

# Comedian Dole rolls with the punch lines

By Jake Thompson and Scott Canon



**'People tend to listen to you closer if you can make them laugh. It has a special power.'**

— Sen. Bob Dole

As Jay Leno launched into his "Tonight Show" monologue Thursday night, he suddenly stopped and complained that his jokes about President Clinton seemed "awful mean."

"Oh, look, it's Dole who's writing them," the comedian said, grinning.

Sure enough, as the camera panned to the audience, there stood Senate Minority Leader Bob Dole hefting a big white cue card, wearing a big play-along smile.

The late-night TV appearance underscores the Kansan's dual role as the Senate's king of comedy and a favorite target for comics, cartoonists and satirists.

Throughout his career, Dole has proved that in the rough-and-tumble battles of politics, few weapons work as well as a laugh. While his repertoire poses no threat to the likes of Leno or Cosby, his quips regularly are capable of deflating mere Democrats.

His is a comedy with a partisan cause, one that has been especially effective as he takes on the role of national counterpoint to President Clinton.

"People tend to listen to you closer if you can make them laugh," Dole said. "It has a special power."

The key, he said, comes in preparation. Most of his material he writes himself or dreams up on the spot. For special occasions, like the annual Gridiron Dinner in Washington in March, he turns to professional help. Dole was named "one of the funniest speakers" by The New York Times after hearing Landon Parvis, President Reagan's joke writer.

But for the most part, the

laughs are the product of his own work or that of one of his Senate staffers.

"You've got to get up and read the morning papers," Dole said. "It has to be current to keep people interested."

But when you're Clinton's foil, the man credited with killing the president's job stimulus package, the jokes will sometimes be on you.

As such as he dishes out those wry, cynical, often self-effacing one-liners, so do the professional humorists:

Liberal columnist Donald Kaul has taken regular pokes at Dole. He has likened Dole to the Sir Mordred of Clinton's Camelot. And he has said casting Dole as

the hero of deficit reduction is "like going to a Star Wars movie and seeing Darth Vader get the girl."

Political cartoonist Pat Oliphant has compared Dole to Waco cult leader David Koresh, depicting him as the sinister leader of the "Branch Bobians."

And comedian and actor Dan Aykroyd recently imitated Dole in a Saturday Night Live skit — a show-opening act that made fun of the senator's disabled right arm.

Robert Makinson, director of the Comedy Writers Association in New York City, agreed that Dole made excellent fodder for comedy.

"You take Bob Dole's funeralistic personality, exaggerate it, and you've got humor," Makinson said.

"I don't mind," Dole said Saturday. "You have to be able to take it. You have to be able to direct it at yourself."

It depends, however, on the teller. Dole did not take it kindly when Clinton poked fun at him for trying to secure "\$2 million" from the federal government for a

Wichita boathouse. No such amount was involved. In that instance, Dole did mind and fired off angry press releases chiding Clinton.

In the end, though, he softened, and he and Clinton issued a joint letter making light of the confrontation.

Among those counting on nightly laughs from references to Dole's seemingly dark demeanor is Leno. He has compared Dole to killer bees and suggested that the Kansan has been so aggressive he should be checked for rabies.

After Clinton's brother Roger got into a fight with a fan, Leno said, "Boy, that Bob Dole doesn't know when to quit."

In a telephone interview Friday from his office in Burbank, Calif., Leno acknowledged that he walks a fine line when he takes on a public figure such as Dole.

"The real trick to doing jokes about people is I never call into question someone's integrity or character," Leno said. "You do jokes about a political view and you satirize. I mean, if he's tough with Clinton, then the joke should make him 10 times as tough."

# Dole works way to top of GOP ladder

By VIC OSTROWIDZKI



File photo

WASHINGTON — He's like "Jurassic Park" — he's all over the place. He's swapped cracks with Jay Leno and it only seems that he's on every Sunday TV talk show.

He even reached the pop culture pinnacle of being satirized on "Saturday Night Live" with actor Dan Aykroyd portraying him at his combative best.

