



Journey Planet 54

Collector's  
Edition

# LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

Welcome to Journey Planet: The Collector's Edition!  
The issue about collections, collectors, and collecting!



I got the idea for this issue from my own collection of Star Trek merchandise, so you'll have to forgive me for taking a moment to show and tell!

My collection is mostly collector's plates and books. I'm done with plates (UNLESS YOU HAVE A GUINAN OR Q YOU WANT TO PART WITH) but my book collection will never, ever be complete. And I'm glad – there will always be an acquisition to look forward to!

I think you'll really enjoy reading about the collectors and collections in this issue. From records to art to Princess Leia, each collector made me care about their collection, whether or not I'm into the thing they collect. I spent OVER AN HOUR with Seanan McGuire and her My Little Pony collection, and it was the shortest hour of my entire life. I could have spent all day listening to her talk about a toy I had a passing acquaintance with three decades ago, because they mean so much to her.

So please have fun reading about the things that bring people joy, at the end of a year when we needed joy more than ever. And if you like this issue, please check out my other fanzine, Star Trek Quarterly, on Facebook.

Live Long and Prosper,

Sarah Gulde  
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# **On Curating, Collecting, & Just Plain Hoarding: A Personal Reflection on My Good/Bad Habits.**

By Chris Garcia

I am, for better or worse, a collector. Let's start there.

I don't really collect things, though; I collect collections.

If you look at the way things come to me, it's almost never one-by-one, it's in a deluge. Boxes and boxes, or bags and bags. A whole bunch of things all at once, almost always handed over to me at one convention or another. I've collected more than a dozen significant collections, some that would have large interest to specific segments (such as the 8mm reduction collection of films of the 20s, 30s, and 40s) to ones that are incredibly specific to my interests (like my set of 1990s All Japan Pro Wrestling figures.) And there are the zines. More on that later.

Why do I collect collections? Well, that's a fascinating story.

When I was a kid, I collected pamphlets. You know, those tri-fold things you find that advertise the various tourist traps in your region. I had hundreds of them, perhaps a thousand or more really. I kept them in a clear plastic container when I was a kid and looked through them every other week or so.

I realized that this was roughly analogous to collecting baseball cards, so I started collecting baseball cards. I had a small collection, two boxes worth, but they were all important in their own way. The As or the Giants players, or folks who had been As or Giants players. There were a few Twins (because Al Williams was a favorite of mine!) and then big names. My mom still has my collection of cards at her house.

I never collected comic books. I read the hell out of them, but never really collected them. At one point, I probably had about 500, but they were beat to hell, read and re-read. If it had its cover intact, it was likely hanging by a thread underneath one of the staples. Some of those issues were worth some money, but they were all worth so much more as a story to be devoured. Except for my first edition Killing Joke. That one I kept in really good shape!

I started working at a museum for 20 years in 1999, and I got back into fandom in 2000. That was a big part of it, as people (let's face it, mostly Boomers) would hear I worked at a museum, was into history, and start to dump things off on me. Then it got out that I was a film historian, and the flood for that came about. Then, zines. And that changed everything.

I acquired zines three ways: by writing for them, by buying them, or by having them thrust upon me. The latter is the biggest portion of my collection. I would typically get a few boxes at any con I did a Fanzine Lounge at, and some of them were really good stuff. A box frothing with 1950s and earlier zines, including the Yellow Pamphlet (hey, a cross-over!) from the first WorldCon, and various other impressive

pieces. Folks who aren't fanzine fans but have gathered some along the way would drop them to me. This often included my own fanzines from over the years! So many zines, some of which were incredible. For every super-special zine like *The Loyal Opposition*, there was another well-loved *Mimosa* I already had, or a *Chunga* I had a LoC in. I did gather some real classics, but the bulk of it probably represents fifty issues of seven or eight titles.

I don't have time to do a lot of curation, and quite seldom do I do any culling. I've got a batch of non-fiction books about comics, about twenty books, and there're at least half duplicates, but I can't bring myself to get rid of them. The 8mm film collection? It's entirely catalogued, but not at all stored properly. I mean, the temperature is pretty constant (an internal room in a sunken garage in a closed drawer) but it could be better, of course. My gem: a near-complete *Intolerance*. OMy 35mm film trailer collection? That's full of duplicates, and though I've pulled two of them out to live up-top in the house, the rest are down in the drawer above the 8mm films.

Once I lost my job at the museum, things had to change. One thing was that I lost the best place I had to do my scanning and storage. (I liberated a LOT of storage supplies when I was working there.) Now, my stuff is largely digital. I have a massive collection of fan art, some dating to the 1950s. I've got a bunch of zine scans, and more of those will be happening sometime soonish, and a lot of material that exists in a form that I can access from any computer. Except it does mean keeping them on a series of different thumb drives. I think there's about 2 TBs of data, with a lot of dupes. Hey, I'm a curator, not a collections manager!

I do have hanging art, of course. A majority of it is my mother-in-law's paintings, but I've got a few others, notably a trio of Frank Wu works, one of which is me as a scary clown. I love art, and there's a bunch of it, though mostly it's drawings and my paintings and nothing that should go on the wall.

But there are treasures. A few original Rotsler-Gilliland co-creations. A Jason Schachat cartoon of Espana Sherrif that is among my all-time faves. Drawings from Bob Hole, Tim Powers, Stu Shiffman, and on and on and on. So much wonderful stuff.

When we were evacuated, thinking the fire was going to be wiping out our home at any second, I had to think fast. I grabbed the Hugos, and a couple of books I had little chance of finding again at a fair value. I left all my art, though Vanessa grabbed a few of her mom's paintings. I grabbed the irreplaceable items, like Mike Glycer's Six-Time Hugo Loser shirt, and the box with the envelope that announced our first Hugo win. A few odds, a few ends.

If we had burned, so much would have been lost. The thumb drives, for example. All my art of all types. Hundreds and hundreds of books. The Nova Award. Most tragically would have been my Sno-Globes, or maybe all the zines, or maybe the near complete run of *Analog*. It's impossible to tell.

I imagine that someday I'll be forced to get rid of things, to reduce, and that'll be like choosing between the children, making *Sophie's Choice*. All I know is everything I've collected, every single collection I've been given is loved, well and truly, and that may be my greatest sin.

# FOR THE RECORD

By Justin Ruiz



We all start somewhere, and somewhen. This all ends with me amassing 4,500+ records and another 3,000 45s, but I can identify the point of origin clearly--my place and time upon 'discovering' Prince drove everything that followed.

