

HOPE OF THE CROW: TALES OF OCCUPYING AGING
DR. KATHERINE SCHNEIDER
AUTHOR INTERVIEW
TEXAS TALKING BOOK PROGRAM BOOK CLUB
NOVEMBER 16, 2021

Operator: Good evening everyone and welcome to the Talking Book Program Book Club Discussion Call. Today's call is being recorded. At this time, I would like to turn the conference over to Mr. John Berkeland. Please go ahead.

John Berkeland: Thank you. Thank you very much. And welcome everybody. And tonight, we have an extra special book club. We're going to be joined by the author of the book we read, Katherine Schneider too. And she's going to be answering some questions and giving us some more insight into herself and into the book.

“Hope of the Crow” is an honest funny book about aging and living with disabilities. It’s a compelling, insightful and often humorous guide to occupying aging with style and grace.

And we’re going to start off just with me asking questions of Dr. Schneider and then toward the end of our discussion, maybe at 7:45 or thereabouts we’ll open up to additional questions and comments from our callers. So, be patient and if you do have any questions or comments and we’ll – you’ll have a chance to share them with Katherine and later on in the discussion.

So in the meantime, let’s get started. Just make sure as we always mention that your phone is not on speaker phone or muted and you should be all set. And now that we’ve taken care of our housekeeping I’d like to welcome Katherine Schneider to the Texas Talking Book Program Book Club.

Katherine Schneider: Hey, thanks. Now that we've had our first snow up here in Wisconsin, it's a pleasure to be down in Texas with you, at least virtually.

John Berkeland: And that will be the first and last snow you get this year. That's why I'm a librarian and not a meteorologist. Well, let's go ahead and get started, Dr. Schneider. First, I just want to ask you to just give us your elevator speech about yourself.

Katherine Schneider: I'm 72-years-old. I was born blind, educated in a Kalamazoo Public Schools, did my undergrad work at Michigan State, my grad work at Purdue and had a 30 year career as a clinical physiologist teaching counseling, supervising, administrating at four different university counseling centers.

When I retired I thought, oh, what am I going to do. So I wrote a book, then I wrote three more books, got on a bunch of community and other kinds of non-profit boards. I had started an award with the American Librarian Association for kid's books that have disability content, an award for journalism with the National Center for Disability and Journalism for good journalism about disability issues. And generally been as busy as I want to be in retirement with time for the good things in life like book clubs.

John Berkeland: Yes, well we appreciate that. Now the subtitle of "Hope of the Crow" is "Tales of Occupied Aging." And one of your previous books entitled "Occupying Aging Delights, Disabilities and Daily Delights." What do you mean by occupying aging?

Katherine Schneider: I mean that you – a few years ago there was an occupy Wall Street movement and it was sort of a

takeover of Wall Street by people with some new ideas. And so what I mean about aging is take it over and protesting kind of a way that you don't just age but you make it work for you. You make it aging so that you get what you want out of it instead of just letting nature take its course.

John Berkeland: Okay. Now you mention in "Hope of the Crow" in 2017, you spoke to several groups of high schools students about adulting and you said they asked many thought provoking questions including, what's the best thing you've ever done. And that's still an excellent question. What's the best thing you've ever done?

Katherine Schneider: I think the best thing I ever did was when I got my first Seeing Eye dog. I had no idea, I was a cane traveler and I was going fine, but I thought well maybe I'd like a dog if I end up working in a big city or – but I've had guide dogs now for almost 50 years.

And in addition to the travel part of working with a guide dog just the companionship and the ability to figure out how to relate with the ten different creatures that I've had by my side have just been an amazing experience. Which one's my favorite? Each one's been my favorite in different ways because they're all characters in their own way. Added so much to my life.

John Berkeland: Good. Good. Now you mentioned before the Schneider Family Book Awards. They are approaching their 18th birthday. And what has been their impact on kids, on parents, on publishers, on you? And have they achieved your goals when you started them?

Katherine Schneider: Yes. They are and amazing success.

When I was growing up there were books like biographies of Helen Keller, Louis Braille and then there was little Elaine

Prince and that was all about the disability related books that were out there way back when.

And when I had the chance to start the awards I really wanted there to be more and better books for the next generations of kids with disabilities and without disabilities to read that – and not necessarily centered on the disability but that the disability is part of somebody's life that's in the book.

