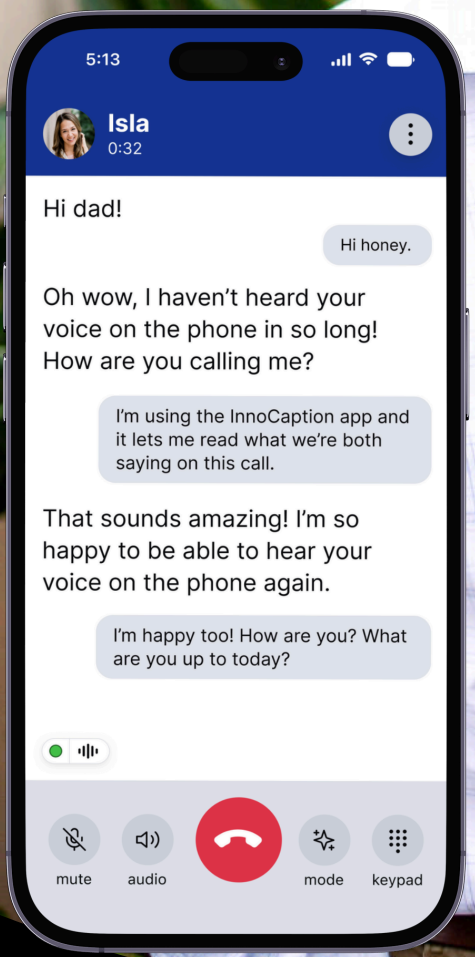

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Welcome to Galveston!



Welcome to the SayWhatClub's 2025 Convention in Galveston, Texas. Galveston Island is known for its 32 miles of beaches and laid-back lifestyle. Our convention theme is “Have you heard? It's Island Time!”

But Galveston Island is famous for more than its warm, sandy beaches. Founded in 1838, it was once the second richest city per capita in the United States and was dubbed the “Wall Street of the South” due to its flourishing banking industry and the retail success of The Strand business district. Among many of its Texas firsts, it had the state's first bank and first post office. Galveston's natural deep-water port, now home to cruise ships, was an important trade route connecting Texas to the world.

Galveston is also the birthplace of Juneteenth, a national holiday celebrating the end of slavery. On June 19, 1865, two years after the Emancipation Proclamation was signed, Union Army Major General Gordon Granger issued an order freeing more than 250,000 enslaved Black people in the state of Texas – one of the last groups of slaves to be freed in the United States.

Much of the island's history can be explored in the museums of the Strand Historic District, along with a wide selection of popular shops, restaurants and activities that help attract more than seven million visitors to the island annually. Tour historic mansions, visit top attractions such as the Galveston Island Historic Pleasure Pier and Moody Gardens, and explore the unique tree sculptures carved from the remnants of past storms. The island's recreational opportunities are endless.

SayWhatClub conventions offer life-changing opportunities to meet other hard-of-hearing people and build lasting friendships that you'll want to renew each year.

The Hilton Galveston Island Resort is across the street from the Gulf waters. It is a beautiful view. Enjoy walks along the Galveston seawall and enrich your knowledge at our educational workshops. Thanks also to our sponsors that make the convention possible.

Martha Wilson

Martha Wilson
SayWhatClub Convention Chair

MARTHA'S BIO: I was a rubella baby and have dealt with a lifetime of spasticity. My hearing loss was diagnosed when I was 6 years old. My parents said they did not know if it was from birth or the severe ear infections as a baby.

I attended Lynchburg College in Virginia and Ohio State University. Due to my hearing loss I had to quit. I did not know sign language and there was nothing like CART back in the ‘70s. I worked 30 years at Nationwide Insurance.

I joined what was then SHHH and became the vice president of the central Ohio chapter. The next year in 1999 I became the chapter president. I bought my first computer that year and searching for hearing loss I found SayWhatClub. I joined in June 1999, and in November joined the Hospitality Committee, where I served until I became a member of the Board of Directors. I served 7 years on the board. Once my term was up I joined the hospitality committee again and have been there since. I also have served as a past list rep and have served many years on the convention committee working with the Silent Auction as chair and later registration chair. I was elected chair of the convention committee, and this is my third year as chair. I will step down after the Galveston convention but plan to remain on the committee.

In 2000 I was the organizing chapter leader of Association for Late Deafened Adults. I have served as the group leader for 25 years with ALDA-MIDWEST.

