

THE DRINK TANK ISSUE 145



Photo from Jon Johnson and no...I didn't pay him!

For the Earth is Hollow, and I Have Touched the Sky -or- (How I learned to wander the high desert to pick up rocks and other shiny things.)

An essay of innumerable facets by Spring Schoenhuth

Every year at the end of January through the middle of February there is a worldwide migration of jewelers, artists, lapidarists, prospectors, miners, beaders, manufacturers, paleontologists, gemologists, diamontologists, shamans, rock hounds, neo-hippies, and “weekenders” to the largest Gem Show in the world.

What on earth am I talking about, and where? The high desert of southern Arizona. Tucson to be exact. The Gem Show was born in 1955 as a way to educate elementary students about geology, and has exponentially grown over the years to thirty-two shows in forty-four separate locations in the Tucson area. Although the show has changed focus, it still is very much an education in geology, as well as economics, budget planning, finding the best bargain, world cultures, finding a hotel room, and footwear

ergonomics.

For the experienced buyer at Tucson, it is always a challenge to get through your list, and have time to see what new and exciting things are out there in an all too rich environment. The first time I went (which was not all that long ago) was with a fellow jeweler in the convention circuit. She told me some very sage advice. “Wear good walking shoes.” It doesn’t matter about how much money you spend, or what you see, it is about how you can take care of your feet. Many long hours are spent standing or walking from place to place to find that what is on your list. The next thing is dressing right. Tucson is in the high desert. Cold nights, sweltering days, and a mixed bag of temperatures all around your stay. This year’s particular trip rendered the first day windy, cold, and wet Seattle-like winter weather one day, and by the time I left the temperatures ranged in the 80’s. I planned my trips accordingly. No breezy tents the first day.



Just one of the many giant tents for the Gem Show.

Take the right equipment to store your purchases in. This one is my big pet peeve. People who bring strollers sans children, and annoying rolling luggage deserve a special level of hell at these events. I have a backpack, light enough to store my precious pretties, and one I can easily maneuver without killing or thwacking buyers when in narrow rows. My colleague also jokingly said, “Bring a ton of cash, you’ll spend like a drunken sailor.” (I am still looking out for that ton of cash. If anyone does run into one, please direct my attention to it!) I still have yet to act like the drunken sailor, well, in Tucson that is.

The Tucson Gem Show is overwhelming, even for the seasoned buyer. Just how many amethyst geodes the size of a Volkswagen bus can you run across? The thought comes to mind as I walk row after row in some of the largest tents in the world looking at these wondrous treasures,

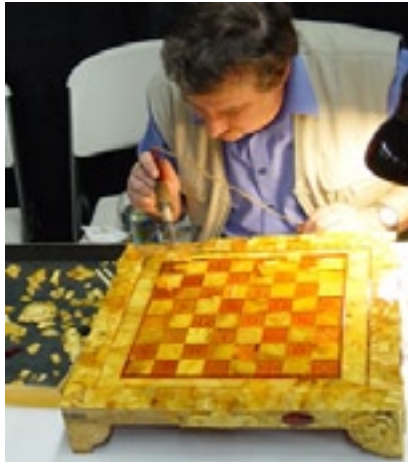
the title of the classic **Trek™** episode, “For the world is hollow, and I have touched the sky”. So many minerals taken out of the earth and brought to Tucson, you have to ponder the weight of what is there, and the mining process that brings it forth. One has to wonder

how mining has also changed the environment over the past number of

years. I am originally from Montana, "The Treasure State". I lived under the shadow of the "Prairie Prick", the 506 foot smoke stack of the Anaconda Mining Company that smelted copper ore. The 'Big Sky' was getting its share of strip mining, and air pollution. Then there is the human labor of the miner extracting precious metals and gemstones deep from the earth. That alone is overwhelming to think on. Misery, mining disasters, slavery, corruption, monopoly, all rolled up in a little ring or trinket around your neck. But that is only the beginning of the hollow earth. You have the poor oysters. All the irritation an oyster goes through to produce a single pearl. Fifty percent of the oysters will die during the three and a half years of production of pearls. (Okay, so they're oysters, not the highest on the evolutionary scale either.) Pearls. There are giant tents devoted to them, tons and tons of pearls in every color, shape, quality, and size in Tucson. Then there is the coral. I am not talking the fossilized variety, but the harvested animal, the marine equivalent of a fur coat. Ton loads.

