October 22, 2004
University of Oklahoma
College of Arts & Sciences Support of Research and Teaching Committee
Ellison Hall
CAMPUS

1. Between March 31 and April the primary professional organization for teachers of film, television, and other media, The Society for Cinema and Media Studies, will be holding its annual conference in London, England. This is the first time for SCMS to meet abroad and those of us who plan to attend are looking forward to more interaction with our international colleagues than we usually have when we meet in the United States or Canada. I am requesting $1,000.00 as a Faculty Enrichment Grant towards the cost of this trip.

2. I organized and will be chairing a panel, “Reviewing the Comic Canon: Neglected Comedians of Film and Television Reconsidered.” This panel grows out of my on-going scholarly work involved with reviving interest in film and television comedians who are largely forgotten today. The four papers on the panel explore the genius and uniqueness of Louise Fazenda and Marjorie Main in film and Ernie Kovacs and Totie Fields in television. Originally I had planned to present a paper myself on Jimmy Durante, on whom I have been doing research, but when I received four excellent proposals from other scholars I decided to forego on my own presentation.

   Instead, I will be giving a paper on another panel that is part of on-going involvement in teaching and writing about the Hollywood blacklist. This is a topic I regularly cover in most of my film classes because I can speak of it from first-hand experience and I find that the majority of students know very little about it. By the time of the SCMS conference in London this spring, I will have finished editing an “In Focus” section for The Cinema Journal, published by SCMS, on children of the blacklist, of which I am one. My paper, “What My Father Bequeathed to Me: The Heritage of the Blacklist,” comes from the interviews I am doing with children of blacklisted parents and the essays they are contributing to the “In Focus” project. In the paper I explore how growing up in the turbulent years of “the Great Witch Hunt” shaped their lives and careers. Some have gone into areas of the entertainment business and work with the legacy of their parents.”
lives in what they create and how they respond to the daily events in the world. All report that the blacklist was destructive of the family. Patricia Bosworth has written, “We seemed to stop functioning as a family,” while one of my own relatives is haunted by “a common amnesia about how we lived together in a dark third-floor apartment” in New York City. It is not surprising that someone like Nikola Trumbo, daughter of Hollywood Ten screenwriter, Dalton Trumbo, grew up to be a psychotherapist. Today she sees the surviving community of blacklistees as an “extended family.” For actress and writer Jennifer Salt, daughter of blacklisted screenwriter, Waldo Salt, “there is a large legacy to keep alive.” But it is Bill Jarrico who gets to the heart of what I will be exploring in the paper I will be giving at SCMS. He quotes the statement his father, Paul, was not allowed to read to the House UnAmerican Activities Committee in 1953: “The miracle of freedom shall be reborn. And I will be able to leave to my son – undiminished – the heritage my father bequeathed to me.” To which Bill Jarrico adds: “I think he helped make that possible.” How did our parents, through their trials, shape our lives and make a better world possible?

In addition to chairing a panel and giving a paper, I will also be participating in a Workshop organized by SCMS’s Career Opportunity, Development, and Promotion Committee of which I am a member. Both the panel on comedy and the paper on the blacklist are intimately connected with what I do in the classroom. I regularly teach courses on film comedy and I always try to introduce at least one or two comics with whom students are not familiar. This past summer I completed an essay on the surprisingly neglected silent film comedian, Harry Langdon that developed from teaching him in class; it will be published in Film Quarterly in the summer of 2005. Hopefully, the work presented in the comedy panel will similarly generate new perspectives for teaching, as well as an edited volume on the forgotten faces and voices of comedy. The blacklist paper, along with the “In Focus” essays to be published in the Cinema Journal are the core of a book proposal I will be “pitching” at the SCMS Conference for an anthology of essays by children of the blacklist. The University Press of Mississippi, with whom I am publishing a collection of interviews with film director, Sidney Lumet, has expressed an interest in such a volume, but I ideally I would like to work with a somewhat more “commercial” publisher.
4. **Budget:**

   Roundtrip airfare between OKC and London, Heathrow: $650.00
   Hotel (4 nights): $642.00
   Per Diem (5 days x $135/day): $675.00
   Registration: $99.00
   Parking: $20.00
   Taxis + miscellaneous transportation $40.00

   **Total:** $2,126.00

5. I have not received any funding for the trip to London for the SCMS Conference, and I have never applied for a Faculty Enrichment Grant. However, I will apply for Arts & Sciences (1/3), and the Vice-President for Research (1/3) matching funds, with the other third to come out of my own M&O account to cover some of the balance of the cost.

   Respectfully submitted,

   Joanna E. Rapf, Professor