I have 3 children and 8 grandchildren. I sign for my church choir and am on the planning committee for the state Adult Conference.

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SILENT AUCTION FUND DRIVE

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.

It has been decided that for our SWC Convention 2025 Galveston, instead of holding our traditional Silent Auction, we will hold a Silent Auction Fund Drive, as we did in 2021 and 2023. This drive will allow both convention attendees and those who cannot attend to support our convention.

Please give us your financial support. All monetary donations are greatly appreciated. To make an online donation to the 2025 Silent Auction fund drive, go to: https://tinyurl.com/SWCSilentAuction

GREETINGS — Bet Whitcomb, President



Bet feeding wild birds on her 65th birthday, as her son took the picture.

Welcome to the 2025 Say What Club Convention and to beautiful Galveston, Texas. Through participation of our various lists and Facebook page, we have all established deep and lifelong friendships. But it is at our conventions that we can put faces on those whom we had previously known only online. It is at our conventions that we enjoy each other's company and deepen these friendships. And it is at our conventions that we embark on adventures and partake in activities that provide us with fond memories throughout the years. Our conventions also offer us chances to visit different cities across the country and to enjoy the unique offerings of each.

I will ask three things of each attendee. The first is to take the time to thank all those who helped make this convention happen. The process is a long one, starting with a vote for a host city. Then there are feelers sent out to different hotels in the quest to find just the right one. This is followed by visits to hotels and the review of the different proposals each one offers before the final decision can be made on a site. While this is going on, another set of people are working in the background to line up presenters and a keynote speaker, to acquire sponsors, to set up the webpage, to arrange group activities, and to plan the Welcome Party. The end result of all this hard work is what you experience when you attend the convention. So, please do take the time to seek out these helpers and give them a huge, heartfelt thank you.

The second request is to meet and make friends with someone new. Learn another's story and share your own story. While you are reconnecting with old friends, try to include new ones in your circle.

This brings me to my third and final request. Enjoy yourself to the fullest. We are here to extend the camaraderie that began with our online friendships and to celebrate these friendships as best we can.

Bet Whitcomb

Bet Whitcomb
President, SayWhatClub

BET'S BIO: 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 20s 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 held for 20 years, when I joined the BOD.

SCHEDULE AT-A-GLANCE

Monday, August 4, 2025

6:00 p.m. - 10:00 p.m.	**WELCOME PARTY,** Oasis Ballroom, First Floor

Tuesday, August 5, 2025

9:00 a.m.	**FIRST-TIMERS BREAKFAST,** Oasis Ballroom, First Floor
1:00 p.m. - 1:15 p.m.	**WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS,** Ocean Front Ballroom, First 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
2:45 p.m. - 3:45 p.m.	**KIMBERLY BOASE, AuD and LESLIE ROLPH, AuD, CCC-A, ABA – Audibility, Accessibility, and Everyday Tech Tricks and Tips**
3:45 p.m. - 4:00 p.m.	BREAK - Visit Vendor Tables
4:00 p.m. - 5:00 p.m.	**PAIGE GAINEY, AuD, CCC-A – Tinnitus: The DJ In Your Head You Did Not Hire**

Wednesday, August 6, 2025

9:00 a.m. - 10:00 a.m.	**CHELLE WYATT – Advocacy in an Uncertain Environment**, Ocean Front Ballroom, First Floor
10:00 a.m. - 10:15 a.m.	BREAK - Visit Vendor Tables
10:15 a.m. - 11:15 a.m.	**TERI WATHEN – What If You Needed Emergency Hospitalization? Are You Prepared?**
11:15 a.m. - 11:30 a.m.	BREAK - Visit Vendor Tables
11:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.	**CAROLYN McMAHON – Living Large with Hearing Loss**

Thursday, August 7, 2025

9:00 a.m. - 10:30 a.m.	**TOWN HALL MEETING | FUTURE CONVENTION DISCUSSION,** Ocean Front Ballroom, First Floor
6:00 p.m. - 9:00 p.m.	**CLOSING BANQUET,** Ocean Front Ballroom, First 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 | ROSE AIRD MINETTE, Stories and Strategies**
9:00 p.m.	**FINAL REMARKS | SPIRIT AWARD PRESENTATION**

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9:00 a.m.	**FIRST TIMERS BREAKFAST,** Oasis Ballroom, First Floor
1:00 p.m. - 1:15 p.m.	**WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS,** Ocean Front Ballroom, First Floor
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.	**AUDIBILITY, ACCESSIBILITY, AND EVERYDAY TECH TRICKS AND TIPS | Kimberly Boase, AuD and Leslie Rolph, AuD, CCC-A, ABA**

This session will discuss how to understand test results and how to incorporate them into real life scenarios for solutions to everyday concerns. It will also include discussion on how new Auracast technology will improve access for all.