My inner life has always been built around music. From my earliest days, songs imprinted themselves on me and could either define or support my mood. It's an art form which--in even the smallest dose--can transport my spirit, yanking me away from turmoil or strife and tethering me to beauty or whimsy. It can help me find catharsis as necessary, allowing me to grapple with my feelings without ever having to verbalize or define them. Everyone should have such a tool.

By December 1995, my sophomore year of high school in a suburb of Minneapolis/Saint Paul (known as the Twin Cities), I had long since abandoned radio as a source of music. I was not a social creature, so I neither had to endure the day's offerings nor had occasion to build fond memories that would build space for then-contemporary songs in my heart. My musical world had turned insular, a rotation of Nirvana, Rage Against The Machine, and Nine Inch Nails perpetuating angst in a grit-and-purge cycle. There's nothing wrong with that; I found joy there. But I was primed for a reawakening, a broadening of scope.

I just happened to catch Purple Rain, the movie, on cable one night, and that was it. I had always loved Prince's songs that reached me on the radio, but here from the first moments of performance footage it hit me that he was everything that music ought to be--driven, restless, multi-talented, genre-defying, iconoclastic. Irresistible, really, so I didn't resist. Prince, even at the moment that he reached the summit of popular culture (still the only person ever to have a number one movie, album, and song simultaneously), was the antidote to the formulaic, trite, uninspired radio hits that alienated me in 1995. So I asked for the soundtrack CD and got it for Christmas. Five months later I had my first job, and I followed Prince's musical lead.

Still not a social creature, there was only one way I wanted to spend the money I made working 20 hours a week at the car wash. I scooped up all the Prince I could find at the store and went hunting for more. I would uncover how he stands completely alone as a combination instrumentalist, vocalist, performer, producer, and songwriter. Since I lived in the Twin Cities, I could go to Let It Be in Minneapolis where they had a box of Prince's old 12" singles, rarities from the 80s. At local record shows, again because this is the Twin Cities, there was a guy who specialized in selling bootleg Prince concerts on VHS and cassette tape. I ate those up and discovered just how insatiable a performer Prince was, playing epic aftershows in local clubs on tour where he would perform tons of covers.

Prince's aftershows made me want to hear the originals, so he is directly responsible for my first dedicated interest in: The Temptations, Stevie Wonder, Joni Mitchell, Ohio Players, Commodores, Isley Brothers, Marvin Gaye, Sly Stone, Santana, George Clinton, the Rolling Stones, Tower Of Power, Earth Wind and Fire, Chaka Khan, Al Green, even Miles Davis. Now, how was I to collect those artists? As a reminder, in the late 90s if you wanted to hear a song you had to either own it or record it off the radio. To own it, I could go to the store and pay \$10-12 for a CD...or I could track down a record and pay \$3-4 for the same 40 minutes of music. As a value proposition, the answer is easy.

Now on a mission to collect the best recorded music of the 20th century, through records I added the satisfaction of having these 12"x12" decades-old artifacts of artistic excellence, artwork, legible credits, where the topography of the vinyl's grooves originated in the physical sound waves of the recorded performance. I was holding real history, giving it new life by listening to it, loving it, revering it. Consider my copy of Stevie Wonder's Fingertips Pt I & II single--this now-58-year-old object contributed to 12-year-old Stevie's first number one, the launching pad for Stevie to establish himself in the world's consciousness and never leave. His spirit and others like it flood my shelves.



Now, let's remember, 95% of my collection was accumulated before Spotify and YouTube enabled a person to either discover or preview pretty much every song ever released. I was buying music I had never heard before. My collection had to extend outward in logical continuous paths. Prince as a locus enabled the broadest possible outcome. If Prince liked an artist enough to cover their work, I could trust focusing on that artist as a high-quality creator. At a glance, I've spotted at least 65 artists of whom I have at least eight records--many more in most cases. From there I could find producers I liked, or bass players or drummers. Follow the people and extend outwards, it never stops.

Over the years I've organized these thousands of objects in a slew of ways. I've sorted by genre beginning with the artists who debuted first, so when I grab an Isley Brothers record I may then move left to Ray Charles or James Brown, or move right toward Rufus. I've sorted without regard to genre in order of an artist's debut, so as not to forget for instance that Bob Dylan and the Temptations were contemporaries. I've sorted by release date, dispersing each artist's output across the span of their careers, and then in order to listen to Kid Charlemagne by Steely Dan I need to first remember it was released in 1976, which then is as likely to lead to Hall & Oates' Rich Girl as that year's Weather Report album. In recent years I've pared down my accessible shelves, prioritizing open space and live instruments in my music room--I have maybe one third of my records out in circulation.

My relationship with music is the most essential and authentic part of me. This hasn't been a hobby, it's been a cultivating of lifeblood. If you know me at all, you know I have all these records, and you know I love Prince. At this point there are old friends of mine spread all throughout the country who are likely to think of me when a Prince song comes on. But how could I share this beyond tedious proselytizing, how could I actually share the feeling? I found a way.

The natural confluence of a creative heart, programmatic brain, and a few thousand records is...mixing those records on the turntables. A lifetime of close, constant listening leads begets an intimate knowledge of these accumulated songs. I am aware of all the melodic, harmonic, rhythmic, and thematic similarities, and I see disparate styles as just gaps that often want to be bridged on the foundation of their commonalities (like people, at their best). Mixing is the best way for me to celebrate the music--my goal is to use worthy songs and have them interact with each other, creating a context that elevates each track to heights greater than they achieve on their own. Constant elevation. This is how I've shared my essence with people who are willing to listen.



I've primarily accumulated my records in the Twin Cities and DC/Maryland, but I've also hit Berkeley CA, NYC, Alaska, Boston, and New Hampshire, and I've bought collections from people for almost nothing. Thousands of these records remind me of where I bought them. I distinctly remember buying a bunch of Isley Brothers records for \$3 apiece at a random store in Maryland that I found in the phone book [I really don't mean to dwell on it, but I came of age in a time where you needed real resourcefulness to gather information. I started out calling places for directions, and I felt damn lucky when I was empowered to print out online maps for my adventure down highways I'd never traversed...] At this point I've collected pretty much every song I remember fondly from my childhood, and everything from the decades before I was born. I like to play a "game" with my kids where if a classic song comes on I will say, "Guess if I have this on vinyl", where of course the answer is Yes.

Speaking of the kids, I stopped obsessively record-shopping once I became a parent in 2004, so my window was basically 1996-2003. I got a lot done in that time, setting myself up to curate a listening experience for my kids from the moment they were born. Then they grew up learning to play piano and other instruments; my oldest can just sit down and play anything she has heard even once, complete with the lyric melody. That has inspired me to want to actually play. I benefit from today's technology by having access to lessons and tutorials on anything I want. I'm playing drums and piano, and I will add bass and guitar. I will end up recording original music with or without input from others, as Prince did. My kids are already masters and for now, with every piece I learn, when I make them proud I am on cloud nine.

