

CALIFORNIA ARTS COUNCIL 115 I Street, Sacramento, CA 95814  
(916) 445-1530

September 21, 1978

Herb Caen  
San Francisco Chronicle  
5th & Mission  
SF, Ca 94103

Dear Mr. Caen:

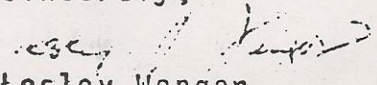
Re your item on the California Arts Council in yesterday's Chron, I am enclosing an article from the San Diego Union which you may enjoy.

As an avid and daily reader of your column, I am familiar with your devotion to correct details, and certainly do thank you for being among the very few journalists who, when covering this story, did manage to get it straight that the grant was made to Second Coming Press and not to the poet. However, in fairness to Second Coming and to Paul Fericano, you should know that the \$5,000 grant produced seven books of poetry, not one, and that the poem in question is in a book entitled "Loading the Revolver with Real Bullets" which contains 41 poems--all by Paul Fericano. Four of these poems deal with the Three Stooges. Whatever you may ultimately think about the Hollywood Party poem, you really should read at least a few more, before you condemn Fericano as a non-poet. I wish I could tell you where you could pick the book up, but I have been unable to buy a copy for myself: the book seems to have been sold out as a result of Bob Wilson's "snit".

Meanwhile we have been contacted by various members of the legislature concerning this mighty poem, and oddly, no one but Bob Wilson is in the least concerned with Randolph Scott, Stuart Whitman or Glen Campbell. Some, however, are outraged by what they regard as an attack on John Wayne. We have been told that it is extremely unwise to attack an "institution". Naturally we have pointed out that the CAC has no formal position on John Wayne, though he seems to have quite a few fans around the office. We have inquired, from the critical legislators, if they were suggesting we should institute a system that would impede free speech by practicing censorship on a grantee. Absolutely not, they have said, they just don't want us spending taxpayers' dollars publishing such poems--the material should be checked for that reason. In fairness to the critical legislators, when we pointed out that the conclusion of that argument was that taxpayers' dollars should not be spent promoting free speech, they agreed it was a very difficult issue.

You see what havoc poets can wreak?

Sincerely,

  
Lesley Wenger  
Information Coordinator