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1987: The Smear In Review

By Joel N. Smith

1987: The year in review will be the favorite, if not the most tired, topic for newspapers, magazines, television and radio stations for the next several weeks. With Gorbachev's recent visit to the U.S., the stock market's Black Monday crash, the Supreme Court nominee game and Ronald Reagan, the other happenings of the past year, often the less known but extremely more interesting items are overlooked, or if noted at all, assigned to an overworked staff writer and relegated to, say, the back page of some small targeted newspaper, while inane political dribble fills the front page. Here are those overlooked subjects and unreported awards.

The 976 phone business really took off in 1987. For your hard-earned money you now have your choice of dial an orgasm or dial a sermon. The Most Interesting Paramedic Episode Award goes to the volunteer team in Delmonico, Nebraska, where rescuers spent 3 hours recovering the receiver of a 976 maniac.

Condoms were big news and big

business in 1987. Network TV seemed to welcome the hoopla, but their commercials were uninspiring. The surgeon general encouraged their use but somehow he seems never to have needed one himself. The award for Least Consumer Sensitive Industry goes to the condom makers who have yet to market a genital flavored condom.

Safe sex parties win two awards. The first "Best copyright infringement without prosecution" for quietly copying the tupperware party format. It seems rubbermaid would be even more concerned. As the parties caught on, "safer sex" seemed a better term, and finally "risk reduction seminars" was suggested as more appropriate. Therefore it receives The Best New Name Most Unlikely To Be Used Award.

The topic of pornography was hot again in 1987, with new debates over obscenity laws fanned by religious fanatics. Jerry Falwell along with Larry Flynt and Hustler magazine receive the Most Entertaining And Ridiculous Lawsuit Award.

In Charlotte, health official Basil Delta, who had to be escorted to the

AIDS seminar in his own city, receives the Most Concerned Public Official Award.

Jim and Tammy Bakker continued to grab local headlines. Together they receive the Fort Mill Notoriety Award, while Tammy alone receives the Best Female Impersonation of a Female Impersonator Award. Along the same lines, the Best T-shirt Award goes to the "I ran into Tammy Faye t-shirts while the Fascist Statement of the Year goes to the UNCC fraternity which sold blatantly anti-gay t-shirts.

Some other awards: Goodwill Among Gays (the GAG Award) to author Randy "The Band Played On" Shilts. Least Likely To Be Missed To Club South. Lack of Gay Pride Award to everyone not attending Charlotte's gay pride picnic.

Most Political Balls Award to Robert Sheets who ran for Charlotte city council. Best TV Programming: The Gay/Lesbian Forum. Most Deprived Theatre Goer Award to those turned away from the last performance of "Life of the Party."

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