

FROM THE EDITOR

History, Legacy, and Lincoln



For several months, five or six days a week, I have driven into Washington, D.C., to deliver and pick up my 11-year-old son, Ben, who is acting in two plays produced by Ford's Theatre.

Amid the gridlock and general chaos caused by traffic—and parking—in our nation's capital, we talk about his day, the rehearsals, the performances, and increasingly about the theater's significance in our nation's history as the site of Abraham Lincoln's assassination.

As the 200th anniversary of Lincoln's birth approaches, it's impossible to go a day without some mention of our nation's 16th president and his continued influence on today's leaders, especially our new president, Barack Obama. And it's both appropriate and extremely timely that the new play my son is in, "The Heavens Are Hung in Black," is a chronicle of the most difficult year of Lincoln's presidency.

By now, you know how closely Obama's career path parallels Lincoln's. But only history will tell what our new president's legacy as a leader is, especially in the area of K-12 education.

This month's issue, which is being mailed the week of the inauguration, has a number of links—intentional and otherwise—to our new president. It

starts with "The Legal List," the results of *ASBJ's* survey of school attorneys on the top legal issues in education, on Page 16. (In case you didn't know, the link here is that Lincoln and Obama both were lawyers before they entered politics.)

On Page 26, Associate Editor Joetta Sack-Min's story, "What About NCLB?" examines the issues surrounding the rewriting of the No Child Left Behind Act as well as what will likely be altered in the landmark federal law. Finally, in "Dear Mr. President," a number of readers give advice to Obama about improving K-12 schools (Page 28).

Recently, on one of those rides back from D.C., my fifth-grader and I talked about Lincoln's leadership and why he is so popular today. I told him how Lincoln used powerful, yet subtle words and phrases to lead our nation through such difficult times.

As we drove on a street blocks from the White House, Ben saw a homeless man begging for money on the street. My son, who is playing Tad Lincoln on stage, visibly cringed.

"Daddy," he said in a voice that could break your heart, "we need someone like Lincoln now."

Until next month...

Glenn Cook, Editor-in-Chief