

Women at Warp Episode 170: Building an Inclusive Podcast Community (IDIC Podcast Festival)

[Women at Warp theme]

Grace: Hi, and welcome to Women at Warp: A Star Trek Podcast. Join us on our continuing mission to explore intersectional diversity in infinite combinations. My name is Grace, and thanks for tuning in. With me today are Jarrah.

Jarrah: Hey.

Grace: Sarah.

Sarah: Hi.

Grace: Andi.

Andi: Hello.

Grace: And Sue.

Sue: Hi diddly ho. [laughs]

Grace: Today's episode is the live to tape recording of the session we presented at the first ever IDIC Podcast Festival last weekend. But before we hit play, we have a few important housekeeping items. First, our show and the IDIC Podcast Festival are made possible by our patrons on Patreon. Our patron is the great, we love it. We love getting to have people supporting us. It feels so good to have that kind of love and support. If you've ever been thinking about supporting us on Patreon, now is the perfect time. Everyone at the Warp 5 tier or higher on August 1st will have all of our 2021 convention swag automatically sent to them this year. That means the first ever Women at Warp embroidered patch, plus some other fun little goodies. There are some great year-round patron rewards, like watchalongs, casual non-*Star Trek* podcast episodes, shoutouts, and to check that all out find out more at patreon.com/womenatwarp.

Andi: And that all brings us to convention appearances this year. Newsflash, we will not be attending Creation's 55-year mission tour in Las Vegas or the convention formerly known as STLV. However, you'll be able to find our crew at other conventions this fall, including, I will be at Dragon Con. Grace and Sarah will be at Rose City Comic Con in Portland, Oregon. Kennedy and I will be at the Sci-Fi summit in Edison, New Jersey. And I again will be at New York Comic Con in New York City.

Grace: Next up, season three of *Star Trek: Discovery* is now on Blu-Ray DVD and limited edition Steelbook. The must have collection features all 13 episodes and also includes over 2 hours of special features, including deleted scenes, behind the scenes featurettes, cast interviews, and gag reel. Own *Star Trek: Discovery* Season 3 on Blu-Ray and DVD now from CBS and Paramount Home Entertainment. And we have five copies of the DVD set to give away. Keep listening to find out how to enter. And finally, this episode is brought to you by TextExpander, more from them later as well.

Jarrah: Now onto today's panel recording. You may remember that back this past winter, Sarah wrote a blog post highlighting some notable *Star Trek* podcasts hosted by and run by people from historically excluded groups, diverse communities. From that blog post came the idea to host a virtual podcast festival highlighting the infinite diversity of the *Star Trek* and

Sci-Fi podcasting universe. So, the IDIC Podcast Festival was held July 17th and 18th. It was so great, we talk lots about it.

Sarah: That was a really good time.

Jarrah: You can watch all the videos from the 16 different podcasts, including our own, on our Facebook and YouTube channels, facebook.com/womenatwarp and youtube.com/womenatwarp. And so, if you watch our closing from that-- we'll recap the whole thing in our highlights for you. But for now, I'll just say that it was amazing. And today we're so pleased to share with you the audio from our session, building an inclusive podcast community in which we share some of our show's history, what we consider our successes and failures, and tips for anyone looking to create IDIC friendly online or podcast spaces. And don't forget, instructions on how to enter the *Discovery* Season 3 DVD giveaway will be in there somewhere as well.

Aliza: Hello, and welcome to Women at Warp, a Roddenberry *Star Trek* Podcast. Join us on our continuing mission to explore intersectional diversity in infinite combinations. My name is Aliza, and with me today are-- let's go left to right in the rows. So, Sarah, go ahead and introduce yourself.

Sarah: Hi, I'm Sarah. I'm from Portland, Oregon, and I am one of the newer members of Women at Warp.

Sue: Hi, I'm Sue. I'm one of the originals. Let's go down.

Grace: I'm Grace. I'm one of the original boring, bland ones.

[laughter]

Aliza: Impossible.

Grace: Sue.

Aliza: We're going middle.

Andi: Hi, I'm Andi. [giggles]

Jarrah: Hi, I'm Jarrah. I'm just going to jump in.

[laughter]

Kennedy: Hi, I'm Kennedy.

Aliza: All right.

[laughter]

Grace: As you can see, we are a feat of organizational skill and working together like a Swiss watch at all times.

Jarrah: It's been a long but very fulfilling day so far. But where it's going to suffer is the figuring out who speaks next.

[laughter]

Grace: That said, we are so thrilled to be bringing you the IDIC Podcast Festival this week. In the spirit of this event, which is all about promoting diversity in *Star Trek* podcasting, we want to use our time to talk about the lessons we've learned over the past six years, the ways that we've tried to showcase diverse perspectives and successes, and the missteps we've made along the way. It's been a long road getting from there to here, and we want to share that journey with you.

Sue: She just went out of frame, but add a cat to the cat count.

[laughter]

Jarrah: On it. [laughs]

Grace: If you're thinking of starting your own IDIC friendly podcast and you have questions for the crew. You can add them in the comments on the Facebook or YouTube live stream, and we'll try to make time to answer them at the end of our time.

Aliza: Lovely, lovely. And I will be the official question asker. But of course, anyone can jump in as needed. And I will keep an eye also out on the Facebook and YouTube for questions. So, make sure to put your questions in the chat. And to kick us off first, I would like to know, how did Women at Warp get started? And then there's a secondary question to that, what's one piece of practical advice you would have for other people starting their podcasts?

Kennedy: I want to know how Women at Warp started.

Andi: So, if we're talking about the genesis of Women at Warp, basically way back in the day, gosh, I don't even know how long ago now, I was on-- [crosstalk]

Grace: [unintelligible 00:06:56] memorial.

Andi: I was on a podcast with Sue, and we were guests on Grace's podcast, which was called All Things Trek.

Sue: Yep.

