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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Roads Taken. Words Written.

The Southwest Festival of the Written Word invites you to pull up a chair at the Festival on Saturday, September 28, and listen while three intrepid southwestern traveler-writers discuss the art of Travel Writing. Richard Mahler, Esther Melvin, and Elan Head, each with their own style of authoring, bring stories of adventure and writing practice to Silver City New Mexico's first literary festival.

Of Richard Mahler's book, *The Jaguar's Shadow*, published by Yale University Press, the Publisher's Weekly writes, "With many photographs, as well as details of travel through little-known territories, Mahler provides a fast-moving, ecological detective tale and a knowing conservationist wake-up call." Richard wrote five editions of the best-selling *Belize: Adventures in Nature*, which won praise for its emphasis on natural history, Maya culture, and outdoor adventure opportunities in Central America's only English-speaking country. Mahler, among many other writing personas, is also an NPR commentator and a columnist for the *Desert Exposure*. Mahler currently lives and writes in Silver City. His website is www.richardmahler.com

Esther Melvin's new book, *Walking Going, A Journey to the Holy Mountains of Nepal*, is a memoir of spiritual seeking and the travel that came with the quest. In 1983, at the age of 49, Melvin's restless heart was yearning for something she could only describe as mountains. Suddenly, a series of chance events led her to step out of her comfortable life in Hawaii in order to attend a Buddhist retreat at a monastery in the Himalayas of Nepal. Thus began a series of treks and meditation retreats among the world's highest peaks that would change and revitalize her forever. A life-long wanderer, Esther now makes her home in Silver City where she offers her experience and insights to other seekers.



A Grant County native and 1997 graduate of Cobre High School, Elan Head began her career as a reporter for the Silver City Sun-News and Silver City Daily Press. Since then, writing has taken her around the world: from posh resorts in Palau to combat outposts in Afghanistan. Along the way, she became a commercial helicopter pilot and flight instructor, and spent four years as the editor-in-chief of the helicopter industry magazine *Vertical*. She now works for the magazine as a special projects editor while studying international relations at the Harvard Extension School.

The Southwest Festival of the Written Word takes place Sept 27-29, 2013 in downtown Silver City NM. All thirty sessions are free and open to the public except for Ana Castillo's Memoir Writing Workshop on Saturday afternoon and the Festival banquet, with Denise Chavez as keynote speaker, on Saturday evening.

Visit www.swordfiesta.org for full Festival details and information on costs for the Castillo workshop and the Festival banquet.