Music uplifts. We all need that. Everyone needs a go-to tool in their belt to help turn a sorry day into a glad one. Music is that for me, and I believe music can be that for everyone. Sly Stone tells you You Can Make It If You Try; Outkast tells you to Hold On, Be Strong; Curtis Mayfield urges you to Keep On Pushin; Stevie implores Don't You Worry Bout A Thing--now you are elevated, uplifted, and in the end maybe it's enough to get through 2020. We're almost there. I'll be over here with Prince and my other friends.



## Artists I have 8+ records of (not including 45

Prince	Rufus/Chaka Khan	Temptations	Bunch
Stevie Wonder	Isley Brothers	Heart	Joni Mitchell
James Brown	Aretha Franklin	Hall & Oates	Paul Simon
Parliament	Marvin Gaye	Elton John	Emerson Lake &
Sly Stone	Beastie Boys	Steve Winwood	Palmer
Santana	Doors	Fleetwood Mac	Chicago
Miles Davis	Led Zeppelin	Genesis	Bob James
John Coltrane	Herb Alpert	Eagles	A Tribe Called
Ron Carter	The Who	Black Sabbath	Quest
Freddie Hubbard	Grover Washington	Earth Wind & Fire	Herbie Mann
Keith Jarrett	Jr	Eric Clapton	Steely Dan
Mahavishnu	Billie Holiday	Outkast	Bob Dylan
Orchestra	Dr Dre	DJ Qbert	Linda Ronstadt
Wu-Tang Clan	Crusaders	Kool & The Gang	Jimi Hendrix
Beatles	George Benson	Isaac Hayes	Funkadelic
Rolling Stones	Three Dog Night	Chambers Brothers	Bootsy Collins
CSNY	Michael Jackson	War	Hubert Laws
Rascals	Supremes	Jimmy Castor	Janet Jackson



# Fandom Paintings

By Meredith Cook

***It started with leaving the baby and toddler at home to get out for an evening.***

Sure, I could have done my own paintings at home. I'm an artist with supplies and surfaces to adorn with whatever my imagination dreams up ([www.mulchmedia.com/gallery/](http://www.mulchmedia.com/gallery/)) but I also had two young children and was tired. The event service provided everything; including most importantly, cleaning up. All that was required of me was to show up, check my brain at the door, and do what the instructor told me to do. Perfect!

I was there with a friend and fellow Doctor Who fan, and we had really wanted to attend the TARDIS painting event, but it sold out quickly. So though not optimal, the pink tree was the next available option. Near the end of the evening I wondered, "Maybe I should add a TARDIS to this painting anyway?" My friend offered an encouraging "Go for it!" It's so small, perched on a distant hill; with a quick glance you may not even notice that it is there.



The second painting was more intentional. I went with another friend who had only seen a few Doctor Who episodes but enjoyed them. I hated how the flowers turned out but the sonic screwdriver was on point. That's all that matters now.



Sometimes I went to the events with friends and sometimes without. I struggle with anxiety and regardless of being comfortable with the challenges of painting, experiencing new places and new people and new activities builds a special set of challenges that become quickly overwhelming. Having a friend along helped to relieve those fears and the formulaic nature of the events made it easier for me to adopt a routine.

My painting buddy for the third event was a no-show but I discovered about an hour into the event I was actually going to be ok. I knew the location, the routine, and I had a mission to keep my anxiety under control. These events were my “thing” now and as a “regular” I even got to know the instructors.

I set some rules: no getting hung up on making a perfect painting, the painting must be completed within the two-hour event, and no reworking the painting at home (this rule gets bent a lot). My inner perfectionist eventually relaxed and I played with styles (“Predators”) and techniques (“At the Bus





Stop”). I experimented with how to integrate ideas (“Gallifreyan Peacock”) and I channeled lessons from college painting classes (Hello, Wayne Thiebaud. Meet Hei Hei!)

The Doctor Who theme carried on for quite a while and as other fandoms became prominent in my family life, their influence found a way into the paintings too. When my girls were old enough to start watching Studio Ghibli movies, a



nod was owed to the influence of those films in our home. As was Harry Potter, Moana, and most recently the fire lizards of Pern. This has been a fabulous way to personalize a simplistic painting and I love having something nerdy in a not-so-obvious way hanging on the walls.

The interior design style of our home is an amalgamation of Dungeons and Dragons Old World, Craigslist Score Traditional, and Preschool Watercolor Boho-Eclectic. All of the paintings are displayed throughout the house and they fit right in. At first paintings were hung after they were completed wherever I could find a wall space. Recently though, I pulled them all down, sorted the pile into mini collections and made special displays in various

rooms around the house.

In general, the groupings are based on aesthetics. The family room has a collection chosen to best suit the room’s color scheme. For one end of a stairway, purple and yellow are the theme. In another corner, I’m amused by grouping of a Dalek with a Weeping Angel. As more paintings are made, I plan to shuffle for new collection combinations. There are so many fandoms not yet included on our walls. This is an opportunity to be fulfilled.



One of the latest paintings diverged from the public painting events. A friend of mine and I met up and did our own work inspired by artist Colleen Wilcox. Keeping with the theme of mixing in alterations, I added drawings from the sketchbooks of my daughters (then 7 & 9 years old).

I call it “New Worlds” because it is a blend of all the fandoms I have shared with my kids so far filtered through their own imagination. Only in the worlds they create will you find a place where cats and owls frolic with 6-legged, crystal dragons among elaborate, alien flowers. And there is love, lots of love.



# MY TWO SIDES OF COLLECTING

By Bradford Lyau

At the opening ceremonies of the World Science Fiction Convention in Dublin, Ireland, I experienced the highlight of my fannish life. I was awarded the Sam Moskowitz Archive Award by First Fandom. This honor is meant to recognize not only one's collection, but also what they did with it.

Sam Moskowitz was both a collector and an amateur scholar of the field. He even cataloged his collection as a librarian would. Well known to many fans, he was viewed as an authority on not only the obscure works of early science fiction, but also of the early history of organized fandom. Though controversial in his role in organizing the first Worldcon in 1939 in New York City, he steadfastly remained devoted to the field and its community.

