2021 PITTSBURGH PA AUGUST 4 - 7
SAYWHATCLUB CONVENTION

Building Bridges in the ‘Burgh
SHERATON PITTSBURGH HOTEL AT STATON SQUARE
Trouble Hearing on the Phone?

See and hear what people say on the phone.

CaptionCall Service is for qualified people with hearing loss who need captions to use the phone effectively.
Welcome to Pittsburgh!

August 4, 2021

Welcome to the most-awaited-ever SayWhatClub 2020-21 Convention!

On behalf of your convention planning committee, welcome to Pittsburgh and the convention. We’re so glad you’re here.

To say this has been a challenging two years since the last convention is a terrific understatement. So let’s focus off the challenges we’ve had during this time and on to some long-awaited fun!

For the next four days, I’m asking you, as Pittsburgh’s most famous resident (Fred Rogers) asked: ‘Please, won’t you be my neighbor?’ And while you’re at it, enjoy the summertime delights of this newly-reopened, most neighborly city in the world.

In this booklet, you’ll find a daily schedule and information about speakers, sponsors, the silent auction, and scheduled activities. You’ll also find a list of "Uniquely Pittsburgh" things to do and see while you’re here. Do as many as you can.

Pittsburgh is a livable, walkable, safe city. Feel free to enjoy any or all of our planned activities or explore it on your own. And no matter what you choose to do this week, meet some new neighbors and make plenty of Pittsburgh memories to last a lifetime!

Angie L. Fuoco
Your neighbor and Pittsburgh Local Chair
SayWhatClub Convention 2020-21

Angie’s SayWhatClub story: Yinz found me! (‘Yinz’ is what we say in the ‘burgh for ‘you guys’ or ‘y’all.’) Yes, yinz found me when Pat Kovac asked me to speak at the 2017 Savannah convention. I’d never been to a SayWhatClub convention before, but spoke, met some new folks, and was hooked! Though I didn't make another convention since, I know many of you either from my brief time in Savannah or from other hearing loss organizations I found during my hearing loss journey.

Fast forward 15 years from the beginning of that journey and here we are in my hometown. I was born just a few miles down the Monongahela River, the now-sparkling clean river just outside our hotel. When I grew up it was called the “Muddy Mon” and couldn’t host a fish. Now, I get to enjoy marvelous views of the river as I walk or ride outside my condo on Mount Washington. And I’ll share that with you if you’ll join me on the “Saturday Skywalk.”
The SayWhatClub Silent Auction is a traditional part of our annual convention and a major fundraiser for the club. We usually request donations of hand-crafted items, hearing loss-related products, gift certificates, or other items that SWCers can bid on at the convention, with all proceeds going to the club.

However, due to the Covid-19 restrictions that were in place for much of the past year, we felt it necessary to rethink our convention's Silent Auction planning. It has been decided that for our SWC Convention 2021, instead of holding our traditional Silent Auction, we will hold a Silent Auction Fund Drive. This drive will allow both convention attendees and those who cannot attend to support our convention.

This Silent Auction revamp is for 2021 only. We plan to resume our traditional Silent Auction in 2022. That said, please save all items to be donated until then.

Please give us your financial support. All donations are greatly appreciated.

To make an online donation to the 2021 Silent Auction fund drive, go to: https://www.saywhatclub.org/how-to-donate-to-saywhatclub/
When we weren’t able to hold our convention last year, in 2020, we were sure that we’d be able to hold our convention this year. We’re grateful that our concerns were answered in the positive and that we’re here together. So I’m extra excited and happy to be able to welcome you to our 2021 Annual Convention in Pittsburgh.

YAHOOOOOOO!

If this is your first SWC Convention, you are in for a real treat as in no time you’ll be a part of our SWC family. If you are returning alumni, welcome back! We hope that the convention will provide you with information that will help you in your daily lives but also that you will make new friends that will last a lifetime.

The pandemic brought on unforeseen challenges. The social distancing compounded any social isolation that we may already feel as people with hearing loss. But there was also job loss or furlough, lack of medical services and short supplies of certain items. For those of you who lost loved ones, friends, or neighbors, we grieve with you.

These challenges emphasized the value of our club more than ever as our lists and Facebook page provided the social outlet that we lost with social isolation. To boot, because we’re an international organization, we’d get perspectives of how other countries were dealing with the pandemic.

We thank Lorne Smith and his convention committee who expended countless hours to make this year’s convention a convention to remember. We also thank our sponsors and vendors who generously agreed to support our convention. And lastly, we thank our speakers for agreeing to share their knowledge with us.

