



The National Fantasy Fan

Cras ad Stellas— Tomorrow to the Stars

Volume 79 Number 4

April 2020

To Join or Renew

There have been recent technical difficulties with coordinating the mailing list and the membership list. As computers are involved, the presence of difficulties should not be unexpected. Having said that

If you join or renew, you need to go to <http://n3f.org/join/membership-form/> and give us your name, your email address (or you will not receive any of our zines), and (if you are paying to join as a 'Regular Member') your papermail address.

It is IMPERATIVE that you give us at least that much information, or your membership may well get lost in a crack and eaten by the gnolls.

Fandbook 8

Four score – less two – years ago, fen from across our Republic came together to create that which had not previously existed, a fan-based national federation of scientification fans. The nation, of course, was the nation of fantasy fans, men and women and boys and girls from anywhere in the world who were fans of tales of science fiction, fantasy, horror, and the occult, expressed in novels and films and comic books and shorter works. They expressed their views in letters, in fanzines, in speech and print and song, at conventions and in public media. Our sixty-

four founders – as I type, one of them is still with us, 78 years later – came together to create The National Fantasy Fan Federation, whose first zine Bonfire is still with us, it being the N3F fanzine that you are now reading.

At the beginning, we had sixty-four members. Some are almost forgotten. Some of them will be remembered as long as there is science fiction in the world. Fandbook 8 recalls fifteen of our founders, people who went on to do great things for scientification. They become great fanzine publishers, great editors, great authors. We chose to remember them in Fandbook 8 because, above all, they were great fen.

These great fen were Forrest James Ackerman, Ray Douglas Bradbury, Louis Russell Chauvenet, E. E. Evans, Damon Knight, Cyril Kornbluth, David Ackerman Kyle, Robert A. W. Lowndes, Ross Rocklynnne, Edward Elmer "Doc" Smith, Jack Speer, Bob Tucker, Harry Warner, Jr., Art Widner, and Donald Allen Wollheim. Fandbook 8 gives a fine biography by Jon Swartz of each of them.

In accord with ancient fannish tradition, Fandbook 8 is held together with not one but two staples. Fandbook 8 was also beneficiary of another fannish tradition. In its production, I sacrificed a stapler, one that was only sort of up to driving staples through its thickness, but that only perished after completing its noble mission on behalf of all fen.

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Wanted: Fanzine Review Editor!

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Continued Next Column

Your Volunteer Team

Neffys

We have Neffy nominations. Please discuss. We vote in June. I'll take nominations next month, too.

Best Novel:

What the Wind Brings by Matthew Hughes
 Monster Hunter Guardian by Larry Correia and
 Sarah A. Hoyt
 Endgames by L. E. Modesitt, Jr.
 The Family Pride by Chris Nuttall

Best Shorter Work:

Waterlines by Suzanne Palmer -- Asimov's SF
 By the Warmth of their Calculus by T. S. Buckell --
 Mission Critical
 A Place to Stand On by Marie Vibbert -- Analog
 The Menace from Farside by Ian McDonald -- Tor

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 Writers Exchange Judy Carroll BlueShadows2012@gmail.com

WANTED! Fanzine Review Editor**Join or Renew**

We offer four different memberships. Memberships with TNFF via paper mail are \$18; memberships with TNFF via email are \$6. All other zines are email only. Additional memberships at the address of a current member are \$4. Public memberships are free. Send payments to N3F, POB 1925, Mountain View CA 94042. Pay online at N3F.org. Our PayPal contact is treasurer@n3f.org Send phillies@4liberty.net your email address for a public membership.

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Airiam of Star Trek Discovery by Jose Sanchez

Best book editor:
Toni Weisskopf

Best TV Show:
Supergirl
Batwoman

Best Cover Artist:
David Hardy
Brad Fraunfelter

Best Anime:
The Promised Neverland
Sarazanmai
Astra: Lost in Space

Best Manga, Comic, or Graphic Novel:
Monstress
Lady Mechanika
Hit-Girl in Hollywood

Best Non-N3F Fanzine:
Opuntia
My Back Pages
Event Horizon
Chunga

Best N3F Fanzine:
Ionisphere
Tightbeam

Best Fan Artist:
Jose Sanchez
Angela K. Walker

Best Fan Writer:
Will Mayo

Best Fan Editor:
Cathy Palmer-Lister
Bob Jennings

Zine Mailings

Lauren Clough writes that she found a whole bunch of zines in her gmail spam folder, with no obvious reason as to why they went there. If you use gmail, please check your spam folders for our mailings.

