

A literary leap

'The Little Spotted Frog' is
Kent D. Walsh's latest children's tale

By HEATHER DOUGLAS
FOR COAST WEEKEND

Seaview author Kent D. Walsh recently released his eighth book, "The Little Spotted Frog," which tells of a young boy who attempts to catch a cute little frog with his bare hands ... and gets more than he bargained for.

The story is based on Walsh's experiences at Burnt Bridge Creek, a small stream about half a mile from his childhood home in Vancouver, Washington. A writer of fiction, nonfiction, young adult and children's books, Walsh drew inspiration for this latest work from his childhood love of fishing and catching frogs.

A lighthearted cautionary tale with a twist at the end, "The Little Spotted Frog" is about a boy's quest for adventure despite the best advice of his mom, and speaks to every child's sense of mischief.

It is also a family collaboration: The illustrations were drawn by Walsh's daughter-in-law, Jennifer U. Ranker, a professional illustrator.

"She does the illustrations, and I do the writing," Walsh said, adding that Ranker is working on another book for him.

Another of Walsh's children's books, "Thaddeus T. and Barnaby," is also about frogs and tadpoles. Walsh's former coworker purchased that one for her 8-year-old son, who called it the best book he ever read in his life, the author recalled.

"I felt that was a real compliment," Walsh said. "That's one of the things that inspires you to write. When someone says good stuff about your work, that makes you want to keep writing."

'That came out of my brain'

Something else that keeps Walsh writing: Words from his father who died in

1978 after a two-year battle in the hospital.

"I visited him nearly every day," Walsh said. "We were talking about his life, and one of the things he said was, 'Ken, I could write a book.' But he never did. I thought that is really a shame, and those words inspired me to write."

Walsh's wife, Madeline, a cancer survivor, inspires him as well.

"She encouraged me to be more serious about my writing and get published. I guess you could say she inspired me through her battle," Walsh said. "I figured, if she could win a battle like cancer, I could accomplish something, too."

Walsh, whose books often take a year or more to complete, speaks as if his characters have a life of their own.

"My brother asked me how I come up with the names and the things my characters do. I joked, 'I don't create their names, their parents do.' I don't control the events; they just seem to be there," Walsh said.

The author prefers to write at his vintage roll top oak desk, a family heirloom. When working on a lengthy book, he will write nearly every day.

For anyone who would like to take writing more seriously, Walsh advises: "You don't have to spend

your whole life writing — an hour here or there. Everyone has a book in them, and when someone reads it, you're so happy. You think: I did that. That came out of my brain."

At home in Seaview

Born in Minot, North Dakota, Walsh grew up in Vancouver and spent the next

'SHE ENCOURAGED ME TO BE MORE SERIOUS ABOUT MY WRITING AND GET PUBLISHED. I GUESS YOU COULD SAY SHE INSPIRED ME THROUGH HER BATTLE. I FIGURED IF SHE COULD WIN A BATTLE LIKE CANCER, I COULD ACCOMPLISH SOMETHING, TOO.'

Continued on Page 15

Kent D. Walsh holds up his latest book, "The Little Spotted Frog."

SUBMITTED PHOTO