If that last bit of rant seems to be depressing, I apologize. What is the attraction if it is so depressing, and tiring, and overwhelming? Simple. You find what you like. The artisanal excellence of the stonecutters. What the current trends are. Probably

the one most folks are into; the "shiny" factor. The ravenesque quality fans are known for when looking for baublage.



Amber carved chess board, courtesy of J.O.G.S.

My particular passion is fossils, and I enjoy talking to some of the vendors in the shows. Mostly preferred are the smaller operations that can afford to be in Tucson year after year. One of those folks is Jimmy of 49'er Minerals.

Jimmy is the happiest person I know. He is animated, knowledgeable, and truly, deeply, passionately in love with his wife Joyce ("She, who is his anchor"). This human bundle of energy bounces around his venue like a super ball on speed. He has a wicked sense of humor, feeds you with What Matters (Chocolate), and always (let me underscore again, always) leaves me happy that I came to Tucson. He is usually my first stop. Sadly the cost of doing business in Tucson has forced

him to consider retirement. I hope to see him at least once a year; because something tells me he cannot bear to be away for long from the Tucson market. It makes for a far better trip knowing he's there.

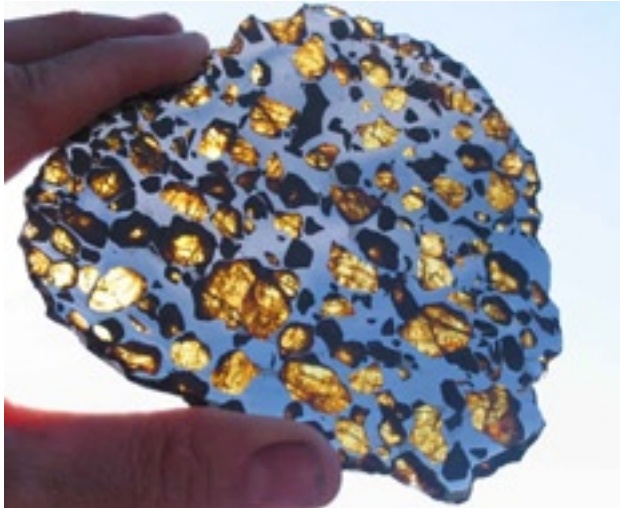
If you are coming to Tucson for the spiritual enlightenment, the metaphysical awaits you. To certain practitioners, stones vibrate certain energies and are used in healing arts. For the person who has an interest in paleontology, it is heaven on earth. One friend who went with me to Tucson noticed I could be in any large area, and gravitate toward dinosaur bone within minutes. What can I say? They speak to me! There are five major fossil shows during this time, and my favorite is in the Inn Suites. Why "Dinosaur Bob" (Bob Bakker) was there last year just hangin' out. The infamous Larson brothers are there too, of the Black Hills Institute.



Trilobite fossil matrix, just one of the paleo-pleasures that await the fossil fanatics.

If meteorites hold a fascination, then this also is the place for you.

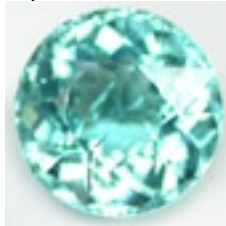
There are very reputable dealers and experts who make a living of traveling around the world finding things that have fallen to earth from the heavens above. On this most recent journey I just happened to walk into a room as a couple of people were uncrating the largest piece of Imilac Pallasite slab taken from Chile that I have ever seen. It measured approximately two by three feet. It was only exposed for a few minutes and I stood in astonishment the entire time while they carefully repacked it. I finally gained enough oxygen in my brain at last to utter "That belongs in a museum". To which one of the packers replied in agreement. The price of my trip was paid for with that one moment.



Imilac Pallasite

At one of the more high-end shows I discovered my favorite stonecutter, Gary. This man has an eye for the weird. Billiard balls, beach

glass, antique porcelain cut into highly unique cabochons. That is only a blink of what he does. He always manages to surprise me and hands me something that makes me exclaim "You bastard! I love you, I hate you!" because I know I am going to spend a lot of money at his booth. This trip a gentleman kept snatching things I had put down (thank goodness, or else I would have bought much, much more given time to contemplate putting something down). He was lamenting how he couldn't quit his day job, as he was so in love with rocks. "I'm going to eat rocks when I'm eighty," he cried. I know exactly how he felt, as my day job supplements my business too. Sigh, hand me a fork, Apatite is what's for dinner.