Bureaus

Birthday Bureau

Birthday cards sent in March=11
R-Laurraine Tutihasi

Conventions

The plague has led to the cancellation of most science fiction conventions. In response, there is a new convention, Concellation, run electronically on Facebook.

Concellation: The SF&F con that's always canceled. Celebrate the con that never was - cancelled before it was even announced, Concellation 2020 is the event you wish you could have pre-opposed!

For more about Concellation: [facebook.com/groups/concellation/permalink/179381123109360/](https://www.facebook.com/groups/concellation/permalink/179381123109360/)

They have a series of activities:

Their main page has interviews—panels.
The Dealers' Room Group: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/concellationdealers/>

The Artists' Gallery: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/concellationart/>
 The Masquerade: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/masquerade/>
 Merchandise! <http://merch.concellation.com>
 Badges? You need a stinkin' badge: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/concellation/permalink/167031094344363/>
 The Adventures of Crash Facepalm: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/concellation/permalink/176022493445223/>
 Wil Wheaton's Charity Roll Post: <https://www.facebook.com/itswilwheaton/posts/2690515114408347>

Correspondence Bureau

Are you seeking Intellectual Adventure into the Unknown?
 Would you like to find an Intellectual Companion?
 The Correspondence Bureau can help you with your quest.

You have two choices for seeking a pairing:

Choice #1 - You want to be paired with someone of like interest. Send an email to the bureau head with your name and a list of your interests. When someone with similar interest requests a pairing both of you will be notified and given the email of the other member. Contact the other member and the rest is up to you.

Choice #2 - You want to be paired with the next person whose interests are unknown. Send an email to the bureau head telling of your choice. Include your name, and email address.

You will be paired with the next person with unknown interests and both of you will be notified and given the email address of the other member. The rest is up to you. Whichever way you choose will be an adventure.

The Correspondence Bureau is open to all members of the club who have an email address whether they are paying or non-paying members. Members seeking to correspond through the Correspondence Bureau will be asked for permission to publish their name in the Monthly article. If they

do not wish to have their name published only their Choice #1 or #2 will be published. No email addresses will be published in the monthly article nor given to another member without that members permission.

To join the Correspondence Bureau or if you have questions, please contact: Judy Carroll - BlueShadows@gmail.com

Fan-Pro Coordinating Bureau

We are making Ionisphere a functioning part of our coordination activities. Email addresses of the pros are made available there, and what they have on the net is listed. I have been receiving positive responses from writers to the interviews I have done with them there. I am trying to get the bureau members to do corresponding with one another.—John Thiel

Games Bureau

Wesley Kawato writes: My boardgame group last met on 3/14. We quit meeting after our Governor issued a stay-at-home order. Since then I got out a copy of the old Space Opera role play game. I rolled up a star sector. Then I rolled up a group of characters and ran them through some solo exploration adventures. Maybe this isn't a waste of time. I'm also a science fiction writer. Perhaps I can use the sector as a setting for some short stories.

History and Research Bureau

We're having a close look at the bureau itself, seeing what further arrangements and improvements we need, and comparing our doings to N3F work of the past. You can join us in this by reading Origin. We continue to bring history alive.—John Thiel

Pro Bureau

In coordination with the Book Review Bureau and the Writer's Exchange, our Zine, *The N3F Review of Books*, continues its regular monthly publication. We are making an effort, more vigorous than effective, to recruit more reviewers. However, in the near term we have enough reviews to keep going.

George Phillis

Recruitment Bureau

No changes here since last month. We continue to invite people to look at the N3F site. John Thiel

Round Robins

Yes, the Round Robins are great Fun....you read all of the responses ...then you answer each one. You may have as many as 4 or 5 people commenting on your route sheet not counting you, the RR Master....eventually it 'rounds again and goes on and on for as long as you and your members can keep it going ..sometimes they will disappear....but I've had some that have lasted for YEARS! May the Robins keep on flying!