And now a days the jury and I'm not part of the jury, I just started the project, I didn't – I'm not able to give input to the jury so it – don't lobby me. But they – every year they have more and more and the books are just excellent. I modeled them on Coretta Scott King awards for books about the black experience and this has really worked out well.

John Berkeland: Just as a follow-up what – what type of feedback have you – have you gotten if any from authors and publishers? You mentioned that they made it ...

Katherine Schneider: The author – the authors love it because since it's an American Library Association Project most libraries will buy a copy of the book. So the authors get prominence from having gotten an ALA award. And the publishers love it because with increasing interest they can talk about how one of their books got this prestigious ALA award. So their sales go up. So everybody's happy.

John Berkeland: There we go. Now you mentioned that you got – recently got your first snow. If there's snow on the ground it must mean that fall is in the air and Thanksgiving is on the horizon. It's getting closer than I want to imagine.

But when – in “Hope for the Crow” you’re discussing Rebecca Alexander’s memoir “Not Fade Away.” And you noted that Alexander has found profound gratitude for everything. What are you profoundly grateful for this Thanksgiving?

Katherine Schneider: I’m grateful for getting to this age. And for having people and things in the – my life in then the areas of love, work, play, pray. I’ve got a lot going on in all the areas and it’s almost too good. Of course there are the issues to deal with, but when I sit back and look at it and say, wow you know I was born and one thoroughly not expected to live and here I am. And it’s good.

John Berkeland: Yes. Now if Thanksgiving is around the corner that means that the holidays will soon be upon us. And you mentioned the term holifrazzle, which is the season to be

frazzled. What are some of the things you do or don't do as an antidote to holifrazzle?

Katherine Schneider: Well, I've got my Christmas letter written.

And I order multiple copies of a gift like there's one book or and there's a calendar I picked on and people are likely to get one or the other. So I sort of batch things. I do it early and I – with people my age a lot of us either have everything we need or want or we don't have it and that's okay and we've adjusted to that.

So a lot of times with friends we exchange – well, I'll give a little gift to your favorite charity and you give a little gift to my favorite charity. So then all you have to do is write a check kind of a thing. So I – when I'm arranging the meals I'll host a potluck and say I'll do the main dish and what are you bringing.

And then, of course, we have to sort out, well how are we going to have everybody at a three foot distance and they need to be masked and all that good stuff. So there's always stuff to arrange. But I try to keep it simple and try to do as much ahead of time as humanly possible.

John Berkeland: Now this next question is a question from one of our patrons. He writes, I have Irlen Syndrome, which is a difficulty with visual perceptual processing. For the past 25 years, I have been wearing Irlen tinted glasses or contacts. And there has been little advancement with Irlen Syndrome becoming common knowledge in social media, medical and schools. Nor is it at the same level of awareness as blind, visually impaired or legally blind. And also aide for Irlen Syndrome is nowhere near what would be accommodative for someone who is blind.

The two questions I have are; what could be done to bring Irlen Syndrome up to the relative level that has been done for blind, such as public awareness and on accommodations? And are there people in the blind community that I could network with that would help in gaining more public awareness and aid for Irlen Syndrome?

Katherine Schneider: Well, my heart goes out to this person because I also have another disability, fibromyalgia, which is an invisible disability and the difference between a well-known disability like blindness versus some of the less well-known disabilities, it's really hard because you have to be public educators/advocate 24/7. And you get a lot of comments that really aren't helpful from people would be my guess.

And I don't know if this person has trolled the internet looking for the Irlen Syndrome Foundation or support groups. That's

one good thing now a days is it seems like you can start a Facebook group or get involved with groups on the internet for almost anything. And if there isn't one you can start it. And then you try to figure out, okay, how am I going to – how am I going to publicize this. How am I going to find a foundation or a medical center that specializes in this that's willing to do a lot of public relations.

Yes, it would be great to get adopted by some celebrity that makes you their cause, but I don't know how you find the celebrity to adopt you or your cause. So, it – I think you just – you just keep looking and looking and looking and realize that although what you have may be relatively rare there are a lot of other people that are dealing with other rarer things.

So sometimes you can find community, more established support group like the American Association for People with Disabilities or some of those cross disability groups. And

yes, they don't necessarily understand your disability any better than the general public but at least their fighting for some of the same things that you are. So that's a non-answer saying good luck.

