

Another milestone for 'Josh' Holt as children's book published

by DAVID MURRAY
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Prolific local author J. Edwards "Josh" Holt has added another milestone to his growing list of accomplishments by publishing his first Children's Book in February.

Entitled *The Jealous Little Ogre*, Holt's story teaches the value of appreciating the ones we love, and has garnered some impressive early reviews:

Brilliant use of rhyming-flows off the tongue and my kids love the characters; Sweet story, my daughter likes the rhyming.

Best known as an author of Young Adult Fantasy, Holt published *The Battle of Danamor*, the third and final book in his *Little Men, Big Treasures* epic fantasy trilogy in December.

When I caught up with him recently in the Richard H. Thornton Library in Oxford, he was fresh off an exciting turnout for his Book Signing at "The Calico Paw" in Henderson. He met some great fans, got some great photos and even sold out of books.

"A lot of people came out to show their support," Holt marveled.

But success hasn't always come easy for the thirty-one year old author. At the age of ten, Holt was diagnosed with a form of Tourette's Syndrome, a neurological disorder characterized by involuntary tics and vocalizations. He had trouble concentrating in school, and has "been in and out" of therapy for anxiety and depression for a number of years. He has also been diagnosed with Obsessive Compulsive Disorder (OCD).

Some days are harder than others, he notes, and "It's still kind of a struggle some days."

Holt did a lot of writing growing up, and dreamed of one day becoming a writer. Following his graduation from VGCC with a degree in School Age Education, Holt found employment with the Vance County School System as the Site Director for the Fantastic Kid's Club at E. M. Rollins Elementary School and immersed himself in the after school and summer enrichment programs for children. His tenure lasted eight years, until the program was ended.

It was around this time that a friend's father was published, and this rekindled Holt's long lost passion to write. Still, there were moments of doubt as Holt undertook the journey. "I wasn't sure if I could do it," he says.

Ultimately he persevered, and found his footing. In



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all, it took Holt about a year to complete *Little Men, Big Treasure*, and the first book of his epic trilogy was published in November 2017.

Little Men, Big Treasure, unabashedly begins with these verses from the Bible:

"Do not lay not up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal, but lay up for yourselves treasures in Heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also." Matthew 6:19-21

It is the story of four dwarves who set out on an epic adventure from a small village in the mountains seeking a fabulous, long lost treasure. But Holt wants his readers to know that greed and lust can take over our lives if we allow it, and keep us away from a relationship with the Lord.

A fan of the works of C.S. Lewis, Holt intentionally weaves a Christian message into his works, and tries to share his faith with his readers.

"C.S. Lewis is branded as a fantasy writer, but he clearly has a Christian message within," says Holt. A good example of this can be found in his classic, *The Chronicles of Narnia: The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*, where the lion Aslan, King of the Narnians, gives himself willingly as a sacrifice to save his people.

"For me, writing Christian books means everything," says Holt. "As someone who grew up in a Christian home, I always wanted to do God's work, and writing Christian books has become my ministry."

When not writing, Holt works as a Home Health Aide for the elderly and disabled, which he finds "very rewarding."

"It allows me to get to know people, and gives me the chance to help them as well," he adds.

He also enjoys drawing, and reading. Some of his favorite books include the Eragon series by Christopher Paolini, and the Percy Jackson & the Olympians series. His favorite book is *The Phantom Tollbooth* by Norton Juster.

Where does the young author see himself five years down the road? "I plan to keep it going," he says without hesitation. He has plans for another epic fantasy series, probably three books in all, with some of the same characters from his first series.

"I try to be a world builder," he says, "And keep my stories connected."

He is also at work on a book of short stories, 12 stories in all with a fantasy thread.

Holt's books are available at www.jedwardsholt.com, where he maintains a lively blog.

Severe Weather Preparedness Week



GRANVILLE COUNTY EMERGENCY SERVICES: The first week of March is designated as Severe Weather Preparedness Week. The observance serves as a reminder of the importance of planning for unexpected thunderstorms and tornadoes.

Severe storms can produce hail an inch in diameter, winds of 58 mph or more or can produce a tornado. Last year, there were 928 incidents of severe thunderstorms across the state with damaging winds, as well as 91 incidents of flooding.

Prepare now for potential storms. Residents are encouraged to learn more about severe weather safety and to develop a safety plan. Follow these tips to keep you and your loved ones safe:

1. Develop a family emergency plan so that each member knows what to do, where to go and who to call during an emergency. Practice your plan.

2. Know the terms. WATCH means severe weather is possible and to remain alert. WARNING means that severe weather is on the way, and that all residents of the area should take shelter immediately.

3. Assemble an emergency supply kit for your home and/or your vehicle. Include a three-day supply of non-perishable food and bottled water.

4. If driving, leave your vehicle immediately to seek shelter in a safe structure. Do not try to outrun a tornado in your vehicle, and do not stop under an overpass or bridge. If there is no shelter available, take cover in a flat, low-lying area.

5. Stay alert by listening to NOAA radio, local television and radio. In addition, be sure you are signed up for CodeRED emergency alerts.

To enroll in Granville County's free CodeRED notification system, visit granvillecounty.org and click on the CodeRED logo located on the Emergency Management page, under the Community heading.

To find out more about tornadoes, severe storms and emergency preparedness, visit the ReadyNC website at www.ReadyNC.org.

Granville-Vance Public Health Director attends White House briefing

