

ALRA-Advocates--Day-2023

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SPEAKERS

Emily Martin, Matt Greer



Matt Greer 00:09

Want to hang out with other labor relations folks in Vancouver BC? Consider attending the Association of Labor Relations Agencies conference on July 17.



Matt Greer 00:20

If you haven't heard of it before, ALRA is an organization of impartial government agencies in the United States and Canada that are responsible for administering labor management relations laws and services. Although most of the conference is geared towards labor agency staff, Advocates' Day on July 17, is open to all with a wide ranging agenda of topics. On this episode of the PERColator Podcast, Emily and Matt, talk about some of the highlights from the advocates day agenda. And Emily puts out a book club challenge. Check out the show notes for links and details. Enjoy the episode.



Emily Martin 01:04

Hey, Matt, how you doing?



Matt Greer 01:06

I'm good. Emily, how are you?



Emily Martin 01:07

I'm good. I'm good. It's the beginning of summer. And I'm starting to think about my summer plans. So there's going to be a conference in Vancouver, BC this year, are you going to go?

M

Matt Greer 01:19

I am. I'm looking forward to it. The Association of Labor Relations Agencies conference in Vancouver. It's yeah, I'm very much looking forward to it.

E

Emily Martin 01:28

Yeah, it's sort of like the, the agencies like ours, both at the state level and the federal level who were active and the agencies in Canada. And every once in a while an agency from somewhere else might show up, but it's usually US and Canada. And the conference tends to go to different coasts, or or go to the middle and have a conference in the Midwest. So this year, it's going to be in Vancouver. So that's super easy and convenient for me and you because we can drive.

M

Matt Greer 01:58

Right! Or take a train. Some of our colleagues are taking trains up there even.

E

Emily Martin 02:02

So the whole conference itself is only for people who are employed by agencies like us, and you're like a delegate of the agency. So not everybody can sign up for that. But there's one day of the conference called Advocates' Day where everybody who wants to come is welcome, and there's a really special agenda. Did you check out the agenda for advocates Day this year?

M

Matt Greer 02:21

I did. And just so folks know Advocates' day is July 17. It's a Monday. So just to put that out there and it is coming up pretty quick, which is why we want to get this episode out there in case people want to take advantage of that. But I did take a look at the agenda. It's definitely got some interesting things on there. I guess I'll put a plug out for our boss Mike Sellars who is Executive Director of PERC is actually the current president of ALRA. So it's his year is kind of his conference to kind of shine. So looking forward to supporting him up there in Vancouver. So I wanted to put that out there. And he'll be welcoming everybody. But I'm really excited about, I know we had an episode of the PERColator podcast a while ago where Jennifer Abruzzo and Mike Sellars had a conversation. Jennifer Abruzzo is the General Counsel of the National Labor Relations Board. And people really enjoyed that episode. And she's going to be one of the speakers at Advocates' Day. So if you really enjoyed that episode, she's going to be talking on a panel about shifts in organizing. So that one kind of stood out to me that one that might be of interest to our listeners. So looking forward to that. What about you? Did you see anything else on the agenda that looks interesting?

E

Emily Martin 03:28

Well, I noticed in the afternoon, there's a session called Turbulence or Smooth Sailing, and it's

about the transportation industry. And I bet you everybody can remember back in December, we almost had a massive railroad strike. And then come Christmas time, there was airline stuff in the news. And it's been a big year when it comes to transportation. And I feel like transportation labor relations is not my area of expertise. It has its own statute. It has its own processes. It's sort of like private, regular private sector. And there's some similarities to public sector. But it's also really different in a lot of ways. So I think learning more about that would be super interesting, and getting a better understanding of what happened. And I think, I think when it comes to transportation, there's some really interesting issues when it comes to staffing and the employers interest in having the right amount of employees but not too many employees and the employees interest of having enough room in the schedule for being able to take time off if they're sick or something like that. So I think there's some really interesting balances going on, in terms of those issues, and how that how that's manifested over time. And yeah, I think I think that will be really fun to think about that and then think about what does this mean to the rest of us in other sectors?

M

Matt Greer 04:52

Yeah, the lessons can be learned for other areas, definitely from from a hot area. They've been dealing with some tough issues. So that should be really interesting.

