Hear, Here in the City of Firsts

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SayWhatClub®



Springfield

MASSACHUSETTS

2024 SayWhatClub CONVENTION

July 31 - August 3

Sheraton Springfield Monarch Place Hotel



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Welcome to Springfield!



Welcome to the SayWhatClub's 2024 Convention in Springfield, Massachusetts. Springfield is known as the City of Firsts, so it is fitting that it hosts our first ever convention in New England. Our theme for the convention is "Hear, Here, in the City of Firsts".

Springfield boasts of many memorable firsts, perhaps that most famous of which is the first ever game of basketball in 1891. To honor this, Springfield is the home of the Naismith Memorial Basketball Hall of Fame, within walking distance from our hotel. Springfield was also the home of Theodor Geisel, better known as the beloved Dr. Seuss. A museum dedicated to his works is housed within the Quadrangle, a collection of museums, also within walking distance of the hotel.



Springfield is the third largest city in Massachusetts and the fourth largest in all of New England. Though it is big by New England standards, with a population of under 160,000, it is one of the smallest cities to host one of our conventions. It was settled in 1636, and can be considered part of one of the first westward expansions in the British Colonies. When settlers left the coastal areas they traveled westward to the Connecticut River Valley. Here they found not only a navigable river but also some of the best farmland in North America. To this day many of the surrounding towns are still largely agricultural in nature.

By virtue of its early settlement, included in its many firsts is being the first city to bear the name Springfield in the U.S. Among its others firsts are the manufacturing of the first gasoline powered automobile in America, the first motorcycle, the publication of the first dictionary, the first board game, and the first telephone party line. Its armory was the first built in America, supplying weapons for those fighting in the American Revolution.

Just outside of Springfield you can visit the site of the Eastern States Exposition, a sort of state fair for all of New England. Each New England state owns property at the site with a replica of each state capitol building. Here it is possible to set foot in each of the six New England states within a matter of minutes. A short drive can take you to the foothills of the Berkshires, known for their scenic and cultural offerings.



The annual SWC Convention offers an unparalleled way to meet old friends and make new ones while seeing other parts of the U.S. and Canada. They provide us with the opportunity to create memories that will last a lifetime. I hope you will be able to join us in Springfield and enjoy all it has to offer.

Bet Whitcomb

Bet Whitcomb
SayWhatClub 2024 Local Chair

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SILENT AUCTION

Wednesday	Silent Auction drop-off during the Welcome Party
Thursday & Friday	Bidding begins 15 minutes before workshops and during break times
Saturday Morning	15 minutes of final bidding following Town Hall Meeting
Saturday Evening	6:00 p.m. - 6:30 p.m. Pick-up and Check-out: Winning bidders, items won, and total balance owed will be posted online Saturday afternoon and will also be displayed as you arrive for check-out. • **Please arrive promptly at 6:00 p.m.** to pay for, and pick-up, your winnings so volunteers can enjoy the second half hour of the cocktail reception. • Signage will direct winners to the check-out/pick-up area as they arrive. • After paying for your winnings, please wait while your items are retrieved and brought to you. • We accept cash, check, or major credit cards. A PayPal account is NOT required to pay with credit card. However, any issues with wifi will prevents us from taking credit cards, so it is a good idea to come prepared to pay by cash or check.

GREETINGS

Pat Dobbs, President



I'm excited and happy to welcome you to our 2024 Annual Convention in Springfield, MA, USA.

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 helps you in your daily lives but also that you will make new friends that will last a lifetime.

We thank Marty Wilson and her convention committee and Bet Whitcomb, our local host, for putting together this wonderful convention. They have spent countless hours to make it 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 sharing their knowledge. 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
Pat Dobbs
President, SayWhatClub



When I was 19 I wondered why people were talking softly and mumbling. Of course, it was the beginning of my hearing loss journey. Through the years my hearing declined as did my self-esteem as I bought into the negative stereotypes of hearing loss. That translated into pretending I understood conversation when I didn't. Yes .... I was bluffing.

Thanks to friends and family, I realized that hearing loss was nothing to be ashamed of .... I'm just challenged hearing. Understanding that, I was able to embrace it and now able to advocate for myself and others.

Upon graduating from Gallaudet University's two-year Peer Mentoring program, I fulfilled my passion to support people with hearing loss. Today I've moved to the corporate world as a DEI Consultant specializing in hearing loss where I give presentations and workshops.

I learned about SayWhatClub 8 years ago when I gave a presentation at the Boise convention. Five years ago I joined the board and am honored to be your President. 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 which I'm grateful for every day.

