

The Pony Express ● 2

The Topeka Experience

One of the many wonderful things about journalism is that it allows you many once-in-a-lifetime opportunities (read: getting out of school frequently). Recently, Melody Vandergon and I decided to take one of these opportunities. Through many rerouted calls across the country, I finally managed to acquire two press passes for Bob Dole's presidential announcement at Topeka on April 10. We decided to attend the prayer breakfast at 7:30 a.m. and then cover the formal announcement at 9:30. This being organized, we waited for word on where to go when we got to Topeka.

My wonderful, self-sacrificial father volunteered to take Melody and I to Topeka. In order to arrive at the breakfast on time, we had to leave at 3:45 a.m.—right behind the band. This meant that I had to get up at 2:45, not something I do on a regular basis.

We departed on schedule on the coldest, rainiest, and most miserable night this year. About ten miles down I-70, we passed the first band bus, but were hard pressed to catch Dean and the activity bus. The next three hours remained sleepless for the two journalists. It was raining so hard the road couldn't be seen for a good part of the trip. We encountered every kind of rain, sleet, hail, and wind. I thought unhappily of the fact that Dole was scheduled to make his announcement on the steps of the Capital building—outside.

We arrived at Topeka around 6:30, where Melody and I were told by Dad that just because we were covering the breakfast as reporters didn't mean we actually got to eat anything. We bolted a fast-food breakfast at Hardee's and continued our journey.

We made it to the Ramada and looked around to get our press credentials. There seemed to be hundreds of reporters from various affiliations roaming around with press passes hanging from their necks. Supposedly, there was a room where Mel and I would be given those same little passes. There wasn't one visible. We asked a couple of frizzy blondes at the front desk and they told us to go down a hallway (in the direction of which they vaguely waved), turn left, and we would find it. After ten minutes of looking, we gave up. The announcer was beginning to introduce people. Melody and I informed the people at the doors of our dilemma, and they just let us in. I spotted several of my friends and classmates sitting at huge tables, languidly eating fresh fruit cups and muffins: "My dad went off to join them."

Almost immediately we spotted Elizabeth Dole smiling and shaking hands. We headed off in that direction and almost got to her before we were shoved aside by some cameramen. After several more attempts, we decided to stick with pictures for the moment.

The press stand was located near the side of the room. We managed to get a small space between two large cameras. I spotted several anchors from the Kansas City, Wichita, and Topeka areas that look familiar. Most look relatively bored. As the speaker began introducing people, more press came over to set up. Before long, we were forced to lower levels of the stand.

We remained there for the rest of the time. I took notes during Elizabeth Dole's speech, which was very inspirational. I was disgusted to see several reporters roaming around Dole's table in the middle of the opening prayer. Melody also discovered that if you want to truly tick off big, burly cameramen, just use a flash camera nearby while they are trying to tape something.

After everything at the Ramada was over, buses were waiting to take everyone to the ExpoCenter (the rally would be inside!) Melody and I decided to make one last attempt to get our credentials. We got the number of the press room and the hallway it was in. We found the main reason we couldn't find it in the first place was because it was on the ninth floor, in a teeny cubbyhole. The lady that met us there was extremely nice. She didn't even check our ID's and the letter we had. She just gave us the passes, a copy of Dole's speech, and sent us on our way.

In order to catch our bus, we sprinted to the elevator, through the lobby, and out the door. We got on a city bus and for the first time, relaxed.

When we reached the ExpoCenter, we headed for the press stand. We didn't even have to show our passes; we just slipped under the rope and joined the rest of the journalists. They had the names of the affiliations taped to the stand, and as we walked, I read these. I saw: CNN, UPI, NBC, CBS, C-Span, *The Washington Post*, *Time*, *Newsweek*, AP, USA, KOD, RNC, and every local TV station and newspaper possible. Mel and I took our position at the side, near the stairs. After our first experience, we defended our territory with death glares and a firm stance. For the most part, we were left alone, except for some people who sneaked in and tried to stand next to us with their little automatic cameras.

