



# THE STUMP

A PUBLICATION OF THE LINCOLN-DOUGLAS SOCIETY

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SUMMER 2023

## MUSIC ON DEBATE SQUARE

The summer of 2023 kicks off with a schedule filled with great music. Each evening's event starts at 6:30 pm. The Chair of Music On Debate Square (MODS), Tim Connors, has announced the following line-up and dates:

July 13<sup>th</sup> – HCC Big Band with Bill Petersen

July 20<sup>th</sup> – Kendra Masters

Aug. 3<sup>rd</sup> – Funkatude

Aug. 10<sup>th</sup> – Pretzel City Strummers

Aug. 17<sup>th</sup> – Southpaw Stance

Aug. 24 – John Hartman Jazz Alliance

Union Dairy has promised to develop some specials for the series.

Please bring lawn chairs and/or blankets.

## NEW FORMAT FOR ANNUAL EVENT

It is common for stories and accounts of the lives of famous historical figures to contain a mixture of both factual information as well as a fair number of myths and misconceptions. In addition to containing true details about past United States presidents, Hollywood films have also tended to create myths about their lives. Movies about Abraham Lincoln were no exception.

Join us on Monday, August 28<sup>th</sup> at 5:30 pm at the Freeport Public Library as Dr. Ed Finch and Alan Wenzel use John Ford's film, *Young Mr. Lincoln*, starring Henry Fonda, to identify some of the truths regarding Lincoln's early years as well as some misconceptions. A screening of the film, followed with a discussion of key moments in the film by Ed and Alan will help us separate fact from fiction.

## ANNUAL MEETING

The Lincoln-Douglas Society's annual meeting will be held on Monday, August 28, 2023 at 5:00 pm at Freeport Public Library.

## DEBATE SQUARE ENDOWMENT FUND

Progress is being made in raising funds for the Society's Endowment Fund thanks to the generosity of so many. The Community Foundation of Northern Illinois has selected the Lincoln-Douglas Society for a 1-to-3 match. For every three dollars the Society places in our endowment fund CFNIL will match it with one dollar. This program runs until the end of 2023. If you have yet to contribute, or wish to enhance your contribution to help us take advantage of the matching funds, please send your contribution to the Society at Post Office Box 58, Freeport, IL 61032-0058.

The Stump is sporting a new look for 2023. Feedback is welcome.

# LINCOLN

A Review by Alan Wenzel

Over his career, director Steven Spielberg has made several notable historical dramas. After two successful WW II era movies, *Schindler's List* and *Saving Private Ryan*, Spielberg turned his attention to the Civil War and Abraham Lincoln with his 2012 film, *Lincoln*, starring Daniel Day-Lewis.

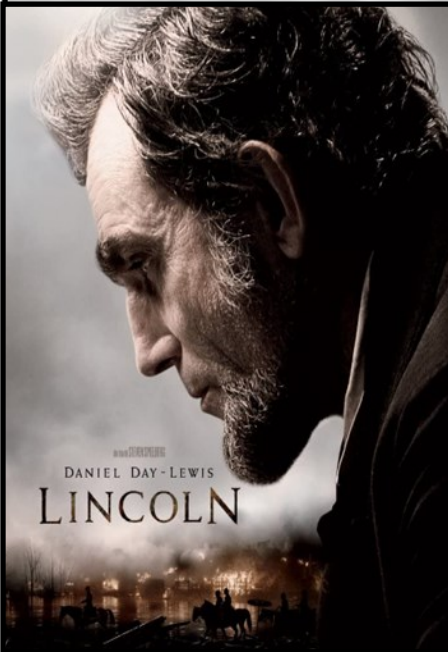
Based on Doris Kearns Goodwin's book *Team of Rivals: The Political Genius of Abraham Lincoln*, "Lincoln" recounts the political events during the last four months of Lincoln's life as he seeks to secure passage of the Thirteenth Amendment to permanently outlaw slavery and servitude.

While previous films about Lincoln from the 1930s and 1940s were often highly fictionalized as they presented mythical aspects of Lincoln, this screenplay by Tony Kushner closely follows actual historical events as it focuses on Lincoln's political prowess. Central to the movie's story are Lincoln's attempts, near the end of the war, to build a coalition of support for the Thirteenth Amendment to the Constitution. The President wished to ensure the end of slavery before the Supreme Court or the soon-to-be returning to the Union, Southern States, could nix the deal, so he worked to bring together radical Republicans, lame-duck Democrats, and border state conservatives to back the Amendment.

Lincoln used misdirection, a little deception, and some good old fashioned horse trading as he enlisted Secretary of State, William Seward, Republican Party co-founder, Preston Blair, and radical abolitionist, Thaddeus Stevens to the cause. Driving the urgency of reaching an agreement were rumors the Confederacy was seeking a peaceful end to the war on the condition that the amendment not be ratified. A subplot has Lincoln's son, Robert, enlisting in the Army to step out of his father's shadow and his mother, Mary Todd Lincoln, pleading with her husband to find a way to end the war before harm befalls their son.

