

Release the Hounds!

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Only 281 More Mailings to Catch Speer

As I was joining FAPA, I learned that I had taken the roster spot of Jack Speer, thus becoming the first member of this association with no connection to any of the founders. None. Nix. Nada. Nil. Seventy years of science fiction history walked out the door right before I came in. That's unsettling, but one thing I've learned in three decades of reading science fiction and comics is that you have to gather ye heroes while ye may. I can still vividly recall sitting across from Jack Kirby and Harvey Kurtzman, speechless and slack-jawed in awe, as they talked in a hotel lobby during the Dallas Fantasy Fair in the '80s. Later I found that my convention program contained Kurtzman's iconic autograph, even though I never approached him for one. He signed it for someone else and I must have picked up the program after they accidentally left it behind in the convention hall.



For this issue of *Release the Hounds*, I cover a short story from *Asimov's* and run a sampling of comic strips from one of my favorite online cartoonists, the game designer Robin D. Laws.

Your Cryonically Revived Head is Marriage Material

Will McIntosh has a terrific 10-page story, "Bridesicle," in the January 2009 issue of *Asimov's*. The story posits a future in which insurance pays for the cryonic storage of the dead but doesn't cover the enormous cost of revival, which inspires the creation of an exploitive and morbid dating service. In brief periods of consciousness separated by decades, the protagonist Mira must persuade a prospective male suitor that she's a romantic catch worthy of the expense of her body's resurrection — while lying paralyzed below the neck in a tank.

Here's her first date:

"You've been gone for over eighty years, sleeping beauty." He made a sweeping gesture, as if all of that was trivial. "But let's focus on the present. The way this works is, we get acquainted. We have dates. If we find we're compatible," he raised his shoulders toward his



ears, smiled his dainty smile, "then I might be enticed to pay for you to be revived, so that we can be together." ...

"So. Mira." Red clapped his hands together.

"Do you want to bullshit, or do you want to get intimate?"

The story has attracted the attention of cryonic enthusiasts on the web. Shannon Vyff, a participant in the Cryonics mailing list at cryonet.org writes, "I personally feel that our current organizations, and the cryonics organizations in the future would never let such a situation occur, but at the same time I have to figure I'd be able to survive in anything that might happen."

McIntosh's story asks a great question: How can the rights of the frozen dead possibly endure centuries of storage?

The living make the rules. It's not like the frozen are in any position to object.

If you'd like to read the story, the online retailer Fictionwise sells ebook editions of Asimov's for \$3.99 an issue at fictionwise.com.

I will only agree to cryonic suspension if I receive assurances that there will always be baseball.

Mailing Comments and Letters

I'm not sure yet whether to adopt the mailing comment model, where I respond to other fanzines here, or send letters to other members for their consideration to reprint. So for now I'm doing both.

Robert Michael Sabella, Ride the Lightning

☞ I wish there was some convenient way for a user to wipe a computer completely before getting rid of it.

I bought the Windows software DriveScrubber from an OfficeMax a while back and used it to clear the data off a hard drive before donating a computer, but I found a free alternative I prefer.

I created a bootable CD of the Ubuntu Linux operating system, booted the target computer up in Ubuntu, and then ran a Linux command that wipes out all data on a drive multiple times.

The only drawback was that I got carried away and asked the command to wipe out the drive 100 times for optimal security. The process ran for three weeks!

Letter from Lloyd Penney

Dec. 23, 2008

Greetings from Toronto, and welcome to FAPA. Sounds strange that a non-member (I have been invited to join a number of times now) would welcome you, but I do receive a number of FAPazines in the mail or e-mail or through eFanzines.com. And, I loc them as I would any other zine, and sometimes, those comments get published. With that in mind, and I hope it's in your plans for the future of your zine, here are comments on *Release the Hounds! 1*.

There have been literally dozens of gafiates who have come back over the past ten years or so. You can't take the fandom out of the fans, you know the line. Welcome back. Perhaps they remember the good times, the social competition, the creation of something physical in the form of a fanzine ... everyone has their reasons.

My training is in journalism, and my background is in publishing. With the financial mess the world is in, I expect publishing to take a sizable hit, so I hope I can stay where I am workwise, at SGS Canada. We produce and design food packaging, so I am in publishing again, at least in a peripheral sense. Beggars can't be choosers.

Interesting first mentions...when it comes to Tolkien's *The Hobbit* being described as a story about trolls and goblins, this seems to go to a proud tradition of the reviewer of a book not really reading it. There's also a difference between reading the book and understanding what you've read. Perhaps Anne T. Eaton did understand what she read; she couldn't have written that first mention.

Clarke's first mention also interests me ... even with mixed reviews, I would like to read Clarke's final novel *The Last Theorem*. Sir Arthur died in March; I know that Pohl is 89 years old, and I suspect he's in poor health. You know you're getting older when many of the famous names that surrounded you and helped to form your world are passing away.

I won't say much about Ellison ... his writing is impressive, his behaviour less so. In spite of his background and accomplishments, I wouldn't cross the street to meet him.

I'm going to wind it up for now, and I hope future issues will also appear on eFanzines.com. Sometimes, I think I'm getting most of FAPA at some point or another, anyway. Take care, and hope to see you next issue.

Lloyd Penney
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My new fanzine is starved for feedback, so I was pleasantly surprised to get your mail. I plan to keep contributing this fanzine to FANAC and eFanzines.Com, because I like being part of the collective fandom hivemind.

I can't say Ellison ranks high on the list of authors I'd like to meet, but he's a fascinating figure. Somewhere around here I have a copy of *The Book on the Edge of Forever*, Christopher Priest's hilarious screed about the history of Ellison's *The Last Dangerous Visions*. Ellison would be a first-ballot inductee into the Obstinacy Hall of Fame.

Now Priest I would like to meet.

Comic Strip: 'The Birds' by Robin D. Laws

Most online comic strips are dreadful, but I've become a fan of "The Birds," a droll cut-and-paste strip about misanthropic birds by Robin D. Laws, a role-playing game designer whose works include *Over the Edge*, *Feng Shui* and the *Dungeons & Dragons* supplement *Fiendish Codex II: Tyrants of the Nine Hells*. *The Birds* has been collected in book form by Pelgrane Press, and you can find more of these strips by visiting <http://robin-d-laws.livejournal.com>. Laws gave me permission to reprint some strips here.



