

AT Banter Episode 311 - Alliance for Equality for Blind Cana...

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SPEAKERS

Rob Mineault, Marcia Yale, Ryan Fleury

R Rob Mineault 00:18
Hey and welcome to another episode of AT Banter

R Ryan Fleury 00:24
With sniffles

R Rob Mineault 00:26
Shut up. Just banter, banter.

R Ryan Fleury 00:31
Banter, banter.

R Rob Mineault 00:33
Ah. Hey, my name is Rob Mineault, aka Sneezy McSniffles. Joining me today is Mr. Ryan Fleury.

R Ryan Fleury 00:47
Hello everyone. I'm feeling fine.



R

Rob Mineault 00:50

Yeah, I know. Yeah. You made that painfully obvious to me during our conversation so far. Hey, how are you?

R

Ryan Fleury 01:01

I'm doing great. Actually.

R

Rob Mineault 01:02

I know actually, I know we already covered that. Well, so for our, our dedicated listeners, you may realize that I don't sound quite myself this week. Yeah, I've come down with that cold that everyone's talking about out there. I don't know how - I really need to take a page out of your book and just not leave my house ever.

R

Ryan Fleury 01:25

I keep telling you outside's bad. There's danger out there.

R

Rob Mineault 01:31

Yeah, I mean, honestly, I don't even leave my house that much. I don't even know where I caught this thing. But yeah, I mean, I must have been at the grocery store or something. I don't know. Maybe it was at the Blind Beginnings office or something. Anyways, whatever. But my dedication to the show knows no bounds. I'm here even though I feel lousy. And yeah.

R

Ryan Fleury 02:01

The show must go on.

R

Rob Mineault 02:02

Wait, I'm just gonna pause to cough.

R

Ryan Fleury 02:09

Typically, our show is an hour, this one may be longer.

R

Rob Mineault 02:15

No, I'm good. I think I'm good now. Hey, well, so listen, before I collapse into a puddle of medicated goo. Why don't you tell everybody at home what the book we're doing today?

medicated goo. why don't you tell everybody at home what the heck we're doing today?

R Ryan Fleury 02:30

Sure. So today joining us, we have Marcia Yale, who is the president of the Alliance for Equality of Blind Canadians joining us to talk about the organization and an event happening on December 3. Welcome. Marcia.

M Marcia Yale 02:45

Oh, thank you.

R Ryan Fleury 02:48

Glad you could join us.

M Marcia Yale 02:49

Oh, yes. It sounds like it's going to be a very laughter filled episode.

R Ryan Fleury 02:55

We try.

R Rob Mineault 02:57

If nothing else, a lot of sniffing. And coughing perhaps. Among other things.

R Ryan Fleury 03:06

So Marcy, why don't you start by telling our audience a little bit about yourself and how you became involved with AEBC?

M Marcia Yale 03:15

Well, let's see a little bit about myself. I live in Huntsville, Ontario, right now. I have a guide dog. I was born and raised and spent most of my life in Toronto. I've been blind all my life, which means I've been an advocate all my life, because I really think that that I think they come together. I don't think you can be blind and not be an advocate unless you're not independent at all, because there's always something. Back in 2001, a friend of mine, who unfortunately, passed away this year, John Ray, talked me into joining what was then called the National Federation of the Blind Advocates for Equality or NFBAE. And he talked me into going

to the Toronto Chapter meeting. And I think, I think at that same Chapter meeting, I got elected Secretary. And then he twisted my arm six months later, or not even six months later, in May of 2002. To come on, join the National Board. So I did. I got elected to the National Board as a director and then due to circumstances I ended up as Secretary. So I was Secretary for Toronto and National for six years. That was fun. And, again, I'm an advocate. So it was sort of be in the middle in the thick of things,

R

Ryan Fleury 05:20

the NFB AE, that was the National Federation of the Blind out of the US, right?

M

Marcia Yale 05:26

NFB AE was an offshoot. So the, the two founders of the organization in Canada wanted it to be wanted it to have the same philosophy as the NFB in the States. And so they called the National Federation of Blind Advocates for Equality. And for the first five or six years the conferences actually happened in the States as part of the NFB conferences. So people were actually funded to go to the States for a conference. That was before my time, right. By 1998, they were holding their conferences in Canada. And one was in Vancouver, one was in Victoria. And I never remember which one happened first, and which one caught it was where the schism happened, where a group of the original people or the people that were members at that point, a group of them decided that they wanted to make a Canadian version of an advocacy organization, they didn't want to be an offshoot of an American organization. And so they split off. And I don't know how they managed it, but they took the name with them. So the new organization, the other half, had to name themselves again, and they call themselves the Canadian Federation of the Blind or CFB. And they are still around. They have a chapter in BC, and then they have a chapter in Ontario, and they may have others, but those are the two that I know of. And in 2004, we went through the horrendous task of finding a new name. So we spent four hours going back and forth. It was awful, going back and forth between all of these names, and people would yell out new names. And finally, unfortunately, in my opinion, the Toronto chapter president at the time yelled out, what about the Alliance for Equality of Blind Canadians? And there was silence and here we are. And I think it was honestly everybody was frustrated by that point that yeah, it has everything we want. It may not be perfect, but we'll take it.