He's Senate Minority Leader Bob Dole, Mr. Republican, leader of the loyal opposition and the titular head of his party now that the White House is in Democratic hands.

While other national Republican leaders lay low, waiting for an opening to the next election, Dole travels the country raising money for the party, criticizing President Clinton and wrapping up current issues in acerbic one-liners.

A sampling of GOP figures — including some obvious rivals — last week separately praised Dole for his national leadership. They specifically cited his ability to keep the 44 Senate Republicans united for a disciplined and successful filibuster that killed Clinton's economic stimulus program.

Some oddsmakers, peering over-the-horizon, speculate that Dole is shaping up to run for the Republican presidential nomination in 1996.

Friends and foes alike already are raising questions about his advancing age and questionable health.

**Bob Dole may be putting himself in a position to win the GOP's presidential nomination in 1996.**

Dole will be 73 years old when America next votes for a president. By comparison, Ronald Reagan was 69 when he was first elected and 73 when he won his second term.

Dole has battled and apparently defeated prostate cancer. He speaks frequently on the need for regular physical examinations for men over 50 and the importance of early detec-

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# Charities, political groups pad Dole's assets with gifts

By BARRY MASSEY

WASHINGTON — If the gifts continue to flow, Senate Republican Leader Bob Dole could soon have enough crystal figurines and bronze statues to start his own art gallery.

According to a financial statement released Friday, charitable and political groups gave Dole more than \$2,500 in gifts last year. Dole accepted a \$1,700 Steuben crystal flag from the Javits Foundation. The Kansan also received a \$250 crystal globe from a prostate research group, a \$375 bronze bull from a Republican group in Arizona and a \$250 bronze statue from a children's foundation.

The gifts, because they were given as awards or mementos for public service, were exempt from an ethics rule prohibiting gifts in excess of \$250.

Almost every year, Dole and his wife, Elizabeth, receive gifts of crystal figurines. In 1991, for example, Dole was given a Tiffany crystal eagle.

Sen. Nancy Kassebaum, R-Kan., reported no gifts, no speaking fees and no expense-paid travel last year.

Dole, traditionally one of the more popular speakers in the Senate, earned \$44,100 in fees for three dozen speeches and one editorial article in 1992, but all of the money went to charities.

Ethics rules prohibited senators from keeping honoraria for personal uses after Aug. 13, 1991, but they can continue to make speeches and give the fees to charity.

## Wife earns more

Although Dole had a busy speech schedule last year, his wife earned far more money as a speaker.

Elizabeth Dole, president of the American Red Cross, delivered 16 speeches for \$328,000. For example, she received \$60,000 from the Dayton Hudson Corp., which operates department stores, for three speeches in a two-week period.

She contributed her speech fees to a Red Cross fund for "at-risk youth," made a contribution to a retirement plan and paid speech writing expenses.

Overall, Dole listed assets valued from \$436,000 to \$991,000, mainly certificates of deposit and mutual funds, some of which were part of a Keogh plan. He had no liabilities.

Dole had unearned income, mostly interest and dividends on his investments, from \$36,900 to \$90,100. The senator reported receiving a state income tax refund of \$11,156.

Elizabeth Dole reported assets worth up to \$5 million, including an office building in suburban Kansas City valued from \$500,000 to \$1 million. She had liabilities of up to \$600,000, including a mortgage on the Overland Park, Kan., office building.

Kassebaum listed assets worth from \$1.5 million to \$3.7 million. That included stock holdings valued at \$588,000 to \$1.5 million, commercial real estate in Wichita from \$500,000 to nearly \$1.3 million and an interest in ranch land in Morris and Geary counties worth from \$250,000 to

## Kansas' senators

### BOB DOLE, Republican

- Earned Income: \$160,996
- Honoraria, all donated to charity: \$64,100
- Major assets: Four certificates of deposit, each \$50,001-\$100,000.
- Major sources of unearned income: Dividends and interest on Keogh plan, \$9,300-\$21,500.
- Major liabilities: none.
- Gifts: \$2,575.