Andi: Yes. And we were on a podcast together, and Jarrah was on a separate podcast, but we were all guests on All Things Trek together. So, they were basically the only women that I had noticed podcasting. And I was like, "You know what? I kind of want to do my own podcast," because at that point, I had been asked to come and guest on podcasts, which is really fun, and I highly recommend it for people when they're first starting out, especially. If you just want to get started by trying it out, nothing better than guessting. And, hey, you should probably guest on our podcast, just saying. And I just sent them all an email.

I literally just sent them all an email to all of them and was like, "Do you want to do a feminist *Star Trek* podcast with me?" And they were like, "Okay," and then we did. And I think people had the idea that we were like BFF forever when we started the pod-- I barely knew these women, barely knew them. I had never talked to Jarrah when I sent her that email. I just was like, "This woman seems like she's cool and that she's got a good vibe. I'm going to--"

it really came together very quickly, but we did not know each other. Even if you go back and listen to the very beginning of our podcast, you can hear us learning each other's vibe and learning about each other and becoming friends, because I think there's a misconception that we were good friends and we were not. So, we basically just were like, we like to talk about *Star Trek*, let's talk about *Star Trek*, and that is how Women at Warp started.

Grace: If we weren't friends to begin with, then who are those three girls I grew up with

[laughter]

-knew from early on?

Sue: Well. Andi, you said it came together quickly, but I remember how quickly, because I think our first meeting together was e-meeting, of course, was either around Thanksgiving or Christmas, because I know for a fact that I was at my parents' house, and that's the only reason [laughs] I would have been there. And we had released our first episodes, I think in March or May. So about [crosstalk] six months for everything to come together, which is pretty fast.

Andi: And we actually posted our first episode way earlier than we'd planned to, because the reaction on Facebook was extremely like, "Okay, but where's the podcast though? But where is it? We want it now."

Sue: Once we clicked the name, we went and we grabbed the Facebook page and the Twitter handle so that nobody else could. And we didn't promote it at all. We didn't put it out there. We didn't even put a description up, and we had 250 likes with doing nothing. And people were asking for a podcast. [laughs]

Andi: I think what it says about what we were doing is that people were thirsty and that we had identified this gap in podcasting about *Star Trek* because people were so excited, and we had nothing to show them to get them excited. We were just like, "We're women, and we're going to talk about *Star Trek*." And everyone was like, "Yes, more please"

Jarrah: It's not going to be a bunch of white bros being, "Ha-ha-ha seven of nine."

[laughter]

Grace: That alone was enough to get people interested, who'd have thought?

Aliza: Yeah. Clearly you had tapped into this piece of *Star Trek* podcast-ness that was missing. And also, I wanted to point out on YouTube, Susan Thieme, sorry, I might be mispronouncing your last name, says, "Your chemistry was amazing from the beginning though."

[crosstalk]

Andi: I have relistened to our early episodes a couple of times now for various projects that we've done. And I have to tell you, the one that I think where it all really clicked and came together was *Wolf in the Fold*. *Wolf in the Fold* was actually-- [crosstalk]

Grace: There's so much to talk about there.

Andi: [laughs] Yeah, well, I think it was our fourth podcast, and it has all of the classic Women at Warp brands. Grace's love of horror, Sue's science corner was born in the *Wolf in the Fold* one. Jarrah kept coming in with all these academic behind the scenes looks, and it just kind of meshed.

Grace: That's right, because I had all those Robert block references to make because I'm a weirdo like that.

Sue: I just want to take a second--

Jarrah: Our first time [crosstalk] hug in unison.

Sue: Oh, yeah.

[laughs]

Sue: Poor Susan has had her name mispronounced all day long.

Aliza: I'm sorry.

Sue: Absolutely. I can't say it's fine, but I just happen to know from previous podcasts that I believe it is Thieme.

Aliza: Thieme, nice.

Susan: Susan. I hope that's correct. And I'm sorry your name has been mispronounced all day long. [laughs]

Andi: If it's not, you made it a million times worse than.

Susan: I definitely did.

[laughter]

Jarrah: I mean, I will say in terms of a practical thing, one thing I'm really glad we did at the beginning was discuss, sort of like dividing some roles and responsibilities. And we also discussed how often we wanted to release, because we've released bi-weekly now for six and a half years, and we've never missed a date that were publishing an episode. But I cannot imagine if we had gone with weekly. And we were pretty clear at the beginning like that seems like it could be a lot of work to try to do it weekly. And I'm really, really glad went with bi-weekly so that we could keep up the consistency and the quality of the topics we were discussing. And, yeah, I think taking some time to actually produce some episodes before you launch and getting a sense of how much work is involved is important.

Aliza: Good advice.

Grace: Yeah, that's the number one piece of advice I give to anyone wanting to start a podcast. Have some buffer time and have some concept of what you want your future timeline to be. Have ideas planned out ahead of time, which all sounds really obvious now that I say it out loud.

Kennedy: You'd be surprised.

Grace: Yeah. Don't plan the night before and say, "Ah, what are we going do?" Have that stuff block out very early, you'll thank yourself later.

Sue: Again, very early on when we when we would pick a topic, and then we'd say, "Okay, when can people record? Well, what about this day?" And it was always random. When who is available when, never the same time, and I don't even know when, maybe a year or so in, we just decided that we picked a recurring day and time, and that was recording time, and it went on everybody's calendar, and it made everything better.

Grace: And it stayed there ever since.

Sue: Well, sometimes we reschedule for certain things.

Grace: I mean, yeah.

Sue: But having that repeating event on your calendar with time dedicated to this thing means you're not going to skip it or you're not going to schedule something against it. Carving out the time, whether it's for recording or for editing or for researching is really necessary because until you get into it, you don't really understand how much time it takes to put a show together.

Aliza: And that's why it's especially impressive that you have six and a half years, have not missed that window. That's really, really impressive, so kudos on that.

Andi: It has come down to the wire.

[laughter]

Andi: [crosstalk] -whole times.

Aliza: Andi, would you like to actually do you--

Kennedy: Yeah.

Aliza: As the main editor of this, the editor of this podcast, do you have any specific advice about editing for new podcasters?

Andi: They should not learn from me.