E

Emily Martin 05:01

Yeah, I want to say thank you to Barry Simon's he's an arbitrator that I know from the ABA section of Labor and Employment Law Committee on State and Local Bargaining and Employment, I guess I don't know. It's it's a long title. Anyway, Barry was able to give an amazing presentation at the midwinter this year. And he summed up the story of what happened with the almost strike at eight minutes, right on the dot. And I really thank him for bringing his expertise. He's an arbitrator that works in the public sector. He's based out of Chicago, and he also works in the history of the railroad industry and works as a railroad arbitrator. So blending those two together, it was a great way to learn from somebody who, who's had so much experience in that field. But the other thing I was thinking about for the railroad thing is that when we went to Tacoma, and we did the labor history tour, I learned that this is a big anniversary year for Tacoma for the railroad, the the 150th year of the railroad coming to Tacoma or being named as a terminus, I'm not sure. But big railroad here in the Tacoma Historical Society has been doing lots of things about railroads, and some of that includes railroad workers, and they recommended this book to me called *Railroaded: The Transcontinentals and the Making of Modern America* by Richard White, and I tried to read it. And I gotta confess that I kind of got into this like, deep chapter about this rich man and this rich man and financial dealings, and it was like way in detail. So I did not read every word. But I feel like if I could get either gloss over that chapter, there could be some really interesting discussion about how this industry has been part of American history. And I find I actually read things if I have a friend and a deadline to get it done. So I want to challenge you, Matt. You don't have to read every word. But I want you to like, spend a little time with this book I met at Chris and Lloyd, you're not on this podcast. But you are in the challenge as well. And Marjorie from Massachusetts. Let's book club this, I think it would be a fun. It's not a book necessarily right on labor relations. But it's about the industry and the history of the industry and how that works in and especially with, like, our West Coast connection about how Seattle and Tacoma became Seattle and Tacoma, I think that could be especially interesting for us. So I'm gonna

put that as a challenge for our reception small talk, maybe I'll wear a little railroad button or something like that. So if anybody who comes to the conference, wants to geek out about the history of railroads with me, come find me. And we will try to explain it to each other because so far, I think there's a lot there. But I haven't really been able to dig that far into it yet.

M

Matt Greer 07:54

So when you mentioned the reception of the conference Advocates' Day, if you come to Advocates' Day on July 17, after the program, there is a reception, it's usually a pretty good reception. I don't know any details about this year, but I've been to previous years, it's actually been a really fun reception. They sometimes have interesting locations. And so I'm not sure what's going to happen this year. But definitely opportunities to mingle with other folks from Canada and the US and labor relations world and kind of a fun little opportunity there.

E

Emily Martin 08:22

And the hotel is right there on the water, downtown Vancouver. So like, doesn't matter where we go, because like the waterfront is right there where the conference is going to be. So it's, we know we're going to be somewhere interesting no matter what, oh, one more thing. If anyone's coming in early for advocates day, on Sunday, or coming to the conference, I found out that the Richmond Night Market is open. It's open Friday and Saturday, but also Sunday nights. And if anybody is interested in like, street food from Asia, it is an amazing, amazing fun place to go and has lots of stands, you have to like pay to get in. I think I figured out if we get that like buy the five packs, it could be cheaper. So it might make sense to kind of do a little bit of coordination. So we don't have to wait in line as much. But if anybody's interested in going to the night market Sunday, and I think I'm going to head there, it's there's the public transportation gets us right there. And it can be lots of fun. And I actually feel like tying it all together like the night market and the really represents a lot of immigration to North America. And when you think about the railroads and who built the railroads and all of that, I think it kind of ties in really nicely to understanding both our past and our present and our future. So I think it could be great.

M

Matt Greer 09:37

I'll be there. I think that sounds like fun. The Richmond right? Richmond Night Market, we'll put links down to everything we are talking about into the show notes. So the agenda and the registration information for ALRA, the night market link, I think there is a link for that and then there's also a report were you willing to share that report that came from the ABA?


E


Emily Martin 09:54

I think we can find it and put a link out there. Oh, Yeah. The night market said is not healthy. I'm not saying it's healthy, and I'm not saying the shopping is high end, it's just fun and light.

M


Matt Greer 10:04

 Matt Greer 10:04
But it's a fun summer outing.


 Emily Martin 10:06
It's like carnival food, you know, but, but a lot of different flavors that you don't see every day.


 Matt Greer 10:12
Well, great. I'm looking forward to it, Emily! Seeing you there as well as some of our other colleagues from around the US and Canada.

 Emily Martin 10:21
And I wonder, I wonder if anyone's gonna read the book?

 Matt Greer 10:25
You noticed I haven't committed to it. And those of you who listen to the podcast know that our last book club, I'd failed to read a book, so I feel a little pressure now.

 Emily Martin 10:34
Maybe you'll read a Wikipedia page.

 Matt Greer 10:38
It actually does sound good, so I might read it.

 Emily Martin 10:40
Thanks! Bye bye.