

ILLINOIS INSITES

April/May 2000

Spring is the perfect time for a weekend getaway in Illinois. The weather is nice, the flowers are in full bloom and Illinois is packed full of events in April and May. To make sure you pick the ideal destination points, the Illinois Bureau of Tourism has compiled some highlights of festivals and special events that will keep you coming back for more Illinois vacations.

If you have any questions, require further information, or would like slides to accompany your stories, please call the Illinois News Bureau at 312/240-2605 or contact us via e-mail at jennifer_resnik@edelman.com.

Visitors requiring additional information should call Illinois' Travel Information Center at

1-800-2CONNECT or visit the Illinois Tourism Web site at www.enjoyillinois.com.

Chicagoland

Creativity of the Season – April 1-2

- No Fooling! The 22nd Annual Spring Fling Arts and Crafts Show in Wilmington is the largest show in the area. More than 100 exhibits will be featured, in addition to cash door prizes and tempting food. 815/476-2846

Spice Up Your Nightlife at the Riverboat Casinos in Joliet.

From Wilmington, head north to Joliet, a city full of excitement and activities for the whole family. Joliet is home to four riverboat casinos, which will have you pressing your luck all night long. Your family will enjoy the Haunted Trails Family Entertainment Center where you can be a kid again with go-carts, miniature golf, batting cages, rides and hundreds of games. After a busy day of activities take advantage of the

warm spring weather and relax at the Will/Joliet Bicentennial Park. Joliet's numerous hotel accommodations and restaurants make it easy to find something for every style and budget. To plan your weekend getaway, call an Illinois Travel Counselor at 1-800-2CONNECT or visit www.enjoyillinois.com.

An "ArtFair" to Remember - Art Chicago 2000 – April 12-15

- The incredible creations of artists from across the globe will be showcased at the eighth annual fair featuring 20th and 21st century art displays. This exhibition at Navy Pier in Chicago will display more than 2,500 artists whose works include painting, sculpture, photography, printmaking, drawing and video. Art Chicago 2000 will showcase galleries from around the world with representation from France, Germany, the United Kingdom, Spain, Italy and the United States. 847/864-7400

Breakfast with the Easter Bunny – April 15

- Children can begin their Easter early this year in Glendale Heights. The morning starts off with a bang at the Easter egg hunt. The Easter bunny anxiously awaits your arrival at his all-you-can-eat pancake breakfast at the Sports Hub in Glendale Heights. Guests can win raffle prizes and hold on to the memories by having their picture taken with the Easter bunny. 630/668-9409

Suburban Sensations. During your stay in Glendale Heights, you will definitely want to visit Oak Park and Schaumburg. Oak Park offers a full day of activities from shopping to museums. Make sure to visit Harrison Street, a quaint area filled with galleries, public art and shops of the burgeoning artist area. Complete your weekend in Schaumburg with a day of indoor waterpark excitement at The Waterworks or shopping at the 285 stores at the world-class Woodfield Shopping Center. End the day at the Medieval Times Dinner and Tournament. Experience an 11th century-style medieval banquet complete with sword fights, jousts and delicious food. To plan your

weekend getaway, call an Illinois Travel Counselor at 1-800-2CONNECT or visit www.enjoyillinois.com.

Chocolate Festival – May 6-7

- Indulge your sweet tooth at this fun-filled event for chocolate lovers of all ages. This Long Grove festival includes demonstrations, dipping stations, plenty of samples and a delectable chocolate brunch. The weekend will also include entertainment and contests for every chocolate fanatic. 847/634-0888

Chocolate Lovers Paradise in Long Grove. While in Long Grove, take a step back in time as you stroll through the historic village. The Victorian-style streets will enchant you as you browse the 90 specialty shops filled with collectibles from around the world. Let the fine restaurants rejuvenate you with enough energy to enjoy nearby the Kemper Lakes Golf and Tennis Club in the afternoon. This golf course was home to the 1989 Illinois PGA Championship and the 1992 Women's Amateur Championship. Stay in one of the areas three hotels. To plan your weekend getaway, call an Illinois Travel Counselor at 1-800-2CONNECT or visit www.enjoyillinois.com.

