

ALDEN: Hey everybody, Alden Ford here. Happy MaxFunDrive! There is just one more day to go before the end of the drive, and we were really, really hoping to release 520 this week to help celebrate the drive, but I don't know if you all know the show very well, but we tend to sort of overcommit ourselves a little bit, and [laughs] we are still working on sewing it up. It is going to be absolutely crazy and really, really funny. It's been so satisfying for us to finish this story in a way that is on our terms, and we *cannot* wait for you to hear it.

In light of the end of the show, Mission to Zyxx is actually sitting this MaxFunDrive out. That's right, this is not a plea for money. We got it already. We're out of here! Why am I even talking right now? Well, it's because I still want to say something about Maximum Fun, and you know I mean it because I have literally nothing to gain by saying this. You couldn't give us money right now if you wanted to! So when we started this podcast, we had no idea how much it would come to dominate our lives, how ambitious we would be in making it bigger and better every season, and how truly fulfilling, inspiring, and humbling it would be to see our listenership coalesce and grow as we built the world of Mission to Zyxx with and for you. We've said it a lot of times before, and it's been true every time, making the show at the level we make it without listener support would simply not have been possible.

When we joined Maximum Fun in season three, we did it with two... fun but in retrospect relatively simple seasons in the can, a really great listenership, and a modestly successful Patreon that really helped us through our second year of work. Could we have kept our Patreon going and funded the show that way, independently? Maybe, but in addition to all the wonderful things MaxFun has provided the show: a wider reach, a community of great creators and listeners that care about and support each other, and a small, dedicated staff of *really* amazing people helping us with ad sales and logistical support; for us, Maximum Fun is a network that understands that listener support is *the* thing that makes podcasting, for those of us who don't have a Spotify deal, worth pouring, in our case, literal sweat and tears into for years on end, putting other creative opportunities and financial pursuits and security to the side for. And that's something that, respectfully, MeUndies is not really doing the heavy lifting on.

So, MaxFun has a model similar at first glance to what a lot of streaming services have, where you pay a few bucks a month to get the shows you like. But unlike every TV service, it's completely optional. If you don't have any extra money or you don't want to pay for it, the shows are free - if you want them to be. And unlike those services, the money you do choose to pay goes directly to the specific creators making the specific thing that you love. And as a side note, they've also been unfailingly kind and supportive to us from day one, publicly and privately, and

they've never expected any creative influence or ownership over the show in return. It's remarkable. *No one* gets to make stuff this way, let alone with a team of people organizing drives, cross-promoting shows, and all the while doing tangible good for charitable causes and industry inclusion and diversity efforts. It's not lost on us that the vast majority of people don't get to make a piece of creative work the way we have been able to make this one. And for the last three seasons, that is all thanks to Maximum Fun and to you supporting us through Maximum Fun.

So, in this year's drive, when you go to MaximumFun.org join, you won't see Mission to Zyxx as a show to support. But you should absolutely support any number of the other amazing shows on this wonderful network and know that you are helping them, and this network, make something worthwhile. That's MaximumFun.org/join. And again, this drive is almost over. And don't worry, our crew loves each other, we love you and we love Maximum Fun. So whenever our brains hatch our next weird project, we promise we will announce it right here on our main Mission to Zyxx feed. And, we hope Maximum Fun will give us the opportunity once again to make it with them.

So for those of you who have listened this long *just* in the hopes that you will hear something besides me, congratulations, [laughs] your patience has been rewarded. We're going to leave you with just a little taste of 520: the opening crawl music, no voiceover, no spoilers, that we recorded several weeks ago with a 65-piece orchestra and a 24-piece choir. It was super fun to record and I think it turned out really great. You will hear all of this in its full episodic glory with voiceover at the top of 520 very soon. Happy MaxFunDrive. And once more, thank you.

[520 opening crawl music]