

# PODCAST Episode 313

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## SPEAKERS

Steve Barclay, Lis Malone, Charlie Ayotte, Peter Field, Rob Mineault, David Best, Hanna Leavitt, Ryan Fleury

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 Rob Mineault 01:02

Hey, and welcome to another episode of AT Banter,

 Steve Barclay 01:07

Banter, banter.

 Rob Mineault 01:11

Hey, my name is Rob Mineault. Oh, and wait a minute. Did I screw that up already? I did and I

 Steve Barclay 01:18

No, no, your name is Rob Mineault.

 Rob Mineault 01:20

Oh, it is. Oh, thank goodness. Listen, I have been sick so I may have taken a Tylenol cold and flu medication earlier so I shouldn't be even operating a heavy, heavy machinery let alone driving a podcast. Okay, here we go. Hey, this is of course the podcast where we talk with advocates and members of the disability community to educate and inspire better conversation about disability. Hey, my name is Rob Mineault, and joining me today - phew, this is gonna be a lot of work. Mr. Ryan Fleury.

 Ryan Fleury 02:11

...  
Hello I'm redneck Ryan today.

R Rob Mineault 02:14

And also in the room, Miss Lis Malone.

L Lis Malone 02:19

Ms. Glitter and Spangles in the flesh.

R Rob Mineault 02:22

That's right. And, and that's not all. That is not all for your money today, people. We also have, making his triumphant return to the podcast, because I'm not even sure when the last episode is I think it's got it had to have been like three weeks ago. So he's been a very busy guy. But Mr. Steve Barclay is here.

S Steve Barclay 02:45

I'll be urban Steve today.

R Rob Mineault 02:47

All right. Rejoice all you barcal-heads there. you know that there's three or four people out there. They're jumping for joy right now.

S Steve Barclay 02:56

You figure?

R Rob Mineault 02:57

I think so. I mean, your Mom ... How's everybody? It's been so long since we've all been together All right, that's, that's been our update. I'm throwing out all the hard hitting questions. How is everybody?

L Lis Malone 03:26

I was expecting Steve to jump in and do the whole like, while I was away on my summer vacation ...

R

Rob Mineault 03:32

Because yeah, let's let's go to Steve for a minute. Let's go to Steve update, because it's been a while. So how are you Steve? We haven't seen you for a while. You've been very busy.

S

Steve Barclay 03:40

Yeah, I've been I've been running all over the place I've been. I did the Indigenous Disability and Wellness Gathering in Victoria. Last week. I am running around like a chicken with my head cut off this week getting ready for the Children's Low Vision Project Clinic in Chilliwack. Over the next few days, and then I will be running out the door with Kimberly Klein from LVI to do the Vancouver - Calgary -Edmonton and back route next week, so yeah, I've been hear and there, man.

R

Rob Mineault 04:18

Wow. Yeah. Okay. Yeah. Wow. Okay, well, that's been a Steve update. Well, okay. I'll give you my update. I'm sick. I got this cold that's going around. So Steve, I'm surprised you, your immune system sucks worse than mine.

S

Steve Barclay 04:42

Mine does?

R

Rob Mineault 04:43

Yeah, you you're always getting sick.

S

Steve Barclay 04:45

No, not really. I rarely get sick.

R

Rob Mineault 04:48

Really? Okay, who am I thinking of them?

L

Lis Malone 04:52

That's just you, Rob.

 Rob Mineault 04:53

Okay, maybe yeah, maybe I was just projecting that onto you. Maybe it is just my immune system. But I'm surprised nobody else is. gotten this stupid cold that's going around because everyone seems to be getting it.

 Steve Barclay 05:03

No. My daughter and her boyfriend both have it.

 Lis Malone 05:08

Well, I just have to throw this in. I am so high on life right now because my New Jersey Devils are whipping tail.

 Steve Barclay 05:17

Oh, they are owning it.

 Lis Malone 05:18

Holy cow. Let's just say sorry Canada they they have been whipping some serious tail through your countryside. But I gotta enjoy it. I'm a huge Devil's fan.

 Ryan Fleury 05:33

Time to get on with the show.

 Lis Malone 05:39

Right now 13 in a row.

 Steve Barclay 05:42

Yeah, cool. Goal differential of plus 29. 19 games played, 16 wins, three losses, 32 points. They are unfortunately, second in the league after Boston. Boston's kicking their butt. Well by two points. But by comparison, Vancouver's played 19 games won six, lost 10 and three overtime wins for a total of 15 points compared to the Devil's 32 points. So yeah, I won't be talking smack about the Devils.

 Lis Malone 06:18

There we go. There you go. Okay, we had to you know, we had to bring a little snorts back to

There we go. There you go. Okay, we had to you know, we had to bring a little sports back to the show and that okay, no, carry on. Sure.

 Rob Mineault 06:25

Well, that's fine. Listen, I'll throw my hat into the ring, too. I'm a big Springsteen fan. And so if I was gonna get behind a hockey team, maybe it'd be the New Jersey Devils. I could I could get behind that.

 Lis Malone 06:39

I think Bruce Springsteen would certainly approve of that.

 Rob Mineault 06:42

So there you go. Yeah. So yeah. All right. All right. Well, listen, enough of that. We've caught up. We've got our hockey update. Ryan.

 Ryan Fleury 06:55

Before you even go there? Are our guests still here?

 Charlie Ayotte 06:59

Yeah. I'm just wondering what we got ourselves into.

 Rob Mineault 07:07

This is, yeah, this is that's why he checked because we better do a roll call. Okay, Ryan?

 Ryan Fleury 07:20

Yes, sir.

 Rob Mineault 07:22

Enough silliness. Why don't we get right to the heart of the matter? Tell the fine folks at home just what the heck we're doing today.

 Ryan Fleury 07:31

- - - - -

Sure. So today we are talking with the team of the Pandora Project and the hosts of the Triple Vision podcast. And they are Charlie Ayotte , Hanna Leavitt , David Best and Peter Field. So welcome, everybody. Glad you could all make it.

P Peter Field 07:54

So we're not talking hockey now?

R Ryan Fleury 07:55

No not anymore.

C Charlie Ayotte 08:02

I'm trying to figure out what great line to come back is to Urban Cowboy.