Apatite

Indeed the world is hollow. If you have money to spend on rocks, Tucson is the place you'll find them. I'd be happy to show you around, or just bring it back to you. If you have a trailer-truck load of money to spare, please consider investing it with me, so I can spend it like a rum filled pirate. Really!

Spring Schoenhuth teaches third grade in Fremont, California, and is owner of the wildly successful Springtime Creations.

**AND NOW...LETTER GRADED MAIL
SENT TO GARCIA@COMPUTERHISTORY.ORG
BY MY LOYAL READERS!**

And let us begin with Mr. Steve Green!

Hi Chris,
I've long been of the opinion that TAFF candidates should be allowed to nominate their preferred destination should they win. A smaller, fandom-oriented event such as Corflu would appear much more suitable a showcase for a UK delegate's talents than some distant corner of a worldcon, just as a US delegate might well prove a better fit at Novacon than the three-ring circus Eastercons have morphed into over the past twenty years. So long as candidates make their intentions clear from the start, I can't see how anyone could object.

All best

-- Steve

Can't argue with ya on that point. I had wanted to run with Eurocon in mind and had more than a couple of folks seriously warn me against it because it 1) wasn't Eastercon and 2) wasn't even the UK. When the Fan GoH thing was announced, that sorta sealed it. I'll stick with Eastercon if I manage to squeeze out a win because it's the right time of year and a lot of folks I wanna meet will be there.

And of course, there's Mr. John Purcell!

Why is it, Chris, that it feels like every other loc I write is to you? Shouldn't you be taking a break some time soon? A nice long, get-away-from-it-all vacation overseas sounds like a nice idea, doesn't it?

Are you kidding me? The only thing I'd do on a vacation away from it all would be to produce dozens of fanzines!

So here we go once again with yet another loc to yet another *Drink Tank*. I am beginning to think you will be crossing the 150-issue point before the end of this year; all you need are two a month from here on out in 2007, and that's the kind of pace you could do in your sleep. Come to think of it, I seem to remember you dictating zines in your sleep at Corflu Quire. I didn't take any notes mainly because I don't loc in my sleep. Lloyd Penney does that.

I've got 150 planned for the middle of November (right before LosCon) so I can keep her goin'! Even if I make it to 155, I'll have shaved several issues off my annual production for both 2005 (60 issues) and 2006 (50 issues). I won't make it to 160 (and I won't even try) but I'd like to keep it to around 40 or 50 a year for the foreseeable future.

As for this loc, let's start off by talking about one of my personal



favorite topics of all time: food. I really love food! In fact, just about any kind of food is good to eat. My children are always grossed out when I regale them with tales of eating curried squid, fried rattlesnake, all washed down with a refreshing peanut butter and gin cocktail. Now *that's* a meal! But seriously, I thoroughly enjoyed Frank Wu's food musings; some excellent ideas in here, especially #10 (eat

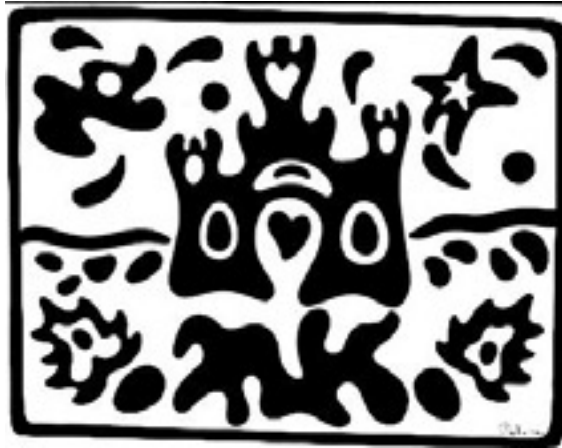
dessert first) and #1 ("chocolate... so dense a neutrino can't pass through it"). I am almost afraid that he's dangerously close to the truth when Frank mentions what we are doing with over-fishing and destroying the oceans. I certainly hope balance is restored because I love seafood. It has been a long time since I've eaten fish, and I really should do so again Real Soon Now. Love grilled salmon steaks

and just-caught fresh fish (walleye, bass, perch, sunfish, pike, etc.) from the lake. Nothing finer.

