**ROUGHLY EDITED TRANSCRIPT**

**CIL‑NET Presents...**

**Promoting Disability Pride: Exploring the Evolution of Disability Culture**

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>> MARY OLSON: I will make this announcement again, but while folks are waiting, there is a PowerPoint for today's presentation, and it was on the APRIL ‑‑ www.APRIL‑rural.org, and it's on the front homepage of our Web site underneath the announcement for today's call.

All right. Why don't we go ahead and get started with a few announcements while people join us. Thank you, everybody, for being on the call today. I'm really, really excited for today's call. It's promoting disability pride, exploring the evolution of disability culture, and we're really lucky to have Steven E. Brown with us today.

A little bit of housekeeping before we get started. Again, there is a PowerPoint for today's presentation and if you would like to access it, it's on our website so www.april‑rural.org. It's right on the homepage there. From that page you can also access our CART. So the CART link will be going on throughout today's call. And following today's call we will have a transcript as well as an audio recording available on our Web site so that you can access it later.

So, let's see. We are going to try to do things a little differently today. So we have a new system. So I'm going to have everybody on mute until we get to questions and answers, and then at that point, if you have a question, go ahead and push \*6, and that will unmute yourself and I'll see your line pop up. If you push \*6 that's how you can unmute yourself and ask your question at that time. And we'll stop periodically throughout the call for questions because this really ‑‑ we're hoping it's more of a conversation rather than a presentation.

Along with those lines, you can also ask questions using the CART system. I do have it pulled up here, so if you have a question and type it in, I will go ahead and read that question for you and then we'll go about it that way.

So for today we have Steve, and I want to read a little about him. Steven Brown is the cofounder on the institute on disability culture and retired professor and scholar on the center on disabilities study in the University of Hawaii. Currently an affiliate faculty. He earned a doctorate in history from the University of Oklahoma in 1981. In the 1980s he worked at and directed an Independent Living center in Oklahoma, organized numerous community coalitions, and was involved in the implementation of the Americans with Disabilities Act. In 1990 he moved to California where he served as training director at the World Institute On Disabilities. In 1993, he received the first federal funding to research disability culture. After moving to New Mexico he cofounded the not for profit institute on disability culture, and with his wife Lillian Gonzalez Brown, in 1994. Brown's books include movie stars and sensuous scars, essays on the journey from disability shame to disability pride in 2003, and surprise to be standing, a spiritual journey in 2011. Brown relocated to the California Bay Area in summer of 2014 where he continues to write, advocate and teach. BLOG posts can be found at the www.instituteondisabilityculture.org/manifesto. And he is on Twitter. Steve is @disculture.

And always, our IL Conversations are presented by the IL‑Net which is operated by the Independent Utilization Research Program at TIRR Memorial Hermann in partnership with NCIL and APRIL. Support for the presentation was provided by the U.S. Department of Education Rehabilitation Services Administration. No official endorsement of the Department of Education should be inferred. Without further ado I'll let Steve take it away.

>> STEVEN BROWN: Thank you. I appreciate that. That was Mary, right?

>> MARY OLSON: Yes, this is Mary. I'm sorry. I'm Mary from APRIL. I forgot to introduce myself.

>> STEVEN BROWN: So we've had a lot of emails but it's the first time I've heard your voice. Thank you.

First of all, I am very happy to be here. Thank you for asking. Definitely I heard some people as they were signing on, but I didn't really ‑‑ I don't know if I heard everybody, so I didn't get a sense of people or groups that are actually here. Do you have a sense of that? Hello? Uh‑oh. Hello?

>> MARY OLSON: Sorry about that. I accidentally muted myself. Hey, Steve, sorry. I muted myself on accident. Yeah, I do have a sense. It looks like we have a pretty large crew right now. We have about ‑‑ it looks like about 40 people online.

>> STEVEN BROWN: Okay. Great. Thank you. Part of why I asked that is I really am hoping this is a conversation. That's how I understood it. So I know that Mary was talking about muting, which I would actually do if I could because you might hear some trains go by. We're very close to BART, Bay Area rapid transit trains. I have no idea how many will come around when I'm talking. Even though I have a headset on, people tend to hear it. So if you hear a noise in the background, that's what it is.

>> MARY OLSON: Steve, just to let you know, at some point if you would like me to unmute everybody, just let me know and I can do that. We'll just give them a fair warning.

>> STEVEN BROWN: Okay. So let me start by saying that as we were beginning to talk about this and thinking ‑‑ I was asked to talk about disability culture. That's not going to shock anybody who knows who I am. And ‑‑ Mary when she was first emailing me about this she sent me a quote that was attributed to me and may well be from me but I could never find it. So that's one of the interesting things about being out in the public eye. Is you never know what's going to come back to haunt you or to surprise you or remind you of something, and in this case, it's actually one I've seen a couple of times, and the first time I thought I saw it, I thought I found it, but then I couldn't find it again, and I can't remember exactly what it is. So it's probably not too fascinating, but it's a way of saying that as we were starting all of this I came up with a title of promoting disability pride, exploring the evolution of disability culture, and then I looked at it further as exploring a personal and professional history of the evolution of disability culture, and I'm using the PowerPoint as a guide if people are following that.

So the reason I'm looking at that is it's now been since the late 1980s when I first began talking and writing about disability culture, and so it really is both a personal and a professional, because it's something I've been do as I've moved along in various organizations and for the last 12 years or so in academia. So looking at how it's evolved for me personally and how it's evolved professionally and just how it's evolved is something that I was thinking about as I was exploring what to do today. And I'm actually going to stop and ask if there's some way to know if everybody can hear me well.

>> CART writer: I'm hearing you fine.

>> STEVEN BROWN: I just want to make sure everybody can hear.

>> MARY OLSON: I just heard from our transcript folks that everything is coming in clear, and the folks on the chat are saying it's coming in clear.

>> STEVEN BROWN: Great. Thank you.

