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Son's legacy lives on through book

California couple takes it upon themselves to publish children's book

BY BRENDA BARBOSA-COLON

Staff Writer

Before losing their youngest son, David, to Hodgkin's disease six years ago, Barbara and Joe Saltzman made a promise that would change the rest of their lives.

The Saltzmans, of Palos Verdes Estates, Calif., promised their son they would do whatever they had to do to see that his book, *The Jester Has Lost His Jingle*, touches the lives of children throughout the world.

Today, Barbara Saltzman says she is proud to see her son's labor of love — a charming, colorful 64-page children's book sitting high on best-sellers lists.

"I knew from the moment I saw (the jester), and saw the characters develop, that this story has the potential of being a children's classic," Barbara Saltzman said.

The book, written and illustrated by David Saltzman, was a project he conceived before he got sick, while a senior at Yale University, New Haven, Conn.

Though he would not live to see his story published, David will forever be in the pages of his book.

The book tells the story of a jester banished from his kingdom because he no longer makes the king laugh. Determined to set things right, the jester and his friend, Pharley, travel the world in search of laughter.

In many ways, Barbara Saltzman said David was the jester. Despite undergoing

months of the painful chemotherapy and eventually receiving a bone marrow transplant, David never gave in to the sadness of his plight, she said. His pain, she said, never showed through.

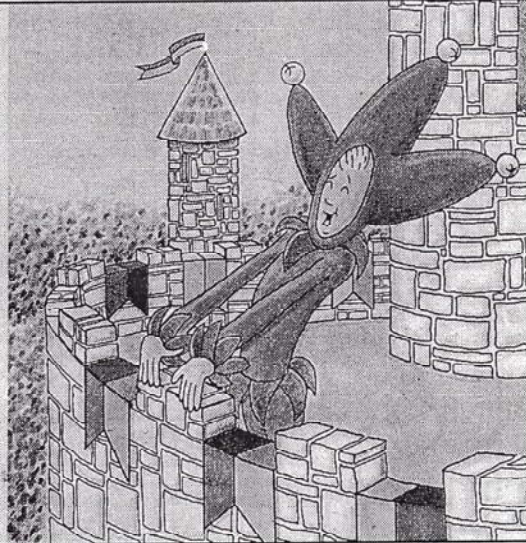
"David's joy of life really is the jester," Barbara Saltzman said. "He was never bitter or angry or melancholy. He never gave in."

The Jester Has Lost His Jingle

Story and Pictures by

David Saltzman

With an Afterword by Maurice Sendak



STORY TIME — Barbara Saltzman of Palos Verdes Estates, Calif., will be at Borders Book and Music store in East Brunswick at 6 p.m. on Saturday to give a reading of her son's children's book, *The Jester Has Lost His Jingle*. Saltzman's son, David, died from Hodgkin's disease six years ago, shortly before his 23rd birthday.

The Jester Has Lost His Jingle (The Jester Co., \$20), now in its fifth press run, has sold more than 150,000 copies, and Barbara Saltzman expects thousands more to sell this holiday season.

At 6 p.m. this Saturday, Barbara Saltzman will be appearing at Borders Book and Music in East Brunswick to introduce the new Jester and Pharley doll. She will be doing a reading of the book and signing personal copies.

In keeping her promise, Barbara Saltzman said the family has earmarked more than 22,000 books for children with cancer and other serious illnesses, which will be distributed to various hospitals and organizations serving children in the tri-state area.

Although the need to publish David's book always remained at the forefront of her life, Barbara Saltzman said she never imagined she would run into so many problems trying to fulfill her son's wish.

Refusing to compromise the artistic integrity of David's gentle tale, the Saltzmans said their decision to publish the book on their own has proved to be an exciting, daunting journey into life.

Although publishing the book independently meant taking a second mortgage on their home, and leaving her job as a television editor at the *Los Angeles Times*, Barbara Saltzman said she knew no better way to preserve what her son worked so hard to create.

"We formed the Jester Co. to publish David's book, bucking the conventional wisdom of the publishing industry ... because we believed in *The Jester Has Lost His Jingle* and in David's talent and vision," Barbara Saltzman said.

"Publishers originally said the book was too long, too expensive to produce and that rhyme does not sell," she said. "We proved them wrong."

Barbara Saltzman said she hopes to have the book published in Spanish and circulated in countries around the world.

While still a long way to go before they break even, the Saltzmans say their son's tragic experience has given them the courage and strength to overcome any obstacles that come their way.

"In the end, David never succumbed to cancer," Barbara Saltzman said. "The disease overcame his body, but it never overcame his spirit."