First, here's a brief description of my stuff (in no particular order): Old pulps dating back to the first decade of the 20<sup>th</sup> century—including a complete run of *Astounding*, first thirty years of *Galaxy* and *F&SF*, and the first issue of *Amazing Stories* along with half of this title under Hugo Gernsback's editorship; lots of first editions (many of them signed or inscribed)—including almost all of H.G. Wells's science fiction works; personal correspondences with many of the field's luminaries—including John W. Campbell, Jr., Robert A. Heinlein, and Ursula K. LeGuin; a small library of volumes about science fiction--including some fan-written histories; 10,000+ vintage comic books—including many key Golden Age issues and almost all first appearances of major superheroes of the Silver Age (both DC and Marvel); and some vintage movie posters and pressbooks.

I did not start out to amass a collection. It's just that over the years, as I kept on buying and reading, I realized I possessed a lot of related stuff that one could collectively label a collection in the conventional use of the word.

Make no mistake, there are a lot of fellow enthusiasts who have larger, much larger, collections than me. Once I had the privilege of researching at Forrest J. Ackerman's "Ackermansion" over a three-month period. Now THAT was a collection, numbering in the hundreds of thousands of rare items from all fields of science fiction literature, films, and fan literature. Don't look too hard for the highlights because you'll probably miss them if you do. For example, stuffed in his first edition of one of his Aldous Huxley books was a handwritten note to 4E from Huxley himself! His first edition of *Dracula* is signed by both Bram Stoker and Bela Lugosi. And his copy of the first edition of Shelley's *Frankenstein* (1818, published in three volumes)! I could go on ...

Then there is the J. Lloyd Eaton Collection located on the campus of the University of California at Riverside. It's probably the largest collection of science fiction and fantasy literature in the world.

So, now we arrive at the second reason why I was honored by First Fandom: what I did with all my stuff.

Ever since I encountered Sam Moskowitz's tomes on the history of science fiction at the ripe young age of 14, I have sustained an effort to know as much about the field, both past and present, as I could.

When I started attending conventions (next Westercon will be my 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of con-going!) and met the luminaries of the field, I became hooked on wanting to know more about the history of both the literature and fan community. I was so impressed with the friendliness of those veteran fans who welcomed newcomers with open arms.

Since I have lived on the West Coast, East Coast, and many places in between, I was able to encounter many segments of the fan community. Talking with the dinosaurs (as First Fandom often referred to themselves) of the community resulted in my collecting much information. Gathering up anecdotes about writers, editors, artists, and fans from the 1920s through the 1960s turned out to be as easy as picking a tree's low-hanging fruit.

Then came graduate school. Since science fiction often described itself as a literature of ideas, it probably played no small part of my wanting to become a historian, an intellectual historian—i.e., one who looks at ideas and their impact on culture, politics, religion, what-have-you. My first seminar paper focused in part on H.G. Wells and his influence on post-World War I thinking (more impactful than many people today would realize). My dissertation analyzed the ideologies present in the major pulp line of French science fiction from the 1950s.

I eventually turned my dissertation into a book-length study twenty years later and it received great reviews from the leading SF academic journals (whew!). Perhaps the three best validations of my book are 1) cited as author for two entries in the *Encyclopedia of Science Fiction* and listed as a reference for further reading at the end of the "France" entry in the *Encyclopedia*, 2) if you are ever in Paris (France, not Texas), you can check out my book from the Bibliothèque Nationale de France, and 3) in addition to libraries of the major US universities, it can be found in libraries of various institutions in 11 other countries.

In addition to my book, I managed to publish articles in peer-reviewed journals and volumes—covering SF from America, Britain, Europe, and even China. Though my teaching career ended in the mid-1990s, I continued to research and write—making these activities an involved hobby and an extension of my collecting. My articles have received positive reactions from writers and fans (I assume the academic

world liked them since they were accepted). One of my highlights is a personal letter (he usually sent form letters to fans in order to handle the large volume of letters he received) from Robert A. Heinlein saying that he enjoyed my first published article in which its second half discussed his ideas.

Of course, I relied on university libraries for my background research. But much of my primary sources came from my collection.

So, lucky me, I managed to combine my collecting and my scholarly lives in a most pleasant way.

While on the subject of my collecting life, living around the USA and travelling to conventions, especially to Worldcons both home and abroad, ended up in my creating another collection list of sorts—visiting various places in my country (49 out of 50 states) and those around the world (79 countries). Once I was able to do so, I used my fannish destinations as a pretext to tour many places before and after cons. I even made some SF-oriented pilgrimages during these trips—including Jules Verne's birthplace (Nantes) and grave (Amiens) and H.G. Wells birthplace (Bromley) and last residence (13 Hanover Terrace, London). I still have my health, so I hope to continue and collect more geographic and cultural experiences.

Perhaps the piece of my collection that best represents the two reasons behind my winning the award is my copy of the first edition of Sam Moskowitz's *The Immortal Storm*, his history of organized SF fandom during the 1930s. Thirty-two years ago, in the dealers' room at Nolacon II, noted fan and dealer, Robert A. Madle (one of the last surviving members of First Fandom and attender of the first Worldcon in 1939—he turned 100 years old this year and is still going strong!), offered for sale this book.

Furthermore, it used to be Julius Schwartz's (also a legendary early fan who published one of the first fanzines ever and is best remembered for being a most influential comic book editor of DC Comics for 42 years) copy with Sam's inscription to him! I snapped it up with warp speed. Bob then offered to get more autographs of the famous SF personalities mentioned in the book. All I had to do was leave the book at his huckster's table and he would flag down these people as they walked by and have them sign on the page or picture where they are mentioned or featured. I came back the next day and, sure enough, he delivered on his promise. Jack Williamson, Frederik Pohl, L. Sprague de Camp, and Donald A. Wollheim just to name a few! He even had Sam re-inscribe the book to me as part of "a new generation of readers of fan history." On the last day of the convention, I ran into Julius Schwartz himself and showed him the book. He proceeded to inscribe it, referring to me as "A true S-F fan." The perfect fan memory piece!

Don't know the market value of this book. Don't care. Its sentimental meaning will remain priceless.

# What Would General Leia Do?

By Amanda Cherry

When I first pitched this article, I had 49 discrete instances of Princess Leia in my office. As of turning in my finished piece, I have 61. And that's just my office décor; it doesn't count wearable items (I have lots), books, comics, DVDs/BluRays, video games, stickers (there's one on the computer I'm using to type this), toys in my son's room, or artwork in the rest of the house. And it also only counts each piece of art one time—sometimes there are multiple Leias in a single painting.

It's not that I set out to have a "collection". In fact, I've never seen myself as a collector at all. And yet, here I sit, surrounded on all sides by a Princess-turned-Jedi-turned General in forms ranging from fleece blankets to one-of-a-kind paintings.