The real problem is that we haven't found a good solution for a sustainable fish raising method that doesn't have serious drawbacks. Farm Raised salmon and trout has led to serious problems around the world, and there's the pollutive nature of trying to raise salt-water fish in the ocean using a netted method. Now, there have been attempts to do it right, but few have succeeded in figuring it all out. Oddly, the things that have not been too troublesome to raise in farms are the shell fish. Crabs, lobster, shrimp, oysters and crawfish have been raised very well in varying conditions without too much serious environmental damage, though they do taste different.

Tell Frank that he's got good stuff here. And also that I am a Chinese buffet junkie; it usually takes me an hour and a half to stuff myself silly at one of those. Gad, but I love Chinese buffets! **urp** Excuse me. ***I love good Chinese buffets, but they are getting rarer and rarer. Mongolian BBQ, on the other hand, is my new All-You-Can-Eat fave!***

In case you're interest, kind sir, the next issue of *Askance* will be out two weeks (I hope) before the



TAFF voting deadline. Our favorite food reviewer (Frank Wu) sent me a wonderful cover for that issue, and I have already begun working on the ish. Well, sort of. No rush, but I have a full zine already, so any new material gets back-logged into issues 6 and 7. What a nice problem to have.

Yes it is. I have often failed when people send me stuff ahead of time and I misplace it. I have to work on that.

But what I am getting at here is that the TAFF race should be great for the fund. Having four candidates should make it interesting and get more people involved with it. What is really good about the candidates this year is that they come from different fannish backgrounds - fanzines, con running, Dr. Who - and that's a good thing, I think. The purists among us might cry about this diffusion of interests, and I can understand their point of view; TAFF was birthed and swaddled in twilltone, and it should

still reflect that origin. And I think it does. Maybe if more folks get involved with things like TAFF and the other fan funds they'll become more involved with fanzines. Anything is possible there. See, the way I look at it, the more people know about TAFF, the more they'll be involved, contribute, and maintain a healthy interest in all the fan funds, which are great ideas. I am not saying all this just because I might run for DUFF in two years - which is a strong possibility - but the fan funds are intended for shipping off goodwill fannish ambassadors to fan groups and cons in other countries, tightening the bonds that tie us all together into one gigantic Gordian knot.

To me, it's all fandom, whatever flavour it comes in. I'm a big Who fan, though not nearly as involved as I should be in the Legion of Rassilon, and I'm a fanzine fan and a film fan and a Trek fan and...well, you get the idea. We're all one fandom in my eyes, even if we don't like to admit it. Hell, even Furry fandom is a part of picture! TAFF is something that we should get more people behind no matter what their preferred fandom is. This year we have some great people running (a former WorldCon chair for example) and I think we'll do well. Still not as much buzz as I'd like, though...John for TAFF!

I think that analogy just went south. Oh, bother... At any rate, I believe in the fan funds, and I am glad that you have the energy and commitment to make this run. Good luck to you, and let's hope enough postage is raised to slap a metered strip on your forehead and shove you into a big bubble-envelope. Let the games begin!

Don't start talking about mailing! I HATE the post office!

All of those images of Soviet Kitsch are something else. Interesting stuff, that's for sure. Russian was my foreign language when I earned my BA, and I still speak and read a smattering of it. My plan is to refresh those Russian skills before I go to Corflu Silver so that I can converse with Luba Anderson. This means I have to translate some fanspeak into Russian. Okay, that could be cool. Stay tuned; I think I just got another weird idea for a fan arkle.

Ochen horoshow, John Purcell. I took a little Russian and have had various Russky friends over the years. When Luba gets going in Russian, she talks faster 'n anything! I should get a chance to sit down and chat with her and Merric at LosCon!

I had no idea that there was a real motion picture of *The Call of Cthulhu*. How intriguing. Now I am going to have to see if I can find a copy

of it somewhere. Internet search, here I come...

See it...if you DARE!!!

Great photo of you and Linda on the last page! Aren't Renfests fun? The Texas Renfest opens next weekend, and we'll be going in a couple weeks. It is always a good time.

I had a blast and I'm planning on goin' back for another one. Just plain fun (and good food!)

That should do it. Take care, young feller, and I shall see you again some time soon.

All the best,
John Purcell

Always a pleasure!



