



from your Executive Director

By Bryan E. Smith

TOI Executive Director

AS YOU CAN TELL from this month's cover, during the month of February we celebrate two holidays that have a lot of historical significance: Lincoln's Birthday on February 12 and President's Day on February 15.

I don't necessarily call myself a historian, but I do enjoy history, and it was always my favorite subject in school. Because I work in Springfield on a daily basis, I am constantly reminded of our 16th President Abraham Lincoln. Lincoln lived most of his life in Springfield. He and his family lived here prior to moving to the White House and he practiced law in Springfield from 1834-1852.

The Old State Capitol where Lincoln said, "a house divided against itself cannot stand" and—of course—Oak Ridge Cemetery where Lincoln was buried after his assassination in Washington, D.C. With all these reminders in Springfield, I cannot help but think about our 16th President each day.

Over sixteen years ago now, the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library and Museum opened to the public in Springfield. I remember attending the dedication ceremony where President George W. Bush spoke, and how excited I was to see it open.

As remarkable as he was, it took more than 125 years for Lincoln to get his own presidential library and museum. I have visited the museum on several occasions and TOI has held events there as part of our Annual Educational Conference



SUNDAY NIGHT PROGRAM of the 110th Annual Educational Conference in 2017, at the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Museum.

so that our attendees could enjoy it. The museum tells the story of President Lincoln from his birth in 1809 to his assassination in 1865. It is truly a fantastic museum.

I have also had the opportunity to visit several other presiden-

tial museums across the country, including George Washington's in Mount Vernon, VA—which really isn't his presidential museum but his home/plantation on the banks of the Potomac. It is a wonderful tribute to our very first President. A couple

of my other favorite presidential museums include the Truman Library and Museum in Independence, MO, and the Kennedy Library and Museum in Boston.

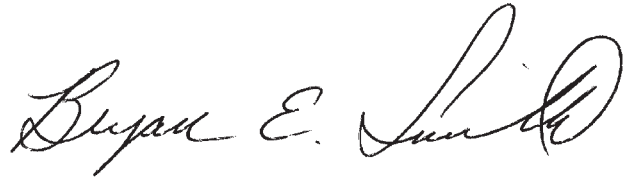
There is so much history and you can spend hours and hours try to take everything in. I have personally challenged myself to visit all of the presidential libraries and museums around this great country in my lifetime. I've hopefully got a few years left so I can most likely achieve that goal!

While I would challenge all of you to visit the various presidential museums around this great country, I'd also like to challenge you, as we look toward the new term of office that begins in May, to set a goal for yourself, and any new officials in your township, to attend an educational opportunity to learn more about your duties and responsibilities as a township official.

Planning for our educational opportunities have been on hold due to the COVID-19 Pandemic, but we are monitoring things closely and are hopeful that there will be a return to in-person events later this year. In the meantime, we have scheduled some webinars that give

you the easy opportunity to learn more without the need to travel. With this in mind, I wanted to challenge you to take advantage of one of these solid educational opportunities that will assist you in your role as a township official.

This is one challenge that will benefit not only you, but the residents you serve so well.



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