

Magazine

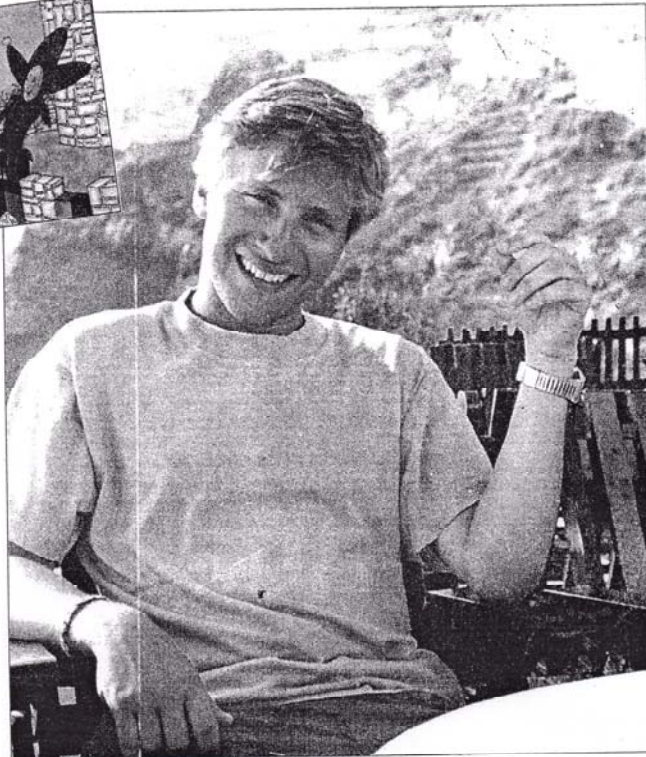
Lifestyle & Entertainment

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The children's story by Saltzman was published by his family after his death.

As his life ebbed, David Saltzman gave birth to a fable that has now taken on a life of its own.



David Saltzman made the impish jester his look-alike and "alter ego," his mother says.

David's story



At his graduation from Yale in 1989, David Saltzman with (from left) his father, Joe, mother, Barbara, and brother, Michael.

By William R. Macklin
INQUIRER STAFF WRITER

Even after doctors found a grapefruit-sized tumor growing in his lungs, David Saltzman refused to give up his sixth-floor dorm room at Yale University. The light up there, he said, was perfect for drawing.

In his senior year at Yale, the last full year of his life, the art and English major devoted much of his time to drawing and writing — weaving a gentle children's tale about a court jester who travels the world in search of laughter.

"If the worst does happen," Saltzman told his parents, "I want this book in the hands of those who love me."

In October, five years after David's death from Hodgkin's disease, his parents, Barbara and Joe Saltzman, fulfilled their son's dying wish and published *The Jester Has Lost His Jingle*. They soon discovered that those who love their son, and the poignant characters he created, are legion.

The hardcover, full-color fable has become a sleeper hit, an out-of-nowhere success that has booksellers scrambling for additional copies. That validates the Saltzmanns' decision to publish the book

themselves and not bow to commercial publishers who wanted the story shortened.

"David had told us everything he wanted done," said Barbara Saltzman, 55, editor of the television magazine for the Los Angeles Times. "We just followed his instructions. We knew the book had to be published. No matter what."

That meant borrowing \$380,000, most of it levied against the family's home in the Los Angeles suburb of Palos Verdes Estates. An additional no-interest loan of \$50,000 came from friends.

The first run of the \$20 book totaled 30,000 copies and sold quickly through mail order and retail stores after the Saltzmanns began telling David's story in print and on TV. As he had requested, the couple donated 10,000 of the books to a charity for children with cancer — one book for each child expected to be diagnosed with the disease each year. A second run of 40,000 was all but gone by the time holiday shoppers began demanding copies at bookstores.

"If we had a stack of 100 copies I'm sure we could sell them all," said Michael Tulip, manager of Barnes & Noble in Jenkintown.

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