

# Freshman pens novels in spare time All eyes on Nathan McWilliams

BY JOHN HITZEL  
Staff Reporter

Magical new worlds exist on Truman's campus — in the mind of Nathan McWilliams.

McWilliams, a freshman English major, published two fantasy novels, "Crystal Clear" and its sequel, "Nathaniel's Triumph: Crystal Clear 2," during his final two years of high school in Leonard, Mo.

"I finished writing 'Crystal Clear' when I was 17," McWilliams said. "But the publishers would not accept anything until you're 18. Thankfully, when I had finished, it was just a few days until I turned 18."

It took him all of his junior year to write his first book, and he wrote the sequel during his senior year.

"The second book was a lot easier to write," he said. "Because I already had that base of the first one. I was able to apply the facts I had from the first one, keep going, make some new stuff up as I went."

Despite being published at such a young age, he said he didn't let the local acclaim get to him.

"Since getting published, in high school, they pretty much thought I was a genius, but I just told them that I'm just a normal guy with a lot of free time on my hands," McWilliams said.

He said his books were inspired by games like "Legend of Zelda," "Halo," and "Final Fantasy."

"After I played 'Final Fantasy 12,' that's what inspired the plot for my books," McWilliams said. "You know, Basch von Ronsenberg

and Gabranth, they were brothers, both came from the same land, but they became enemies over time, and at the end, they were good to each other."

It wasn't only video games that inspired McWilliams, though.

"Half of why I wrote the first book was because I had a crush on a girl," McWilliams said. "We're friends now. The second book was written partly because I said, 'Hey, I've got some good momentum going here,' but also because of the girl."

"I tried writing action, and it just didn't work. The problem with writing action, for me, was that the hero would never get shot, and you know, the hero needs to get shot sometimes."

Nathan McWilliams  
Freshman

He said the overarching theme of the two books is brotherly love.

"The plot to my first book is you've got two brothers, Nathaniel and Zeromus," McWilliams said. "There were four wayward sorcerers who came by, and gave Zeromus all their powers. One day Zeromus goes insane [and] destroys Nathaniel's hometown — that's the cliché right there. Most people are used to the whole 'man searching for his father' cliché. My cliché is that the hero has his hometown destroyed."

Other than writing, McWilliams said he likes to play video and computer games, fiddle around on the guitar and read fantasy novels. He said he wants to learn a foreign language because of his experiences with international students.

"Sometimes, I'll study on my own, beyond what I'm told to read and study, because I would love to be able to speak a second language," he said. "You know, all these international students come

by, and they had to learn to speak English, and it makes me feel, I don't know — outdone, that I only know English."

McWilliams began writing in grade school. He said the very first story he wrote was in the second grade.

"I was trying to write a Mega Man story," he said. "It was very, very rough. You couldn't read the handwriting. It would say 'Mega Man fires his Mega Blaster at Sigma. Sigma explodes.'"

Despite his early stylistic hurdles, he kept writing because he had a lot of free time in school. McWilliams said he often finished assignments early and used the free time to write.

"Normally it would be about a popular video game or a really cool story that's out there, and I'd just put my own little spin on it," he said. "Of course, that would be, what do you call it ... copyright violation? So eventually I had to say, well, I can make something original."

So far, he said he has enjoyed his classes and his time at Truman, and that he really enjoys the Liberal Studies Program because you have the opportunity to learn about everything.

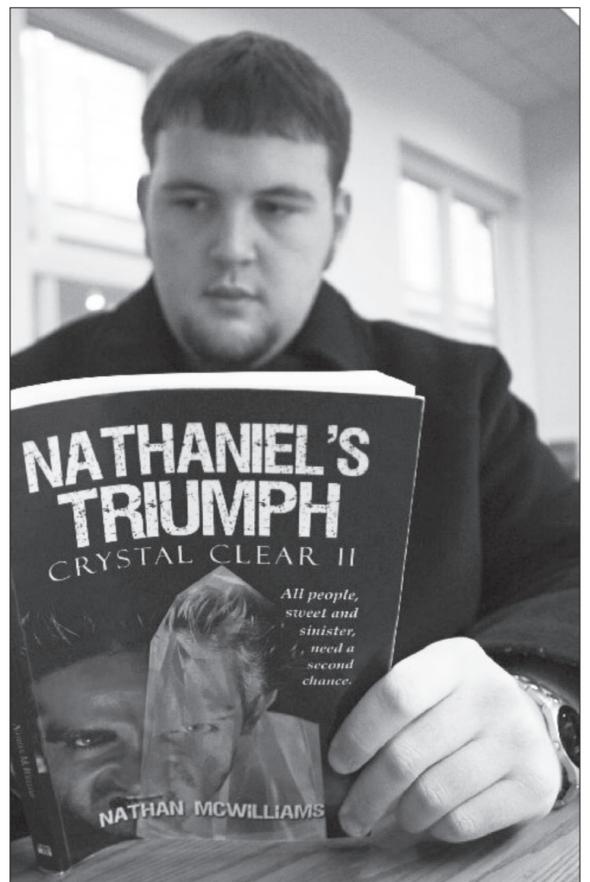
"I'm thinking about being an English teacher," he said. "Partly because I really like hanging around international students a lot, I've always thought about going to a foreign country and teaching English as a second language."