John Berkeland: Keep at it.

Katherine Schneider: Yes, keep at it.

John Berkeland: Now – and one of your 2016 entries in “Hope for the Crow” you wrote about artist Candy Chang’s public artwork, “Before I Die.” How would you fill in the blank, before I die?

Katherine Schneider: I’m glad you asked me that one ahead of time because I had to think about that for a while and I came up with in my living room I have piles of magazines and I have a to-be-read book list that pages and pages of

titles that I've written down that I hope to get to someday. So I will say that I will – I will finish the piles of magazines and I will finish my TBR booklist and that's never going to happen. So I guess I never have to deal with it, right?

John Berkeland: Well that's a worthy, worthy, worthy goal. We all have to-be-read lists. Now you mentioned before your retirement, what surprised you the most about retirement?

Katherine Schneider: I wondered if I'd find enough to do in retirement. And I've been amazed that projects find you and as one project winds down another possibility just jumps up.

Another thing that surprised me, old habits die hard. Like I've been retired oh, 16 years or so, and during the day I have a hard time reading a junky novel. I just – I just feel guilty. Now, this is something I'm working on.

John Berkeland: Yes.

Katherine Schneider: Because that's goofy. For the rest of my life, I – if you're going to read for fun you read for fun in the evening. But no, hey, I could read for fun at 9:00 in the morning if I wanted to.

John Berkeland: Yes, that's the joy of being retired.

Katherine Schneider: Yes.

John Berkeland: Now, you mentioned in Hope of the Crow Booth Tarkington said, "Cherish all your happy moments; they make a fine cushion for old age." What are some of your happy moments from the pandemic years? And were happy moments more precious during the pandemic?

Katherine Schneider: Pandemic's been hard. I've been fortunate to not have had COVID but it's been hard the last 16 months. I think this keep your distance stuff doesn't really work for blind people. And so, I've – I think I've treasured more the contacts I have even if they're contacts by phone or by zoom.

Because there have been less people contacts. One happy moment is things like this when I get to talk about my book.

Because I'm sitting here thinking, hey, some people clear down in Texas have read and perhaps enjoyed, and perhaps related to something that I spent time and energy writing.

So, enjoying hearing from people who read my writing whether it's my blogs or my books or whatever. Finding that contact from writer to reader. That's been another of the joys. And then my guide dog, I got my 10th Seeing Eye dog just before the pandemic hit.

So, it's been an interesting time to train a guide dog in for my life because my life has changed so markedly. Now when I say we're going to work that means we're going to go sit in front of the computer as opposed to walking over to an office.

John Berkeland: Well, this might be kind of an oddball question just as follow-up. Has it been – has it been more difficult training your guide dog during a pandemic?

Katherine Schneider: Yes because people are keeping a distance and, yes, in a way that's good with guide dogs that they're not all over the guide dog but at the same time, if you're trying to judge how to stay six feet away from somebody that's hard with a guide dog to not be in their space.

And also, people talk less when they have a mask on I think, and are trying to keep at a distance. So, you don't get as many queues as to whether you're on the correct street or whether you're making the correct turn. Because people are scooting around you at a distance. So, traffic – foot traffic flow is harder to judge.

And then you don't have as many opportunities to stay good at things like being in a restaurant and the dog lying quietly under the table and that that kind of stuff. You almost have to pretend that your house is a restaurant and work on it that way.

So, it's – yes, I think as things open back up if and when they do become more quote, "Normal," there will be more training that goes on in reviewing the skills that they learned before the pandemic.

John Berkeland: Now, and Hope for the Crow when you were writing about your birthday in 2016 you asked the reader the question, “What is on your happiness list?” Well, what is on your happiness list?

Katherine Schneider: I think what I was thinking about is what do I – what do I want to do that I haven’t done yet when I mentioned happiness lists. And I would say needing some more different kinds of animals.

Back in the 1990s, I got to go down and swim with dolphins, and that was just an amazing experience. And I’d like to encounter some other creatures up close and personal. Haven’t quite figured out how I’m going to get that done but perhaps.

John Berkeland: That’s a worthy – that’s a worthy goal. Now, you mentioned earlier about some of your experience with

the National Library Service, could you talk just a little bit about interactions with and your history with the National Library Service and various State Talking Book Programs you've dealt with?

