



## WE THE PEOPLE

BY DAVID ADLER, *The Alturas Institute*

### Heeding Lincoln on His Birthday: Let Us Re-Adopt the Declaration of Independence and Its Principles

Celebrations this week of Abraham Lincoln's birthday should include his advice in an October 16, 1854, speech in Peoria, Illinois, at a juncture not dissimilar from the circumstances that torment our nation today. Polarization and division, violence, voter intimidation and murder, and the spreading racism, exacerbated by enactment of the Kansas-Nebraska Act, which permitted the extension of slavery, set the stage for Lincoln to emerge from retirement in politics to condemn the new law and declare slavery immoral. He characterized it as "monstrous injustice" that betrayed the foundational principles of the United States. Lincoln's "Peoria Speech," marked his historic ascension as a national leader and, ultimately, as a giant whose voice speaks to us across the ages.

Lincoln, perhaps the most gifted of America's rhetoricians and a literary artist whose style strikes the "mystic cords of memory," unlike any other president, or politician, for that matter, appealed to his audience in terms that resonate in our time. He said, "Let us re-adopt the Declaration of Independence, and—with it—the practices and policy which harmonize with it." He appealed to all regions of the nation and added, "let all lovers of liberty everywhere, join in the great and good work. If we do this, we shall not only have saved the Union, but shall have so saved it, as to make and to keep it forever worthy of the saving." As readers know, Lincoln's presidency was devoted to saving the Union, in a form "worthy of the saving." His words in Peoria were but prologue to his epilogue.

For Lincoln, the majesty of the Declaration of Independence, which he called the "sheet iron of the republic," lay in the self-evident proposition that "all men are created equal." This was, for him, the foundation stone of America and the bedrock of his own moral and political philosophy. He saw in this first principle a pledge of future actions, a statement of aspirations beyond achievement in the Constitutional Convention, to be fulfilled upon the occasion of America's political maturity. Lincoln's conviction on this score, influenced by his embrace of the Golden Rule, was manifested in his own declaration: "as I would not be a slave, so I would not be a master.

This expresses my idea of democracy." His opposition to slavery, preeminently a function of his moral code, was illuminated by the calculus of logic and his commitment to the principles and values of democracy.

Lincoln's plea for re-contracting American society in accordance with the Declaration of Independence as the fundamental charter of the nation, invoked a high standard for the salvation of the nation. If "lovers of liberty" pledge to restore the principles of the Declaration, beginning with remembrance and renewal of the self-evident principle that "all men are created equal," then America will have saved the "Union" in a manner "forever worthy of the saving." Such a union could not be worthy of the saving if it remained "half slave and half free." Lincoln's moral compass, which taught him to identify and pursue what he discerned to be right required, consistent with the Golden Rule, respect for the rights of others, which was a necessary predicate to protect our own rights. This distillation represented a commitment to democratic governance— "government of the people, by the people, for the people."

Lincoln's system of thought, built upon the pillars of the Golden Rule and the principle that "all men are created equal," shunned Machiavellian values that embraced the philosophy of might makes right, the ends justify the means and other facets of autocratic rule. A nation "worthy of saving," he believed, should be grounded in the principles of the Declaration, not one governed by acts of brute force that ignored equal justice. Born and raised in an antislavery ethos in Kentucky and Indiana and influenced by the transcendentalism of American writers such as Emerson and Thoreau, Lincoln believed in the convictions of conscience. His conscience taught him that all men "are created equal," and throughout his career, guided by principles of pragmatism that, occasionally, for reasons of war, tempered his conscience, he sought to make that self-evident principle a living reality for the nation. Though Lincoln was unsuccessful in making it the conscience of the nation in his lifetime, his words, wisdom and efforts speak to us today and inspire Americans to seek it in ours.

## BACK IN THE DAY

Underwood

COMPILED BY SHELLY WALLACE  
from the Files of the Central McLean News Journal

### 20 years ago, Feb. 2006

After 23 years of clearing and patching area highways, Leonard Krantz is looking forward to retirement. Krantz has been with the North Dakota Department of Transportation for 23 years, working out of the section shop at Underwood.

Prior to working for the DOT, he worked for the Farmers Oil Company in Underwood doing bulk delivery.

