

## **SCANDIA: 87-YEAR-OLD WRITER STAYS ON CUTTING EDGE**

**By Lynette Meachum, Sun Staff Reporter**

Dwight Droz will use the benefits of e-publishing to get his latest work, "Culture on the Cuff," into print.

Holding court in the friendly kitchen of his Scandia farmhouse, crowned with a hat advertising the Vermont Bean Seed Co., Dwight Droz doesn't seem like someone on top of the latest in technology.

But the 87-year-old author embraced the computer age as soon as the first K-Pro came out, and his latest book will make him the among the first small author-publishers in Kitsap County to take advantage of electronic publishing.

That doesn't mean the book will be available online, technical consultant Don Taylor said. Instead, Droz and Taylor will send the book to the printer electronically, eliminating the need to print expensive camera-ready copy.

The press will then be able to print a short run of copies economically, sparing Droz an inundation of new books.

The format also means the book could be made available to download from the Internet, if Droz and Taylor decide they're interested in that route, Taylor said.

"When we printed his first book, we ended up with a living room full of books," Taylor said. "This solves the problem of 'Where am I going to store all these copies?'"

Droz and his wife, Pauline, are still selling copies of "One for the Weather, One for the Crow" out of the back door of their farmhouse and at several Poulsbo businesses. The book chronicled 30 years of their life at Scandia Patch, their small farm.

Droz is also flush with copies of "Arizona Bound," a book of poetry and sketches. His forthcoming book, "Culture on the Cuff," is a weighty 593 pages of essays, poetry and stories from Droz's years in rural Idaho and Kitsap County. It should be available this fall, Taylor said.

"I don't care whether I make a dime or not," Droz said. "I just want to get this out there."

Section headings include "Two Tales My Barber Told Me" and "People, Skits and Cheesy Bits." He loves to thumb through his well-worn manuscript and read snatches of the strictly rhyming poetry, wistful recollections of his farming childhood and the story of a horse thief and a string of stolen horses that spent the night with his family.

The volume's title comes from the Little Blue Books of publisher E. Haldeman-Julius. Droz has a copy of one, called "How to Play Checkers," that was published in 1927. It easily fits into his shirt pocket.

The brown-paper book was part of a series that included everything from Shakespeare on down. Growing up, Droz would carry the books with him as he did his farm work.

"That's how I got all my culture, on the cuff," he said.

He went on to host a short radio program on a station in Boise, Idaho, and worked for a stint at Puget Sound Naval Shipyard before being laid off and turning to the state Department of Employment Security for help. Instead of finding him another job, they hired him to help other unemployed workers.

"I was out of work so often, it was clearly my main experience in life," Droz said.

In 87 years, he's met a host of interesting characters and accumulated an endless stock of the tales that have made their way into his books.

With Droz's prolific writing, Pauline said she was happy when the first personal computers came out and he bought a K-Pro.

"He had me do the typing before. Now, I don't set foot in there," she said, beckoning to the packed living room where Droz does his writing now on his third computer, a Gateway.

Droz said learning the computer ropes wasn't hard - "you just have to be firm with it." He sings the praises of Windows, and especially loves spell-check.

"I just sit there and grin and say, 'I'm stupid, but that thing sure is smart,' " he said.

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