R Rob Mineault 08:11

We we set a lot of groundwork in that opening for sure. Well, listen, we are thrilled to have you guys on and and this is most definitely the the most crowded podcast that that we've ever had in our history. So we are excited. But we're also really excited to talk to you about about the Pandora Project and about the podcast for sure, because it's such a great idea. But before we do, maybe we could just go down the line and maybe if each of you could just give you give us a real just brief introduction to to who you are, and we'll go from there.

C Charlie Ayotte 08:49

Okay. My name is Charlotte Ayotte, I'm however known as Charlie. I'm located in Ottawa. I'm a now retired former entrepreneur, and advocate for all things accessibility. And that's about who I am. The company I started with TBS Communication, it's now been rebranded Alient. And it was an exciting part of my life and what I believe I was meant to do

H Hanna Leavitt 09:24

My name is Hanna Leavitt , I'm in Victoria BC and I'm a bit of a blindness historian. And I really enjoy I've really enjoyed finding out a lot about our history. And now we have a forum to share that. And I'm also a published author and so I'm in the group because mostly because of that, because we do want to eventually produce a book on on the topic of the history of blindness in Canada.

D David Best 09:55

Yeah, who am I? Yeah, hi, I'm David Best. And I have for most of my career or worked as a

software engineer, or and I recently retired from IBM. And I now do my own thing. I work a lot with small and medium sized organizations wanting to develop digital communications, especially in the accessibility realm. And I guess, primarily, I work with the Pandora Team and helping with the Triple Vision Podcast, I do the the editing and prepare the recording for the final output.

P

Peter Field 10:39

And I'm Peter Field, I'm coming from beautiful Port Coquitlam today, just outside Vancouver, I am a semi retired person retired about three years ago from the federal government. And I have the pleasure of leading this team. I also am also involved in the second podcast on AMI called Eyes on Your Money with Ryan and Becky. Financial podcast devoted to financial literacy and funded by the Canadian Council for Rehabilitation. I work, and I do some consulting on currently involved in a project, researching and consulting and Guide Dog barriers in Canada. So that's us. That's the that's the TVP team.

R

Rob Mineault 11:27

So maybe we can just start by giving us a little bit of an overview of the Pandora Project and just how it how it all started.

P

Peter Field 11:38

Yeah, for that we have to go to Charlie, because Pandora is Charlie's name. Charlie came up with the name Pandora. And came up with the idea of a book. So Charlie, you want to talk start talking about that and then I'll jump in?

C

Charlie Ayotte 11:53

Yeah. Okay. For a long time, I had been thinking about how our story has been told, as part of our history of blindness in Canada. And it never quite felt right. Because having experienced going through all of this the last 40 years or so 45, maybe 50. Damn, I'm getting old. I approached Peter, after he had retired from his federal government job and said that I thought we could do this and should do it. It was time to write a book. I didn't want to write it. And Peter, Peter, was kind of not really, but kind of keen. In fact, but we came up with the name Pandora, because technology had leveled the playing field for blind people. And because of that, it opened that box where we had been sitting and sweating in the dark for so many decades, that the box lid has come off, or the jar lid has come off and we can't be put back in. So it was time to tell this story. Because with the freedom and access to information technology, we were in a position to do so. And that's how it started. And then we had to reel in a bunch of other people like John Ray, who passed away in April. And David and Hannah, who was a writer who we thought, great, we can write a book. But we had to do a lot of research before that. So Peter, I'm going to turn it over to you.

P

Peter Field 13:46

Yeah, thanks, Charlie. So Pandora is the overall vision of the project. So Charlie said, there was a book that we wanted to do. The book is and will be to tell the history of Canadians who are blind, deaf, blind, partially sighted from the point of view of those individuals who have the lived experience, as opposed to others. And we'll talk more about that later, as we get around to what happens when other people tell our story, what story comes out, when we're not the ones telling it. So went off to Canadian Heritage looking for funding for a book. And it turned out that they don't have much funding for a book a little bit maybe. But they said we could we can fund podcasts and we can fund that learning curriculum. And we could fund part of your book if you want to submit an application to the Canada History Fund. We were not able to do that in September. We had a sponsor pulled out kind of last minute just kind of high and dry. We waited till sorry, September September 2021, we applied again and waited from September to April. And they said, no, so sorry, we're short of funds this year, we're not going to fund it at this point. So in the meantime, though, we, we have been able to move ahead with the podcasts, thanks to the generous support of T-Bass now Aliant, who is funding part of the podcast, and Charlie herself, who's funding part of the podcasts out of her own pocket. So we have been able to carry on now into our second season. So our first season was 26 episodes, one episode every two weeks, through AMI, and we're just in the last two weeks, told by Aliant that they have the funds to fund this for a second season. So we're expecting to be back on air in January.

R

Rob Mineault 16:07

So how have you found the podcast format in terms of recording this? And can you maybe speak to a little bit about what kind of format the episodes are? Like, is it sort of going in chronological order? Are you breaking down certain different issues at different times? How does the podcast format sort of contribute to being able to do that?

P

Peter Field 16:32

Yeah, good question. So basically, we've proceeded along thematic lines. So we did start kind of chronologically with podcast number two, podcast number one was just as introducing ourselves, podcast number two, we picked up on a book out there from Serge Doerflinger, who's a professor of history at University of Ottawa, who wrote a book called *Veterans With a Vision*, which was about returning soldiers returning from World War One who were blinded during the war, and eventually decided, you know, they needed to form their own organization, which led to the organization of the Canadian National Institute for the Blind, CNIB. And there's a whole history around that, of course, again, we can talk about more, more about that later. So that was sort of episode one. Episode two, we did talk a little bit more about the history of CNIB, with Jim Sanders, former CEO. We got into the topic of colonialism after that. And then we kind of proceeded along thematic lines, we talked about library services. We talked about eugenics, we talked about employment, we talked about education, we talked about advocacy.

D

David Best 17:54

Now Charlie's good at getting people involved in things. And she talked to Peter about getting this Pandora Project going, and Peter came to me and somehow I got involved. And I think it was a rather interesting venture to get into I know very little about the history of blindness in

Canada. And that's really what we were trying to do is find out what is the real true history of blindness in Canada. And it's all based on our theme, is really based on the single narrative we want to have. The Canadian people, the Canadian Blindness Community tell their story in their words by telling us about their experiences, their dreams, and goals and where things are going. And it's a learning experience, because we started off by interviewing people that we could reach that we knew had expertise and understanding history of library services, history of advocacy. And we found that as we developed the podcast and interviewed more and more people, that there was a lot more to the story that we could actually cover in a single podcast, when we're talking about a particular theme. And so we have sort of evolved the podcast over the last year or two, going from interviewing for specific, factual information to talk a little bit more about the story. And in our second year, I think we're going to be trying to develop that even further by getting more in depth of getting into the story that individuals have.

