



Dole is swarmed by a crush of well-wishers, autograph seekers and journalists as he tries to make his way from his outdoor stage to a more secure room to wait for the evening's events.



In contrast to the swarm at Dole's tent, KOOD-TV videographer Scott Williams has Russell's other presidential candidate, Sen. Alan Specter, to himself for an interview.



Sen. Bob Dole acknowledges his supporters from the stage in the Hilton Coliseum as the candidates are introduced to the crowd. Next to Dole are California Gov. Pete Wilson, Texas Sen. Phil Gramm and Alan Keyes.

Photos by Kelly Presnell/Salina Journal

Fans find someone to like across political spectrum

► FROM PAGE A1

Barney Roberts, who organized a busload of 46 Dole supporters from the candidate's hometown of Russell, Kan., seemed overwhelmed by the hoopla. She has been a Dole supporter since he ran for Congress in 1960.

"It's really a thrill to be part of this," Roberts said.

There were seven busloads in all from Kansas. The homestate folks came from Salina, Concordia, Logan and other towns to vote for Dole.

But their trip — about eight hours — was minor compared to others. Anyone could vote in the straw poll — the cost was \$25 — and political junkies came from across the nation to participate.

The event — a fund-raiser first and a straw poll second — raised about \$250,000 for Iowa Republicans.

One man standing in line for lunch at the Buchanan tent said he spent 24 hours on a bus from Virginia.

Nearby were two Iowa couples who first met Buchanan on a recent farm tour. One of the couples, Ken and Maxine Buchanan, said they were distant relatives of the candidate. Their friend, Lyle Johnson, said the relationship had nothing to do with their support, however.

"I have a lot of relatives I wouldn't vote for," he said. He turned to a Dole supporter who wandered into the Buchanan tent. "You're in the next president's camp," he said. "Give Bob our

"Give Bob (Dole) our condolences. He's been leading us for 40 years and look at the mess we're in."

— Lyle Johnson, Pat Buchanan backer

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Johnson said it was more than the free food that attracted him to the Buchanan rally.

"I would have been here if he had served a stale cookie," the semi-retired farmer said. "He's the only man in the race for America. The rest are new-world Republicans. Buchanan wants to get us

out of all those trade agreements and the United Nations."

As he talked, a group of young men riding on a wagon pulled by a tractor cruised by and started shouting, "LUG-AR, LUG-AR, LUG-AR" to the crowd. Johnson was out of his seat in an instant.

"BUCHANAN. BUCHANAN. BUCHANAN," he yelled in response. Soon, Buchanan and Lugal supporters were involved in

an all-out shouting match.

On the other side of the coliseum, the shady side, things were much quieter and not nearly as festive. That was where Pennsylvania Sen. Arlen Specter and California Gov. Pete Wilson had their tents.

But it was there, in the small, sparsely-populated Specter tent, that the philosophical differences pulling at the Republican party were most apparent. Specter is a pro-choice candidate who was later jeered by the crowd inside the Hilton Coliseum as he spoke about less government interference in all places, including the bedroom. Specter, like Dole, is a product of Russell.

Nancy Norman of Des Moines, Iowa, said she and her husband

Keith Uhl, who works for the Specter campaign, are moderate Republicans. Norman is pro-choice and she also worries about the program cuts being made by Republicans in the U.S. House of Representatives.

"I'm free enterprise, but I also believe you need to provide some people with assets to buy into that system," she said.

Norman said she could not vote for Dole, Gramm or Buchanan.

"The Republican Party will survive one way or another, but I have to put my heart into a candidate," said Norman, who has been active in GOP politics for 23 years. "If one of them wins the nomination, then it's a whole new ballgame and I'll have to think about what I'm going to do."