Forces of liberalism defeated at Austin YD's convention

by WATKINS and KAPLAN

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If no earthquake was detected around Austin last weekend, it could hardly have come as a surprise to the Young Democrat Clubs of Texas, whose annual convention was held in the Capitol's Driskill Hotel.

From Congressman Bob Eckhardt's moderately dove-ish keynote speech, concerned entirely with the Vietnam issue, to the almost unanimous election of a predictably moderate slate of state officers headed by Betsy Wright as President-elect, the convention held no surprises for the observer.

Attempts by the liberal faction of the YD's to remove restrictions placed on the club during the dark years of the Shivers regime were defeated in toto. The loyalty oath requiring members to support Democratic candidates was retained, and an effort to lower the upper age limit from 35 to 30 went down to an smashing defeat.

The platform drawn up by a temporary committee was drawn almost completely from proposals made by the University of Texas delegation. It was modified slightly by the Platform Committee itself, but was still sufficiently starry-eyed to forestall major dissent from the liberal minority.

Planks supporting the Valley Farmworker's strike and liberalization of drug laws were fairly strong and were passed with a minimum of friction. The Vietnam plank, on the other hand, was bland to begin with and was watered down still further in the hands of the delegates.

The Rice delegation was reduced to a long series of abstentions in various uncontested elections to protest the control held over the party by the YD's equivalent of The Establishment. They broke this precedent by voting enthusiastically for Tom Walker of the University of Texas for vice president in order to express support for his independent stand.

Perhaps the best thing about the convention for politicians of any stripe was the glorious weekend away from home in extrciting Austin. The city was mobbed with a staggering number of drunks and hell-raisers in for Round-Up, to whose numbers the wise politico quickly added himself.