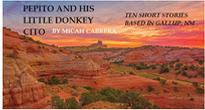


Local Author Pays homage to Gallup, childhood in book series

Written by Rachael Merilatt Sun Correspondent
Friday, 08 May 2015 00:34



When Micah Cabrera discusses Gallup, New Mexico, he personifies the definition of hometown pride. In fact, his admiration of the town is so strong that it is the setting of a children’s book series authored by Cabrera called “Pepito and his Little Donkey Cito.” The main character, Pepito, lives with his family in Gallup and explores a number of important topics that he hopes readers, particularly residents of Gallup, will enjoy and appreciate.

Early Years and Inspiration

Born in Gallup in 1955, Cabrera’s family moved to California the following year so his father could pursue a career in banking. However, Gallup remained a constant in his life in several ways. As a child, his father would regale his children with tales of a child named Pepito and his donkey, Cito.

“He used to gather us in the bedroom on Saturday mornings and tell us these stories,” he remembers fondly. “They always took place in the town of Gallup, his hometown.”

The New Mexico native also recalls his family’s annual summer trips to Gallup in the 1960s with endearment, describing it as “magical.”

“We fell in love with the place as kids, playing with our cousins and roaming around the hills of

Local Author Pays homage to Gallup, childhood in book series

Written by Rachael Merilatt Sun Correspondent
Friday, 08 May 2015 00:34

the North Side,” he said. “Ever since then, when I was a child, I always wanted to come back here.”

Various circumstances delayed him from moving back. Eventually, Cabrera and his family relocated to Gallup in 2000, and have been residents ever since.

Writing has always been a pastime of Cabrera’s, so much so that he found a way to jot down stories while working in an oil field. Unfortunately, his early writings were done on paper and were eventually lost.

He continued to hone his writing skills by penning cigar reviews for the Tee Pee Smoke Shop in Gallup. The desire to write increased so much that he knew it was time to do more.

“I just had a natural progression, just wanted to start writing more, so it kind of progressed to the short stories.”

While he had trouble recalling details about the stories from his childhood, he always remembered Pepito. He decided to create a series of fictional short stories that were inspired by his family. Ironically, some of the ideas for the newer “Pepito” stories came from his father. “Every time I need an idea for a story, I call him,” he revealed.

Pepito and His Little Donkey, Cito

Set in 1960s Gallup, “Pepito and his Little Donkey Cito” follows Pepito, Cito, Mama Tina, Grandpa Juan and a host of other family members and friends. The stories take place from Pepito’s perspective, and the young boy’s wide-eyed excitement for the world around him makes for an engaging, heart-warming read.

To date, Cabrera has released four titles in the “Pepito” series: “The Circus Comes to Gallup”; “Pepito Shelters the Homeless”; “Pepito Discovers His Roots” and “Tina’s Tamales is Born.”

Local Author Pays homage to Gallup, childhood in book series

Written by Rachael Merilatt Sun Correspondent
Friday, 08 May 2015 00:34

The first installment finds Pepito in amazement as the Circus comes to town, while introducing the readers to the characters and setting. In *Pepito Shelters the Homeless*, Pepito discovers a way to help the less fortunate citizens of Gallup by bringing the community together. *Pepito Discovers His Roots* has Pepito learning about his lineage on his mother's side of the family, influenced by his maternal family history.

The latest release, "Tina's Tamales Is Born," follows Pepito as his grandmother, affectionately named "Mama Tina", opens a tamale business in Gallup. Like the previous book, the story is a recollection of how Cabrera's own grandmother, Tina, opened a tamale restaurant in Gallup nearly 50 years ago, which now operates under the name Erlinda's Tamales, which will serve as the plot of another Pepito book in the future.

When asked about his target audience, he shares that he would like to see people of all ages reading "Pepito and his Little Donkey Cito." He passes on the good principles and morals given to him by his father to Pepito, and thinks everyone could benefit from it. Cabrera also has the residents of Gallup in mind when writing the series.

"I think people reading these, especially from the town of Gallup... can see the natural progression of things that might cross their minds and make things better, hopefully some lasting changes."

What's Next?

Having received a significant amount of local attention for the Pepito series, Cabrera plans to write and release six more books over the next few months. Upon completion, he wants to compile all ten books into an anthology and have them published in print. Most impressive is the fact that he doesn't use any outlines or pre-written ideas; it all comes from his mind.

"I just look at a blank page and start coming up with something, and that's how it goes. Thank goodness they're just short stories," he says with a chuckle.

Local Author Pays homage to Gallup, childhood in book series

Written by Rachael Merilatt Sun Correspondent
Friday, 08 May 2015 00:34

His family and friends are very supportive of the Pepito series, which, in turn, encourages his writing endeavors.

After the Pepito series is completed, he would like to work on a semi-autobiographical novel that would include some of the events that have transpired in his life, like losing his wife and having to raise five children. "I think it would make a good book, a very inspirational book."

When he isn't working on a story, he enjoys practicing photography and acrylic painting. A cigar enthusiast, he continues to write cigar reviews, and meets up with his friends at Sammy C's in Gallup every Wednesday night.

"I still have two boys that live with me at home," he shared, "so that keeps me tied up most of the time.

The "Pepito and his Little Donkey Cito" books are available on Amazon.com. For updates on Micah Cabrera's future releases, like his facebook page at www.facebook.com/michaswritings.