4:00 p.m. - 5:00 p.m.	**TINNITUS: THE DJ IN YOUR HEAD YOU DID NOT HIRE | Paige Gainey, AuD, CCC-A**

Ever felt trapped by the ringing in your ears, frustrated by fading conversations, or anxious about sudden dizziness? Join audiologist Dr. Paige Gainey as we tackle tinnitus, hearing loss, and vertigo head-on—sharing proven strategies to reclaim control, comfort, and clarity in your daily life.

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Presenters

VENDORS / EXHIBITORS

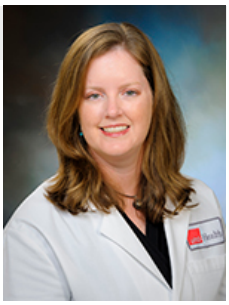
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KIMBERLY BOASE



Kimberly Boase is an audiologist at the University of Texas Medical Branch in the Galveston area for the past 2 years. She received her Bachelor of Science and her Doctor of Audiology degree at Lamar University. She has advanced training from the Audiology externship at South Florida ENT Associates in Miami, FL and specialized vestibular training from The American Institute of Balance. Her clinical interests include comprehensive audiological evaluations, vestibular assessments, amplification, and implantable devices. Her main goal is to provide a patient-centered and evidence-based practice approach in treating those with hearing loss and vestibular problems.

LESLIE ROLPH



Leslie Rolph is an audiologist at University of Texas Medical Branch in the Galveston area for the past 16 years. She received her Bachelor of Science and her Doctor of Audiology at Auburn University. She is passionate about all areas of audiology, including but not limited to amplification, vestibular disorders and precepting 4th year residents. When she is not at work, she is with her two dogs.

PAIGE GAINEY



Dr. Paige Gainey is a Lenire-certified expert treating tinnitus patients at Total Hearing Care in Dallas. She holds a Doctor of Audiology Degree from the University of Texas Tech Health Sciences Center and a Bachelor of Science Degree in Speech and Hearing Sciences, Texas Tech Health Sciences Center. She is a member of the Texas Academy of Audiology and has previous experience treating tinnitus in hospital, ENT clinics, and private practice environments. Her goal is to provide a synergy between excellence in customer service and enhancing the quality of life for each of her patients and their family members.

9:00 a.m. - 10:00 a.m.	**ADVOCACY IN AN UNCERTAIN ENVIRONMENT** | **Chelle Wyatt** | Ocean Front Ballroom, First Floor