He said a third installment of "Crystal Clear" is in the works, but his "progress is like a paragraph every two days." He said he does have some misgivings about his aptitude for action writing.

"I tried writing action, and it just didn't work," he said. "The problem with writing action, for me, was that the hero would never get shot, and you know, the hero needs to get shot sometimes."

McWilliams is optimistic about his next few years at Truman and

Half of why I wrote the first book was because I had a crush on a girl.



Amy Gleaves/Index

Freshman English major Nathan McWilliams has written two fantasy novels about brotherly love and is currently writing a third book.

said it has taught him to balance his writing, which is influenced by different people he has met.

## Il Spazio commmits to Kirksville art

BY CASSANDRA MCCARTY  
Assistant Features Editor

Local art covers Il Spazio's earth-toned walls, and the restaurant's new management plans to continue this support.

Although Il Spazio is home to many local artists' work, the Kirksville Arts Association Gallery remains dark due to lack of regular office hours.

The former management of Il Spazio gave local artists the opportunity to show their art within the restaurant space. Despite the change of ownership, the new management of Il Spazio plans to continue the restaurant's tradition of art patronage by showcasing regional artists.

"We are all for it," new manager Eric Minturn said. "I think it's a great little touch to our atmosphere. We will always have the artwork up."

The restaurant's entrance

houses works by numerous local members of the Kirksville Arts Association. The restaurant welcomes anyone who would like to display their work in the building

and two to three times a year, Il Spazio sponsors a show specifically for the Kirksville Arts Association.

"Kirksville Arts Association has their section up front and everything you see with a label on it and a price tag and a name of the artist, [those are works by] the members of the Kirksville Arts Association," Minturn said. "They bring in an exhibit."

Despite the significant amount of artwork shown in Il Spazio, some Kirksville Arts Association artists feel a lack of involvement in the rest of the community. Local

painter Patricia Kreps has been a member of the Kirksville Arts Association for 20 years and had her artwork displayed three times at Il Spazio. However, Kreps said the association is in need of sponsorship and help.

"There are people in this town that will not go into the Kirksville Arts Association gallery, and they will not go over to Ophelia Parrish to look at the shows

over at Truman but they will go into a restaurant and see the art there," Kreps said. "I think the restaurant shows are another community outreach."

As a member of the Kirksville Arts Association, Kreps has been in a number of the local gallery's shows as well as shows at University of Missouri-Columbia. She said she participates in shows to continue her involvement with the arts and to create connections between her and the community.

"I just support the community," Kreps said. "In Kirksville if you don't do stuff, nothing will happen. You have to facilitate something happening. I just continue the work with the community art, and that's a commitment I have toward the community. It's just a blast, making things happen."

While Kreps continues to uphold the commitment

she has made to the community, the Kirksville Arts Association gallery needs help answering the same call because the space is in need of regional volunteers. Without students and community members to watch over the gallery, the building has been unable to stay open for regular hours and its art remains closed to the community. Another local artist, Evelyn Carlson, also shares the desire to turn the Kirksville Arts Association gallery into a more popular place.

"We always need volunteers," Carlson said. "We have been trying to have the gallery open longer hours, but it's difficult to find people who want to volunteer."

The Kirksville Arts Association does participate within the community, sponsoring many shows for local artists, bringing in shows such as the Smithsonian Art Exhibit for spring 2009 and numerous

fundraisers throughout the year.

"There is not a lot of opportunity in this small of an area to either show or to sell but I think it's getting better, ... especially with the Kirksville Arts Association being so active," Carlson said.

The walls of Il Spazio continue to be covered with the numerous visions of creativity, which reflect the community's desire to showcase local artists. However, the Kirksville Arts Association gallery frequently is still closed and the art remains among shadowed corners.

"If we could have more student involvement, we need more walk through traffic," Carlson said. "And it goes hand in hand, we need more people to come to the gallery, but in order for that to happen we need more people volunteering to sit in the gallery so that it can be open."

Read the **Index** online

www.trumanindex.com