SCHEDULE AT-A-GLANCE

Wednesday, July 31, 2024

7:00 p.m. - 10:00 p.m.	**WELCOME PARTY,** Worthy Room, Second Floor

Thursday, August 1, 2024

9:00 a.m.	**First Timers Breakfast**, Stonehaven Room, Second Floor
10:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.	**Naismith Memorial Basketball Hall of Fame-Springfield, MA**
1:00 p.m. - 1:15 p.m.	**WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS,** Mahogany Room, Second Floor
1:15 p.m. - 2:15 p.m.	**VENDOR INTRODUCTIONS AND UPDATES**
2:15 p.m. - 2:45 p.m.	BREAK - Visit Vendor Tables & Silent Auction
2:45 p.m. - 3:45 p.m.	**JONATHAN O'DELL - Assistive Technology**
3:45 p.m. - 4:00 p.m.	BREAK - Visit Vendor Tables & Silent Auction
4:00 p.m. - 5:00 p.m.	**ANDREA KANEB - Hearing in Noise:** Finding Clarity and Connection Through Tenacity and Steady Innovation
6:00 p.m. - until…	**SWC Casino Night! - MGM Springfield**

Friday, August 2, 2024

9:00 a.m. - 10:00 a.m.	**JULIE FISHER - Hearing Evaluation:** Understanding the Audiogram
10:00 a.m. - 10:15 a.m.	BREAK - Visit Vendor Tables & Silent Auction
10:15 a.m. - 11:15 a.m.	**ELLEN PERKINS - Hearing Loss & Relationships:** Feelings, Foibles & Funnies
11:15 a.m. - 11:30 a.m.	BREAK - Visit Vendor Tables & Silent Auction
11:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.	**ALISON FONDO - Protection and Advocacy for the Rights of Individuals with Disabilities:** The Americans with Disabilities Act and Communication Access
1:00 p.m. - 5:00 p.m.	**Springfield Museums:** One Stop = Five Museums

Saturday, August 3, 2024

9:00 a.m. - 10:00 a.m.	**TOWN HALL MEETING | FUTURE CONVENTION DISCUSSION,** Mahogany Room, Second Floor
10:30 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.	**Yankee Candle Village/Historic Deerfield,MA**
6:00 p.m. - 9:00 p.m.	**CLOSING BANQUET,** Mahogany Room, Second Floor
6:00 p.m. - 7:00 p.m.	**COCKTAIL RECEPTION (group pictures 6:30 p.m. - 7:00 p.m.)**
7:00 p.m. - 8:00 p.m.	**DINNER SERVED**
8:00 p.m.	**KEYNOTE ADDRESS | DR. OPEOLUWA SOTONWA**
9:00 p.m.	**FINAL REMARKS | SPIRIT AWARD PRESENTATION**

WELCOME TO SPRINGFIELD

WELCOME PARTY SPONSORED BY nagish

Welcome to Springfield, Massachusetts!

The SayWhatClub is excited to be in the “City of Firsts” for the 2024 convention.

Springfield has many nicknames including The City of Homes, The City of Knowledge, The City of Innovation and Vibrancy as well as The City of Firsts.

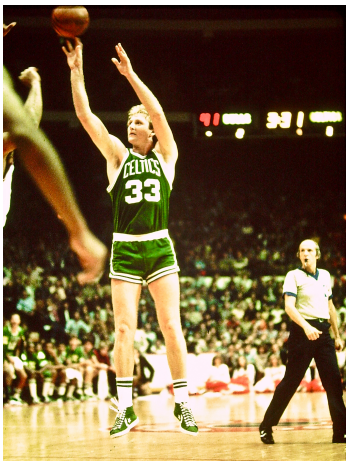
We kick off our convention with our Welcome Party, where we mingle with old friends and new. This is a chance to reconnect with both old and new friends!

Since Springfield is the birthplace of basketball, I invite you to wear your favorite basketball shirt. And, since we are in the City of Firsts, please bring along a photo of one of your “firsts”, such as your first day of school, your first car, your first child, your first haircut! The sky’s the limit!

I’m excited to reconnect with old friends and welcome new SWCers to the city of Springfield while we explore life with hearing loss.

I can’t wait to see everyone!

Christine G. Fuller
Christine G. Fuller, RN
Welcome Party Chairperson



Naismith Basketball Hall of Fame
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9:00 a.m.	**FIRST TIMERS BREAKFAST, Stonehaven Room, Second Floor**

10:00 a.m. -12:00 p.m.	**NAISMITH MEMORIAL BASKETBALL HALL OF FAME-SPRINGFIELD, MA**

Celebrate the sport of Basketball at every level at the Naismith Memorial Basketball Hall of Fame in the city where basketball was born. Learn about the game and more than 400 inductees through 40,000 square feet of basketball history, as well as interactive exhibits.

1:00 p.m. - 1:15 p.m.	**WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS**

1:15 p.m. - 2:15 p.m.	**VENDOR INTRODUCTIONS & UPDATES**

Our first workshop of the afternoon will highlight our Vendors. Each representative will give a short introduction and update for their respective company. Please stop by the Vendor tables during our workshop sessions on both days if you have questions and would like more details, as the Vendors will be happy to talk to you one-on-one.

2:45 p.m. - 3:45 p.m.	**ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY** **Presenter: Jonathan O'Dell**

Assistive technology plays a huge role in all of our lives, and we need to know what is available and how we can use it in order to maximize our own access and inclusion. However, we also need to be wary of seeing it as a cure-all, and have to remain vigilant to cost and availability barriers, as well as misconceptions about universal applicability and the impact it has on perceptions of disability.

