

INSPIRED BY THE OUTDOORS

Children's book illustrator-turned-author
Alice Feagan launches two new titles

By Laura Lieff

PHOTOGRAPHY BY BRENT BINGHAM

Writing and illustrating are two separate skill sets but there are a few who excel at both. Dr. Seuss, Mo Willems, and Oliver Jeffers are prime examples, and local author Alice Feagan is also part of that list. Originally from North Carolina, Feagan has called Edwards home since 2015 when she and her husband, Cam Frey, moved here for his job. He is now an Architect and Associate Principal at Shepherd Resources and together they have two sons — Tobyn and Llewyn — who are nine and six years old.

Known for her mixed-media collage illustrations — which she has created for Kids Can Press, National Geographic Kids Magazine, Ranger Rick Magazine and Boston Children's Hospital — Feagan earned her MFA in Illustration from the Savannah College of Art and Design and her BFA in Studio Art and Art History from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

During her time in graduate school, Feagan explored a variety of mediums as she honed her style. Then, an assignment came along that lent itself to collage.

"I gave it a try and was hooked," she says. "It fit with my drawing style and I loved finding, creating and working with different textures and papers." Although she now builds the collages digitally, Feagan explains that it's "the same process of building the composition out of shapes and then applying papers and textures." She also says that working digitally gives her flexibility to change colors and textures as the illustrations evolve.

In 2021, she collaborated with Nicole Magistro — another local author and former owner of The Bookworm — on their children's picture book "Read Island" which won multiple awards. Because authors and illustrators don't typically communicate during book development, Feagan and Magistro's involvement was unique. "Working with Nicole

on 'Read Island' was a wonderful experience," Feagan explains. "We collaborate well together and we each bring different skillsets and industry knowledge to the table which makes us a great team."

With "The Collectors," which was also published in 2021, Feagan took on the role of both illustrator and writer for the first time. Though she says that becoming an author was not one of her original career goals, editors at conferences and book events consistently asked for a manuscript based on a piece of art from her portfolio. "So, I finally dipped my toes in the water with 'The Collectors' and from there I was hooked," she says. "It was intimidating at the beginning, but I've grown to love the process!"

OUTDOOR INSPIRATION

Whether Feagan is writing or illustrating, the outdoors consistently informs her work. Her childhood was spent outside in North Carolina and, for the last decade, she has been enjoying

her Colorado surroundings. "I'm happiest outdoors," she says. "It's one of the reasons I love living in the Vail Valley and what I loved about my childhood in the mountains of North Carolina. Most of my stories tend to center on nature and/or the experiences kids have in nature." She notes that each book she writes offers the opportunity to take a deep dive into a subject she may have only had general knowledge of before. "I love that I'm always learning from the process," Feagan adds.

Her next endeavor is a story that takes readers to the ocean rather than mountains. "The Lost Board," which Feagan wrote and illustrated, was inspired by an article she read in 2020 while at home with Tobyn and Llewyn — who were two years old and three months old at the time. Because she was taking care of two young kids, and the world was in the throes of Covid, Feagan wasn't working on anything new — until she read about a guy in Hawaii who lost a surfboard on a big wave.



Author and illustrator Alice Feagan writes books for both children and adults. Many of her titles can be found at The Bookworm of Edwards.

"The Lost Board" was inspired by true stories of lost surfboards, as well as the history of female surfers dating back to the 1400s.



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“He thought it was gone forever, but over a year later it was found by a teacher in the Philippines who reached out to him,” Feagan remembers. “It was such a great story about connection (in a time when we were all separated from each other) and I couldn’t stop thinking about it so I began reading and researching other stories about lost surfboards.” Next thing she knew, she was learning about the rich history of revered female surfers going back to the 1400s and began writing “The Lost Board.” Slated for a June release, the book follows the story of a young girl who loses her family’s cherished surfboard on a big wave.

COLORADO BOOK TOUR

Feagan’s six-date Colorado book tour for “The Lost Board” begins June 12 at The Bookworm and ends August 16 in Denver.

Although each bookstore has their own routine, most events will include storytime, a drawing demo, a “design your own surfboard bookmark” activity and a book signing. She will also have some fun swag for kids to take home.

“Pumpkin on a Vine,” for which Feagan provided the illustrations, is slated for a September release. A part of the I Like to Read® series — which fosters vocabulary and encourages fluency — the book was penned by David Harrison who is a poet and has

written more than 200 books for children. Feagan describes “Pumpkin on a Vine” as “a cumulative story that is fun for kids to read aloud.”

When she’s not writing or illustrating, Feagan enjoys meeting young readers, writers and artists through her school visits and workshops. She says showing kids her craft is “one of the greatest joys of being a children’s book creator.” Her visits, which she started doing in 2018, are tailored to the school and grade level and offer a variety of options for media

center or classroom settings. Her presentations can focus on writing and illustrating picture books, illustration process and technique or becoming an author/illustrator.

Going forward, Feagan is excited about her future collaboration with Magistro as their next book will be released in spring 2027. In the meantime, she will spend this summer outside with her family in both Colorado and North Carolina — possibly finding inspiration for her next story. For more information, visit alicefeagan.com. [vvm](https://www.vvm.com)