 Rob Mineault 19:45

So I mean, it sounds almost like the podcast is sort of taken a life of its own. I mean, initially, it was kind of sort of a backup plan from the book, but it sounds like as you guys have evolved and grown it. It's almost become its own thing.

 Hanna Leavitt 20:04

Well, this really, we've really discovered. Every time we take on a new topic, we discover, instead of doing one podcast about it, we need to do three or four, there's a lot to the story, right? And there's a lot of history about the different things we've had that, you know, a lot of us didn't know about. So it's been, it's been really interesting. It's been interesting to identify blind people throughout history who have made major contributions to us in terms of library services, and other in other areas as well. So one of the things we're doing in the podcast as well, or outside the podcast is keeping a list of those people. Because as a writer, I feel like we don't as as, as a community of blind people, like we need our own sort of pantheon of heroes as well. So we have to identify them first. So yeah, that's been a really, really interesting exercise is to realize how much there really is out there. In terms of content for, like, even education, we, you know, we talked about the different blind schools in Canada. And I mean, we've all understood that Halifax School for the Blind has always been the first school for the blind in Canada. But hey, upon more research, we know that, that Quebec actually had the first schools for the blind in Canada, that preceded Halifax, and even the first Association for the Blind that preceded the formation of CNIB. So we found some really interesting facts out in our research, and it's going to make really interesting content.

 Charlie Ayotte 21:51

And to get there, we've had to do some research and dig in at Archives Canada, that takes a lot of work. And it's also that part is an expensive venture, just being able to track down things like the schools, for example, were asylums for the blind and education. And it was that kind of initial stereotyping that has stayed with blind people for over 100 years.

 Peter Field 22:23

Literally, I think what's really interesting, though, I know you're gonna go down the kind of the stereotyping route, and that's, that's definitely, you know, a theme that we've sort of been picking up on. But I think what really strikes me is that when we look at the sort of earlier heroes, so we'll call them heroes. It's kind of a funny word, but trailblazers. So a guy like Bert Robinson, right? So Bert Robinson was the first graduate from a Canadian University, kind of got through university using various kinds of reading materials, some Braille I think, and even some precursor formats to Braille, probably with a lot of support of his father, and then started the Free Library for the Blind in Toronto, basically, around 1900, somewhere or shortly before, which eventually was taken over by the CNIB and became the CNIB Library after Bert sadly passed away fairly young. His wife had taken that on, she couldn't maintain it. So guy like Bert Robinson kind of stood this thing up all on its own, all on his own. So not a guy, not a stereotypical individual going to your stereotype comment, utterly, but a real Trailblazer, right? And then a guy like Philip Leightons. So Philip Leighton, who started the Montreal Association for Blind came to Canada from England, because he said, I don't want to be treated the way I am here in England. There's no opportunities for me here. came to England to work for his brother who had they had a music studio music store. The great grandfather of Jack Layton was a huge sort of pillar of that Layton family, again started the Montreal Association for the Blind, went head to head with Baker, Edwin Baker of the CNIB vying for, you know, who would who would be the representative of the blind population in Canada. And again, not not your stereotypical individuals. So, you know, we we've had stereotypes I think, through history, but we have our Trailblazers too. And that's that's part of the story that we want to tell through the podcast.

 Rob Mineault 25:02

Well, and that's why I think that it's such an important podcast. And this is such a great idea because you think of all these stories that that would just be lost, they would just be, you know, gathering dust in the archive somewhere. And, and the youth in the community would have absolutely no idea and these names, we would just kind of be lost in the history.

 Ryan Fleury 25:28

Well, even myself, Rob, who lost the sight later in life, almost 30 years ago, I had no idea of a lot of that history in the Triple Vision Podcast, and still until I started listening to it. So it's not even just the younger generation, there's probably tons of people in older demographics that aren't aware of the history.

 Hanna Leavitt 25:47

Well, the big thing about history is that we feel really strongly about is, you know, we have to unearth it, I mean, we need to, we need to be proud of those who came before us and and who established so many foundational type programs. And like we need to, they need to be recognized, not just fade away into history, right?

 Ryan Fleury 26:08

Like curb cuts, right, we all take it for granted that we have accessible books. Now, I don't even know where that all started and how it came about, right?

 Rob Mineault 26:10

Well, and now individually, this must be a really valuable project to all be a part of, because I'm sure that that the learning curve for all of you is sort of off the charts as well, I know that for us doing this podcast and talking to all kinds of different people. I'm constantly saying, like, I get a an incredible amount of value out of the podcast, because I'm always learning. And that's really exciting. So I'm just wondering, for each of you, like, what kind of impact has the podcast sort of had on each of you.

 David Best 26:38

Something you can probably relate to is one of our big challenges is editing. We get so much great information. And we have interviews that can go on for quite a while. But when it comes down to doing the podcast, we have to edit out a lotta a lot of stuff, which is why in our second year, we're sort of changing our format to allow that, that more of the dialogue to get into play.

 Hanna Leavitt 27:17

I'm kind of the one who reads through a slog through all the boring history books, and finds all kinds of interesting things. Like we all know that Louis Braille you know, added to down the military version of night reading and, and came up with Braille, and that's been adopted throughout the world. And that's the only story I ever knew about a language for blind people. And I just I think in the last two weeks, I read a book about a guy in in Edinburgh, Scotland at the Edinburgh School for the Blind. At around the same time Louis Braille was coming up with Braille they had developed here and some instructors there had developed something called the string alphabet. So it was tactile, it was a length of string. And they would use a different knots and loops and things to represent the alphabet. And so by running their fingers along the string, they could make they could there was a narrative there. And and I have never heard of the string alphabet before, before that book. And I thought that was fascinating, right? So I don't know what a book would look like in string alphabet.

 Steve Barclay 28:35

But can you imagine trying to do refreshable string Braille?

 Hanna Leavitt 28:44

I mean, I thought that was fascinating.

