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Democrats push party unity theme

From the Reuter News Report

SAN FRANCISCO — Walter Mondale and Geraldine Ferraro swept into San Francisco Monday as the Democratic Party opened its four-day convention. There, Mondale is expected to be nominated to do battle with President Reagan in the November 6 election.

As thousands of nominating delegates and journalists gathered amid tight security, Mondale and New York Rep. Geraldine Ferraro, the first woman named as a vice presidential candidate by a major political party, arrived from the resort town of Lake Tahoe, Calif. They had been sequestered there for several days mapping campaign strategy.

Mondale's first appearance in San Francisco was before 3,000 women where he introduced Ferraro to thunderous applause. If he observes tradition, Mondale will not appear before the convention until Thursday, the day after the nomination roll call.

His first order of business was to try to unite the opposition Democrats for their uphill fight to unseat the popular Reagan, who leads Mondale in opinion polls.

Party unity was a theme stressed by speaker after speaker during the convention's opening ceremonies. "We are here not to beat up on each other but to beat up on Ronald Reagan," Los Angeles Mayor Tom Bradley told cheering delegates.

The party's solidarity has been severely tested during the campaign season leading up to the convention.

Mondale now has more than the 1,967 delegates needed for nomination Wednesday. But he will have to find a way to mend relations with rivals Gary Hart and Jesse Jackson, who he defeated only after an extremely divisive state primary and caucus selection process.

Aides said Mondale would try to meet Hart and Jackson, possibly Monday night in separate sessions, before his formal convention appearance to forge a united front.

The former vice president will also have to smooth over controversy that arose when he tried to fire the party's national chairman Charles Manatt Friday and changed his mind Sunday, deciding to reinstate him.

The decision to replace Manatt with former President Carter's controversial budget director, Bert Lance, seemed to dampen the euphoria that electri-

fied Democrats when Mondale announced that he wanted Ferraro as his running mate.

Sunday on the eve of the convention, Mondale attempted to calm the situation by agreeing to let Manatt stay on as party chairman with reduced powers. Instead of replacing Manatt, Lance was named Mondale's general campaign manager and will work with Manatt in the months ahead.

"I do not think any substantial damage has been done to the Mondale campaign," Mondale campaign director Jim Johnson said.

The major events at Monday's opening session were a speech by Carter and an address by Mario Cuomo, governor of the politically important state of New York.

Mondale has found himself in a difficult position as far as Carter is concerned. He has paid only enough homage to the former president to be respectful but has carefully distanced himself from Carter, who lost to Reagan in a landslide in 1980.

Critical to Mondale is winning the strong backing of Sen. Gary Hart, an underdog candidate who came from virtually nowhere to give him a good run for the nomination, and black civil rights leader Jesse Jackson, who has criticized the ex-vice president for not taking a strong stand on minority issues.

Ag economist says interest rates crippling

By Gene Gentrup

High interest rates and a heavy debt load have crippled the ability of farmers to repay loans, according to a UNL assistant professor.

Bruce Johnson of the agricultural economics department said the low interest rates of the 1970s, if adjusted for inflation, were actually at a negative rate. The 1970s was a time when farmers were encouraged to take on more debt and expand their farm sector, Johnson said. But the situation for farmers has taken "a very pronounced turn in the 80s," he said.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture reported a 12 to 13 percent decline in Nebraska land values between April 1, 1983, and April 1, 1984, Johnson said. Nebraska carries more debt than any other state in the agricultural sector, and the ratio of debt to asset is the highest of any state, second only to South Dakota, he said. Income levels are only two-thirds of what they were in the 1970s and the reduction in income has resulted in a very depressed agricultural economy, he said.

The decline in land values has not increased the number of farm foreclosures, Johnson said. Instead, farmers are liquidating their assets partially to get out of debt.

Although farmland values have fallen as much as 30 percent in some places, Johnson said, rental rates have remained relatively stable, indicating land values also may be stabilizing.

As the market reaches a point of stabilization, Johnson said, people will begin to see returns for their land and generate income.

For agriculture graduates who want to return to the farm, Johnson said, that potential exists. But the potential to bring it up to a two-family operation may not be there right now.

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UNL faces housing improvements

By Marc Simon

Smoke detectors, improved outside lighting, and a graduate student kitchen will soon be installed into UNL's residence halls.

Douglas Zatechka, director of university housing, said that updated fire codes created the need for new smoke detectors. Current fire codes require smoke detectors in all residence hall corridors, Zatechka said. However, he said, housing officials were worried that vandals would ruin the smoke detectors installed in the corridors. Therefore, the officials decided to put smoke detectors in every residential room, a plan that met with approval from the firemarshal, Zatechka said.

