

## ***Bark, George Wins the Vote of Young Oregonians***



*Five nominated books were read by 11,600 students*

*Portland, 28 April 2008* – This month at a ceremony at the Portland Children’s Museum, SMART revealed the ninth annual SMART Book Award winner: *Bark, George* by Jules Feiffer. Instead of barking, the puppy George meows, quacks, and moos. His mother takes him to a vet who discovers the reason.

Five nominated books were read and voted on by 11,600 SMART students throughout Oregon. *Bark, George* won by a landslide, receiving twice as many votes.

SMART students explain why it was their favorite:

“Whenever his Mom said bark he said meow!”

“He sounds like a cow and they pull out a cow.”

“The dog made all the animal voices!”

“It’s kinda about me, learning English because I’m Russian.”

“I like it when the Vet had to take out the animals.”

The Portland Children’s Museum opened its doors especially for SMART’s ‘reveal’ ceremony, which was attended by 200 SMART students and their families, as well as volunteers. Meredith Weber of SMART read the winning book to a captive audience who meowed, quacked, and oinked along with George.

Thanks to donations from Volunteers of America and the Museum, SMART gave away more than 20 door prizes, a 1-year museum family pass and individual passes, and each child went home with a free book.

While other children’s choice awards are selected by children who may already be enthusiastic readers, the SMART Book Award is selected by students who need extra reading support and are just discovering the joy of reading. Children received a ballot to record their vote. Votes were tallied in March and kept secret until the ‘reveal’ ceremony.

Other nominated books included *Awful Ogre’s Awful Day* written by Jack Prelutsky; *The Hiccupotamus* written by Aaron Zenz; *Six-Dinner Sid* written by Inga Moore; and *I Will Never Not Ever Eat a Tomato* written by Lauren Child. Each SMART student receives their choice of nominated book to take home and keep, thanks to a major annual donation from Scholastic.

The ceremony coincided with the Museum’s traveling book exhibit called “This is Our Land: Discovering America and the World through Original Illustrations from Children’s Books.” The Meridian International exhibit included work by artists depicting the great diversity of people,

*For Immediate Release*



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pastimes and natural wonders in all 50 United States, together with vivid images of life in 20 countries. It was brought to the Museum by Sharon Smith and Nancy Wyden.

For more details on the SMART Book Award, including past nominees and winners, visit [getsmartoregon.org/award.html](http://getsmartoregon.org/award.html).

**About SMART® (Start Making A Reader Today)**

SMART is a nonprofit that envisions an Oregon where every child can read and is empowered to succeed. We engage community volunteers to read one-on-one with K-3 children who need literacy support. Participating children also receive new books each month to keep and read with their families. Since 1992, thousands of SMART volunteers have been inspiring little readers through storytelling. Together with support from the community, we are building brighter futures for Oregonians big and small. Volunteer or donate today. Visit [www.getsmartoregon.org](http://www.getsmartoregon.org) or call 1-877-598-4633.

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Contact: Melissa Logan, [mlogan@getsmartoregon.org](mailto:mlogan@getsmartoregon.org), 503-937-4813

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