

## GOP offers up old Dole, rightist Pat, for primary

**■ OUR OPINION:** The Republican Party doesn't have much of a presidential line-up

Will the real Pat Buchanan please stand up?

Four years ago Pat Buchanan went to the podium at the Republican Convention and proceeded to verbally whip affirmative action, gays and lesbians, and several other groups, organizations and institutions. His speech was so venomous, people were driven from the Republican Party in droves.

Buchanan came in only two percentage points behind Bob Dole in the GOP's presidential caucuses in Iowa on Monday, setting up what could turn out to be a neck-and-neck race for the party ticket.

The apparent closeness of this early race is the very thing that makes it a little scary.

Thanks to the short-term memory of many Americans, wolf-in-sheep's-clothing Buchanan could end up as our next president.

Lately, Buchanan has maintained a much more moderate persona, one that contrasts sharply with the Buchanan of four years ago. His shrill speech is gone; he sounds kinder and gentler, and Republicans are listening to him again.

It's not that Republicans have a whole lot of premium candidates to choose from in the first place.

Sour-faced Dole, a more-than-capable statesman and politician, has failed to connect with baby boomers and probably wouldn't be able to relate to "Generation X" even if Pepsi decided to put him in one of its "Be Young, Have Fun, Drink Pepsi" TV

commercials. Hmm. Wait a minute, we might have something there — slap some cool Rayban sunglasses on the man and, well, you never know.

Dole is brilliant and reasonable, but comes across as a grumpy old man who chases pesky teenagers off his property with a shout of anger and shotgun full of rock salt.

While Dole will easily harvest a major portion of the 55-and-older vote, his campaign will not see thousands of young Republicans rushing "Dole for President" headquarters to sign up as volunteers.

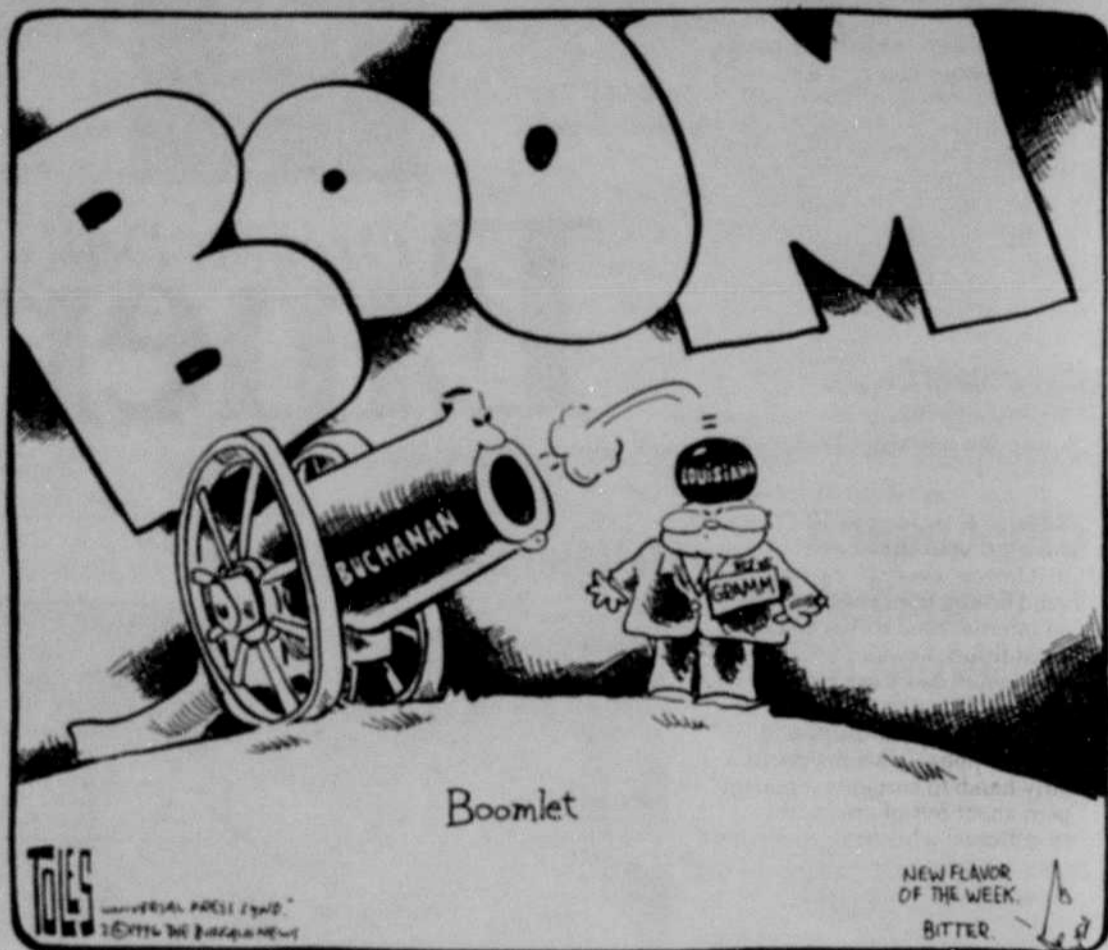
If he does win the presidency, what will his supporters chant? "Bob Dole, Bob Dole, He's our Prez, and he's real old?"

