



January 20, 1993

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS

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Mr. Steve Leggett
Library of Congress, National Film Preservation Board
M/B/RS Division
Washington, DC 20540

MOTION PICTURE
AND RECORDS

Dear Mr. Leggett:

Thank you for forwarding your "Request for Information...." for our response. I don't envy your task of compiling all of the data necessary to formulate a cohesive national policy on a complicated issue like film restoration.

Our qualification to provide useful information for your review stems from over 10 years of experience in motion picture soundtrack restoration. Chace Productions, Inc. is a full-service audio post-production facility with proprietary and specialized equipment for preservation and restoration soundtrack work. We have worked on a wide range of films from the first "talkies" like *'Coquette'* to the highly dramatic *'On The Waterfront'*. Early stereophonic and Cinemascope® films like the *'Ten Commandments'* and *'Rebel Without A Cause'* have benefited from our patented Chace Surround Stereo™ process. Our ability to work on these kinds of diverse projects has established Chace as a premier facility for this kind of work. But, like any business, the hard reality is that work costs *money*.

As you might expect, from a business perspective, there is no problem in getting commercially viable projects restored and rejuvenated. All of the major studios are heavily involved in preserving and managing their film assets for current and future use. Perhaps two good questions to ask are: Will the studios be able to renovate their entire film inventories in a time expedient fashion?...and...Will every film in a studio's collection be considered commercially desirable? The answer to both questions, in my opinion, is optimistically yes.

To my knowledge, all of the studios now have, or will soon have, departments and procedures to check the condition of their film inventories and have them repaired as required. While the question of commercial viability is sometimes used to temper the amount of work ordered, I believe that the enormous demand for U.S. filmed product, both past and present, will ensure that no more elements will be allowed to degrade to an unusable condition. Unfortunately, the studios' portion of film inventories is only a small part of the total. However, with the studios financially able to care for their inventories, I believe a restoration policy should favor the film archives and libraries which are not blessed with strong economic support.

From our experience as members of the Association of Moving Image Archivists, the term "archive" means a safe storage place which catalogues and organizes a collection. Archives do not, usually for lack of funds, do a large amount of work for the restoration or replacement of aging elements. However, this is not to say that archives wouldn't do this work if they had the funds. Quite the contrary, I believe they would be very proactive in restoration activities. But, the realities are that the enormous cost of providing a proper storage environment—temperature and humidity controlled—requires nearly all of the funds they have. In fact, for many archives the improper storage of films is their most pressing concern. In addition to storage concerns, the fact that film elements are not permanent creates a need for a continuing source of funds for the ongoing preservation of aging or damaged elements.

Therefore, in my opinion, a national policy should address both the short term problems of storage and element restoration as well as a long term policy of developing cost effective technology to produce more permanent film elements which require less controlled storage environments. The bottom line for both goals however, is a steady and secure source of funds.

The creation of the mechanism to produce this steady revenue stream will not be an easy task. Since our expertise at Chace is in "audio" not "auditing" I'll leave the formula for achieving film preservation revenue to the experts. But, certainly there are many creative ways in which funds could be collected. One possibility would be to put a tax on film admissions. If 1¢ per theatrical admission was set aside for film preservation, this "tax" could raise millions of dollars per year. Tax credits or tax incentives could be created to encourage monetary donations or gratis use of facilities. Whatever the approach, I'm quite confident that properly constructed, an equitable plan can be created which would have the support of studios, archives and facilities.

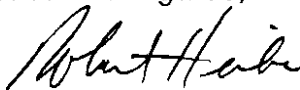
Regardless of the route chosen, the decision making and implementation of a cohesive plan cannot be postponed. All interested parties must agree that time is of the essence. Therefore the most modest first step is to adopt a firm timetable for the implementation of a "National Policy". Furthermore, the timetable must be adhered to. Because, even while everyone's best intentions are to create an equitable plan, any delays will contribute to the problems of film restoration. It would indeed be a sad day to find out that a lengthy legislative process had outlived the film elements it was designed to protect.

Finally, I would like to answer the questions you asked in your fax of 12/23/92. Perhaps a collection of the answers could be used to create a restoration and preservation data base.