[laughter]

Andi: Well, first of all, Jarrah was our editor for our first couple years, and I don't really remember why that switched. The number one thing that I would say is, find whatever editing software that you're going to use, make sure you like it and understand it. But I taught myself how to edit, and I still think that I probably am doing things wrong. So, there's resources out there, and I have looked through them. But the main thing for me, like my go-to rules of editing are make sure the most important thing is clarity. You want to make sure, and that seems obvious, but sometimes it comes down to, should I keep this because it's funny, but it's hard to understand. And I always err on the side of clarity. And so, some super funny stuff has come out of the podcast because of sound quality issues, or somebody laughed too loud and it was lost to the winds of time.

[laughter]

Aliza: Kennedy is pointing to herself with that.

Kennedy: Yeah, that's usually me.

Andi: Kennedy is not the most difficult person to edit. I'll say that.

Kennedy: Woah. I am shocked.

[laughter]

Kennedy: I am shocked and quite pleased, but also curious.

Andi: Should I call that person out?

Aliza: Well, I'll call myself out, because I know one time I like-- this is probably what you're talking about because you're smiling.

[laughter]

Aliza: One time early on, when I had just joined, maybe I hit some switch in my freaking.

Andi: It is the Darth Vader switch.

Aliza: Yeah, it was like the Wizard of Oz voice.

Andi: She sounded like the great and powerful Oz.

[laughter]

Aliza: My entire recording for that episode was like, with this booming voice, like echoing. And poor Andi-- well, we got a really good laugh out of it.

Andi: I cried laughing, but I was like, "Aliza, I cannot describe it. You have to listen to it."

[laughter] [crosstalk]

Andi: But I have to say-- [crosstalk]

Sue: Why did we not lean into this?

[laughter]

Andi: Yeah.

Jarrah: If your hosts are in the same physical location, that will make things a million times easier because we're all in different cities. We do a way more complicated production than a lot of people who are able to record in the same location using maybe two mics attached to the same computer. And in addition, since we started podcasting, I think technologically has become a lot more accessible. And there's, a lot of the shows involved in the festival this weekend are using Anchor, and there's similar services like that kind of build the whole thing together. And there's pros and cons to those, so I advise like do your research, like google, pros and cons to using those services, but a lot of people find that they're a really easy way in.

Aliza: Fantastic. Such valuable advice. Here's another really great question that came in. I want to build a more diverse slate of hosts and or guests for my podcast. What do I need to do to ensure they're supported?

Kennedy: Listen to them. Sorry, did I speak out of turn?

[laughter]

Aliza: No. No take it, take it away.

Kennedy: That's probably it. Listen to people.

Grace: That's good answer.

Kennedy: If you're looking to exclude experiences that do not in any way reflect your own, the only way that you can even perceive those experiences is if you're open enough to listen to them. So, a lot of that will involve deconditioning. If there's certain ideals, certain staples that you've been raised with or have come to your own conclusions about that are contradictory to what somebody's experience inherently is, then you might have to do some work to unplug from the matrix, as it were, not to cross Sci-Fi wires, but you might have to unplug for a second, get over yourself, and listen to them and know that their experience, albeit completely different than yours, is incredibly valuable for that exact reason.

I mean, intersectional diversity and infinite combinations is going to do nothing but enrich your life. So, if you want to include more people, one, talk to more people. Go out of your way to include more people in conversations that don't look like you, they don't look like anybody in your present friend group. And if you're presented with something that you've either never encountered before or have difficulty grasping, then do the work. Do the work, do your research, don't tax somebody else for labor to explain something to you, because it might not be an easy feat for that individual. And just listen, and you'd be surprised. Part of listening is keeping your mouth shut though, a lot of people don't-- I know that's hard in podcasting, you got to talk, but part of listening before you structure your show, before you cast your show, you got to shut the f-up and listen to people.

Grace: That's the most important piece of advice right there, knowing when to shut up.

Andi: Well, people will tell you what they need. What you need to do is create a space in which they feel comfortable telling you what they need. And then when they tell you, listen to them and give them what they need. And that sounds so simple, but it is hard for a lot of people. So, then you get what-- I see happening a lot now where you see these calls for diversity, and then the people come and then you treat them poorly and then they leave because you didn't really want their voice. You just wanted to check a box or you just wanted their face there. And that's an issue, that's an issue.

Jarrah: Yeah. I think some people expect, when you invite someone more diverse than your usual group that all of a sudden no one's going to question why your normal group is pretty homogenous, and it's like, "Oh, here's my diversity shield," kind of thing. It's an ongoing process and inviting one diverse guest isn't going to be-- it can't be the end of the work. But I also think it's important, one of the biggest things we encounter is people who are legitimately, really have a lot of doubt. Like, "Do I have anything valuable to say? And what if I sound terrible?" A lot of people have a hard time listening to their own voice, a lot of us included. And they just think, "Well, my opinion can't be the most valuable on this subject." Well, really a lot of times, not everyone-- I will say white guys don't always think of that as their first concern.

[laughter]

It's like, we hear this in politics too, if you ask a man to run, they'll be like, "Yeah, sure, I can totally run for office." And if you ask a woman or a person of color to run that they have to think about it, like, three times as long because sometimes they're at the stakes are actually higher, but there's also more doubt built in. So, we have to spend a lot of time reassuring people that, "We really do want to hear you," and we want to make a safe space by moderating our comments and ensuring-- maybe having other guests on from other diverse communities so that it's not you and just a room full of professional podcasters or other things to make people realize that their voice is important.

Andi: I think you hit on something there, Jarrah, too, which is you have to protect people.

You can't just send them out there and then leave them out there. There's going to be pushback no matter what. When you're out there on the internet and you're having opinions, people are going to disagree with you. And a lot of people do not know how to disagree with you healthily. The only way they know how to do it is attacking you. And so, we have to be ready for those attacks and be ready to protect your people and make sure that they don't feel like they're just sitting out there alone, getting beat up on with no help or no backup.

