

Senate challengers debate — without Dole

By Larry Peirce
The Hutchinson News

They didn't exactly burn Sen. Bob Dole in effigy, but three candidates vying for the incumbent's Senate seat said his absence from a political forum Saturday night showed his arrogance toward Kansas voters.

The candidates were invited to the forum at the Hutchinson Holiday Inn Holiday, which was organized by United We Stand America, the political group that survived Ross Perot's aborted campaign.

Dole didn't attend, saying he was busy with Senate business. He also had criticized the forum as a Dole-bashing event.

Gloria O'Dell, the Democrat from Silver Lake who is challenging Dole, said she had written a letter to the Pachyderm Club of Wichita, hoping that other Republicans could persuade Dole to take part in a debate or forum.

Even without Dole to take the limelight, Ms. O'Dell said she wasn't happy with the forum's structure because its time limits interrupted the candidates' messages.

Independent candidate Christine Campbell-Cline of Wichita said she was hampered in preparing her answers because she had been busy getting 7,000 petition signatures to get on the ballot. She favors revamping the IRS, ending foreign aid and reducing department budgets by 30 percent.

Libertarian candidate Mark Kirk's answers to a panel's 12 questions, which were identical for each candidate, reflected the small-government, free-trade philosophy of the Libertarian party.

Kirk said he wouldn't support anything that made government larger.

The highlight of the forum came when UWSA panelist Sonny Scroggins raised laughter from the 175 people when he mistakenly addressed Kirk as "Captain Kirk" before asking a question.

The crowd cheered whenever the candidates talked of cutting spending and waste in government, a position supported by all three.

All three candidates said they supported giving the president the line-item veto. President George Bush also supports the line-item veto.

Ms. O'Dell said Congress should consider making entitlement programs eligible for line-item budget cutting and should reduce congressional salaries.

The crowd, largely made up of UWSA supporters, voted after the forum for the top candidate, though the UWSA emphasized that it was not an endorsement of any candidate.

Ms. O'Dell placed first, followed by Kirk and Ms. Campbell-Cline. Dole was included on the ballot and placed fourth.

Why was Dole fourth?
"I think it's rather obvious," said Lee Stone, a UWSA volunteer. "The group felt it had been snubbed."

Ms. O'Dell pointed out that



Photo by Sandra Watta

Where was Bob?



Associated Press photo

On Saturday, three U.S. Senate candidates were at the Hutchinson Holiday to discuss the issues involved in this year's Senate campaign. The only problem was that the incumbent himself, Sen. Robert Dole, never showed up. His

chair sits empty next to the Senate hopefuls: independent candidate Christine Campbell-Cline, front, Libertarian candidate Mark Kirk and Democrat Gloria O'Dell.

Dole had been stumping for GOP candidates in 11 states but that he said he didn't have time to come to Kansas for a forum.

Ms. O'Dell said she would vote to raise taxes on the wealthiest 2 percent of taxpayers to reduce the deficit and would consider closing the tax loopholes opened by capital-gains tax exemptions. She supported financing the improvement of the country's infrastructure with money saved in defense-budget cuts.

In a follow-up question, Ms. O'Dell was asked about the un-

employment caused by cuts in the nation's defense budget.

She said military expertise could be directed toward commercial industry. Workers now needed to build Stealth bombers could go to work for commercial aircraft builders.

The forum also featured an appearance by two representatives of Lead or Leave, a nonpartisan group asking candidates to pledge that they would only seek re-election in 1996 if the budget deficit were 50 percent lower than it is now. Of the four sen-

atorial candidates, only Ms. O'Dell has signed the pledge, organizer Jon Cowan said. About 70 candidates have made the pledge, and of them about 10 are incumbents, Cowan said.

"It's a huge pledge for them to make," Cowan said.

Many in the audience wore Ross Perot T-shirts, which were on sale at the door, along with buttons, bumper stickers and Perot's best-selling book.