4:00 p.m. - 5:00 p.m.	**HEARING IN NOISE: FINDING CLARITY AND CONNECTION THROUGH TENACITY AND STEADY INNOVATION** **Presenter: Andrea Kaneb**

Understanding speech in noise is the biggest hurdle for most of us. This presentation highlights the incremental advancements and additional technology needed to maintain or restore the clarity of speech amidst noise and gives reason for hope. Learn from Andrea's journey from a disheartened beginner to a grateful and less isolated individual through experience and tenacity.

6:00 p.m. - until…	**SWC CASINO NIGHT! - MGM SPRINGFIELD**

Take a chance, take a spin...and win win win! The MGM Springfield Casino is your one-stop for all of your gambling fun: over 1,500 slot machines, poker room, table games, Mass Lottery Keno, etc.

Presenters

VENDORS/EXHIBITORS

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JONATHAN O'DELL



Jonathan O'Dell, ALB, is assistive technology manager and training specialist with the Massachusetts Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing. His interest with assistive technology and reasonable accommodations comes from decades of personal and professional experience in expanding his own and others' horizons and opportunities. With his knowledge, he is able to seamlessly merge legal requirements, position-specific responsibilities and the appropriate technological and programmatic solutions to enable individuals to be successfully integrated into most any environment, and reach their full potential.

ANDREA KANEB



At 8, **Andrea** learned she inherited her father's progressive sensorineural hearing loss, a challenge she's learned to navigate over decades. With her engineering background and problem-solving tenacity, she founded gatheringsound.com and consults on hearing assistive technology to break down barriers that lead to social isolation. She's also fostering a hearing loss exhibit at the Museum of Science and chairs the NH Advisory Committee to Voc Rehab for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing.



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9:00 a.m. - 10:00 a.m.	**HEARING EVALUATION: UNDERSTANDING THE AUDIOGRAM** **Presenter: Julie Fisher**

Do you understand your hearing tests? Audiologist Julie Fisher, a specialist in evaluation, diagnosis, and treatment of hearing loss in adults and children, will help you make sense about your hearing evaluation, testing and results.

10:15 a.m. - 11:15 a.m.	**HEARING LOSS & RELATIONSHIPS: FEELINGS, FOIBLES & FUNNIES** **Presenter: Ellen Perkins**

It's a fact: hearing loss is tough on any relationship. It doesn't only affect the person with the hearing loss but their partners/spouses, family, and friends. Even the most supportive of partners/family/friends doesn't "get it" and vice versa. Join us for a panel discussion from both perspectives and the highs and lows of loving someone with hearing loss. *This will be an interactive discussion so please come with your own stories and questions!*

11:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.	**PROTECTION AND ADVOCACY FOR THE RIGHTS OF INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES: THE AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT AND COMMUNICATION ACCESS** **Presenter: Alison M. Fondo**

Attorney Alison Fondo will provide an overview of the right to effective communication access protected by Titles II and III of the Americans with Disabilities Act. She will also describe the important role that Protection and Advocacy Agencies across the United States play in monitoring and investigating abuse and neglect, and advocating for the civil and human rights of individuals with disabilities. Attorney Fondo will describe the resources and services that P&As provide, such as the Civil Legal Aid for Victims of Crime program within the Disability Law Center of Massachusetts.

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1:00 p.m. - 5:00 p.m.	**SPRINGFIELD MUSEUMS: ONE STOP = FIVE MUSEUMS**

Located in the heart of downtown Springfield, The Springfield Museums offer access for 5 world-class museums under a single admission price: The Amazing World of Dr Seuss Museum, Dr. Seuss National Memorial Sculpture Garden, Springfield Science Museum, George Walter Vincent Smith Art Museum, Michele and Donald D'Amour Museum of Fine Arts, and Lyman and Merrie Wood Museum of History.

Presenters

JULIE FISHER



Julie Fisher, AuD, is an audiologist at Baystate Franklin Medical Center in Greenfield, MA. She has 20+ years of experience working with adults and children with hearing loss, including former years at Dartmouth Hitchcock Medical Center and Clarke Schools for Hearing and Speech. Growing up on a farm, she has seen the impact of hearing loss in her family members due to loud noise exposure and aging. She enjoys working with individuals and their families to improve quality of life through ever-advancing hearing technology.

ELLEN PERKINS



Ellen Perkins - Hard of hearing since age 2 and a current CI user, Ellen works as the Assistant Manager/ Hard of Hearing Skills Trainer at Center for Living & Working, Inc.—a Deaf and Hard of Hearing Independent Living Center in Massachusetts, which empowers people to live their lives independently. **PANELIST:** John Perkins is hearing and has worked in Facilities for a government contractor for 35 years. They met later in life and fifteen years later, are still navigating the world of hearing loss with a lot of laughter. They hope sharing their experience will help others going through something similar. Ellen and John live in Central MA with their fur baby Cashew.



