

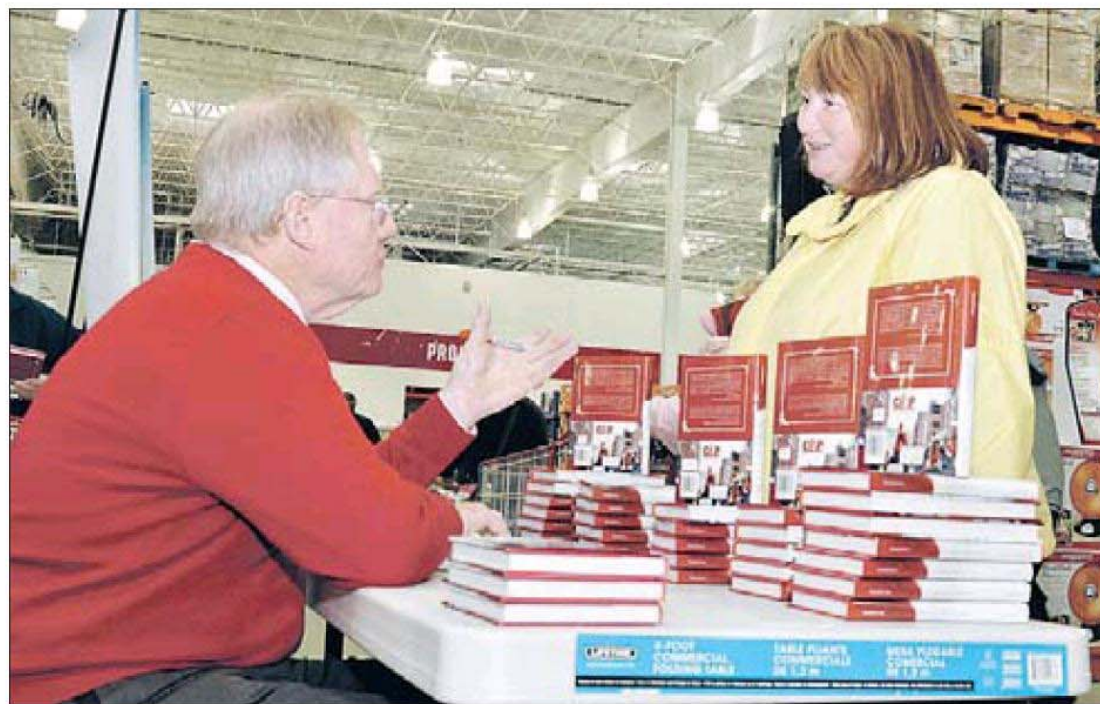
PUBLISHING

Santa book makes national bestseller list

'The Man in the Red Suit' sells 5,000 copies in four weeks

By ANDREW ROBINSON

THE TELEGRAM



Author and Santa helper Bruce Templeton signs copies of his book, "The Man in the Red Suit," at Costco recently in St. John's. — File photo by Gary Hebbard/The Telegram

Bruce Templeton of St. John's could not have imagined how well his first book would sell, but its holiday spirit appears to have caught the attention of book buyers as the Christmas season draws nearer.

"The Man in the Red Suit," a memoir based on Templeton's experience of, as he calls it, "assisting" Santa Claus on his visits to boys and girls in the St. John's area for the last 33 years, has sold 5,000 copies after debuting on the book market four weeks ago.

Earlier this month, the book managed to crack the Globe and Mail's bestsellers list, placing fourth in the Canadian non-fiction section and seventh in the hard-cover non-fiction category.

"I'm humbled and astonished by the result," said the author.

Donna Francis, editor and marketing manager for Creative Book Publishing (owned by The Telegram's parent company TC Media), said she was thrilled to see it make the bestsellers list.

"Every book that we do, we always aim to make a national bestseller out of it," she said.

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Book to become available at large Chapters stores

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"The reality is publishers of our size, publishers with regional titles, very seldom get to make it to that list."

However, Francis was not shocked by the news given the book's content, which she said had received a fabulous response before it hit store shelves on Sept. 24.

"The biggest part of what makes the book beautiful is the story that it tells," she said.

The book sold 400 copies at its launch two days later on Sept. 26, an unheard of figure, according to Francis.

A third printing of the book has been ordered. Francis said she cannot begin to speculate on how many printings may be completed by the time Christmas arrives.

However, Francis has received word that Indigo Books, which operates Chapters book stores amongst others, is set to make it available at the company's large-format stores.

"It's a book that can sell nationally, and sometimes when you're a regional publisher it's hard to find a book that has a national appeal, but this one absolutely does," said Francis.

In honour of the book's early success, Templeton intends to donate some of the proceeds to Rotary International's polio campaign, which will help immunize 6,000 children as a result.

He also intends to make a donation to the Janeway Children's Hospital, a place Templeton has become very familiar with through his visits over the years. Many of those visits are referenced in "The Man in the Red Suit."

Templeton said the book signing events he has attended have been an amazing experience.

In one case, a woman showed him a picture of Santa holding a 542-gram baby and then introduced Templeton to the same girl, who is now 11 years old.

"When you're signing books, you have no idea as the author ... what stories they're going to bring you. That for me has been a huge bonus in what's happening."

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