 Ryan Fleury 28:48

Well, I think that's a great point. I think that's a great point. I think that's a great point.

Well, it's fascinating to that Braille is still evolving. It's only been in the last couple of weeks or month where we now have a Braille code for Micmaw that a woman in Halifax developed. Yeah, Braille is still evolving and developing for other languages in the indigenous cultures.

 **Hanna Leavitt 29:05**

So yeah, even even for like mathematics. Like Abraham Dimas, is in our lifetime. He was, you know, a scientist who developed mathematics and scientific, like algebraic and all that. And, and, I mean, he's, most people don't even realize that he just died in the 80s.

 **David Best 29:27**

So you know, I think one of the other challenges we have is actually getting to the stories. It's really hard to find those people that have the history, the knowledge and the stories that we're we're looking for. So we're really hoping that in the second year, we can really start getting into more of the personal stories that people have, whether it's personal or whether it's back in their, you know, their parents grandparents time. But it's important for us to be able to find those people that we can talk to.

 **Peter Field 30:09**

I think that is the biggest challenge for me, David, it's just, you know, if you're gonna do this, and you're gonna do this, right, you need to take the time, right? You need to take the time. And kind of like Hannah has said is kind of beat the bushes to find out who has the story. Where is this person? Where do they live? You know, have them come on the podcast. One of the going back to challenges we talked about, it might have been in our advocacy series, where we talked about the charter. And there's a complete story that we really haven't explored as in depth about the fact that when, when the Charter of Rights and Freedoms and the Constitution was going through cabinet in the early 80s, that persons with disabilities, or were being left out, and they weren't going to be included because they thought it was going to be too costly. And marches happened, bigger, had people with disabilities up on Parliament Hill marching away. And some of those people are still around Yvonne Peters, who's retired. He's a lawyer and Human Rights Commissioner from Manitoba was one of those people, David Lebowski, who you may know, retired lawyer, blind lawyer from Toronto, made a presentation to the House of Commons committee just indicating why people disabilities needed to be in the charter. And, and as a result, you know, very, very last minute, 11th hour we were included. Well, we talked to Yvonne and David, in that podcast just for us to tell for them to tell us their story. But you know that that's an entire podcast in itself, one of those two people. So you know, we're going to be trying to be very deliberate this year, and in giving those guests the scope, and the time that they need to be really full and rich, but their storytelling. Charlie, do you want to talk about the single story, and the danger of the single story?

 **Charlie Ayotte 32:19**

Sure. One night, when I was sitting around and exploring TED talks, I found a presentation done by a woman from Nigeria and the title was The Danger of a Single Story. And she spoke of her experience living in Nigeria, and having two parents each which was professor, and each of

which would bring home books for her to read. And she was an avid reader. And she learned about winter and apple pie is and what life was like in North America. And to her, her experience was, what is an apple? What is an apple pie? Is that like a mango pie? That kind of conversation? And what was this thing called winter and snow, the only season in Nigeria was hot. And because of what you're exposed to, which is all things North American, because that's where the literature was coming from. She became aware of the need to have Nigerian stories, a take prevalence over in that conversation. And I think I'm getting this right, maybe Hannah. But it's like when other people tell your story they're telling it from their perspective. And what was missing for us as blind people was that it wasn't our story that was being written. It was the story of the institutions, who has an obligation to continue their longevity and resist change. And my question was always, how did we get here? How did we come to be in a place where as blind people, we were subjected to the story being told about us by a service provider, not not by the voice or not through the voices of blind people. And, and this, the danger of the single story kind of embodied what was happening to us. It was there was one story being told. It was always the story told by CNIB and the voices of organized, blind advocates were being ignored. And they were being ignored in really awful way, by, let's not give them any necessary funding to organize. Let's make sure that the consultation takes place with the service provider and not with blind people. And it was that, and I hate to come back to this, Peter, but it's about the stereotyping. It ordered to bring in donations to support the work of the institution. They had to make us appear to not be who we were or who and who we were become a skilled, knowledgeable, talented pool of people that brought breadth to the conversation. Anyway, that's the danger of a single story. Yeah, once Nori, and there's no change, which continues on today. Absolutely.

P

Peter Field 36:07

Yeah, so exactly right. And so that's the theme that we're going to pick up on now in Season Two. And we're going to start looking from issues from the point of view of the single story. So the fact that this issue is around, or this is where we're at, is that the product of the single story is that the product of someone telling, well, this is what should happen. I'll give you another example. This is a podcast about technology. We sat down a few weeks ago to talk about well, is there a single story around technology? And there might have been right, the fact that, you know, the kinds of innovations that we're seeing now in technology and, and universal design, and products, like VoiceOver on Apple is pretty new, right? Universal Design itself is fairly new. Prior to that, was there a single story being told around the kind of technology blind people should have? Or blind people should use or blind people should have access to? How come Universal Design took so long? Is that because there is a single story around? You know, think about Braille, they got a Perkins Brailler, they got into this another? They'll be fine, right? I don't know the answer to that question. But those are the kinds of questions that we're asking.

C

Charlie Ayotte 37:24

And what's there a bit of protectionism taking place to keep the community of blind people as a, as a single source of that would benefit the institutions providing the services. Keep us in that box? Pandora's box. It's open now.

R

Ryan Fleury 37:47

Time for an uprising. Let's do it.

R Rob Mineault 37:54

Ryan's just dying, because he wants to storm the legislature, he wants to fight.

R Ryan Fleury 37:59

For many podcasts, I've been saying the blindness community doesn't get anything done is because we can't agree on anything.

R Rob Mineault 38:06

One day, we'll find it in the budget to send Ryan to the legislature and send him in

C Charlie Ayotte 38:16

It needs to happen. I mean, what other communities endured this kind of a treatment for so long. It's like, it's, it's the impact of colonialism, on all kinds of marginalized people in this country.

R Rob Mineault 38:39

Right. And that's why, you know, again, I have to, I have to say, again, I keep saying it, but this podcast, and this project is really, really important. Because I think that all of this would just get lost. I mean, we're on the, on the edge of a lot of the people that you're talking to, ya know, you know, they're not going to be around forever. And some of these stories are going to be lost to the ages. But I'm also kind of curious to know now that you've you guys are able to sort of take this historical perspective, and look at all this history and, and uncover a lot of these stories, and look at the different trends throughout the 20th century and into the 21st. Now, I'm just curious to know is has there anything that you've that you've noticed that surprises you in terms of trends, or are you able to sort of sort of apply some of the different historical aspects of looking into the past to sort of be able to apply them to what's going on now? And to really, does anything sort of stand out to you in that aspect?

