

Route 4, Box 33
Santa Fe, N. M.

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The Editor
The New Mexican
Santa Fe, N. M.

Dear Sir:

The time has come for someone to say a good word for Oliver La Farge, although I am sure he is quite capable of defending himself. Every time he writes critically about a Santa Fe activity, especially one that involves money and in direct proportion to its amount, he is lambasted by the local economic royalists. To them money is sacred and to express anything but approval for a project that brings money into the community, no matter on what or how short the terms, or to take a stand for any proposal, however desirable from other points of view, that conceivably might ever so slightly decrease trade, is considered down-right heresy. They prefer fulsome praise to honest criticism. This has been their prevailing attitude on decommercializing Fiesta, on the location of the new Post Office, on the preservation of historic buildings, on rezoning problems, and on parking on the Plaza.

Oliver La Farge is a mildly liberal, artist - to use the word in its broader sense - of independent convictions who stands for excellence and high performance. This should not be very hard to understand even for Mr. Colves. As a columnist his function is to express his own views, not to say merely what some people would like to hear or to parrot the opinions of other commentators. Thank goodness he has convictions and the more controvertial the better. But judging from the quality of most TV programs his criticism of "Empire" was probably not exaggerated. Mr. Colves, not it seems being a man of independent opinions,

was offended because his judgement of the show, based on reviews in newspapers and trade magazines (a place one would hardly expect to find the greatest independence of thought), did not agree with La Farge's. That the "Empire" producers spend several thousand dollars a day in Santa Fe and that 32 Million people will be watching the show is not a convincing measure of its merit or a reason for Santa Feans to be proud of it unless one accepts the proposition that the more a thing costs and the greater the demand for it the better and more desirable it is.

With Mr. Colwes, Mr. Wadleigh too complains of a shortage of money in Santa Fe. They talk as though money were still a commodity of fixed quantity, which it has long ceased to be, and not a means of exchange, the amount of which varies directly with the volume of trade. Those who complain of a shortage of money are actually saying that ^{what} they offer in goods or services is not greatly wanted. Mr. Wadleigh, not being an economic royalist, can at least be funny. But because he is ^{trick} ~~perked~~ by what he calls the money deficiency, he regards "Empire" a Hollywood-given boon to this depressed community to be welcomed in warmth in proportion to the dollars it allegedly tosses about. Because "Empire" is not supposed to be an Oedipus Rex and because Santa Fe is not even the artistic hub of the Southwest, he feels we should not complain if it does a "lowlife, bilge-ridden, lousy job".

Yours truly,

Eliot Porter