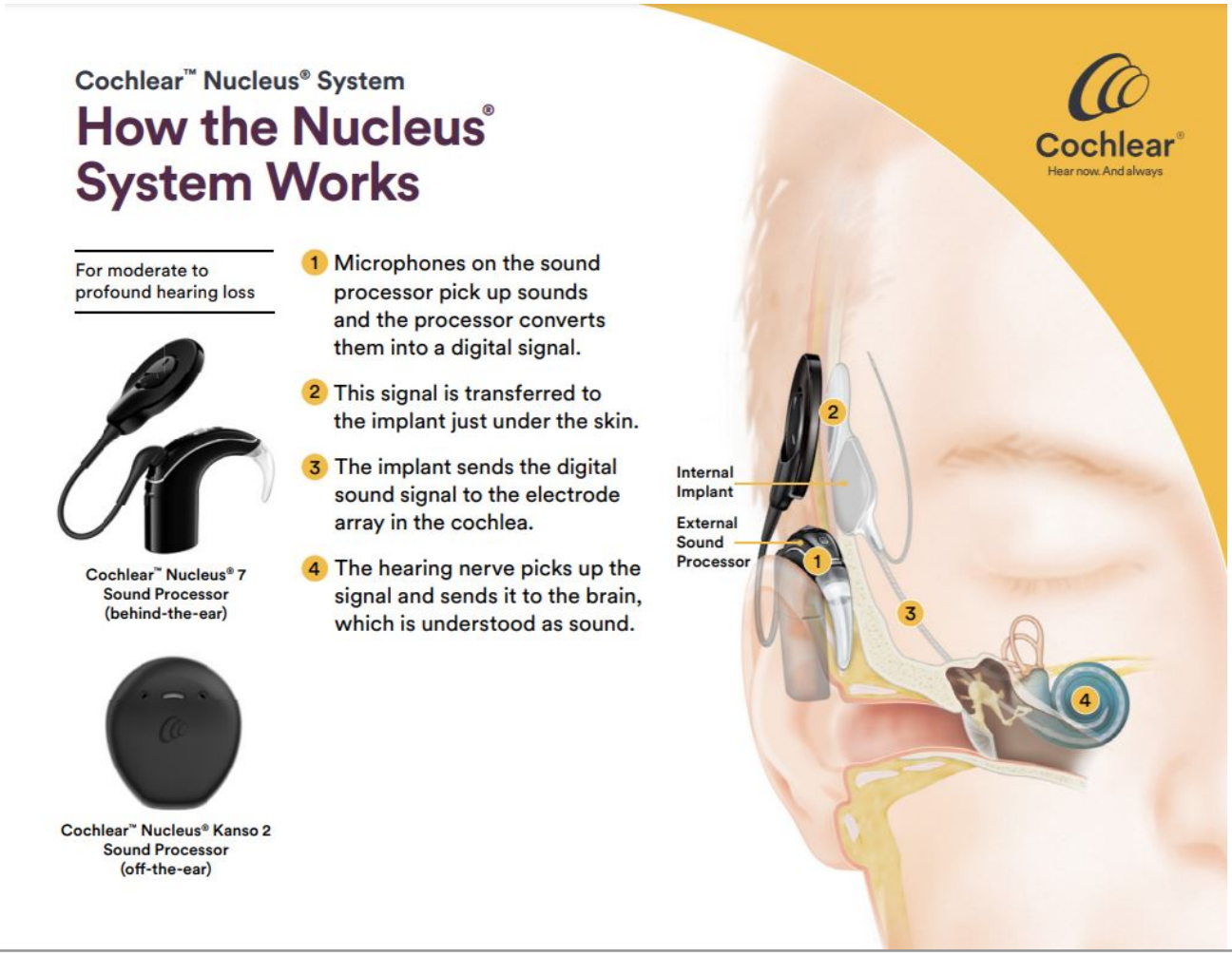
Given the current climate where diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility (DEIA) initiatives are being scrutinized or eliminated, it's important for those with hearing loss to cultivate self-reliance. Should things take a turn for the worse, we will likely face more challenging situations than usual. This workshop will discuss strategies for navigating uncertain environments and how to develop the skills and confidence necessary to thrive with hearing loss.

10:15 a.m. - 11:15 a.m.	**WHAT IF YOU NEEDED EMERGENCY HOSPITALIZATION? ARE YOU PREPARED?** | **Teri Wathen**

Teri Wathen will talk about how to manage your hearing loss while in the hospital or other healthcare settings. She will cite examples of her friends with hearing loss who had trouble hearing or didn't know how to handle health care providers with accents or masks. The audience will have a chance to ask questions and/or share their experiences.

11:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.	**LIVING LARGE WITH HEARING LOSS** | **Carolyn McMahon**

Where are you in your hearing loss journey? Are you just "doing okay" or are you "living large" with hearing loss? In this lively, interactive presentation we will share strategies and tips for taking our hearing loss journey to the next level.



Presenters

CHELLE WYATT



Chelle Wyatt, an SWC member since the late 1990s, discovered the invaluable support of community in her hearing loss journey. Finding solace and connection within the group during challenging times, she recognized the significance of shared experiences. Chelle's involvement in SWC, local hearing loss support groups, and the Utah Hard of Hearing Program has fostered her passion for building community. Now as co-owner of Hearing Loss LIVE!, she continues to empower and connect people with hearing loss through workshops and lipreading classes, emphasizing the importance of community support.

TERI WATHEN



Teri Wathen has experienced a progressive hearing loss since birth. She wore a hearing aid for many years, but now wears bilateral cochlear implants which help her to hear so much better than before. Her husband has a hearing loss, as well as her sons and grandsons. In her spare time, Teri enjoys crossword puzzles, Sudoku, and playing on her iPhone. Teri has a Master's in Supervision of Education and taught in the Fort Bend school district for 32 years. After that, she had a contract with the State as a Hearing Loss Resource Specialist and did that for 14 years. Now she is retired and enjoying LIFE!