Sue: I also want to add, if there's anybody watching the stream or watching it later who has those feelings, "I want to do this podcast, or I want to guest on this podcast, but I'm not sure if I'll sound smart or I'm not sure if I'll do okay." The people having you on want to make you sound as good as possible. They want to encourage you. Or at least we, we're never going to edit you to make you sound unintelligent.

Kennedy: Yeah. That is [unintelligible 00:23:45] us.

Sue: Andi does a great job of turning our word salad into coherent sentences most of the time.

[laughter]

Jarrah: Andi edits out so many tangents I go on.

[laughter]

Sue: If you're invited on the show, it's because the hosts think you have something of value to add and they want to showcase that. So, I know it's hard. We also talk very openly on Women at Warp about mental health and our own mental health. It can be hard to let go of some of those things, but know that nobody is inviting you on their show to expose you, that's not a thing.

Grace: There's no gotcha moment. Hopefully all of our guests come in with the confidence and comfort of a mediocre, straight white man.

Jarrah: Yeah. And we do let people use pseudonyms because we respect that. Sometimes people are going to want to protect their privacy or need to protect their privacy for various reasons. And that's totally cool if people just want to use their first name. Some of us only use our first names. For us, your voice is more important than what you're using as your label on your identity.

Aliza: Yeah. And I want to just add one more layer to this too. One thing to be careful of when you're inviting anyone from a marginalized community to your podcast, a guest is tokenizing them. And one way this happens really easily is if it's-- This is an actual example from a friend of mine who went through it and had to call out the people. If you're inviting a native or indigenous person to your podcast only to talk about native or indigenous issues or only during November, let us express our interests and voices outside of just the lens of being the torchbearers for our cause. And I think with our podcast, it's easier because *Star Trek*, hello, we all have that in common that we're going to talk about, but it would be the same as if we only invited people of color to talk about people of color issues or if we only invited LGBTQ people to talk about gay things.

So just remember that everyone has different viewpoints and sides to them, and they don't need to just speak on their identity. They can talk about their interests, their expertise, and a lot of other stuff.

Andi: And I can tell you one practical way that we avoid this is when we ask guests to be on our show, we ask them what they want to talk about. So, both Aliza and Kennedy went through this process when they were guests on our show way back in the day. I literally reached out to Kennedy and was like, "Hey, you're freaking cool. You should come hang out with us on our podcast."

Grace: And she did.

Andi: Yes. And I was like, what do you want to talk about? And we spit-balled ideas. And she landed on wanting to talk about Klingon women, which is why-- Jarrah.

Kennedy: There's a cat.

[laughter]

Andi: But she's the one who chose to talk about Klingon women. And when we reached out to Aliza the first time, we did reach out and we thought of her for Guinan because she was doing such a cool job doing her Guinan show. But if she wanted to do a totally other topic, that would have been fine with us too. And it's a nice way to like all your guests, but especially your marginalized guests. Just ask them what they want to talk about. Chances are they have a list of things that they are like, "Yes, cool. I want to talk about these things." And sometimes it will have to do with their community, and sometimes it will not.

Aliza: Yeah. All right, so another great question here is, beyond producing the podcast itself, so, shifting from the actual content of the podcast, how do I create safe online spaces for listeners to interact?

Sue: Comment policy.

[crosstalk]

Aliza: Aha.

Kennedy: That's very genteel. I was just going to say punch Nazis in the face, but--

[laughter]

Sue: Virtually

Grace: And not so many words, but yeah.

Aliza: Yes. So, curating the experience for them and not letting shitheads stay, is that the summary?

Grace: Know what your zero tolerance is for and enforce that.

Sue: Yeah. We had a comment policy from day one on the website, on Facebook. And even though there's nowhere to post it on Twitter, we applied the same thing to Twitter. And, it did not-- Of course, because, *Women at Warp* a feminist *Star Trek* podcast, that word is in our title, so people are going to search for it and come be assholes. But after not very long of deleting comments and banning those users, that really died down. So, it's not just setting the comment policy and expecting people to follow it, you have to enforce it, and you have to enforce it every time the same way. It does no good if you put out a comment policy for brownie points and then do nothing about it and let the bigots continue to show up on your

page and say hateful things to people. And there are some examples I could give that I'm not going to on a live stream.

Sarah: Because the thing is, the people they are targeting will leave your group and you're just going to be like bigots.

Kennedy: Exactly.

Jarrah: Yeah. Like, I definitely know when I started out before this, I worked in social media and there was definitely an idea, and I think there's some validity to it that it's better for your community to respectfully engage in some dialogue and to push down the negative comments by posting positive things than it is for you to come in with the Banhammer. But, like, is that actually a fair thing to ask your community to do? And I think over time like, more and more, I've just been like, "No, companies should be taking responsibility." I mean, we're a very, very small organization compared to some of the bigger organizations that could be doing a better job at this. But I don't think that it's fair to ask our listeners to police our social media. And I wouldn't blame people for leaving if we were allowing that kind of stuff to proliferate on our pages, not just for us, but it just doesn't make anyone feel good about commenting there. So hopefully people do feel good about commenting on our sites. And we love hearing from folks there.

Andi: And just a comment on blocking. We don't block for us. I mean, somewhat we block from for us because these comments are boring and cliché, but we block for our community. So, if we allow some person who has been making terrible comments to remain following us on our Twitter, they're going to respond to people who respond to us, and they're going to get into the threads and they're going to be jerks and it's just going to be frustrating. So, we just block them. We just block them.

Kennedy: Block hardy.

[laughter]

Andi: Yeah, for real. And I understand why people are nervous to take that step, but they're not bringing anything to your community, they're actively bringing it down. Get rid of them.

Jarrah: In addition to handling the haters before it gets to be a thing, I think the other thing that's really important is to lead by example and the tone you set in your social channels and on your website. And so, we publish a lot of blog posts from a lot of different backgrounds, broader than our own, just sharing their experiences really candidly and how they relate to *Star Trek*. We share inspiring quotes from women across the *Star Trek* universe on our social media. And I think that it generally fosters more kind of meaningful, respectful engagement than if you're just kind of catering to the lowest common denominator.

Aliza: Mm-hmm.

