

Press Release



Vote!

by Eileen Christelow

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About the Book

Clarion Books is pleased to present *Vote!* by Eileen Christelow, the best-selling author/illustrator of many Clarion titles, including the vastly popular Five Little Monkeys books. *Vote!* depicts a fictional election for town mayor, covering every step in the process, from the start of the campaign all the way to the voting booth. There's even a recount!

Eileen Christelow is the author/illustrator of two previous nonfiction books for Clarion, *What Do Authors Do?* and *What Do Illustrators Do?*, in which she used an appealing, accessible comic-book style to explore her subjects. With *Vote!*, Christelow has taken this signature style to new heights. Told with clarity and wit in colorful panels, this lively introduction to voting turns an often daunting topic into an exciting narrative. Christelow's narrators, a pair of wry, inquisitive canines, playfully introduce important concepts in an engaging way. Their comments and questions mirror those of young readers and help to explain some of an election's more confusing aspects. Who would have guessed that learning about voting could be so much fun?

Vote!, which was vetted by an expert in voter education, includes the classroom resources that teachers, librarians, and parents will most value: a timeline of the history of voting in the United States, a glossary of words associated with voting, a discussion of American political parties, and a list of Internet resources. Politically balanced and inclusive, teachable and readable, light in tone but serious in content, *Vote!* is a book that will speak to the next generation of American voters. (The current generation of American voters might learn a thing or two as well!)

Eileen Christelow was inspired to write *Vote!* during a school visit on Election Day 2000. She says:

"I was visiting elementary schools in Hastings, Minnesota. The school walls were filled with student-made election posters. Students were wearing 'I Voted' buttons. They wanted to know how I could vote since I was so far from my home in Vermont. I was intrigued. Why did these young students care so much about voting?"

Answer: The state of Minnesota was starting voter education early! Teachers were encouraged to discuss voting with their students. Students were encouraged to go to the

polls with their parents. . . . And no one wanted to miss out on wearing an 'I Voted' button!"

When she asked teachers what books they used when discussing voting with young kids, though, they responded that few materials were available. So Christelow set out to create her own. Clarion Books is honored to be publishing the result.

About Eileen Christelow

Eileen Christelow published her first children's book, *Henry and the Red Stripes*, in 1982 with Clarion Books. Since then, she has written and illustrated dozens more best-selling and award-winning picture books, including the beloved Five Little Monkeys books. Her books have been accorded the following honors, among others: ALA Notable Children's Books, School Library Journal Best Books of the Year, ALA Booklist Editor's Choice, New York Public Library "100 Titles for Reading and Sharing," National Council of Teachers of English Notable Trade Books in the Language Arts, and the International Reading Association–Children's Book Council's Children's Choices. She has also twice won awards from the Oppenheim Toy Portfolio. Eileen Christelow lives in Dummerston, Vermont, with her husband, Ahren Ahrenholz. They have one daughter and a dog named Emma.

Eileen Christelow speaks

"I wasn't much interested in writing until I had a dynamic and demanding English teacher in the eighth grade and another in high school. I planned to major in English in college. But freshman English was so tedious that I lost all enthusiasm for that idea. But, my senior year, I discovered photography!

"My first years out of college, in Philadelphia, in the late 1960s, I photographed buildings for architects, and did photo essays for small magazines on urban life. While I was photographing, I was also looking at children's picture books. I started experimenting with my own stories. And, during that same time, I met and married my husband, Ahren.

"By the mid-seventies, Ahren and I were living in Berkeley, California, with a child of our own, Heather. She and I went to the library once or twice a week and borrowed piles of books. I decided once again that I was going to try writing and illustrating picture books. I started with an alphabet book, thinking it would take a few weeks. Two years later, I reached Z, having taught myself something about illustration and about the complexities of writing a 'simple little picture book.'

"Unfortunately, no one wanted to publish my alphabet book. But I got encouragement from editors who told me to write and illustrate a story and then come back to see them. So, while earning my living as a photographer and graphic designer, I continued to experiment with picture books. In 1981, I sold my first two books and we moved to Vermont.

"Many years and many books later, picture books are still an exciting challenge. I have file folders filled with ideas for new stories: clippings from newspapers, stories heard on the radio, family stories, childhood memories, conversations overheard, nursery rhymes, all waiting for me to find their beginnings, middles, and ends and to bring them alive in the

space of a thirty-two-page picture book."

Author Appearances

Philadelphia Area

Friday, September 19, 1:00 p.m.
Children's Bookshop
17 Haversford Station
Haverford, PA 19041
(610) 642-6274

Friday, September 19, 7:00 p.m.
BookTenders Children's Books
103 S. Main St.
Doylestown, PA 18901
(215) 348-7160

Baltimore

Sunday, September 21, 1:00 p.m.
The Baltimore Book Festival
Baltimore, MD

Washington, D.C., and Virginia

Monday, September 22, 11:00 a.m.
A Likely Story
1555 King St.
Arlington, VA 22314
(703) 836-2498

Tuesday, September 23, 10:30 a.m.
Politics and Prose
5015 Connecticut Ave., N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20008
(202) 364-1919

Tuesday, September 23, 6:30 p.m.
Aladdin's Lamp Children's Bookstore
2499 N. Harrison St., Suite 10
Arlington, VA 22207
(703) 241-8281

Seattle

Thursday, October 9, 10:30 a.m.
Secret Garden Bookstore
2214 N.W. Market St.

Seattle, WA 98107
(206) 789-5006

Saturday, October 11, 3:00 p.m.
University Bookstore
4326 University Way
Seattle, WA 98105
(206) 545-4361

Tuesday, October 14, 9:30-11:30 a.m.
Hullabaloo Books
2350 California Ave, S.W.
Seattle, WA 98116
(206) 937-0599

Wednesday, October 15, 9:00 a.m.
All for Kids
2900 N.E. Blakeley St.
Seattle, WA 98105
(206) 526-2768