

# SIGNews™

A NEWSPAPER FOR THE SIGNING COMMUNITY



Honoring Sculptor Douglas Tilden, page 5

## The First ASL Talk Radio Show Launched to Bridge the Deaf and Hearing Communities

**Katherine Firkins**  
*SIGNews staff writer*

Deaf people now have the chance to enjoy the radio without feeling frustrated or excluded. American Sign Language comedian and interpreter Keith Wann launched the first ASL talk radio show called “That Keith Wann Show — Cultural Bridges” on Aug. 4.

“Cultural Bridges” is heard and viewed live every Wednesday from 8-9 p.m. EST on the Toginet talk radio network. The radio show provides live stream captioning for deaf followers on Toginet.com. The ASL version of the show can be viewed the next day on KeithWann.com, and the audio podcast can be downloaded 30 minutes after the show on Toginet.com.

### Promoting Deaf Awareness

Wann aims to reduce the gap between the deaf and hearing communities on the radio show. He said, “My goal is to offer the deaf community insight and connection to the hearing world in all media forms, and vice versa. Talk radio is an extension of my continued efforts to connect to the hearing, ASL, and CODA

(children of deaf adults) in shared experiences, education, and entertainment.”

As a host, Wann makes sure that “Cultural Bridges” offers an educational platform for the guests and listeners to share their deaf-related experiences, inspirational stories, opinions, and expertise. He explained, “Guests requiring an interpreter will be featured periodically and will offer further context to the personal and professional headway, which the deaf and CODA communities have made in connecting with the hearing world.”

Wann explained further that talk radio shows, in general, aren’t known for pauses and that listeners are used to the constant “noises,” whether it is a commercial, a news report or a song, on the radio. He likes to remind the listeners that silence is “golden” when an interpreter is used to translate the details in the guest interviews on “Cultural Bridges.”

Recent guests for the radio show include ASL poet Peter Cook and Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf president Cheryl Moore.

### Providing Deaf-Related Resources

Wann views the radio show as a study tool for teachers, students, and interpret-

ers who are involved with the deaf community. He said, “It is imperative that ASL students, new and veteran interpreters, and professors in diverse fields of the ASL industry understand this show as a valuable resource to reference. Talk radio is yet another outlet that will help put a voice on their profession.”

Recent topics covered on “Cultural Bridges” include CODA entertainment, deaf and hearing relationships, deaf adoptions, and the video relay service industry.

### Bridging the Cultural Divide

It comes as no surprise that Wann added the title of ASL talk radio host to his list of ongoing endeavors within the deaf community. He is recognized for his other roles in which include the founder of non-profit organization coda365.org, the producer of “ASL Comedy Tour” with his wife Emilia, and the manager of interpreter video service company callVRS.org.

As a hearing son of two deaf parents, Wann said, “I feel like a deaf person who has a handicap for hearing. ASL is my first language. It’s in my heart.”

Wann is passionate, without a doubt,



Keith Wann

about bridging the cultural divide between the deaf and hearing communities through entertainment and programming.