R

Ryan Fleury 08:16

Perfection is hard to find. We've fight that every week with our podcast AT Banter.

R

Rob Mineault 08:22

Yeah, we've been we've been trying to rename our podcast for five years now. And we've gone nowhere.

M

Marcia Yale 08:29

But I actually think it's kind of neat.

R

Rob Mineault 08:34

Thank you.

M

Marcia Yale 08:37

So that's AEBC. And I mean, amazingly enough, this is our 30th year, it started in 1992. And it's 2022. And it's wow, we're still here. We're still causing trouble. Still, yeah, we're still fighting for things that we shouldn't have to fight for anymore. But we have to fight for them.

R

Ryan Fleury 09:06

And being a national organization, we have Chapters across the country as well. Can you talk a little bit about the Chapters and the work they do?

M

Marcia Yale 09:13

Sure. The Chapters mainly deal well, not mainly, but they mostly deal with advocacy issues at the local level. So we have right now we have three chapters and one quote unquote affiliate. BC has the affiliate and it basically amalgamated in the end about six or seven chapters, because at one time at one time, there were quite a few chapters in BC. I think at one point, I could name them all. But I'm not going to try. But Victoria, Vancouver and Kelowna survived and so they finally decided that there were enough people outside of Vancouver and Kelowna, that could help do some of the work. And they what was happening was that usually whoever was on the Vancouver or Kelowna executives were also on the BC affiliate executives because they were the people who were doing the work, right? So they were doing twice the work because they would do it at one level and then go do the same kind of thing at the other level. So last year, they decided that that was that enough was enough. And the Kelowna chapter had dwindled. Vancouver still had quite a few members, but Kelowna was really getting down and so they decided to amalgamate put all the the members as part of the BC affiliate, which they already were, that they just basically got rid of a lot of a layer there. So they've done things with TransLink for Vancouver. They've helped with some things going on in Victoria with human rights complaints. They've talked to the BC health ministry, they've talked to housing, and we had a we had a meeting with the housing minister just recently, and he's now your premier, David Eby. Yeah, yeah, so we actually met with him. Then we've got one in Toronto, and they've done their main thing seems to be employment. They've done a lot of employment training work. They're doing another COVID-19 thing, with CILT, which is the Center for Independent Living Toronto. So they've done a bunch of vaccination town halls as well. Halifax has not done much lately, but they've been known to do some fundraising. And it's another small chapte Ottawa Gatineau. I think their claim to fame is E-Scooters. They've been going up against the city of Ottawa for the last couple of years. And apparently, the city has now produced its report for the for the end of of pilot number three. So we'll see what happens there. But they're they're very active, trying to get Ottawa to not allow e scooters to continue.

R

Ryan Fleury 12:58

That's interesting how different regions of the country have different priorities. You know, you're talking about Ottawa was talking about E-Scooters and fighting that battle. We don't really hear about E-Scooters out here, this I'm just not watching the right news channels. You know, or Toronto or Halifax, for that matter. So, like I said, it's interesting how we have different topics of interest in the different regions of Canada.

R

Rob Mineault 13:22

That's interesting to me too, because I'm just looking at all the different advocacy issues that you guys are tackling. And they they're, it's huge. You know, it's everything from you know, accessible elections to guide dog awareness to you know, things like hybrid cars and what Ryan was talking about the the E scooters, poverty reduction, media. My question is, the Chapters, when they take on some of these different advocacy issues, are they working on on a local level for those? Or are they also working on sort of a national level as well?

M

Marcia Yale 14:00

Depends what it is. Toronto helped with the Scooters issue there. They actually got the council to ban them. So Toronto Chapter did a little bit of work with E-Scooters as well. So it's not just Toronto, not just Ottawa, but then we've sent letters but some, sometimes these local issues can become national. The E-Scooter issue has sort of become national. I mean, I've been I've sent letters to Brampton to Mississauga to Hamilton to and I know there's another one. I just can't remember what it is. But so sometimes they they grow, they start local. And then we realize that oh, the same thing is happening elsewhere. And so you just take what they started with, and just, you know, move it to wherever else it's needed.

R

Ryan Fleury 15:07

Yeah, it's like elections, you know, you can take elections locally in BC and accessible voting and, you know, then you can take it federally as well. And we're still don't have accessible elections or independent voting. You know, so that's, you know, a national, but also a regional issue that we're tackling as well.

