

Frugal Gourmet meets his fans

By Ethel Simmons
staff writer

The "Frug" himself — Jeff Smith, star of TV's "The Frugal Gourmet" — visited Cargo Express in Farmington Hills one recent afternoon to sign copies of his books for customers and cookware show.

Smith was even more lively than he is on the syndicated PBS show, seen locally on WPTV, Channel 56. His cooking show chef, Craig Wallam, who also came along to sign books with Smith, was as laid-back as he is on the air.

TV star Smith greeted each customer or family effusively, as they approached him for the book-signing — after many of them waited for an hour or more in a long line that snaked through the store.

The Frugal Gourmet was especially cheery with the youngsters, many of whom watch his show along with their moms and/or dads. "How long have you been waiting?" he said loudly to one child. "That's dumb!" he joked, after the child told him.

ONE MOTHER brought copies of Smith's to sign each of his five books, which include "The Frugal Gourmet," "The Frugal Gourmet Cooks With You," "The Frugal Gourmet Cooks American," "The Frugal Gourmet Cooks Three Ancient Cuisines" and "The Frugal Gourmet on Our Immigrant Ancestors."

Smith kidded everyone that buying his books was helping him put his sons through college. "Remember, I have two boys in college," he said. "If you have all five books, you get a grade report every semester."

A glass bowl on the book-signing table, and Smith asked custom-

ers who requested autographs to make a donation for a food bank, his own personal cause, if they desired.

The Cargo Express sells Smith's books and carries a line of kitchen products labeled "selected by Jeff Smith, the Frugal Gourmet."

"They're all products he uses on the show, has tested and believes are quality merchandise," said Timothy J. Hopkins, Cargo Express president. "The line includes kitchen utensils and such cookware as a three-piece

wok set, baking shells, a stainless steel oil can and a mandolin kitchen slicer.

BEFORE ARRIVING at the Downtown Farmington Center, Smith had signed books at Cargo Express at Madison Place in Madison Heights. Barb Serman, advertising manager of Cargo Express, estimated the size of the crowd in Madison Heights as "at least 300. Here it looks like we had even more."

The TV show "The Frugal Gourmet" is watched by more than 15 million viewers each week, making it the highest-rated cooking show in TV history. An ordained Methodist minister, Smith developed his show in the early 1970s. Both Smith and chef Craig make their homes in Seattle. "The Frugal Gourmet" is filmed at studios in Chicago.

"Bless your heart, and thank you so much!" he said to one person, after signing a book.

SHARON LE MIEUX/staff photographer

The Frugal Gourmet signs autographs at Cargo Express in Farmington Hills. Customers bought or brought copies of his five books for him to sign. Individuals and couples showed up, as well as many kids with their parents.

An appreciative audience laughs after Smith tells them a colorful story about his TV cooking show.

Quick-rise yeast saves time when baking bread

AP — The thought of baking your own bread, however delicious and comforting, may be a fleeting one, when you consider the time it can take.

Lucky for you, today's parade of cook-faster products has touched even bread baking. You can now subdue quick-rise yeast for regular yeast in many bread recipes and cut dough-rising time almost in half.

This timesaver is simply a stronger strain of yeast, as natural as regular active dry yeast. Breads made with quick-rise yeast will rise faster, coarser in texture than those made with regular yeast. Also, the dough may have more oven-spring (the rising that happens when dough is first

put into a hot oven). This means the loaves may crack more along the top.

To get the best results from using quick-rise yeast, follow these Better Homes and Gardens test kitchen tips:

- Use quick-rise yeast for bread doughs that need only one rising, such as brioche breads. Doughs made with quick-rise yeast typically don't rise much in a second rising.

- Choose regular yeast instead of quick-rise yeast for refrigerator breads and for doughnut batters.

- Substitute one package of quick-rising active dry yeast for each package of regular active dry yeast specified in the recipe.

Check the expiration date to be sure the yeast is still active. Old yeast, quick-rise or regular, are not satisfactory.

• Start with ingredients that are at room temperature; cold ingredients slow the rising action.

• Stir the yeast into the flour, rather than dissolving the yeast in the liquid.

• Heat the liquid to 125 degrees to 130 degrees. Use a cooking thermometer to assure accuracy.

• After mixing the yeast and the dough, let it stand for 10 minutes, then shape the dough. This relaxes the dough and makes shaping easier.

• Let the shaped dough rise,

loosely covered, in a warm place. An unheated oven is ideal. Place the bowl of dough in a cold oven, then set a large pan of hot water under the bowl on the oven's lower rack. Keep the oven door closed during the

rising process.

• Start checking for doubling of the dough at about half of the time suggested in the recipe. To judge whether or not the dough has dou-

bled in size, press the tips of your second and middle fingers into the dough. If the indentations remain, the dough has doubled. If the indentations disappear immediately, then let the dough continue to rise.



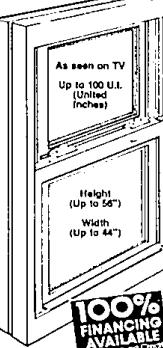
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