Sue: I do also really quickly want to add on the more technical side of this is we have sometimes been asked why we have a Facebook page instead of a Facebook group because groups can be made private. Groups are also a lot more difficult to moderate. So that's really the main reason. The Facebook page, everything is public, and that can be seen as a positive or a negative, because anybody who might be concerned about what they say, getting them in trouble, will maybe not say that thing on a public page. Of course, somebody else who might not want, I don't know, someone at work to know that they're writing things or have deep opinions about slash fic, might not want to comment publicly. But we made the choice early on to go with a page for those moderation purposes so that we knew we could moderate more easily with our crew of four at the time. But anybody who is concerned, we

say, "The messages are open, the Twitter DM's are open, the email is open. If you want to reach us in any way, there are multiple ways, not just a public Facebook group."

Aliza: Great. Okay.

Sue: [laughs]

Aliza: What is the biggest surprise you all have had about running and being a part of a feminist *Star Trek* podcast?

Sarah: It's really, really fun.

[laughter]

Sarah: No, I'm serious, because something totally random happens in my life and I'll just message the group on Slack and be like, "This is the thing that happened. What the heck?"

Jarrah: Glad we dragged you kicking and screaming into it.

[laughter]

Andi: We do have an awesome group chat. And if you're wondering, yes, there are lots of cat pictures.

Kennedy: Yeah.

Sue: The most surreal-

Andi: Oh, so many.

Sue: -moment for me was when someone recognized my voice at Dragon Con and asked me for a photo that was like, only like a year in at that point. And I was like, "What?"

Jarrah: [unintelligible 00:35:53] stopped me outside of a Skytrain in Vancouver, and this was before I was bald even. So, I think it was harder to pick out of a crowd. But, yeah, that was random.

Andi: Yeah. When we were at Star Trek Vegas, the 50th one, I had solidly three people be like, "You're Andi from Women at Warp." And I was like--

[laughter]

Sarah: When I was setting up our business and I, we used Zen business, the customer service person turned out to be a listener. [crosstalk]

Kennedy: What?

[laughter] [crosstalk]

Kennedy: That's so fricking cool.

[crosstalk]

Andi: My biggest surprise is that people actually listen to what we have to say. And like, I mean, I guess I knew that was going to happen, but to have it actually like come in other

contexts where like somebody would recognize me and want to talk to me about something I said on the podcast. It's like, "Okay, that's weird. I don't understand why anybody cares what I have to say about anything, but cool."

[crosstalk]

Kennedy: Because your input is valuable.

Andi: Sorry, you were going to say [crosstalk] I cut you off.

Kennedy: I haven't been recognized for Woman at Warp. [crosstalk]

Grace: I was going to say the closest I have got is--

Kennedy: Oh, who said that? Go first. Was that you Grace? Grace, that was you, Grace. Say the thing, Grace.

Grace: Come to that is, I've had a friend-- Okay. Okay. Well, now I'm under pressure for to say it.

[laughter]

Grace: Closest I've come is a friend's Tinder date listed our podcast as one of her favorites. And then my friend got to be like, "Hey, my Tinder date tried to recommend you to me, and I already know you in real life." That's great.

[laughter]

Andi: That's amazing.

Kennedy: That's [crosstalk] cool.

Grace: Yeah.

Kennedy: That's freaking cool. I can't say that I've been recognized publicly for Women at Warp, but I think that's probably because I-- with Aliza and Sarah here, joined during the pandemic, so we weren't doing things. But since joining, my follower count has jumped. Like, people are like, "What? Let's go." And I'm like, "Whoa, random person."

Sue: It helps when Anson Mount like celebrates your promotion.

[chuckles]

Jarrah: One thing that I found really surprising, which actually kind of goes back to Ann Marie's comment about how-- I wasn't surprised that people wanted to listen when we started because we knew there was a gap that we were filling. One thing I was surprised about was when other women started making *Star Trek* podcasts, and people would, like, check with us if we were okay.

[crosstalk]

Grace: That was so weird.

Jarrah: It was so weird because no one ever went to the first person to start a *Star Trek* podcast to be like, "Are you okay that other men are *Star Trek* podcasting? Because this is

your turf," or something. And we were going, "No, this is great." We on our first network, there are around 30 podcasts, and there was us, and then there was one other podcast that had one woman host. And so, we're going like there is tons of room before there is saturation here. And, I mean, this festival is kind of a testament to what happens when you think that more diverse voices is better not thinking about protecting your turf.

Kennedy: Absolutely.

Grace: And if I'm remembering right, we had an issue early on where we had a bunch of people complaining. Well, all their voices sound the same because they're all women on the show.

Aliza: Oh, wow.

Grace: So, I think it was Andi who was articulating that and saying, like, "Yeah, I've learned people have a really complicated relationship with women's voices."

Sue: That is the reason we all say hello at the beginning of every episode.

Jarrah: That's true.

[laughter]

Grace: Because so many people were saying, "Well, I can't tell all these broads voices apart."

Andi: I had to tell Sarah that at one point, because the first time she ran one, she did it the most easiest way, which is just Sue and Grace and Aliza are here, whoever it was on that podcast. And I was like, "I just want to let you know that that's totally fine, but the reason that we do that is we got more than one complaint that nobody could tell who was who."

Grace: All women voices are the same.

Andi: I don't even think it's malicious. I think that people their brains are just trained differently when it comes to women's voices. And that's another thing, like if you're asking about my editing things, one of my editing things is I never take out uptalk.

Aliza: Mm-hmm. Oh, nice.

Andi: Like, when we transcribe too, I keep the transcriptions. I keep the uptalk. I put in the question mark to indicate the uptalk, and vocal quirks, and you're going to like it.

Aliza: I love it. I love that. And this is great to hear from all sides of it, because there's absolutely weirdness about women's voices, hearing them and using them. And I'm glad to be a part of a podcast where we just use our voices and celebrate them as they are. I wanted to add my surprising thing about being part of this podcast as a feminist *Star Trek* podcast, I was surprised at how gratifying it felt and feels to get to deep dive into topics with other women.