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Marcia Yale 15:25

Well, the problem with elections is that it's three tiered, you've got the municipal elections, which, which some of them can be really accessible. And Huntsville and a few other cities around here used Internet and telephone voting, right? So even if you were technologically a lot, right, you could still vote because you could use the phone. Now the lowest common denominator, we had it. And then you get provincial elections where they won't do that. But they'll do you know, the voting machines, the electronic voting machines. Yeah. And if the person knows what they're doing, right, yeah, that's always the point. And then you've got the federal elections where they don't like any of that stuff.

R Ryan Fleury 16:28

Well, that's why, you know, I, we kind of, sorta some of us actually have high hopes for the Accessible Canada Act, and even the Provincial Acts that are being worked on as well. Hopefully, some of these items will be addressed. Maybe we can hope, right, we can be part of part of that process.

M Marcia Yale 16:46

We can hope but don't don't set your expectations too high.

R Rob Mineault 16:51

Right. And how important is that with some of these advocacy issues? Is it important, in some ways to just make these issues more visible to the to the general public, or to the federal government in general, like just making noise about these some of these issues? Is, that sort of half the exercise? Is that kind of right?

M Marcia Yale 17:16

Oh, yeah, yeah, you got to you got to keep them front and center. And it's really easy for someone to forget them pull thing. It's like everything else that would have stayed out of mind right now?

R Rob Mineault 17:31

Well, I think that for especially for the general public, and the media, some of these things don't just don't even come to mind, like in the E-Scooters. And I think hybrid cars are a perfect example of that. Everyone just thinks that they're super cool. And they're neat. And they don't think about the issue about them being so quiet and being driven on sidewalks and stuff. It just it doesn't occur to them. And so that's why you know, organizations like yours that's that's making noise about these things, I think really helps bring those issues to the forefront and makes people kind of think twice.

M Marcia Yale 18:05

We try.

R Ryan Fleury 18:06

We've talked about that on the show in the past, too, right? How many people on a daily basis, use curb cuts or ramps, right? They don't even think about why those were implemented in the first place. They just use them.

first place. They just use them.

M Marcia Yale 18:22

And they sure bitch if they aren't there. Yeah. A shopping cart full of stuff. suitcase. And all of a sudden, there's a drop, or a step into play. Oh, yeah.

R Ryan Fleury 18:41

That didn't just happen out of the kindness of people's hearts.

R Rob Mineault 18:45

Well, I think that the other interesting thing about the organization that I think is really important is the fact that it's, it's driven. And it's run by people in the community, which a lot of times in the past historically, a lot of advocacy organizations are run by able bodied people who are who don't have, you know, experience on the ground of some of the issues. And they they miss them where they don't, you know, they don't that doesn't even get on their onto their radar.

M Marcia Yale 19:18

And yeah, you know, what, those are the ones that get government funding the little the little organizations like ours, don't. Which is really, you know, if you look at it interesting. The big service organizations, who may be charities, get government funding and get, get the general public think that they're the best thing since sliced bread, right? And here we are, we are volunteers. And, boy, it would be nice to get paid for all the work that we do. That just doesn't happen.

R Rob Mineault 19:58

Well, and that's got to be really frustrating. thing for for both the organization and for the community because here you have something that's community driven, that, you know, the list of of, of issues that you guys are sort of fighting for is, is lengthy. And they're all incredibly important yet. Yet some of these bigger organizations that that are sort of run by -- not that they're not doing good work. I'm sure they are. But you know, at the same time, I think that, that we need to put funding towards, you know, sort of grassroots community driven organizations like AEBC.

R Ryan Fleury 20:36

Well, and I do want to step in real quick and say, you know, the organization does work in cooperation with other blindness organizations in Canada. You know, we're not all necessarily agreeing all the time on certain things. But we are at the table with each other, probably more

often than not, and having a cohesive front. You know, and we've talked about that on the show before, you know, the reason nothing gets done is because nobody can agree on anything. You know, that's kind of I say, that kind of tongue in cheek, but, you know, AEBC is at the table with CNIB, with CCB, with Fighting Blindness, maybe or whoever the other organizations are, on specific topics. We're not just tackling all of these necessarily on our own all the time.

M

Marcia Yale 21:24

No, I believe in collaboration, more heads are better than one.

R

Rob Mineault 21:29

Well, so can you can you talk to us about some of the sort of the larger issues that you guys are tackling currently, are there any you sort of really ones that leap to mind in terms of ones that are really important for the organization to be to be hitting, especially these days, when the Accessible Canada Act is sort of grinding its gears? You know, what sort of stands out to you?