CAROLYN McMAHON

Carolyn McMahon has been a member of Hearing Loss Assoc-iation of America since the mid-eighties. She has a life-long hearing loss She spent 5 years as a Hearing Loss Resource Specialist contractor with the Office of Deaf and Hard of Hearing Services and has worked with both Deaf and hard of hearing people as a Job coach and vocational adjustment trainer. Her most recent job was as the Specialized Telecommunications Assistance Program Outreach and Training Specialist for the Houston and Gulf Coast area. She has been an adjunct professor at UTMB in Galveston with the Osher Lifelong Learning Institute, designing a curriculum and teaching an 8-week hearing loss class called "Hearing Matters" in Galveston. She is a volunteer Hearing Assistive Technology Trainer having taken the HLAA N-CHATT(Network of Consumer Hearing Assistive Trainers) training in 2019. She has given presentations on the local, county and state levels. She is currently Vice-President of the HLAA Houston Chapter, the Texas State Office newsletter writer and editor and a strong advocate of hearing loops. She loves serving all Texans with hearing loss as the State Chapter Coordinator. She is currently working on developing a YouTube channel for people with hearing loss. She lives in Houston with her husband, Eugene and enjoys being with her 5 grandchildren.

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THURSDAY, August 7th Schedule

9:00 a.m.	**TOWN HALL MEETING,** Ocean Front Ballroom, First Floor

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

6:00 p.m. - 7:00 p.m.	**COCKTAIL RECEPTION,** Ocean Front Ballroom, First Floor
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: ROSE AIRD MINETTE, Stories and Strategies**
9:00 p.m.	**FINAL REMARKS | SPIRIT AWARD PRESENTATION**

BANQUET KEYNOTE SPEAKER



Rose Aird Minette | Thursday, August 7th @8:00 PM

Rose Aird Minette holds a Bachelor's Degree in Speech and Communication, an MA from the University of Texas at Austin and a Texas Lifetime Deaf Education Teaching Certificate. She has a severe hearing loss and has worn hearing aids since she was 18. She has been a member of Hearing Loss Association of America since the 1980s.

For 24 years, she was employed at the Texas Office of Deaf and Hard of Hearing Services (now part of Health and Human Services), where she created and implemented programs for people with hearing loss. While there, she provided statewide and national presentations on a variety of topics to consumers and professionals and was also responsible for the Certificate of Deafness for Tuition Waiver Program.

Rose also taught at Texas School for the Deaf, the Regional Day School Program for the Deaf and was a certified sign language interpreter. She is currently semi-retired.

She plans to discuss her hearing loss journey and share strategies she has learned to manage her hearing loss.

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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.



2015 San Antonio convention family dynamics panelists, from left, Kristen Willey, Donna McNary, Bill McNary, Barbara Gurtov, Regina Devita, Sheiladawn Fitch.



2015 SWC board members, from left, Emily (Jazzy) Wingert, Marti Castor, Martha Wilson, Arthur Veen, Robyn Carter, Lorne Smith, Jack Nichols. (Joanne Smith photos)

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, Vancouver, British Columbia in 2023, Springfield, Massachusetts in 2024 and Galveston, Texas in 2025.

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.

VOLUNTEERS & COMMITTEES

CONVENTION VOLUNTEERS

CONVENTION STEERING

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Mike Steele, **Vice-Chair**
Donna McNary, **CSC Co-Treasurer**
Kim Ward, **CSC Co-Treasurer**
Elizabeth Whitcomb, **BOD Liaison**
Mike Steele, **Registration Co-Chair**
Shari Steele, **Registration Co-Chair**
Sheiladawn Fitch, **Love Page, MessageBoard**
Chris Fuller, **Welcome Party Chair**
Rhonda Edwards, **Welcome Party**
Pat Kovac, **Scouting**
Michele Linder, **Webpage**
Ilene Morales, **Scholarship Chair**
Lorne Smith, **Sponsorship Chair**
Pat Dobbs, **Sponsorship**
Don Dippner, **AV Coordinator**

CONVENTION PROGRAM

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

COMMITTEES

LIST REP COMMITTEE

Lorne Smith, **Chair**
Linda Binns, **Vice Chair**
Ann Marie Picardo, **BOD Liaison**

