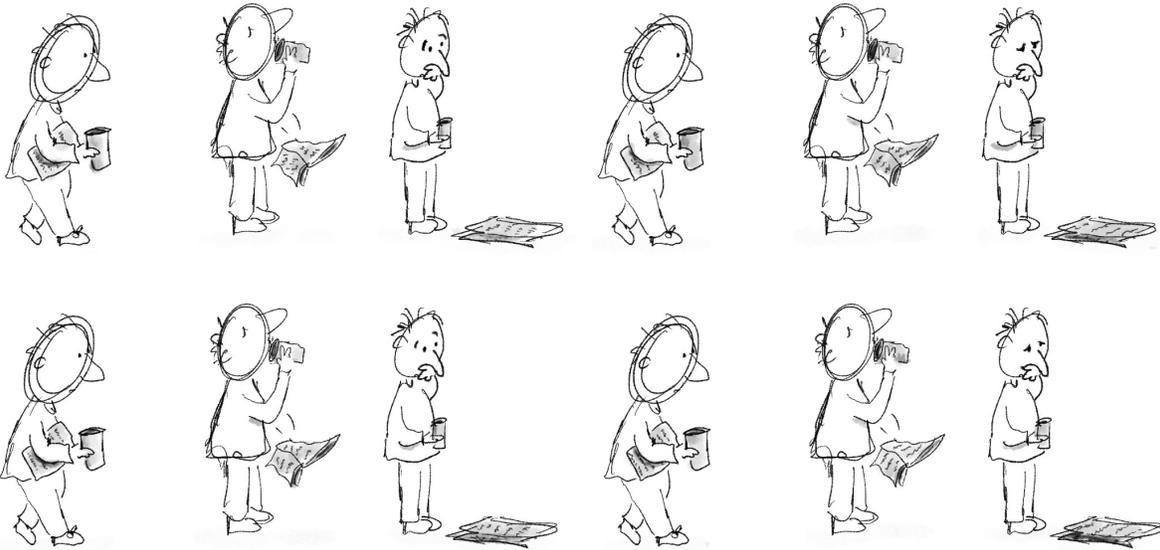


ILLUMINATING ISRAEL

By Barney Saltzberg

CHILDREN'S BOOK AUTHOR & ILLUSTRATOR



NEWSPAPER AND COFFEE

ETGAR KERET

SALTZBERG 2019

I BECAME AWARE OF PJ LIBRARY when they asked to reprint a book I had published. I have been tickled to hear from so many people that my book *Tea with Zayde* is now in their home library thanks to PJ Library.

I have published close to 50 picture books, and in all the years I have been writing and illustrating, I have never heard of or been involved with another institution like PJ Library. Who else can get books into so many people's hands?

My parents grew up across the street from each other in Brooklyn. They moved to California, and I was raised in a Jewish household

where my mother subscribed to the Groucho Marx line, "I don't want to belong to any club that would have me as a member." As a result, we did celebrate Passover and Hanukkah, but neither I nor my two siblings were bar or bat mitzvah. I was also sent to Quaker summer camp for six summers on a farm, so basically my Jewish education was nonexistent.

And then I met my now wife of 34 years. Her father was the director of a temple. I knew it was time to learn something about being Jewish when our daughter came home from the Temple preschool talking about Haman. I sincerely asked her if that was the name of a boy in her class.

This past February, PJ Library invited me, along with 17 other writers, to travel from the Negev desert to Jerusalem and then to Tel Aviv on the Author Israel Adventure. It was an incredible, once in a lifetime opportunity and a perfect way for me to get some more Jewish education.

The idea behind bringing us to Israel was the hope of inspiring us to write books about Jewish traditions and values. As a writer and an illustrator, the process of where ideas come from has always been fascinating to me. My books are traditionally stories about relationships, with themes of solidarity and celebrating what makes us unique and, at the same time, what makes us feel connected to each other. I never know when or where I'm going to find inspiration.

I don't think it's possible to visit Israel without being moved. I found myself taking a lot of photos and drawing over them on my iPad. My first drawing was done with a partial mural left on a wall at Masada. I found that there was something so powerful in blending ancient history with my illustrations. After I published a book called *Beautiful Oops!*, where I turn mistakes into art, I learned about *tikkun olam*, repairing the world. I had this feeling in Israel that when I was creating art from photographs, it wasn't that I was repairing, but rather illuminating what I saw. Jerusalem is filled with such a rich history, and at the same time, there is a vibrance of youth and a growing modern city, mixing in with the old. Talk about inspiring!



UNDER
THE WALL
JERUSALEM
SALTZBERG 2019



HUMMUS MONKEY, JERUSALEM
SALTZBERG

As one who was raised not to be a member of any group, I found myself traveling with a group of children's book writers in a land where I felt very much at home. I am delighted to say that I am a very happy member of a spectacular group of people who were given the gift of exploring a very special country. I can't wait to read the books my new extended family creates as a result of this incredible experience.

Barney Saltzberg has been captivating audiences since 1980 as he has traveled all over the world speaking about creativity. One of his children's books, Beautiful Oops!, was chosen by Melinda Gates as one of the top three books every child should read! He is also the co-founder of the YouTube channel, CREATEtubeITY, a site to inspire creativity for families. Go to pjfor.me/create for more.

GREAT STORYTELLING REQUIRES GREAT STORYTELLERS.

Investing in authors and illustrators is an integral part of PJ Library's success. It takes time to make great books happen – there are PJ Library books currently in development for children who haven't even been born yet! Through retreats and workshops, PJ Library works with authors and illustrators to create content that meets the needs of PJ Library's growing subscriber base and global presence.