H Hanna Leavitt 39:49

One of the things that I realized I mean, I'm very impatient for change as well as most people are. But I, when I was reading about a Vancouver blind woman named Isabel Beveridge. I learned that she was the first woman, blind woman to graduate from the University of BC. And I mean, that wasn't until the 1940s. And it made me realize that well, you know, we haven't had. And I mean, that was without access to any kind of technology and stuff that was really, you know, her father read or all or textbooks, right. But I mean, you know, that generation or, you

know, that group of people that have been able to get an education, and use it in ways to help our community. I mean, that's pretty recent. And, you know, that's, that was something for me to recognize.

P

Peter Field 40:49

I think, I think we saw the trends. You know, I think we saw the progress in the sense that, you know, we kind of started back, as I said, with World War One. And then, after World War Two, and around that you kind of had the formation of different organizations like the CCB. And you had Philip Layton around, and his, his son, actually, Gilbert Layton, kind of lobbying for what, what, what is the future of blind people in Canada, and they sort of duked it out one day, in a meeting. And in London, Ontario, and, and Philip, are Gilbert actually kind of lost that model, when it kind of went over to the CNIB, and the CCB. And then you sort of have this period where we didn't really find that much happened kind of between then and the 70s. But all of a sudden, in the 70s, you had people like John Ray, Michael York, and and other people who, you know, decide looked at the civil rights movement in the US, and look, how other groups were getting rights and including the disability groups in the US and said, well, there's no reason why we can't do that here. And that was kind of the storming of the legislature. At that point, I would say, Ryan, these were really militant people who, you know, who, who took this to heart. And, and, you know, I'll just maybe said, one John Ray story that we really liked was John was a thorn in the side of the provincial government. And, and he walked into their offices once a day and one day and said, Well, you know, if you want me out of your hair, give me a job. And they did. So he had a career after that, with the Ontario Public Service, so, you know, had this group of people coming out of schools in the 70s, and, you know, mad as hell, and we're going to take it anymore. And it really kind of took things by storm. And then, you know, I think then we got into the 80s, with the charter, and then technology and so on. So you can see the trends, you know, all the way up to the Accessible Canada Act. You know, I don't you know, depending on what people think of that, at least there's an app there now. And then, you know, what's the future? Well, we're not sure. But we're hoping those trends are going to continue those those positive trends.

H

Hanna Leavitt 43:27

We're going to make those things continue, Peter.

D

David Best 43:31

Yeah, yeah, we are. I think for me, I've come to realize over the last year more and more that the blindness community really, is really no different than the rest of the population. In that our narrative, our story is told through a very narrow focus point. And this is something that I think, because it's it's a small community, in a large country, that we don't really hear the voices of the individuals, we hear the voices of service organizations and government. But I think we like other groups. Like for example, in the 1970s, the women's group changed the whole narrative of the women's place in society. It became a rather large movement continues today. And I think the danger we have today is that as we become more polarized through social media, and people just having time only to listen to one news channel, they don't listen to all of the other stories that are being told that I think we can see that our story is very similar to the racial

problems we have in Canada. The the narrative of certain races are being told through a narrow channel. And so I think our, what I've come to realize is that our story is really not that much different. We just need to get on the stage we, we just need to get more attention.

 Rob Mineault 45:17

Well, so now I'm curious, though, in terms of what kind of reception has the podcast had? Are you getting any sort of pushback from, say, the CNIB? You know, because, you know, when you when you are building these narratives are they're sort of going counter to what the official story is? I don't know is that is that people? Have you heard anything from anybody?

 Charlie Ayotte 45:42

I've annoyed a few people. Guaranteed. I can remember back in the days when I started T-Base, and I would ask for information format that I could use that was audio based, because I'm an audio based learner, that I remember that at Treasury Board, some of the people in the communications director finally said, "buy that women a computer, so she gets off our back". And then I got my first computer. And it was like, Oh, my God, take that computer away. Because having access to information at any time, anywhere you needed, it was an absolute delight. And I had spent 10 years without access to books, because nobody had let me know that there was ways that I get to get access to audio books. And when I found out, I could have the hunt, and I had access to a computer, so I could have it any time anywhere. I wasn't going back into that box again. So Pandora's Box keeps the emerging here.

 David Best 47:03

Charlie, you're absolutely right. Because Pandora, really, the purpose of it was to raise the issues was to give the the individuals a voice. And it's really not our intention to create any kind of conflicts with, you know, grassroots groups and service organizations, but rather, we want to have the story told, and we are quite willing to invite organizations, whether it's government or CNIB, to join our narrative. We've had interviews with certain people from CNIB, the library and the CEO. So we do engage them and try to get them to, to sort of understand our side.

 Peter Field 47:47

Yeah, we've had we've had a researcher on talking about genetics. We had former CEO Jim Sanders, we've had the archivist Jane Beaumont. .

 Hanna Leavitt 48:13

And then the, the employment fellow as well.

 Peter Field 48:18

..

Oh, sorry, who was that?

H Hanna Leavitt 48:20

Um, was it Gore?

P Peter Field 48:22

Wayne? Yeah, yeah. So we've had, we've had guests on. We're, I'm thinking we're a little bit under the radar still, in terms of that particular organization,

C Charlie Ayotte 48:41

That may change this year.

P Peter Field 48:42

Yeah, I'm gonna say I think when we need to challenge... we've decided in year two, we're going to push a little harder to it a little bit more edgy. John Ray was our voice of edginess saying you're not you know, edgy enough, you know, you're not pushing hard enough. You're not controversial enough. So we're going to probably, I don't know, we're planning to take that to heart in Year Two. And when we get into this single story theme to say, okay, so who's who has been telling our story?

H Hanna Leavitt 49:17

Yeah, one of the things about all of our organizations, we're all volunteer based, you know, for the most part, and it takes a lot of time to get the podcast together and edited and everything like that. You know, we talked about developing lists of like MLAs MPs, that type of thing and different people in different disability organizations. And every time we put out a podcast, like sending them a link to the podcast and saying, you know, you need to know about this, but that all takes time, you know. You know, we podcast a little bit more, and get it out to like, say MLAs and MPs that, and even local people like our local mayors and things so they understand some more of the issues that are facing their blind citizens.