The 26 active, alive Round Robins are:

- #1 Cats in SF , F & folklore Number of Members 3
- #2 Worldwide Folklore Number of Members 3.
- #3 The Speculative in Films Number of Members 3.
- #6-A Fairy & Folktales Number of Members 4.
- #8 Mysticism and Religion in SF & Fantasy Number of Members 3.
- #9 Celtic Folklore & Druid Folklore Number of Members 3.
- #10 Harry Potter books & Movies Number of Members 3.
- #11 Mercedes Lackey Number of Members 3.
- #12 Mythology Number of Members 3.
- #13-A Syfy Channel Number of Members 3.
- #14 Star Trek: VOYAGER & Enterprise Number of Members 3.
- #15 STAR TREK: CLASSIC /TOS Number of Members 4.
- #19-A Current Reading Number of Members 4.
- #21 C.J. Cherryh Number of Members 3.
- #23 DOCTOR WHO Number of Members 4.
- # 24 J.R.R. Tolkien and TLOTR's Books & Movies Number of Members 3.
- #27 Sherlock Holmes Number of Members 4.
- #28 TORCHWOOD Number of Members 3.
- #29 Science & Technology in Society Number of Members 3.
- #30 Thieve's World Number of Members 4.
- #31 Women SF &Fantasy writers 3of Mem 4.
- #32 Darkover / MZB Number of Members 4.
- #35 The Three Mary's Number of Members 3.
- #39 The Hobbit Number of Members 3.



Landing Spot B by Jose Sanchez

#41 General SF & Fantasy , books , Movies , Number of Members 3.

#42 Anne McCaffrey/Pern Dragons Number of Members 3.

The following letter, slightly edited, was originally written for the N3F's Star Trek Classic Round Robin on Aug. 31, 2019.

Dear Trekkers:

I was delighted to learn today that Full Moon Streaming, the streaming service on Hulu and other places, features a series of movies bookended and punctuated -- hosted, shall we say -- by William Shatner. It's called William Shatner's Full Moon Fright Night and seems to date back to 2002 with movies including Castle Freak, Horrorvision, and others. I watched just a little of one opening segment, and I shall return. He'll be a nice addition to Joe Bob Briggs, Elvira, and Svengoolie. It also reminded me of the old William Shatner DVD Club, which operated for less than a year in 2006. I subscribed briefly and received movies such as Black Cadillac, Dragon Storm, Epoch, Ginger Snaps, and The Lathe of Heaven. Has anyone watched any of the Fright Night episodes?

I quite like that Channel 31 where Patsy lives airs Star Trek regularly. When I was in college near Chicago in the early 1990s, there was a fellow who published a monthly calendar of what Star Trek series aired where in the Chicago area. He'd figured out the syndication schedules and could even identify which episodes would be aired. All photocopied

on an 11-by-17 or 8 ½-by-14 piece of paper with photos clipped from magazines -- pre-mainstream Internet and a true labor of love. I wish I knew where he was now. I'll check to see where Star Trek is airing in the LA area. Mostly, I watch Trek on DVD so I can be a linear completist and am able to refer to specific episodes whenever I want.

Not too long ago I found an inexpensive set of the 1981 reprint of the 1967 Leaf Star Trek card set. There are 72 cards in the series that feature black and white images from various episodes as well as stills taken during filming. The writing on the back doesn't always appear to relate to any specific episode, but in most cases, seems to. Let's just go with the first card in the series: No Time for Escape. The photo side features Spock and Bones examining some kind of snowy globe. The back reads, "The U.S.S. Enterprise is ordered to rescue a scientific earth team from the dying planet Psi 2000. Captain Kirk orders the spacecraft to change course and race for Psi 2000. The rescue is too late. Mr. Spock and Dr. McCoy beam down to the dying planet. They find the entire scientific team dead -- frozen to death. They return to the spacecraft and the Enterprise goes into orbit, observing the disintegration of Psi 2000." That would describe "The Naked Time," the seventh episode, which originally aired in 1966. I've seen lists of all the card titles, but not a detailed episode list based on the cards... perhaps a project to undertake!

