

ILLINOIS INSITES

December 2000/January 2001

CHICAGO

Mayor Daley's Holiday Sport Fest 2000- December 29-31

- Warm up those muscles and throw on some sweat pants; it's sports time! Gear up the family and head over to McCormick Place in downtown Chicago. Get ready to participate in floor hockey and volleyball tournaments as well as kick ball, badminton and ping-pong games. There will be on-site clinics with players from the Chicago Bears, Chicago Bulls and Chicago White Sox. All ages are invited to this true family event during the holiday season. 312/744-3315

Ring In The New Year at Navy Pier- December 31- January 1

- Count down the final seconds of 2000 on Chicago's Navy Pier Ferris Wheel as 10 illuminated rings of light disappear one-by-one to mark the start of a New Year. The arrival of 2001 will be celebrated with an elaborate display of fireworks set to an exciting New Year's Eve soundtrack. The fun continues on January 1 with a full day of family activities including free ice-skating and live performances throughout the day at the family pavilion. 800/595-PIER

CHICAGOLAND

Botanical Garden's Festival of Lights and Flowers- November 24- December 31

- Be a part of the excitement in Glencoe as you stroll through the mystical winter wonderland featuring beautiful indoor gardens, Christmas carolers and a Teddy Bear Tea at the Chicago Botanic Garden. Roam the grounds to catch a glimpse of dozens of bright poinsettias and trimmed trees. Whether you're after fun and frolic or just simple R and R-- it's a perfect way to spread a winter weekend. 847/835-5440

Escape to Evanston for a weekend- As a vibrant community bordering Chicago and Lake Michigan, Evanston is the perfect backdrop for a culture and fun! Scope out Evanston's downtown area and explore the historic shopping hub featuring an array of fine shopping with more than 275 stores, businesses and restaurants. Take a break and retreat to Central Street where you're invited to linger among fresh flowers, movie theatres and coffee houses. The Evanston Art Center is known for its visuals and offers major exhibits of contemporary art throughout the year. Stay in one of Evanston's three hotels or two B & B's. To plan your weekend getaway, call an Illinois Travel Counselor at 1-800-2CONNECT or visit www.enjoyillinois.com.

Christmas Tours at Frank Lloyd Wright's Home- December 9,16

- Learn how one of America's most renowned architects celebrated the holiday season right here in Oak Park. Join the specially-trained junior interpreters as they give a detailed guided tour through the Frank Lloyd Wright Home, where victorian decorations reflect the Wright family's taste for the holidays at the turn of the century. 708/848-1976

It's the "Wright" Time and "Wright" Place To Get Away

Home to the world's largest collection of Wright-designed buildings, Oak Park and nearby River Forest are a virtual outdoor museum of modern architecture. Spend the entire day exploring famous architectural icons like the Unity Temple, a favorite among Wright's creations, or the Frank Lloyd Wright Prairie School National Historic District, with 25 of Wright's buildings. Enjoy Oak Park's beautiful streetscapes as you stroll by a wide variety of specialty shops on Lake Street or East Harrison, known for its several art galleries. While you're there, stay at one of Oak Park's two hotels or four B & B's. To plan your weekend getaway, call an Illinois Travel Counselor at 1-800-2CONNECT or visit www.enjoyillinois.com.

Polar Express and Yuletide Celebration- December 16-17

- Hop aboard the Polar Express at the Blackberry Farm-Pioneer Village in Aurora's Fox Valley Park District. Experience an old-fashioned Christmas as you leave the train station and begin your voyage around this charming village. Visit the century-and-half-old log cabin and learn about old-world Christmas celebrations. Check out the Victorian House where children and adults are invited to make a Victorian ornament to take home. Storytellers will be on hand in the one-room school building to share the delightful story of the "Polar Express." 630/892-1550

Astounding Aurora- Deeply rooted in Native American history, Aurora is home to several museums, quaint historical districts and some of the state's finest antique shopping. If you're looking for all that glitters in gold, experience a taste of real-life glamour at the Hollywood Casino, where you can take in a show at the Paramount Arts Center or try your luck at riverboat gaming. While you're there,

stay at one of Aurora's five hotels. To plan your weekend getaway, call an Illinois Travel Counselor at 1-800-2CONNECT or visit www.enjoyillinois.com.