SWC conventions are more like family reunions because it’s so nice to be around friendly people who share your concerns and challenges. There are many people anxious to meet you. Welcome each and every one of you.

Pat Dobbs
President, SayWhatClub

PAT’S BIO: When I was 19 I couldn’t figure out why people seemed to be talking softly and mumbling. Of course, it was the beginning of my hearing loss journey. Through the years my hearing declined but so did my self-esteem. Yes - I bought into the negative stereotypes of hearing loss. That translated into my pretending I heard what someone said rather than letting them know I have a hearing loss and could they perhaps look at me when they talk. Consequently, I was often uncertain of what people said which only contributed to my isolation and also depression.

Thanks to friends and family, I finally realized that hearing loss was nothing to be ashamed of. Rather it was something to take ownership of and embrace. That means advocating for oneself - like getting to a lecture hall early so you can sit in the front row or asking someone to talk a little louder if need be. It also means embracing the wonderful technology available to us.

As a result, I became passionate to help other people with hearing loss and started an HLAA Chapter, started a supportive website called Hearing Loss Evolution, and wrote The Nine Guiding Principles of the Hearing Loss Evolution which are tools to support people with hearing loss.

In 2017 I graduated from Gallaudet University’s two-year Peer Mentoring program. With this knowledge and passion, I started helping people deal with their hearing loss. To complement this, today I am taking a 15-month coach certification.

I learned about SayWhatClub 5 years ago when asked to give a presentation at the convention in Boise. When asked to join the board close to 2 years ago, I was honored and accepted and today am your President. Today I’m grateful to benefit from the wonderful support and knowledge that the SayWhatClub offers - and not just once a year at our conventions, but all year round. Thank you SayWhatClub.

Of course, I can’t forget to mention that I proudly wear two cochlear implants – I got the first one in 2010 and the second in 2015. I’m grateful for them every day and for Cochlear’s wonderful technology.
# SCHEDULE AT-A-GLANCE

## Wednesday, August 4, 2021

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Event</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>12:30 p.m.</td>
<td>Lunch at the Grand Concourse</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7:00 p.m. - 10:00 p.m.</td>
<td><strong>WELCOME PARTY SPONSORED BY T-MOBILE ACCESSIBILITY</strong></td>
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</table>

## Thursday, August 5, 2021

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Event</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Morning</td>
<td>Andy Warhol Museum (<a href="http://warhol.org">warhol.org</a>) or National Aviary (<a href="http://aviary.org">aviary.org</a>)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1:30 p.m. - 1:45 p.m.</td>
<td><strong>WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1:45 p.m. - 2:45 p.m.</td>
<td><strong>VENDOR INTRODUCTIONS AND UPDATES</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2:45 p.m. - 3:15 p.m.</td>
<td>BREAK - Visit Vendor Tables</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3:15 p.m. - 4:15 p.m.</td>
<td><strong>JULIETTE STERKENS, AuD - Hearing Loops: Are They the Future of Assistive Listening?</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4:15 p.m. - 4:30 p.m.</td>
<td>BREAK - Visit Vendor Tables</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4:30 p.m. - 5:30 p.m.</td>
<td><strong>ANGIE FUOCO - Tall Tales about Hearing Loss and the Story of Pittsburgh’s “H”</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7:00 p.m. - 9:30 p.m.</td>
<td>Dinner Cruise Aboard the Gateway Clipper</td>
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## Friday, August 6, 2021

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Event</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8:45 a.m. - 9:45 a.m.</td>
<td><strong>“KAY” TYBERG - EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS:</strong> What hard of hearing people need to know</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9:45 a.m. - 10:15 a.m.</td>
<td>BREAK - Visit Vendor Tables</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10:15 a.m. - 11:15 a.m.</td>
<td><strong>CHRIS DOIG - MAX YOUR MICS:</strong> An introduction to several hearing assistive microphones</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11:15 a.m. - 11:30 a.m.</td>
<td>BREAK - Visit Vendor Tables</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.</td>
<td><strong>ERIC SINAGRA - pathVu NAVIGATION:</strong> A mobile app for accessible pedestrian directions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Afternoon</td>
<td>Kennywood Amusement Park (<a href="http://kennywood.com">kennywood.com</a>)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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## Saturday, August 7, 2021

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Event</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>9:00 a.m. - 10:00 a.m.</td>
<td>**TOWN HALL MEETING</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10:30 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.</td>
<td>Mt. Washington Stroll &amp; Shop or Mt. Washington Walk</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6:00 p.m. - 7:00 p.m.</td>
<td><strong>COCKTAIL RECEPTION</strong> (group pictures 6:30 p.m. - 7:00 p.m.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7:00 p.m. - 8:00 p.m.</td>
<td><strong>DINNER SERVED</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8:00 p.m.</td>
<td>**KEYNOTE ADDRESS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9:00 p.m.</td>
<td>**FINAL REMARKS</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Welcome to Pittsburgh, known as the City of Bridges for the many spans that cross the Three Rivers and connect the city. You can see some of those bridges and the stunning downtown skyline from the windows of our 2021 SayWhatClub convention hotel, the Sheraton Pittsburgh Hotel at Station Square.

