

CREATORS

The math professor who writes fantasy novels

BENJAMIN C. KLEIN
CORRESPONDENT

After spending the day teaching and analyzing complex mathematics, professor and Binghamton resident Joshua Palmatier likes to relax by sitting down and writing about epic quests in fantastical realms filled with magic.

Palmatier is waiting for his seventh and eighth novels to be released this year, and is already hard at work on a novel that won't come out until the following year at least.

"I started writing in eighth grade, when my English teacher assigned everyone to write a 'Twilight Zone'-inspired short story. I wrote something based off the lost city of Atlantis, and she wrote a note to me that she thought it was good and I should write more. That was the spark," Palmatier said.

Writing ever since, Palmatier said he started to consciously write a novel in high school but that it didn't become a true passion until he was working on his doctorate in mathematics at Binghamton University.

"I think I enjoy working in the fantasy genre, because it's totally different from math," he said. "When doing my Ph.D. I needed a break from the heavy thinking, and fantasy writing was a nice, fun outlet that was creative and provided an escape when I needed the escape."

Palmatier said that without

See **MATH**, Page 4A



ANDREW THAYER / STAFF PHOTO

Joshua Palmatier, a math professor at SUNY Oneonta, writes fantasy novels in his free time.

Joshua Palmatier

Age: 44.

Hometown: Coudersport, Pennsylvania.

Residence: Binghamton.

Education: Ph.D. in mathematics from Binghamton University.

Family: Mother and two brothers.

Hobbies: Teaching spinning classes.

"When doing my Ph.D. I needed a break from the heavy thinking, and fantasy writing was a nice, fun outlet that was creative and provided an escape when I needed the escape."

JOSHUA PALMATIER

Math

Continued from Page 2A

writing, he isn't sure he would have gotten through his doctorate studies.

"I think it is how I got through my Ph.D., because while going through it, you need a mental break, and escaping to another world with magic was a nice break from heavy-duty proofs."

However, despite being so different, Palmatier said he has seen a direct correlation between his writing and his math.

"In order to get a Ph.D. in mathematics, you have to prove something that has never been proven before. So I think in order to do it, you have to get pretty creative, because if it was easy, someone would have thought of it already."

On the flip side, Palma-

tier said it is also easy for him to see how math influences his writing.

"I am writing fantasy, but in order for it to hold up and be believable, the world-building has to follow specific rules, and the rules have to be consistent with each other and work with each other, and I think that is where the math comes into the writing," he said. "Even though it's magic and fantasy, it still has to have an order that has a logical sense."

Palmatier said that as he has gotten older, his influences have evolved. First as a teen, it was Terry Brooks, and then progressed with more adult authors as he got older, such as George R.R. Martin.

"Stephen King as well. I don't write quite that mainstream fiction, but King always has elements of fantasy in his horror."

When it comes to sit-

ting down and writing, Palmatier said he learned long ago that an author of novels cannot just write when they feel like it.

"You will never finish that way," he said. "You have to schedule time to sit down and write every day."

Palmatier is a math professor at SUNY Oneonta. During his teaching months, Palmatier said he likes to write at least 1,000 words a day, but he tries to boost it to at least 2,500 during breaks and summer months.

"You can't just do the writing on a whim, because you will never get a book written on time or on deadline working that way."

Along with working as an author, Palmatier also has edited four short story anthologies.

"You get 10 to 20 authors to write short stories on whatever that theme happens to be," he said. "So the authors

write the stories, and as an editor, you tell them what they need to fix and advise them on revisions, and once that's done, you copy edit and then organize the order of the stories."

Palmatier said that is much more difficult than it sounds, as you don't want all the humorous stories together. "You want to create a flow in the order that doesn't clump the similar stories together."

He described editing as much more mechanical than writing. "The authors are doing all the creativity; you are just trying to make it better."

Despite being a published author, Palmatier said teaching math pays the bills, and that he writes more so because he loves to write. "I would prefer to write every day."