



## Jo Osborne Award for Humor in Children's Literature

Ohio Library Foundation, 35 E. Gay Street, Ste 305, Columbus, Ohio 43215-3138

May 12, 1997

Steven Kellogg

Dear Mr. Kellogg:

I am very happy to officially announce that you are the winner of the Jo Osborne Award for Humor in Children's Literature for 1998. I am also pleased that Barbara Elleman was able to reach you by phone to convey this news as soon as it happened.

The award was established two years ago to honor the memory of Jo Osborne, a well-loved children's librarian who touched the lives of thousands of children with her own humor and with the humor of authors and illustrators like you. Ms. Osborne's friends and family wanted to carry on the spirit of her life's work by recognizing the importance of this genre in children's literature that has been under-estimated. Children, of course, already seek out funny books, enjoy them, and even learn from them. With this award, we expect more adults to take humor seriously!

A local committee of librarians, teachers, and academicians conferred and produced a list of five nominees for a national jury, which ultimately selected you as the winner. This year's jury is comprised of Wendy Saul, author and Professor of Children's Literature at the University of Maryland Baltimore, Trevlyn Jones, Editor of Children's Book Reviews in *School Library Journal*, and Barbara Barstow, Coordinator of Children's Services for Cuyahoga County Public Library.

The jury was impressed with the breadth of your work over the years. Your illustrations are so full of humorous details and witty perspectives that the (already charming) text is enhanced many times over. Though not a member of the jury, I am especially impressed with your tall tales which appeal to a wider age range than previous renditions. Of course, here in Columbus, home of the Thurber House, we are all partial to *The Great Quillow*.

To emphasize the importance of humor across the professions, the Jo Osborne Award is presented at the Ohio State University Children's Literature Conference each year, where the winner is invited to be an honored guest and speaker. Janet Hickman, one of

the conference coordinators, has informed me that you have accepted the invitation to appear at the January 1998 conference.

I am glad that you will accept the award in person, so that your own style of humor will be represented authentically. Mark Twain once said that the classics are something that people praise, but don't read. Humorous books have the opposite problem: they are read, but not praised. As a recipient of this award, you will be instrumental in turning that attitude around.

Jo Osborne approached life with two goals in mind: to work hard and to have fun. I would like to thank you and congratulate you for all your hard work that has caused so many people to smile, chortle, and have fun while reading.

Best Regards and Grins,

Rachel Alexander  
Chairperson,  
Jo Osborne Award for Humor in Children's Literature Committee