

Toasted by 2,000 supporters

Dems honor Mrs. Carter at local bash

Those close to the operation recall Rosalynn Carter's first visit to the Detroit Plaza Hotel in the Ren Cen as "the night they lost the salads."

That was a couple of years ago when the mammoth structure was still under construction. And somewhere in its awesome towers, a downed elevator kept hundreds waiting for those appetizers.

Mrs. Carter's most recent visit to the Detroit area went more smoothly. She was in town last weekend as the guest speaker before the state's Democrats' biggest fundraiser of the year — the

39th annual Jefferson-Jackson Day Dinner.

More than 2,000 Democrats from the Detroit area as well as the state were on hand to toast Mrs. Carter, only the third woman to be so honored before the gathering. She follows Patricia Harris, secretary of Housing and Urban Development, and Eleanor Roosevelt. In addition to Mrs. Carter, former 12-year governor of Michigan and present Michigan Supreme Court Justice G. Mennen Williams was also honored by the group.

The sell-out occasion collected more

than \$110,000 for the party. Per head, donations sold for \$50. While most observers described the event as "social — a time to see old friends," a few candidly replied that there was more going on than what met the eyes.

"GENERALLY SPEAKING, it's more of a back slapping kind of thing," said Maxine Berman of Southfield. "Future candidates are walking around talking to the right people."

Ms. Berman was one of the co-ordinators of the dinner. It was her job to arrange seating for the crowd. "People come here, some by obligation, and some because they want to give to the party," she said.

Robert Ficano, a Livonia attorney and active member in the Wayne County Democratic Club, mostly viewed the event as "a good time." However, he added that such a festive occasion is considered a reward for active campaigners.

And for those who couldn't afford the ticket price of \$50, some large organ-

izations (the United Auto Workers, for one) would buy blocks of tickets and distribute them to members.

Kathy Brown, the party's Oakland County chairperson from Troy, gave some insight into the conversations originating from close knit encounters.

"They're talking about the state of the party," describing it as a time to compare notes with other local party groups.

"I think the party, statewide and in Oakland County, is moving to new directions — like getting more involved in state issues and becoming an effective lobbying force. We want to deal with human issues continually year-round, not just at election time when we have a candidate we want to sell to the voters."

ANOTHER PARTY MEMBER, who recently worked on the unsuccessful campaign of a state candidate, described the evening as "almost like a blind date."

"There's a lot of shucking and jiving

going on," she said. She explained that's because political watchers are just beginning to get a feel for where other's ambitions lie in facing an approaching election year. However, she added, the atmosphere was more relaxed than one in an election year.

Overall, she said, the evening is a coming together for those "grassroots" who are not from Detroit or Lansing.

State Sen. William Faust, (D-Westland) estimated about 100 Democrats from his district, covering Westland, Garden City and Canton Township, attended last Saturday night. "The Jefferson-Jackson dinner" pays about half the bills for the state organization."

U.S. Rep. William Brodhead, D-Detroit, described those "grassroots" in attendance as situated between "despair and elation" in describing President Jimmy Carter's chances in the 1980 election.

He explained many house mixed feelings in his attempts to solve such

major domestic problems as energy and inflation concerns.

Overall, however, many interviewed pointed to Carter's successes in dealing with the Midwest crisis. One suburban Detroit Democrat described his efforts as gaining a "Noble Peace Prize for sure."

MOST PEOPLE enthusiastically agreed it was a bonus to the party to snare Mrs. Carter as the guest speaker. Statuesque and dressed in a soft white dress with a gardenia corsage, she reminisced over her previous visits to the state. Additionally, she threw in a few plugs for her husband's successes, plans and ambitions, briefly pointing to his new energy plan to be broadcast this week.

But before the evening was through, Detroit's Mayor Coleman Young gave her a message to take back to the White House — that Detroit is just the right place for the next national Democratic convention.

"And what better place to be elected," he added.



Senator Carl Levin, First Lady Mrs. Rosalynn Carter and Michigan Democratic Chairman Morley Winograd chat during a reception prior to the Jefferson-Jackson Day Dinner Saturday. (Staff photo by Teresa Banas)

Angles corrects itself

In Monday's edition, the Inside Angles column featured a notice asking for volunteers to drive hot meals to the elderly in the Oakland Livingston Human Service Agency program.

The 90 volunteer drivers of the Farmington and Farmington Hills sec-

tion of the hot meals at home project deny that there is a need for more drivers in this area, according to telephone coordinator Shirley Najjar.

The 90 drivers include regular volunteers and a list of emergency substitutes.

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