I'd also like to call attention to a magazine of potential interest: The Parade Special Edition The Best of Star Trek, Athlon Entertainment #37, published in 2018. It's one of those bookazines that are so popular now -- ads-free magazines with a cover price of \$12.99 or so. But they sure are wonderful. I haven't read this one completely yet, but it touches on the origin of the series, Shatner and Nimoy, the various series, the role played by fandom, memorabilia, the movies, and current projects. Highlights include the wide range of photos -- including stills from the pilot! -- including the animated series, the nod to fandom, and the bit on the rumored Quentin Tarantino Trek movie. The magazine only gives two pages to Star Trek: Discovery. Just two pages... so there's plenty of material on older stuff, with a bias toward the original series, cast, and movies. Check it out -- or others like it -- if you like such a thing.

Tonight's episode was "That Which Survives," an episode from the third season, the 69th in the series, with an air date of Jan. 24, 1969. It's a slightly quiet but good one... with an abandoned alien outpost, immeasurable power, a beautiful menace, a race against time, and some great -- for the time -- special effects. Two instances are notable. One, when the Kalandan Losira leaves the scene... and two, the magnetic field when Scotty's in the crawl space. There are a couple of fun lines, too, but I don't remember them exactly. But good luck to the crew of the Enterprise when Spock is in charge! Totally different bedside manner than Kirk. With that, I leave you. Live long and prosper,
Heath Row

Welcommittee

This month we have six members to welcome into the N3F: one returning member, Jerry Kaufman, and five new members, Justin E.A. Busch, Kathryn Jankowski, Roger Ley, J. I. Rogers, and Angela Walker. We hope your stay with us will be long and pleasant, full of interesting conversations and activities.

The purpose of the Welcommittee is to welcome new members to the club. A letter is sent, by email or postal mail, to new members informing them of club activities they may be interested in joining. Those members with email addresses are also sent attachments to the current TNFF and other publications the N3F has to offer. If you have questions about the club or are interested in helping, please contact Judy Carroll at BlueShadows2012@gmail.com

Writers Exchange

Welcome to the Writers Exchange!

I am sitting at my desk trying to figure out what to write about this month. Nothing comes to mind. Normally, I have thought of at least two subjects to consider before even approaching the computer. After filling in the Recipients and Subject bars, I realized the only thought I have given to this article is the fact that I have to write it. While my mind is desperately running down its corridors looking for inspiration, my hands are combing through my hair, rubbing my face and frantically searching my desk draw-

ers for munchies. Munchies, the things that keep my hands active, set up a rhythm of movement that calms my mind allowing it to peruse my mental files in a peaceful and orderly manner. I can't find any suitable munchies, but just finishing this paragraph has calmed me down to such a slow pace I'm beginning to wonder if I will get this article finished in time to meet the deadline.

My fingers have been drumming the desk top in unison. My eyes are staring at the screen hoping something will appear other than what I am now writing. My mind is going numb having given up seeking anything worthwhile to write about. I need munchies.

Eureka! I found a small bag of fruit snacks. If I eat them slowly they may last until I finish this article.

I would like to hear from our N3F writers. Tell me what you do when the piece you are writing runs into a wall, hits a bump, cries for understanding, hops a train going in a direction opposite of where you are planning, or you're stymied because you ran out of munchies.

With your permission, I would like to share your comments in the May, TNFF.

Email me at the address below. I really would love to hear from you. (I just ate the last of the munchies.)

If you are a new writer, a professional writer, or someone who dreams of being a writer - this is the place for you. If you love reading unpublished work and find it exciting to do so, this place is also for you

The Writers Exchange is for anyone interested in writing. If you have a story you would like read and commented on, or if you just want the excitement of reading unpublished work, then the Writers Exchange is here for you. Published or unpublished - all are welcome. You may join as a writer, a reader or both.

If interested, please contact: Judy Carroll.
BlueShadows2012@gmail.com

Treasurer's Report Late March

Mountain View PO is on lockdown. I can't get to the box as I am locked out.

