

LOCAL NEWS

Do you see the miracle?

Daughter's fascination with bugs inspires Walton's first children's book

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Heather Hughes Walton, of Kings Mountain and fourth grade teacher at Grover Elementary School, has written her first children's book.

"Do you see the Miracle?" published by Tate Publishers in Oklahoma, is scheduled to hit the shelves of bookstores and online shops on September 25, 2007. Tate's marketing director will be setting up some book signings for Walton after the release date. "Do you see the Miracle?" will be sold for \$8.99 plus tax under the Border Books label at stores like Books-a-Million and on walmart.com and amazon.com.

"It's about my little girl. Isabelle Jane is the character in it and she's my daughter," Walton said. "I had written it for her. I teach writing in school and I had some ideas for some little Christian stories for my daughter. So I just kind of sat down and started writing. I felt like it was very God-inspired because it just kind of flowed. I have written a few of them, but this was the first one I had ever sent anywhere because I didn't think that anybody but Isabelle would want to read it."

Her husband, Matthew, kept encouraging her to send it to a publisher. "I found Tate Publishing on-line because it was a Christian publisher for new authors," she said. In September, she sent Tate a copy of her story. She said that after she sent it off, she was sure that

they would respond with the dreaded rejection letter. But within a week they emailed her and the author acquisitions agent called her the next day saying they wanted to publish it. They sent her a contract. She said that she was very shocked, but also very blessed.

Brandon Wood from Tate Publishers did the illustrations for the book. The pictures were all done with colored pencils. Walton is very pleased with the way he helped bring the images of the story to life with his art. She said that the girl illustrated in the book, captures some of her daughter's qualities, with the freckles and the big eyes. The picture of Isabelle looking at the bugs captures her personality.

"The bugs are what got me started," she said. "During the springtime she would literally almost get on her face on the ground to look at the bugs. She loves bugs and stuff that I think is gross. I thought, you know, I never would've stopped to look at some bugs while out playing on the ground. That got me thinking about other things that you just don't take the time to stop and look at that are little miracles every day."

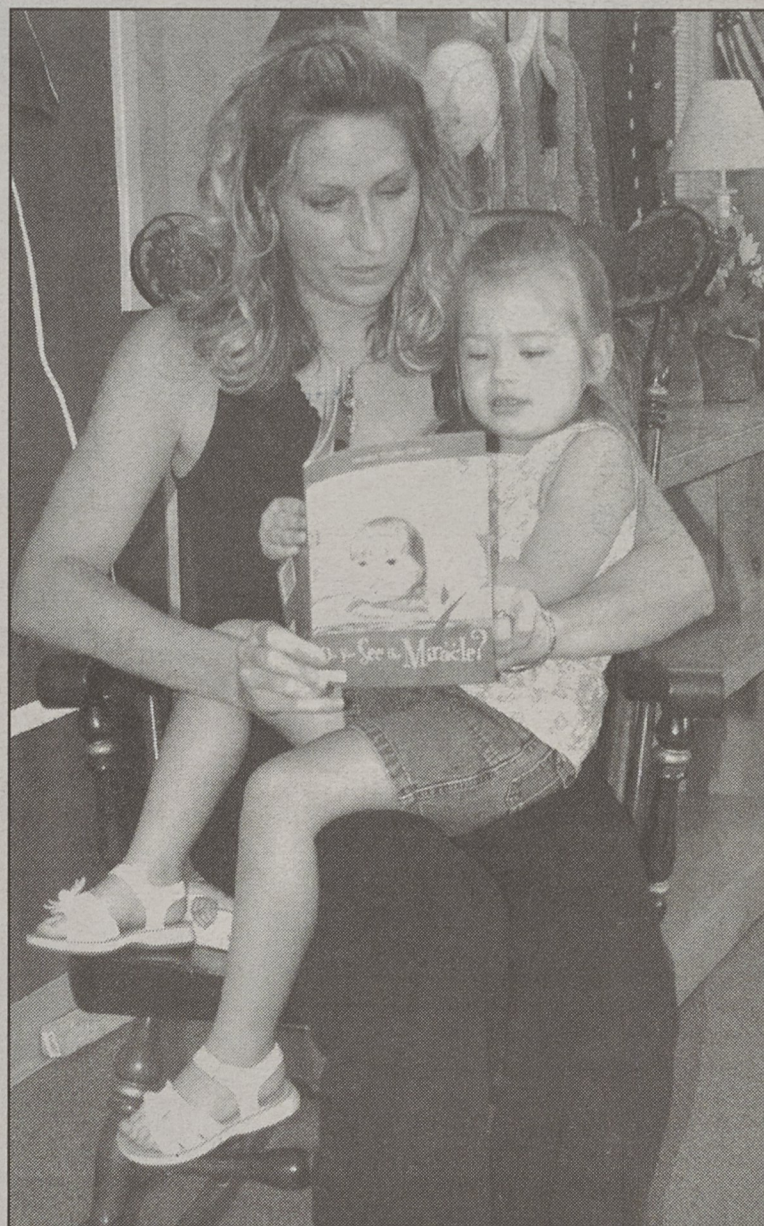
Writing the book was sort of an escape for her, she said. "There's a child message, but then there is also an underlying adult message in the book," Walton said. "I wanted it to be so where the child could really enjoy the story, and I think relate to it. But I wanted the adult to get the deeper meaning of the story - the risen Christ and how spring kind

