

Elephants and Donkeys by Kathleen Klenetsky

If you thought Charlie Manatt was bad. . .

On Feb. 1, the Democratic National Committee will meet in Washington to elect a replacement for Charlie "the Tuna" Manatt, the DNC's outgoing chairman.

Anyone who thought that the Democratic Party's officialdom might have learned some lessons from the humiliating beating which the Mondale-Ferraro ticket took Nov. 6, would be quickly disabused of that notion after looking at the major contenders for the DNC chairmanship.

The leading candidates are cut from the same mold as Manatt, and represent the same post-industrial-society, unilateral-disarmament policies American voters rejected overwhelmingly on Election Day.

After a month of political in-fighting, the field has narrowed to the following major candidates:

- *Paul Kirk*: Son of a Massachusetts Supreme Judicial Court justice, and a close aide and adviser for years to Sen. Ted Kennedy (D-Mass.), Kirk now holds the powerful position of DNC treasurer.

- *Robert Keefe*: A Washington political consultant close to Democratic Party wheeler-dealer Robert Strauss. Keefe served as a top consultant to Sen. John Glenn's (D-Ohio) unsuccessful presidential campaign.

- *Nancy Pelosi*: Former California state Democratic Party chair, Pelosi has functioned as an "enforcer" for Chuck Manatt and the other big boys who run the California Democratic apparatus. It was her assigned job to block the influence of the Lyndon LaRouche-affiliated National Democratic Policy Committee, which

has over 15,000 members in the state. Pelosi got her leg-up in national politics through former Gov. Jerry Brown. Her father and brother are both former governors of Maryland, linked to the same unsavory "business interests" responsible for the careers of Brown and Manatt.

- *Sharon Pratt Dixon*: A member of the Democratic National Committee from the District of Columbia, closely affiliated with Jesse Jackson's political machine.

- *John Cavanaugh*: A Nebraskan, Cavanaugh lines up with the ultra-liberal wing of the Democratic Party. He served two terms in Congress (1976-80), and compiled a record that included votes against the B-1 bomber and increases in defense spending.

- *Duane Garrett*: A San Francisco lawyer and party fund-raiser, Garrett has a reputation as the central money-launderer for Manatt and the California Democratic Party. His ability to dig up funds from unusual sources prompted Walter Mondale to appoint him co-chairman of his presidential campaign.

Another key contender, *Neil Goldschmidt*, suddenly dropped out of the contest Dec. 13. Goldschmidt, who went from being Carter administration transportation secretary to a job with the Nike running-shoe company, had been the favorite of a group of Democratic elected officials led by Virginia Gov. Charles Robb, who were expecting to formally endorse him at a meeting in Kansas City Dec. 16.

With Goldschmidt out of the race, Paul Kirk has emerged as the frontrunner—although Robb and the rest of his group, which includes Arizona Gov. Bruce Babbitt and Rep. Richard Gephardt of Missouri, are desperately casting about for an alternative candidate.

Prompted by fears that if Kirk be-

comes DNC chair, it would give Ted Kennedy a lock on the party's 1988 presidential nomination, Robb and his pals have reportedly approached Terry Sanford, the ex-governor of North Carolina, to enter the race. If that doesn't pan out, they are considering seeking a change in the party charter to allow a sitting official to become party chair.

Kirk, however, already has over a third of the 377 Democratic National Committee votes in his pocket and is getting significant support from the Harriman wing of the party. "Right now," according to one Washington Democratic operative, "this thing is lurching toward Kirk."

On Dec. 13, the day Goldschmidt withdrew, Kirk called a press conference to unveil a proposal for creating a policy council to come up with "new ideas" for the party. Basically a revival of the old Democratic policy group set up in the 1950s by Averell Harriman and Adlai Stevenson, the idea was immediately endorsed by outgoing Utah Gov. Scott Matheson.

The former head of the National Governor's Association, Matheson is a long-time ally and social intimate of Harriman and his wife.

Dobrynin's choice?

Another Harriman pal may have as well—though not quite so publicly. Just a few days before Kirk's press conference, Soviet Ambassador Anatolii Dobrynin stopped in at the Democrats' national headquarters in Washington for a little conference with Charlie Manatt. Nobody's saying what happened, but given the Democratic leadership's past record with the Soviets, we can only surmise that Dobrynin may have been offering his old pal Charlie some friendly advice on who would make the best new DNC chair.