SayWhatClub conventions are for bonding, and the theme of our convention is Building Bridges in the ‘Burgh. The Welcome Party sponsored by T-Mobile Accessibility on Wednesday, August 4 is a long-awaited chance to renew old friendships, make new friends and build bridges to each other at our first convention in two years. Dress in black and gold if you want to look like a Pittsburgher, indulge in some local hors d’oeuvres and refreshments and prepare to make four days of memories that can change your life and make you yearn to come back for more.

Pittsburgh Bleeds Black and Gold

According to a 90.5 WESA article, it is no coincidence that the city “radiates black and gold.” The colors are linked to the founding of Pittsburgh and William Pitt’s family coat of arms. The family crest was also the inspiration for the design and colors of the city seal.

Look around Pittsburgh and you will notice buildings, bridges, businesses, houses, sports fields, and other landmarks that pay homage to the black and gold theme.

There may be no other city that represents itself by uniformity of color to the degree that Pittsburgh does. All of its major sports teams—Steelers (NFL), Pirates (MLB), and Penguins (NHL), Riverhounds (USL)—use the same color scheme. Black and gold stands for unity and pride for Pittsburghers.

Some say black and gold also have an association with the steel and coal industries that once defined Pittsburgh: black represented coal, gold iron ore. However, according to American Iron and Steel Institute (AISI) history, their trademarked Steelmark—developed by U. S. Steel in the 1950s and later given to AISI to promote steel made in America—represents the three materials used to produce steel: yellow for coal, orange for iron ore, and blue for steel scrap.

The AISI Steelmark may look familiar. According to an LA Times article, the Pittsburgh Steelers logo “was originally the logo for the American Iron and Steel Institute, and features a circle around three four-pointed geometric shapes called hypocycloids in yellow, red and blue. Those colors represent the three materials used to make steel: yellow for coal, red for iron ore, and blue for steel scrap.”
## THURSDAY, AUGUST 5th

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Event</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1:30 p.m. - 1:45 p.m.</td>
<td>WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1:45 p.m. - 2:45 p.m.</td>
<td>VENDOR INTRODUCTIONS &amp; UPDATES</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3:15 p.m. - 4:15 p.m.</td>
<td>HEARING LOOPS: Are They the Future of Assistive Listening?</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Presenter: Juliëtte Sterkens, AuD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4:30 p.m. - 5:30 p.m.</td>
<td>TALL TALES ABOUT HEARING LOSS AND THE STORY OF PITTSBURGH’S “H”</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Presenter: Angie Fuoco</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7:00 p.m. - 9:30 p.m.</td>
<td>DINNER CRUISE ABOARD THE GATEWAY CLIPPER</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Tour the Andy Warhol Museum with the aid of assistive listening technology to view the largest collection of the artist’s works and archival materials. Or, enjoy the National Aviary, home to more than 500 birds representing more than 150 species from around the world, many of them threatened or endangered in the wild.

Since the early 2000's efforts have been underway to make hearing loops the go-to assistive technology for users of hearing aids and cochlear implants. But what is the future of hearing loops? Is a new public digital wireless streaming technology on the horizon?

This session will give a progress report of the looping of America and try to answer the question whether hearing loops have a future when the whole world seems to be going digital. A timeframe of when a digital Wireless Interface for Hearing Instruments replacement technology might go mainstream, will be discussed. No matter the type of assistive technology – without advocacy nothing will change; that’s why some practical advocacy tools will be shared.

This guided session will be about you and your stories as much as you want it to be. Tell your tallest tale about hearing loss in 5 minutes or less, be it hilarious or horrifying!

This means you get 5 minutes to tell your best hearing loss story (true and “embellishing” details are welcome!). Practice is advised! Practice in the mirror, with your spouse, or with someone who hasn’t heard your story before. Angie will be using Toastmasters’ timing rules which require wrap-up at the designated time, unless the audience permits.

Angie will cover the “rules” at the beginning of the hour and see who wants to “tell all.” She’ll also bookend the session with her hilarious and horrifying story that relates to the picture of her that you see on the facing page. And the story of the Pittsburgh “H”...