I mean, not because it's other women, but more so because it's a place where I can take all my crazy *Star Trek* ideas, and there's three to seven other women who will go on that dive with me, that is such a gift for me. And I get to almost be academic about bringing these ideas to you all and be like, "Do you want to discuss this with me?" And then you all say, "Yes." [crosstalk] And I'm like, "Yay, I feel so good." So that's something that's been really surprising, but also really gratifying for me.

Jarrah: I mean, we do get some flak [unintelligible [00:37:10] we agree with each other too much. [laughs]

Sue: I think a lot about this, and I think people are used to disagreements being fights.

Jarrah: Yeah, right.

Sue: Because we don't disagree all the time. We say, "I didn't see it that way," or, "This is my take." We don't say, "You're wrong, and here's why."

Kennedy: Right. Right.

Sue: And I think people just don't know how to listen to amicable disagreements anymore.

Aliza: Respectful.

Grace: We don't look for arguments.

Kennedy: There's plenty of things that we don't agree on as a collective. But like Sue was saying, we're diplomatic about it. We have our fucking pips. Oh, sorry, we have our fricking pips. You know what I mean?

Grace: Yeah.

Kennedy: There's a way to engage with somebody with an opposing point of view without being destructive. The other refreshing thing about being in a conversation about *Star Trek*, particularly without any men, is there is a certain thing about-- they're trying to say that women sound the same like, dudes have a timbre to their voices that is just physiologically going to be more resonant than most women's voices. And when you're having a conversation about something that perhaps not everybody agrees upon, it's a lot harder to physically get your voice heard, because these dudes have these resounding baritone ass voices. And I say that as somebody who has a deeper voice as a woman.

There's plenty of times where I've had to go toe to toe with people, and it's just like, "If you stop talking for 2.5 seconds, you would maybe see that one I'm agreeing with you. And two, that you're being an ass before not listening." And I think that's part of the issue. Like, people don't understand that you can have disagreements while listening to the person and leaving space for their point of view, even if it doesn't correspond with yours. Especially, if it doesn't correspond with yours without having to play double dutch to get into the conversation.

Sue: I want to real quick jump back to what Jarrah said about people thinking that new podcasts would step on our toes and put my amateur historian hat on for just a split second-

Grace: Oo, do it.

Sue: -and say, like *Star Trek* fandom has almost always been dominated by women. The letter rating campaign was dominated by women. The fanzines were dominated by women. Fanfic has been dominated by women. The creation of conventions, not Creation the company, but the genesis of conventions was women. And really, once we got to-- not even the online space, but specifically somehow the podcasting space, that changed. And I don't know if, like, a stereotypical technical barrier came into play there, but in my opinion, there is no reason that the *Star Trek* podcasting space should not also be dominated by women, because this is a fandom that has always been led by women, and there's no reason for that to stop because it's on the internet.

Grace: I think that part of it does play into that whole thing of a bunch of guys will just go, "Oh, yeah, my opinion is worth hearing. I'm entertaining just off the cuff." And a lot of women-- [crosstalk]

Kennedy: [unintelligible [00:40:37] How?

[laughter]

Grace: Sometimes if you ask somebody, you listen to a podcast and you realize, "Oh, this person has never asked themselves if they're actually entertaining or interesting to listen to talking, they're just assuming they are by virtue of talking." And one hand, that's the beauty of podcasts. Everybody has the potential to share their opinion. But the downside of that is that opinions truly are like buttocks, and everyone's got them. And sometimes you--

Kennedy: Most of them are dirty.

Grace: Yeah, yeah.

[laughter]

Grace: And sometimes you definitely have to take the point of saying, "Okay, this is someone whose opinion is probably going to be more interesting to hear than mine right now." And another point of where you have to learn to just shut up sometimes, which, as I can very clearly attest to, is an issue for me.

[laughter]

Andi: This kind of goes back to what we were talking about with guests too. There some of our most fantastic guests, I've had to woo. I've had to be like, "No, no, no. You really-- No, please, please come on the podcast," Literally over months, just be like, "No, your voice is so valuable because so many women just have been told that their voice is not valuable. And it's really hard for them to put their voice out there because they're afraid of sounding not smart or they're afraid that people will be mean to them or judge them or whatever." And some of them I have successfully wooed, and then their podcast turned out to be the best ones. They had the most valuable things to say. And I remember the first time we had somebody tweet us and they were like, "Are you okay with us starting a podcast?" And be like, "Not only are we okay with it, please let us know if you need help, because we want as many as possible." [laughs] No dude has ever been like, "Oh, maybe there are too many dude podcasts out there." Like, don't do that to yourself. Don't limit yourself.

Grace: Maybe more should.

[laughter]

Sarah: Don't feel like you have to have a PhD to talk about *Star Trek*. I have no qualifications to be here whatsoever other than I watch a lot of TV.

[laughter]

But if you are passionate about *Star Trek*, if you care about it, that's going to come through when you talk.

Kennedy: I'm sorry. I'm sorry. I would like to respectfully disagree with you, Sarah. Judging by your background alone, what y'all don't understand is that's her guest room. That's not

even the real shit. That's the backup shit. So, I feel, just judging by the aesthetic alone, that you are more than qualified.

Grace: [crosstalk] -her house and you were afraid to sneeze for fear of ruining some-- [audio cut]

[laughter]

Andi: Can I also please say that that reminds me that once Sue and I got told that we needed to take some anthropology classes to talk about *TOS*, and that made me laugh a lot.

Kennedy: Wow.

Sarah: Gatekeeping anyone?

Kennedy: What?

[crosstalk]

Jarrah: Jokes on you. I have.

Andi: Yeah, I have too.

[laughter]

Aliza: I mean, everyone here has taught *Star Trek* to other people and led other people in *Star Trek*-ness, but you don't even need to have that qualification to talk about *Star Trek* on a podcast.

Andi: Like, "Legitimately have you seen a episode of *Star Trek*? Cool. Talk about that episode of *Star Trek*. You're qualified. Congrats."