As Mary said in the introduction, I've got a doctorate in ‑‑ I got a doctorate in 1981, probably before some people on this call were born, which is ‑‑ it's a weird thing these days, but it's probably true, and that was at the University of Oklahoma, and it was in history, and I've written about this, and so some of you may have actually read it or heard me talk about this, but it wasn't long after getting that degree when I encountered job discrimination, and remember, this is the early 1980s, and I was hired to ‑‑ verbally to write a book for a company in Tulsa, and when they heard that I used crutches, which I did at the time, they decided that I couldn't write the book. All kinds of stupid things were said like, a person using crutches can't write a book, and in Oklahoma, as some of you will know, football is a big thing, and I was told maybe if I had the physique of a football player I would have the stamina to do this, but since I didn't, they didn't think I would. If and in those days I was quite tall, about 6'4", and I was also very skinny. So I didn't at all look like a football player. But I had had the serendipity when I was teaching as a graduate student and then for one year after graduating at O.U. a couple students in one of my classes who were involved in the development of what's now progressive independence, in Norman. In those days it was called the Independent Living project. I began to get to know them and they began to get to know me, and we talked about my going to a meeting of the ILP, Independent Living project, and seeing if I was interested in doing volunteering. I did that and I was really impressed by what they were doing. They were actually planning a statewide conference and they were doing all kinds of cool things, one of which was they were bringing in two national speakers, people I'd never heard of at that point, but names that might be familiar to some of you these days. One was frank Bowe, who passed away now, but was an author of. Books, including one in late 1970s, I believe called "handy capping America," and another lady that probably most of you had heard of named Judy [indiscernible]. So this was pretty cool, and as I began to get to know the Independent Living project more and after this job discrimination happened I started hanging out at the ILP pretty much every day and in the fall of 1982 they had two new jobs that were created. One of them was to do peer counseling and skills coordinating and community organizing and so I applied for and got that job and started working at the ILP. I didn't know anything about disability. I did know how to find things out, which in those days was going to the library and looking in the card catalog, which is actually how I found handicapping America, and I was reading some of the things that were around the office. So the person who was the director of the program at that time, Helen Kuth, who is still one of my best friends, and who I consider my mentor in this movement, knew about this magazine called "the Disability Rag," and she ordered it. So I'm reading the disability rag in the mid‑mid‑1980s. They had a cartoon and a whole series of items that they called disability cool. That was kind of shocking, "disability cool." I wonder what that is. And then there it was in front of me, this cartoon. What really, I think, because this is all going back and trying to recreate it in my mind, I think that the thing that really hit me was an article that Mary Johnson who was the editor of the rag did add an interview with Tara Gill. He was in L.A. at that time and now at the University of ill in Chicago. She is a psychologist with a disability who in this interview was talking about why people with disabilities needed our own culture. That really hit me, too, because I'd grown up in a Jewish culture, my family belonged to a synagogue, and I was really aware of what cultural artifacts and what it was like to be part of a culture, but that particular culture didn't resonate with me so much. When I was reading Carol talking about disability culture, it did resonate, and it kind of brought together for me a lot of my passions. So my passion as a historian, my passion as what today we call human rights activist. I don't know what I was calling it in those days. And my passion for learning about different kinds of culture, like ‑‑ those days anyway we called it high brow and low brow culture, high brow things like academic books and low brow things like comic books and TV. I liked all of those things. And disability culture felt to me like a way to bring that all together.

So the 1980s is happening, and a lot of very interesting things happened to the CIL, which I avoided calling a CIL because ‑‑ and Helen avoided calling it a CIL because we didn't have the consumer controlled board. This was before the law mandated that. So in 1984 we actually walked out over the issue of consumer control and a number of other things, which I did write about and was published in the rag, and then I worked for a few years at a state advocacy office, and then I came back as the director of progressive independence. Now it was PI. And one of the things that I did was helped to facilitate a spin‑off to consumer controlled board. But during this whole time I'm still thinking about writing disability culture, and the more I'm thinking about it and the more I'm contemplating it, the more attractive it is to me.

So a few things happened in 1989, 1990, right around there, actually maybe more 1990. One of them was that NCIL, of course, the National Council On Independent Living, has it annual conference every year, and I thought it would be kind of interesting to try and do something at the 1990 conference that related to disability culture. There was also a statewide IL conference in Tulsa that was right after the NCIL conference, and it was ‑‑ there was something else I'm forgetting, so it must not be that important. So the NCIL conference, I had the feeling that if I just submitted what I was thinking about that it wasn't going to go very far because I wasn't well‑known. And I thought, well, who can I get so that it's going to be an accepted presentation. I contacted these two people who I knew somewhat, one a bit better than the other, and the first one was Judy, and she agreed to be on the panel, and the second one was Justin Dart who at that time was in Texas and I knew him ‑‑ not pretty well, but I knew him from being in that region. So Judy and Justin and I submitted this proposal called "speakers of movements," and it ‑‑ oh, "voices of independence." That was the subtitle. We decided pry R, primarily Judy and I because Justin was working very hard at that point in getting the ADA passed, so primarily Judy and I were talking about it and we wanted to talk about one of our stories, and we wanted to leave about half the time, I think it was a 90‑minute session, so we wanted to leave about half the time for audience participation. So I talked about the walk‑out, which I mentioned a few minutes ago, and Judy talked about what it was like being at a camp when she was a kid where she was around other kids with disabilities, and Justin talked about the ADA. Justin kind of swooped in and talked about the ADA and swooped out, because he was really busy meeting folks in those days.

So we did this, and Judy talked about her stuff, and I talked about my stuff, and then we opened it for audience participation. That's probably when I knew we had hit on something because I had swear that every single person in that audience wanted to talk. They all had stories to tell, and we were really happy to hear them, and we were also ‑‑ we were also ‑‑ didn't have time for everybody who wanted to talk to talk. So when we left, Judy and I both looked at each other and we said we really have something here, and I was on my way from NCIL to Tulsa to kind of do a similar thing, and Judy was going back to the World Institute On Disability in Oakland. So I came back from this meeting in D.C., and I came to Tulsa, and in Tulsa I organized a panel, a large panel of like eight or nine people, and the basic question was: We're exploring this thing ‑‑ maybe more accurately, I'm exploring this thing called disability culture and we kind of want to know what people are thinking about it. Is it a good thing? Is it not a good thing? What is it? And each of us talked about it, and, of course, I talked about it's a good thing, and some people weren't very clear on what it was or wasn't, and all of the things were talked about. But what kind of really hit me in those days and at that stage was that people had really strong re actions to it. Sometimes they didn't like the idea but they had really strong reactions to it. So I knew it was something to continue to explore.

And right around then was when I felt it was time for me to move on, and so I was lucky enough to get a job at the World Institute On Disability, and I moved to Oakland, and I worked there for the next three years.

I'm going to actually stop and ask if anybody has questions or comments at this point.

>> MARY OLSON: Again, if you have a question, if you can push \*6. Or a comment.

>> STEVEN BROWN: Everybody is still awake, right?

>> MARY OLSON: I think so. I think we're hanging ‑‑ this is a new ‑‑ we've never really muted everybody before, but we've had some issues in the past. So we're trying to figure out a way to make it work but still make it conversation‑y. So, again, \*6. It looks like maybe somebody ‑‑ somebody from CART just said "I'm awake too! "But no questions.

