

Small wonder you clutch my arm with frightened fingers, nails digging through the rough jacket till I give a small gasp of pain; your eyes glaze in terrour*, your teeth make a small grating noise as they chatter, like gnurrs gnawing in der vood-vork. Small wonder indeed for, shivering across the foetid dampness of the old moor there arises an obscene, unholy clamour*, ululating in satanic cacaphony until the very Fog** itself seems to shiver in mindless horror* beneath the scabrous light of an evil-visaged and gibbous moon. Your voice is an uncontrollable, spasmodic hiss as you hiss, "Is...is that the Dread Hunting-Call of the Overlords of Delgon? Can it be the Hound of the Baskervilles? Is it Laney arisen from his uneasy shroud of gafia? Can...can*** it b-be ... D-De-Deg-geg...Degler???" "No," I hiss (there are two ways to talk in a situation like this--hiss and herss) dragging deeply on my Dunhill until it glows in the greenish, phosphorescent dark like the eye of an angry cyclops, clutching the butt of my silver-bulleted .357 Magnum with sweaty palm, "No, macushla, there's nothing to be afraid of so take yer furshlugginer talons out of my bicep. That eldritch tumult, that Fiendish**** shriek, that unhallowed howling, that cotton-pickin' commotion, that is only the keening of.....

LA BANSHEE 4

Published for nothing
but the sheer,
unmitigated hell of it
by:

Dean A. Grennell,
402 Maple Avenue,
Fond du Lac, Wisconsin,
U. S. of A.

every time a banshee howls...

Let him beware,
the reader (or, as
we usually say,
Caveat Lector).

Thursday evening, September 2nd, 1954

Tonight it's not nearly as much a question of what to say as how much I can squeeze into these pages before I have to quit. My mail basket runneth over again and I intend to comment on some of that. The following is about what I would say if I were to write each and every one of you to whom I owe a letter so wot the heck--we're all friends here, ain't we?

Ain't we?

First of all, I should explain what happened to LaB #3. If my typing is not up to par tonight it is because I am hammering at my favourite* type-writer with fingers crossed. Somewhere between Fond du Lac and Rodeo, California tonight there is a package and a 9x12 manilla envelope containing the bulk of LaB 3 and its accessories. I hope most devoutly that they are closer to Rodeo than they are to Fond du Lac. But I only mailed them last Saturday morning, slothful procrastinator that i am (@ the moment, i don't feel i rate an upper-case I) and I fear they'll need a tailwind to blow into Box 203 by the time the office closes out there Saturday. Thank Foo they'll be gaining two hours! Redd and Agberg and I prepared a bunch of those "Quote-Cards" like the London O did up for the SuperManCon and a special edition of LaB went with them to tell how to use them. As long as they hold out, I'll send LaB 3 and sample cards with this one. Maybe if you crossed your fingers...

*We have a lot of British readers.
**This word courtesy of Don Wegars.

***From the dance of the same name.
****Copyright 1953 by Chas. Wells.

NEO-NEO-FAN DEPARTMENT In LaB 2 we reported the arrival of David Roger Tucker on August 7th and congratulated parents Fern and Bob Tucker. It was a busy week for the people connected with sf because on the 5th--well, let me quote a postcard from Bob Bloch: "Allan Samuel Dikty born August 5th, to T. E. Dikty and E. J. Bleiler, with slight assist from Julian May Dikty ... Patricia Lake Mahaffey marrying Lawrence J. Imburgia on August 28th in Cincinnati ... " Then, a day or two later, Mr. & Mrs. Sam Martinez of Tulsa had a boy (name, so far as I know, not given) and Sandra and August Derleth, not to be outdone, had a daughter...but let me quote the announcement: "August and Sandra Derleth announce their first collaboration, a new work entitled April Rose. Bound in full skin, this edition is limited to eight pounds and four ounces. Publication date, August 9, 1954." So far as I know, that brings our Department of Vital Statistics up to date again. Congratulations to all concerned and thanks to Gerry Steward who beat Bloch by a couple of days with the news of the Dikty heir. Let's see--this makes Bob Tucker's third, Fern Tucker's first, the Dikty's first, Sam Martinez' fourth and the Derleth's first. What some people won't do to get science-fiction out of its so-called "slump"! 10 Sept: Dave Pike writes that FAPA-member Helen Wesson & husband Sheldon had a little girl on 29 August. They had 2 boys before. Congratulations, Wesson's!

A grosvenor sang in Nightingale Square.