Katherine Schneider: Yes, one of the – one of the best things in life National Library Service and its branches. My first boyfriend when I was about seven-years-old I got brail and talking books and they were big old records back then from the Michigan Library from (George Frees), he was the librarian.

And boy I just – I just knew that he knew everything and was this wonderful man because at least once a month he sent me books. And that was a treasure. Over the years I've had contact as I've moved around the country with different state libraries and each of them have done some things a little bit differently.

So, that's been fun. I got the opportunity a few years ago to serve on the advisory committee that the NLS has for patrons. And that was fascinating to hear how things are done in other states and try to help chart some policies. So, it's one of my favorite libraries.

I do have to mention another of my favorite libraries, which is Benetech's Bookshare. And for those of you who want more than the NLS can provide you might well want to look at Bookshare and see if that would – for the bookaholics among us, that's another great one. You can never have too many libraries.

John Berkeland: There you go. And well, the National Library Service is – has given a lot to you but you've given a lot to the National Library Service. So, it's a – it's been a good deal – it's been a good deal.

Now, you wrote that you “Leaned toward animal stories and tales of people overcoming obstacles with a dash of thrillers to keep my heart pounding.” What are some of your all-time favorite animal stories?

Katherine Schneider: Oh, I’d probably say James Herriot.

John Berkeland: Yes.

Katherine Schneider: All Creatures Great and Small, et cetera.

John Berkeland: And what are – what’s one of your favorite tales or memoirs of overcoming obstacles?

Katherine Schneider: Joni Eareckson Tada has written several. She’s a gal who’s quadriplegic and she’s written several

different memoirs. For a more current one, Haben Girma, I'm not sure if I'm pronouncing her last name correctly.

She's a deaf/blind young woman who got her law degree from Harvard and is just an amazing young woman. And I enjoyed reading her memoir recently. It's called Haben, H-A-B-E-N.

John Berkeland: And what are – what's a good thriller that kept your heart pounding?

Katherine Schneider: Oh, Tom Clancy, if I had to pick just one I'd pick him.

John Berkeland: And well, continuing a theme of books, since Christmas will soon be upon us what are some of your favorite Christmas books?

Katherine Schneider: For the one that I'll read every year The Other Wise Man, I think it's by van Dyke. But I – usually every year I look around for one or two and I might not – might or might not ever read them again. But Fannie Flagg, Redbird Christmas. I like Craig Johnson books and a couple of his, Christmas in Absaroka County, and the Spirit of Steamboat.

John Berkeland: Yes.

Katherine Schneider: A couple of his are Christmas-themed. But pick your favorite reader and put their author name and Christmas in the search string and you'd be surprised. An awful lot of readers have tried a Christmas book or two. And they're not usually – it seems to me they're not usually their best writing. But they're fun this time of year.

John Berkeland: Yes, just...

Katherine Schneider: The ones that I just downloaded because after all, Christmas is coming.

John Berkeland: Yes.

Katherine Schneider: This year I'll try *Comfort and Joy* by Knight and *Christmas Days* by Jeanette Winterson.

John Berkeland: Okay. Now, you mentioned before that you created the Katherine Schneider Journalism Award for Excellence in Reporting on Disability, how are journalists getting better at covering the disability angle of news?

Katherine Schneider: I think there are less of those stories that make you gag if you're a person with disabilities where somebody shovels the walks for somebody with a disability

and they get front-page coverage for shoveling the walks for somebody with disabilities.

And there's nothing about the fact that the person with disabilities whose walks are shoveled may well pay them, or may well bake cookies for them, or it's a one way oh, aren't they wonderful to be nice to people with disabilities. There's less – there's less of that kind of stories it seems to me.

And they're more stories where disability is a piece of what's going on and it's covered that way but it's not all there is to that person's life. And it's covered more as a – this is the accommodations that need to be made.

Yes, of course, you build an accessible playground, it's not always in that wonderful that you built one, it's yes, here's our cool new playground that all can enjoy.

John Berkeland: And they're going to be – this year they're going to be awarded pretty soon again, aren't they?

Katherine Schneider: They just were.

John Berkeland: Okay, they just were. Good. So, you got to go down to sunny Arizona?

Katherine Schneider: Well, I did not go. I went virtually.

