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## Frog's jokes

continued from page 1

visited friends in 1979. He quickly decided to stay.

"I realized why they were living out here, so I stayed," he said. Frog said he has hardly used his legal name since high school when a friend started calling him Frog; although, he said it was so long ago he can't remember why.

Now that it's winter, he wears a green wool hat with frog eyes and a pullover jacket with a frog on the front to match both the winter weather and his nickname.

After high school, he went to Ohio University and received his bachelor of arts in journalism. He wanted to be a writer but soon discovered that working for an employer was not for him.

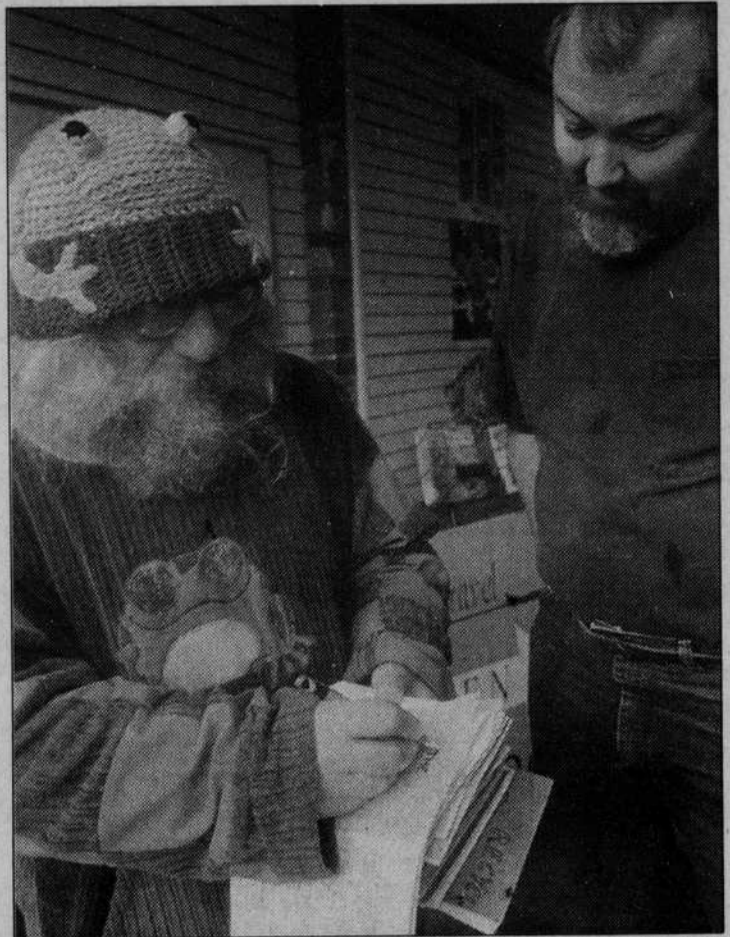
"I just don't like being told what to do," he said.

So Frog became his own boss and explored a number of businesses before he took some friends' advice and started writing up some of the many jokes he knew.

Selling his joke books on 13th Avenue, however, was not that easy. Frog found out the hard way when, in 1990, Eugene police started ticketing him repeatedly for violating a law stating that vendors can only sell flowers, balloons, food and beverages on the street. Rather than paying the tickets, Frog said he not only continued selling his joke books but he also took the city of Eugene to court — all the way to the Oregon Supreme Court, that is.

In 1995, the Supreme Court decided that limiting the items vendors can sell on the street to balloons, flowers, food and beverages was unconstitutional.

But Frog had only won half the battle. He still needed a license, which the city refused to issue because it feared overcrowding on 13th Avenue. With the help of his lawyer, Frog found a loophole in the law and used it to his advantage. While street vendors need a



Catharine Kendall Emerald

Frog signs a jokebook he just sold to a Eugene resident Wednesday afternoon.

license, newspaper boxes do not.

So Frog got an old newspaper box, painted it blue, decorated it with a frog, chained it to a light pole on 13th Avenue and put his books in it. He said he now advertises his books and then points customers who wish to buy a book to the blue box.

Frog said he even called the city prosecutor and told him about his new way of doing his business and has not had any problems ever since. The court proceedings even had some perks, Frog said. The newspaper coverage at the time provided free advertising, and his sales rocketed, he said.

"It was the best publicity I could have ever gotten," he said.

He even recorded his experience in yet another book — "Frog goes to court."

Elise Chandler, a junior business major said she walks by Frog frequently and has heard him ask other passers-by the famous question: "Have you read the funniest joke book in the world?"

Chandler said she has wondered about Frog before and was curious to find out who he is, but said she just is not the type of person who walks up to people and starts a conversation.

"He's just doing his business and I'm doing mine," Chandler said.

Sachitiano said she and her friend suspected that Frog has a

successful business with his books and lives comfortably.

"He's gotta be rolling," Sachitiano said.

Frog said his business allows him to make a living. He said he knows he could earn more working for an employer, but he likes being his own boss and working only about four hours a day.

"Obviously I don't believe in punching the clock," he said.

Frog said he likes what he does and although he sometimes enjoys a break, he has no plans of doing anything else. He said he likes his customers, many of whom are students, faculty and staff, and is friends with many of them. But he also said he knows that some passers-by would rather not have him do his job where he does it.

Frog said he is now looking forward to a well-deserved break. He is headed to Ohio at the end of January to visit his family and enjoy watching the Super Bowl with his mother and sister, even though the Seattle Seahawks, his favorite team, have already been eliminated in the playoffs.

Frog said he loves his family and is looking forward to the visit, but he said he could never move back to Ohio permanently. A couple weeks is all Frog needs before he will return to his business and his spot on 13th Avenue.

"I'll definitely be ready to come back here," he said.

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