Castles and Crowns- January 26-28

- Look on as professional ice sculptors chisel their way to first place at this year's Fourth Annual Ice Sculpture Festival in Downers Grove. Downtown businesses will feature ice sculptures depicting some of Disney's most loved characters including Cinderella, Sleeping Beauty and Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs. Enjoy free trolley rides, face painting, and even the chance to meet one of these Disney characters as they stroll up and down Main Street. 800/934-0615

Get Down In Downers Grove- If shopping is on your to-do list for the holiday season, then you've hit the jackpot! From Oak Brook Shopping Center, with its internationally recognized stores, to unique shops and upscale boutiques in historic downtown, Downers Grove can satisfy any shopper's wish list. After your shopping adventure, get some fresh air outdoors at the Morton Arboretum which features more than 25 miles of trails to explore. Stay at one of the five hotels in Downers Grove. To plan your weekend getaway, call an Illinois travel Counselor at 1-800-2CONNECT or visit www.enjoyillinois.com.

NORTHERN

One-Hundred Years Of Christmas- December 9-10

- Relive Christmas past in Woodstock as you stroll through the McHenry County Historical Society's fabulous display of century-old Christmas style vignettes. Each colorful display, the oldest dating back to the late 1800s, depicts the clothing style, tree decorations and holiday decor of that period. Partake in this delightful afternoon of holiday music, snacks, and historical Christmas celebrations.

815/923-2267

Walking in Woodstock- Woodstock was the setting for the 1993 Bill Murray movie "Groundhog Day" and is home to the famous Woodstock Opera House. Built in 1890, this historic performance hall marks the site where well-known actors Paul Newman and Orson Wells started their acting careers. While you're there, be sure to check out the Illinois Railway Museum in nearby Union, the largest railroad museum in the US and recently voted "Illinois Museum of the Year." While you're there, stay in one of Woodstock's three hotels. To plan your weekend getaway, call an Illinois Travel Counselor at 1-800-2CONNECT or visit www.enjoyillinois.com.

Luminaria Trolley Tour- December 16

- Thousands of candles will be aglow in Galena as the heated Luminaria Trolley Tour begins its voyage from the center of town and travels over hillsides, down to the riverfront levee and past the footbridge steps of the city park. Decorated

homes and illuminated sidewalks add to the magic of the evening. Keep warm at the tour's end as you enjoy a cup of hot chocolate. 815/777-1248

Getaway to Galena- With more than 85 percent of the city listed in the National Register of Historic Places, Galena's architecture is a must-see featuring several architectural styles including Queen Anne, Greek Revival, Italianate and Grand Victorian Era Mansions. Visit the Old Market House Historic Site, which is more than 150 years old and depicts the town in 1850. Plan to see the home of Ulysses S. Grant, Civil War hero and 18th President of the United States. Check out a few of the 19 art galleries in town inspired by this picture-perfect town's natural beauty. Relax country-style in one of Galena's nine B & B's. To plan your weekend getaway, call an Illinois Travel Counselor at 1-800-2CONNECT or visit www.enjoyillinois.com.

Winterfest- January 12-14

- Bundle up and bring the entire family to Le-Aqua-Na State Park in Lena for the annual festival. Try your hand at a variety of events like candlelight cross-country skiing, ice skating, ice sculpture demonstrations and ice fishing. Don't miss your chance to take a sleigh ride or enter in the "Anything Goes" sled contest. Warm those taste buds at the soup-tasting party and the early morning pancake breakfast. 815/369-4282

Fun & Frolic in Freeport- Round out your weekend in this town most known for hosting the Lincoln-Douglas Debates of 1858. Be sure to visit the quaint Jane Addams museum, a social-work pioneer who founded Chicago's Hull House. Walk to the highest point of the state along the Stephenson-Black Hawk Trail and take advantage of more than 13 scenic miles of beauty and nature. Stay at one of Freeport's two B & B's or five hotels. To plan your weekend getaway, call an Illinois Travel Counselor at 1-800-2CONNECT or visit www.enjoyillinois.com.