M

Marcia Yale 21:54

Well, we've been talking about medical devices. So there's, there's a real push to get medical devices like diabetes, like the glucometers, and the insulin pump, right, get those accessible. I mean, look at the COVID-19 home home tests that weren't accessible, and probably still aren't. Things like that should not be allowed to happen. There should be something in the you know, the Health Canada should not be allowing inaccessible devices to come into Canada there. And we actually got connected with the the Director General of the Medical Devices Division of Health Canada last year. And we were able to talk to him and I think we gave him some definite food for thought because his comment was, well, the the Canada Health Act, does not talk about accessibility, it only talks about safety and efficacy. So they look at devices and are they safe. And do they actually do what they're supposed to do? Okay, great. Well let them in. And I said, Well, what if the device that you're talking about, if it doesn't talk, then how is it safe for us? Yeah. And and I think he had an aha moment. And sort of, yeah, that makes sense. We're talking about safety. If you can't use the device properly, then it's not safe. Because I am full there are no there are no accessible insulin pumps. So someone who has and ironically or not, diabetes is one of the major causes of blindness. The fact that a higher percent plenty of people in the community need accessible insulin pumps and the fact that they haven't really thought in 2022 is amazing to me. Yeah. So there are things that are starting to happen. We also are trying to get ScriptTalk more more spread out over the country and Shoppers has it. That's the the talking medical prescription labels for anybody that doesn't know what that is. And now there's an iPhone app for that. So you don't even need a separate reader. The pharmacy just needs the ability to record the information onto the label. And then your even your iPhone can read it, which is great. But there are very few really pharmacies across Canada that provide it. So again, there's the safety issue, if you've got 12 bottles of medication, and you're supposed to take one one time, one three times a day one you can't take with food, one you can't take, you make sure that you don't eat grapefruit, and you're supposed to remember all of this stuff. Because you don't have access immediately to the label on the bottle that can

become really unsafe. We're starting to work on that a bit more. And I think that one will be a collaboration effort, because Canadian Council of the Blind has also started to work on it. So I think we were we were working on at the same thing. So we might as well work together. So I'm looking forward to seeing where that's gonna go. We've done a little bit of, of poking the bear in terms of housing. And we've gotten a few, like I said, before, we got to meet with the BC Minister of Housing, which was quite the coup. And I'm trying to think what else we've been up to lately. Oh, there seems to be a lot.

R

Ryan Fleury 26:26

Yeah, there's always accessible transportation.

R

Rob Mineault 26:29

And yeah, well, I mean, I think that that that really speaks volumes about about just why organizations like yours is are needed is because there are so many issues. And, and a lot of them are, I'll call them smaller, not that they're not important, but I just been on a sort of on a grand global scale of accessibility, and that that one organization just wouldn't be able to tackle on all on its own. And so I think that, you know, organizations like yours that can go to an advocate for these smaller issues that don't aren't going to take, you know, super complicated fixes. And the ScriptTalk is a perfect example of that, I think. It's not rocket science, the technology is all in place, all it really needs to do is just for pharmacies to implement these things. So and it doesn't need necessarily federal regulation and and, you know, acts of legislation to make it happen. So I think that the, the, you know, the more organizations that we can have on the ground fighting for these little little victories, in the long run, you can make a huge impact over time.

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Marcia Yale 27:46

The other thing is that because we are a small organization, and we don't have any ties, really to anything that would prevent us from taking a stand, we can take stands on issues that are maybe contrary to other organizations, because our community wants it that way. So we've been, we've been talking about the new, the proposed Canada Disability Benefit Act, good old Bill C 22. And Bill C 22, if it passes, the way it is now will only affect people between the ages of 18 and 64. Which means that anyone outside of those age groups, even if they have a disability, they won't be getting a benefit from this Act. And we don't believe that that's right.

R

Ryan Fleury 28:49

That's not right. My disability doesn't end when I turned 65.

M

Marcia Yale 28:57

Yeah, it doesn't start at 18. That's right. Yeah. I mean, you've got people who who have disabilities, who acquired disabilities later in life, but you have people who have had disabilities all their life. Yeah, it's not a magic age where all of a sudden your disability goes. Wow, that

all their life. Yeah, it's not a magic age where all of a sudden your disability goes. wow, that just doesn't happen. So we're fighting that. And so far, so far, I don't think it's, it's helping in any way. But, you know, we can only try. And then we can at least say that we did that we didn't just sit back and let things happen. We try to make a difference. And that's that's all always been my my view is that we need to try and make a difference.

R

Rob Mineault 29:52

So what are some of the hurdles, I guess being a grassroots organization that is strictly made made up of volunteers, I mean, I can't even imagine this is probably a completely loaded question, but I'm just curious to hear your take on it. What what are some of the day to day organizational challenges that you guys come up against?

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Marcia Yale 30:15

Oh, I bet Ryan could tell you that.

R

Ryan Fleury 30:19

We don't have enough people.

M

Marcia Yale 30:21

Well, we have enough people, if everybody worked, if everybody did one thing, our members, we could get a lot of things, yes, for sure. We have a group of members that are the workers of the organization. And then we have a bunch of people who just sit back. And, and don't, I don't want to say that they do nothing, because that would be, of course show us but they do not work for the organization in in in any real capacity. So that's where our problems are, is the lack of capacity and the lack of funding. Because if we had some more funding, we could hire someone to do the stuff that we are doing now. So that we could do other things like our board does everything, right? If we had the money to hire an executive director, we might be able to offload some of the stuff that we do now. Right. If we haven't applied for government funding, and honestly, I don't know what will happen if we get it? Because I think I think it will, it will cause a lot of excitement and a lot of stress. Yeah, right. But in the end, hopefully, it would mean that we could, we could hire some help.