R Rob Mineault 50:19

Yeah, that's a really good point. I mean, I I'm sure that this, this is also a, you know, an incredible learning experience for people in the mainstream as well as the blindness community themselves.

C Charlie Ayotte 50:32

Well, I mean, it's been so revealing to all of us how stilted this thing has been, that it that we, we need to look at some of the modeling that has taken place, that as we, as we look at matters of governance, where the board of directors of, of our grassroots movements are elected by membership for by members. And we, we send our members off to sit on committees and become part of the conversation. But it doesn't always happen that way. Sometimes, the service provider will point to the person they want to represent our organization. And they that road they go down. So it's like they become or have become the advocacy for blindness in Canada. That's one of their objectives to become the advocate. And, and I look at that, and I think, well, would we give up our consumer rights to Walmart to speak on our behalf? I don't think so. Service providers provide services. They're not our advocates. We are advocates.

 H Hanna Leavitt 52:01

I think, Charlie, one of the things you and I had a really, really eye opening kind of experience on was our podcasts about eugenics. And the role of our service provider. the role they played. in the eugenics story for blind people in Canada. That was a real really surprising,

 P Peter Field 52:21

Very scary story. It was it was it was very frightening.

 D David Best 52:27

Yeah, I think our our podcasts have revealed one thing in that over time, our our position in society has shifted, over 100 years ago, we were more or less a burden to families and friends, we then became part of the charity model where charities took over the care of blind people. And then over recently became more of a medical model, we follow the medical model. And I think we're now moving more into the social model where we're actually becoming part of society as an active participant.

 C Charlie Ayotte 53:13

We're not going to take the crap anymore.

 R Ryan Fleury 53:15

Yeah, we need more people to yell and scream, though some of us are getting old.

 C Charlie Ayotte 53:21

There's another, there's another piece that comes into that. And it's part of the conversation. And it's the willful blindness. Of those who know better, though it's in governments, those in the institutions that know full well, that some of their policies and strategies have led to the

isolation of blind people in Canada, and kept us out of the mainstream. But technology has changed that so that I think there's a that that trend towards greater independence, because of the technology available to us today that's accessible right out the box. So there's less financial restraint, there still is financial restraint, because some of this technology, it's expensive, but it's accessible, right at this box, the same stuff, everybody else use this.

 Rob Mineault 54:17

And it's, it's interesting, you know, yes, we absolutely have come a long way. But then again, you know, you know, you only have to look as far back as COVID and sort of the, you know, sort of some may call it botched response, in terms of in terms of building a path for people with disabilities. You know, so we still have a long way to go. Absolutely. But it's so fascinating to sort of have that historical perspective to have a look on and apply it to today.

 Peter Field 54:58

Yeah, it's it's good to see the trend, I think the trend is overall positive. And, you know, hopefully more positive, you know, that, that trend that we talked about a long time, you know, as we move along towards universalism designed towards incorporating needs into into the way products services COVID testing kits should be designed, right. So, that should be the trend, and it's sort of like, you can't really let your foot off the gas. Because if you if you do, you're kind of gonna, you're gonna kind of get left behind. So that, you know, I, you know, I've heard I've heard one of your podcasts, but I assume that's, that's something that you guys want to talk about a lot in terms of, how are they how things are designed to meet everybody's needs?

 Rob Mineault 55:52

Yeah. I mean, it's certainly a recurring theme here as well. But I, you know, I don't know, I guess I'd like to look at it as, as you know, back, you know, 100 years ago, it may have been sort of, you know, almost willful neglect. And these days when those things happen, I kind of like to think it's more of just, they're just meatheads, and they didn't think of it. You know, you know, the ArriveCan guys who made the app, they didn't think about accessibility. So it at least maybe we've made progress.

 Charlie Ayotte 56:30

right on airplanes and everything.

 Rob Mineault 56:44

Yeah, so I mean, it still happens. But you know, it's, I guess, maybe if the, the intent maybe is, is slightly better these days. It's just people don't necessarily think of it. And hopefully, it's podcasts like yours and podcasts like ours, hopefully, that, you know, will will help move the

needle a little bit. And people will start to actually think of these things before they make policy.

P

Peter Field 57:09

Yeah, but it is amazing. I think, yeah. You raised it in terms of Donovan's experience hitting the news, the the woman from Minnesota who wouldn't let her get on a plane with her dog, because she hadn't, you know, filled out a form. I mean, this, you know, it doesn't take long for this stuff now to surface and for somebody to be caught out. So, yeah, I think that's a big change.

D

David Best 57:32

In general, there's two global trends that you need to keep your focus on when you're trying to, you know, understand the historical context of blind people within society. And that's the first one trend is the innovation technology trend. You know, back in the 1900s, technology was sort of developed for a particular human need for whether you're deaf or blind that typically it was human centered design. So technology has really pushed its way into society, because for the longest time, technology was built for the sake of technology, and then it was sold to the market and pushed as they created their own demand. The other trend that we need to look at is the human rights trend, because right across the world, we're seeing government's coming up with more and more legislation with regard to accessibility and disability. And I think with the women's movement, growing in strength, we see push back toward the the innovation so we see a push pull effect between these two trends. And I think our next challenge coming up in the next few years is going to be the artificial intelligence, research and development and how that's going to affect the human evolution.

R

Rob Mineault 59:03

Yeah, we need to make sure we keep Elon Musk far away from AI.

P

Peter Field 59:14

Exactly exactly, but we all want our self driving cars right sooner, the better.

S

Steve Barclay 59:20

Hey, I was supposed to have a flying car by now.

R

Ryan Fleury 59:28

I think you can find them>

P Peter Field 59:35

I've got a watch that I can talk into and make a phone call just like Dick Tracy.

R Rob Mineault 59:42

it's true. And if you know if they made an iShoe it would be just like Get Smart.

P Peter Field 59:50

That's a true wearable.

R Rob Mineault 59:54

So where when does when does Season Two start?

P Peter Field 59:59

Well I was waiting for confirmation from AMI, but January, notionally January so we're in touch with them or we're getting all the the i's dotted and the T's crossed. We're, storyboarding, we're arranging guests. So it should be January.