Winter Wilderness Weekend- January 20-21

- Spend the weekend wilderness-style and explore the majestic bluffs and canyons of Starved Rock State Park in Utica. Park guides will navigate you through spectacular icefalls and canyons formed by melting glacial water and erosion. Try some cross-country skiing or do some hiking on your own on some of the 13 miles of well-marked trails. 815/667-4096

Relax in Rockford- Visit Rockford, the state's second-largest city, filled with many recreational and cultural opportunities. Whether you're looking for costume jewelry, antique collectables or decorative arts, Rockford has it all with two large antique malls and 60 individual shops. While you're there, check out some night entertainment at the New American Theater, recognized by the *Chicago Tribune* as a jewel. Don't miss the cultural hub of the community, the Riverfront Museum Park, home to six museums and associations including the Discovery Center Museum and the Rockford Symphony Orchestra. Stay at one of

Rockford's 10 hotels or two B & B's. To plan your weekend getaway, call an Illinois Travel Counselor at 1-800-2CONNECT or visit www.enjoyillinois.com.

CENTRAL

Once Upon A Holiday- December 2-31

- The entire family is invited to attend this month-long holiday extravaganza in downtown Bloomington! The kick-off weekend features a Saturday morning holiday parade, which is just one of the many great events planned for the month's festivities. Take a carriage ride through town and plan to see the holiday art exhibit. Enjoy live musical entertainment and interact with strolling Christmas carolers and character actors as they make their way through town. Children of all ages are invited to attend the DePriest Puppet Show. 800/433-8226

The Best of Bloomington-Normal- Located in the heart of Central Illinois, Bloomington-Normal is home to four universities and represents a friendly community rich in cultural heritage with a wide variety of attractions to see and explore. Stop by the McLean County Museum of History where you can learn about prairie life in the 1860s or the Eyestone One-Room Schoolhouse as it was in 1899-- full of wooden desks and even a coal stove. Delve into a little exercise while en route to more history as you walk or cross-country ski on the Constitution Trail with more than 14 miles of scenic trails. While you're there, stay at one of the many hotels or three B & B's. To plan your weekend getaway, call an Illinois Travel Counselor at 1-800-2CONNECT or visit www.enjoyillinois.com.

Christmas In Mr. Lincoln's Neighborhood- December 2- January 1

- Spend the entire day roaming the charming four-block historic neighborhood of Abraham Lincoln located at 8th and Jackson in Springfield. Enjoy Victorian Christmas door decorations mirroring holiday fashion from the 1860s. Open to the public, the Lincoln Home Historic Site will feature indoor and outdoor holiday decorations. 217/492-4241 x221

Explore Sparkling Springfield- As Illinois' state capitol and Abraham Lincoln's longtime residence, Springfield offers weekend getaways featuring a variety of sightseeing activities. Begin your trip with a walking tour of the town, where you can explore Frank Lloyd Wright's Dana Thomas House complete with original furniture and art glass doors. Be dazzled as you stroll by the Old State Capitol decorated with hundreds of luminaries in celebration of its 182nd birthday. Enjoy a natural indoor setting at the Washington Park Botanical Garden, a domed

conservatory filled with tropical foliage, gardens and indoor floral displays. While you're there, stay at one of Springfield's many hotels and B & B's. To plan your weekend getaway, call an Illinois Travel Counselor at 1-800-2CONNECT or visit www.enjoyillinois.com.