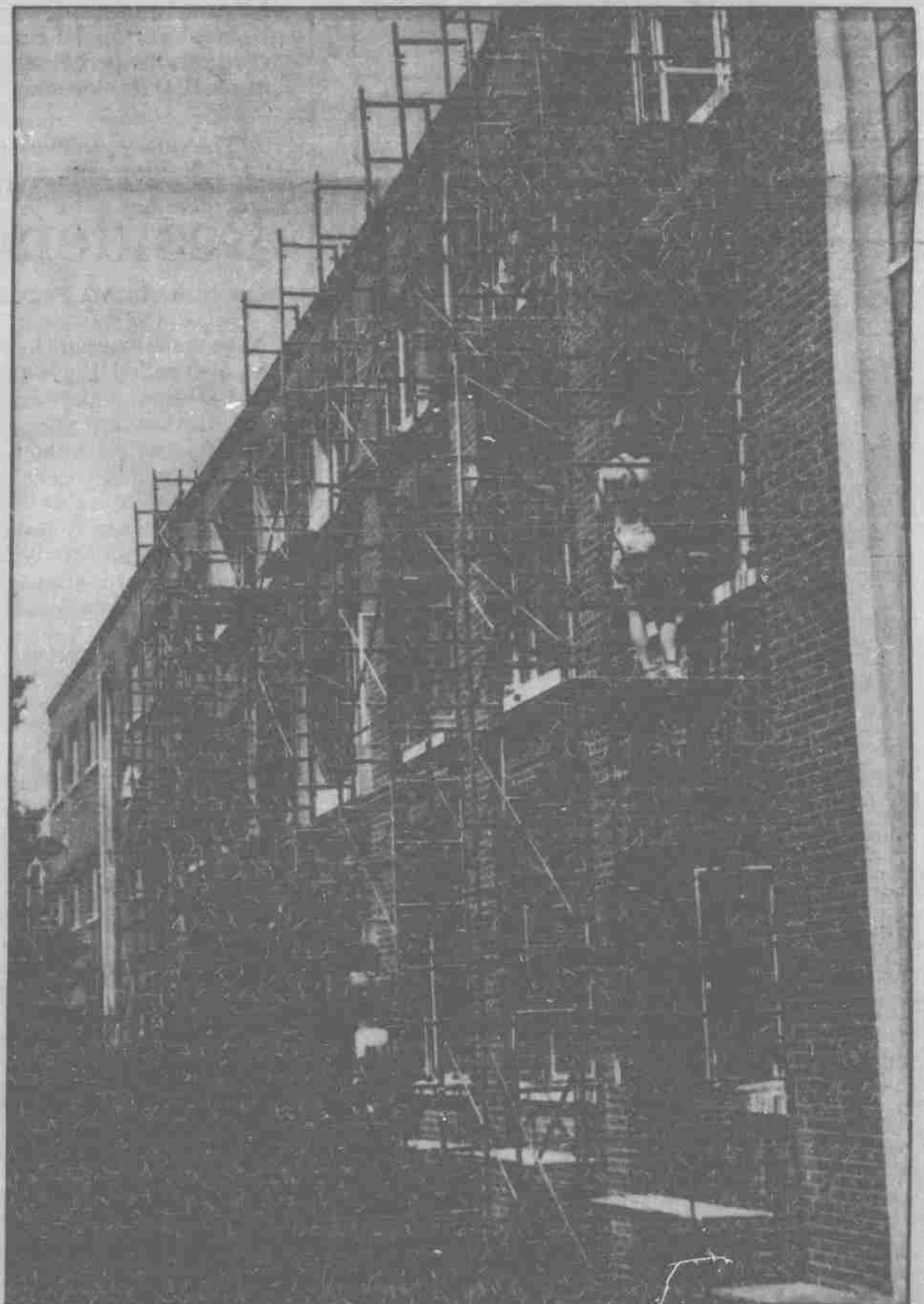
To accommodate new fire codes, smoke dampers, which prevent dangerous fume-filled smoke from traveling and laundry-room enclosures, will be added to the halls, Zatechka said.

Dry chemical fire extinguishers also will be installed in the halls to be used if an electrical fire starts, he said. These will replace existing extinguishers which use water and are dangerous to use on electrical fires.

Glen Schumann, assistant director of housing for maintenance, said high-pressure sodium lights, which "offer better security and are cheaper than ordinary light bulbs" will replace existing lights by Harper-Schramm-Smith halls and Selleck Quadrangle. Outdoor lighting costs for the Harper-Schramm-Smith complex would decrease from \$1,300 per year to \$200 per year, Schumann said.

Because of a new generator, lighting inside should be more stable. The Cather-Pound-Neihardt complex will soon acquire an auxiliary power generator to act as a backup to existing power facilities, Schumann said. He said backup power systems already exist in the other residence hall complexes on City Campus, and are now required in high-rise residential buildings as part of the fire code.

Students in the graduate section of Selleck will soon have a multi-purpose kitchen facility and lounge, Schumann said. Three existing rooms — a lounge, a modified kitchen and an eating area — will be consolidated into one large lounge, he said. It will contain a kitchen with linoleum floors, a refrigerator, microwave, dinette area and a lounge with a television, he said. Closets in the existing rooms will be removed



David Trouba/Daily Nebraskan

Members of the Selleck Quadrangle maintenance crew paint the trim on Selleck's windows Monday afternoon.

to create more space, and ceiling fans will be installed to cool the area on hot days, he said.

Selleck soon will have carpeted corridors and its dining hall will have booths similar to those in UNL's other residential dining halls, Schumann said.

A men's restroom in the Selleck 8000 wing will be modified to accommodate handicapped residents, according to

Schumann. Similar changes probably will be made to women's and graduate students' restrooms in Selleck when funds are available, he said. The men's restroom was given higher priority over other restroom changes because more male undergraduate handicapped students will be attending the university, Schumann said.

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