Sitting in the front row was Jesse Hubbard of Paola, the original organizer for Perot in Kan-

sas. Now working as a UWSA volunteer, he kept track of the candidates' answers. Ms. O'Dell came out on top, in his opinion.

On the chair beside Hubbard was a pot containing crab grass. Live crab grass. In appreciation for his work, Perot workers from the Topeka office gave the him the potted grass as a symbol of the grass-roots Perot movement.

"They started us, now they can't kill us," Hubbard said. "We're ugly. Nobody wants us. They don't know what to do to us. They can't get rid of us."

Dole cuts Kansas in on disaster aid

By Tom Webb

Eagle Washington bureau

WASHINGTON — In the roll call of 1992 disasters, there was Hurricane Andrew that devastated Florida, Hurricane Iniki that hit Hawaii, Typhoon Omar that smashed Guam... and twin thunderstorms that hit north central Kansas.

Victims of those four natural disasters — but only those four — are in line for federal help from a \$75 million appropriations bill before Congress. If the Kansas disaster wasn't quite as famous as the other three, it did have something the others lacked: an advocate in Sen. Bob Dole.

Dole saw to it that \$300,000 of the aid was earmarked for two rural electrical cooperatives in north central Kansas. The money will enable the Jewell-Mitchell Co-op in Mankato and the NCK

raises hackles on Capitol Hill. Last week the chairman of the House Agriculture Committee, Kika de la Garza, was said to be furious that Dole managed to move winter wheat growers to the front of the disaster-aid line by earmarking \$100 million of \$750 million in farm disaster money solely for their relief.

The Texas Democrat, in a letter to the House Appropriations Committee, said all producers "should receive an equivalent amount of assistance relative to their losses" instead of receiving preferential treatment.

Riker said that in the past, winter wheat growers haven't always received their fair share of aid simply because the crop's fall-to-spring growing season differs from other crops. As a result, when disaster strikes, wheat farmers often fall at the end of the second phase of disaster aid, competing for whatever is left.

"It is really reversing an inequity that's been there for years and years," Riker said. "We've always been taking it on the chin... We were determined not to let that happen again."

Electrical Co-op in Belleville to replace "pretty much" every piece of damaged equipment and downed utility pole caused by back-to-back summer thunderstorms, said Jewell-Mitchell manager Jim Gouldie.

Well, maybe not every piece of equipment, Gouldie added.

"We found five (damaged) poles just the other day, and those aren't covered," he said.

Dole spokesman Walt Riker said Monday that the two co-ops sought help from the senator. Without federal help, he added, the co-ops would have had to raise electric rates to their rural customers, many of whom had their own storm damage. The storms hit north central Kansas on June 15 and July 7, with tornadoes and winds measured at 100 mph.

"But with federal help, they can receive assistance without any additional charges to the consumer," Riker said.

Dole's knack for earmarking disaster money for Kansas sometimes

Dole agrees to appear at 2 forums

The Associated Press
TOPEKA — Sen. Bob Dole plans to participate with his opponents in two October campaign forums sponsored by public-broadcasting stations, his campaign said Wednesday.

The announcement marks the first time Dole has agreed publicly to share a stage at an event. The first is Oct. 11, produced by High Plains Dole Public Radio, station KANZ-FM in Garden City. The second is Oct. 17, produced by television station KTWU in Topeka.

Officials at both stations said they hoped the events would have a statewide audience through broadcasts on other public stations in Kansas and Missouri.

Under their plans, four journalists will question the candidates.

Gloria O'Dell, the Democratic nominee, repeatedly criticized Dole for what she said was his reluctance to participate in forums, and she has agreed to participate in the two events. Libertarian Mark Kirk also has accepted the stations' invitations, but independent candidate Christina Campbell-Cline has not agreed to participate yet.

"I hope these debates will give Kansas voters the opportunity they deserve to find out where all of the candidates stand on the issues," Dole said in a statement.

The two events apparently are the only ones in which Dole plans to participate. Kathy Peterson, his campaign press secretary, did not say Dole would not accept others but added, "We think two is an excellent number."