>> STEVEN BROWN: I'm glad. You know, it's a little funny when Mary and I were talking about this. I was saying it's been a long time, maybe 10 years, I mean a really long time, since I have only done a phone teleconference. I'm used to kind of doing webinars where I don't necessarily see people, but one of the techniques of doing the webinars is to ask every few minutes if anybody has any questions, is there anything going on. So that's why you'll probably get that from me.

>> MARY OLSON: If at any time the audience wants to say something you can push \*6 and unmute yourself and I'll know that you did that. So we can go from there. So, yeah, go ahead and do that at any time.

>> STEVEN BROWN: Okay, until somebody does that I'll keep going.

So in 1991, I believe, I had now started talking, obviously, started talking publicly about disability culture, and for some people it may be a little hard to imagine, but it was quite controversial in those days. One example of that is we used to have these informal lunch as WID, and sometimes we would talk about different topics more than just the social lunch, and I remember talking about disability culture one day, and I was blown away because there were people in the room who had different sexual orientations, I believe that the person who worked at WID in those days who was transgendered was in that room, there were people of various religions, lots of different kinds of disability backgrounds, but we all must have been from the U.S. on that particular day, although that wasn't necessarily true of everybody at WID. So somebody made the comment that there couldn't be a disability culture because they were Americans. And I heard that, and I was like, what?! and then I kept hearing it. I heard that several times, that same comment in some variation of that. And so I was thinking, okay, so what does this mean? What I finally decided was, and I think this is accurate, was what it meant was disability was seen as so stigmatizing, such a terrible thing in those days, that nobody wanted to add that to any already stigmatizing characteristics that they might have, like being gay or being Black or being anything else. So that's where the ‑‑ as near as I could tell, that's where there can't be a disability culture because Americans came from. Which always struck me as odd because I was never saying ‑‑ I've not said and don't say that people only belong to or identify with one culture. We all identify with lots of different cultures. And so that was going on. And then, as you might be able to tell, I can be a talking head, and so when I was first talking about disability culture, I was doing it in the way that I knew how to talk, which is kind of from an academic point of view, but I realized really quickly that that wasn't getting across what I wanted to get across. And so I started bringing other things in, like cartoons. Callahan was publishing his cartoons in those days, and I used some of those. And music. And videos. Which in those days were videotapes. And because I write, and one of the things I write is poetry, I also tried to bring that in. So in 1991 there was a conference in Arkansas, a Region 6 Independent Living conference, and I was asked to speak. So I did a presentation and the bulk of the presentation was about kind of finding my disability ability in my 30s when I was in the hospital, and that was later published in a journal and in my ‑‑ in movie stars, but I also wanted to bring the disability culture part in there, and so I very consciously wrote a poem, and the poem was called "‑‑ is called "Tell Your Story," and it's on the website the PowerPoint that you have, and it's also on the institute Web site. So I don't know if it's really helpful to read it here or not, but I could use some feedback about that if people want to hear it or not. And I won't be insulted either way.

>> MARY OLSON: I think folks are seeing that, Steve. I have a couple of questions from the chat room. Is that okay?

>> STEVEN BROWN: Great. That's perfect.

>> MARY OLSON: So Flo is wondering what exactly you mean by "culture" as applied to disability?

>> STEVEN BROWN: Okay. I will get there in a minute. So let me hang on on that one.

>> MARY OLSON: Okay. Then there's another one: What's the difference between disability culture and disability history?

>> STEVEN BROWN: Okay. Let me just go to the definition, and let me tell you, and if you ‑‑ actually, let me ‑‑ I will answer both those questions, I promise, but I think I need to do a little bit much background before I answer it. And so let me do that. Be patient, please.

So in the '92, '93, I was ready to do disability culture. That's what I wanted to do. And I had met with Lynn and she agreed with that and she ‑‑ we were looking at moving from California and starting an institute on disability culture. So one of the things I did was apply to what used to be NIDH, until recently, national institute on disability research, for a one‑year fellowship to do research on disability culture, and I got that, and so from '92 to '93, from '93 to '94, I had that year to do research, and also in that year we moved. We moved to southern New Mexico. And we created the institute. And so in the beginning of ‑‑ well, let me just parenthetically say that when you ‑‑ at least in those days ‑‑ when you had a fellowship, you were asked to do a final report, and that was actually the only thing you were asked to do other than some accounting to be accountable for having had this fellowship, and the report could have been done in a lot of different ways, but what I decided to do was to write a monogram. So I wrote this monograph called investigating a culture of disability: Final report. That's what it was. So it's 150 pages probably in today's world monograph, and it started out with an executive summary, and I just want to read one paragraph, part of one paragraph from that summary. So this is '94. "The existence of a disability culture is a relatively new and contested idea. Not surprising, perhaps, for a group that has long been described with terms like, and these are in quotes, in‑valid, impaired, limited, crippled, and then end of the quotes, and so forth. The disability culture movement is running full steam ahead. While I write and you read, multiplying numbers of people are creating rapidly increasing examples of disability culture." So I did this monograph, and one of the things that I have in it and that I put in the PowerPoint, but it was originally done for this monograph, I called the chart. I don't know how many of you are familiar with this, but in those days there were actually a number of paradigm charts that were going around. There was an Independent Living paradigm, a rehabilitation paradigm, and so I took actually the left‑hand column, which is definitions of problems, locus of problems, social roles, solutions to problems, who controls and desired outcomes, I took those from the previous paradigm chart and then I created two columns that were my creation, and the first one is called "community assistance/medical/charity paradigm." So as you can imagine, it includes looking at the medical model, in social roles it includes people with disabilities as patients, clients, charity recipients or nonexistent. And then I created disability rights culture/pride paradigm. In that one, social roles were family and community members, customers, co‑workers, advocates, the same as anyone else. Kind of, believe it or not, going on about this not to delay answering your questions, but as part of the answer, because I had now written this monograph, I'd been talking about disability culture, and for quite a while now, for three or four years, which in those years seemed like quite a while, and people started asking me for a one‑sentence definition of disability culture. And when they do that, and a number of people did that, I would go, ah, ah... well, let me see. I have' written a monograph about it. I can talk about it. But a one sentence definition? But I got asked about that enough that one very sunny day, a Saturday, if I remember correctly, in New Mexico, I sat down and attempted to write a one‑sentence definition of disability culture. But what happened instead was I wrote an article. And the article was eventually public issued in Mainstream Magazine called: We are who we are so who are we? In that article I included a one paragraph, not a one sentence, but a one paragraph definition of disability culture, my definition, and it's been republished in movie stars and other places, and I still use it. So here is the answer to how I am defining disability culture. People with disabilities have forged a group identity, share a common history of oppression and a common bond of resilience. We generate art, music, literature and other expressions of our lives, our culture, infused from our experience in disability. Most importantly, we are proud of ourselves as people with disabilities. We claim our disabilities with pride as part of our identity. We are who we are. We are people with disabilities.