From up above, I spotted many familiar faces. We took a roll of pictures of the RHS band and the crowd. The place was filled with waving signs and cheering. The announcer had been urging them on by telling them of the people there. Among those he mentioned were Bill and Linda Graves, Nancy Kassebaum, and the Kansas Representatives. Graves and Kassebaum gave brief

by Erica Reisig

Right Makes Might

by C.J. Mahoney

California Congressman Bob Dornan's candidacy for the Republican nomination is perhaps the best example of how far to the right the political winds have shifted. Dornan, whose last bout with fame came earlier this year when he accused President Clinton of treason, says he is joining a field of candidates including Phil Gramm and Pat Buchanan because he doesn't feel that the "true" conservative views will be heard.

However, the candidacies of both Bob Dole and Arlen Specter also illustrate the battle between conservatives and moderates for control of the GOP. While Specter is waging an all-out war with what he terms the "intolerant" right, Dole has embraced this faction of the party.

Although Dole once sponsored the Brady Bill, he plans to run on an anti-gun-control platform in '96. In fact, earlier this year, Dole wrote in a letter to the National Rifle Association that he would make the repeal of the assault weapons ban a top legislative priority.

While Dole was an advocate of much of the civil rights legislation during the 1960's, he has recently called for a review of all affirmative action programs.

These tough stances coupled with Dole's long-time pro-life record will likely be very attractive to conservative voters who play an important role in the primary process.

On the other end of the spectrum is Russell's other presidential hopeful, Senator Arlen Specter. Specter seeks to convert the party to his brand of libertarian Republicanism. Specter, a pro-choice advocate, favors taking the pro-life plank out of the Republican party platform. Specter believes that by accommodating religious right, the Republicans will be seen as extremists and will give President Clinton his best chance for re-election.

When the candidates start giving speeches next year, their respective podiums will likely slide to the right of center. Let's hope they don't slide past the American people in the process.

Dole and Specter's Senior Wills and Prophecies Found

While the Pony Express staff was digging around in the archives of the school paper, they found the senior prophecy and will of Arlen Specter, and Bob Dole's senior will. We thought these might be of some interest.

Senior Prophecy

Arlen Specter, famous dietician, has formulated two astounding observations—first, paunch is food gone to waste, and second, one million women are overweight, those of course are round figures.

From the May 29, 1947 issue:

Senior Will

Arlen (Gee I'm pretty) Specter bequeaths three packages of grass seed, one curling iron, and two bottles of black dye, plus his own personal bible entitled "How To Be a Debater and Love Thyself Only" to that up-and-coming junior debater, Beverly Carlman.

From the May 23, 1941 issue:

Senior Will

Bob Dole, who used to be bashful but is rumored that after a certain blitzkrieg—oh! oh!—that might be gossip—anyway, he leaves all he feels he can spare in the first three chapters of his book, "How to Woo and Win" to his ardent admirer and follower, Bob Resley.

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tested by history, yet too often ignored in Washington. I intend to restore it.

In the last election, the American people sent an unmistakable message to Washington. With rare clarity, they reaffirmed their faith in themselves and a healthy amount of skepticism about government.

If we are trying to rein in government, we must have a President who is more than a clever apologist for the status quo. In 1992, Bill Clinton ran for president as a candidate pledged to prevent change at all cost.

We need a President who will do more than say "no" to every spending cut, "no" to every attempt to return power and money to our agenda and who will lead the fight for the fundamental change America chose last November. We need a President who will say "yes" to the American people, and that is the kind of President I intend to be.

And while on the subject of creating a government that will say "yes" to the American people, let me make one fundamental belief crystal clear: we can cut taxes and balance the budget. Middle-class families are forced to send too much of their hard-earned money to Washington. We should provide a tax credit for children and remove the marriage penalty to strengthen our families. And we should cut the capital gains tax to stimulate economic growth, create new jobs, and expand opportunity for all our people.

That is just the first step, not the last. We need a president committed to making our tax system lower, fairer, flatter, simpler—so that ordinary people like you and me could fill out our tax form without a lawyer or an accountant or both.