Letters of Comment

Dear Neffers:

Thanks kindly for the March TNFF, and I will try my best to make it fast, for all of us. I imagine this COVID-19 quarantine is driving some of you crazy. For us, and many others, it's business as usual, and the excuse we needed to get lots of things done. Congratulations to José Sanchez! There aren't a lot of fan awards left, so let's celebrate the prizes we can still win. And, thanks to David Speakman for all of his good works here. I hope he won't be going far away.

Be nice to the Earth, indeed. It's the only one with coffee! And chocolate! And (fill in your own food and drink vices here)!

My letter of comment...we do have plans to make a return trip to Loscon some time, but money will have to allow for it, and we are already making preliminary plans for our third trip to England. Re Amazing Stories: I have just edited the second Amazing Selects/Captain Future novel, written by Allen Steele, and with luck, that will see the light of day soon. (Six of us in the letter column! Excellent!)

I will pass on a message to John L. Coker III, to thank him for the First Fandom publications we have received. It's our real connection to history, and it looks like we're the only Canadian members. We do know of others here who definitely qualify to be members.

I remember as a kid reading Mandrake the Magician in the weekend paper colour comics. Does anyone know (I could Google it, but it deserves some discussion) if Mandrake has been taken over, and is still having regular adventures in the funny papers? I had never heard of the Defenders of the Earth series from 2015. There's no more cartoons on Saturday

mornings on TV, so perhaps it appeared on specialty cartoon channels.

Thanks for this, I've got to go and make some dinner for us. Take care, see you with the next one.

Yours, Lloyd Penney.

Editor:

I'm sorry we are losing David as Treasurer. I can't take on the job. I can barely keep up with my N3F duties. The membership today isn't like it was when I first joined the club. Many of the "leaders" were involved in more than one bureau or activity - just as they are today. The general membership was more actively involved then; they are less involved today. I have a suggestion. Seek out a member who has been with the club for years. Someone who remembers the way the club used to be. There may be someone who would take on the position of Treasurer. I will let you know if I come up with other suggestions.

Judy Carroll

Editor:

For some reason I was not, as a kid, simply uninterested in The Phantom; I positively loathed the character. Yet Jon Swartz's articles on older comics are always intriguing, and I found myself reading about The Phantom and Lee Falk with genuine interest and enthusiasm. It didn't make me regret my youthful prejudices, but it did give me a better sense of why the character was so popular. I never thought about the appeal of 'a guy with no eyeballs wearing a purple suit'.

Congratulations to Jose Sanchez on winning the Kaymar award. Having at best limited and infrequent access to the Internet (and currently none at all), I've seen most of his recent work only in passing, but what I have seen adds much to the zines in which it appears. How about bringing him back to TNFF?

With the closure of the public libraries I have lost any access to printers, so I will keep this comment on Fandbook 8 shorter than I might have preferred.

There is much to learn from, and enjoy here. At a purely statistical level, it was fascinating to note that 40% of the men discussed here lived into or past their middle 80s. Perhaps helping to found a long-lived organization is itself a key to longevity. It would be interesting to know whether the percentage held for the rest of the founders.



Triangular UFO by Jose Sanchez

I knew, in broad outline, much about most of these men (I do wish that at least one of the women in at the birth of the N3F could have been featured as well.) but in each case all sorts of small details added life to the facts presented. I thought that I knew all of Forrest Ackerman's pseudonyms, but 'Vespertina Torgosi' was new to me. Nor did I know that Dave Kyle wrote sequels to the Lensman series. And I found the catalogue of E. E. Smith's pre-writing jobs quite amusing.

One question: Did L.R. Chauvenet also publish a fanzine entitled A, or did he publish the first issue and then Jack Speer publish the second ("An infinitesimag" at 1 1/2 by 1 inches)?

The content was delightful, but I was not as favorably impressed by the publication itself. That there was no back cover was annoying as well as aesthetically unattractive. The space between each paragraph and the next gave the feel of an unfinished Word document. The whole thing would have been more impressive as a saddle-stitched chapbook with the same number of sheets of paper but half the size.