■ Narrative: Dole received a \$17,196 pension from the Army. The honoraria was for about three dozen speeches and one editorial article. The gifts included a \$1,700 Steuben crystal flag from the Javits Foundation. Dole also accepted a bronze bull valued at \$375 from a Republican group in Arizona, a \$250 bronze statue from a children's foundation and a \$250 crystal globe from a prostate research group. The gifts, because they were given as awards or mementos for public service, were exempt from an ethics rule prohibiting gifts in excess of \$250. Dole's wife, Elizabeth, president of the American Red Cross, had \$328,000 in speaking fees. She contributed the fees to a Red Cross fund for "at-risk youth," contributed to a retirement plan and paid speech-writing expenses. Elizabeth Dole reported assets worth up to \$5 million, including an office building in Kansas valued from \$500,000 to \$1 million.



### NANCY KASSEBAUM, Republican

- Earned Income: \$129,500
- Honoraria, all donated to charity: none.
- Major assets: Commercial real estate in Wichita, Kan., totaling \$500,000-\$1.25 million; ranch land in Kansas, \$250,000-\$600,000.
- Major sources of unearned income: Royalties from natural gas wells, \$15,001-\$50,000; interest from note on sale of Fort Collins, Colo. radio station, \$15,001-\$50,000.
- Major liabilities: Business loans of more than \$1.5 million; personal loan, \$100,001-\$250,000.
- Gifts: none.

■ Narrative: Kassebaum's assets included corporate stocks worth from almost \$590,000 to \$1.5 million. She had shares of Exxon, General Electric, Atlantic Richfield, and the V F Corp. each valued between \$100,000 and \$250,000.



\$600,000.

Another asset, worth up to \$100,000, was a scholarship fund for teachers that contains money from previous congressional pay increases and some campaign receipts.

She had liabilities potentially in excess of \$1.7 million. For example, Kassebaum had one business loan of "over \$1 million" from a Wichita, Kan., bank, but the reports do not provide a more specific amount.

Kassebaum had unearned income from \$60,700 to \$189,000, mostly rent from the ranch land, stock dividends, royalties from natural gas wells and interest on the scholarship fund and a note for the sale of a Fort Collins, Colo., radio station.

Dole reported expense-paid travel for himself and his wife on two trips that were part of his speaking.

The Pharmaceutical Manufacturers Association, for example, paid for air travel to West Palm Beach, Fla., and one night of lodging for the Doles so the senator could appear before the group. Three days later, the association paid for a return flight for the couple from Fort Lauderdale, Fla., to Washington.

The Doles have a condominium in nearby Bal Harbour, Fla.

On Valentine's Day last year, Dole spoke to the American Bankers Association, and the group paid to fly Elizabeth Dole from Atlanta to Fort Lauderdale and then provided a return flight for the couple to Washington.

While other national Republican leaders lay low, waiting for an opening to the next election, Dole travels the country raising money for the party, criticizing President Clinton and wrapping up current issues in acerbic one-liners.

A sampling of GOP figures — including some obvious rivals —

# Mississippi senator sees Dole as GOP frontrunner

The Associated Press

JACKSON, Miss. — Sen. Thad Cochran is convinced he already knows the name of at least one Republican stalwart who will be on the starting line for the 1996 presidential race — Senate Minority Leader Bob Dole.

"I don't know what his plans are going to be," Cochran, R-Miss., said of Dole. "He obviously is a candidate right now. He's doing everything a candidate would do. He's been all over the country campaigning for Republican candidates."

Cochran is a longtime supporter of the Kansas Republican. He supported Dole in the 1976 campaign for the GOP nomination for president, won by incumbent Gerald Ford. Ford picked Dole as his runningmate.

Dole was among the pack of candidates who tried for the

nomination in 1980, which ultimately went to Ronald Reagan, and made a short run for the nomination in 1988.

"I just see Dole building up himself in the eyes of Republicans everywhere," Cochran said in a telephone interview. "Dole is the Republican counter-force to Bill Clinton in the government nationally. As spokesman for the Republicans in the Senate, he has a full head of steam going for him."

Cochran said Dole campaigned extensively for Republican candidates in Texas, California and Mississippi, where Hayes Dent lost to Democrat Bennie Thompson.