Balancing the budget will also be a top priority; we cannot continue mortgaging our children's future. We will give the President the line item veto and we will give the American people a Balanced Budget Amendment.

But that is only the beginning. Reining in the government means streamlining the entire Federal bureaucracy, getting its nose out of places the government just shouldn't be. We should work our way through the alphabet soup of government, asking this question: Is this program a basic function of limited government, or is it an example of how government has lost faith in the judgement of our people?

The best place to begin is with four of the most ineffective, burdensome, and meddlesome departments: Education, Housing and Urban Development, Energy, and Commerce. Together they spend more than \$74 billion per year and employ more than

74,000 workers.

Let's close down the Education Department and spend the money on our children, not bureaucracies and red tape; and let's implement school choice to return power to parents. HUD has become a cash cow for big city mayors and the well-connected. We should give housing vouchers to those who need them and get the government out of the landlord business altogether. Energy would function better as an agency within the Department of Defense. And more than half of what the Department of Commerce does has nothing to do with commerce or trade—duplicated by 71 other governmental departments, agencies, and offices.

And there are other questions we should ask. We spend hundreds of millions of dollars on the Endowments for the Arts and Humanities. Why is the Federal government in the culture business? In this explosion of the information age, why do we have a Corporation for Public Broadcasting?

There are a host of other areas that cry out for reform. I will be talking about them at greater length in the year ahead. Welfare is one. The Federal system has failed. Why are liberals in Washington so afraid to turn their welfare decision-making over to our governors and state legislatures? There is already considerable evidence that they can do much better.

Affirmative action is another Federal policy out of control. Discrimination is wrong, immoral. This is America. We should have a color-blind society. But fighting discrimination should never be used to divide Americans by race, ethnic background, or gender.

There is one area where the Federal government must work in partnership with our state and local governments—and that area is crime. Today, a criminal committing a serious crime has less than a ten percent chance of going to jail. And once in jail that criminal will serve only a fraction of his sentence.

We should put an end to parole for violent offenders. Put limits on the endless and often frivolous appeals clogging our courts. Remove teenagers who commit serious, violent crimes from juvenile courts and try them as adults. We should be more concerned with the rights of victims than the privileges of criminals. And we must rededicate ourselves to the war on drugs.

Finally, let me touch for a moment on America's place in the world. There is one responsibility only the Federal government has, and that is to protect our freedom. We must never be reluctant about our greatness or ashamed of our national strength.

We must stop placing the agenda of the United Nations before the interests of the United States. When we take our revolution to the White House in 1996, we will vow that American policies will be determined by us, not the United Nations. Let us remember that America has been the greatest force for good the world has ever known.

I was reminded of that on the 50th anniversary of D-Day last summer, when the eyes of the world were focused on the beaches of France. I was there and witnessed the emotion as memories came flooding back—memories of the heroism, the sacrifices and pain men and women suffered.

Before visiting France, I traveled to Northern Italy where I served in the 10th Mountain Division. While revisiting the battle sites, I thought about why we had been sent there, about the America of our youth, the America we were risking our lives to protect, and about our hopes for the generations who would follow us. And then I thought about the America we live in now—an America still great and still the beacon of freedom around the world, but an America that is headed in the wrong direction.

Standing there gazing across those peaceful fields I thought of why it is critical to have a president who knows what made America great, who knows what has been sacrificed to keep us free, and who would do all in his power to lead America back to her place in the sun.

My friends, I have the experience. I've been tested, tested in many ways. I am not afraid to lead, and I know the way. Let us rein in our government to set the spirit of the American people free. Let us renew our moral convictions and strengthen our families by returning to fundamental values. Together, let us reassert our rightful place as a great nation.

We should do it for ourselves—we owe it to our children. We must act to be worthy of the gift our ancestors sacrificed so much for: to ensure the next century will dawn on a new beginning of American greatness... prosperity... and freedom. Let us do it together. Let us begin today.

Thank you.

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