

President's Letter
Al Squire
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ABRAHAM LINCOLN'S THE TEN CANNOTS

1. You cannot bring about prosperity by discouraging thrift.
2. You cannot strengthen the weak by weakening the strong.
3. You cannot help little men by tearing down big men.
4. You cannot lift the wage earner by pulling down the wage payer.
5. You cannot help the poor by destroying the rich.
6. You cannot establish sound security on borrowed money.
7. You cannot further the brotherhood of man by inciting class hatred.
8. You cannot keep out of trouble by spending more than you earn.
9. You cannot build character and courage by destroying men's initiative and independence.
10. And you cannot help men permanently by doing for them what they can and should do for themselves.

Recently while waiting for our order at our favorite burrito place in Roswell, Linda and I came across a framed copy of "Lincoln's Ten Cannots." I was amazed that the sayings attributed to President Lincoln from over 150 years ago were still relevant to the political discussions of today. When I got home, I researched further and discovered the following story.

The "Ten Cannots" was originally written in 1916 by an immigrant from Hamburg, Germany by the name of William John Henry Boetcker (1873-1962). He became an ordained Presbyterian minister soon after his arrival in the U.S. as a young adult. He quickly gained attention as a motivational speaker, and it appears that he had a good grasp on the "American Dream" and how to motivate people to achieve their own goals and dreams. His original pamphlet, entitled "The Ten Cannots" was published in 1916 emphasizing freedom and responsibility for the individual for himself. The misattribution of the saying to Lincoln apparently stems from a leaflet published in 1942 by the Committee for Constitutional Government which had sayings from Lincoln as well as "The Ten Cannots" from Boetcker on the same flyer. Since that time "The Ten Cannots" have been often mistakenly attributed to Lincoln, most notably being quoted by Ronald Reagan during his address to the 1992 Republican National Convention in Houston.

The amazing thing about "The Ten Cannots," which was written in 1916, is that we are still talking about the same issues 100 years later and it appears that we are not making much real progress. Many of the "Cannots" are talking points (for one side or the other) in the current election cycle and will be discussed endlessly for the next 15 months. Perhaps the election of 2016 will finally make a difference.

Thanks to Bev, Kaye and Susan for taking on the responsibility of managing Dairy Producers of New Mexico so that the rest of us can take care of our own business.