Although Republicans lost congressional races in California and Mississippi, Cochran said the GOP candidates got big votes.

"People in California and Mis-

issippi will remember Dole was there, that Dole was willing to come down when others weren't," Cochran said.

Cochran, 55, is chairman of the Senate Republican Conference, which is the No. 3 leadership position among Senate Republicans. The state's other U.S. senator, fellow Republican Trent Lott, is secretary of the conference.

Dole, 69, has been Republican minority leader since 1986. He was majority leader when Republicans controlled the Senate 1984-86.

Cochran said former Congressman Jack Kemp was the talk of the 1992 Republican Convention in Houston, but little is heard from the former Bush administration official.

"He (Kemp) doesn't have anything to do right now ... not mak-

ing much news.

"Dole is out making speeches. He is galvanizing Republicans in the Senate, influencing legislation and using his power to kill parts of the Clinton program," Cochran said.

Cochran said he also is more convinced that Dole is thinking about 1996 because Dole is beginning to look at foreign issues.

Cochran said Dole is rising in stature and influence in the party. He said Dole is working closely with Republican party chairman Haley Barbour, a Mississippi native, even though Dole backed someone else for the job.

Cochran said Dole's credibility as a national leader is being aided by the problems in the Clinton administration.

"Anything with Clinton's name on it right now is destined for defeat," Cochran said.

**If his presidential ambitions again flare up, Dole would have to confront other questions. Some ask whether his Senate leadership can translate into a broader vision and whether he could unite a party divided by social and cultural issues that have caused trouble for other Republican candidates in the past.**

tion. He works at it, exercising on a treadmill in the Watergate apartment he owns with his wife, Elizabeth Hanford Dole, president of the American Red Cross.

If his presidential ambitions again flare up (he ran unsuccessfully for the nomination against Ronald Reagan and George Bush in 1980) Dole would have to confront other questions. Some ask whether his Senate leadership can translate into a broader vision and whether he could unite a party divided by social and cultural issues that have caused trouble for other Republican candidates in the past.

Ed Rollins, long-time Republican political guru, campaign manager

and consultant (except for a brief 1992 fling as manager of Ross Perot's independent presidential candidacy) sized up leading Republicans last week and declared: "Dole is the hottest — no one will challenge him as the frontrunner for several years."

Rollins named other prominent Republicans who are stirring the waters to check their chances for 1996: Sen. Phil Gramm, R-Texas, former defense secretary Dick Cheney, former education secretary Lamar Alexander; former drug czar William Bennett, Massachusetts Gov. William Weld and South Carolina Gov. Carroll A. Campbell Jr.

Former HUD secretary and member of Congress Jack Kemp is waiting until after the 1994 elections to make his intentions known, "which may be a mistake," said Rollins.

How about Dan Quayle? "If he runs in '96 and loses, it would end his career," Rollins said. His advice to Quayle: Do something else first, such as get elected governor of Indiana, and then try to come back.

Pat Buchanan? "I'm unsure he even wants it."

Bottom line: "It's not impossible for Dole to end up the nominee." Separately, both Kemp and Bennett praised Dole.

"Bob has done a terrific job and he is absolutely at the top of his game and performing at the world-class level," said Kemp referring to Dole's work in the Senate and as leading Republican critic of Clinton. Bennett described Dole as "a hot commodity" and credited him for

achieving GOP unity in the Senate, a phenomenon symbolized by the sight of liberal and independent Sen. Jim Jeffords of Vermont walking arm-in-arm with crusty conservative Sen. Jesse Helms of North Carolina.

For the record, Dole says he isn't thinking about the 1996 presidential sweepstakes. He says he can't plan beyond next year's congressional elections when he hopes Republicans capture enough Senate seats to make him the majority leader.

The possibilities are indeed threatening to Democrats, who now have a 56-44 edge in the Senate. Of the 34 seats up next year, Democrats must defend 22. Dole is savoring the prospect that Republicans could capture seven of those 22, putting them in the majority for the first time since 1986.

That's why, for now at least, Dole's battle cry is "Seven more in '94."