

Raleigh writer publishes pirate series in the name of charity, creativity

By Leslie Rudd, Wake Weekly Staff Writer

RALEIGH — When Eddie Jones's boys were little, he loved to tell them stories.

For the most part, these tall tales wee of the high seas, with pirates and booty seasoned with some age-appropriate humor.

An avid sailor, Jones spent many a night on the bow of his sailboat on the North Carolina coast making up pirate tales for his two sons, most of them starring Captain Stinky Foot — a nod to his youngest son's odorous trait.

Pirate stories came naturally to Jones, who has been a lifelong sailor and, after years of weaving together tales for his kids and their friends, he was encouraged to put them down on paper.

“Part of being a writer and going after your dreams,” he said, is that you rope your family into it. Whether they want to be or not, they're along for the ride.”

It's a ride that has taken decades and some unexpected turns. Now, as the first book in the Caribbean Chronicles series prepares to hit bookstores, Jones wants to ensure that its impact is lasting.

Inspiration Station

The Curse of Captain LaFoote, the first book in the series, follows modern-day boy Ricky Bradshaw as he is transported back to the times of pirates and landlubbers.

In the end, he must choose between returning home to help his widowed mother, or staying with the girl of his tropical dreams.

“The truth is, The Curse of Captain LaFoote is a love story,” said Jones. “But all good books are, I think... It's the quest of a boy to find his soul mate and his manhood.”

A romantic at heart, Jones is an equal-part opportunist, fully admitting to the greater purpose behind the series.

“I love reading,” he said. “But I've noticed that increasingly boys are drawn to video games, movies and television, instead of books. My goal is to give boys a compelling story they can fall into. I want to inspire boys to dream of what might have been and what could be. I want them to fall in love with their imagination and pretend, play and create in their heads... not just absorb what's shoved at them from the flickering screen.”

More than that, Jones fashions each book around virtues, like courage, responsibility, and compassion.

“I really want the stories to speak to boys that don’t have father figures. I want them to know that it means to be a man and what bravery and sacrifice looks like.”

It’s a book rooted in the silly, but with careful attention to detail and its long-term influence.

Early in the writing process, Jones was stuck. “I needed a disease or some reason Ricky would pass out on the docks,” he explained.

A friend, Mary Ann Jordan, a radio host and wife of local DJ Bill Jordan, suggested that Ricky should have epilepsy. It wasn’t until Jones had another brush with the disease that he became convinced of the book’s next purpose.

“I met another woman at a writer’s conference whose son has epilepsy,” he said.

During the conference, the boy suffered a seizure—the first one he’d ever had without his mother present. “It was a bad one,” she told Jones.

It was then that he knew Ricky could be a champion for those suffering from epilepsy.

”It’s not cancer or heart disease. It doesn’t get a lot of media,” Jones said. “I’m not going to cure it. But if I can raise awareness, that’s something.”

For each book sold, publisher Port Yonder Press will donate “a few pieces of eight” to the Epilepsy Foundation’s Heroes Among Us program.

It’s just one more way Jones is striving to give his writing more depth.

“In the end, a book gets filed away or sold for a penny on Amazon. But if you can make a difference some other way, the success of the book can be lasting.”