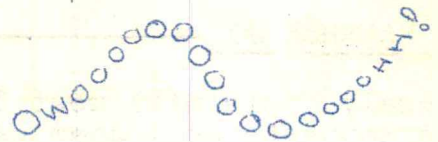


La Banshee #1



August 7, 1954 This publication is the end-product of a vague, uneasy ambition that I've had for some time now. I've wanted another fanzine to supplement Grue; not to replace it, mind you, but to accomplish things that Grue isn't too well fitted for.

For one thing, Grue is a quarterly publication with all the virtues and headaches inherent in such periodicity. It can be--and usually is--put together in a very leisurely and easy-going manner with a few pages accumulated here and a few stencils cut or run there. Which is all very fine. I'd not like the idea of a large mag that had a deadline every month or so. Even quarterly issuance seems a bit frequent at times.

But, on the other hand, a $\frac{1}{4}$ ly suffers from usually being late with the news. Unless an event breaks with extremely fortuitous timing it is either ancient history by the time you can mention it or—as occurs much more frequently—it happens a few days after you've "put the issue to bed" and you're still left out.

Then, too, I've felt the need for a less pretentious thing than Grue in order to have something I can send out in lieu of a letter without the necessity of sitting down and laboriously hammering out a time-devouring personal missive to each and every person who writes me a letter. If I had only a dozen or so letters a month to answer it would be very simple. But the figure is more like 75 to 90 letters a month and the plain unvarnished truth is that I can't answer that many letters no matter how badly I may want to (and I want to very badly indeed).

Enter, then, this little thing. I can't say with any assurance how many pages it will run...though I doubt that it will ever exceed the 2-ounces for 2¢ postal minimum. I can't say how often it will appear...probably whenever I have something to say in it. And I can't say what future issues will contain...or, for that matter, if there will be future issues. At best, it is a very haphazard and uncertain deal.

It will go to anyone to whom I would ordinarily write a letter—to all those people I'd very much like to write a personal communique to but can't on account of the myriadity (if there isn't such a word there should be!) of their numbers. It won't circulate through any of the amateur press associations because I prefer to retain some control over who gets it and who doesn't. Circulation through any of the apæ demands a degree of reticence that I'd like to dispense with here. By keeping it from a few chronic soreheads and hemophiliacs who bleed at a feather's touch I'll be able to speak more freely.

Also there are members of all the apæ to whom I'd like to be able to send something extra...something they get, not as a matter of course from their membership but because I like them and want to send it to them. The fact that you got a copy probably means that you're included here. In a word, this goes to people whom I like to consider as my friends. I want to return to the more personalised fanzine that Grue used to be before it went FAPA—to a magazine where I send each copy to each recipient and can underscore pertinent (or impertinent) passages if I feel so inclined. I intend to leave a blank space on the back page for two reasons. I hate to expose my stuff to the snoop eyes of the USPD and I want to be able to write a note on the back and send it first-class if I'm so minded.

Loosely, this will most likely carry such news as I hear, such opinions and comments as I deem of sufficient general interest plus personal mentions and brief quotes from incoming letters plus maybe a few fanzine reviews, plugs, ads and such-like. I will say about what I'd say if I were writing to you alone except that, through the garrulous agency of the Gestetner duplicator, I'll be saying the same thing to everybody else too.

I suppose I'll be laying myself open to accusations of copying this mag or that one but it's rather more than a little too late to invent fanzines. Nearly everything that you can think of has been done at some time or another...and probably earlier than you thought as we'll see in just a minute. The trick is not so much to originate something new as it is to take an old idea and handle it well. So if this reminds you of Review, Confab, Grey, Vorzimerzine or some other bikinizine, just relax and the feeling will doubtless pass in a little while.

And now we come to that title. As you've no doubt heard, Tucker plans to put out a revival issue of his fine old fanzine, "Le Zombie," which has been cœstivating for too many years now. It never really died (for a Zombie, by definition, is a thing undead) but it has lain dormant for a bit over eight years now...since July of 1948 when LeZ #63 appeared.

As Tucker mentioned in Richard Geis's "Psychotic", the the reanimated 1954 LeZ will be produced on the Gruesome Gestetner of Mafia Press. As a reward for agreeing to be Tuck's publisher he loaned me the complete bound backfile of Le Zombie to read over. My excuse for talking him into this was that it would enable me to design a cover in harmony with previous issues and—possibly—to write something suitable for the inside.

Take it from me, you haven't really lived till you've had the chance to read the complete backfile of a great fanzine like LeZ all at one gulp. Stretching, as it does, from about March of 1939 (the first issue isn't dated) for nearly a decade through the war years, it is a rich lode of fannish lore indeed. It bristles with things that strike the 1954 eye as anachronisms (appearing in a list of "Fans in Service" is the name of Pvt. Dean W. Boggs who didn't become known as "Redd" till sometime after the war ended). But a surprising number of things currently thought of as fairly new are there on the record, irrevocably pinned to that bygone era. Lemme give you a f'r-instance:

How recently would you say that the expression, "Goshwowboyoboy!" came into general fannish usage? I don't claim that this is the first recorded appearance of it but the phrase appears on the cover of LeZ #17, dated November 18, 1939. It is the caption for a cover cartoon by Damon Knight. I write this with upper-case D&K because that's the way damon knight signed it. But can you imagine demon damon knight drawing covers for fanzine publishers? You can? Then try guessing who drew the cover for #18—give up? OK, I'll tell you. Ray Bradbury, thass who. #21 has another cover by dk and inside there's a self-portrait of/by Bradbury. And only 14 years ago...