John Berkeland: Another – Coronavirus, the gift that keeps on giving.

Katherine Schneider: Indeed, I've got all my shots, et cetera but I still – creeps me out to go through busy airports with who knows who having what variant to spread. I just don't want to do it.

John Berkeland: I might have been...

Katherine Schneider: People that are – people that are braver than I am go for it I say. But I'm going to go virtual.

John Berkeland: And that – maybe that might have been dicey with a new guide dog, I don't know.

Katherine Schneider: No. Dog does airports, that's the amazing thing when you go to school you train with them then you bring them home on an airplane and you think, oh, I wonder how this is all going to work. And it always has worked.

John Berkeland: They handle airports better than people do.

Katherine Schneider: Yes. And a lot of flight attendants have told me that they're a lot nicer than a lot of passengers of the two-footed variety.

John Berkeland: There you go. Liking laugh about it. Speaking of which, World Laughter Day is the first Sunday in May.

What's made you laugh this week? What's made you laugh today?

Katherine Schneider: This week I encountered a limerick of – that is about accessibility and it was written a long time ago. I assume long before accessibility was a thing. And if you're listeners can stand a little bit of body I would be glad to read that limerick.

John Berkeland: Go for it.

Katherine Schneider: Okay. "On the breast of a barmaid named Gail Was written the price of the ale, and on her behind, for the sake of the blind was the same information in Braille."
So, that made – that made me laugh.

John Berkeland: An accessible limerick.

Katherine Schneider: Yes, yes. Who would know – who would...

John Berkeland: Saying that you made – you made us laugh.

Katherine Schneider: Yes. And as far as what makes me laugh pretty much every day my guide dog likes to start the day with a game of chase. And that involves him picking up one of my shoes before I get to it and the game is on.

John Berkeland: Good.

Katherine Schneider: Good stretching.

John Berkeland: That sounds like fun. Yes, yes. Now, among many things you mention in Hope of the Crow you do

mention your peanut butter cookie recipe. And you claim that if you can count to two you can make it. Count me skeptical. Please give us your peanut butter cookie recipe.

Katherine Schneider: I swear to you this is true. A jar of peanut butter, which is about 18 – 16/18 ounces, two cups, you can either use crunchy or smooth depending on your taste, two eggs, two cups of sugar, and let's see, two, two, two, and a half a cup of flour. So, it's cheating, it's one half – it's one over two.

John Berkeland: Oh yes, yes.

Katherine Schneider: And that's it.

John Berkeland: Okay.

Katherine Schneider: That's it.

John Berkeland: Well, that sounds – that sounds doable – that sounds doable.

Katherine Schneider: One, two, three, four ingredients, make them into balls about as big as walnuts, bake them at 350 15 minutes or so. Hopefully, you have a gallon of milk and some friends to enjoy them with.

John Berkeland: That sounds...

Katherine Schneider: And it's really that simple.

John Berkeland: Simple is good. Simple is good. Now you also mentioned the Community Pet Food Program in (Eau Claire), is that still going? And are you still a litter lady?

Katherine Schneider: It's going in a modified manor and the litter ladies that did it, we all kind of aged out. We were all of a certain age and lugging around 40 pounds boxes of litter do bring them to cat lover's homes got to be a little more than any of us wanted to do. So the program has changed a little bit but still serves some of the same people.

John Berkeland: Yes.

Katherine Schneider: And I throw a little – and I throw a little money at it at Christmas time instead of sweat equity.

John Berkeland: There you go. And we'll go back to reading. Every day is I love to read day. What are you reading now?

Katherine Schneider: Let's see. I'm reading "Never" which is a political thriller by Ken Follett. And I just got done reading Kate Bowler's, I'm going to block on the title. It's a book

about her diagnosis with stage four cancer and how she's living with it.

John Berkeland: What was the author's name, again?

Katherine Schneider: Kate Bowler, B-O-W-L-E-R. And the title will occur to me at 3:00 a.m. or such.

John Berkeland: Okay. That always happens, it always happens. You share and hopefully ((inaudible)) of the wise man and the young man throwing star fish into the ocean. What star fish picking up have you done the past few years?

Katherine Schneider: Well the past week I'm working on getting a friend of mine who doesn't use computers, is baffled by phone trees, doesn't drive, I'm working on getting my friend their booster shot. So they need – they need – and then to get signed up for it and they need to get transported to it and

so it's a little star fish kind of a thing to try to get that arranged. And not do too much for them but do enough for them so that they get it done. And right, it's still in process.