You know, all streaks have to end, both positive and negative. You had Joe DiMaggio hitting safely in 56 games ended with two strikeouts and a fly-out. The classic losing streak of the Washington Generals ended in the 1990s. The legendary streak of Santa Clara's Mini-Golf Masters Hole-in-Ones by one Anand Geetpak ended with a duece on 9 after recording 8 consecutive aces. These things happen. Sadly, some streaks just seem to go on and on, like the Giants not winning the World Series since the 1950s despite having gone to the series 3 times and brought it to game 7 twice.

And that's a lot like the Geelong Cats, except they were even closer and at times even further away from winning the Premiership in Aussie Rules Football. They won the Big Cup in 1963 behind a team that had legends and was one of the great. The Cats went to five other Grand Finals and lost them all. Geelong, one of the longest standing teams in the AFL and owners of a number of the important records (longest winning streak, most wins, most Hall of Famer players, etc) and when you compare them to the Giants (who have a lot of records of their own) you

come up with a great comparison.

The difference between the Giants and Geelong is that the Cats won the Premiership this year!

The first loss after 15 straight wins was against Port Adelaide, a team that was second on the ladder. This is where the wonderful story was built. While Geelong had a good series of Premiership matches, they had a close win in the semi-final. The other team that ended up winning the spot in the final had a easy match, rolling

through a tough opponent on their way to the Finals.

That team was Port Adelaide.

The set-up was beautiful. There were all sorts of things standing in the way if you looked at history. Jimmy Bartel had won the Brownlow medal, the MVP of Aussie Rules, and the last four times a player for a team that was in the finals had won it that team had lost. It happened the last time Geelong won one, 1989 for Paul Couch. This was a serious curse-type thing (and for

more on Cursed teams, see the Cubs). THE Cats had lost in five finals, three of those times they were pretty heavy faves to take the cup. And they were playing PA which was the last team to beat them. Everything pointed to disappointment.

Then they started the game.

Geelong didn't score first, but by the end of the first quarter, it was obvious that they'd be doing very well. By the half, they were up by 50. They ended the game a 119 point winner.



Until this season, you could have said that the Cats qualified for the title of this article from Frank, but no more.

LOVABLE LOSERS

by

Frank Wu

Other teams are as bad as the Chicago Cubs. Sure they haven't won the World Series in 99 years, but lots of other teams haven't ever even been to the World Series. When was the last time you heard the phrase "Lovable Texas Rangers" or "Lovable Seattle Mariners"?

Um, never.

Why is that?

I'm not sure any type of love can be justified to the outsider, and I'm not really sure I understand the love for those Lovable Losers. But I'll take a stab at it.

I think it's got to do with the very nature of Chicago.

It's the biggest city in the midwest, but it's got no reason to be there.

Sure, it's on a big lake so it's a shipping and transport hub, but why would anyone put a city there, where megatons of ice and snow and wintry misery tumble down from Canada? Why would you plant a city there, knowing that it'd be buried in snow?

Have you ever actually experienced a Chicago winter? I lived a couple hours away in Madison, Wisconsin, during

grad school. One day we got 13 inches of snow, but that would have been a cakewalk in Chicago.

Some cities have swagger, earned or unearned. Bostonians sometimes project the attitude that theirs is the only city in America that truly matters. They got MIT, they got Harvard - oldest college in America, doncha know - they got the Old North Church and the Midnight Ride of Paul Revere and the site of the Boston Tea Party.

Boston's baseball team and their fans project an attitude that they should win, they deserve to win. Indeed, their teams had Hall-of-Famers (and future Hall-of-Famers) like Roger Clemens, Carl Yastrzemski and Carlton Fisk. But they would blow it year after year - not just losing the World Series,



but squandering chance after chance to win, and pushing it all the way to seven games before snatching defeat from the jaws of victory. How could this be? The only possible explanation is a divine curse, which could only be lifted by a savior's blood - Curt Schilling's.

No, Chicagoans don't have the attitude that they deserve to win, or that they should win. Barry Bonds and his tainted all-time home-run record would never fly in Chicago. But it does in Silicon Valley, where his home stadium was packed to the gills with adoring fans. Maybe Silicon Valley's money and power gave it the feeling that success is everything, even if it requires cheating. That would never go in Chicago.

Sick of the fashions and trendiness of New York, Leo Burnett set up an advertising firm in Chicago, the only major one in the midwest. His ad campaigns weren't built around flash and gilt, but around lovable characters he created, like Tony the Tiger and the Keebler Elves and Poppin' Fresh the Pillsbury Doughboy. Burnett said that Chicago, of all places, was a "sod-busting" town. You worked hard here, you paid your dues. It didn't matter what your name was or how much money your daddy had.