Dole



O'Dell

Independent candidate: 'Senator Dole was right'

The Associated Press

Christina Campbell-Cline, an independent candidate for the U.S. Senate, says Bob Dole was correct when he said a forum in Hutchinson last Saturday was structured to favor Democrat Gloria O'Dell.

She complained in an interview that United We Stand, America, the organization of Ross Perot followers, had turned the event into "a vehicle for O'Dell" when it took a straw poll and endorsed the Democratic nominee.

"Senator Dole was right," Campbell-Cline said. "The United We Stand, America forum in Hutchin-

son was taken over by Democrats and used as a vehicle for O'Dell to bash Dole and to be sure her name was first in the poll."

She said the poll shouldn't have been taken. She said she commended United We Stand, America for staging the forum, but the poll had given the forum a partisan taint.

"I am a member of United We Stand, America and will work hard so that the public's view of this infant organization is not distorted," she said.

Lee Stone, a spokesman for United We Stand, America in Topeka, said the organization believes the forum was "entirely fair."

Dole proves generous with PAC money

BARRY MASSEY

The Associated Press

Senate Republican Leader Bob Dole is busy on two campaign fronts this year.

He's not only running for re-election in Kansas, but also is campaigning in other states on behalf of Republican congressional candidates. But Dole is giving far more than his time. He's handing out money as well.

The Kansas political action committee, Campaign America, has contributed about \$242,000 to 55 Republican House and Senate candidates from 1991 through the end of July, according to records filed with the Federal Election Commission.

Dole's PAC has given the maximum amount, \$10,000, to 11 Senate candidates.

Campaign America, Dole said, is supporting GOP candidates in races "where I think we've got a chance."

"We're going to use it to help Republican candidates, primarily U.S. Senate candidates, some House races where we've been asked specifically and some of the races in the state of Kansas for the state Senate and the state House of Representatives."

In addition to the contributions to congress-

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ional candidates, Campaign America has given about \$85,000 to state GOP organizations and state office candidates across the country. Of that, nearly \$60,000 went to state legislative candidates and GOP groups in Kansas, FEC records show.

Since the Republican National Convention in mid-August, Dole has campaigned in Kansas and traveled to 11 other states to campaign for Senate candidates: Oklahoma, Arkansas, Ohio, Minnesota, North Dakota, South Dakota, Indiana, Iowa, Illinois, North Carolina and South Carolina. Dole says he hopes to make campaign appearances for more congressional candidates before Election Day.

In South Dakota, Dole appeared at two fundraisers and a farm rally in late August for Charlene Haar, a Republican running against

Democratic Sen. Thomas Daschle.

"He was an enormous asset to us," Lon Anderson, campaign manager for Haar, said of Dole.

"He was a boost to us in our media coverage. He was a boost to us in our fund raising. It just raised the stature of the campaign to have the minority leader of the United States Senate for you."

Campaign America has given \$5,000 to Haar campaign.

Dole's PAC, formed in 1979, is separate from his re-election campaign committee and is the senator's vehicle for party-building activities.

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PAC, in addition to making campaign contributions, can pay for Dole's own political travels across the country. That helps him in building a network of supporters and contacts.

Since 1991, Campaign America has raised about \$992,000 and spent almost \$1.2 million. Dole's PAC had cash reserves of \$941,000 at the start of 1991, and reported a balance of \$678,931 at the end of July, the latest figures available.

Among so-called leadership PACs — those affiliated with members of Congress — Campaign America traditionally has been a top fund-raiser and contributor.

During the last campaign cycle, 1989-90, Campaign America contributed more money to federal office candidates than any other so-called leadership PAC operated by a member of Congress — roughly \$300,000. The Effective Government Committee, the PAC of House Majority Leader Richard Gephardt, D-Mo., was next with contributions of \$252,000.

This election year, Campaign America's work could prove to be particularly important to Dole's own political future. Twenty Democratic-held seats are up for grabs and Republicans are defending 15 seats, including Dole's in Kansas.