R

Ryan Fleury 32:00

We have multiple committees that people can join as well, regarding different topics, like membership, like advocacy, like fundraising. And so you know, there are certain members, some members who join multiple committees. You know, they meet usually once a month. And you know, they're like, like Marcia said, they're the worker bees, they're the ones that are putting letters together to write to government advocating for whatever, more descriptive

media on TV. You know, the list goes on. So, you know, we do have places for people if they're interested. They just need to let us know where what they want to do and what they're interested in and we can find a spot for them.

R

Rob Mineault 32:48

Well, you know, we should we should have full disclosure. Actually, I'm surprised we haven't actually talked, about this until now. But speaking of worker bees, AEBC has recently gotten a new worker bee in the form of Mr. Ryan Fleury. We talked a little while on the show back when, you know, we, he was discussing how he had been -- what was the word ... not nominated .. Yes, I use the word strong- armed ..

R

Ryan Fleury 33:21

Now I'm gonna get a second round.

R

Rob Mineault 33:25

Onto the board. So. So Ryan does have a very inside view of all of this. And that's why you keep hearing him say we we we. So I'm curious, right, like, so far, and I'm turning the tables on him now. So far, like, what what's your experience been going from that sort of being a, somebody observing from the outside to now being sort of in the middle and being on some of these committees? What's that been like for you in the past few months?

R

Ryan Fleury 34:03

It's been a very large learning curve. There's a lot involved for me, because I haven't been in the advocacy space, other than, you know, self advocating whenever needed to. Really, coming on to the board I'm seeing and hearing the struggles that an organization like ours has to deal with on a daily basis, whether it's writing letters to a minister, the government, whether it's writing letters to City Hall, whether it's, you know, complaining about accessible voting and how, you know, one of our members wasn't able to vote independently. They had to have somebody sighted help them. So how is that secure, and confidential? So all of these issues, you know, you kind of hear about them in passing, but now that you know my feet are in the fire, I see it and hear it every day, I see all of the things that this organization is working on, in cooperation with others in some regards. But there is a lot of work way, way more going on than I ever would have imagined. And I'll be upfront and honest, and then say, I had no idea what I was getting into, not a clue. And I've told Marcia, you know, I have a full time job, right, I work that can as tech from nine to four. And if I wanted it to be being on the board, could be a second full time job. There's that much work that needs to be done. And we need people to engage, and, you know, if they want to participate, help us out, or help some organization. Because like we mentioned earlier, we can't do all the work on our own. So yeah, it's been a lot of fun. It's, there's a lot of learning. There's a lot of banging my head against the wall. But, you know, right now, for me, it's it's getting through each day. And just kind of looking at the little successes that come across our desks, right? So I see the work that's being done. I see the ups

and I see the downs. And it's tough, like Marcia said, we are all volunteers, nobody is getting paid to do this work. Right? And that kind of makes us you pretty unique. So you know, I have nothing but praise at this point for this organization and the work that's being done.

R

Rob Mineault 36:53

Well, and let me ask this and what what kind of work are you talking about? Like for when you when you bring on some people? Is it mainly just sort of, you know, writing letters and making noise? Do you need specific skill sets? What kind of thing, what kind of people does the organization really need?

M

Marcia Yale 37:10

People who are passionate, and who want to work, like who wants to even give ideas, they don't have to be letter writers, they don't have to be there all the fantastic and they then they don't have to be graduates of of English courses, they just, they have to be willing to give their ideas to give their time.

R

Ryan Fleury 37:34

And time is the big one. Your time, time and creativity. You know, we have a newsletter called Equalizer, you know, we could have people contributing to that we get people contributing to our social media presence, but get people contributing to fundraising and helping suggest ideas and new ways to fundraise because everybody and their dog out there have their hand out for money. You know, so creativity, passion for advocacy, or even just self interest, you know, what would make your life better as a person who's blind, deaf, blind or partially sighted? Come and share that with us. And, you know, see how we can work that into what we do, because we don't know at all. And we're learning as we go along as well.

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Marcia Yale 38:20

Very nicely said.

R

Ryan Fleury 38:21

Yeah, there you go. I try. Try.

M

Marcia Yale 38:28

Yeah, you do.

R

Rob Mineault 38:29

We didn't even rehearse that Marcia.

R

Ryan Fleury 38:34

It is, like I said, it is you see the successes, you see the lows, and you just have to keep going because you want to affect change. And it's not about yourself, it's about the overall community. We wouldn't have descriptive TV, if it wasn't for AEBC, if it wasn't for CNIB. If it wasn't for all these different organizations coming together, we wouldn't have Braille on the elevator buttons, that wouldn't have ramps, if it wasn't for, you know, the Paraplegic associations advocating for wheelchair ramps, like these, these groups are the ones that are effecting change for everybody.

