



“A Halloween Story” to Launch at the Monterrey International Book Fair

September 25, 2007, Monterrey Mexico.

When five-year-old Alberto Fernandez took pen, or crayon, to paper in his first grade English class, he never imagined how far his “A Halloween Story” would go.

Yet his book, now adorned with illustrations by up-and-coming Mexican artist Pilar de la Fuente, is showing up on bookstore and library shelves across the US. But perhaps there is no better fitting launch for “A Halloween Story” than in his own native city of Monterrey, Mexico at the annual International Book Fair, hosted by the Tec de Monterrey.

Alberto, his father, an educator from his school, and the illustrator, will all be participants in the launch celebration and conference the first two opening days of the festival: October 13 & 14.

The conference called: Fostering Creativity in Your Young Authors and Artists, will be held on the 13th starting at 2pm on the 13th, and 1 pm on the 14th.

Alberto is looking forward to “unleashing” his ghoulishly charming creations on the fair, where he will read “A Halloween Story” to the audience, and sign copies—for which he’s been practicing his signature, he says.

Since its inception in 1989, the fair has gained recognition for its quality, size, and turnout—and for the prestigious backing from the Tec; one of the most highly acclaimed institutions of higher learning in all of Latin America.

The following is the lineup of the conference participants, which is being promoted by the book fair organizers, as well as the local Monterrey press.



Alberto Fernández, at age 5 wrote “A Halloween Story” albeit phonetically, for a school English writing project at the American School Foundation of Monterrey (ASFM). His first language, naturally, is Spanish, being a native of Monterrey, Mexico. The story’s excellent structure and tale twist surprised his teachers, and inspired his father, Alberto Fernandez, Sr. to found Maroma Books, a new children’s book publishing

company.

Alberto is a “graduate” of the Tsikuri Kindergarden and is currently studying at the ASFM.

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His hobbies include inventing, writing, and drawing stories. Practicing Tae Kwon Do (he's a brown belt) and basketball. Like many his age worldwide, he says his favorite author is Dr. Seuss. His favorite titles include "Hop on Pop" and "The Lorax."

Alberto Fernandez, father of the young author, is an entrepreneur in Monterrey, México. This year he launched Maroma Books, a children's book publishing company releasing "A Halloween Story" as its first title. "Our 5 founding principals, and what we aim to achieve with our books are that children:

- Feel. Through a tear or a belly-laugh.
- Free themselves from the artificial limits adults unconsciously set for children.
- Question. To arrive at the meaning each book has for them, by their own able minds and means.
- Explore. Languages & Cultures.
- Learn. To compliment what children learn in school with an emphasis on the arts."

Alberto has a degree in Economics from the University of Notre Dame, and an MBA from Georgetown University.

Melissa Schaub-Diaz, Assistant Principal of Curriculum and Instruction at the American School Foundation in Monterrey (ASFM).

She has been working in international education for 15 years, in Mexico and in Venezuela as well, where in Caracas, she served as an elementary teacher and Language Arts coordinator.

She received her Multiple-Teaching Teaching Credential K-8 from the San Francisco State University, a Master's in Elementary Education from The College of New Jersey, and completed her Essential Skills of the Principalship training with The Principal Training Center.

Mrs. Schuab-Diaz has extensive training in fostering writing skills in young children through the "First Steps Literacy" program, and also the "Write Traits" program, which was implemented in K-5 at the ASFM recently. She has also implemented in the school, the "Study-A Writing" program from the Teachers College Reading & Writing Project of Columbia University.

Molly Armstrong Vargas, editor of the new children's book publishing company, Maroma Books, Armstrong has 10 years working and teaching written communication skills in many forms including: creative writing, corporate communications, and in newspaper journalism. She has a degree in Journalism from the University of Minnesota, her home state.

"The ability to write creatively is not only an important skill for children to learn, but it is a source of power: power to make an opinion, to propose a solution, to teach, and move others. This is a power that no one can take away—they will have it at their fingertips for their entire lives."

Pilar de la Fuente, is the artist behind the "Halloween Story" illustrations. Born in 1972 in Juarez, Mexico, she has drawn on her creative energy throughout her life. De la Fuente graduated with a degree in Visual Arts from the Universidad Autonoma de Nuevo Leon, and has a master's in Graphic Design from the Centro de Estudios Superiores de Diseño de Monterrey (CEDIM).

De la Fuente has gained much recognition for her work, which has been displayed in nearly 80 individual and collective exhibitions, in museums and galleries throughout Mexico and beyond including in Spain, France, Portugal, Peru, and the US.