So expanding on that, just talking about it a little bit, for me the purest definition of disability culture is when somebody with a disability is infusing their experiences or experiences that they're aware of from a disability perspective into whatever they perceive as culture that they generate. It's different from history ‑‑ disability history can certainly be a part of disculture and disability culture be part of disability history. We can talk about disability in certain ways millions of years ago because there have been skeletons that have been found that show people millions of years ago with disabilities and there have been some conclusions from that, for example, whether or not they're right, some of the conclusions that people with disabilities were taken care of, at least some people were, because the skeletons are old enough to demonstrate that. That's an example of history or an example of disability in history, but it's not disability culture. On the other hand, if we look in the last 20 years I think you can say that disability culture is a part of disability history and that disability history has played a role in the development of disability culture because it's only probably in the last 20 years that people have really been looking at people with disabilities in the sense of how we've impacted or ‑‑ how we've impacted history or how we're looked at within the boundaries of history. So did that answer those two questions or not?

>> MARY OLSON: I think that it does. People say that it's an awesome definition and that they like that we are who we are, no frills. Just us.

>> STEVEN BROWN: Thank you. So having said that, here's definition ‑‑ another definition. This one I read a number of years ago. It was published on the kids itself advocate site. It was published anonymously but a few years ago I actually met the author of the piece, which is ‑‑ I think just what is disability culture, I think that's what it's called, and the ‑‑ it's on the PowerPoint. So Naomi Ortiz is her name. She's in Tucson. She's actually right now working on a BLOG that she calls self-care for social justice and working on how people working for social justice can take care of themselves and so every once in a while she'll post usually ‑‑ not necessarily lengthy, but in depth, deep BLOG post, and some of you may know her. So, anyway, she wrote ‑‑ remember, she was writing it for kids as self‑advocates and writing it probably as person in her 20s at that point. Most people who are disabled do not have parents who are disabled. That means we are different than other cultures who learn their culture from their parents. We have to learn it from each other. Not all people agree, people with disabilities have a culture, but there are thousands of disability rights groups, books and materials that explains we do. So I really like that definition, too, because one of the things that people were saying in the early days was, you get your culture from your family, and a lot of people with disabilities, of course, didn't get their culture from their families because their families either didn't have disabilities or didn't know as much about disabilities. So this was to me a really good example of ‑‑ not the only example ‑‑ but a good example of we actually learn our culture from each other because we don't necessarily learn it from our families.

Anything else at this point? Any other questions or comments?

>> MARY OLSON: Not yet. Let me know ‑‑ you know, if you ever want to go to discussion, I can unmute folks, but until then, if folk have anything, go ahead and push \*6 or you can type it into the CART chat.

>> STEVEN BROWN: I put a PowerPoint slide in here called why does Steve call disability culture global [indiscernible] and there's a specific reason for that. That's why I put it that way. In 2007 I was asked to go to Norway and to participate in a Ph.D. seminar on ‑‑ in Bergan, Norway, and Ron Cory the person who asked me gave me the title of the talk that he wanted me to give, and it was "disability culture: Global and diverse?" I thought, okay, this is interesting. And so kind of one of my goals of this presentation was to take the question mark away and to make the statement disability culture: Global and diverse. I was ‑‑ it was actually coming at a good time for me because I was starting to want to explore what I could find about disability culture in non‑Anglo countries, and that was ‑‑ that was and is kind of interesting because I only speak English. So it's a bit limiting, but at the same time, and this was before a lot of Google translation was going on, at least before I was aware of it, and so it was kind of interesting to try and ferret out examples of disability culture happening in other countries, but it was. So, for example, one of the things I found in those days was a group in Israel called [indiscernible] which I'm probably not saying right. They are billed, maybe still billed as the world's only death‑blind theater troupe. They've actually become quite well‑known, and they are tourists come to their theater. So they're not so hard to find on the Internet these days. Another person/group I found was a group in Norway ‑‑ actually Sweden, but they became most popular in Norway, called boys on wheels, and they're a boy band, three men in wheelchairs, using wheelchairs, and the leader is a guy named ‑‑ I can see him but I just forgot his name ‑‑ anyway, he is a personal with cerebral palsy who is also a comedian, and so boys on wheels was doing these comedic songs and one of the songs was called making love in the handicapped toilet. You can find that on YouTube if you want in English. So I was finding examples like this, and there are other ones. And so I talked about some of those when I was Bergan and actually they told me about some when I was there, like there's a hip‑hop, I think, group in ‑‑ somewhere in Norway, I forget where, called "cripple crew," and so these things were going on, and actually Lillian and I have the wonderful pleasure of going to Germany and somewhere around ‑‑ somewhere in the '90s, actually, and we saw examples of different kinds of disability culture there at what they called a cripple festival. We wouldn't use that language, but basically it was a disability festival and there were a lot of things going on, including performers and one of the performers wars a group called "station 17" and you can find them on the Internet, although it's not so easy to find their information, but they're actually a fascinating group. They are musicians who are actually all living in an institution in Germany, and the institution that they were in is called "station 17," that's where the name comes from, and they brought some music therapists in and they were working with this group of people who they thought were really talented, and so they formed this group, and they've actually been ‑‑ they've made lots of records, they've toured all over the world. Many of them are no longer living in the institution. So there were all these kinds of things going on. So there were things happening globally. And then diversity, I'll just give you ‑‑ [no audio] ‑‑ a ‑‑ I don't know if spin‑off is quite the right word, but a spin‑off of hip‑hop and the founder of the hip‑hop nation and lives in this area, we became friends, always talks about Crip hop is more than music. So it is music and there are people all over the world, actually, who are doing Crip hop as music but it's also social justice, it's writing. Leroy himself is a poet who does spoken words. And, of course, because a lot of the hip‑hop movement itself came from minorities, came from Black culture and other nonwhite cultures, so it's Crip hop. So there is a diversity that's happening now that maybe I wasn't so aware of in the early '90s when I first began talking about this.