R

Rob Mineault 39:17

Well, you know, and it's interesting, too, because, you know, we, we talked to, we've been talking to a few different global organizations as well recently. And a lot of, you know, the question that I always ask them is, you know, what, what's preventing the disability movement from really gaining ground like a lot of other equity seeking organizations have been able to sort of move the needle on their issues. But the Disability Rights and Justice movements just haven't really had the same amount of success. And the answer that often that we get is that because the a lot of advocacy organizations in the disability sphere are just are run by able bodied people they're not they're not driven and the the awareness that a lot of organizations that are that are run like yours by people in the community. And I think that that's really important. And I think that, that it is really important to start to get some government funding into organizations like yours.

M

Marcia Yale 40:21

I think also that that disability is such a varied thing. So you've got people with hearing disabilities, and people with visual disabilities, vision, disabilities, and people with mobility disabilities. And so each of those are in all of the organizations in order to make real change, they need to learn to work together and to think cross disability, and not just not just their own. And we tried to do that we try and not cause another disability organization or another group of disability, people with disabilities, barriers because of what we want. Because that doesn't, that doesn't solve anything that just creates more problems. So we're trying to think outside the box than to, and that's what needs to happen. For disability to become, I don't know, I mean, we seem to go in cycles. What happens, it seems, is that one group will be top of mind for a few years, and then then the cycle will turn. And that's, that's kind of scary, because you never know who is going to be the one that's, you know, what group is going to be the top of mind. And so you have to, you have to keep fighting and and hope that one day, maybe people with disabilities will become, you know, top of mind and get government attention. Right now, right now, we are not, we are definitely not.

R

Rob Mineault 42:08

Yeah, well, I think that that speaks more to sort of the media and just how the media cycle goes. And, you know, social media outrage, and all of that. I mean, I think you're definitely

goes. And, you know, social media outrage, and all of that. I mean, I think you're definitely right, I think that those do, it does work in a cycle, and I don't think that has reflects anything on the importance of of any of the issues, they're all very important issues, it's just that it seems like the mainstream audience, you know, only only has a certain appetite for a certain amount of that, and then they, they sort of shut down. So you know, you have these these sort of these weird cycles, where there's some outrage for a while and a real push for that movement. But then you're right, it's sort of it fades over time. So, you know, what's the solution? You know, how do we sort of overcome that and, and address, you know, all the issues for everybody, instead of like, feeling like, you know, it's, this community's turn now, to sort of be at the forefront. Because really, that doesn't do them any good either. You know, any given community that's at the center of attention for a few years, yeah, they have some support for a while, but then that fades, and then they're right back to square one. So really, what we need to do is we need to affect real positive change across all all issues. At the same time, and you know, I'm not unfortunate. I'm not smart enough to know how to do that.

M

Marcia Yale 43:35

I was just gonna say, Well, that would be true inclusion, wouldn't it?

R

Rob Mineault 43:45

Yeah. Yeah. Exactly. So and I mean, you know, I guess the, you know, the upside to not just be a Debbie Downer about it. But the upside to it is that, you know, it's certainly the conversations are getting louder. We are seeing some movement. Certainly people are noticing Accessibility and Inclusion and Disability Justice, way more than they were five years ago. So you know, I guess we got to take that as a positive where we can.

R

Ryan Fleury 44:18

Well, that's why we keep pushing forward and making as much noise as we can, and celebrating persons with disabilities like we are going to on December 3.

R

Rob Mineault 44:29

Oh, right. That's right. Listen, this not only not only a worker bee, but a master of the segueaway. You go. Tell us more.

R

Ryan Fleury 44:40

So if, if you aren't aware, December 3 is International Day of Persons with Disabilities. And the Alliance for Equality of Blind Canadians is holding an event that Marcia is going to tell us all about.

M

Marcia Yale 44:53

Yeah, so this is led by the Toronto chapter. It's their sixth event. Three of them were in person and three have been virtual, well will have been virtual. And this year we have this year, I think we we have a coup, we managed to do some really good outreach and we've got some amazing speakers. We've got, let's see, we got David Lepofsky, opening things once our once our Indigenous respect has been provided. Then we have Ingrid Palmer, who is a she's an activist in the people in the anything that has to do with people who are marginalized. She's the CEO and founder of Focus on Ability. But then we're gonna have a little fireside chat with the Accessibility Commissioner, speaking of our Accessible Canada Act. One of the things that actually did was require the hiring of an Accessibility Commissioner who is responsible for fielding and responding to complaints on lack of compliance for of the Accessible Canada Act. And his name is Michael Gottheil, and he was just installed, pointed this year. And he's he wants to have a fireside chat. So it's going to be interactive for a half an hour. So everybody should come with their questions for Commissioner Gottheil

R

Rob Mineault 46:47

Half an hour. Wow, that's so so long!