I was in preschool when I was first introduced to the *Star Wars* films. HBO was running the Original Trilogy back to back to back, and my mom was watching *Return of the Jedi* in our den while she was doing some ironing and I was playing with Barbies on the floor. I happened to look up at the television during the speeder bike chase- a moment that changed my life forever. There was a **GIRL** there on the screen who was out-flying and out-shooting the white-armored bad guys (who were clearly professional soldiers because uniforms).

She was instantly my hero. And I said so. I told my mom I thought she was the greatest.



"That's Princess Leia," my mom said back.



Now—I don't know how many of you are familiar with preschool-age girls, but if there is one thing a person could have said to me in that moment to make me love this character even more than I already did, that was it.

*SHE'S A PRINCESS!?!?!*

That was it. I was a fan for life.

And then, a few scenes later, it gets revealed that SHE HAS MAGIC POWERS.

Yeah. Barbie Schmarbie; I was watching *Star Wars*.

My affinity for Leia only got stronger as I got older. She was the proof of concept that it was absolutely



possible to shoot the bad guy AND wear a dress, to defeat the Empire AND fall in love, to have great hair AND do great things. There wasn't a whole lot of that going around in the 80's. Most princesses needed rescuing, and most badass women wore short hair and trousers.

Not that there's anything wrong with short hair and trousers.

But when you're a "girly-girl" the message is [far too] often that you're not leadership material, that you're the opposite of a badass, and that you're unlikely to grow up to be solidly self-reliant, much less someone who others can also rely on.

Leia was (and is) my lodestar in the belief that glamour and authority do not have to be mutually exclusive.

The older I got, and the more I realized what a rare thing it was (and is!) in pop culture to have a character who is both

super-feminine and super-capable, Leia became more and more of an icon in my eyes. And as I worked to navigate adulthood, I found it inspiring to surround myself with depictions of my favorite badass Princess.

Also, I was a PR major and worked as a district-level promotion coordinator for a major cinema chain—I know just enough about merchandising to know that, if I want more Leia merch, I need to buy the merch that already exists. This led to a years-long habit of buying every single thing I came across for

sale with Princess Leia on it—a habit I had to reconsider once the Disney acquisition came to bear and filled the world with oodles of new and exciting product lines.

Along with the newly-minted Disney merch came a resurgence of fandom thanks to the announcement and subsequent release of the Sequel Trilogy. And even though I'd mitigated my impulse to buy everything with Leia on it anywhere, I found myself, for the first time in my life, positively swimming in Leia merchandise I really \*liked\*.



At the same time, I became a published author. I subsequently began spending a lot of time in and around Sci-Fi/Fantasy and Comic conventions, through which I was introduced to the work of some amazing artists (both licensed and fan) whose work I adore and am happy to support with my dollars (you'll likely notice multiple works by Karen Hallion on my walls).

And third, as though I needed any more reason to make my writing space All About Leia, the Sequel Trilogy brought me an even deeper level of representation via the self-same character I've loved all my life.

I spent a lot of years (many of them spent as a professional in Musical Theatre) abusing and ignoring my body, and that has left me with mobility challenges. I've had both of my knees rebuilt, and often walk

with the aid of a cane (it's purple and covered in Leia stickers). And it's kind of hard to feel like a boss when your own body doesn't always do what you ask of it.

So I cannot overstate my gut-level joy at seeing General Leia onscreen in *The Last Jedi* bursting onto the bridge of the *Raddus* with her blaster in one hand and her cane in the other, and watching her for the rest of that film as no less herself—no less the hero I'd looked up to since preschool—leaning on her mobility aid.

I think I would have been thrilled at any non-villain in *Star Wars* walking with a cane. But the fact it was Leia was... I don't know. I write for a living, and I've been looking for the words to describe the feeling for years now, but the only thing I can come up with is *Everything* which seems at the same time absolutely correct and terribly hollow.

*Everything* is somehow not enough.

If I ever needed permission from myself to go all-in on living my best Leia-inspired life, that was it.

When each of my parents died, I got through it with the mantra, "What Would General Leia Do?" And whenever I feel like I'm losing my way in life, I turn back that same wisdom. I continue to be motivated and inspired by this character (and by the amazing actress who brought her to life) every day.

And so now I unabashedly surround myself with these prints and postcards, pins, toys, stickers, and stamps, so that every time I look up from my work, I'm reminded of the particular brand of fully-feminine heroism that has inspired me my whole life.



# The Pony Whisperer: An Interview with Seanan McGuire

By Sarah Gulde

Photos by Seanan McGuire

*I vaguely remember having a purple My Little Pony when I was in first grade, but I can't remember which one it was.*



Do you remember anything about her hair color or the symbol on her behind?

*I feel like she was purple with purple hair.*

Then I feel like given your age and that you said first grade, you had Blossom.

*Oh my god. I think that's it.*

Yep, one of the Original Six. So almost everyone that didn't collect Ponies that says "I had a Pony when I was a kid, but I don't remember who it is" had one of these Original Six. And Blossom here was the first purple Pony with purple hair. She was released in year two.

*Wow. I'm almost crying right now.*

Yeah, that is not an uncommon reaction. And it's part of why I'm doing the Instagram Pony thing. Because I've had so many people go, "You just showed me my childhood friend. I didn't know where she went."

The Instagram thing is a photo project, where every day I'm photographing one My Little Pony, in order from the very first My Little Pony. We just reached number 11 today, so I'm going to be doing this for a while.

There is something incredibly soothing about "This is Firefly here and today is her day. Today's the day I'm going to look at Firefly and I'm going to find the best angle to photograph Firefly from. And then I'm going to write a little blurb for Instagram telling people about Firefly and why she was cool, and what she represents in the mini Pantheon.

So as of right now that's where I am in the photography project. And after a little bit I'm going to get past that and I'm going to get to the Ponies that actually came with accessories. Like Puddles and Peaks here, who came with their teeter totter. And then I'm going to have to start matching Ponies up to accessories, and discovering all the accessories I don't have, and buying so many My Little Pony accessories, and it's going to be so soothing.

***This room is amazing. Does it have a name?***

It's the Pony Room for now. It's probably going to get called Pony Land at some point because that is where the Ponies lived in Generation One. But it's not going to feel like Pony Land until I am able to finish clearing out all the staging tables, and set up a card table in the middle of the room to put the Paradise Estate on. The Paradise Estate was the single largest My Little Pony place that was ever released, and it does take up an entire card table. And it is the only place that not currently in this room because it takes up so much space.

Here we've got the staging tables and such, and the conservation cases. One thing that is very important when dealing with My Little Ponies is that most storage cases you're going to find will be a stained wood and glass product. You don't want to let Ponies sit directly on stained wood, as it will damage them over time. So you'll see that my Ponies are either standing on glass or they are standing on various plastic Pony props.