Connect: Leslie Cotter, Pat Kovac

CI: Judy Heimbach, Linda Binns

Explore: Martha Wilson

Forum: Carol Hansing, Norma Ortíz

Vistas: Ruthann Saunders, Linda Binns

World: Lorne Smith, Nancy Fenstermaker, Pat Dobbs

HOSPITALITY COMMITTEE

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Vicky Harland, **Vice Chair**
Ilene Morales, **BOD liaison**
Mary-Ann Livesey
Henderson Wiltshire
Martha Wilson

SPIRIT AWARD COMMITTEE

Elizabeth Whitcomb, **BOD Liaison**

SPIRIT AWARD COMMITTEE (cont.)

Linda Binns
Don Dippner
Debbie Gilmer
Pat Kovac
Michele Linder
Lorne Smith
Kim Ward
Martha Wilson

WEB COMMITTEE

Kim Ward, **Webmaster**
Michele Linder, **Webmaster**
Lorne Smith, **Webmaster**
Vicky Harland, **Webmaster**
Ilene Morales, **BOD Liaison**

SOCIAL MEDIA TEAM

Tyler Smeltkop, **Acting Chair**
Ilene Morales, **BOD Liaison**
Chelle Wyatt

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SayWhatClub, A Worldwide Forum for People with Hearing Loss
Kim Ward, Admin
Chelle Wyatt, Editor
Michele Linder, Editor

Facebook Groups:

SayWhatClub Friends w/Hearing Loss -
Don Dippner, Kim Ward, Martha Wilson

SWC Gen-Y - Vivie Moraiti, Tim Stones

BOARD OF DIRECTORS | REGISTERED AGENT

Elizabeth Whitcomb, **President**
Dawn Linder, **Vice-President**
Ann Marie Picardo, **Secretary**
Ilene Morales, **Treasurer**
Deanne Pedroni, **Director**
Mary-Ann Livesey, **Director**
Donna McNary, **Director**
Kim Ward, **Registered Agent**

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. The board holds an annual face-to-face meeting prior to the opening of each SayWhatClub Convention. Their 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. We appreciate all who have contributed their time and talents to make SWC a success.

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 **SWConnect** • **SWCForum** • **SWCVistas** • **SWCWorld** 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.

SWCExplore, an optional secondary list for those who want to interact with subscribers from various lists • **SWC_CI**, a special-focus list for discussing cochlear implants • **SWCCommons**, a temporary list for convention registrants to get acquainted with one another, search for a roommate, and discuss convention events and activities.

SWC Gen-Y, for 18 - 40 year olds - https://www.facebook.com/groups/155139947975931/
SayWhatClub Friends With Hearing Loss, for 18 and older - https://www.facebook.com/groups/SWCFriends/
SayWhatClub, A Worldwide Forum for People with Hearing Loss, public page - https://www.facebook.com/SayWhatClub/

www.saywhatclub.org

@ahearingloss

BOD PROFILES



VICE PRESIDENT, 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 8 grandchildren. Today I'm remarried and have 3 stepchildren and 2 step grandchildren.

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 also done volunteer work for ALDA in Chicago and now in Indiana where we live today. In addition, I'm a leader for a new hearing loss support group called ALDA Northern Indiana whom we meet monthly and they are mostly socials.

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 whom we see once or twice a year.

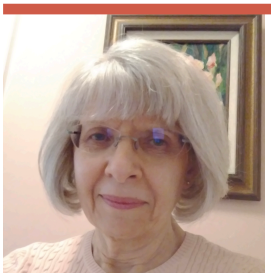


TREASURER, Ilene Morales

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.

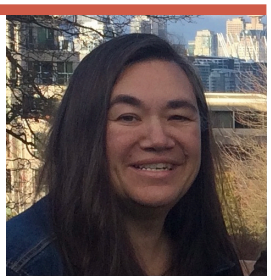
Getting a CI has been a blessing for me. I'm so grateful for this amazing technology. I joined SWC in 2016 and prior to joining the BOD was a CI List Rep. I've attended several conventions and have enjoyed them.

