

Monk tells his story

by Margo Piffer

Local hermit monk, environmental activist and naturalist Charles Brandt signed copies of his newly released book *Self and Environment* on Saturday at Blue Heron Books in Co-mox.

The 62-page book is one of five in the 'On Retreat With...' Christian meditation series, published by Medio Media in conjunction with Arthur James.

The first section of the book, written by David Lawrence, explains the need for meditation in daily life and directs the reader in using the book.

Self and Environment, the second section of the book, probes deeper and expands that subject. Brandt describes his religious background, travels and academic training as well as how his beliefs about the environment led him to become an ordained Catholic hermit monk living in Oyster River.

Brandt talks about human history, the nature of meditation, humanity, spirituality and their relationship to the earth and universe. An avid naturalist and environmental activist, Brandt believes the split between individuals, their inherent spirituality and nature has resulted in people exploiting the planet's resources, alienating ourselves from self, community, divine truth, and nature.

As a result, the present generation, in danger of engineering its own extinction, is facing emotional stresses unprecedented in history.

The 'On Retreat With ...' Series



Self and Environment

On Retreat With
Charles Brandt



Brandt describes meditation as a tool people can use to reconnect with their own inherent human spirituality and ultimately with nature, the universe and God. He believes that humans, spirituality, the earth and the universe are irrevocably tied — their story is one — and people must heal themselves and reconcile with nature if we are to make decisions needed to survive in the future.

Self and Environment Brandt takes a refreshing perspective on church doctrine and incorporates it into the wider story of natural history and human experience, offering both perspective and hope.

The third section of the book lists of Christian Meditation Centres in various

countries around the world.

Self and Environment reaches beyond meditation as a 'selfish' tool. It will appeal to anyone interested in the human condition or environmental issues and activism. Brandt's ideas are both well developed and conveyed in a way that is easy to read and understand. He manages to convey complex ideas without sounding either pedantic or overintellectualized.

Self and the Environment is thought provoking and a concise roadmap. Its generous references to thinkers and authors in various schools of thought light the way for further exploration and give the reader hope for the future.

It is a book that is written to be read and reread