Besides a compelling, suspenseful, captivating story, the film features an excellent ensemble of well-known actors. Arguably the best actor of his day, Daniel Day-Lewis follows the tradition of great actors (Raymond Massey, Henry Ford, ) portraying Lincoln on film. Day-Lewis's outstanding work in *Lincoln* garnered him an Academy Award®. Other wonderful performances were provided by Sally Field as Mary Todd Lincoln, Tommy Lee Jones as Stevens, and David Strathairn as Seward.

Spielberg's attention to detail was evident in his visual depiction of Washington, D.C. at the end of the war. The realistic, period-correct look and feel he gave the movie earned an Academy Award® for its production design. ~Continued on Page 3



The Lincoln-Douglas Society / PO Box 58, Freeport, IL 61032-0058

President: Nicole Bauer / Vice-President: Tim Connors / Treasurer: Mindy Borgmann / Secretary: Ed Finch // Board Members: Carole Dickerson, Mary Hartman, Ashley Huffines, Scott Leiser, Mickey Martin, Todd McKenna, Sally Noble, Michael Perry, Connie Sorn, Danario Thomas, Alan Wenzel.  
Ex Officio Members: Honorable Jodi Miler, Mayor, Nicole Haas, Greater Freeport Partnership

## 2023 SOKUP PROGRAM SCHEDULED

The biennial Richard F. Sokup Program will feature Freeport native John O'Connor presenting the one-person drama *Mr. Lincoln*, on Saturday, October 28<sup>th</sup> at 1:30 pm at Winneshiek Theatre. Written by Herbert Mitgang, the dramatization of Abraham Lincoln's life and times was premiered in August, 2013 at New Salem's Theatre in the Park.

Admission is **FREE OF CHARGE**, however, a free will offering will be solicited, with all funds going back into the Sokup Fund. Please do not call Winneshiek with questions. Call 815-975-7631.



John O'Connor is a graduate of Freeport's Aquin High School and the son of John and the late Shirley O'Connor of Freeport. He graduated from Loras College and the University of Illinois, Springfield.

A veteran actor, O'Connor's favorite roles include: Sky Masterson in *Guys and Dolls*; Daddy Warbucks in *Annie*; Captain Hook in *Peter Pan*; Frank Butler in *Annie Get Your Gun*; Adam Pontipee in *Seven Brides for Seven Brothers*; Bill Sykes in *Oliver!*; Callahan in *Legally Blonde: The Musical*; Lawrence Jamieson in *Dirty Rotten Scoundrels*; John Wilkes Booth in *Assassins*; Judas in *Jesus Christ Superstar*; and Willy Wonka in *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory*.

John is a political writer for The Associated Press centered in Springfield, IL.

*Mister Lincoln* is a 90 minute program with a single intermission. There will be a wine and hors d'oeuvre reception to greet O'Connor following his performance. Sokup was a life-time Freeporter, who regularly portrayed Stephen A. Douglas in programs across Illinois and the Nation.

## DEBATE SQUARE FLAG

Becky and Tim Connors have donated the American Flag currently flying over Debate Square. They are honoring their son Petty Officer Second Class Henry Connors, United States Navy, currently on active duty in Hawaii.

*Lincoln* Reviewed by Alan Wenzel ~Continued from Page 2

The film opened to wide critical acclaim. Lincoln scholar, Harold Holzer, who has been a past speaker at Lincoln-Douglas Society events, served as a consultant to the movie and praised the film while noting that there is "no shortage of small historical bloopers in the movie" in a piece for *The Daily Beast*. Historian Joshua M. Zeitz, wrote in *The Atlantic*, that *Lincoln* is not a perfect film, but it is an important film".

If you haven't yet seen this movie, put it on your list! You will be treated to a superb historical drama, political thriller, and moving biopic that will, once again, have you appreciating Lincoln's extraordinary character, insight, and determination as he led the United States through a most troubling time.

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P.O. Box 58  
FREEPORT, IL 61032-0058

## **GIVE A LINCOLN FOR DEBATE SQUARE**

returns as Union Dairy joins the Society in fund-raising for current needs at Debate Square. If you receive this newsletter, then you will soon receive ten (10) tickets via the US Mail. The tickets are \$5 each. If you decided to use them, or just want to donate, then send \$50 to the Society at Post Office Box 58, Freeport, IL 61032-0058. If you do not want to participate, then please discard the tickets. Purchased tickets expire at the end of October, 2023.

When presented at Union Dairy, the ticket is for a single-dip ice cream cone. Union Dairy has agreed to donate to the LDS \$3.00 for each ticket redeemed.

## **PRETZEL LITERARY FAIR**

The 3rd Annual Pretzel Literary Fair will be held on Saturday, July 8th from 10 am to 2 pm in the Art Park at the corner of Chicago Avenue and Douglas Street. Co-sponsored by the Lincoln-Douglas Society and Freeport Public Library, this year's event is being held in conjunction with the renewed Tutty Baker Days festival, which is the weekend of July 7-9 in downtown Freeport.

As before, the Pretzel Literary Fair will feature local and regional authors and illustrators offering their creative works for sale. The event also offers a good time to talk to a favorite author about her or his work.

The event is open to the public free of charge. Any writer or illustrator who has not been contacted, should email Dianne Ludwig at Freeport Public Library: [dludwig@freeportpubliclibrary.org](mailto:dludwig@freeportpubliclibrary.org).