- 1) Yes
2%
50%
Depends upon the requirements of the job. Some are simple transfers and others require extensive noise reduction processing, stereo synthesis, editing, mixing, etc.
- 2) By the nature of our equipment to reproduce optical soundtracks. Through other experts, technical journals and experience.
- 3) Specifically audio.
- 4) Yes. 17.5mm, 35/32mm single row and three row, Cinemascope® prints.
- 5) See our enclosed sheet specifically on preservation services
- 6) All audio work is monitored from the reproduce head of the target recorder. Hence every track is Q.C'd 100%.
- 7) We would do work for the tax incentives such as credits. I would envision these to be set to a maximum dollar amount per year and be more favorable than dollar for dollar.

Mr. Leggett, I hope the above information is useful in your quest to achieve a national policy. As a firm believer in film preservation as well as a practical businessman, I would be happy to assist you in whatever way I can. I would also like to personally extend to you an invitation to visit Chace when you are in Los Angeles for the hearings, in February.

Most cordial regards,



Robert Heiber
President

RJH/cak

Encl.



CHACE PRESERVATION Services

Since its founding in 1981, Chace Productions, Inc. has established itself as a premier audio restoration and revitalization facility. Our historical perspective and specialized equipment—much of it unavailable elsewhere—makes us the first choice for preservation work, including:

Transfer and Mastering — featuring C.O.S.P.[™] (Chace Optical Sound Processor), proprietary and unique equipment for the playback of 35mm/16mm optical sound track negatives.

Audio Repair — utilizing Sonic Solutions **NoNOISE[®]** digital audio workstation and proprietary Chace technology to de-noise, de-pop and revitalize sound tracks.

Stereo Restoration — reconstructing missing stereo sections of stereo films using monaural sources.

Complete Library Services — cataloging, data base creation and entry, custom transfer services and audition libraries.

Consultation and Evaluation — on-site or in-studio inspection of materials and recommendations for preservation and back-up.

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CHACE PRESERVATION SERVICES

Where Science Meets Art

Chace Productions' reputation as a premier restoration and revitalization facility is the result of over 10 years of successful work in developing specialized equipment and processing techniques for audio production. All projects, whether a routine transfer or a complex restoration, receive the benefit of the resources and personnel available only at Chace.

However, Chace is more than a collection of fancy "black boxes" and skilled engineers. Our goal is to remain true to the original—to preserve, repair and restore the audio as closely as possible to the original. We believe that a 1930's soundtrack should sound like the best 1930's soundtrack obtainable, but not like a digital recording of the 90's. Our results are achieved by combining proprietary and unique equipment with our historical perspective in solving a wide range of problems. Our services are:

Transfer and Mastering

Chace Optical Sound Processor

- Proprietary technology for the transfer of 35mm/16mm optical negative tracks.
- C.O.S.P.[™] reproduces variable area and variable density negatives
- C.O.S.P.[™] eliminates most noise and artifacts—small audio details come through the years with amazing clarity

Custom Transfer Facilities

- Special transports never touch the picture area
- 100% monitored transfers in acoustically designed listening environments
- Cinemascope[™] 4-track LCRS transfers and encoding to Lt/Rt mags
- 35mm, 17.5mm, 16mm formats, optical positives and magnetic film
- Special fixtures and techniques for distressed, "vinegar syndrome" mags, and shedding, sticky audio tape
- Custom styli for phono records, transcriptions, historic recordings

Audio Repair and Revitalization

- Sonic Solutions **NoNOISE**[®] digital audio workstation
- Production de-clicking/de-crackling
- Complex filtering and broadband denoising
- Digital audio workstations for soundtrack reconstruction and repair

Stereo Restorations

- Missing stereo tracks re-created from mono sources with the patented Chace Surround Stereo[™] Processor
- Stereo matches of unprecedented quality and fidelity
- Full length stereo features are restored using the least amount of alternate materials
- Synchronization to 1/3000 of a frame

Complete Library Services

- Chace's computer networked facility creates custom client data bases to organize big libraries
- Establishes a catalog of materials for easy reference and accessibility
- Cost effective planning maximizes use of transfer facilities and stock usage, minimizing expense
- Secondary audition or access materials created, catalogued and cross referenced

Consultation and Evaluation

- On site inspection by Chace personnel
- Audio evaluation services with written results
- Proposals and cost estimates for funding and grant requests