M

Marcia Yale 46:52

Yeah I think we could have dne an hour.

R

Ryan Fleury 46:58

Just have to pepper him real quick.

M

Marcia Yale 47:02

So I'm really looking forward to that. And then we have more, we have a panel of four. We have Penny Bennett many of you will know as her former name Penny LeClaire, and she is a deaf blind advocate. Robert Hamsun who was a parathlete. He was a swimmer for 17 years. He's got lots of medals because of that, and lots of awards. And he's an advocate now. Keenan Weller from Live Work Play in Ottawa, which is a an organization that helps people with cognitive disabilities and, and or autism. And then we have Sandhya Rao from ibid. Today, many blind people will know I bought today as a technology training organization in the States. They have a website, they provide tons and tons of free training. And she's a lawyer, and has been working in the the court of Texas for the last 20 some odd years. So she's going to be speaking That's our panel, and it's going to be from 1 to 4 on on Zoom. It's also going to be simulcast on AMI.

R

Ryan Fleury 48:43

And that's 1 to 4 Eastern.

M Marcia Yale 48:46

Yes, sorry. Sorry. Sorry. Yes, I forget where I'm where this podcast is going coming from. Yes. For Eastern. 10am to 1pm. Pacific via zoom. And the the registration is via Eventbrite, right or via email to AEBCToronto@gmail.com. If you can't get Eventbrite to work, the app is much better than the website and anybody can attend. And I even sent I even set it up so that they there are some US and US numbers in the in the email that will be sent out to registrants.

R Ryan Fleury 49:36

And it is free.

M Marcia Yale 49:39

Free, free free. And it's gonna be amazing. It's gonna be three hours of fascinating discussion. Yeah.

R Rob Mineault 49:50

Well, listen, we got a listener in Russia, so you might need to put a Russian number in there.

M Marcia Yale 49:56

Well, they can still use the Zoom link. It'll get them in there.

R Rob Mineault 50:04

There you go Svetlana.

M Marcia Yale 50:08

We don't we don't have any restrictions on anyone, you know, coming through from other places. Yeah, I think that's great. Thanks for having me. It's been fun.

R Ryan Fleury 50:17

I'm glad we could fit you into the schedule so quickly. Yeah, this out into the Wildwood. Wildwood? Wildwood

M Marcia Yale 50:30

How about wild world wild worlds?

R Ryan Fleury 50:34
I got to stop drinking at noon.

M Marcia Yale 50:49
He didn't say when he started.

R Rob Mineault 50:52
That didn't come up with the nomination meeting? No? Well, listen, it was an absolute delight talking to you, best of luck. Just remind our audience again when when is the event.

M Marcia Yale 51:06
It's Saturday December the third which is in a week and a half. There you go less than two weeks away. Wow.

R Rob Mineault 51:14
Perfect. And we will be posting the link in our show notes. So any body who is interested. Go down. Check it out and register. And yeah, again, once again. Thanks so much for taking the time out and talking with us. And best of luck on AMI tomorrow.

M Marcia Yale 51:33
Thank you. It's a Skype adventure.

R Rob Mineault 51:47
What are you doing? Call us AMI, we will help you with your tech.

M Marcia Yale 51:54
Yeah. Skype is always an adventure for me. I never know whether it's gonna work properly or not.

R Ryan Fleury 52:02
Because it's Skype

because it's Skype.

M Marcia Yale 52:40

That's what I always say. I always laugh because I never know what's gonna happen.

R Rob Mineault 52:46

There was no, there was a very brief period in our show where we tried Skype, tried to use Skype, we gave up real quick. All right, well, listen, we will let you go back out into the wild woods.

M Marcia Yale 53:03

You're not gonna live that one down.

R Ryan Fleury 53:07

It's recorded.

R Rob Mineault 53:09

We don't let anyone live in anything down around here. It's true. But have a great rest of your night. And thanks again. Marcia

M Marcia Yale 53:22

Nice to meet you. Feel better.

R Rob Mineault 53:27

Thank you, bye. Well, there you go, who knew you are up to so much after hours. Yeah.

R Ryan Fleury 53:36

And before work. There's a lot of stuff. There's multiple meetings each week. There's open chats, as well as like the AEBC Affiliate Thursday nights. At eight, we'll have an open chat where your members and others can just come and hang out. Kind of like our old Zoom Rooms.

