

Our Man Hoppe

Inaugurals Solve
All Your Problems

Arthur Hoppe

Washington

I ASKED my Uncle Manny to cover the Inauguration for me because he's such a good reporter. What he lacks in accuracy he more than makes up in capturing the flavor of historic events. Following is his report.

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IT WAS beautiful. Enough to tug the strings of your heart.

Now it's a cold, cloudy day and my feet are freezing, but finally the President comes on the steps of the Capitol. Only he's got to stand there for a couple of minutes because nobody recognizes him.

"Hey, that's the President," says an old-timer. "I'd know him anywhere." And everybody says, "The President? You got to be kidding."

But it's him, all right. He's hardly changed a bit since the last time he appeared in public. Only naturally, he's a lot older. I'm glad he can make it.

So we have a lot of prayers for the good Lord to give him wisdom and courage, which is a fine thing to say about his first four years. We got a black Protestant preacher, a Jewish rabbi, a Greek Orthodox archbishop and a Catholic cardinal. And I'm a little worried the Buddhists are going to be offended.

But the very minute the President finishes swearing to be loyal to America, which is a good idea, the heavens part and a golden shaft of sunlight smacks him dab between the eyes. You wouldn't believe it.

Then there's this whirring noise. It's an Army helicopter covered all over with white feathers and it's got an olive branch in its forward gun port. The belly opens and Henry Kissinger leans down and hands the President a beautiful Treaty of

Everlasting Peace. Which he accepts modestly.

Just then a fork of lightning strikes, one bolt hitting the Washington Post and the other the Washington Monument, where 100,000 misguided demonstrators are knocked to their senses.

The President makes a little speech. He says it's been a great four years for us and the next four's going to be even better. On account of now that we've got Everlasting Peace, we can all work harder.

"Ask not what your country can do for you," he says, "Ask rather, 'What's in it for me?'"

So the Congress invites him to lunch, him and his taster. And after that he and the vice president go parade down Pennsylvania avenue, each of them standing up in their limousines with their heads sticking through the roofs.

Only about half-way along there's a bunch of young demonstrators the lighting missed. They're against violence. To show how much they're against violence they start heaving oranges and apples at the President.

The President keeps smiling, sort of, and stands right up there to show his valor. In the car behind, the vice president ducks right down there to show his discretion. What a team we've got.

The demonstrators are so ashamed they all march off to find jobs, of which there aren't any that I know of.

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SO YOU CAN SEE where nobody's got any problems any more except me. I been thinking about how the President said that from here on, everybody's got to stand on their own two feet and not expect any handouts from the government.

Will you call my broker and tell him to sell my Lockheed stock?