Jarrah: Yeah, that's the other thing is, you know, the feeling like you have to be a completionist. Like, you have to have seen all the things and you have to not only love but respect the original series. It's like [crosstalk] comes up a lot, and we're pretty open in our podcast about not all *Star Treks* for everybody, and it's totally cool. Don't force yourself to watch it because of some idea of what it means to be a real Trekkie. Watch the parts that you like or that you can stand and then come talk about it with us. We think there's so much to love in there, but it's not going to be the same for everyone.

Kennedy: Yeah. Just because we're completionist nerds doesn't mean you have to be.

Andi: That's some of you are.

Jarrah: Yeah.

Kennedy: Whoa. Whoa.

Andi: I still haven't finished *DS9*, *Voyager*, *Discovery*, *Picard*. [crosstalk] I haven't seen a single episode of *Enterprise*.

Kennedy: Oh, in your defense, 50 plus years of content is a lot. That's a lot.

Sue: Mm-hmm. Some of us had a big head start, Andi, it's okay.

[laughter]

Aliza: Some of it what? Wait, what did you say?

Sue: I said some of us had a very big head start.

Aliza: Oh, right, right, right. Yeah. I haven't finished *Deep Space Nine* or *Voyager*. You know what's funny? I definitely could have finished them by now, obviously, but I've been savoring them.

Kennedy: Oh, yeah.

Aliza: I haven't wanted to finish them because then there's going to be no more episodes, new episodes.

Kennedy: But here's the beautiful part about being a *Star Trek* fan in the 21st century here and now, is that we have surpassed the great drought, okay. That chunk of time between 2005 and, well, if we're talking about series 2017 with disco. And even if you want to include the Kelvin films, that's still four years of not having *Trek* and just being like, "I guess I'll watch *Andromeda* then." And hope that you'll get by. So, the beauty part about having streaming platforms that have *Deep Space Nine* and *Voyager* and all the other series is on them--
[crosstalk]

Grace: [crosstalk] -enjoy a thing.

Kennedy: You can always go back. There's times where I'll be like, "Oh, I'm doing research for a show, let me watch this particular episode because it's relevant." And then I'm like, "Well, three hours later here I am into the next season."

Sue: [crosstalk] -the next episode started to play.

Aliza: Oh, I've done it so many times.

[laughter]

Kennedy: And you can always go back. You can always start over. You can always pick a lens. That's my favorite part about rewatching *Trek*, is picking a lens and starting over and watching it again. If you're looking at *Trek* for the first time through a womanist or feminist intersectional perspective, you're going to be like, "This is a completely different show." One of my favorite things about being in Twitter *Trek* discourse now is how gay people are about it. People are like, "I love how queer *Star Trek* is." And at first, I was like, "Is it?" But then I, like, went back and watched through that lens. I was like, "Yo, this show gay as hell. Let's go."

[laughter]

Sue: [crosstalk] I asked the panelist a question based on that.

Aliza: Oh, yes.

Sue: I want to know from the other hosts if there was a time that one of your co-hosts blew your mind with a take you hadn't thought of. And I will go first because Andi blew my mind with *The Inner Light*.

Andi: I was going to bring that up when we were talking about disagreeing respectfully,

because I was like, or possibly it's just because we listen to each other and go, "Oh, my God, you might be right."

[laughter]

Jarrah: Yeah, we're easily swayed.

Sue: Yeah. I had never considered the weird consent issues and the gaslighting and *The Inner Light* until Andi talked about it. So, I want to know if anybody else has had that moment.

Kennedy: I will say that the-- I mean, I've had several moments like this, but the first time I felt this with this show was probably *The Next Generation's* inaugural launch. Me, Sarah, and Aliza. When Sarah said that she resonated with Molly O'Brien the most because it was seeing herself in Trek, and I was just like, "Ooh." You know what I mean? Like that was just like, I don't know. I mean, obviously, we watched Molly be born. We watched Molly's almost entire life, and it was just like, "Oh, cool, here's the O'Brien kid somehow surviving the shenanigans her parents got her into," But it didn't occur to me, because that's a lot. But it didn't occur to me to be like, "Wow, this is incredibly impactful for people from two different types of backgrounds, and seeing themselves in the future in this capacity is just as important as anything else." And I was stuck. Like, if you go back and listen to that episode, like 20 minutes later, I'm like, "Oh, my God, Molly."

[laughter]

So that was probably the first one for me.

Sarah: Grace came over to my house this one time after we spent a whole day at a con, and we put on *Deep Space Nine*, and I'm blanking on what episode it is, where Bashir and Garak meet for the first time.

Grace: It's the third episode of the series.

Sarah: [crosstalk] [unintelligible 00:55:47] was this gay? And Grace is like, "Yeah, yeah, was."

Grace: Oh, yeah. Oh, yeah. You just got to know where to look.

[laughter]

Sue: I derailed us, I'm sorry.

[crosstalk]

Aliza: No, that was a good question.

Jarrah: It's just hard to come down with an example because it happens all the time. And with our guests too we have-- I will say that one of the things that I think has worked well but just kind of evolved organically was that we've had several times when we've had someone comment on an episode on Twitter, just say afterwards and say, "Hey, my perspective wasn't included in that discussion. As a person from x backgrounds, here's what I thought was really missing." And then, I think Andi was definitely the one who first suggested, like, "Cool, let's invite them to be a guest."

Andi: I like to collect people, okay?

[laughter]

Grace: We've had some great guests that way.

Jarrah: And we've had several guests who have come to our show that way. And inevitably, those have been really good episodes. And I think, we can't possibly represent every single viewpoint in every episode, but a lot of times people are coming with really valid things that we just didn't consider, and then we're able to include them in something else, and that's really cool. Oh, I got a cat.

Andi: We also do that blog post where we're like, "Would you like to write a blog post about that?"

Grace: We would like to represent as many opinions and backgrounds as we possibly could, that's why we started doing this, because we wanted to do that.

Aliza: I think that's also partially, not partially, but that's a huge also another part of cultivating a safe space for both the audience and the guests by saying, "This is our discussion space together," and inviting people into that to contribute to it, it's really great.