Enjoy a scenic dinner cruise on Pittsburgh's Three Rivers with SayWhatClub friends.
VENDORS

T-Mobile Accessibility  CaptionCall  InnoCaption  Hamilton CapTel  MED-EL  Advanced Bionics

JULIËTTE STERKENS, AuD

Dutch born audiologist Juliëtte Sterkens has 40+ years of experience in the field of audiology and hearing rehabilitation. She is on her encore career as a consumer and hearing loop advocate for the Hearing Loss Association of America. In this capacity she lectures to consumers and hearing professionals and supports anyone who wants to foster a loop in their personal house of worship, or in local public spaces. She is a member of Get in the Hearing Loop (GITHL) National Taskforce, member at large of the WI State Chapter of HLAA Board and serves on the board of the Hear in the Fox Cities; a non-profit that helps pay for hearing aids for children and teens in NE, Wisconsin.

ANGIE FUOCO

Angie is a self-described Abilities Evangelist. She has been a SWCer since 2016 and was invited to lead a workshop at the 2017 SWC convention in Savannah. When she’s not working for the EPA, she talks about disability and hearing loss awareness as much as she can, anywhere in the world. Most recently, she served on a 2021 “Humor in Hearing Loss” panel, sponsored by Utah Deaf and Hard of Hearing Services.

This will be her first interactive workshop where YOU take part by telling tales as Angie keeps time and allows us to “roll on the floor laughing” if the stories call for it. So be kind... and get ready for some fun and a lesson or two!
There are approximately 4.1 million miles of sidewalk in the United States, most of which are unmapped. Cities often don't know where their sidewalks are located nor their condition. Typical navigation apps use the road network when suggesting routes to users, assuming there is a sidewalk on both sides. These apps do not consider the user's ability to navigate nor the accessibility of those routes.

This session will provide an overview of a new app called pathVu Navigation, which focuses on pedestrian navigation for all users, of any ability. Unlike typical navigation apps, pathVu Navigation uses the sidewalk network, condition of the route, and the user's customized settings when suggesting routes. This session will explore the various features of the app, upcoming features to be included, and allow you to share your opinion on desired features. You will learn how you can use the app in the Pittsburgh area throughout this conference.

Max Your Mics: An introduction to several hearing assistive microphones
Presenter: Chris Doig

Many of us use remote microphones (mics) to help us hear what people say to us. Phonak makes an assortment of “Roger mics” that people with hearing loss can use to improve their speech understanding in noise and over distance. These mics can be used with most hearing instruments (hearing aids, Bone Anchored Hearing Aids (BAHA's) and cochlear implants) and are not Phonak specific. They can also be used with hearing instruments made by other manufacturers, such as Resound, Oticon, and Cochlear Americas, to name a few. Many of these mics can be linked together to form groups (often called a network), thus increasing the benefit of a single remote mic.

This workshop will provide an overview of 9 different Roger microphones and will demonstrate how they might be used. In most applications an additional component called a Roger receiver is required to be able to hear the audio from the mics. These receivers come in several forms. This workshop will introduce the receivers and will illustrate how they can be coupled with various manufacturers' devices. Multiple people with hearing loss can listen to one microphone network, which is a benefit for groups of people with hearing loss who are gathered together. All those who have trouble hearing with their basic hearing instruments alone or with one remote mic will find something of value in this workshop.

PathVu NAVIGATION: A mobile app for accessible pedestrian directions
Presenter: Eric Sinagra

There are approximately 4.1 million miles of sidewalk in the United States, most of which are unmapped. Cities often don't know where their sidewalks are located nor their condition. Typical navigation apps use the road network when suggesting routes to users, assuming there is a sidewalk on both sides. These apps do not consider the user's ability to navigate nor the accessibility of those routes.

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Afternoon
Kennywood Amusement Park (kennywood.com)
ANNITA “KAY” TYBERG

“Kay” Tyberg was born with sensorineural hearing loss in the left ear and profoundly deaf in the right ear. In 2008, Kay became profoundly deaf in three days. Kay is fluent in several communication modes - sign language, speech reading, cued speech, and others. Kay’s lifelong inspiration and passion is ensuring people with hearing loss, their families/guardians, and the public seek appropriate resources and information to make sound decisions about his/her hearing loss in the various stages. Kay teaches sign language to the public. Kay attended Gallaudet University, Mercy College/New York, The Union Institute University, and Pennsylvania College of Technology with degrees in Management Information Systems, Human Resources, Business Administration with minors in Psychology and Physical Education. She is involved in various organizations; ALDA, PSAD, SILC, CILSCPA, TRS/PUC, HLAA-Blair County PA Chapter president, PATF, PA State Ombudsman, etc. Kay and her husband, Dr. Thomas Tyberg have four adult children and 10 grandchildren. They reside outside of Altoona, Pennsylvania.