Laura Jean: I don't mean to interrupt. This is Laura Jean and I'm sorry to interrupt. Do you believe the title might be "Everything Happens for Reason and Other Lives I've Loved" by Kate Bowler?

Katherine Schneider: That was her first book.

Laura Jean: Okay is it – okay, then it's her more recent one.

Katherine Schneider: Yes.

Laura Jean: Let me. Hold on just a second.

Katherine Schneider: Are you – are you – are you near a
computer, Laura?

Laura Jean: Yes.

John Berkeland: She is a computer.

Laura Jean: ((Inaudible)). You're kind. Let's see.

Katherine Schneider: I could ask – I could ask Alexa.

Laura Jean: She would probably know.

Katherine Schneider: Well I don't – well I'll try. Alexa, what's
Kate Bowler's most recent book?

Alexa: Kate Bowler's most recent book was "No Cure for Being
Human" ((inaudible)) ...

Katherine Schneider: “No Cure for Being Human”.

Laura Jean: That’s it, okay. Thank you.

Katherine Schneider: It is available from NLS yet?

Laura Jean: And that is what I’ m checking. Hold on just one second.

Katherine Schneider: Alexa, stop. Alexa reminds me of something else that I think you’re going to ask me about which is my favorite app ...

Laura Jean: Yes, we do have it.

John Berkeland: Yes, what – do you have any new favorite apps?

Katherine Schneider: Well Trivia Crack is still a favorite of mine.

Of course Facebook especially if I can get my friends describe the pictures they post. (Barred), OverDrive, unfortunately OverDrive is going to sunset and Libby which has been less than totally accessible is going to attempt to be as accessible as possible I think is what they're saying now. So that one remains to be seen how that's going to work out or whether that's going to be something that those of us who want it fully accessible right now are going have to get working on. But ...

Laura Jean: Regarding, sorry. I just wanted to add really quick and then I'll leave y'all alone. "No Cure for Being Human" is it's currently being recorded. It's in our system so if a patron wants us to mail it to them we could add it to their request list at this point. But it's not completely finished so we can't actually send it to them the mail and it's not yet (a bombard).

John Berkeland: But it will be soon, hopefully.

Laura Jean: Yes.

John Berkeland: Okay, well ...

Katherine Schneider: But I wanted to point out that if for people that have A-L-E-X-A, there's all sorts of wonderful games on there. And if you wanted I could send you a list of some of the best games. I don't know if being librarians if you promote things that aren't exactly or not.

John Berkeland: That's fine ...

Laura Jean: I'm for fun of all kinds.

John Berkeland: That's right, that's right. We can definitely do that.

Katherine Schneider: Okay, I'll send it. I will send you that list and you do with it as you please.

John Berkeland: There you go. Well let's just take a minute now it's getting to be like 7:47 or thereabouts and we'll just give – if some of our callers have a question or a comment we can just take a few minutes now and if you have a question or comment you'd like to ask, Kathy Schneider, go ahead and press "star", "1" to get in the queue and ask your question or make your comment.

Operator: And again if you would like to ask a question please press "star", "1" on your telephone keypad at this time, "star", "1".

Katherine Schneider: See how good your questions were, John, you covered everything.

John Berkeland: There you go. Well not quite. I have a quick question and this got to my very heart because I've been there, done that. Did you ever finish reading the Bible?

Katherine Schneider: No. I've tried starting in Genesis a couple three times now and by Leviticus or so I'm dragging. Yes, I've read the New Testament. I've started with Matthew and I get through those four volumes. But the Old Testament I – that's still on the – to be done list.

John Berkeland: And ...

Katherine Schneider: I've gone through those, some of those Bible in a year kind of things where you get bits and pieces

from everywhere. And I usually make it through the year relatively successfully. But that's still not everything.

John Berkeland: Okay.

Katherine Schneider: Have you?

John Berkeland: No. No. It's the Old Testament is too daunting. It's too daunting. Back to again "Occupying and Aging" can you just share two or three tricks of the trade for "Occupying and Aging" with a disability and doing it with style and grace.

