

ARTICLE APPEARED
ON PAGE 18

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Darts and laurels

Laurel: to *The Westsider*, a Manhattan weekly, and reporters Jan Bartelli and Jeff Kisseloff, for an October 11 story that reached out and touched a telephone polling operation in which callers, sounding out prospective voters with Jewish-sounding surnames, identified themselves as representing the National Jewish Coalition, without revealing that the coalition was in fact an arm of the Republican National Committee. The reporters got the coalition's number when Bartelli took a \$4-an-hour undercover job as a polltaker along with twenty-five other part-time workers, many of whom were black or Hispanic and all of whom — including those with decidedly Caribbean accents — were instructed to introduce themselves to respondents as Betty or Harry Goodman.

Dart: to Alan Bock, editorial page editor of the *Santa Ana Register*, for going beyond the accepted limits of editorial support by making available to a Republican congressional candidate a printout of a favorable editorial that found its way into a campaign flyer three days before it was published in the paper.

Dart: to the *Chicago Sun-Times*, for foul play of a photo in its special twenty-page souvenir sports section celebrating the first-game victory of the Chicago Cubs baseball team in the National League playoffs with the San Diego Padres. Pitched as a MOMENT OF TRUTH — AND GLORY across a two-page spread, the dramatic, sixteen-by-ten-inch picture was captioned "Two fans raise their pennants [emblazoned with the words NL EASTERN DIVISION CHAMPIONS] in the upper deck of Wrigley Field as the first game of the National League playoffs kicked off with a 13-0 victory for the Cubs . . ."; alert fans, however, catching clues from the scoreboard, the stadium clock, and the color of the visiting team's uniforms, quickly figured out the score: the photo, of a game

with the Pittsburgh Pirates, had actually been shot a couple of weeks before.

Dart: to C. Peter Jorgensen, publisher of Century Newspapers in Massachusetts, for his comic interpretation of the role of interfering publisher. In an October 11 memo, Jorgensen (who also functioned as chairman of New England Newspaper Friends for Reagan/Bush), advised all members of the editorial staffs of his three Boston-area weeklies that he did "not intend to pay for paper and ink, or staff time and effort, to print news or opinion pieces which in any way might be construed to lend support, comfort, assistance or aid to political candidates who are opposed by Republican candidates in the November election. . . . You are specifically instructed," the memo went on, "to submit any and all political stories which mention any candidate in any race and any photographs, letters, editorials, cutlines, or any other kind of written material whatsoever relative to the election or elected officials and their record, to the publisher prior to publication. . . . If this is unclear in any way, resolve every question in your mind with a decision NOT to print."

Laurel: to the Associated Press and correspondent Robert Parry, for a June 29 story documenting the existence of a comic-book-style manual on methods of sabotage produced for Nicaraguan rebels by the CIA. Laurel: to Pacific News Service and free-lance reporter Brian Barger, for further revelations (July 26) of a second manual, this one on "Psychological Operations in Guerrilla Warfare," that had also been furnished to the rebels by the CIA. (According to PNS, the story had originally been offered to *The Washington Post*, for which Barger was working at the time, and to NBC, but both news organizations had turned it down.) Significantly, it was not until the appearance of Parry's

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independently confirmed report on the psychological-operations manual (October 14), and *The New York Times*'s own page-one account three days later, that the dirty-tricks story entered public consciousness and became an issue in the 1984 presidential campaign.

Dart: to *Time*, for giving with one hand and taking away with the other. The newsweekly's October 8 issue carried a special advertising section on "Strategies for Healthier, Happier, and Longer Life" that featured editorial material supplied by the American Academy of Family Physicians, but deleted from the AAFP narrative all references to the hazards of smoking cigarettes. (Also featured in the issue were seven full-page, four-color tobacco ads.) Laurel: to *The Boston Globe* and reporter Charles Kenney, for a front-page series (September 30, October 1 and 2) on scientific, legal, and political developments in the intensifying war on smoking — including that rarity of rarities, a discussion of the impact of advertising on the outcome of that war.

Dart: to the Yakima, Washington, *Herald-Republic*, for a remarkable innovation in journalistic enterprise — a "paid letters to the editor" feature in which readers might register their views on candidates and issues by paying the paper ten cents a word.

Dart: to *The Cincinnati Enquirer*, for a shameless feature story (October 12) about one of the first women in the region to benefit from a new government program providing housing subsidies to minority female heads of household. Although the article identified the mother of five as a clerk employed by the *Enquirer*, it neglected to mention that she had been encouraged to apply for the aid by her boss at the highly profitable Gannett-owned paper after he had rejected the latest of her several requests for a "survival" raise.

Laurel: to the Casper, Wyoming, *Star-Tribune* and city

editor Daniel Gearino, for a refreshingly candid confession (September 16) that the paper had been "irresponsible, elitist, pompous, and absurd" when it decided to wait for guilt to be established before revealing in its news accounts that an unnamed "prominent city official" charged with sexual assault was in fact the city's mayor.

Dart: to Michael Simmons, publisher of the Marengo *Pioneer-Republican*, *The North English Record*, and the *Williamsburg Journal-Tribune*, the only general circulation papers published in Iowa County, Iowa, for cutting off his professional nose to spite his unprofessional face. Perceiving a snub to the president of the papers' parent company by Representative Janet Carl at a Democratic fund-raiser last spring, Simmons delivered an ultimatum: either an apology from Carl (which was not forthcoming) or a blackout on coverage of her reelection campaign, including letters to the editor on her behalf. In a November 9 editorial, Simmons apologized to readers (though not to Carl) for having "ignored our obligation to cover the news. . . . In making public our mistakes," Simmons could not resist adding, "we also hope that Representative Carl realizes hers." Carl won reelection, incidentally, by twenty-four votes.

Dart: to the *Akron Beacon Journal*, for turning its Sunday magazine into an amateurish yearbook. Its September 30 cover story on the Salvation Army's 100 years in Akron was flanked by twenty-two ads from local merchants giving the organization a lucrative (for the paper) salute.

Dart: to the Orange Coast *Daily Pilot* in Costa Mesa, California, for the looking-glass logic of its October 24 editorial urging voters to return the district's Republican representative to Congress despite the fact that his record, as outlined in the editorial, was so appalling that "we can't bring ourselves to endorse the candidate by name." ■