CHRIS DOIG

Chris Doig is a volunteer N-CHATT (Network of Consumer Hearing Assistive Technology Trainer) for the Hearing Loss Association of America (HLAA). She is a member of the Association of Late Deafened Adults (ALDA). She is Vice President of the Montgomery County, PA HLAA Chapter and serves on the HLAA PA advisory board. She has bilateral sensorineural hearing loss and wears 2 hearing aids. She enjoys flying airplanes and spending time with family/ friends and her 3 cats!

ERIC SINAGRA

Eric Sinagra is CEO and Co-Founder of pathVu, a Pittsburgh startup whose mission is to map the world’s sidewalks to improve accessibility and walkability. Eric has a Master’s in Rehabilitation Science and Technology from the University of Pittsburgh, where his research focused on how sidewalks affect wheelchair user comfort. In 2014, Eric started pathVu in order to help people with disabilities get around the community safely and accessibly. His passion for this work comes from friends and family members who have a disability, including: his brother Nick (pathVu Director of Technology, wheelchair user), his father-in-law Greg (blind), and pathVu co-founder Jon (wheelchair user).

NOTES
### SATURDAY, AUGUST 7th

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Activities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>9:00 a.m. - 10:00 a.m.</td>
<td><strong>TOWNHALL MEETING AGENDA</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Join the SayWhatClub Board of Directors at the Town Hall Meeting:</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Introduction of board members</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Introduction of committees and committee members</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- What has happened since the last convention?</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- Goals for the next year</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Questions and Answers</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Discussion of future conventions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6:00 p.m. - 7:00 p.m.</td>
<td><strong>COCKTAIL RECEPTION</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6:30 p.m.</td>
<td><strong>GROUP PICTURES</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Please make yourself available for group pictures during the second half hour of the Cocktail Reception.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7:00 p.m.</td>
<td><strong>DINNER SERVED</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8:00 p.m.</td>
<td><strong>KEYNOTE ADDRESS: Elena LaQuatra - Special video presentation</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9:00 p.m.</td>
<td>**FINAL REMARKS</td>
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When it comes to understanding what's said on the phone, Hamilton® CapTel® makes all the difference. Reliable and accurate captions of what's said to you over the phone ensures clarity on every call – eliminating the frustration even a simple phone call can make.

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FEDERAL LAW PROHIBITS ANYONE BUT REGISTERED USERS WITH HEARING LOSS FROM USING INTERNET PROTOCOL (IP) CAPTIONED TELEPHONES WITH THE CAPTIONS TURNED ON. IP Captioned Telephone Service may use a live operator. The operator generates captions of what the other party to the call says. These captions are then sent to your phone. There is a cost for each minute of captions generated, paid from a federally administered fund. To learn more, visit fcc.gov. Voice and data plans may be required when using Hamilton CapTel on a smartphone or tablet. Hamilton CapTel may be used to make 911 calls, but may not function the same as traditional 911 services. For more information about the benefits and limitations of Hamilton CapTel and Emergency 911 calling, visit HamiltonCapTel.com/911. © 2021 Hamilton Relay. Hamilton is a registered trademark of National Telecom, Inc. CapTel is a registered trademark of Ultratec, Inc.
Though 100% deaf in both ears, Elena LaQuatra is defying all odds.

She spent her grade school years performing as the lead in over two dozen musicals, winning numerous awards for dance choreography, and performing as a member of her high school’s percussion ensemble, learning to play dozens of percussion instruments.

Elena spent her teenage years competing in pageants, winning the prestigious titles of Miss Pennsylvania's Outstanding Teen in 2007 and Miss Pennsylvania Teen USA in 2010. She captured the title of Miss Pennsylvania USA in 2016 and represented the state at the Miss USA pageant, televised live on FOX from Las Vegas.

In college, Elena made a number of international television appearances. She was contestant on Greece's Next Top Model, a coach on an episode of MTV's “Made,” and had a principal role in a Superbowl commercial alongside NFL legends.

She graduated from Point Park University, obtaining her Bachelor of Arts degree in Broadcast Communications. Shortly after, she landed her first job as a Digital Video Reporter for Pittsburgh's online lifestyle and entertainment channel, 4the412 for WTAE. In 2017, Elena accepted a full-time position as a General Assignment Reporter and Anchor for WJET in Erie, Pennsylvania. By 2018, she returned back to WTAE in Pittsburgh, accepting her dream job as a full-time General Assignment Reporter.