With Gramm dropping out on Tuesday and too-rich-to-relate-to-the-rest-of-us Steve Forbes hanging on for dear life at the back of the pack, it looks as if Dole and Buchanan will be slugging it out in the political ring for the next few months.

Buchanan will shuffle his feet and make circles around the slower-moving (but infinitely wiser) Dole. Buchanan will throw landing jabs and sucker punches, even a few below the belt, but Dole will hug the ropes, go straight to his corner at the end of each round, and play rope-a-dope the entire match.

Just before the May primary, Dole will come out of his corner completely renewed with some strategies and bandages from his trainers. With a strong "right" hook, Dole will send Buchanan crashing to the canvas.

We can only hope Pat stays down for the entire count.



## Don't wait for a holiday to express love

Was it good for you, too? A romantic dinner by candlelight? Moonlit stroll along the river? Midnight champagne in the hot tub? Red roses and white chocolate?

Or did you spend the evening at home watching *Live from Lincoln Center* by yourself?

Happy Valentine's Day. Because people who call themselves my friends have accused me of writing a series of political diatribes, and because they claim they enjoyed the "Romantic Getaways" guide I wrote for the Valentine's Day supplement (*ODE*, Feb. 9), and because they think I can't write a warm and fuzzy column, I'm writing my first (and probably last) warm and fuzzy column.

The epidemic of Valentine ads for flowers and chocolates and cards — a seemingly endless array of ways to demonstrate affection for sweethearts — got me thinking about the times in my life when I've felt most loved. You know the old saw that the best things in life are free? I sat on my patio this morning, flipping through my catalog of memories, trying to pick out some of the best.

If you couldn't afford the deluxe overnight with candlelight, or if you couldn't spring for the dozen red roses, listen up. The inexpensive (or free) ways to say "I love you" are often the most memorable, and just because Valentine's Day is history doesn't mean it's too late.

When my son Daniel was about 9 years old, we camped out on a windy ridge in eastern Oregon's Blue Mountains.

I returned to camp from a horseback-scouting trip to find the dishes washed, the firewood split and stacked, the lanterns refilled and a fire laid in the stove. Nailed to one of the poles supporting the kitchen tarp was a paper plate with a goofy drawing of something with wings. Daniel had scrawled on it, "Mommy, Mommy, the camp fairy came!"

I still have that paper plate.

When my kids were in grade school, I bought each of them a little, blank book. I filled the books with photos and drawings and memorable trivia. Their favorite pages were the ones I called "The Day You Were Born," on which I wrote everything I could remember about each birthday.

The best example I've ever seen of this kind of gift was a scrapbook put together by the girlfriend of a University football player; she included photos, newspaper clippings, little University stickers and even frilly scraps of green and yellow pompoms.

This year for my birthday my mom sent me a box crowded with little packages. She evidently

went on a baking frenzy because I got assorted Ziploc bags of cookies, fudge wrapped in foil, two little tins of coffee cake and a pint jar of Mom's homemade soup. This collection of goodies, made especially for me, was more comforting and meant more to me than several hundred dollars' worth of birthday presents.

Some of my most cherished possessions are the little gifts my kids have made me. One family friend, a Danish goldsmith, helped my daughters put together earrings for me one year in exchange for their helping her with yard work.

Another friend, a skilled potter, helped Daniel make a candle holder for me; it says "To Mom, Love Danielson" on the bottom, and I've had it on my bathroom counter for years. Such gifts cost little or nothing, and often become prized keepsakes.

If you know someone with a kid or two, try to remember what it was like when you were young and broke. Helping someone make or buy or create a gift is appreciated twice!

Some of the most endearing and enduring gifts are the ones you don't make or buy. Time spent together can create cherished and lasting memories that are worth more than any other gift.

One of my favorites is also a favorite of my son Daniel. I'd been thinking that a little one-on-one time would be good for both of us, so I planned a mother-son overnight fishing trip. We loaded up the tent and sleeping bags and fishing gear and picnic basket and drove up to Anthony Lake.

Now I've been out on probably five or six thousand fishing trips, but they all pale in comparison. We laughed and talked and goofed off, shared fried fish and spuds and coffee by the camp fire, and kept a running count of the mosquitoes lined up on our hands while we fished.

We had water fights and told jokes. I think I spent six bucks on gas, but the memories are priceless. If you're feeling a little let down now that the Cavalcade of Romance is over, just think for a minute about the Nearest and Dearest in your life.

Whether it's your lover or your mom, your best friend or your neighbor, ask yourself what you could do to really say "I love you."

Mend his shirt or take out her trash. Bake a cake. Wash her car. Type his term paper. Write your dad a letter, and tell him everything you remember about one of your favorite days when you were a punkin. Send your mom a card and tell her thanks.

It's not too late for a Valentine, and it's never too soon to say "I love you."

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