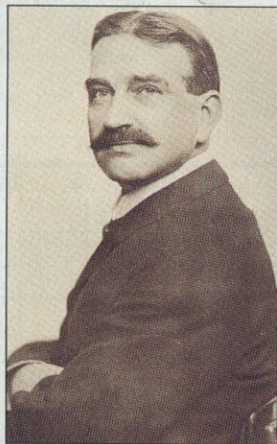


life." Two years later he produced *Dorothy of Oz*, and the Emerald City gang was again back in business. Baum has written an Oz book each year since—the next, *The Lion of Oz and the Badge of Courage*, is due out this spring—and is selling 110,000 hard-back volumes a year. "Oz is supposed to be timeless," says Fred M. Meyer, secretary of the Oz club, which has 2,500 members, "and Roger Baum has captured that."

Although his family never made much of its Oz connection, Baum vividly remembers his great-grandmother Maud Gage Baum, L. Frank's widow, who lived in Hollywood and died in 1954 at age 92. "I would sit in this immense, very comfortable chair she had, playing with her dog Toto." Still, the younger Baum's journey to Oz was circuitous. The Los Angeles-born son of Joslyn Baum, an insulation contractor, and his wife, Elizabeth, a homemaker, he was an indifferent student who dropped out of college to enlist in the Navy, then went through a series of jobs in brokerage houses and banks. Along the way, he married, fathered two children, divorced and was remar-



"From what I know about L. Frank Baum [left]," says Roger's wife, Charlene, "he and Roger are a lot alike. Both have huge hearts."

ried, in 1985, to Charlene Barrad, 55, an accountant.

Like his great-grandfather, who produced early silent-movie versions of Oz books, Baum is exploring other media for his work. He recently released an interactive CD that lets cybnauts travel through Oz. Well, most of it, any-



way. "Oz is an enormous place," says Baum. "In keeping with Great-Granddad's spirit, I will always make sure that some part of it goes unexplored. I never want readers to feel that they've seen it all."

■ MICHAEL NEILL

■ EX. FEENEY in Las Vegas