At age four, Elena contracted bacterial meningitis, resulting in the loss of all of her hearing and balance. After extreme rehabilitative measures, including numerous surgeries, Elena now hears with a Cochlear Implant. She attended the DePaul School for Hearing and Speech in Pittsburgh for four years to regain her listening and spoken language skills.

Living life with a disability has instilled in Elena a love of philanthropy. She serves as the Mistress of Ceremonies for fundraising galas nationwide, she’s a host and spokesperson for various projects and businesses across the tristate region, an ambassador to numerous non-profit organizations, and gives motivational speeches across the country. Elena was the top fundraiser for The Cystic Fibrosis Foundation’s "Pittsburgh’s 50 Finest" program in 2013, was named one of Whirl Magazine’s “13 Under 30,” Pittsburgh Magazine’s “40 Under 40,” The National Heralds “40 Under 40,” and the Greek America Foundation’s "Forty Under 40."

Her greatest passions include inspiring those living with disabilities, mentoring young girls, volunteering, traveling to Europe, and spending time with her family, boyfriend, and chihuahuas.
Once upon a time, in the early 1990s, a group of people wandered into an AOL bulletin board for deaf and hard of hearing. They connected—relieved to find others in the same boat—began chatting, became friends, and the SayWhatClub was born during that time. In 1995, the group moved to an early listserv. Forum was first list, and as they grew, a second list, Connect, was added a year later.

Many of the club’s founders met face to face for the first time in July 1996 in Dorsett, Ontario, to get to know each other better. They forged bonds that carried them through the next steps of organizing the club. The following year SWCers gathered in Monterey, California.

The SayWhatClub was officially incorporated as a not-for-profit in the state of Washington in 1997, and at that time was the only internet-based nonprofit organization in existence. There were other organizations for people with hearing loss, but none were based solely on the Internet. Our club was recognized by the Internal Revenue Service in 1998 as a tax-exempt organization.

Real-time captioning of cell phone calls

Through live stenographers and automated speech recognition software (ASR) – the choice is yours! Switch between our captioning modes before OR during a call.

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Download the app today to register for a demo account!

Use Your Cellphone Number
Our optional Call Forwarding and Caller ID features allow you to choose whether you use your regular cellphone number or personal InnoCaption number.

Desktop Streaming
See the captions on your phone displayed simultaneously on a desktop computer by accessing our DeskView web streaming portal.

Call Forwarding
If you need all of your phone calls captioned, set up call forwarding with your wireless provider to have calls to your existing phone forwarded to your InnoCaption number.

No Cost to Users
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ABOUT SAYWHATCLUB

SayWhatClub (SWC) is a nonprofit, tax-exempt organization incorporated in the state of Washington since 1997. We are governed by a seven-member board of directors who officially meet monthly via web conference, from various countries and time zones, and who communicate daily via email and Facebook. The board holds an annual face-to-face meeting prior to the opening of each SayWhatClub Convention. The board’s Annual Meeting is typically held the first or second week of January during which the year’s business is reviewed and new board members are appointed to fill any vacancies left by members whose terms have expired.

SayWhatClub is run entirely by volunteers, with no paid staff. Over the years, many dozens of people have contributed their time and effort to make SWC a success. We appreciate all they have done.

SayWhatClub maintains numerous communications avenues including 7 email lists, two closed (private; only those who join have access) Facebook groups, a public Facebook page, a blog, and a Twitter feed, all of which can be accessed through our website.

Of our seven email-based lists, the first four listed below are home lists and welcome discussion on any subject, focus on hearing loss to varying degrees, and have a flavor all their own. Forum was the original list and currently has an international flair.

- SWConnect
- SWCForum
- SWCVistas
- SWCWorld

- SWCExplore is optional secondary list for those who want to interact with subscribers from various lists.
- SWC_CI is a special-focus list for discussing cochlear implants.
- SWCCommmons is a temporary list reserved specifically for convention registrants to acquaint themselves with one another, search for a roommate, and discuss convention events and activities.

SWC Gen-Y is a closed Facebook group for 18 - 40 year olds:
https://www.facebook.com/groups/155139947975931/

SayWhatClub Friends With Hearing Loss is a closed Facebook group for all ages over 18:
https://www.facebook.com/groups/SWCFriends/

SayWhatClub, A Worldwide Forum for People with Hearing Loss - Public Facebook Page:
https://www.facebook.com/SayWhatClub/

www.saywhatclub.org
@ahearingloss

A TRIBUTE TO SWC CO-FOUNDER BOB ELKINS
By Alan Sprague

I was saddened to learn of Bob Elkins' passing. My condolences go out to Ling and Bob's family.