Katherine Schneider: Keep telling yourself that you're doing your best. And try to assume that that other person also is doing their best. Because sometimes I get offended when somebody deals with my disability poorly and I think well, jerk, you ought to know better. And the fact is in all probability they're doing as good as they know even though

it's not adequate. And I get to educate them if I want them to ever get better.

Napping is one of the tricks for "Occupying Aging" with grace and style. Because that way if you want to stay up late and read the next thriller you can if you can nap the next day.

And in all of the advocacy kind of stuff I get involved with, I keep in mind that old song about we shall overcome

someday, it may not be tomorrow or yesterday like I'd like it to be but someday. Those are my tricks.

John Berkeland: Now we talked just a little bit about, in a general kind of way, about apps and games and stuff. Are – generally speaking are apps becoming significantly more accessible for the blind and other people with disabilities?

Katherine Schneider: It comes and it goes. And sometimes an app that's accessible in its next iteration it goes backwards.

Which is makes me think they're just not necessarily thinking about it. Recently, I was presenting at a conference and the conference had to go from in-person to virtual and they used an app called Whova and it was terrible. And I thought what the heck. This is a widely used app but it's all sorts of unlabeled buttons.

Now, of course, I made the Whova app people aware of all their unlabeled buttons but I was not the first. I did some reading out on the internet and about a year ago somebody was kicking up dust about the same problems with the app. And probably got the same answer that I got which is, "Thank you for your comments and we'll consider them."

John Berkeland: Yes and this kind of next question ties – kind of ties into that and whether or not the developers and stuff were thinking of the disabled community. You observed at one point that disability as diversity is just starting to get

noticed. Is that beginning to change? Is disability as diversity is starting to get noticed?

Katherine Schneider: It should be and occasionally you see that it is. A couple years ago, I decided that I needed to get on our county board, County Board of Supervisors. I'd never thought about political office much as something that I would ever be involved with and I ended up going on it as one of my friends who's a political kind of a guy says if you're not at the table you're on the menu.

And I decided that, darn it, with the public sector,

Hey, disability needs

to be part of this. So I spent two years raising disability issues and I'm about to run to continue that because it's just not on people's radar where it should be.

John Berkeland: Now, kind of touching upon that and this might be – it's probably be our last question. You mentioned politics and such. Is access to voting for people with disabilities getting better? Are we removing barriers? Or are we creating new barriers to voting for folks with disabilities?

Katherine Schneider: Probably both. And I hope we get beyond just thinking about access to voting to thinking about access to serving. Because believe me, there are very few people with disabilities serving as elected officials. And that needs to change. If we're one out of five, people that has a disability is we're one out of five of the population we ought be one out of five of the people serving in government. So don't limit yourself to voting, consider serving.

John Berkeland: There you go. There you go. Well, thank you very much Dr. Schneider. We enjoyed our visit and we're just going to take a minute to announce our January Book

Club title. On January 27, we'll be discussing a Texas classic, "The Time It Never Rained" by Elmer Kelton.

And here's the annotation. A cantankerous, independent minded Texan Charlie Flagg fights to save his medium-sized ranch in Rio Seco during a drought. His problems are compounded by an ineffectual federal aid program and difficulties with Mexican ranch workers. Some strong language. Was published in 1973 and again that's going to be our book club discussion on Thursday, January 27. And we are looking forward to that and we are hoping you'll be able to join us.

And in meantime thank you to everyone for supporting our book club. And looking forward to having you join us, believe it or not, next year. And right now we just want to thank Kathy Schneider for joining us and sharing some of

her observations and helping us and enjoy her book “Hope of the Crow.” And I will ...

Katherine Schneider: Thanks for having me.

John Berkeland: Yes.

Katherine Schneider: And don't even tell me how warm it is down there.

John Berkeland: Oh, it's been way too cold in my book. But anyway, thank you very much and thank you everyone for joining us. You help make our book clubs a lot of fun. And we are looking forward to having you join us again in January. So if you want to get signed up for the January Book Club just give us a holler or drop us an e-mail and we'll get you signed up and we'll get “The Time it Never Rained” heading your way.

But thank you very much and you have a good evening.

And again, thank you Dr. Schneider for joining and helping us laugh a little bit and learn a little bit as well. So thank you very much and you all have a good evening.

Operator: And that does conclude our call for today. Thank you for your participation. You may now disconnect.