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, Mary-Ann Livesey



My hearing loss likely began when I was eighteen months old and fell on cement stairs and hit my head. My balance was off for a few days. Hearing loss was diagnosed later with severe to profound in one ear and mild to moderate cookie bite loss in the other ear. My hearing was stable until I was hit in the forehead with a softball line drive in my mid-thirties. Six months later I was diagnosed with bilateral enlarged vestibular aqueduct syndrome, the cause of both my hearing loss and poor balance. During my forties my hearing started slowly dropping in both ears and I am now bimodal with one cochlear implant and one hearing aid.

I live in Vancouver, Canada and work as a Teacher of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing. I am involved in various groups advocating for accessibility and inclusion for Deaf and Hard of Hearing people. I have also been studying ASL for the last five years.

I found the SayWhatClub in 2023 and attended the convention in Vancouver. Last year, I travelled to New England to attend the convention in Springfield. I enjoy meeting and connecting with other people who understand the struggles of hearing loss, in particular those with low hearing.

I love to travel and participate in water sports. My husband and children are all hearing.

DIRECTOR, Donna McNary



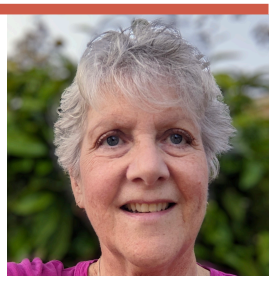
I am a newly retired special education teacher from the Madison, Wisconsin area. I grew up on a dairy farm in southern MN. I'm married and we have 4 married daughters and 3 granddaughters.

My hearing loss was first detected in my 20s when I was taking an audiology course for my Bachelor's Degree in Communicative Disorders. In this course we practiced giving hearing tests to each other. My hearing loss at that time was a mild bilateral sensory hearing loss in the very high frequencies. From there my hearing loss continued to deteriorate. I began wearing hearing aids in my late 30s and received cochlear implants in 2013 and 2017. Many have said that after being implanted they 'got their life back'; and it was true for me too. I feel blessed!

I found SayWhatClub around 2009 when I was looking for hearing support and for anyone that understood what I was going through. I went to my first SWC Convention in Salt Lake City in 2012. I am so thankful that I found SWC because I not only found support and understanding; but I found life long friendships and family.

I have volunteered with SayWhatClub in the following capacities: List rep representative for the World and CI lists, volunteer and leader with the Silent Auction, and convention co-treasurer. I'm excited for this new role.

DIRECTOR, Deanne Pedroni



In 2015, after noticing a problem with my hearing and balance, I went to my local ENT. An MRI was ordered and showed that I have bilateral acoustic neuromas. I was referred to Stanford and started 'watch and wait' to see what changes would occur. The neuromas grew and cyberknife (radiation) was needed. After the treatments, my hearing degraded further - my left ear lost almost all hearing, and the right was steady at 60 percent. Hearing aids became part of my life with a CROS to adjust for that loss. In 2023, my right ear started following my left, and I started my journey to a cochlear. I got a cochlear in 2024 and am thrilled with the results.

I realized I needed help. My isolation was increasing, and my family life suffered. I started searching for alternatives. I found speech reading classes which led to finding the SayWhatClub and HLAA. I feel much more able to handle my day-to-day life with hearing loss. While my journey is not done, a second cochlear is likely in my future, I am thankful to have found groups that are supportive and helpful in my journey.

I spent the last 40+ years in technology. I have worked in the telco, financial and security industries making sure their systems work and work well. I am retired and enjoying life with my husband, children and grandchildren. I am an avid crafter, ask me about it.

So excited to spend Island Time with the fabulous SayWhatClub! Love being with people who always make me smile! ❤ Chris Fuller

CHULITA, U L M -POPPI

To all those going to Galveston I hope you have a wonderful time!

Ann Marie Picardo

Thank you to the CSC, board, sponsors, vendors, the Galveston convention center and attendees for making the Galveston convention a success! - Marty Wilson

To the great folks of SWC, especially those on Forum, thanks for over 20 years of friendship, support, and just plain being there whenever I needed someone who understands. -Bet

Spending time with **SayWhatClub** friends is always a highlight of my year. -Lorne



I look forward to going to the SWC con because it is a chance to see your friends whom we see once a year. love Dawn

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

We appreciate your contribution in making the 2025 SayWhatClub Convention a time of learning, inclusion, and fun with friends. All that we experience and learn from our shared time in Galveston (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 Southern Star Technology for sponsoring our hearing loop, and to Julia Stepp, LLC and Hearing Loss Live! for 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.

Martha Wilson

Martha Wilson**, CSC Chair**

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