of mirrors how everything is dead and then it comes alive. Christ does that for us. We're dead and barren inside until we accept Christ and then we become alive like the spring. Every year these small miracles happen and we just don't take time to look at them. But I wanted the message to be two-tiered so it can be enjoyed but also if the parent had never accepted Christ that it could speak to them too."

It took about nine months to transform the story to its printed paperback edition. The publishing house sent Walton her first set of 100 books in July. All but about 20 of them have been sold already. If this one sells well, they want to see some more Isabelle Jane stories, she said. Walton has about three or four other stories written and waiting. Isabelle is real excited to be the character of the book. She turned 3 years old on Friday. "I saved her the very first copy out of the batch so that when she's older it might be a little more special to her," she said. "She loves it. When she first saw it she said, 'Oh that's me Mommy! That's me!'"

Principal of Grover Janet Anthony wrote an acknowledgement in the book. "She was very, very supportive of the whole venture and how much time it would take," she said.

To Heather and Matthew, little Isabelle is their miracle. She dedicated her book to Isabelle, with the inscription, "For my daughter, Isabelle Jane. You are truly one of God's miracles."



Rocking and reading is a favorite time for Grover teacher Heather Walton and her daughter, Isabelle Jane.

Blood drive set August 31 at KM Red Cross

There will be a blood drive August 31 from 3-7:30 p.m. at the Red Cross Office in Kings Mountain.

The Red Cross office is located on South Piedmont Ave. in the old Kings Mountain Herald building behind Kings Mountain Baptist Church.

Rezoning matter to be heard by Council

Twenty property owners in the area of Grace and Church Streets want their neighborhood rezoned for single family residences only and are petitioning the city to change the zoning. City Council will conduct a public hearing on the request at Tuesday's 7 p.m. meeting at City Hall.

Protection of their neighborhood is reasoning behind the change from single family to multi-family dwellings, says

Planning and Zoning Administrator Steve Killian. The various properties run north of their intersections with Linwood Road.

If rezoned, the rezoning would include several blocks of homes and vacant lots in a wide area.

Also on the agenda for the regular meeting is a public hearing on a request by Kings Mountain Care to rezone

property of Archie Crocker at 115 Ferguson Drive from Residential R-20 to Residential Office.

Council is expected to set Sept. 25 for a public hearing on a request from Mark Beach for rezoning of property on West Mountain Street from Residential to General Business; to consider a request from East Elementary School for additional parking

on Woodside Drive; to consider a request from Eugene Erving for a downtown development incentive grant on East King Street; and for a budget amendment for Chris Craft's Marine Travel Hoist project at Moss Lake. Funds, which also included a grant, were budgeted last year with the remainder of the cost in the 2007-2008 budget. The total project cost when completed this year is \$319,607.