PANELISTS: Barbara & Peter Johnson

Barbara grew up with bilateral progressive sensorineural hearing loss and received her first cochlear implant in 2012. She also uses a hearing aid for her other ear. Her CI journey propelled her into the world of advocacy and outreach for people with hearing loss. Barbara has presented at conferences and support groups about hearing loss, self-advocacy and hearing assistive technology. Currently Barbara works for a deaf and hard of hearing program for K-12 students in Massachusetts. Peter does not have hearing loss, but has lots of experience with people who do: 30 years of connection with Barbara and with her family, in which there are a number of family members with hearing loss. He can speak from personal experience about how hearing loss affects relationships and communication. In addition, his work experience includes a position with a captioning phone company where he promoted captioned phone service, to audiologists and individuals with hearing loss.



PANELISTS: Laura & Mark Sinclair

Laura and Mark were high school sweethearts...prom, college...whoops! 3-year break...married...40 years later, they learned together how to continually reinvent communication with each hearing loss milestone hit. Laura has genetic, progressive hearing loss that started when their relationship did. An engineer at his core, Mark has been put to the test to configure TV loops, phones and even the sound system at church to help Laura engage the tools she has found works best for her. Through fits and starts with different "helpful" devices, the loss progressed steadily during their child-raising years. By the time those had grown up and out Laura had regained her hearing once more with cochlear implants. Now proud grandparents to two boys, they are enjoying this next generation where Laura is not just bumbling through but effectively communicating. It takes two! Laura is President of ALDA, Inc., and ALDA Seacoast NH Group. Her life is advocacy so others can find life hacks that make each day a bit lighter.

ALISON M. FONDO



Alison Fondo, Esq., is Deaf, uses a Cochlear Implant and is fluent in ASL. She joined the Disability Law Center as a Civil Legal Aid for Victims of Crime Staff Attorney in 2021. Prior to joining DLC, Alison was an Associate Attorney for a general practice law firm that handled both family law and criminal matters. She later joined the Massachusetts Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing as a Human Services Coordinator where she advocated for communication access for her Deaf and Hard of Hearing clients in a variety of settings, including prisons, homeless shelters, housing authorities, medical providers, and legal services.

9:00 a.m.	**TOWNHALL MEETING AGENDA**

- Introduction of Board Members
- Introduction of Committees and their members
- Accomplishments for past year
- Goals for next year
- Financial Report
- Questions and Answers
- Discussion of Future Conventions

10:30 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.	**YANKEE CANDLE VILLAGE/HISTORIC DEERFIELD, MA**

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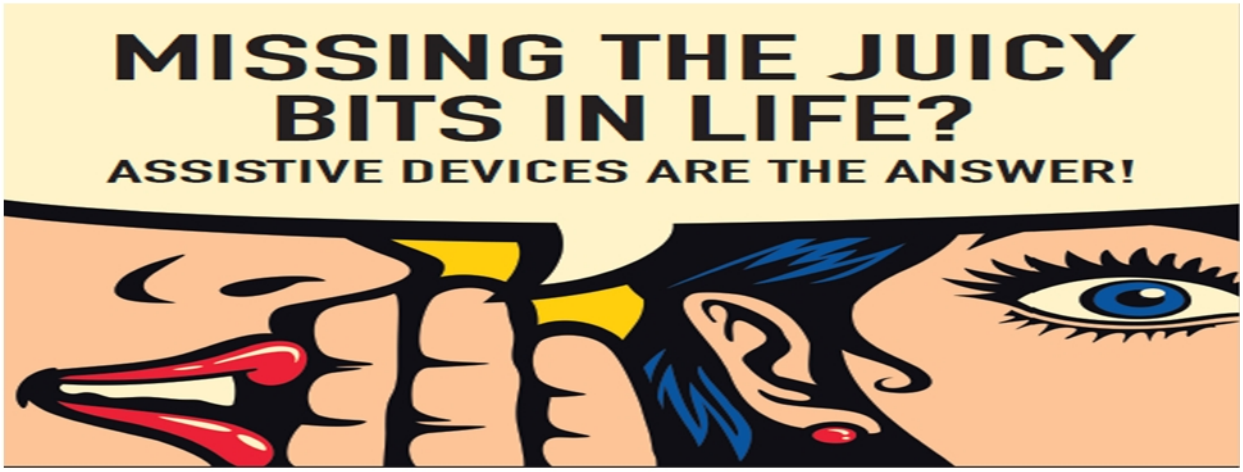
6:30 p.m.	**GROUP PICTURES**

Please make yourself available for group pictures during the second half hour of the Cocktail Reception.