I first encountered Bob back in the 1990s when I was exploring around the chatrooms at AOL seeking information about hearing loss. Some of us who frequented AOL’s hearing loss sites began meeting weekly for IM sessions and got to know each other better that way. The first time Jane and I met Ling and Bob in person, was when I had told him we were going to Maui for our annual spring getaway, and he said "Gee, maybe we'll meet you there!"

My wife was a bit uncertain about meeting strangers there for a week (turns out Ling was as well). We were getting unpacked when there was a knock on our door -- and there they stood! We all hit it off and had a great time.

There were many people involved in organizing what was to become SWC, but clearly Bob was the magnet that pulled late-deafened and HOH people into the orbit. As we attracted new people in greater numbers, several of us spent hours and hours planning and debating, and even met in person for several days near Dorset, Ontario. Bob was clearly the driving force behind that process. Later that year, Bob flew into Seattle and he and I met with an attorney who had offered, pro bono, to do the paperwork required to set up a nonprofit corporation on which SWC could be built. We signed the papers, and here we are a quarter century later and still going strong, thanks to the many people who have since picked up the torch and carried us into the future.

It was Bob's enthusiasm and efforts during those early years that launched SayWhatClub. For that, we can be most grateful. And, hopefully, he is at rest knowing that he did a great deal of good and gave much hope to many people struggling with life-changing hearing loss.
**Leslie Cotter, Vice-President**

My hearing loss was diagnosed in college, where I was on a vocal music scholarship. It explained a lot about my childhood and teen years.

I got my first hearing aids in my mid 20s and my cochlear implant 8 years ago. I love it. It gave me my life and music back. I had taken early retirement from teaching when I lost the last of my hearing.

I am a long time member of SWC. I joined in 1996 (or there about) on the Connect list where I have made many long time, close friendships. My home town is St. Paul, Minnesota where I live with my two cats. Crafting is my passion. I love my part time job in retail at a major big box craft/fabric store. It feeds my crafting addiction.

**Linda Binns, Secretary**

I grew up with normal hearing, and lost hearing on one side, due to a blow to the head, when I was 38. I am considered a late-deafened adult. I used hearing aids for years, until finally qualifying for a cochlear implant. I now have bi-lateral cochlear implants.

I joined SWC in 1999, at the lowest emotional point in my hearing loss journey. I made a conscious decision not to be a victim. I promised myself would never cry over it again, but would educate myself and learn to live inside of it. I am proud to educate and advocate wherever I go. I do not hide my hearing equipment and am always open for discussion or questions. I am glad to be able to give back to SWC and to re-join the BOD at this time in my life. I owe much of my success in my hearing-loss journey to SWC. The people here are now lifelong friends.

I became an activist for people with hearing loss in the workplace and was the go-to person for my Human Resources Dept. in the large government legal agency where I worked for 31 years. I am recently retired. I am also on the executive team for Virtual Ability, a non-profit that assists the disabled in virtual online accessibility issues.

**Ilene Morales, Co-Treasurer**

This is my first time attending a SWC convention and am very excited to participate!

My hearing loss and tinnitus began when I had high fevers with measles at age 8. I was not tested until I was in college and got my first hearing aid then as well. I have a ski slope loss in both ears that goes to profound in the high tones.

I managed for a long time, adding a second aid years later, but as I got older it was more difficult to follow conversations. Audiologists suggested a cochlear implant, but I knew no one who had one and it seemed like a very drastic action. I attended the 2016 HLAA convention in Washington DC, in an effort to learn more about cochlear implants. I asked someone I met there for ways to meet others with hearing loss. She told me about the SayWhatClub, and I signed up right away. The support I received was instrumental in my decision to go ahead with an implant in January 2020. I did so well with the first side that I did my other ear in December 2020.

For the past 42 years, I have worked at a nonprofit community based organization, in a variety of roles. I am currently a financial compliance coordinator. I am a lifelong New Yorker, love to read and travel.
I'm 62 years old, married to my wife Rhonda for 23 years (24 in July). I am currently retired. I have been hard of hearing all of my life, so I know the struggle faced by those who are hard of hearing/deaf. I have had both eardrums surgically replaced when I was a kid. While they provided only modest improvement it was still a huge help. I did not get my first pair of hearing aids until I was 45 or so. They helped for a couple of years, then ceased to be helpful. I now have a pair of Phonak Audeo hearing aids.