And then here's another ‑‑ looking at the PowerPoint, another example of the global reach of disability culture these days in the ‑‑ I guess in the early 2000s when I started talking about disability culture and trying to convey how popular it had become, I started doing searches on Google and Yahoo just to see, entering the phrase "disability culture" in quotes and entering the phrase to see how many returns I got. So I have this return from December 24th, 2013, where Google returned 8,520 hits and Yahoo returned 5,740 hits. And then I kept doing it but I didn't record it religiously until about 2008, and then I started partly because I was doing it for a class I used to guest lecture in, I started recording it about every six months. And so from 2008, which is five years later, there's 43,700 hits from Google and 280,000 hits from Yahoo. And then the one that totally blew me away was in September 2010 when I got 43,900 hits from Google and 41 million on Yahoo. When I first saw that 41 million I was like, oh, no, it's really gone down. I thought it was like 4100. But it was 41 million. I'm like, where in the heck are 41 million hits coming from? But it actually stayed that way through August 2011, at which point there were 50 mill,700,000 returns on Yahoo and 12,900,000 on Google. They been it's gone down since then. Obviously the algorithms have changed. The last time I looked there were 79,500 returns on Google and 92,400 on Yahoo. Don't ask me what they all are. I've never had time to go through them. So I don't know. But I know if you enter "disability culture" you'll get a lot of hits. So it's kind of all over the place.

>> MARY OLSON: Great. Steve, I just wanted to make a quick announcement. I apologize, folks. I'm just learning how to use this new system, but now when you push \*6 you should be able to ask questions and unmute yourself. So before, I guess that when folks were pushing it, it was saying that I said the lines muted. So just to let you know, people are interested in listening ‑‑ and listening. That was operation error. We have a bunch of calls lining up now.

>> STEVEN BROWN: Okay.

>> CALLER: Hello? Hello?

>> STEVEN BROWN: Yes.

>> CALLER: Yes. I was wondering ‑‑ yes, hello? I was wondering when you talk about disability culture, wouldn't the present day be more because we're so into integration and so into ‑‑ look I'm just a regular person and not associating ‑‑ you know, I am just a person with a disability, and the disability becomes secondary, in that person hood ‑‑ and that person hood becomes first. That disability culture by that nature is going to be waning?

>> STEVEN BROWN: Well, I can give you a one‑word answer to the second part which is, no. It's not waning. But I think there's ‑‑ there's a broader answer to it, and there's also a more complicated answer. So part of it is that the way you describe disability as secondary to personhood and the phrase that we've been using for years in this country, "people with disabilities," that's becoming kind of controversial. It's always been controversial in certain places. Like England, for example, in the U.K., has never liked "people with disability." That he use "disabled person" with a capital D. There are a number of people in this country who are looking at it that way now. So it's not quite as cut and dry as we might think. So that's one thing.

But the other thing is this is why I think it's really important, and this is what I've been saying now for a number of years, and that is that no matter who we are, Black, white, yellow, gay, straight, trans, Jewish, Catholic, Muslim, whatever, no matter who we are, I believe that it's important that we have pride in who we are. So that goes with having a disability, too. If we are somebody with a disability, I think it's important that we have pride in who we are as a person with a disability, but I also think it's a little bit broader than that, and that is that because it's a part of who we are, and because disability is a part of who we are, and because there's a disability culture I think it's really important to know about disability culture because we want to know about, in my view, we want to know about ourselves. If I am a historian ‑‑ as a historian, I'm interested in how history has developed. As a person with a disability, I'm also in how disability has been perceived currently and over time because of that historical interest. So I think it's really important that we know who we are, but I also think it's important for another reason, and that is if we don't know who we are, how can we talk to somebody else about who we are? How can we expect somebody to want to include somebody with a disability if they don't understand disability? And if we don't understand disability, how are we able to convey that to other people? So those are reasons I think that it's really important to understand who we are as a culture and I should now say that I don't think that there's a disability culture. I think there are lots of cultures and subcultures and I always thought that, but when I started doing this, I started with disability culture as an overall term because I had to start somewhere, but there are certainly lots of subsets within that culture.

Does that make sense?

>> CALLER: Uh‑huh.

>> MARY OLSON: Great. Looks like there's one more question, if that's okay, Steve.

>> STEVEN BROWN: That's good.

>> CALLER: Hi. This is not a question but a comment. I'm Terry. I just wanted to say that I appreciate you bringing it up out of hand because nobody ever does, and I appreciate your embracing the dark humor of the disability movement. It's nice to see.

>> STEVEN BROWN: Thank you. I missed something. What did you say people don't bring up?

>> CALLER: A lot of people do not appreciate the dark humor on the side of disability, such as like Callahan and like you're saying Crip hop and all of that. There are a lot ‑‑ yeah. And they get all weird about it. And I just really appreciate hearing this story. So thank you.

>> STEVEN BROWN: Yeah, thank you.

Other comments or questions?

>> MARY OLSON: One more comment, and it might have been answered, I'm not sure. Just wondering, RJ is wondering if you included deaf people and studied their rich culture in language and history?

>> STEVEN BROWN: Sorry, I miss add word there. Included deaf culture and deaf history in disability culture, is that the question ‑‑

>> MARY OLSON: Yes.

>> STEVEN BROWN: So ‑‑ well, again, the short answer is yes ‑‑ the short answer is yes, and certainly there is controversy over whether people who are deaf and are in deaf culture would want to be part of disability culture. So it may be a good point to say that I grew up, meaning grew up in the disability rights movement, in Oklahoma in the '80s, and a very cross‑disability movement. It was wonderful, actually. We had people from what at that time was most of the various disability groups. People who were blind, people who were deaf, people who used chairs and had other mobility impairments. There were a few people ‑‑ today they're what we call psychiatric disability. Nobody, I think, in those days included people with cognitive disabilities, and I don't remember anybody. Autism wasn't something that we really thought about in those days. But one thing that we did think about and did include was people with AIDS. That was developing in the '80s. But to be very specific about deafness, one of the PowerPoints is a slide that says "some examples of disability culture," and if you go down to the fourth entry, it's a guy named Sean Forbes who some of you may have heard of. He's a deaf hip‑hop artist and he's pretty popular. You can find lots of his videos and songs on YouTube. The one I put here is called "let's mambo," and I put this one because it's a fun one. I really like it. Marley Matlin is in it. I actually have used this in classes a lot because it's fun.

I did a BLOG earlier this year on my top 25 disability pride songs. It was actually somewhat hard to do. There's a lot of disability pride songs out these days, and I included a different song of Sean's called "watch these hands," when he said he really liked because he said most people don't use that one.

In Hawaii and other places, but the lead singer is in Hawaii, is a guy who goes by the name of Echevi, and he is part of a group called Beethoven's Nightmare and they bill themselves as the first or only deaf rock‑'n‑roll band, and you can find some of their music online, too. There's a song ‑‑ there's I've used a lot called "turn it up louder," and as a hearing person with pretty good hearing who has seen them in concert, I have to say they are really loud, as you would expect. And then, of course, I'm using music because it's something people sometimes don't think about, deaf folks, but also because I like music, and that's what came right to my mind. But there's certainly lots of other examples of deaf folks and deaf culture. So from my perspective, yes, it's a part of it.