7:00 p.m.	**DINNER SERVED**

8:00 p.m.	**KEYNOTE ADDRESS: DR. OPEOLUWA SOTONWA**

9:00 p.m.	**FINAL REMARKS | SPIRIT AWARD PRESENTATION**



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BANQUET KEYNOTE SPEAKER

Dr. Opeoluwa Sotonwa | Saturday, August 3rd @8:00 PM



Dr. Opeoluwa Sotonwa is the Commissioner for the Massachusetts Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (MCDHH). Before being hired in February 2021, he served as the Executive Director of the Missouri Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing. An accomplished international thought leader, Dr. Sotonwa has been involved with disability rights issues since becoming a civil rights lawyer in Nigeria. He was instrumental in the drafting and passage of Nigerian disability rights law.

Dr. Sotonwa has dedicated his tenure to partnering with purposeful organizations, community leaders, and sister agencies to improve the quality of life for the Deaf, Hard-of-Hearing, and Late-Deafened individuals in the Commonwealth. He is a passionate advocate for responsive government to the needs of the underserved community. Under his leadership, MCDHH has expanded its programs and services, increased rates for communication access providers, and implemented agency reorganization and inclusive strategic planning that has improved staff welfare, including internal promotions, job reclassifications, and more diverse hiring. Under his leadership, MCDHH has had its largest budget increases since its inception.

In Missouri, he was involved in drafting and passage of over twenty pieces of legislation – some of which have established preeminent programs such as hearing aid distribution programs for low-income individuals, the establishment of a statewide support service program for Deafblind individuals to live a more independent life, a Commercial Driver License law that paved the way for Deaf people to obtain licenses, 911 service legislation that repositioned the Missouri 911 Service for Next-Generation 911 service, overhauling the Missouri state Interpreter Certification System, and collecting statewide data to identify the Deaf and Hard of Hearing population in Missouri. He held two Missouri gubernatorial appointments as a board member of the 911 Service Board and the Governor's Council on Disability. He was a member of the Relay Missouri Advisory Committee, the Missouri Department of Mental Health Deaf Advisory Council, and the Missouri Deafblind Technical Assistance Project Advisory Committee.

As part of his commitment to giving back to his native country, Dr. Sotonwa founded the Opeoluwa Sotonwa Foundation. The Foundation provides annual scholarships to economically disadvantaged Deaf and hard-of-hearing college students in Nigeria. He has played key roles within and outside Deaf communities in the United States and African countries. He was formerly the Vice President of National Black Deaf Advocates (NBDA), the nation's foremost civil rights organization serving the Black Deaf community. He was also the Chair of the NBDA Board of Directors. He serves on several think-tank organizations and frequently consults on disability rights advocacy.

Dr. Sotonwa graduated with a Law degree from the University of Ilorin. He holds a Master of Laws (LLM) degree from Howard University School of Law. He also has a Doctor of Law and Policy (LPD) degree from Northeastern University. He conducted his doctoral dissertation on "The Lived Experiences of Deaf Suspects during Police Interrogations: An Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis." A recipient of numerous awards, he was named the recipient of the prestigious Judge Arnold Krekel Trailblazer Award for Human Rights in 2020.

A History of the SayWhatClub

By SWC Co-founder, Alan Sprague

The origins of the SayWhatClub can be traced back to the early 1990s, when 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 and became friends. In 1995, the group moved to an early listserv. Forum was the first list, and as they grew, a second list, Connect, was added a year later.

SayWhatClubbers have been gathering in person annually since 1996 when many of the club's founders met face to face for the first time 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.





1999 Cape May Convention - LEFT (L to R)**:** Jane and Larry Schlau. | **RIGHT** (L to R): Ling Elkins, Jazzy Wingert, Elaine Procida, Christine Seymour. **Photo Credit:** Barbara Bavido

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. The club was recognized by the Internal Revenue Service in 1998 as a tax-exempt organization.

SayWhatClub conventions grew out of a gathering of about thirty SWCers in Estes Park, Colorado in 1998. The first official convention was held in 1999 in Cape May, New Jersey. Subsequent conventions have been held San Diego, California in 2000, Chicago, Illinois in 2001, Alexandria, Virginia in 2002, an international convention in Amsterdam in 2002, Seattle, Washington in 2003, Bloomington, Minnesota in 2004, Clearwater Beach, Florida in 2005, St. Louis, Missouri in 2006, Las Vegas, Nevada in 2007, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania in 2008, an informal fling in Portland, Oregon in 2009, Denver, Colorado in 2010, Baltimore, Maryland in 2011, Salt Lake City, Utah in 2012, Williamsburg, Virginia in 2013, Madison, Wisconsin in 2014, San Antonio, Texas in 2015, Boise, Idaho in 2016, Savannah, Georgia in 2017, Saint Paul, Minnesota in 2018, Sacramento, California in 2019, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania in 2021, Nashville, Tennessee in 2022, our first Canadian convention in Vancouver, British Columbia in 2023 and Springfield, Massachusetts in 2024.

Since its earliest days, the SayWhatClub has had active subscribers and volunteers around the world and has been led by board members from many nations, including the United States, Canada, the Netherlands and New Zealand. In addition to international board members, SWCers from Mexico, Greece, India and Australia have been among convention attendees over the years.

