

# A very sweet inaugural indeed



**BARB GUY**

“The Other Inaugural,” a poster in our living room, is a memento from my time in Washington, DC. It’s a print by Garry Trudeau, creator of *Doonesbury*, dated Jan. 21, 1985.

It was already 6 years old in 1991 when I paid a dollar for it at a church rummage sale near where I was setting up an apartment in Washington’s Dupont Circle.

I was first able to vote for president in 1980. Over the ensuing years, my choice for president of the United States has failed to be elected about two-thirds of the time. That’s part of why I love the poster. It was created to publicize “The Other Inaugural,” an inauguration night party in D.C. for those who were in no mood to celebrate the re-election of Ronald Reagan. It was an underdog party.

By the time I chose the poster at the Quaker meetinghouse yard sale, I was 0 for 3 on presidential elections, the pinched and grumpy George Herbert Walker Bush having been elected in 1988. I never even took a tour of the White House while I lived there. In its 11th consecutive year of Republican rule, it seemed like an enemy bunker to me.

My grievances regarding the list of presidents I had not voted for were many when I bought the poster. Since then, only one president has been added, but the grievance list has stretched beyond all fathomable proportions due to George W. Bush. In fact, if written in long-hand, the Dubya complaints section probably would stretch past the Hubble telescope.

I mention all this because now I am feeling a little lost. We won. We’re the top dogs, not the underdogs. It’s unfamiliar territory for people like me. We’re not big gloaters, most of us, we just wanted someone wise and careful, someone unembarrassing and up to the job. For once we got what we wanted, and we don’t really know what to do.

We’re like the tiny, 10-pound dog who discovers a five-pound ham lying in the yard. It’s too good to

be true. It’s more than we know what to do with. It’s unsettling.

It’s been a tough eight years. But now, there’s hope. A lot of people worked and volunteered and canvassed and phoned and donated and wished and prayed and it worked! After what George Bush put this country through -- put the world through -- you’d think a little *schadenfreude* would be forgiven.

But no. Obama’s too decent a man for that. He does not do the pompous end-zone dance. The night he was elected he took time to acknowledge the people who did not vote for him. That’s very cool. None of those presidents for whom I did not vote ever made a point of telling me that they would be my president, too.

Still, somewhere in the midst of this inaugural fervor, the giddy delight that so many of us are feeling, there are some Americans hunkering down, having their underdog party. I guess I feel some empathy for them.

But I’m going to relish this moment. On Tuesday, a fool will tumble off his bike and roll into the prickly brush near Crawford, Texas. A new, dignified man will take the stage, a man so reasonable and classy as

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to likely be disappointed by the uncharitable way I just described his predecessor.

President Barack Hussein Obama is going to teach all of us overly partisan dogs some new tricks, like mutual respect and collaboration, concepts capable of diminishing the sharp bite of being "other."

This inaugural is very, very sweet indeed.

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*BARB GUY is a regular contributor to these pages. © Salt Lake Tribune.*