

Ahwatukee Toastmasters

Profiles in Leadership: Author and Road Scholar, Katrina Shawver



By Brenda Smull

The Ahwatukee Toastmasters club is fortunate to have a number of accomplished authors in its ranks and is proud to announce that one of its members is now a *Road Scholar*. Katrina Shawver, author of the book "Henry: A Polish Swimmer's True Story of Friendship from Auschwitz to America" has recently been recognized with this title that designates someone who is a member of the AZ Speaks program.

When asked about the program, Katrina replied, "Think of AZ Speaks as a speaker's bureau for a humanities-focused organization. For the years 2019-2021, forty-one different presenters are available to speak on a wide variety of topics."

The best description comes from the website for Arizona Humanities:

“AZ Speaks presenters represent a diverse range of expertise, from a variety of professional backgrounds including: history, cultural and gender studies, and more. Speakers are selected based on their expertise and ability to offer content and insight that inspires discussion with audiences of all ages and backgrounds.”

Use the link below to browse the new catalog by speaker or topic. Many of the topics focus on Arizona history.

<https://azhumanities.org/programs/az-speaks-2019-2021/>

When not researching, interviewing or writing books, Katrina enjoys public speaking and connecting with people in person, especially readers. She credits Toastmasters for preparing her to be a more polished speaker and for giving her the confidence to present to any size audience.



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As to writing, Katrina continues to blog, however she has not found that next great book to write. She explains, “I am a nonfiction writer, which is far harder to find topics than a sci-fi or romance writer. When you create worlds, you just keep writing more stories and build a series. I have tracked down about six people I thought had great stories, but for various reasons none of them worked out. The universe keeps smiling down on me, so I have no doubt that the right story will come my way at the right time.”

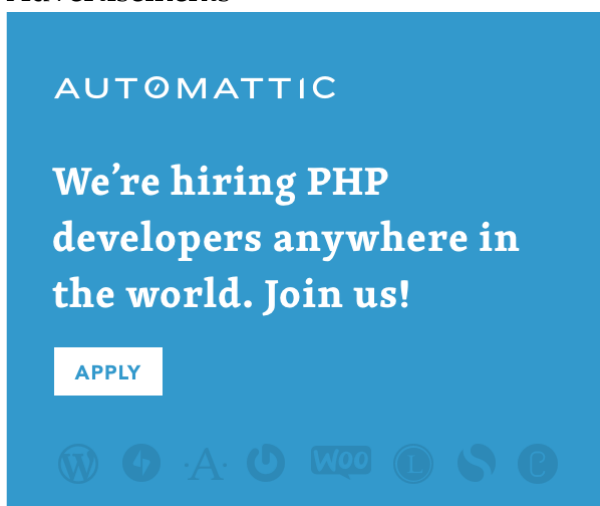
When asked what the biggest challenge is in getting the word out about her book to the public she replied, “Having the self confidence to put yourself out there personally and to the media. The core essentials for anyone, especially authors and public speakers, are a strong social media presence and a website that is updated regularly. These requirements have steep learning curves, especially for any author or individual without a background in marketing and graphics. People like to know who you are before they care about what you do. Social media is about connecting, not marketing, and you have to be willing to share about yourself, and promote others. It can be incredibly time-consuming. A writer has to balance the time needed to connect publicly, with the need to keep writing new content.”

The Road Scholar program is a great honor and an exciting opportunity to reach and connect with many people across the world. Katrina shared what she is most excited about by explaining that, “At heart I am a communicator and passionate about the subject of under-recognized people and issues. For me that includes a strong emphasis on Poland and the Holocaust because that is what I researched for many years for my book. I support the mission of Arizona Humanities which is to build an understanding of, and promote learning about our shared human experience. I am honored to be named to the program as their criteria for speakers is highly selective, and I bring new topics to the program.”

I applaud Katrina Shawver for her courage and perseverance. She is a role model and leader in our community and I encourage you to check out her work online.

For more info, visit <https://katrinashawver.com/> and follow her on Facebook at Read Katrina Shawver.

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