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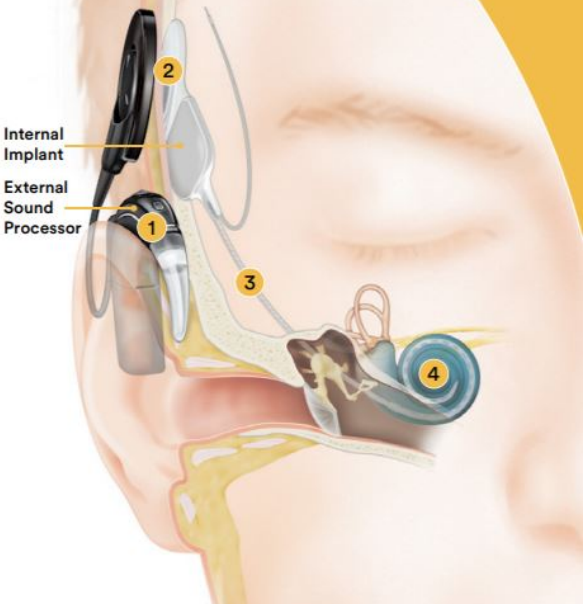


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2. This signal is transferred to the implant just under the skin.
3. The implant sends the digital sound signal to the electrode array in the cochlea.
4. The hearing nerve picks up the signal and sends it to the brain, which is understood as sound.







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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 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.

SWCCommons 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/

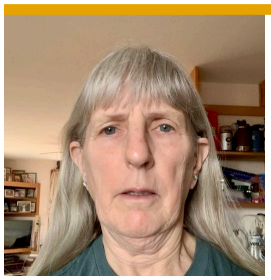
SayWhatClub, A Worldwide Forum for People with Hearing Loss - Public Facebook Page:
https://www.facebook.com/SayWhatClub/

www.saywhatclub.org

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BOD PROFILES



VICE PRESIDENT, Bet Whitcomb

I am a retired public high school math teacher who lives in Northfield, Massachusetts. I have three grown children and four rapidly growing grandchildren. I started to lose my hearing in my 20's due to otosclerosis, a condition I inherited from my mother. Luckily for me hearing aid technology has kept pace with my worsening hearing loss. My loss is now severe to profound across all frequencies. I wear two powerful BTE hearing aids and have been told that I am on a path towards a CI, though it may be years before I get there.

I joined SWC in January of 2003. I remember the day very well. It was a day of in-service training for teachers and I was having an extremely rough time trying to hear anything that was said. On the verge of tears, I went to my principal and told him I couldn't do this anymore. He excused me from the training and suggested that I go online and see if I could find any resources that may help me. What I found was SWC. I joined immediately and was placed on Forum. By that summer I was a list rep on Forum, a position I have held ever since, until joining the BOD.

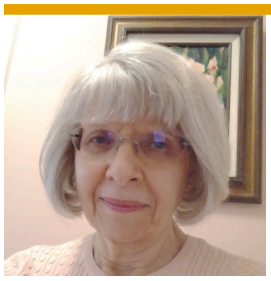


TREASURER, Ilene Morales

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. I love my brand, Advanced Bionics and am a mentor for them. I speak to potential candidates regularly to assist on their journeys.

For the past 44 years, I have worked at a non-profit 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.



SECRETARY, Ann Marie Picardo

I have a progressive hearing loss that began in my late 30s. By the time I was 61, I reached the point where hearing aids were no longer giving me much speech comprehension so I moved forward with getting a CI in my left ear.

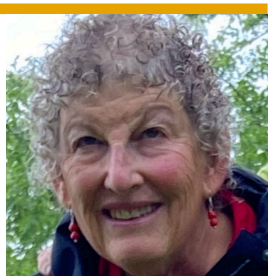
Getting a CI has been a blessing for me. I'm so grateful for this amazing technology. I joined SWC in 2016 and prior to joining the BOD was a CI List Rep. I've attended several conventions and have enjoyed them.

I'm also a member of the Hearing Loss Association of America and am currently the President of HLAA Morris County Chapter. I have also served on the board of the Hearing Loss Association of America – New Jersey State Association. While living with hearing loss is challenging it also has a positive side. It's allowed me to meet some wonderful people that have become friends.

I'm retired from a long career in the music business and am a life-long resident of New Jersey.

BOD PROFILES

DIRECTOR, Sandy Spekman



I was born into a family of several generations who've had hearing loss: my great grandfather, my grandmother, my mother, me, and my son. My hearing loss has gone from mild, moderate, severe, to profound. I have two cochlear implants, which brings my hearing up to a mild loss. I'm thankful for this amazing technology.

I retired as a NYC Teacher of the Deaf in 2013 and moved from NJ to Plymouth, Massachusetts two years later. I have been active in HLAA in both NJ and MA. I started up an HLAA Chapter in Plymouth, MA in 2015. I have been to two SayWhatClub Conventions and have enjoyed meeting lots of new people.

Being busy with clubs and activities, I have never let my hearing loss stop me from getting active in the community. I often advocate for open captioning at local performing arts theatres and constantly educating others on why I need captioning. I find that people often think that using an assistive device is enough, but when it comes to understanding song lyrics, it's as if I'm hearing a foreign language.