(I have some experience with these, which are not that expensive to produce.)

The major omission, though, was any sort of illustration. It is possible that no photograph could be obtained of some of the founders, but surely at least a few photographs (or, better yet but harder to arrange, some pen-and-ink illustrations) could have adorned the cover. The whole package was rather stark, hardly befitting such a colorful group of individuals.

Justin E. A. Busch

We also heard from regular correspondent Bob Jennings, who has a mail-order business selling books, magazines and similar such things. He reports that due to the plague his sales are through the ceiling, so that he is unable to write LoCs, short term.

SerCon

Mandrake the Magician by Jon D. Swartz, Ph.D. N3F Historian

Mandrake the Magician is a syndicated newspaper comic strip, created by writer Lee Falk. Its publication began June 11, 1934. Phil Davis soon took over as the strip's illustrator (assisted by Ray Moore), while Falk continued as the writer. The strip is still distributed by King Features Syndicate.

Davis worked on the strip until his death in 1964, when Falk recruited artist Fred Fredericks. With Falk's death in 1999, Fredericks became both the strip's writer and artist. The Sunday *Mandrake* strip ended December 29, 2002. The daily strip ended mid-story on July 6, 2013 when Fredericks retired, and a reprint of "Pursuit of the Cobra" from 1995 began on July 8, 2013.

Mandrake

The single-named Mandrake is a suave magician dressed in the usual stage-magician costume of

opera hat, Spanish cape, and tails. Originally possessed of genuine magical powers, he later came to rely on his quick wit, moral superiority, and skill as a hypnotist to right the wrongs he encountered. He was helped (and at times hindered) by the following characters.

Supporting Characters

Lothar is Mandrake's best friend and crime fighting companion. Mandrake first met Lothar during his travels in Africa. Lothar was Prince of the Seven Nations, a mighty federation of jungle tribes; but declined to become king and instead followed Mandrake on his world travels. Lothar is often referred to as the strongest man in the world, with the exception of Hojo -- Mandrake's chef and secret chief of Inter Intel. Lothar is invulnerable to any weapon forged by man, impervious to heat, cold and possesses the stamina of a thousand men. He also cannot be harmed by magic directly (fire bolts, force bolts, spell incantations, etc.).

One of the first African crime fighting heroes ever to appear in comics, Lothar made his initial appearance alongside Mandrake in 1934 in the inaugural daily strip. In the beginning, Lothar spoke poor English and wore a fez, short pants, and a leopard skin. When artist Fredericks took over in 1965, he had Lothar speak correct English and changed his clothing, although he often wore shirts with leopard-skin patterns.

Narda is Princess of the European nation Cockaigne (ruled by her brother Segrid). She made her first appearance in the second *Mandrake* story. Although she and Mandrake were infatuated with one another, they did not marry until 1997, at which time there was an extravagant triple wedding ceremony – at Mandrake's home of Xanadu, Narda's home country Cockaigne, and Mandrake's father Theron's College of Magic (*Collegium Magikos*) in the Himalayas. Narda learned martial arts from Hojo.

Theron, Mandrake's father, is the headmaster of the College of Magic (*Collegium Magikos*) located in the Himalayas. Theron is hundreds of years old and may be kept alive by the Mind Crystal of which he is the guardian.

Hojo is Mandrake's chef at his home of Xanadu, and the secret Chief of the international crime fighting organization Inter-Intel, in addition to being a superb martial arts expert. As such, he has used Mandrake's help with many cases. Hojo's assistant at Inter-Intel is Jed. Hojo knows six languages.

Principal Villains

The Cobra is Mandrake's most evil and dangerous foe, apparent from the start of the story. In 1937, the Cobra was apparently defeated; but returned in 1965, wearing a menacing silver mask. The Cobra's main goal is to acquire one of the two powerful Crystal Cubes which increase mental energy. These are guarded by Mandrake and his father Theron. Mandrake learned that The Cobra was secretly Luciphor, Theron's oldest son and thus Mandrake's half-brother. In later years, the Cobra abandoned his silver mask as his face had been reconstructed through surgery. He is sometimes accompanied by an assistant named Ud.