Andi: And don't get defensive. That's the hardest thing about it, is sometimes people can come at you and they're not super diplomatic about it, but, like, do they have a valid point? And if so, how can you address it?

Aliza: I have one more question here, and then if the audience has any other questions, put them in the chat now or forever hold your peace. My last question here is, what do you see as Women at Warp's biggest successes and biggest missteps?

Andi: The biggest misstep for me and the biggest regret I have for the beginning of our show is that we all ended up being white women. So, for the first however many years that was-- we were aware of it, and we tried to balance it with guests. But the fact remains is that we started a podcast to talk about women's issues, and we were four white women. And that just happened to be just because like when I started talking about the genesis of Women at Warp, it literally was is because I could name three women that I knew podcasted, and they happened to all be white. But it does mean that the longer it went and the longer we went into our show, the more it became an issue. And we talked about it for years. Literally, years where we were like, "We should add more hosts," and we would spitball ideas, and then, it would just get away from us, and we kept kind of kicking it down the road because you three were involved when we did that. It was a lot of work, so we just kept pushing it, and then finally we were just like, "We can't push this anymore. We need to fix this issue. It's a recurring issue." And we did, and it made our show so much better, and I feel like we should have done it years ago. And that to me is easily our biggest mistake we ever made.

Grace: Yeah.

Jarrah: Yeah. 100%.

Kennedy: I don't know if I would call that a mistake, because you explained it. You collected the people that you had access to at the time. The three of us were doing our own things. We didn't know you all up until relatively recently in your run. I don't know if I would call that a mistake. I think it would have been a mistake had there not been an adjustment.

Aliza: That's exactly what I'm thinking too.

Andi: We still think that we could have done it earlier, I guess.

Sue: It was a learning experience.

Andi: Yeah. And I think the podcast landscape has changed a lot, even in just since we've been doing it, because this festival is a good example of that. We could not have done this six and a half years ago, we couldn't have done it. I'm telling you right now, there were just not as the depth of the different podcasting perspectives were just not there. But I feel like we could have done it maybe by our second year. I mean, we had black women guests by the second year. So, I feel like it was an honest mistake. The misstep that we made was not fixing it earlier because we could have, and it just kept because, I mean, we do this-- this is not our job, this is something that we do as a hobby, and so it's easy to be like, "Well, we'll talk about it later. We'll work on that later." And it just kept happening, and then we finally sat down and we're like, "Let's fix this." And it made our show so much better, and I'm really glad that we did that. And I'm really happy that you ladies are here now. And, yeah, so that's the one that I think of.

Aliza: I will say this. Kicking the can down the road is a thing that happens. I've been a part of other spaces that just kind of drag their feet and bringing in, and some still literally have not done it years and years and years later, after getting lots of feedback that they need to. And so, kicking the can down the road is a thing that I think is shared by white spaces that are faced now with having to think about these things. I'm not excusing it at all, and I'm glad that you take responsibility for it, Andi, thank you for that. But I also will say it is really good that when you did it, you were ready for us. As Kennedy said, you listened to us, you brought us in, and you didn't say, "Here's how we do things." You said, "Here's how we do things. What do you think? Do you think we should change this? Should we do this as well?" And you welcomed our ideas as well.

So, for any other all white or mostly white groups of people that are thinking about bringing people in, one way to not be shitheads when you do it is to be ready for them, be ready to listen. It all goes back to that listening thing, because honestly, there are some spaces that have wanted to bring me in, and I just notice in the way they talk about certain things and how they talk about it, is that I'm just going to be a token for them, I'm just checking off the box. They're not ready for me. They're not ready for other people of color. And if I include myself there, I'm signaling to other people of color and other women of color that it's safe when it's not. And so, you got to make sure you have a safe space, a safe landing pad for these people to come in.

Kennedy: Mm-hmm. And also launch properly. Like, my favorite thing about all of that, and probably why I'm so forgiving about it, is because you all announced us in such a receptive, loving, celebratory way that whatever animosity somebody might have had is like, "Well, shit, I got a press release."

[laughter]

Andi: The biggest [crosstalk] is, Kennedy, you got a little cartoon version of yourself.

[laughter]

Aliza: Yeah. Yeah.

Andi: I will never forget when we got the new version of our banner, how excited everyone was, and it's so good and so cute, and I love that we were able to bring the original artist back to do our new art, and that art is better. The art is better. Like, everything about it is better.

Sue: It was five years later, so everybody improved. And we also had a budget. I mean, that artist, I'll shout her out, Bethany, is Andi's friend. And she did the first time, when we first launched, she did our art for free. And when we came back to her this time and wanted it updated, we said, "We are going to pay you. We would like to pay you, not can we pay you, we are going to pay you."

Kennedy: Come on.

Jarrah: That's what I would say would be another success or thing I'm proud of is not just the art, but-- And I know we don't pay like a living wage to bloggers. People contribute to our blog occasionally. People do volunteer to do our transcripts, but we do pay honoraria and we don't-- Generally, we try not to ask people to write for us or to transcribe our episodes for free when we do collect money from Patreon, we want to add value back to our listeners and make our show more accessible and inclusive and not just be using it to develop the show, that's part of it, but we have kind of a broader mission.

Aliza: Wonderful. And that sounds like to me, a big success. So, with that, I'm going to say thank you all for listening. Thank you all, my co-hosts, for being here. To learn more about our show or to contact us, visit womenatwarp.com or find us on Facebook, Twitter or Instagram [@womenatwarp](https://www.instagram.com/womenatwarp). You can also go ahead and email us at crew@womenatwarp.com and for more Roddenberry podcasts, visit podcast.rodnenberry.com. And we'll be back tomorrow for day two of this podcast, IDIC Podcast Festival. If you're listening after the fact, there's lots more to find and listen to. So, check us out. Thanks so much for listening. Bye.

[Women at Warp theme]

This is a Roddenberry podcast. For more great podcasts, visit podcast.rodnenberry.com.

[Transcript provided by [SpeechDocs Podcast Transcription](#)]