On the slide there's a few other things you can find online. The first one is called "everybody,: And artifact history of disability in America," and that's at the Smithsonian. It's an online exhibition as well as an in‑person one that you can see in Washington. There's a really wonderful curator at the ‑‑ called the American history of ‑‑ American History Museum ‑‑ American Museum of History, something like that. Her name is Katherine Ott, and she's very aware of disability and likes to do lots of exhibitions about disability. So that's a very cool exhibition. And one of the things that you can see on it is a poem by a guy named Neil Marcus. He wrote this home in the '80s called "disabled country," and it's about his country is disabled. And so I'll let you find that if you're interested.

He also performed a play in the '80s and '90s. I describe it as a one‑person play that it takes three people to do because Neil has a speech disability, as well as using a wheelchair, and when he performs the play, he talks some, he had a voice interpreter, and a sign language interpreter, but the play was from his writings.

There's lots of disability pride parades around now. The one that's been around the longest as an annual parade is in Chicago, and so there's a link to ‑‑ a description ‑‑ I think it's their 2009 parade. There is a wonderful video from ability international U.S.A. called "loud, proud and passionate." It's women from all over the world who are talking about why they are loud, proud and passionate. One of the things they do in that video is hold up signs of various kinds of work that they do. There's a woman named [indiscernible] who has created a web series. She's an actress and she's created a web series called "my gift of life," and so there is a link to the first episode, and some of these you may have heard of. This person you probably haven't heard of, he's local to Hawaii, his name is Damon Boyser, and he is an extreme athlete. He is a quad who does things like fly out of planes, and he scaled down, what is it, ‑‑ fairly high ‑‑ around 20 story hotel in Waikiki. So he does those kind of things. So athletics is also something that would be included in culture. And I just included some of these examples to give you an idea of some of the things that were going on.

Then there's a comic book called "the silver scorpion." You can find that online, too. I have a URL for it. The "silver scorpion" was created by a group of youth about five years ago, I think. They met in Syria. It was mostly Syrian and American youth. And they worked together to collaborate and create this comic book character called the "silver scorpion" who loses his legs in a land mine accident and becomes a super hero. And actually it's also, I think, developed into a web series that I don't know if it's still going on. So it's had a lot of legs, and I keep hearing there's going to be a second issue, but I haven't seen that yet.

So one other comment, and then I think discussion would be great, which is kind of building on the "why I think disability culture is important," and maybe another addendum to that is to say that I don't think knowing who we are as somebody with a disability and as part of a disability culture separates us or has to separate us, maybe is a better way of putting it, from the more mainstream culture. I actually think in some ways it helps ups to fit in better because we have a better handle on who we are, and, and this is what I wanted to say, and this is a way that I think CILs can use disability culture, and that is that there are all these examples around from disability culture that demonstrate disability rights, history, talents and resources, and I said I was going to stop but I actually wanted to say one more thing that I just thought of, and I have to take a drink of water first. One of the things that's going on right now, which I'm sure you're all aware of, is the things going on around the 25th anniversary of the signing of the ADA, and so there's this wonderful Web site called the ADA legacy project, and the Web site is ADALegacy.com, and the goal is to preserve, celebrate and educate and, of course, because I'm sure most of you know this, the bus has been going around the country and is going around again, the road to freedom bus, and one of the ‑‑ there are a lot of people who are doing various things. I'm sure some of you are in relation to this celebration. One of the things going on in San Francisco is there's a woman named Alice Wong who has created what's called the disability/visibility project and she's working in conjunction with story score and people are telling their story, people all this area, but also all over country ‑‑ over parts of the country are getting a chance to get into the story booth and talk about their disability stories. She has a great website disabilityvisibilityproject.com and publishes lots of things. She's also very active on the Facebook and Twitter and so you can find her and the project there. And now I'm going to try and be quiet and ask Mary for you to open it for discussion.

>> MARY OLSON: Great. So, again, go ahead and push \*6 to unmute yourself, and as that's happening, I've got a couple in the chat room. One is: Do you think that disability culture as it stands today is fairly inclusive of family members and friends much those with ‑‑ friends of those with disabilities?

>> STEVEN BROWN: I'm thinking about that one. Well, I'm not sure that I can give an answer to that beyond my own experience and my own ‑‑ what I see, like on social media and other places. And I think the answer is, yes. But I also have to qualify that and say that I'm sure there are examples where that's not true ‑‑ well, actually I can think of one real big example where that's not true. So let me give a qualified yes to that. Let me also say that, some of you may be aware, we just ‑‑ we just had around the country this past weekend, in this area it was on Sunday, and I think a lot of places it was on Sunday, we just had what's called the disability day of mourning, and it started out in the autism community, but it's ‑‑ at least in ‑‑ here it's spread to other disabilities, and it's not a fun thing, but it's certainly part of our culture, and that is memorializing people who have been killed, people with disabilities, who have been killed by their family members, and in our case it also extended to police brutality. So there's certainly plenty of people who would have reason to give a "no" answer to that question. So maybe my answer is there isn't a "yes" or "no" response, but it's somewhere in between.

>> MARY OLSON: Okay. One more from the chat room. How do examples of disability culture differ from the idea of the "super Crip"?

>> STEVEN BROWN: Well, not everybody ‑‑ I think this is accurate ‑‑ not everybody who is involved in disability culture is a super Crip. That's the first thing. Secondly, part of the super Crip mythology, I think, doesn't come from Crips. Not all of it. There are certainly many of us for various reasons have [indiscernible] super Crip role and probably have fulfilled that, but there are a lot of people within disability culture who are most definitely not super Crips. They maybe, for example, creating something once a year. They may be ‑‑ they may be doing something quietly at a very local level. So I think there are people who are doing disability culture who are super Crips, but I don't think everybody is.

And one more thing about that, which is that I think talking about that, and talking about what a super Crip is, is actually part of this. It's a characteristic of talking about the culture.

>> MARY OLSON: Okay. So I'm going to try something. I think I'm going to unmute everybody to see if we can get some discussion going for the next couple minutes. Is that okay, Steve?

>> STEVEN BROWN: Works for me.

>> MARY OLSON: All right. Are folks ready? I'm going to unmute everybody. Hopefully we can have a little bit of discussion about what is disability culture.

>> STEVEN BROWN: I hear music. Mary, I don't know if you can hear me, but all I hear is music.