I should note here that damon knight was (and, presumably, still is) a damned good artist in anybody's league. Work like that would be warmly welcomed in Grue any day. However Ray Bradbury, as an artist, could very likely write good stories about life on the planet Mars. Nuff sed.

"You got a mind I wouldn't use for a cesspool."

--Bob Ruark

Getting back to the point, the early issues of Le Zombie were something along the order of this...quick paragraphs of news, comment and stuff. Reading it over, I kept thinking that it would be fun to receive a mag like that nowadays. "Hell," I finally decided, "it might even be fun to edit it." So here we are. I shall be eagerly awaiting a reaction from Bloomington but unless Tucker's reaction is one of Victorian un-amusement, I shall return*. Though I won't by any means guarantee that LaB will ever reach 63 issues. (*just call me D. MacArthur Grennell)

If Seetee Beck wants my address he can write and ask me for it.

Above being in passing reference to a bit in the current ish of "Dawn," Russ Watkins' fanzine. Commenting on a previous issue, I made what I thought was a harmless remark to the effect that I wished I had so much spare time that I could even read columns by Seetee Beck. In the current issue Cal-Tom is fuming because he doesn't have my address and, therefore, can't send me any ominously-ticking packages. Sometimes there goes by a whole week when the postman doesn't come scuttling up the walk with a single ticking package. We always keep a pail of oil by the door to drop them into. It's a good thing CTB doesn't read Dawn very closely because Russ listed my name in his directory of fanzine-publishers.

The Big Vampire Mystery
or
Who Gnawed Courtney's Throat?

I should, perhaps, save this for Gnurrserly Rhymes. But I feel generous. Did you ever see a limerick in blank verse? Here's one by W S Gilbert:

There was an old man of St. Bees,
Who was stung in the arm by a wasp.
When asked, "Does it hurt?"
He replied, "No, it doesn't,
I'm so glad that it wasn't a hornet."

Anybody want to try their hand at something along that line for GR nexttime?

Men never make joshes with girls in galoshes.

SILVERBERG SIGHTS SAUCER, SWEARS SAME "But here I am prating on for paragraph after paragraph without relating the really big thing that happened. I SAW A FLYING SAUCER! Really and truly! It was an oval, glowing object that sailed serenely through the skies at an enormous height, obviously under intelligent control. I'm not pulling a hoax, either--I actually saw the thing sail through the skies over Cupcake, West Copake, N.Y. and so did a number of other people. You can quote me on it--I'm convinced that it was a saucer, or disk if you like, and not a meteor or any such thing." --Bob Silverberg: Corr. (Can't help but wonder if the Saucerians saw Silverberg.)

I'm working on a Superpoo that will be mightier than the Yobber.

FOND DU LAC NOOSE-LETTER If the source of the following news feels that a loss of egoboo is involved the source should so notify me and proper credit will be given next issue. From past experience, it seems a good idea to refrain from naming sources in such matters as these. Continued overpage.

According to info just received, Sam Mines is no longer at Standard. Replacing him is a comparative unknown named T. W. Raines. I, for one, will miss Unca Sam keenly...always luvved his touch with the letter departments. Often a new ed betters a magazine but I'm wondering if that will be the case here. I wish I could resist observing that it never Raines but what it poors.

Jim Harmon is up to something down at Mt. Carmel. Seems he's editing two prozines called "X Science Fiction," and "Fact Adventures For Men." Says he has a story, among others, by David Grinnell, "The Original." LaB sez Bully fer him. No, I don't think that's the title (The Original).

FUTURE reported cutting out all departments. Future Future features only fiction...no more good knight and sweet Madle reviews of pro's prose and fan's fmz. Being a Banshee, we keen keenly.

be

Ballantine Books said to experiencing tough sledding with hard-cover stuff suffering from constipation of sales. Pb editions going well but that can't carry the load.

Tucker's "Time Masters" is out and "Long, Loud Silence" is or soon will be. TM retains the winsome bit of Hoffman poesy on the flyleaf. FB.

If you don't object to an occasional corpse-opera, I'd recommend "Always Leave 'Em Dying," a Shell Scott opus by Richard Prather (Gold Medal) and "Few Die Well" by Sterling Noel. Latter also authored "I Killed Stalin," a doozy of a couple years back. Also above average, "I Came To Kill," by Howard Hunt.

J. Francis McComas has parted from F&SF, presumably on the most amicable of terms. Long-time publisher Lawrence Spivak left them a couple of months ago. With Boucher said to be on the verge of going in for politics, F&SF may be in for some radical changes.

Want to write for quick, easy dough? Like to dream up plots but hate to spend long hours writing out stories? Here's the deal for you then. E-C Comics are in the market for short plots to construct episodes from for their stable of OCS textbooks. They'll buy suitable plots for Panic, though not for Mad, where Kurtzman does the braining. They also buy for their Crime, Horror, Adventure and Piracy mags. Boil down an impactful plot to about one page with a socko ending and send it in. Pay, if accepted, is about \$10 which amounts to 4¢ a word or better and if that's hay you'd do well not to sneeze at such alfalfa.

I don't expect any of you to believe this but so help me Foo it's the truth. We got a bunch of shirts back from the laundry the other day and Jean called my attention to the mark they're using to identify the things these days: GRUE. Honest to parègoric--if you don't believe me send a new shirt (size 16½-33, no french cuffs please) and I'll tear off a collar and send it to you.

Vernon L. McCain, I'm quite pleased to report, has a story upcoming in the November issue of "If." Congrats, Vee-El--it couldn't happen to a nicer guy! Vernon's lucky in that he had a little advance warning and wasn't confronted with the issue bearing his story out of a clear, blue newsstand. That can be something of a shock, I'm told. FB.

If the South rises, the Yeast will rise also.
