Mondale position tenuous

By Robert E. McMillan
SAN FRANCISCO — Walter Mondale's selection of Rep. Geraldine Ferraro of New York for the vice presidential nomination and his effortative attempt to install Bert Lance as chairman of the Democratic National Committee dominate the thoughts of politicians and journalists at the party's convention.

Mondale’s selection was hailed throughout the party as a bold step by the normally cautious former vice president. Politicos, however, see the choice as a risky maneuver by Mondale, who was seen by 79 percent polling to President Ronald Reagan in the latest Gallup poll.

The Democrats hope Ferraro will attract non-white and non-traditional registered women to the ticket and the party. The strategy should work best with liberal women, but that group was already expected to strongly pro-Mondale.

Ferraro, from a conservative New York district, will challenge the Republicans’ dominance of the House of Representatives and strong military.

Mondale, by picking a woman, hopes to seize the issue of the future of America that Sen. Gary Hart (D-Colo.) used effective against the former vice president in the primary campaign. Identification with the women would aid Mondale in overcoming his lackluster image.

The congressional woman would also help the ticket in New York.

MIT applies for exemption from state right-to-know law

By Diana ben-Aaron
MIT would apply for non-exemption laboratory exemptions to the Massachusetts right-to-know law, which details rights of employees who work with hazardous or toxic substances, Safety Office director John M. Fresina said yesterday.

The exemption would affect Linde Laboratories, Base Linear Accelerator, hypocryb Observatories, and similar MIT enterprises as well as the Cambridge police.

The right-to-know law is aimed at companies that carry out routine testing and production using relatively few chemicals, and "haven't done anything about safety," Fresina said.

The state currently lists 1,700 common hazardous chemicals subject to the law, but MIT uses four or five thousand different chemicals, Fresina said.

Fresina explained the exemption is necessary "to avoid directing our research toward a great deal of unnecessary paperwork that takes the focus of safety." He estimated the paperwork involved would initially fill 54 four-drawer cabinets.

The right-to-know law would require each employee to report on every chemical used in the lab to the chief at MIT and with city and state officials and maintain files for thirty years after the instance stops using the chemical, Fresina explained.

MIT has no institute-wide safety training or maintenance policy, Fresina said. "We rely a great deal on supervision, and we think it works well," he commented.

"It's not MIT style to do things like that. We like to dictate cooperation from the departments. Sometimes you get better results that way than if you beat them over the head," Fresina added.

"Some departments and labs, for instance, Chemical Engineering, Biology, and Cancer Research make it a policy to teach new students and professional lab workers about safety before they even see a lab," Fresina said.

"They have to sign a document saying they have been "indoctrinated" before being issued keys, and another certifying they have left a "clean lab" before they can enter a new lab," he continued.

Fresina stressed that the research laboratory exemption removes MIT only from the paperwork, "we will not exempt MIT from the responsibility to trans-