

Support Our Needy President



Arthur Hoppe

GOOD MORNING, housewives and other shut-ins. It's time for another chapter of "Tooth and Nail" — the heart-warming story of a poor Whittier lad named Dick and his lifelong struggle upward from poverty to at last achieve, through determination, grit and the IRS, poverty.

As we join Dick today, he and his loyal wife, Pat, are in the breakfast nook of their little white house. Pat's reading the paper. Dick looks glum.

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PAT: Listen to this, dear. We made the New York Times' list.

Dick (brightening): Ten Best Dressed? Ten Most Admired?

Pat: No, dear. The 100 Neediest Families.

Dick: Oh. Say, I wonder why Bebe hasn't returned my calls? I know he'll help. I'll give him a ring. (He does.) Hello, Bebe, old buddy? This is Dick. No, Dick. D as in Denver, I as in Idaho, C as in . . . Hello? Hello? We've been cut off. Are you sure we paid the phone bill, Pat?

Pat: I'm sorry, dear. Your check bounced. But somebody named Studs Terkel called for an interview.

Dick: Well, I'm glad we're not forgotten. Shhh! Look dignified. Here they come. (A group of tourists file in and out, chattering and snapping pictures.) I'm charging them \$5 a head for the full tour now, plus 50 cents a frame if they'd care to go bowling.

Pat: I noticed that new neon sign over the South Portico: "White House Bowl." How's business?

Dick: Terrible. I wish a head of state would visit and take us out to dinner. No offense, but that dish you made last night was awful.

Pat: It's hard preparing adequate

meals with food stamps.

Dick: So that's what those were. Remind me to increase the quality of our food stamp program. For some reason, my heart goes out to the needy these days.

Pat: You're always thinking of others, dear. But couldn't you just get us a loan to tide us over?

Dick: I applied at The Friendly Loan Company. But I had to tell them all our property was mortgaged to the hilt, the IRS has garnished my salary, and I didn't have a permanent address.

Pat: What did they say?

Dick: They said they weren't that friendly. But don't worry. We'll be on easy street after the garage sale.

Pat: The garage sale?

Dick (rubbing his hands): Yes, it's from 1 to 4 p.m. on the South Lawn. There'll be all that furniture they wouldn't let me deduct. And those papers they wouldn't let me write off. And my private tape collection!

Pat: Oh, dear, not those tapes you love so much!

Dick (nobly): We all have to make sacrifices. Besides, there are not many left. And, confidentially, they're not in very good condition. But if they'll buy that 18-minute gap, they'll buy anything.

Pat (tearfully): To think we should be reduced to selling your precious tapes. I can't help feeling Wilbur Mills was right that your financial difficulties will force you to resign.

Dick (stoutly): Never! Wilbur Mills was dead wrong for two reasons. First, as I have said many times, the job needs me.

Pat: Oh, I'm so proud of your courage in adversity. What's the second reason, dear?

Dick (gloomily): Frankly, I need the job.