for Angelo Rubino, 3, of Aurora. Baum, like his great-grandfather, writes about Oz.