

McGovern ruined Idaho Demos; Glenn now leads

By BEN J. PLASTINO
Post-Register political editor

The surprise entry of former South Dakota Sen. George S. McGovern for president recalls some painful Democratic memories in the 1972 presidential election.

McGovern, who admits he is now a long-shot candidate, was little more than that in 1972 when he won the Democrat nomination and then badly lost the presidency to the now disgraced Republican Richard Nixon. McGovern won only Massachusetts and the District of Columbia.

McGovern, with little money and few campaign supporters, said he is laying out a liberal course that includes arms control talks with the Soviets, an end to U.S. military involvement in Central America and a program of government-backed education and other aid. These are goals that many could support, not just liberals.

The setting of the Idaho Democrat Convention in 1972 was at Sun Valley where Maine Sen. Edmund Muskie was the main speaker but McGovern was the dominant force. The powerful U.S. Sen. Frank Church had switched his support from Muskie to McGovern; that not only influenced the Idaho delegation but apparently was an important factor on the national scene.

The McGovern backers in Idaho were well organized and even though many had never participated in the intense political process before they stormed the legislative district meetings throughout the state beforehand to pick delegates favorable to McGovern.

What happened at Sun Valley that year is something that will be well remembered. Not only did the Idaho Democrats give McGovern a hefty delegate lead over Muskie, they adopted one of the most liberal political platforms ever seen in Idaho, including a plank that favored abortion.

Then Gov. Cecil D. Andrus and many of the Democratic office holders were so incensed at what happened that they publicly dis-



McGovern

vowed many sections of the Idaho Democratic platform, a rare occurrence.

McGovern won 17½ of the 21 Idaho delegates.

It's also worthy to remember that many of the avid McGovern supporters, including those in Bonnevill County, were never heard from again, and those who did stay, became more conservative. These include the past longtime party officials, National Committeeman John Chapman, and National Committeewoman, Carol Sealander, both of Boise.

The Sun Valley convention left the Democrat Party in shambles for that year and for many years following.

Talk in high Democratic circles indicate that Ohio's U.S. Sen. John Glenn looks to be the heavy favorite in Idaho, mostly because of his more conservative views over the other six avowed party presidential contenders.

Former Idaho Senate Minority Leader Ron Twilegar, a Boise attorney and businessman, heads the Glenn campaign forces in Idaho. He said he is attempting to bring Glenn into Idaho this fall, or at least early next year but has no commitment as yet.

Twilegar said it is a 50-50 chance that Glenn will visit Idaho in the near future as he is concentrating on the larger states at this time to pick up delegates for next summer's national nominating convention in San Francisco.

Democratic talk indicates that former Vice President Walter Mondale lacks Idaho support, mostly because of his ultra-liberal views and his strong connection with the somewhat unpopular Carter administration.

Andrus is a close ally of Mondale because both were high in the Carter administration, Mondale as vice president and Andrus in the cabinet as secretary of interior.

Mondale was in Boise during the 1980 presidential campaign and spoke at a large party gathering but

his liberal remarks failed to evoke much enthusiasm among rank and file of the Democrats.

Whether Andrus will give more than tacit support to Mondale, however, is problematical.

Andrus has political aspirations of his own — meaning mostly his well-known inclination of running for governor in 1986 and he doesn't want to jeopardize his chances by allying himself with an unpopular candidate in Idaho. Gov. John V. Evans has said he will not seek re-election in 1986 and it is no secret he likely will take a shot at the seat now held by Sen. Steve Symms.

The other Democratic candidates, so far, appear to have little backing in Idaho which has comparatively few votes on the national level. The only effort reported so far is by John Greenfield, young Boise attorney and son of a former State Democratic Chairman George Greenfield, who is Idaho's campaign manager for the fading presidential aspirations of California's Sen. Alan Cranston.

The latest polls show Glenn has been gradually increasing in strength and many show him ahead of both President Reagan and Mondale.

The latest Harris poll shows Glenn leading Reagan by a few points while Reagan in turn is a few points ahead of Mondale.

It's ironic but as far as polls goes, those on Reagan are following the pattern established by Carter before him. Carter was highly popular at the start but gradually slipped until he was trailing other formidable candidates as election time approached.

In the latest one at the New Jersey Democratic Convention at Atlantic City last week, of 1,125 ballots cast, Glenn had 431 and Mondale 317. The others trailed far behind, Colorado's Sen. Gary Hart with 41, North Carolina Gov. Ernest Hollings 26, California Sen. Alan Cranston 11 and former Florida Gov. Reubin Askew, only three.

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B-6 The Post-Register, Idaho Falls, Wednesday, September 21, 1983