The exception is that in most of the cases, if you look on the bottom shelf, you'll find some Ponies standing directly on stained wood. And these are all Generation Three Ponies. They're not my primary collection, but people send them to me and they're still Ponies and they still deserve to be treated with some respect. But they are not at as much risk of damage from the stained wood as the Generation One because they're 20 years younger.

***I remember you saying you have plans for having displays built?***

Yes. A friend of mine who is both a My Little Pony collector and a woodworker is coming up to assist me in designing shelves specifically, specifically to the dimensions needed by My Little Ponies. Those will be all glass, with UV resistant shielding and lights that are designed to not do damage over time.

That's because at this point, any act of My Little Pony collection that's focusing on the Generation One Ponies is also an act of conservation. You know, these are children's toys. They were made to be played with, and they were made to be thrown away. These really are part of the first era of hardcore plastic toys. They're not meant to be hand-me-downs. They're not meant to have that kind of sturdiness. So all of the things I just said about stained wood, that's because we're fighting a losing battle and an

inherently losing battle against plastic that wasn't designed to stand up. So we're going to be building shelves in here specifically to reduce the rate of decay.

***May I see some of your favorite items?***

The Dream Castle is this lovely pink castle. In the US the Dream Castle was released with Spike the dragon, and Spike is around here somewhere. Spike is very common. Almost everyone that has a collection of 1980's My Little Ponies is going to have at least one Spike kicking around. I think I've got three of them. Because he's a baby dragon.



In the UK, when they issued the Princess Ponies they each came with their own baby dragons. And these are impossible to find. You cannot find them. And this one was included in a lot of Ponies that a reader of mine from the UK sent to me for shipping and a small payment. If I were an eBay reseller, I would feel like an asshole for having accepted it, because you can get like 100 bucks for one of these dragons. Just the dragon.

This is the South African version of Seashell, who is one of my favorite Ponies from childhood. If you read my October Daye books, a thing that I don't hide at all (and gets me yelled at sometimes for not hiding) is that the Toby books are basically straight up my childhood My Little Pony game. The game I was playing with my Ponies in my bedroom for literally years. George RR Martin gets praised when he says that Game of Thrones started out as a game he played with his turtles. So there's a difference here and the difference is the patriarchy.



This is Ladybird. She is one five Ponies ever made in this sitting pose, which was not a hugely popular pose. And I have never understood why. Even as a kid, this was one of my favorites. But she's the fifth Pony put out in this pose out of five total. She has just a great symbol. She's from Greece. That's the only country where she was released. And it took me years of hunting to track her down. So she is a favorite.



This is the Lullaby Nursery, and the Lullaby Nursery was issued randomly with either pink or blue furniture. You didn't get to pick what it was. But while this is technically my third Lullaby Nursery, this is my second *modern* Lullaby Nursery. My first one was a blue furniture Nursery, which is why you still have some blue furniture in there. But this is a pink furniture Nursery, so now I have the pink and the blue furniture.





And those are some of my favorite Ponies. I could just show you individual Ponies all day. I have hundreds of them, and will continue to acquire more until I have all of them. I'm not actually shooting for all of them, because no one can get all of them. There are there are variant Ponies that come from different countries where to the best of our knowledge, there are four left in the world. We know whose collection every single one of them is in. And some of the rarer Ponies only circulate when someone dies.

So you can't really say I'm going to get every Pony, but I am planning to try for every mass produced Pony. If it was a Pony you could just go out and acquire, I want it.

### ***What are those boxes on the floor?***

I keep bins of Ponies around, because you're going to wind up with some duplicates. I've got these bins here, which are Ponies that have had haircuts or have bad body damage, or otherwise are not collector quality anymore. And I keep so kids can play with them when they come to visit because otherwise my house is literally a circle of hell for children.

All of these Ponies have the things you cannot fix that you can't rehab for a standard collection. And there are collectors that will allow some of these things a little bit more than I do. But the things you can't fix are paint damage, body damage, and haircuts. So if the paint has been scraped, if the body has been like chewed by a dog or a child, or the hair has been cut, the Pony is, from a collector's standpoint, ruined. There are places I could send a Pony to have its hair replaced, but that's not the original hair. And I know collectors who are okay with that. I am not .

This box is the next salon batch. These check out on all three of those of axes. Their paint is good, their bodies are good, and their hair is good. They're just filthy, or really, really tangled and beyond my capacity to fix. I send these off to my friend Tiffy who is a professional doll restorer, and she gives me a special bulk rate. Which is good, because I've sent her a lot of Ponies. I send a box of Ponies I already own off to her, and then she sends it back to me shipshape and good as new. They're so cleaned up that it's like getting new Ponies in the mail and I'll spend hours like "Oh my God, look at you. You're so good."

This is my latest amazing treasure, the Spanish Scrub-a-Dub Tub. It was released in what's called Year Ten. It is "new in box", the instructions are still present, and everything is still in its little plastic baggie. I have yet to actually commit to opening it. But I'm going to. I am destroying that fucker's resale value. And I'm going to do it with a smile on my face, while huffing 40-year-old plastic. Because that is what we do.

### ***Do you usually take things out of their boxes?***

I mean, I'll think about it. Right now I'm leaving things that come "new in box" in their boxes, until we get the shelves built so everything can go immediately into its hermetically sealed protection.

This is possibly my most valuable "in box" item because I don't do a lot of "mint on card". This is a Little Flitter from the Summer Wings. She is probably my favorite Pony of all time. Again, talking about my childhood Pony game. This is October Daye. Like this is the original Toby.

She's got a yellow body and a hair color. We call it fading pink, because it bleaches to white in sun exposure, but hers is still pink because she's been in this box since 1987. And she is coming out of this box the day they press record on the camera for the first of my TV shows. So if it weren't for COVID she might be out of the box by now. God dammit COVID, why did you go and shut down Hollywood just when this stuff was actually moving forward?

***So we saw your most valuable Pony. Is there a Pony that means the most to you personally?***

This is **Wind Whistler**. You can make a very strong argument, based on the way that she was characterized in the My Little Pony cartoons, that Wind Whistler is the first autistic My Little Pony. She's kind of the Pony Vulcan - she's very blunt. She doesn't really do contractions. She is me as a child. And when she told you something she followed through with it. She wouldn't say "I'm going to do this ridiculous thing" and then go not do the ridiculous thing. She would go and do the ridiculous thing.