My brother was an undergrad, then a grad student, then a professor at Harvard before he started teaching at

University of Chicago. He said that the Chicago kids knew more and studied harder, but had far less arrogance than any of the Harvard kids. That's Chicago.

Chicago's surrounded by farms and factories, hard-workin' places all. Heck, just walking down the street to get milk in the middle of the Chicago winter is hard work. In Chicago you busted the sod, or the sod busted you. And even if you did succeed, you'd have to bust the sod all over again next year.

They say baseball is a symbol for life. If that's true, then this is what the Cubbies teach me:

Life is hard work, and you shouldn't expect to be crowned champion of the world. But if you do, unexpectedly, win a game in Chicago, it's like walking out the door into the harshest winter on record - and finding a bright summer day.



When the Little Bear Carries the Flag, All will be Lost!

And now, our good friend and closer (or whatever the Cricket equivalent of a Closer is), Mr. Steve Green and...

Fannish Memory Syndrome

Steve Green

To the heart of Warwickshire, for a rare exhibition of paintings by the 17th Century “master of candlelight”, Georges de La Tour. Heavily influenced by Caravaggio, La Tour was reportedly a major inspiration behind Peter Greenaway's *The Draughtman's Contract*, yet his work languished in near-obscurity for more than 350 years following his death in 1652. One of my favourite nocturnes, *The Dice Players*, was itself largely unknown until showcased in an exhibition in Paris thirty-five years ago.

The venue is Compton Verney, home of the Verney family for five centuries and the site for half that period of a mansion designed by neoclassicist architect Robert Adam, set in 120 acres of parkland landscaped by Lancelot “Capability” Brown. The estate passed from the family's hands in 1921 – another casualty, I suspect, of the First World War – and was eventually acquired in 1993 by a charitable foundation set up by the Littlewoods millionaire Sir Peter Moores.

Running alongside the display



Cromwell by Cooper

of La Tour's artwork (plus that of his contemporary Jacques Callot and son Etienne de La Tour, to pad it out slightly) is “The Shadow”, a themed multi-media exhibition which includes a rather forgettable Andy Warhol screenprint with that same title, Laurie Anderson's disconcerting *At the Shrink's* (footage of a seated Anderson is projected onto a chair-shaped statuette, an effect reminiscent of Leia Organa's plaintive hologram in *Star Wars*) and Doug Aitken's hypnotic video installation *Lighttrain*, wherein shadow is used as protagonist in a thriller played across five television screens.

In many ways even more startling are Compton Verney's permanent displays, among them medieval Germanic sculptures and British

portraiture, one of three major European archives of Chinese bronzes and the largest collection of British folk art on these isle. The trustees are justly proud of their latest acquisition, a Samuel Cooper miniature of Oliver Cromwell painted in 1657, four years after his subject had been appointed Lord Protector of England; although only four inches tall and three inches wide, its reputation as Cromwell's favourite depiction (and the likely origin of his famous instruction to be painted "warts and all") earned it a million-dollar price tag.

Walking back through the grounds, Ann and I make a mental note to return next summer, maybe bring along a picnic. It's been a fascinating reminder of the delights that can lie hidden virtually on your own doorstep.



The Dice Players



OK, that's all for this issue. Once again, it's got bulk from people other than me! I wanna thank Spring, Frank, Steve, Selina Phanara, Pikomi, Dan Shileah, Kurt Erichsen, Karen Alik, Jon Johnson, John Purcell and everyone else! Also, here's to Jimmy Bartel, Gary Ablett Jr., Nathan Ablett, Cameron Mooney, Comeron Ling, Matthew Scarlett and all the other winners on the Geelong Cats!

Next issue will have some Silicon stuff, but it's gonna have a science kick to it. I love science and I seldom get to run enough science articles. It'll probably be at least 2 weeks before it's out because the next week is Vintacon and that'll take up some time too. It'll be a bigger than usual issue, I'm imagining.

I've gotta start working on the Annual Index (I started in September last year) and the Corset issue is slowly coming together. More articles would be lovely!

And BayCon's starting to rev up too. I've gotta see if they want Wait, Wait, Don't Tell Me since The Match Game won't be happening this Year (Kevin Standlee is the GoH at Marcon that same weekend) and I've got a good set of ideas for that one.

And after that, it's the long run towards the end of the year!