My wife and I currently live in Hot Springs Village, Arkansas. We moved here after my wife retired from teaching last July. We do not have any kids. We have a yellow Lab that I am training to be my hearing and mobility assist dog. She will be my fourth Service Dog, and we were "gifted" a second dog earlier this year.

The SayWhatClub was the turning point for me. Attending my first conference in Savannah, Ga. was the absolute best thing that could happen to me. I was not hopeful of ever getting to attend a conference, but I was encouraged to apply for one of the scholarships. I was ecstatic to be chosen from all the applicants. It was life-changing to meet and enjoy the chance to be with people who "get it." I highly encourage all who qualify to apply for one of the scholarships. You have nothing to lose and if you succeed ... everything to gain!
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Ann Marie Picardo

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Explore
Marty Wilson

Forum
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Susan Collins

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IT’S THE LITTLE THINGS
that make it a memory.

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It’s time to start making new memories.
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* Spouse/Significant Other/Guest
Top Ten *Uniquely Pittsburgh* Things to Do

1. Most of you did this from the airport - came out of Fort Pitt tunnel into an amazing view of Pittsburgh! Pulitzer Prize-winner David McCullough said, “Pittsburgh is the only city that makes an entrance.” (Should you be unable to do this live, please do it virtually by searching Mr. McCullough’s quote.)

2. Visit the National Aviary - - yes, Pittsburgh is a truly bird-lovin’ ‘burgh and it’s got Penguins too!

3. Learn, if you didn’t know yet, that the French and Indian War, fought in the area, was the real WWI. Learn this at the Heinz History Center, endowed by our most famous Senator of the ketchup family.

4. Listen to the world’s first commercial radio station, KDKA, operating since 1920.

5. Enter the city on two wheels via a rail-trail spanning two states that starts in Washington, D.C. You’ll be blissfully winded after pedaling 334.5 miles of Great Allegheny Passage and C & O Canal Towpath.

6. Ride two hillside railways that Pittsburghers call inclines, used as transportation since the 1870s.

7. Pause at the arresting Keeping Tabs Holocaust Memorial in Squirrel Hill, a memorial comprising six million pop tabs (1 for each Jewish person killed), encased in glass blocks, shaped in a Star of David.

8. Tour the USS Requin, a floating one-of-kind, diesel-electric, radar picket, WWII submarine museum.

9. Visit University of Pittsburgh’s 31 Nationality Rooms, easily the world's most beautiful classrooms, which represent and honor the national and ethnic groups that helped build the City of Pittsburgh.

10. Walk the infamous Grandview Boulevard from one incline to another on Mt. Washington, aptly-named and arguably, the most grand and beautiful view-filled 1-mile (and hilly!) walk in any city. Highlights of Pittsburgh’s rich history are displayed at various stops or viewpoints along the walk.

This sign with the “T” in the corner tells you that a facility has a hearing loop. A hearing loop helps you hear in group settings like houses of worship, theatres, meeting rooms, and others. It takes the sound from the sound system and transmits it directly to your T-coil equipped hearing aid or CI. Its like the speaker is talking directly into your ear. You can relax. No more sitting on the edge of your seat struggling to hear every word.

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TO ALL OF OUR PROVIDERS, PARTNERS, SPONSORS, PATRONS, VENDORS, SUPPORTERS, DONORS AND FRIENDS:

We appreciate all of the ways in which you have contributed to make the 2021 SayWhatClub Convention a time of learning, inclusion, and fun with with friends. What we experience and learn in the short time we are together in Pittsburgh (through workshops, organized events, social time and communication) is empowering. We return home renewed, carrying with us all that we’ve gained to apply to our everyday lives, jobs, and relationships. You’ve helped us grow. You’ve changed us. For that, we thank you.

A special “THANK YOU” to T-Mobile Accessibility for generously sponsoring our Welcome Party, and to Brown Audio Service LLC for their equally generous donation of their services to install our hearing loop.

TO OUR VOLUNTEERS:

Some of our SWC Volunteers and Committee Members are mentioned by name in the program. However, there are many more generous SWCers—too many to list and some unknown at printing—who offer their energy, time, and talent to make our club and convention a success. The convention and Silent Auction would not be possible without every single person who lends a hand. To all of our volunteers, we want you to know how much we appreciate and value your spirit of helpfulness and your service.

Lorne Smith, CSC Chair

THANK YOU!

Brenda Dawe
RID/NAD IV
ASL Interpreter

Joyce Conser
Watercolor Artist

Lorne Smith, CSC Chair