>> CALLER: It's music. [silence]

>> MARY OLSON: Sorry, folks. All right. Sorry about that, folks. I thought I would give it try, but that's why we got to this new system. So if you have a question, please push \*6 and let us know. While we're doing that, I want to say thank you again to Steve, and also I wanted to give a shout out to our folks behind the scenes, thank you, Bill and Skill for recording our conversation, and thanks for Larry for doing captioning for us. The CART that's been really great to have. And it looks like we might have one question lined up.

>> STEVEN BROWN: Okay.

>> MARY OLSON:, caller.

>> CALLER: Yes, hello. This is ‑‑ [overtalk] hello?

>> MARY OLSON: Go ahead. Delta.

>> CALLER: Okay. I was wondering if Steven had heard of something in the St. Louis area called the disability project that does theater, and are there others like it throughout the country? It's not just people with disabilities. It's an integrated format of performance. So you have people with disabilities and without. The director of the program is Joan Lipkin, who is a playwright.

>> STEVEN BROWN: So I know that name. I don't know the name of the theater project that you mentioned. It didn't ring a bell.

>> CALLER: Well, yeah, she is with the Uppity theater. And then she has an off chute of that where she integrates people with disability into theater called the disability project, and I didn't know if you were aware of that, or of others around the country.

>> STEVEN BROWN: Yeah, so to the first part of your question, no, I wasn't aware of that one. I am aware of some. I'm sure not aware of everything. One of the things that we've been doing on our Institute Web site is we have a page of links and resources, and I had things add things as I learn about them. There are some integrated as well as other theater troupes around country and the world, for that matter, and also bands. There's a lot of integrated dance troupes. So there's a group in Michigan called ‑‑ I think it's still around ‑‑ called the wild swan theater. In Colorado there's one called ‑‑ believe it's Colorado ‑‑ called Phamily. Though two came to mind right away. In the Bay Area there's ‑‑ I don't know if they still exist, but there was ‑‑ kind of a comedy troupe called rye Crips, which was all people with disabilities, I believe. Also in the Bay Area there is a fairly well‑known dance group called at Axis that dance troupe. So as I think bit, I think about more. But the basic response is, yes, there are lots of different kinds of groups around. There's also in the Bay Area a group called the disability comedians act, and there's been disability comedians around for a long time. When I lived here in the early '90s there were comedians who performed together, but I don't think they were formalized in an act as a few of them are now. But I also ‑‑ I want to really say this, that it's not just the U.S. It's all over the world that people are coming together in various kinds of cultural entities, dance, theater, music. So, yeah, it's definitely happening. And there's lights of writers with disabilities, lots of good writers with disability who are writing from a disability perspective. In fact, one of the things that I have been doing recently is trying to understand how to use social media better, so I for about a month, I guess, maybe not quite that long, was using Twitter to promote the hashtag promoting disability pride and talking about some of those different kind of groups I was aware of, and social media has become a real treasure to find a lot of these kinds of groups and people who are doing these things that are around.

>> MARY OLSON: Great. I think there's another line open. Is it Rick, maybe?

>> CALLER: No, I'm fine. It's okay. I do have a question. You talk about disability pride, but I'm just wondering in terms ‑‑ because there's pride with every disability group ‑‑ if that makes any sense. Like ‑‑ you know, Asperger's has them, embrace, I'm an Aspy, you know, people with HIV have embraced that, and they end up having their own social pride but it doesn't always encompass the whole disability huge group. Am I making any sense there? It seems like it's ‑‑ you know, I don't know, except for your example, like, oh, there's a disability parade, which I didn't even know about, and it's like I'm sure that embraces all disability. Just wondering ‑‑ so sit more predominant that it's just each group, and then there there's these overwhelming like the disability parade?

>> STEVEN BROWN: Where are you located, just out of curiosity?

>>

>> CALLER: I'm in Cincinnati, Ohio with the centers for accessible living.

>> STEVEN BROWN: So I think ‑‑ the reason I asked you where you were located is I think a lot of times the way those things develop are very localized. Like I said, I was really lucky in Oklahoma to be in a very cross‑disability, at that time, very cross‑disability group. The day of mourning that I was talking about that we just did here, there was a person with ‑‑ using a wheelchair who spoke. There was a person with Asperger's who spoke. There was somebody ‑‑ there were people with a lot of different ‑‑ actually there wasn't a huge number of people there. There was about 60 people, but they represented a lot of different disability groups, and I think, speaking of Ohio, there used to be a guy who came from Ohio named Rowan Sykes, some you of may remember him or have heard his name, and he was a very militant disability advocate, and he was ‑‑ for a while we were in Oklahoma at the same time, and he directed the center in Tulsa, and I remember him saying once to a group of deaf people who were saying at the Tulsa center at that time, that they didn't provide services folks who were deaf need. Rowan's response to that was "make me." He didn't mean that as I'm not going to do it, that you have to make me. He meant, we respond to the community, and if you show us that we need to be doing they, then we will do this. Now, there are maybe other CILs doing it without that community advocacy, but I think the point I'm trying to convey is people are interested in working with other groups, then it's probably easier to facilitate that happening.

>> CALLER: Gotcha.

>> MARY OLSON: Ironically, the question from the chat room is that in Cincinnati they're organizing their first disability pride March and they're wondering if you have ideas for resources for that, or if there's resources for chants that they could use.

>> STEVEN BROWN: I saw a couple ‑‑ saw a couple ‑‑ a BART train came by and I missed the segment where this person is.

>> MARY OLSON: Cincinnati is organizing their first disability pride March and wondering if there is a resource they could use to come up with chants.

>> STEVEN BROWN: Two Cincinnati comments. I would definitely get a hold of Chicago Access Living because they are the ones who have been doing it the longest on an annual basis. They were actually the first, but they're the first to have ‑‑ to be doing it on an annual basis.

>> CALLER: Did that person who asked the question ‑‑

>> MARY OLSON: Sorry, go ahead.

>> CALLER: Did that person that asked the question say ‑‑ that ‑‑ she's trying to start a disability pride parade in Cincinnati?

>> MARY OLSON: Yes.

>> CALLER: Really?

>> CALLER: Hello? Can you hear me?

>> CALLER: Yes, ma'am.

>> CALLER: This is the person who said ‑‑ said about the March in Cincinnati. My name is Kat Lyons and I work at the Center for Independent Living options which is our IL center in Cincinnati. So if anybody ‑‑

>> CALLER: I work at IL in northern Kentucky.

>> CALLER: Okay. If you would like to contact me, please feel free. It's 241‑2600, area code 513. And we have a committee working on the 25th anniversary event on Fountain Square and this disability pride March is going to be part of that. So we welcome all of you to participate.