R Rob Mineault 53:58

And you know, you think about it, and you think about advocacy and how it all works. It's so incredibly hard when you're when you're part of a community that like I'll go to read the ScripTalk again, because that's a perfect example of something that's small and simple, but so important, like the fact that you have inaccessible prescription labels for years and years and years and years. And we have this technology that allows us to produce labels that can talk so you can actually identify your medication. So important. If you're and you're part of that community, where do you go like how do you advocate for pharmacies to implement this technology? Like there's nobody advocating for you. So that's why, you know, grassroots organizations like AEBC is so important because they can take those issues and they can make noise about them and they can advocate for the community and make that happen. You know, because otherwise you know, you try to try to crack that at a federal level, like, you know, go talk to your MLA who has to talk to this person or that person into trying to push through some sort of legislation that takes monumental effort and years and years and years to even get close to doing.

R

Ryan Fleury 55:14

So people can't get it accomplished, then sometimes they have to go through the Human Rights Complaint. And that can take even longer as well.

R

Rob Mineault 55:22

Exactly, it's ridiculous. So I mean, that's why it's important to have these organizations on the ground, and they can they can help with some of that stuff.

R

Ryan Fleury 55:29

Well, and that may be a good question to ask our upcoming guests in a couple of weeks, who has had an experience trying to get his local pharmacy to bring on Scriptalk. And, yeah, it's been an uphill battle.

R

Rob Mineault 55:41

And that's just one of dozens. I mean, you go on the AEBC website, and you look at the different advocacy issues, and it's, you know, it's huge. It's huge. And you know, every disability group, I'm sure how has a list that length.

R

Ryan Fleury 55:55

And that's why we have to work together, you know, and agree when we need to agree and agree to disagree so that we can continue moving forward with the accessibility for everyone. It's not just about Ryan's needs, it's about the community's needs as a whole, because you're never ever going to meet the needs of the individual.

R

Rob Mineault 56:16

That's right. So I have noticed you've been a lot less grumpy and a lot more positive since you you join them as well.

R

Ryan Fleury 56:23

Really?

R

Rob Mineault 56:23

I think so. I think so. Oh, my maybe it's just my imagination, or maybe it's the cold meds.

R

Ryan Fleury 56:29

You'd have to ask my wife, I don't know if she'd agree.

R

Rob Mineault 56:32

Okay, well,

R

Ryan Fleury 56:35

Like I said, we are busy, we are busy. There's a lot of stuff happening, a lot of stuff going on. And we're just one organization like you said, yeah, there CCB is doing work the CFB, CNIB. And that's just the blindness community. So there's a lot of work being done in the disability arena. So if you want to get involved, get involved, because any one of us can use you.

R

Rob Mineault 56:59

Well, okay, well, let's talk about that. Then how can people get involved if they want to get involved?

R

Ryan Fleury 57:04

Well, they can reach out to info@blindcanadians.ca. I had to think about that for a second. That's probably the best way to reach us because you can go to our website, which is blindcanadians.ca. But as we mentioned in the show, it is being redeveloped and redesigned. We were hoping to launch the new site here in December to coincide with International Persons with Disabilities. But it looks like it's going to be postponed a little bit so you can still go to our website, check it out. Best way to reach us if you want more information is to send an email to info@blindcanadians.ca

R Rob Mineault 57:45
All right, wow. Well, since you're on a roll ... Hey, Ryan.

R Ryan Fleury 57:49
Rob?

R Rob Mineault 57:50
Where can people find us?

R Ryan Fleury 57:55
Over at www.atbanter.com

R Rob Mineault 57:58
Sorry, I had to I had to rush to the the outro because I'm dying here.

R Ryan Fleury 58:01
That's fine.

R Rob Mineault 58:02
I gotta I gotta lie down on the couch. They can also send us an email to cowbell@atbanter.com

R Ryan Fleury 58:26
And they can find us on Facebook and Twitter. We're not on Instagram. Don't go there. It's a dumpster fire.

R Rob Mineault 58:38
Honestly, they're not able to find us on Twitter soon.

R Ryan Fleury 58:42
We are still on Twitter. I haven't moved us over to Mastodon yet but I can

We are still on Twitter. I haven't moved us over to Mastodon yet, but I can.

R

Rob Mineault 58:47

Well, I mean, I don't know. I mean, we I think we got to see how this whole thing shakes out. I mean, we're waiting.

R

Ryan Fleury 58:54

Yes. Yeah, that's why I haven't left Twitter yet. I'm still on Twitter. But I'm also a Mastodon now.

R

Rob Mineault 59:00

I haven't used Twitter in awhile, I don't even know what's there anymore. So Donald Trump back onto it. It's it's gonna be crazy. There's no fact checking anymore.

R

Ryan Fleury 59:08

Well, and there's really, at some point, the accessibility is gonna go downhill. He laid off or fired all of his Accessibility department.

R

Rob Mineault 59:22

Yeah, I mean, he's taking the company right over the cliff, which is fascinating to watch.

R

Ryan Fleury 59:31

So stay tuned for more information on where you can find AT Banter. It could be changing. I don't know. Maybe

R

Rob Mineault 1:00:04

There you go. Well, that is going to about do it for us this week. Big thanks, of course for Marcia for joining us. And we will see everybody next week.