I have two grown children and four grandchildren. My husband and I love to travel.

DIRECTOR, Angie (Fugo) Fuoco



I have been a U.S. Government employee, in various roles, for 36 years, making government agencies accessible to people with hearing loss and other abilities. My newest position is Employee Experience Coordinator at the United States Mint in Philadelphia. I am honored to serve my country in civilian work as I was unable to serve in uniform due to my hearing loss.

I have a bilateral hearing loss and use cochlear implant, hearing aid and an array of technology to hear. I became profoundly deaf in the left ear at age 9 after the mumps and unknowingly experienced moderate to severe loss in my right ear by my 40s.

In 2017 Pat Kovac asked me to speak at the Savannah convention; I accepted and fell in love with the SayWhatClub. I offered up my beautiful hometown of Pittsburgh for the 2020 (cancelled) and 2021 Conventions, serving as local host.

I have a Master's in Public Health, a BS in Chemical Engineering, and an Advanced Certificate in Disability Studies. I am a Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Professional, Associate Safety Professional, and certified ADA Coordinator. I love connecting people to all kinds of accessibility and especially, that which involves hearing loss. I love presenting and changing hearts and minds about hearing loss, disabilities, ableism and accessibility. Most of all, I love connecting with people, hearing, deaf or any possibility in between.

DIRECTOR, Dawn Linder



I was born prematurely, which resulted in my having a hearing loss but it was only recognized when I was 4. In those days deaf children weren't allowed to learn sign language. Instead, I went to an oral training program to learn to speak and read lips. For school, I was mainstreamed; I always sat in the front row so I could read the teacher's lips. Yes – it was challenging.

I was married in my early 20's and had 3 children. Eleven years later we were divorced. Today my children are all happily married, and I am proud of my 7 grandchildren. Today I'm remarried and have 3 stepchildren.

I've had several jobs, but I especially loved working for a nonprofit organization that worked with individuals with developmental disabilities. Another job I loved was working for the state of Illinois where I assessed housing discrimination for people with hearing loss. I've done volunteer work for ALDA in Chicago and now in Indiana where we live today. In addition, I'm working on forming a hearing loss support group in Indiana. I will say though, that my most rewarding job is watching my grandchildren.

My husband and I enjoy traveling and especially going to our conventions where we've made so many wonderful friends.

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Shari Steele

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Lorne Smith, **Editor**
Michele Linder, **Layout/Design**

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Kim Ward
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SWC Gen-Y
Vivie Moraiti
Tim Stones

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REGISTERED AGENT

Kim Ward



REGISTRANTS

NAME	LOCATION	HOME LIST	NAME	LOCATION	HOME LIST
Linda Binns	Nevada-USA	SWC CI	James G. Mayfield	Iowa-USA	SWC World
Sharron Bradshaw	North Carolina-USA	SWC World	** Mary Lou Mayfield*	*Iowa-USA*	*SWC Connect / Spouse*
Darelynn Clay	Pennsylvania-USA	SWC Forum	Donna McNary	Wisconsin-USA	SWC CI
** Ron Kubowicz*	*Pennsylvania-USA*	*Spouse*	** William McNary*	*Wisconsin-USA*	*Spouse*
Daniel Brooks	New York-USA	Hearing Loop Provider	Carol Menton	Massachusetts-USA	Guest
** Lisa Brooks*	*New York-USA*	*Spouse*	Ilene Morales	New York-USA	SWC World
Brenda Dawe	Michigan-USA	SWC World / ASL Interpreter	** Carmine Morales*	*New York-USA*	*Spouse*
Don Dippner	Pennsylvania-USA	SWC Vistas	Lisa Nihan-Demeule	Massachusetts-USA	CART Provider
** Judy Dippner*	*Pennsylvania-USA*	*Spouse*	John Noerr	Vermont-USA	Vendor
Pat Dobbs	Maine-USA	FB: Friends w/Hearing Loss	Jonathan O'Dell	Massachusetts-USA	Presenter
Rhonda Edwards	Pennsylvania-USA	SWC Connect	Ellen Perkins	Massachusetts-USA	Presenter
Nancy Fenstermaker	Ohio-USA	SWC World	** John Perkins*	*Massachusetts-USA*	*Spouse*
Julie Fisher	Massachusetts-USA	Presenter	Ann Marie Picardo	New Jersey-USA	SWC CI
Sheiladawn Fitch	Texas-USA	SWC CI	Eleanor Shafer	New Hampshire-USA	FB: Friends w/Hearing Loss
Debra Flowers	Illinois-USA	SWC CI	Nini Silver	Massachusetts-USA	Exhibitor
Christine Fuller	Arizona-USA	SWC CI	Sue Silver Schy	Massachusetts-USA	SWC World
Angie Fuoco	Pennsylvania-USA	SWC World	Laura Sinclair	New Hampshire-USA	FB: Friends w/HL / Panelist
Ruth Gorrin	California-USA	FB: Friends w/Hearing Loss	Lorne Smith	British Columbia-CAN	SWC World
** Gregg Gorrin*	*California-USA*	*Spouse*	** Joanne Smith*	*British Columbia-CAN*	*Spouse*
Judy Heimbach	New Jersey-USA	SWC CI	Alyssa Somplasky	Virginia-USA	Vendor
Kate Johnston	Washington-USA	SWC Forum	Sandy Spekman	Massachusetts-USA	SWC CI
** George Johnston*	*Washington-USA*	*Spouse*	** Hyman Spekman*	*Massachusetts-USA*	*Spouse*
John Jun	Illinois-USA	FB: Friends w/Hearing Loss	Sharon Steele	Tennessee-USA	SWC World
Andrea Kaneb	New Hampshire-USA	Presenter	** Mike Steele*	*Tennessee-USA*	*FB:Friends w/HL / Spouse*
Pat Kovac	Virginia-USA	SWC CI	Aurora Vilchis	California-USA	Vendor
**Joe Kovac*	*Virginia-USA*	*Spouse*	Kim Ward	Washington-USA	SWC World
Mitchell Levy	Wisconsin-USA	Vendor	** Eric Ward*	*Washington-USA*	*Spouse*
Dawn Linder	Indiana-USA	SWC World	Tamera West	Oklahoma-USA	SWC CI
** Joe Linder*	*Indiana-USA*	*Spouse*	Bet Whitcomb	Massachusetts-USA	SWC Forum
Michele Linder	Minnesota-USA	SWC Connect	** Jim Whitcomb*	*Massachusetts-USA*	*Spouse*
** Kate Linder*	*New York-USA*	*Daughter*	Roberta Wiggins	Massachusetts-USA	FB: Friends w/Hearing Loss
Mary-Ann Livesey	British Columbia-CAN	SWC World	Martha Wilson	Ohio-USA	SWC World
Joan Marcoux	New Hampshire-USA	FB: Friends w/Hearing Loss	Adelaide Zabriskie	New Jersey-USA	SWC CI

