

# Former Austintown man completes second book

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Town Crier

Everybody has thoughts and ideas from time to time, but only a few ever act on them. Former Austintown native John Ferguson is one of those few.

Ferguson, along with close friends and coworkers Brad Hauber and Julie Goulis, came up with an idea to write quality children's books. It wasn't an easy task and took the trio down a new road in business ventures.

Ferguson was raised in Austintown and attended Austintown schools. From an early age he developed a keen interest in drawing.

"Ever since I was 8, I loved to draw," he said. "My mom bought me a light box that I loved to use to trace comic book characters."

Ferguson would often draw comic versions of himself and would place them imaginary adventures.

From that moment on, Ferguson's love for drawing grew. At Fitch High School he took all the art classes he could. He graduated in 1987 and went on to YSU where he continued his career in fine arts, graduating in 1991



Special to Town Crier

Former Austintown native, author John Ferguson will be signing his new book at Barnes and Nobles this weekend.

with a bachelor's degree.

His talent took him to Cleveland where he is the art director for a large advertising firm.

Last year he observed that children are spending more and more time in front of the television and video game screens. He felt children should be using their imaginations and expressing themselves more through creativity. He also noticed a lack of good children's books.

"I came up with the idea to do a children's book," he said.

Easier said than done! Ferguson made some drawings of the characters for his book and sent his idea off to the few children's book publishers that exist. He got the same comment from all of them. The idea was rejected because Ferguson is not a big name or well established. That would be enough to make some throw the hat in, but not Ferguson.

He teamed up with a coworker Julie Goulis, who handled the text for the books. Being in advertising, they knew what to do to get printed, they only needed the right company. They brought in Brad Hauber and made the decision to form their own children's book label called Bubblegum Books.

It was a success and Ferguson and Goulis were able to print, market and sell their first children's adventure book called "The Things a String Can Be." The book involved a character named Sam and his friends. Sam would progress through stories geared to making kids use their imagination. It even included a fun things-to-do page near the back that could be used by juvenile readers and their parents to have some quality fun together.

Now, Ferguson is releasing his second book called "Something Shiny, Something Round." The

new release will be available at Barnes and Nobles in Boardman.

Ferguson returned to the Valley last Saturday to sign his latest book.

In the book, the main character (Sam) finds an old hubcap buried in the snow. As each page turns, Sam and his friends let their imaginations run wild as to what it was they had found.

As for Ferguson, his imagination took him into the realm of reality with a successful venture in the world of publishing. He said the hope is to someday go full time.

"My eventual goal is to go full time in children's books," said a happy and contented Ferguson. "It makes me feel good and now I am actually using my degree."

For those who didn't make the Saturday signing, he will be signing books at Borders, 2102 Niles-Cortland Road in Niles from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. this Saturday.