In the United States of America, Wind Whistler was only issued as what's called a So Soft Pony, which means that she was covered in a layer of flocking. I have a remarkable number of So Soft Ponies for someone that fucking hates So Soft Ponies. I despise them. They get filthy if you look at them, and their flocking is almost constantly damaged. Finding them with undamaged flocking has been one of the greatest challenges of my collection so far. And I don't enjoy them. I don't enjoy the way they feel. And I don't enjoy the way they look. But I have to get them to have a complete collection.

So since Wind Whistler was only released in So Soft, I scraped like half the flocking off of her with my teeth. I would sit there just running the Pony against my teeth to take the flocking off when I was seven years old. She's not great, do not chew on My Little Pony.

I learned that in Europe, Wind Whistler was released as a normal Pegasus so she didn't have flocking. And this was the first non-American My Little Pony I bought. She was probably 60 bucks in 1999 money. And at the time I was working minimum wage in a call center, so saving up for her was the biggest deal.



But she is me as My Little Pony. She is the version of me I always wanted to have because she's not flocked. And she represented a weirdly enormous step into adulthood for me, figuring out how to budget to do this extravagant thing and still be able to do all of the other things that I needed to do.

***Do you have any tricks you use to keep yourself from going on eBay and blowing your whole bank account on Ponies at once? Do you have any limits you put on your spending?***

I have a monthly Pony budget which can be added to by selling things. If I do not spend the full budget, it rolls into the next month. So if the Pony budget for January is one and I don't buy any Ponies in January, then the Pony budget for February is going to be two, because the money is still there. I will let myself go over budget if it is something that has been on the hunt list for a long time. I could in January spend the February Pony budget if I have the money and can still make the rest of my bills.

In addition to being a writer, I am a filk musician, which is the folk music of science fiction and fantasy. It's a relatively small community, and with conventions down right now because of COVID, we don't really have great ways to sell physical CDs. I had just reprinted an album at the start of 2020, which has been filling my garage, and a local friend who runs an Etsy store finally volunteered to sell some CDs for me. I said "Great, sure," and promptly earmarked all of that money for the Pony fund. So in the last month, I have probably spent about \$1,500 on My Little Ponies, because it was 100% money from that CD sale.

My latest Grail acquisition is not actually here yet. And that is number five in the sitting pose Pony listing. It's the Brazilian version of this is the first one I have seen go on sale. I've waited five years for this Pony to come up on sale, and when I saw her I bought her immediately. Because of the CD sale money, I did not have to dip into the actual Pony budget to buy her.

This one Pony cost about a third of the money I made from the CDs, because there were maybe 12 of them left in the world. And every time one of them goes on sale, someone like me acquires it. Unless I die, this Pony is not going back into circulation ever. And if I do die, my friend who's helping me build the shelves gets my entire collection in my will. And they are not planning to resell her because they are a Pony that they don't have.

***When you end up with duplicates of stuff, do you end up doing any eBay reselling yourself?***

No, no, no, no, no. I do not have the patience for mailing things. The post office is my enemy. I love the USPS. We are so fortunate to have them. But in terms of going there and mailing a package, no, no, no, no, no, no, no, no, no, no, no, no, no.

The Ponies that are being packed to go to salon don't have to be packed delicately. They're already in a filthy state. So I just throw them in a big box, make sure the box is secure and send them off. And when I get Ponies that have had bad haircuts or stuff like that, I will sometimes send them to my friend who does the customs. And those again don't have to be packed gently because they are going to be destroyed. But if I am sending you a Pony because you have paid for that Pony, that Pony had better be cushioned so perfectly that it feels like it is riding the wind off an angel's ass.

I'm in the middle of my first ever PayPal dispute, from a shipping problem. They packed the Pony with too much tension on her wings. And it was one of the Ponies that has gauzy fly wings. They packed her with too much tension on her wings and the wings snapped. And they are claiming that the box was compressed at some point, and that's what snapped the wings. And I am contesting that when I received the Pony in the mail, she had been wrapped in bubble wrap tape so tightly that her wings went from their normal angle to a straight up and down. And then the 30-year-old plastic was left in that position for three months because of COVID.

I would also price things way too low for the current market. Because I do want to be fair and I do want to make collections accessible to people, because I have been the person with functionally no money trying to grow my collection. And I thus know that half of what I sell will get snapped up by resellers who are going to flip it around and post it again, at three times what I had just sold it for.

And it's not like I keep a database. The duplicate I'm selling, maybe it's something I bought, but it might be something I was given by a reader and I don't want to be that girl. I do give them away sometimes to people that are like "Oh my God, I've loved her forever." But that's a very different thing.

As far as I'm concerned, the entire Pony collection lives in the sunk cost fallacy. If I have spent money on Pony things, that money is Pony things now.

***Do people send you random things having to do with your collection for no reason?***

Yes, it is the best thing. It is fantastic. I have readers contact me. I'm not going to say constantly, but more frequently right now because I'm talking about Ponies a lot, because we only just started setting up the Pony room. Part of why it's so chaotic in here is that I have only had this space since the start of August. Prior to that it was the craft room of a housemate who has since moved out. So everything in here has been organized, staged and sorted since August 1 while also doing everything else that has to be done.

So people are sending me a lot more right now than they historically would be. But I'll get contacts going, "Hey, I found this Pony just at random. Can I send her to you?" And I also get people going "Hey, so it's a big box. I can't really just send it to you. But could you pay postage and maybe, I don't know give me 50 bucks." And some of the stuff people have found to send me is insane. It's incredible.

I am 42. So when I talk about my childhood, I'm talking about the 80s. A lot of people who were kids, when we were kids, got deeply fucked up by children's television, because it was the age of everything as a toy commercial. We constantly saw the toys coming to life, and doing things and having adventures, but they were still toys. And then we hit Toy Story and The Christmas Toy and the Velveteen Rabbit.

Most of us are smart people intellectually. We know that these are toys. They don't have adventures when we're not in the room. Emotionally, though, part of us was told over and over and over by adults we trusted that our toys are individuals. They are people, they have rich inner lives, they do things when we're not around. And it's hard not to internalize that a little bit.

I will get contacts from people who go “Yeah, I know that what I have has some monetary value. But at the end of the day, I don't have space for this anymore. And I can't sell my friends.” And that is a lot of adult toy collectors and a lot of teenage toy collectors today, because the Toy Story movies continue.

So the responsibility of somebody being willing to pass a beloved toy off to me is huge. And I feel like I kind of owe it to the toys to give them a safe place to be. I know that's weird, but I'm a professional fantasy author. I'm allowed to be a little weird.

***You said this room started in August, when did your adult re-collection start?***

1999. I can actually say that with some assurance because of my PayPal dispute on eBay. In order to open it I had to find out when I opened my eBay account, and that was in 1999. I was 21 years old and found out that Ponies were an option again, and went for it.