R Rob Mineault 1:00:19

Wonderful. While I'm looking forward to it. I absolutely love the podcast. I recommend every all our listeners, head over and give it a listen to it. It's great. Before we let you all go, maybe if you can tell us where people can find the podcast and more information about the Pandora Project. Absolutely anything at all that that you guys want to plug. Now's your chance.

D David Best 1:00:45

Well, I guess the first place they could reach out to us is through the triplevision21@gmail.com. And I think we have the @triplevision21 twitter feed as well. Yeah. What else is there, Peter?

P Peter Field 1:01:11

Well, the podcast is available on all the all the major podcasting platforms. Apple, Spotify, Simplecast. It's all out there. We don't have a web presence yet. Definitely. That's something that we we'd like to. But as David said, reach out to us at triplevision21@gmail.com. Find us on Twitter at triplevision21. And you know, just ask your smart, smart speaker to play the latest episode of triple vision. And and that'll happen.

R

Ryan Fleury 1:01:47

If you want to sponsor the book. Send them an email, let them know.

P

Peter Field 1:01:52

Yeah, no, yeah, yeah.

C

Charlie Ayotte 1:01:56

We need greater push on having our history told. So it's like, let's let's make it happen by insisting that it happened.

P

Peter Field 1:02:07

And we need likes and subscribers just like every other podcasters it's really hard to figure out who's listening and who's not unless people like and subscribe. So please do that. Please like us, please.

S

Steve Barclay 1:02:20

We know for a fact that we have at least five people listening

R

Rob Mineault 1:02:32

That means everybody here and Steve's mom Listen, it was an absolute delight talking to you all. Thanks so much for making time to come talk to us. Best of luck with Season Two. You guys are doing really, really incredible work. Keep it up. And anytime you guys want to come back because I feel like we could have talked for another hour to be honest. We would love to have you guys back.

P

Peter Field 1:03:07

Thank you very much.

D

David Best 1:03:08

Yes, absolutely.

P

Peter Field 1:03:10

And we'll be listening. We'll be listening to AT Banter

R Rob Mineault 1:03:13

Alright guys, nice to meet you as well.

R Ryan Fleury 1:03:15

Thank you so much for coming. I know it's evening in Ontario. And dinnertime,

C Charlie Ayotte 1:03:21

My bedtime..

R Ryan Fleury 1:03:22

Oh, my goodness. Well, thank you for staying. Thanks, everyone. Thank you. All right.

R Rob Mineault 1:03:33

Hi. So Lis, do you want to give us a update on the score of the Devils game?

L Lis Malone 1:03:41

They are not playing this evening, but they play Toronto tomorrow?

R Rob Mineault 1:03:45

Oh, do they? Okay, yeah.

L Lis Malone 1:03:49

Just letting you know that they beat them then their last meeting today? Like I said they won the last 13

R Ryan Fleury 1:03:56

Why did Rob bring up hockey again?

R Rob Mineault 1:03:59

R

ROB MINEAULT 1:03:59

I was just kidding. Like go sports or what? Well, listen, I don't know maybe maybe New Jersey Devils will be my new team.

R

Ryan Fleury 1:04:07

Oh my goodness.

L

Lis Malone 1:04:08

Good team to get behind.

R

Rob Mineault 1:04:11

Now here we go. I don't want to be I don't know. Did the new dirty, New Jersey. New Dirty.

S

Steve Barclay 1:04:18

Dirty dirty jersey. Dirty devils.

R

Rob Mineault 1:04:22

Dirty devils. No. Did they ever play the Vancouver Canucks? Are they in the same zone or whatever?

L

Lis Malone 1:04:27

Yeah, they played them and they won. Poor Canucks.

S

Steve Barclay 1:04:33

I know it's brutal. You know, they're they're talking about trading our captain No.

R

Ryan Fleury 1:04:39

Because this is a trade it doesn't matter who coaches the team the team sucks has always sucked it will always suck.

S

Steve Barclay 1:04:44

Okay. Is it the rain? Is it the rain?

R

Ryan Fleury 1:04:47

Doesn't matter who they trade. How many coaches have gone through in the last five years? How many players have they traded and they still can't get there?

S

Steve Barclay 1:04:56

We got a new general manager now and he's gonna shake things up in a new way.

R

Rob Mineault 1:05:04

There's always hope I have opened up Pandora's box right here. What was I thinking?

S

Steve Barclay 1:05:14

I can tell you that if they trade Bohorvat there's going to be people kicking the door down and they're going to be so mad at these guys. Oh, yeah. Yeah, for sure. For sure. He's heart and soul of this team right now. And you could probably trade anybody else.

R

Ryan Fleury 1:05:35

Peterson you gotta keep Peterson, he's the only one scoring.

S

Steve Barclay 1:05:37

Wait. A second in the league for scoring. Jersey. Okay. Yeah, he's what he's like a goal. Maybe two behind McDavid? Wow.

R

Rob Mineault 1:05:48

I feel like the last time this happened Ryan was like, oh, I'm not into hockey. Anyways, So thoughts. i This is such a cool idea. I absolutely adore this idea.

R

Ryan Fleury 1:06:09

Well, there's, like I said earlier, there's a lot of us who don't know the history behind blindness in Canada. And it is fascinating to go through it and listen to some of the stuff that happened not that long ago. Yeah. I mean, all of those names.

R Rob Mineault 1:06:24

I knew none of those names that they were throwing around. I was like, I haven't heard of any of these people.

S Steve Barclay 1:06:31

But I've been doing this for 30 plus years. 32 this month, actually. But yeah, I know a lot of those names. I mean, some of them. David Lebowski, for example. They have a great idea, a great concept for a podcast because there are so many not just compelling stories. Some of them are just weird as snot and so entertaining. Yeah, they've got a, they've got a great body of material to work with.

R Rob Mineault 1:07:06

For sure. Well, you know, and I didn't even want to say anything, but I was kind of like this is this whole idea this, this suits a podcast better than a book? I mean, sure, you can, you can write a book about some of this stuff. But I don't think you'd get a better picture. When you're doing audio interviews and a podcast where you can put it all, you know, you can put it all into one or two or three episode series. I think it's it has way more impact than than something like a book. Not that you can't do both anyways. But I think that it's just it's yeah, it's it's so great that they fell into this podcast idea and didn't just stick with the book is kind of like a fortune of. So it was like a, you know, a blessing in disguise not getting that funding. Well, it took them down another path. They found the fork in the road, they found another. Well, and if you think about it, it makes total sense. Like, of course, cniv runs the narrative in terms of the last 100 years of blindness history, because that's where whoever won turns to. And yeah, of course, the history that gets written is going to benefit, CNIB. And that narrative is definitely, you know, when you're to charity, and this is something that that is a problem among charities is that the way that they gather funds is pulling on the heartstrings of donors. And you build this narrative and these stories of, you know, the poor blind population. And that's just not a healthy narrative anymore.