Greater Decatur Chorale- January 12-14 and January 19-21

- As the title of this year's production says, "Open A New Window" and be carried away by the sound of beautiful music from an 80-voice adult chorus at the Civic Center Theatre in downtown Decatur. Accompanied by an instrumental three-piece combo and guest fiddler, this musical group incorporates show tunes and humor into their performance, ensuring each spectator an enchanting evening of special music. 217/422-8535

Be Dazzled in Decatur- Located at the bend of the Sangamon River, Decatur was the original stomping ground for the Great Western Railroad and today remains full of history and character. During your stay, take a stroll through the secluded paths and rocky terraces of the Anna Bethel Fisher Rock Gardens in Nelson Park. Schedule time to see the large collection of Wedgwood and Tiffany fine glass art at Birks Museum on the Millikin University campus. And if you love jazz, don't miss the Central Illinois Jazz Festival celebrating their 25th anniversary of fabulous jazz, food, fun and dancing. While you're there, stay at one of Decatur's several hotels or B & B's. To plan your weekend getaway, call an Illinois Travel Counselor at 1-800-2CONNECT or visit www.enjoyillinois.com.

Winter Blues Weekend- January 13-14

- Shake those winter blues and shop 'til you drop at the Amishland's Country Village conveniently located behind the Tuscola Factory Shops. Don't miss the after-Christmas sales in this quaint shopping village featuring the products of the Amish and Illinois artisans. Stop by the General Store for homemade foods and the Amish Furniture Store with the state's largest collection of Amish furniture. 800/500-3705

Celebrate In Champaign-Urbana- Whether it's fine art at the Krannert Art Museum located on the University of Illinois' campus or a science lesson at The William M. Staerkel Planetarium, the second largest planetarium in Illinois, you're sure to have a great time while learning new things. If you are a music lover, the John Phillip Sousa Library and Museum will let you catch a rare glimpse of Sousa's personal music instruments and period band uniforms. Spend a memorable evening at one of the five local theatres, featuring all types of

performances including dance, opera and Vaudeville. While you're there, stay at one of the numerous hotels or five B & B's. To plan your weekend getaway, call an Illinois Travel Counselor at 1-800-2CONNECT or visit www.enjoyillinois.com.

WESTERN

An Irish Christmas at the Flanagan House- December 9-10

- Venture back in time with Louisa May Alcott's "Little Women" at the Flanagan House to see 19th century style vignettes modeled after women's fashions of this period. Fabulously decorated for the holiday season, this home is located on Peoria's East Bluff overlooking the Illinois River and was owned by John C. Flanagan, an early frontier in the Peoria community. Nibble on holiday cookies and listen to holiday music performed by local musicians. 309/674-1921

Picture Perfect Peoria- Full of charm and located on the banks of the Illinois River, Peoria has everything you need to make your weekend trip fun and memorable! Dash over to the Park District and take part in a variety of events including the Holiday Shop and Stroll, productions by the Community Children's Theatre and Candlelight Walks. Visit the Illinois Antique Center on the Riverfront featuring more than 250 antique dealers and hundreds of showcases. For the sports enthusiast, try the Peoria Civic Center Arena where you can see the Peoria Rivermen take the ice or check out the Illinois Central College men's basketball team as they take the court. Stay in style at the Hotel Pere Marquette or one of the many other hotels in Peoria. To plan your weekend getaway, call an Illinois Travel Counselor at 1-800-2CONNECT or visit www.enjoyillinois.com.

Quincy Preserves Christmas Candlelight Tour- December 10

- Bundle up tight as you begin this evening of candlelight fun at the Newcomb-Stillwell Mansion, home to the Quincy Museum in the town's historical district. Listen to the Quincy University Singers' delightful Christmas melodies as you tour five of Quincy's most delightful historical homes decorated in full holiday splendor. Take a stroll through Quincy's historical district as its beautifully illuminated amidst dozens of candlelight sidewalks.
217/223-1000

Quaint Quincy- Explore Quincy's large variety of architectural styles and three major historical districts: the downtown, east end historic district and Quincy's German village. Celebrate Valentine's Day a bit early and visit the Lincoln-Douglas Museum Valentine Museum or stop by Villa Kathrine and experience this stunning example of Mediterranean architecture in the Midwest. With an active Society of Fine Arts, Quincy offers its visitors a variety of theatrical productions throughout the winter season. Get away from it all in one of

Quincy's hotels or B & B's. To plan your weekend getaway, call an Illinois travel Counselor at 1-800-2CONNECT or visit www.enjoyillinois.com.

