



Oz Festival book signing party: Roger S. Baum, the oldest living great-grandson of L. Frank Baum, pictured here with SillyOZbul, a character he created for one of his books, will be at the Oz Festival September 15-17 in Chesterton for a book signing party. L. Frank Baum penned the most widely read children's book of all time, *The Wizard of Oz*. Roger's latest book is *The Lion of Oz And The Badge of Courage*.
 (Photo Provided Courtesy of Wizard of Oz Festival)

Oz author descendent expected here for festival

Roger S. Baum is the eldest living great-grandson of L. Frank Baum, author of the most widely read and beloved children's book of all times - *The Wizard of Oz* - penned 100 years ago this year.

"Most people don't realize that *The Wizard of Oz* was written in Chicago, and the Yellow Brick Road was named after winding cobblestone roads in Holland, Mich. where great-grandfather spent vacations with his family," says Roger Baum who will appear at the 19th Annual Wizard of Oz Festival, Sept. 15-17 in Chesterton.

Some area residents are aware the L. Frank Baum family had a vacation home nearby Chesterton at Bass Lake, Indiana. And, Chicago's Humboldt Park was home to L. Frank Baum for many years. Despite a heart problem, he continually worked to support his four sons: He was a traveling salesman, published a small newspaper and ran a dry goods shop. The magic, however, in his life was story-telling. Each story he envisioned, fired and sharpened his imagination for future stories. Baum became so well known and well loved by the neighborhood kids that they waited on his doorstep for him to come home to—or, come out of—his apartment.

"The tales were tested not only on his four sons, but all the kids in the neighborhood," says Roger. "My great granddad told these stories for the love of the young at heart."

L. Frank Baum's wife Maud prodded her husband to write what he had then only recited. Reluctant

at first, he finally consented and ended up writing a total of 61 books. Several were under pen names.

Children of the world lost a dear friend when he passed on at the age of 62, but one hundred years later, he still lives in the hearts of many. Maud survived him by 30 years and lived to be 92.

Roger was blessed with the opportunity to hear stories directly from his great grandma as she sat in her big winged back chair.

"Yes! She did get to see the movie in 1939, and even visited the set with Judy Garland," says Roger. "I think she was pretty pleased with the outcome."

Just as L. Frank Baum's wife prompted her husband 100 years ago, Roger Baum's wife Charlene has also gently motivated her husband to follow the famous author's footsteps to continue down the Yellow Brick Road to write his own series of seven Oz books.

Roger will be at the local Oz Festival to sell and autograph copies of his newest book *The Lion of Oz And The Badge of Courage*. First released in 1995, the book has since been made into an animated two-hour musical motion picture to debut on the Disney Channel in late August. It will appear on Toon Disney, be released on DVD and VHS in September, and then shown on television stations internationally.

For schedules, information, activities and maps, please call the Duneland Chamber of Commerce at 926-5513 or log on to <http://wpl/lib.in.us/chamber/Oz/oz.htm> (no spacing).