

This Old Man Is 'Young and Fresh'

U-Turn Takes Dole to Brewery as Alexander Talks Pork in Iowa

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If Robert J. Dole's schedulers had only ended the afternoon at Top of the Tree Baking Co., the picture that would have gone out to the world from the candidate's first day back in New Hampshire would have shown Dole surrounded by apple pies.

But the staff slated one more stop. It was down the road at Nutfield Brewing Co., another up-and-coming young firm with which Dole would want to be identified, but one whose prize product did not go down easy.

It's called Old Man Ale.

When Dole's New Hampshire staff learned that their 72-year-old candidate would be surrounded by cameras and that label, the stop at Nutfield was abruptly canceled.

Hours later it was restored, when higher powers recognized that the only thing worse than being photographed by reminders of the age issue is being seen trying to avoid it.

"Any symbolism there, Senator?" reporters called out, again and again, after Dole held aloft a brown bottle of Old Man in what by then had become the most stilted photo-op since the Senate majority leader climbed onto a treadmill in what only appeared to be his underwear.

"None that I know of," Dole replied. "I'm looking good."

The beer, which he sampled in the other room, Dole declared "young and fresh." He added with a game smile that he felt that way too.

"It's not named for him. It's named for the Old Man of the Mountain," said Nutfield brewer Mike McDonald, naming the rock formation so identified with New Hampshire that its profile appears on state road signs.

Still, McDonald said the brewery was well aware how delicate its hearty ale might be to the Dole campaign. "We brought it up ourselves," he said. "It's a campaign year, and everybody knows the senator's not as young as a lot of other people."

Only after a Dole advance team actually visited the brewery was the stop called off, however. McDonald said that when he got to work Tuesday morning he learned Dole was no longer coming. A half-hour later the visit was back on, McDonald said.

"You know, he looks good for his age," said Windham resident Paul Cantin, watching the Kansas Republican wade through a media crush that for once not only had the feel of a too-successful kegger, but

also a hint of the smell.

In person Dole almost always looks younger than he did giving his party's reply to the State of the Union address, but age remains an issue here. The assessment of Steve Lombardi of Salem is a common one: "I like him as a guy, I guess. As a person. I think he's too old."

"It's not his biggest asset," said Maurice Moynihan, 79, smiling as he sat in the front row at Dole's apple pie factory appearance. Beside him, wife Bea reported that, as a GOP ward captain in Manchester, she has heard a lot of talk about **Steve Forbes** and his pro-



Senate Majority Leader Robert J. Dole (R-Kan.), 72, holds a bottle of Old Man Ale while campaigning in New Hampshire for presidential nomination.

posal to scrap the federal tax code in favor of a 17 percent flat tax.

"Time will tell," she said. "It's a little early."

Dole agreed.

"It's like a new restaurant," he said, lending one more gustatorial reference to the afternoon. "Everyone rushes down to see what they're serving. And after a few weeks they complain about the gravy."

But as philosophical as he tried to be today about his situation, Dole must have longed for Lamar Alexander's venue: a convention of hog farmers meeting in Des Moines.

Not that everything went easily for the former Tennessee governor. Members of the Iowa Pork Producers Association convention were none too happy with cuts congressional Republicans have proposed in

farm programs and wanted to know just what would the would-be president do if he were in charge. "Some of these cutbacks are actually hurting us," said Doug Berry, a hog farmer from Holstein, Iowa,

Other farmers argued that the federal government should actually boost spending to help pork producers with the costs of building lagoons and manure catchers that meet environmental standards.

In a comment designed to appeal to his audience while keeping a foot in the camp of those advocating deep budget cuts, Alexander said: "If there is room in this farm bill and a balanced budget as part of this farm program transition to help hog producers to have more environmentally sound practices, that's a good idea. I think senators have to decide whether there is room in a balanced budget for such a program."

While Dole was drinking beer and Alexander was talking pork, Sen. **Richard G. Lugar** (Ind.), in a hairnet, was sampling sweets at candy factory in Sioux City, Iowa, before flying back to Washington to lead the fight to pass farm legislation in the Senate.

Staff writer Thomas B. Edsall in Iowa contributed to this report.