Derek is Mandrake's twin brother. He was similar to Mandrake in appearance, and used his magical powers (nearly the equal of Mandrake's) to achieve short-term personal satisfactions. Mandrake has tried to remove Derek's knowledge of magic, but has never entirely succeeded. Derek has a son, Eric (mother unknown), who has shown no signs of following in his father's footsteps.

The Clay Camel, real name Saki, is a master of disguise, able to mimic anyone and change his appearance in seconds. His name comes from the symbol he leaves at the scenes of his crimes, a small camel made of clay.

The Brass Monkey, daughter of The Clay Camel, has a talent for disguises similar to that of her father.

Aleena the Enchantress is a former friend of Mandrake's from the College of Magic, a much-married and spoiled temptress who uses her magic powers for her own benefit. She sometimes attempts to seduce Mandrake; but she always fails, and thereafter attempts to cause him trouble.

The Deleter is an extra-terrestrial contract killer who will "delete" anyone for a price, but will inflict justice on anyone who tries to cheat him out of his contract fee.

Lee Falk

Lee Falk, born Leon Harrison Gross (April 28, 1911 - March 13, 1999), was an American writer, theater director, and producer -- best known today as creator of the comic strips *The Phantom* and *Mandrake the Magician*. In addition, Falk wrote short stories; and he also contributed to a series of pulp novels about *The Phantom*.

Falk married three times, to Louise Kanaseriff, Constance Moorehead Lilienthal, and Elizabeth Moxley. Elizabeth helped Falk with the scripts in his later years. Falk was the father of three children.

Principal Artists

Phil Davis was born in St. Louis in 1906 and began his art career in 1928 at the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*. He met Falk in 1934, and Mandrake was born. During World War II, Davis served as art director for Curtis-Wright Aircraft Corporation. For a time his wife Martha assisted him in preparing the Mandrake drawings. He died of a heart attack in 1964.

Fred Fredericks was born in 1929 in Atlantic City, New Jersey. He was editor of his high school newspaper and then served in the U. S. Marine Corps. When he returned to civilian life, he spent five years working for Dell and Gold Key comic books. He started drawing the Mandrake strip in 1965. When Falk died, Fredericks took over writing the scripts as well. Fredericks is also known for inking several comic books for Marvel and DC. He retired in July, 2013, and reprints of the Mandrake comic strip were then published until the present time. Fredericks died on March 10, 2015.

Mandrake in Other Media

In addition to his newspaper appearances, over the years Mandrake has appeared in several other media, including Big Little Books (1930s - 1940s), comic books (1930s -1990s, including Marvel Comics), a



movie serial (1939), and a syndicated radio series (1940-1942) – with radio actor Raymond Edward Johnson of *Inner Sanctum* fame as Mandrake.

A pilot made for a television movie was shown in 1979. There have been plans for feature films at times, but this has not yet happened.

Merchandising

Compared to most popular comic strip characters, there has been relatively little merchandising of the Mandrake characters. In addition to the ones already mentioned, however, there have been Mandrake figures, refrigerator magnets, fan cards, stickers, rings, buttons, pins, charms, games, Christmas cards, Halloween costumes, a toy pin-ball machine, at least three different magic kits, a sponge, and even a toy train boxcar!

There were a couple of Mandrake paperback books published, one based on the TV movie, and at least one coloring book.

Mandrake was also one of the five silver art bars that were minted in 1974 (along with The Phantom, Superman, Flash Gordon, and Batman & Robin).

The Mandrake Magic Club

In the early 1930s there was a Mandrake the Magician Magic Club for boys and girls to join. Members received a Mandrake button or brass pin and a membership card. Very few of these items have survived, although occasionally one of them shows up for sale on eBay. When a complete Mandrake magic kit is offered for sale today, it generally sells for hundreds of dollars.

Some Conclusions

Mandrake the Magician has been a popular comic character for many years, although not quite as popular as Falk's other creation, The Phantom. Both characters have been very successful, however, especially in Europe and Australia.

Although only reprints are published in newspapers today, Mandrake the Magician stories remain popular today.

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Note: In addition to these references, several Internet sites were consulted.



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