This has been roughly 20 years of collecting in varying degrees of focus. Ponies have always been there. And there have always been Ponies that I would go out of my way to acquire even if I was not currently “Ponies! Ponies! Ponies!” all the time the way I currently am.

I did Monster High for a while in that gap. I collected nothing for a while because I bought a house and moved to the Pacific Northwest in that gap. Various other things have interceded, but it always comes back to Ponies.

***I read that you had a childhood collection that got taken away from you. Do you mind talking about that a little?***

So I genuinely think that many adult collectors are adult collectors because our things were taken from us too soon. It is actually a psychological injury that we are trying to salvage in some way.

My grandmother always bought me Ponies. That was the thing that we did together. I mean, that makes me sound super materialistic. And it wasn't that it was just that when I got to see my grandma, which wasn't all the time, we would go to the toy store and I would get a Pony. And so there's this very strong association between what was really the only stable adult relationship in my life. And My Little Pony.

This is Candy, who's one of the first ones Grandma bought for me when I was 14. Then my mother threw me out of the house. I went to live with friends and I couldn't take my Pony collection, which was massive, with me. So it went into the storage unit along with everything else I owned. I literally had one long box of comics and books and one suitcase of clothes. And that's out of everything I had acquired over the course of my childhood. And I wouldn't even say collected because I wasn't collecting yet, I was just acquiring.



My mom is not great with money, never has been. And I am not 100% clear on the sequence of events here. Because again, I was a teenager, I was a an emotionally battered teenager, so I was not super talking to my family at the time. But whether it be there was no money or whether it be she got distracted by shiny thing, Mom stopped paying for the storage unit, and it got seized for nonpayment. All of our possessions were sold in a storage unit auction, including my Pony collection, which I was not yet emotionally ready to give up.

That led to years of resentment. And frankly, I'm still resentful. So once Ponies became an option again, I began reacquiring Ponies. Part of me is like you owe me for both the therapy bills and for the Ponies because I wouldn't be doing this if you had just paid for our storage unit when I was you know, 16. And I do periodically go looking. You know, I have collect, I have connections in most of the collector community. And this was in Pleasant Hill, California that this all went down. So I will periodically just put out feelers Hey, does anyone in the collector community remember when this happened? Because it is possible, it is not likely. But it is possible that my entire collection is still together somewhere in a room very much like this. That has happened before. And I would pay quite a lot of money to have my Ponies back. Even if they are not in as nice of condition as the Ponies I have collected over time to replace them. You know, even if they are going to replay with hard by a kid their mind and I missed them and my grandma bought them for me.

One of the fun things I discuss with every friend of mine who has kids, is when your kid hits the age of I'm Too Grown Up For This. You know, I Don't Want My Barbies Anymore. I'm a Grown Up. And if they want to sell them at a yard sale, let them - but *buy them yourself*. Give the kid the amount of money that they're asking. Unless they're asking something ridiculous, because if they're asking something really ridiculous, then clearly they don't actually want to sell them. But buy them yourself and put them in the garage for a couple of years, and just tuck them away. And if after five years, your kid has not expressed any regrets about outgrowing their Barbies, you can get rid of them. Now you can sell them, and their collector value will only have gone up from another five years safe in a box. But I find that after two or three years, most kids, rather than just drifting away, want their stuff back. They regret and that's what leads to adult collectors.

I love being an adult collector. I love being a part of the My Little Pony community. I love my Ponies. And I would love to live in a world where people like me don't exist.

***Do you feel like being a collector is a little more intense in 2020?***

Yes, I feel like collecting is a little more intense in 2020 for a lot of reasons. One of them is you know, this is the first social contact I've had all day. I don't really know you most of my social contact is zoom meetings. And when we're done, you're going to go away. Bye bye. And I'm still alone. I haven't had a hug since February. And I am by no means unique in that. So my Ponies again, they're not people. They don't love me. But I can be with them. I can brush their hair and I can they can soothe me the way they did when I was a kid. And that's really nice.

You asked about techniques for not just buying all the Ponies straightaway. My agent weirdly asked me the same question recently. She's like, "If I if I get another book for sold for you, how much do I need to

ask for so you can just buy all the Ponies and be done?" And I was like "Um, I could probably get all of the Ponies that I'm missing in perfect condition for \$20,000," which is a lot of money but as big collections go is not that much.

But first of all, I don't want you to get me \$20,000 just to spend on Ponies. That is fiscally irresponsible in a way I try not to be. Second, every time you acquire a new Pony, it's a little hit of dopamine. And I do feel like a lot of us are self-medicating with stuff that we know will make us happy this year. I know for a fact that if when we're done with this interview I will hang up on you, go to eBay, and buy myself a Pony. It will make me happy. And having something I know will make me happy in 2020 is very valuable.

In fact, I've been staying off of eBay today because I got Baby Cherries Jubilee in the mail yesterday. She's a very difficult to find baby Pony, and I actually had to bid for her on eBay. I hate bidding because I don't snipe, I set what my top bid is and walk away. And the snipers will beat me by \$1 at the last second. And then I get kind of angry. I didn't get the Pony. I didn't spend the money, but I didn't get the Pony.

Sometimes you Buy It Now so you get the dopamine hit. You won the art, you acquired the thing, and then you get it in the mail a couple days later. And it's so good. And so when I get something really, really exciting, I'm trying to wait a couple days before I get anything else. Because that way I can stretch out the wonder and the glory of acquiring.

***Going back to what you said about self-medicating, I feel like there are a lot worse things that we could be self-medicating with than collections of things.***

I agree. You know, the limit on my Pony collection at this point is my own ability to say no, you've spent enough money on Ponies, which is a thing I'm very good at. And this room, all of my Ponies have to fit in this room.

As long as I am doing both of those things, I am making fiscally responsible choices. I am helping other people during COVID actually because I'm giving them money for their stuff. I'm making fiscally responsible choices and I'm not overrunning my house with little plastic horses. Why shouldn't I self-medicate with more Ponies? You know, there is literally no good reason in this world not to do it.

By the way, this is Baby Cherries Jubilee. She's a European-only baby, she never came out in America. So I had to hunt her down and she was not easy, but she is not my white whale.

***Which one is your white whale?***

My white whale is a complete set of the Argentinian release Windy Wing Ponies. And that's going to take another 10-15 years. Because the Argentinian windy wings are very, very delicate and finding them intact is very, very difficult. But I will get there. I will.

***I believe you. It's nice you have something to look forward to.***

I do.

And in 2020 a reason to live is not the worst thing ever.

