



SOUTHWEST FESTIVAL *of the* WRITTEN WORD

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

The Southwest Festival of the Written Word announces that Western New Mexico University has become the major sponsor of Silver City's first literary festival, according to Tom Hester, chair of the festival organizing committee.

"WNMU has always been a big part of the festival plans," says Hester, "but we celebrate this affirmation of their confidence that the festival will bring learning, fun, and tourist attention to downtown Silver City. We believe that the university's sponsorship will inspire others to join in supporting this fantastic event."

The Southwest Festival of the Written Word fills the meeting places of Silver City on September 27, 28 and 29. A pre-festival performance of the one-man play *Tuck*, followed by a reception, takes place on September 26 at Hurley's JW Art Gallery.

Fifty authors or other publishing professionals have agreed to speak in 30 sessions. A one-act play, written and performed especially for families at the festival, as well as a literary market and a day of reading and writing fun for kids and adolescents, will round out the schedule.

"We cover nearly every aspect of writing," says J.J. Wilson, WNMU writer-in-residence and one of the primary festival planners. "But you don't need to be a writer to relish what our invited speakers have to say."

Wilson notes that it was impossible to invite every writer living in the area. "We have sought a balance between local authors and those who live elsewhere in New Mexico, or in West Texas, Arizona, or Colorado. Moreover, we're certain that this won't be our last book festival, and we need to preserve a strong lineup for the future."

All the sessions will be free except for a writers' workshop on memoir writing, conducted by famed novelist Ana Castillo. Castillo, who is from Chicago but who has connections to Anthony, New Mexico, leads a writers' workshop on memoirs for Northwestern University.

Castillo gives a free public address on the festival's opening day.

The festival banquet, on the second day, will feature Denise Chavez, familiar to many Silver City residents because of a visit several years ago that created an intensely loyal following. Chavez has a new book appearing later in the fall.

"It's difficult to overstate how impressive it is to have two of the leading novelists of America giving major talks a day apart in Silver City," says Hester. "Part of the festival committee's purpose has always been to point to Silver City, in the past and today, as a major center for authors."

Further details about the festival may be gained from www.swwordfiesta.org.

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