The Underwood Civic Club is sponsoring a design the banner contest and offering \$100 in merchant bucks to the winning design. The banners will be 3x7 feet and will hang from the light poles of the Underwood Business District.

Mike Lehmann, the area service representative for Otter Tail Power Company, recently presented The Family Store in Underwood with a \$2,500 grant from Otter Tail.

Erika Bruestle and Denise Leingang, both of Pick City, were among the winter 2005 graduates from the University of North Dakota, Grand Forks.

Tiffany Fischer, Underwood, and Megan Dockter, Riverdale, were named to the U of Mary's Dean's list for the 2005 fall semester.

McLean County Treasurer-Auditor Les Korgel said after being down slightly in January, February put the county budget back on track.

The Underwood boys Comets snared a pair of wins on the hard court this past week. The Comets won a key district game Tuesday, topping Garrison 56-53, then went on to hold off Grant County 55-42 Thursday.

The Comet girls clinched a Region 5 berth Monday night, knocking off Garrison in a loser out game 55-46.

Drug forfeiture money seized in McLean County will go to help fund the Dakota Children's Advocacy Center at Medcenter One in Bismarck. When a child has been a victim of sexual or physical abuse, the interview process is extremely important. The deputies take the child to Medcenter One and the child is interviewed by specialists. State's attorney, Ladd Erickson, requested that the commission approve spending \$1,000 of the forfeiture money to help fund the advocacy center.

### 30 years ago, Feb. 1996

The price of the Underwood News is going up. Beginning Feb. 29, the newsstand price will be 50 cents a copy. According to the most recent survey by the North Dakota Newspaper Association, the average single copy price for weekly newspapers in North Dakota is 54 cents. The survey shows 36 newspapers charge 50 cents; 22 charge more than 50 cents; 19 papers charge less than 50 cents.

Terri and Doug Wolf are the new owners of the Hot Stuff Pizzeria in Under-

wood. They purchased the shop from Gene and Linda Hummel, who will continue to operate Heaven's Scent Floral.

The Club 83 will open in the former Frontier Lounge building. Ken Stadick, Laurel Miller, Eric Benson and Robert Benson formed the B.E.M.R.S. Corporation to open the business

### 40 years ago, Feb. 1986

The Underwood Golf Course would become a strip mine under a Falkirk Mining proposal recommended for approval by the McLean County Planning and Zoning Commission. The golf course was owned by a group of stockholders who sold the course to the city. The land was traded to Falkirk in exchange for reclaimed land where a new golf course will be developed with funds from the sale of the mineral rights.

The Max Cossacks made it a clean sweep, the District 21 fifth seeded recorded its third straight upset, defeating the Underwood Comets 68-64 to take home the 1986 District 21 crown. Underwood cheerleaders, Becky Brockel, Michelle Hummel, Denise Rasmussen and Holly Stadick, won the spirit award. Shawn Auck and Clint Erhardt were named to the All-District team from Underwood, along with Riverdale's Pat Friedt and Dayton Combs.

### 50 years ago, Feb. 1976

Whitty Mees of Bismarck approached the city commission Monday evening to annex land he owns south of town into the corporate city limits. Mees purchased the Repnow Second Addition last month from TeRoy Repnow. The property borders the city on the south of the Repnow First Edition.

Bismarck radio personality Jack Fisher has sent a letter to the county commissioners asking to appear before them soon to discuss further plans for construction of a pizza restaurant at Falkirk.

Mr. and Mrs. Perfecto Hernandez of Riverdale are very proud of their boxing sons, Ferd and Art, who were named to the Midwest Boxing Hall of Fame.

Ardella Rae Malnourie and Marshall P. Bratz are engaged to be married. Miss Malnourie is a 1975 Underwood High School graduate and is employed at Prairieview Nursing Home. Mr. Bratz is a 1974 graduate of Underwood High School and is attending North Dakota State University at Fargo.

Miss Renee Lutz is a member of the freshman nursing class of Bismarck Hospital. She and other freshmen at the Bismarck Hospital School of Nursing were honored at a Recognition Ceremony, which acknowledged the class achievement during the first term.

### 60 years ago, Feb. 1966

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