** Spouse/Significant Other/Guest*

Remembering Andre'. He loved our SWC family as much as I do. I honor his memory and love our SWC connection. It's important to me. ~Linda

Love my SWC Family! Rosie

We 'get' each other & we're FUN! ALWAYS LOTS of laughs & memories. I NEED & LOVE time with my SWC FAMILY.

Sheiladawn

Remembering all the beloved people that were a part of SWC. Especially Maurice Wilson and Joyce Conser. I will miss the scooter gang. — Marty Wilson

Where would I be without the SWClub? TRUE FRIENDS through thick and thin! So excited to see everyone! ❤ ❤ CHRIS

SWC is a big part of my life. I've learned a lot and made many great friends over the years. Thank you all. - Lorne

Happy Birthday to Hyman on August 2. Thank you for coming to our second SWC con together (my third). Lots of love, Sandy

Wishing you all a great time! Happy memories to you all, I'll join again next year. love Chelle



A huge shout out to Forum, for all the friendship and support for over 20 years! Love you guys! - - - Bet

Remembering two special ladies, Maurice Wilson and Joyce Conser who are no longer with us. They were two of the best! ~Jeannene Brown

I always look forward to attending the SWC to reconnect with friends and making new ones as well. ❤ Dawn Linder

Honouring the memory of Jan Christensen, a member I felt a kinship with and wish I'd spent more time chatting with about her books. Heidi in Australia



"SARA'S SEARCH" WAS JAN'S FIRST BOOK.

❤ REMEMBERING THE DEAR SWC MEMBERS WE'VE LOST RECENTLY. THEY WILL BE GREATLY MISSED BUT CELEBRATED AT THIS, AND ALL, CONVENTIONS. ❤ CHRIS

Sorry I am missing the convention this year. Will miss seeing all your smiling faces! 🙂 Mary Stodden

SWC MEANS SO MUCH TO SO MANY. THANK YOU, VOLUNTEERS! YOU ARE THE HEART AND SOUL OF THE CLUB. XOXO Michele

Vancouver, Canada was my first SWC Convention! I was welcomed by everyone, learned a lot, and made friends! Looking forward to connecting in Springfield! ❀ ❀ ❀ Debra

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THANK YOU!

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

We appreciate your contribution in making the 2024 SayWhatClub Convention a time of learning, inclusion, and fun with friends. All that we experience and learn from our shared time in Springfield (through workshops, presentations, scheduled activites, socializing, and communication) is empowering. We return home renewed and ready to apply all that we have gained to our everyday lives, workplaces, and relationships. You have helped us grow and we **thank you**.

A special "**THANK YOU**" to Nagish for generously sponsoring our Welcome Party, Pro Hearing Loops for sponsoring our hearing loop, and to Julia Stepp, LLC, Listen Technologies, and Hearing Loss Live! for jointly sponsoring CART.

TO OUR VOLUNTEERS:

Some of our SayWhatClub 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.

Marty Wilson

Marty Wilson**, CSC Chair**

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