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To: Julie L. Sigall
Associate Register for Policy & International Affairs

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From: Jason Finley

Comment:

I am the webmaster for a small fan website, The Taj, which is dedicated to the "Berserker" science fiction series of books and stories by author Fred Saberhagen. The series is a far-reaching and influential one, and has an interesting history and breadth which my site aims to chronicle. Here is the URL:

<http://www.berserkerfan.org/>

My site is authorized by Mr. Saberhagen to be the official fan website, so I have been able to work closely with him on including some of his copyrighted material with permission. I have also been able to seek permission from some prominent science fiction artists who have done illustrations or book cover art for the series to reproduce their works online. (See the ART section of my website.)

Prominent artists who are still living often have their own websites, which makes it easy to get in touch with them and seek permission to use their copyrighted work. However, there are an equal number of much less prominent artists who have done artwork for this series since it began in 1964. I have a stack of illustrations from now-rare science fiction magazines from the 60s and 70s for which I've been unable to find even a trace of the artist to seek permission to reproduce the work online. Sometimes there is only a last name for the artist, sometimes only an illegible signature, and sometimes there is no artist credited at all! I have attempted to contact publishers and their art directors to discover the names of uncredited artists or contact information for elusive ones, but it seems that that information was mostly never recorded in the first place, not to mention that many publishers (especially of the old science fiction magazines) have either long since gone out of business or been subsumed by another company, and anyone who may have been around at the time this art was commissioned has long since retired or passed away.

As a result, I have a number of illustrations that would be of great interest to fans of the Berserker series and of science fiction in general, and are worth preserving and displaying, but that I cannot legally display because it is impossible to contact the copyright holder or even establish who he or she is! If I don't document these works of art, I'm afraid they will pass entirely out of the realm of human knowledge before much longer; it will be as if they never existed.

I believe that my difficulties are likely representative of those of many others, especially in the field of science fiction. Preserving and documenting works of decades-old science fiction unavoidably leads one into the realm of the old magazines, where orphan works are plentiful and can stop one's efforts dead in their tracks. Please remedy this situation, so that I and others like me can preserve works of science fiction for fans of all ages and future generations to study and enjoy.