FANZINES & GOOD-GRIEFS Which, with slight modification and a nod of apology to John Collier, was the tentative title for a column of reviews of publications of the amateur press as devoted to fantasy and science fiction that was once contemplated for Grue, the fan's magazine. But, somehow, it never took root there. I like fanzine reviews in other magazines but I never seemed able to spare room in Grue after #18 for them. Then I launched Bleen to take care of reviewing the other magazines in the FAPA mailing and I had about all the reviewing I wanted to do. But right now the stack of fanzines un-commented-upon towers almost as high as the stack of letters to be answered so I am inexorably pushed into some sort of collected comments on them. Not only that, but a number of readers may not be familiar with the mags I'm about to list. And these--among others--are magazines without which no well-organized, self-respecting fandomicile should ought to be without which. These impress me as doggone good reading. If you don't receive these, I think you should at least try a copy and make up your own mind. Let's start with:

OOPSLA! #14, 15¢ ea., 2/25¢, Gregg Calkins, 2817 Eleventh Street, Santa Monica, California. If you're a Willis-fan (as is yed), you'd get your money's worth buying OOPS! for his column alone. HYPHEN, Willis' own magazine, does not carry better Willisiana than this. The current installment is almost painfully hilarious. Besides WAW, you get Vernon L. McCain (newly be-smirched filthy pro-type author), you get Robert Bloch in paeantful praise of one Bob Tucker, six pages of editorial comment by Calkins, lovingly moorged piece-to-each with reader's letters and stuff, you get--if you're a fan-ed--a poll card to fill out (the telephone company admits they're worried--everybody's taking polls these days), object to determine the top fanzines; there's Terry Carr, face-critter-creator, Calkins verse (which could be much verse), and you even (Foo help you) get a column by LaB's editor. Get OOPS! @ all costs!

VARIOSO #11, 10¢ straight, John L. Magnus, Jr., 9312 Second Avenue, Silver Spring, Maryland. This one I find particularly charming. In fact, I think I can truthfully say that this is the finest Maggy-mag I've ever seen (& I've seen 'em all). Maggy has taken the accent off of perfect duplication and format and has put it where I think it belongs--on interesting, highly-personalized material. I don't mean to imply (cont.)

VARIOSO (cont.) that VARIOSO is sloppily produced. It's above average, with good, clear mimeoing and typos held down to a reasonable minimum. But I loudly glee at seeing Magnus--one of my oldest and best friends in fandom--put more of himself into the issue. The theme this time is musical with--so help me--a sheet of music for the cover. No room to list all the fine, funny business contained...just get yourself a copy and see if you don't agree. Very highly recommended. And only a lousy dime.

ABSTRACT #7, 10¢ (#8 will be the con-ish @35¢), Peter J. Vorzimer, 1311 North Laurel Avenue, West Hollywood, California. The cover this issue is rather symbolic of ABSTRACT in a concrete sort of way. Borrowed from this chap, Wood, who draws for MAD comics, it shows two 'fans' brawling away in an all-out donnybrook with knives, broken bottles, hand-grenades, etc. That's ABBY all over...a lusty, brawling, vividly colorful magazine that--whatever other adjective you may want to apply--is never dull, but never. You may not necessarily agree with Pete right down the line but his magazine makes for interesting reading, it's good-sized, it's better-than-average in format, reproduction and readability; it's damn well worth a dime. Send for a copy of #7, he's probably got some left. Bring your own brass knucks.

MIMI #2, 15¢, 4/50¢, Georgina Ellis, 1428 - 15th Street East, CALGARY, Alberta, Canada. I swear I can't recall seeing MIMI #1 though I wish I had. It's a real nice, fast-living, free-wheeling, funful sort of magazine, impeccably reproduced (I suspect a Gestetner is behind it all) and very well put together. The past six months or so have seen a spate of Canadian fanzines, all of them quite good indeed and this appears to be one of the better. There's a neat bit of fan-fiction by that venerable Vancouverian, Bill Stavdal; there's an editorial and other fine stuff by Daryl Sharp, Norm Browne, Elmira D. Schultz (a hugely gigglesome takeoff on Tucker's celebrated monograph on eagles, "Wild Talons") and Harry Calnek. Very Fine Business, this. Get it.