Bald Eagle Days- January 6-7

- Don't forget those cameras and binoculars and get set to join in the eagle watching fun at the Quad Cities Expo Center in Rock Island! Get up-close and personal at live eagle presentations or attend one of the several wildlife seminars. This two-day exposition also features birds of prey shows and environmental exhibits. 309/788-5912

The Quintessential Quad Cities- From nightly entertainment on a riverboat casino to action-filled family adventure, the Quad Cities, also known as "Midwest magic on the Mississippi River," offers a little bit of everything. Take a trip to the second oldest U.S. Army Museum in the nation, the Rock Island Arsenal Museum's Confederate Cemetery and prison camp. Try out one of the many interactive exhibits at the John Deere Pavillion or explore the Family Museum of Art and Science. Don't forget to check out "The District" in historic downtown Rock Island featuring dinner theatres, coffee shops and even a local improv comedy club. Plan to stay in one of the Quad Cities' many fine hotels or three B & B's. To plan your weekend getaway, call an Illinois Travel Counselor at 1-800-2CONNECT or visit www.enjoyillinois.com.

Julotta- December 25

- Partake in this special evening of fellowship at the Bishop Hill Colony Church located in Bishop Hill featuring a candlelight nondenominational service spoken in both English and Swedish. Coffee and traditional Swedish rusks will be served directly following the service. 309/927-3345

Beautiful Bishop Hill- Often referred to as the "Utopia on the Prairie," Bishop Hill is recognized both nationally and internationally for its unique blend of American and Swedish cultures. Spend the entire weekend exploring this century-and-a-half old settlement. Check out the Bishop Hill Museum with its remarkable collection of paintings depicting local scenes throughout the colony. Take time to scope out the Colony Hotel which was built to lodge traveling salesmen, journalists and immigrants passing through the area. If you love antiques, pottery and collectables, be sure to stop by one of the several specialty shops located in town. Stay in one of the area's B & B's. To plan your weekend getaway, call an Illinois travel Counselor at 1-800-2CONNECT or visit www.enjoyillinois.com.

20th Anniversary Crossroads International Fair- January 27

Miss your cut of the Camembert or your side of Weinerschnitzle? Then take a trip to Knox College's Center For Fine Arts and mingle among 40 different booths representing countries from all corners of the world. It's your opportunity to take

a trip around the world without leaving Galesburg. Check out a show featuring native dancers or one of the various displays of cultural crafts. 309/343-2485

Gallivanting Around Galesburg- History, tradition and culture combine for an ideal getaway weekend in Galesburg. Begin your journey at the Galesburg Civic Art Center whose permanent collection includes more than 125 pieces and hosts more than 10 exhibits annually. Stop by a must-see performance by the Knox-Galesburg Symphony housed in the Orpheum Theatre, originally constructed in 1916 as a Vaudeville house and landmark to performances by the Marx Brothers and George Burns. Don't miss your chance to peek at The Carl Sandburg Historic Site, home to Carl Sandburg a two-time Pulitzer winner and Lincoln Biographer. Plan to stay in one of Galesburg's three B & B's. To plan your weekend getaway, call an Illinois Travel Counselor at 1-800-2CONNECT or visit www.enjoyillinois.com.

SOUTHERN

Christmastown USA- December 1-2

- There's a little something for everyone in Carlyle this holiday season. Enjoy a candlelight tour of area homes, a holiday cantata and a tree lighting ceremony. The kids are sure to love the Christmas parade, cookie walk and Santa's Secret Shop. 618/594-4015

Consider Centralia- Centrally located in the heart of Southern Illinois, Centralia has access to some of the finest outdoor recreation in Illinois. Both Lake Centralia and Raccoon Lake offer excellent ice fishing and just a few miles away, you'll find Carlyle Lake, the largest man-made lake in Illinois, ideal for winter wildlife viewing and hunting adventures. Centralia also is home to sixth-largest carillon in the world, standing more than 164 feet tall. With more than 65 bells and the heaviest bell weighing 61,000 pounds, this is one of the heaviest instruments in the world. Plan to complete your stay in one of the area's B & B's or hotels. To plan your weekend getaway, call an Illinois Travel Counselor at 1-800-2CONNECT or visit www.enjoyillinois.com.