S Steve Barclay 1:08:46

Yet, yeah, nor nor was it ever here.

R Rob Mineault 1:08:49

Yeah, true. Exactly. Yeah. I mean, it's great for raising funds, but it's not so great for the for the community in general. So I'm really glad to see that, you know, this is a sort of a community driven initiative. That's, that's really setting the record straight. So I'm excited.

S Steve Barclay 1:09:08

Well, you know, this, this got me thinking back to that guest that we had before in a forgotten his nameless. you brought him on. and he was talking about building consensus within

MS. BLINDNESS, you brought him on, and he was talking about building consensus within organizations and communities.

L

Lis Malone 1:09:24

LeMondre. That's right.

S

Steve Barclay 1:09:32

Yeah. Yeah. You know, how, how do we pull this together? How do we get how do we get the community to pull together on this to to not just tell the stories but to change the narrative and to include CNIB in changing that narrative, right? Because that's what has to happen.

R

Rob Mineault 1:09:58

That's what needs to happen it because I think you're right. But I also think that, you know, like they were saying, you know, they've had people from CNIB on the show, you know, the people individuals that make up CNIB are I think are very different animal than the organization CNIB that's 100 and whatever years old and it's pretty set in their ways. But I mean, I think that the other thing that we I guess we have to understand to be fair, is that, you know, CNIB is part of that story as well, even though, you know, they sort of the, you know, have been responsible for building their narrative, and there's, there's a shift to take some of that back. I mean, I think it is so important for them to, you know, to include CNIB in that, and to tell the story from their perspective, as well and have, you know, and build a really well rounded narrative of, you know, all the players in in blindness history. Well, and they have, you know, in some of their podcast episodes, they talk about how CNIB was, was a big employer of the Blind in their stores, or their cafes, or, you know, they have kiosks set up, you know, they were an employer of the blind when we couldn't find jobs. So, you know, they do have positivity to spread around as well. But, you know, I agree that narrative has to change and that's a behemoth of an organization to try to change attitudes. Yeah, it is. So I mean, there's a lot of work to be done has with everything that we seem to talk to every week, we always end on there's a lot of work that needs to be done. So more education, dammit. But listen, it's a very good group. They're high energy you know, they're gonna I think that they're going to get it done and I'm looking forward to to hearing more what they have in store for Season Two.

I

Lis Malone 1:11:48

I love when Charlie said we were not taking that crap anymore. I said oh my god, that is the nicest delivery of those words. We're not gonna take crap anymore I said it almost made it almost sounded charming. I said Yeah, Charlie gets at it. You gotta get that edge girl.

R

Rob Mineault 1:12:03

Yeah, I love it. And I love that they're they're gonna be a little bit more edgy.

R

Ryan Fleury 1:12:07

Yeah, we'll see. We'll see what that looks like, being that they're you know tied to AMI so we'll see. We'll see what edgy is or means.

R

Rob Mineault 1:12:16

Ryan's on fire today.

S

Steve Barclay 1:12:21

You think they might have to moderate because of the platform?

R

Ryan Fleury 1:12:25

Absolutely. Yeah AMI has media licenses they have to abide by. Then there's the yeah the broadcast licensing. So See we can we can we can do whatever we want. we want and say whatever we want because we don't have to listen to anybody so podcasts don't give a shit about your attitudes

S

Steve Barclay 1:13:08

So Ryan, how's the new medication working?

R

Ryan Fleury 1:13:13

I knew I forgot to take something today

R

Rob Mineault 1:13:20

Gotta get out of the house more. Creating 20 minutes or editing work for me.

S

Steve Barclay 1:13:26

Poor Linda.

R

Ryan Fleury 1:13:28

Oh, she's retired. She leaves the house every day.

L

Lis Malone 1:13:33

It's Ryan getting hangry

R

Ryan Fleury 1:13:35

No, I'm good.

L

Lis Malone 1:13:38

We know when he's hangry

R

Ryan Fleury 1:13:44

Ryan's rant. Let's go wrap it up.

R

Rob Mineault 1:16:36

Hey, Lis.

L

Lis Malone 1:16:38

Yes, Rob?

R

Rob Mineault 1:17:22

Where can people find us?

L

Lis Malone 1:17:23

Yes, Captain Phlem. They can find us at [atbanter.com](http://atbanter.com)

R

Rob Mineault 1:17:27

That's Deputy McSniffles to you. They can also drop us an email if they so desire at [cowlbell@atbanter.com](mailto:cowlbell@atbanter.com).

S

Steve Barclay 1:17:50

And if they're so inclined, they can also find us on social media. Yeah, the AT Banter twitter feed I think needs to go because I want no part of this new Musk Twitter thing it is turning into

an absolute joke. I would encourage everybody to leave Twitter at this.

R Ryan Fleury 1:18:08

Oh, and they are. Sunday alone 90,000 people left Twitter. We'll get it get us set up on Mastodon. Well, I'm on there now so I can..

L Lis Malone 1:18:19

People are leaving Twitter. Are they deactivating their accounts?

R Ryan Fleury 1:18:23

They are actually downloading their archives from Twitter. Yeah, yeah. I deleted the company account.

R Rob Mineault 1:18:36

All right. Well,

S Steve Barclay 1:18:39

We are still on Facebook, although I don't think for much longer and we're on LinkedIn.

R Rob Mineault 1:19:54

Yeah, there you go. Whenever they can also just listen to the goddamn podcast people they can worry about social media. I find this wherever.

S Steve Barclay 1:20:02

Yeah, okay, we prefer email anyway.

R Ryan Fleury 1:20:06

That's yeah. Yeah, that's right.

R Rob Mineault 1:20:52

All right. Oh, that's good. Yeah. Okay. All right. That is going to about do it for us this week. Big thanks to everybody for joining us this week. And we will see everybody next week.

