TIME

A Letter from the Publisher

ajor TIME stories often involve a careful dialogue, and negotiation, between correspondents in the field and writers

in the New York City office. But the partnership behind this week's cover story on political action committees was unusually close. Correspondent Evan Thomas, who suggested the story and reported it from Capitol Hill, and Associate Editor Walter Isaacson, who wrote it, were friends at Harvard a decade ago. Their paths recrossed in 1978, when both joined TIME as staff writers in New York. Then, again almost simultaneously, both transferred to TIME's Washington bureau. Isaacson returned to New York in 1981, and the two have collaborated since as reporter and writer on numerous articles, including last year's cover story on the politics of abortion and this year's profile of Senate Majority Leader Howard Baker.

Two months ago, when Thomas began thinking about a story on PACs, he flew to New York to discuss it with Isaacson. From his Washington perspective, Thomas was "struck-by how many Congressmen seem to live in fear of PACs." Isaacson observed that "PACs have changed the nature of political campaigning—and of the legislative process." Once the projection

HUGH PATRICK BROWN

Thomas and Isaacson with PAC print-outs

ect was approved, they continued to talk by phone two or three times each day. While Thomas interviewed dozens of Congressmen, lobbyists and academics, each of TIME's U.S. bureaus filed extensive reports to Isaacson. "We used our normal system," says Senior Editor Stephen Smith, "and because of their friend-

ship and long hours of planning, the story developed with unusual smoothness and coherence."

Like many large and diversified corporations, Time Inc. has a PAC. It contributed a total of \$46,730 in 1981 and 1982 to congressional candidates and political and party organizations. The PAC is under the jurisdiction of Time Inc.'s business management, which has no authority over editorial policy. The editors of Time Inc. do not participate in these decisions—or know the identities of the recipients. The company's forest products subsidiaries have their own PACs: Inland Container Corp. gave \$15,200 in 1981-82, Temple-Eastex \$17,350. In addition, Temple-Eastex con-

tributed \$28,650 in 1981-82 to candidates for state and local office in Texas.

John a meyers

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cover: Political action committees are changing the way campaigns are financed and undermining the legislative process. This year PACs will donate \$240 million to win friends and influence elections. See NATION.



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