Old Fashioned German Christmas- December 2-3

- You don't have to go to Germany to experience an authentic German Christmas! The town of Maeystown celebrates its German Heritage at this holiday festival and features opportunities to meet St. Nikolaus, sing German Christmas Carols,

and enjoy live entertainment in the Maeystown Village Center. Join in the holiday festivities, then shop in quaint boutiques or feast on your favorite German foods. 618/458-6660

Fantastically Fun French Heritage- After you've had your heap of German goodies, get your fill of French culture as you continue your travels in downstate Illinois. Begin your tour at Fort de Chartres, just one of three remaining reconstructed forts where you can catch a glimpse of life under the French regime of the 1750s. Stop by the home of Illinois' First Lieutenant Governor, Pierre Menard and see one of Illinois' finest examples of French colonial architecture. Check out the Fort Kaskaskia State Historic Site, located at the confluence of the Mississippi and Kaskaskia Rivers, where high bluffs allow visitors to get the best view of this former French trading post. Relax at a quaint B & B to complete your weekend getaway. To plan your weekend getaway, call an Illinois Travel Counselor at 1-800-2CONNECT or visit www.enjoyillinois.com.

11th Annual Gingerbread Walk- December 1-January 2

- Add colored gumdrops to complete the roof, white icing to secure the seams and candy decoration around the windows, and you have an award-winning recipe for a gingerbread house! Stroll along East Main Street in downtown Belleville and check out the more than 75 unusual and whimsical gingerbread creations on display in merchants' windows. 800/677-9255

Boisterous Times In Belleville- As one of the oldest towns in Illinois and rich in German ancestry, Belleville provides an array of cultural and outdoor activities. While you're in town, plan to see the Victorian House Museum, featuring 19th century quilts and furnishings. Don't miss a show by the Belleville Philharmonic Society, the second oldest orchestra in the U.S. Take some time to check out the 175-year-old historic district in downtown Belleville where you're invited to browse through antique and specialty shops. Get some fresh air at Cahokia Mounds in neighboring Collinsville, where you can walk through the remains of a sophisticated prehistoric Native American civilization. Belleville and its surrounding areas offer an array of hotels and B & B's. To plan your weekend getaway, call an Illinois Travel Counselor at 1-800-2CONNECT or visit www.enjoyillinois.com.

Living History Weekend with the Massiac Marines- January 13-14

- Listen to the drum beat roll as re-enactors spend the entire weekend participating in mock battles, giving tactical demonstrations and playing Revolutionary War music on the grounds of Fort Massac State Park. French and British military units, buckskinners and Native Americans depict the day-to-day activities of a

real-life Illinois encampment dating back to the mid-1700s. Enjoy a piece of camp life while you watch participants in period costumes perform activities such as cooking, mending and making various crafts. 618/524-9321

Magical Moments in Metropolis-Just a hop and a skip away from Fort Massac, Metropolis, officially declared the Hometown of Superman by the state of Illinois in 1972, is the perfect destination for comic book fanatics. During your stay, swing by the Super Museum filled with rare collectibles and artifacts, original movie props and comic book displays. Plan to visit the 15-foot bronze statue of Superman where thousands of visitors have stopped to measure up against this monument dedicated to America's most famous flying hero. Check out the woodwork and other unusual features in the Curtis House Museum, built by Elijah P. Curtis after he finished his duty in the Civil War. Explore the more than 300,000 acres of woodland in Shawnee National Forest. Stay at one of the area's five hotels or two B & B's. To plan your weekend getaway, call an Illinois Travel Counselor at 1-800-2CONNECT or visit www.enjoyillinois.com.

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The Illinois Department of Commerce and Community Affairs (DCCA), Bureau of Tourism works to promote Illinois as a travel destination, thereby enhancing the state's economic development climate and improving the quality of life for the citizens of Illinois.

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