>> CALLER: Thank you.

>> STEVEN BROWN: That's fascinating. A couple things, I don't know if you're familiar with the ADA legacy website but you might look on there for some information. And also a lady named Kathy Wolfe wrote an article a few years ago, actually I think it's in the BLOG, one of the BLOGs I put out this year, she wrote an article about disability pride parades. So I know of ones in Chicago, San Jose, Philadelphia. Philadelphia has gotten kind of a big one. And I know there are others around. Those are the three that come right to mind.

>> CALLER: Great. Thank you.

>> STEVEN BROWN: And I also had the opportunity to actually walk in one in Stockholm a few years ago. So they're actually happening all over the world.

>> MARY OLSON: Great. Looks like we might have another caller. Yes, I think ‑‑ ‑‑ Claudia, did you have a question?

>> CALLER: Well, yeah, I would like to hear Steve recite ‑‑ tell your story poem. I can read it just like anybody else can, but I just feel it's very powerful and would like to hear Steve recite it.

>> STEVEN BROWN: If there's time I would be happy to do that.

>> MARY OLSON: You know, I think ‑‑ were there any more callers that didn't get a chance to ask their question yet?

>> CALLER: Hi, can you guys hear me?

>> MARY OLSON: Yes.

>> CALLER: Oh, yes, I had ‑‑ I hate to beat a dead horse here, but I had two things I wanted to point out about your definition for disability culture, and I just ‑‑ I don't know if I'm the only one, and I speak for myself only, but I feel like pride is probably the wrong word in all instances. To give you an example, you'll never hear anyone say I'm proud of my son or daughter for being disabled. You may be proud of what they've accomplished after they become disabled, but even that sort of has a stigma that lowers the bar for people with disabilities. And I also think on the first guy that commented on this, where he said, you know, you're identifying us as people with disabilities instead of individuals who happen to have disabilities, and I just wanted to bring that up and see if anyone else agrees with me on both the wording for pride and the definition of a person with a disability.

>> CALLER: This is Mike Levenson. I'm in San Francisco. I think the word pride is supposed to refer to the person, not to the disability. In other words, the person is proud of who they are, not proud of their disability. Regardless of whether you're gay or straight, or disabled, or African American, or whatever the pride March is about, it's that you're proud of yourself and what you've become and what you represent, regardless of what other attributes you have.

>> CALLER: And this is Terry in Texas, and I just wanted to add a remark to that. It's not about how others see you; it is definitely how you walk upon this world with your disability, being proud.

>> CALLER: Again, I mean, I think you can be proud, but it seems odd to me ‑‑ I think it's the same mistake that the gay pride parade makes. I understand that they're proud of who they are, but it seems like the wording could be better. It seems like there has to be a better way to say it, a clearer way. But I could be alone. [barking dog]

>> STEVEN BROWN: I wasn't saying anything. You've heard what I have to say.

>> CALLER: This is Mike again. I was muted. Let me say it a different way. In other words, if you are proud of yourself, it's not because you're proud of being disabled or overcoming a disability; it's saying that having a disability does not eliminate or reduce your personal self‑esteem, you're still out there in the job market, or you're out there volunteering to help other people, or you're out there, you know, performing well in sports, or whatever it is you're doing, you know. You're another person in the community of people and not a person restricted to your group of people with disabilities or your race or your sexual orientation. You're saying I'm part of the whole world. I'm just a person that has this particular characteristic, but it doesn't stop mean from being a full participant in the rest of the world. That's the pride that it represents.

>> I understand that, but like for wording, if you call something a disability pride parade, then it infers that we're proud of our disability.

>> CALLER: I see what you're saying.

>> CALLER: I just feel like the wording could be different or better. Because people see that, and it just ‑‑

>>

>> CALLER: What would you change to get the point across to people with disabilities are trying to display the fact that they are ‑‑ they're everyday members of society like everybody else? How would you reword that phrase so it's not three sentences long?

>> Yeah, therein lies the problem.

>> CALLER: Right.

>> CALLER: Yeah.

>> CALLER: This is Lindsay. Can you guys hear me?

>> STEVEN BROWN: Yes.

>> CALLER: I'm from North Dakota and I have a disability and I'm proud of it because it's made me the person that I am today. Without my disability, I would not be as strong as I am and I would not have met the people that I have met, but it is because of my disability that I am as strong as I am, and I have met the people that I have met, and it has made me the person that I am today, and I'm able to work with my disability.

>> CALLER: Go Lindsay!

>> MARY OLSON: Great. I feel like the conversation always livens up right at the end. [chuckling] I want to be respectful of your time, Steve. Do you have time for maybe one more question or ‑‑

>> STEVEN BROWN: I do. And I appreciate ‑‑

>> MARY OLSON: Are there any more folks who didn't have a chance yet to speak their question?

Maybe ‑‑ would you mind maybe taking us out with a part of your poem?

>> STEVEN BROWN: I don't mind. So I'll read the first story. There's three stories in here. They're all true. And the first one ‑‑ well, anyway. I don't want to say any more about it.

"Tell your story. Tell your story. It may bump from the page like words of Braille to the tales of blazing glory. It may glisten in the sunshine like the holy grail. So tell me a tale. Even if it's gory. I'm yearning to hear you tell your story. Have you heard about the man in the motorized chair, found the ramp at the movie theater? Did he despair? No, just let them dudes lift him in there. Came back a few days later, after something greater, brought with him a crew, people in chairs just grew and grew. Said they knew they'd be part of the view. No problem getting in. Just lift and push and move those in. The chairs, the weighed aplenty. The ushers stress and strained and got somewhat benty. Seeing the movie was not the goal. Changing the stage was the whole. They paid for getting in, but that theater knew its sin. People in chairs feel their own personal stamp on that theater's new shimmering wheelchair ramp."

So that's one.

>> MARY OLSON: Thank you so much.

>> CALLER: Thank you, Steve.

>> MARY OLSON: I appreciate you joining us today. I know the folks on the line do as well. And, again, if you want to get a copy of the transcripts or the audio recording today you can go to our Web site at www.april‑rural.org. And I think that that might be a wrap. Do you have any last thoughts, Steve?

>> STEVEN BROWN: I just wanted to thank everybody, including the behind the scenes people that you thanked earlier and to say the last slide on the PowerPoint on the PowerPoint has my email address, which is disculture@gmail.com.

>> MARY OLSON: Great. Thank you again. And for folks, if you would like to go to our website there is an evaluation link on the homepage along with the audio transcript. We appreciate any feedback you have to give us. We're always trying to make things better for the future. So thanks again.