

# The BOOKSTORE

## The Magic of OZ Lives On

by Jeanie Linders

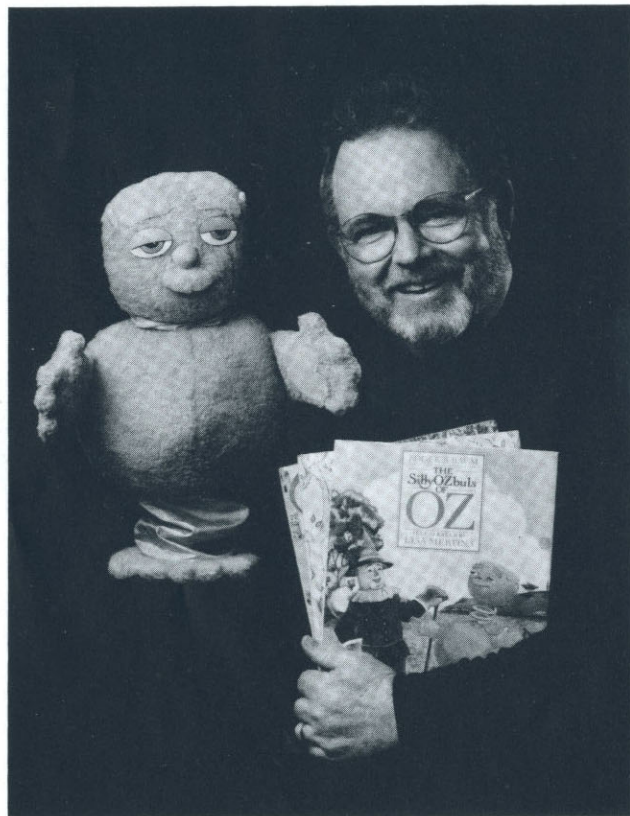
**I**n the tradition of his great grandfather, L. Frank Baum, the creator of *The Wizard of Oz*, Roger S. Baum recently launched the third of the SillyOZbul trilogy — *The SillyOZbul of Oz and the Magic Merry-Go-Round*.

Like his great-grandfather before him, Baum has a gift for entertaining children and bringing countless stories to life. But his reluctance to capitalize on the Baum name nearly prevented the 54-year-old author from writing his own Oz stories.

A former stockbroker and banker, Baum of Westlake Village was encouraged to continue the tales of Dorothy, Toto and the rest of the yellow brick road crew by a member of the International Wizard of Oz Club.

"It sounded a little presumptuous, but I figured no one had to see it but me," says Baum, who had already written several short stories and a children's book entitled *Long Ears and Tailspin*.

*Dorothy of Oz*, handwritten, more or less as a hobby,



was subsequently published in 1989 by William Morrow & Co. with illustrations by Elizabeth Miles, whose work includes *The Velveteen Rabbit*.

*The Rewolf of Oz* was published by Simon & Schuster; and since 1991, Baum has published and sold over 60,000 SillyOZbul books through his own Yellow Brick Road Publishers, Inc.

"The SillyOZbuls are a race of loveable, huggable, spring-footed characters," said Baum, "that were created to give and receive love. The trilogy was written more for younger children, but the books have already become collectors' items."

The trilogy — *The SillyOZbul of Oz*, *The SillyOZbul of Oz and Toto*, and *The SillyOZbul and the Magic Merry-Go-Round* — are sold during book-signing appearances which take Baum throughout the country.

With the launch of the third in the trilogy, Baum will continue his touring schedule while completing *The Lion of Oz*, a more sophisticated children's novel that was slated for publication by Yellow Brick Road Publishers in March.

As the only Baum writing about Oz today, Roger takes the responsibility of being the name bearer seriously.

"Maintaining the quality of the Oz books is my main concern," said Baum. "I am not trying to follow in great-grand dad's footsteps — they're pretty big. I just want to carry on the love of Oz and add to the legend."

Roger Baum never met his great grandad, but he remembers visiting Maude Gage Baum, his great grandmother in the 1940s at her home in Hollywood. One of his most cherished possessions is an early edition of *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz* inscribed "To my great grandson with love."

Baum's earliest recollection of family memories was when he was about four or five, and she was in her 90s.

"As a youngster I was more excited about seeing her little dog Toto than I was about visiting Great Grandma," says Baum. "I remember sitting in a winged back chair playing with the pooch. I'm not sure what kind of dog it was, but I do know it was a dog named Toto... all of their dogs were named Toto."

Baum remembers reading and loving the Oz books as a youngster. His father, Joslyn Stanton Baum, to whom *The Road to Oz* is dedicated, used to read the Oz and Winnie-the-Pooh books to him at bedtime.

"I didn't understand the family connection until later, but always enjoyed the stories," says Baum. "My favorite character, well, it was Winnie-the-Pooh."

*Jeanie Linders is a writer in Montecito.*