PEON #32, 10¢, \$1/12, Charles Lee Riddle, 108 Dunham Street, Norwich, Connecticut. One of the oldest fanzines still being published and certainly one of the best of all time. No frantic, chest-beating self-promotion here (which is perhaps why it doesn't get all the credit it so richly deserves), just beautifully produced, competently written and edited material without a crumb of crud in the carload. This issue had a lovely cover by Jerry Bixby which, from a purely artistic standpoint, is a blamed sight better than the ones you find on most professional magazines. I mean it. Painted in oils or tempera with the same degree of competence, it would have been a credit to any mag on the stands. Ed Emsh had best look to his laurels. I knew that Bix was marvelous at the piano, a matchless reviewer of fanmagazines, a darn good author and the best editor PLANET STORIES ever had ... but isn't there something the guy can't do? Inside--tearing myself from that cover--there's a remarkably fine article by Jim Harmon, other good stuff by Larry Stark, T. E. Watkins, Terry Carr (huh, Terry--you think that was a typo??), Carol McKinney, the ubiquitous McCain, splendid fanzine reviews by Ian T. Macauley, and "Peon Notes" by Lee himself. If you ever want to develop a taste for fanzines in some friend, this is an excellent choice for sampling. If the neophyte doesn't like PEON, then it's hopeless to attempt conversion. Can I say more?

Shouldered Cedars

In this space I'd like a 2-line poem about 'Frisco.
But what can you do when the only rhyme you can think of is Crisco?

THE QUOTE WUNKERY "Grennell's La Banshee is nice reading, tho misnamed. Unless my fractured French is wrong, 'Le' is female, instead of 'La', and a banshee is definitely feminine." --from the first issue of "La Kobold", a newssheet published by Larry &erson of Billings, Montana, on a poetsarc'd.

"La Banshee", I will freely confess, is a barbarous miscegenation of Gaelic and Spanish. But honestly, &y, I have the genders straight. I direct your attention to a fairly well-known tune called "La Cucaracha". According to my Spanish dictionary: CUCARACHA f. cockroach. Note the f. which stands for feminine. If the Spanish word for cockroach were a masculine noun it would be El Cucaracho. In French "La" is the feminine prefix and "Le" is the masculine. Fractured French, though diverting as all get-out, is a poor guide for discussing Linguistics. Please note that I refrain from deriding "La Kobold". The Kobold is traditionally a gnome-like being indigenous to German non-ferrous mines. I can only presume that Kobolds are/were bi-sexual; if not, I am glad I am not a Kobold.

Are Galonian veterans eligible under the GI Bill?

Which reminds me that, so far, two readers have made quizzical inquiry as to what's with all this Brave Galonians business, said two being Ed Cox and Bill Stavdal. I am tempted to Reveal All here and now but I can't help thinking that somewhere among all these old-time fans there must be some one to whom the term Brave Galonians ought to ring a bell. Who, of those reading this, is going to be the erudite soul who covers himself with egoboo by identifying the context? You, perhaps?

In LaB #2 I mentioned that del Rey had practiced Tuckerism to the extent of naming a slew of characters in a recent story (Superstition, ASF Aug 54) with names highly reminiscent of oldtime fans. After the stencil was irrevocably on the machine I noted that I'd forgotten to mention that there was also a character named "Moskviz" or something similar. Any number of readers wrote in to point out that the character named "Kayel" was named after Dave Kyle; that the one named "Derek" was probably Dirk Wylie (correct me if I'm wrong, but wasn't Dirk Wylie the pseudonym adopted by the late Harry Dockweiler along about August of 1939?). One reader, Damon Knight, suggested that "Aevan" may not have been intended to denote E. E. Evans but A E van Vogt; further, dk wondered if "Lari" was Larry Shaw or somebody else but he couldn't imagine who the other would be. Upon reflection, I wondered if it might have been Leslie Perri that LdR had in mind. Well, anyhow...

Recent stories I particularly liked--"Martians, Go Home!" by Fredric Brown (Brown, I fear, will be furious over the way they misspelled his first name on the cover. Nothing--but nothing--makes him madder than seeing his name spelled "Frederic".) in the Sept 54 ASF; "Conventional Ending" by Ted Cogswell in the Oct 54 FUTURE; and "The Girl in the Flaxen Convertible" by Will Stanton in the Oct 54 F&SF (reprinted from ESQUIRE). There may be others but these are culled from the stories I've managed to read this past month or so. I've been discovering, with happy amazement, how many sf magazines I can go without buying and hardly miss at all. The only ones I get any more are BEYOND, GALAXY, ASF, F&SF and FUTURE. With Sam gone from the Standard chain, I see no reason to buy them regularly. Oh, sure--if a particularly good-looking story turns up in a particular issue I'll buy it. Like I bought the November copy of IF to read Vernon McCain's story (good, too!) but I get better mileage from sf these days.