Mother's Day Fashion Show & Tea – May 14

- Show mom you care by spending the afternoon at Blackberry Farm's Pioneer village in Aurora. View unique and beautiful vintage clothing and indulge in deserts in Victorian style. While in the neighborhood, visit Aurora's Historical Districts or stop by Fox Valley Center, one of the largest shopping malls in the state. 630/892-0155

Let the Fox River Take You Away. Begin your weekend in St. Charles, a city on the beautiful Fox River that runs for miles along its wooded slopes. Sail away on the St. Charles Belle or Fox River Queen as you cruise along and enjoy the scenery in full bloom. Travel back in time on double-decker

paddlewheelers, which are replicas of the steamboats used centuries ago. Stay the night at Hotel Baker, located along the scenic Fox River. On Sunday, take a train or wagon ride through the Blackberry Historical Farm-Village. Explore 55 acres and see an 1840s farm, an old-time carriage collection, carousel and petting zoo. To plan your weekend getaway, call an Illinois Travel Counselor at 1-800-2CONNECT or visit www.enjoyillinois.com.

Northern

Tartan Day – April 1

- Celebrate this Scottish holiday the way it was meant to be celebrated at the Tebala Shrine Temple in Rockford. The festivities include highland and country dancing and piping by the Scottish Ed. Society Band. Storytelling, weapon demonstrations, weaving and kilting will also be featured. Sit back and listen to traditional Scottish music played on the banjo, small pipes, cittern, recorder and bodhran. There is plenty for you to do after the celebration; check out Rockford's numerous theaters, excellent shopping and beautiful gardens. 815/873-0363

Antique Charm in Belvidere. Close to Rockford is a town full of charm: Belvidere. If you're interested in antiques, this is the perfect destination point for you. The Funderburg Antique Wholesalers is a 20,000-square-foot warehouse stocked with antique pine furniture, stained glass windows, European furniture, folk art, blanket chests and accessories. To have your antiques appraised, visit Home Place Antiques, which boast experts with more than 20 years of experience. Whether you're in Belvidere or Rockford, there are B&Bs, hotels and state parks to accommodate you. To plan your weekend getaway, call an Illinois Travel Counselor at 1-800-2CONNECT or visit www.enjoyillinois.com.

Casey Jones Day – April 30

- The town of Union celebrates the 100th anniversary of the death of America's best-known locomotive engineer, Casey Jones at this annual festival. The life and death of this interesting individual will be commemorated at the Illinois Railway Museum, where you can observe more than 250 cars and locomotives. Visitors can also ride electric or diesel passenger trains along a five-mile main line. 815/923-4391

Peace, Love and Harmony in Woodstock. Close to Union lies the town of Woodstock, a perfect stop for your weekend. Stop by the U-Pick Orchards, Nurseries and Farm where nature's delicacies are at your disposal as you pick everything from blueberries to pumpkins. Add culture to your vacation at the Woodstock Opera House and Performing Arts Center. Famous stars such as Orson Wells and Paul Newman got their start on this stage, and the opera house hosts musicals, dramas, dance and touring groups. Stay at one of the nearby hotels for a comfortable place to end your day. To plan your weekend getaway, call an Illinois Travel Counselor at 1-800-2CONNECT or visit www.enjoyillinois.com.

Spring Fling – May 6

- Not far from Galena in Elizabeth, take part in the annual Spring Fling. Your day will be filled with browsing the different displays at Sidewalk Days. Visit the animals at the petting zoo and express your artistic side at the arts and crafts display. Stagecoach rides, a quilt show, train displays and walking tours will roundout the rest of your day. 815/858-3450

Say "I do" to a Weekend in Elizabeth. Elizabeth offers a taste of the past with its classic general store, quaint church and historic train depot. If you're planning a wedding, why not say "I do" at the local wedding chapel. The quaint countryside wedding chapel was built in 1875, and hosts weddings for up to 100 including complete services. Elizabeth has B&Bs and motel

accommodations for all your guests. In the nearby town of Woodbine is the Woodbine Glass Museum. Here you can observe a collection of handblown glass which features classic and contemporary works from American and international studios. To plan your weekend getaway, call an Illinois Travel Counselor at 1-800-2CONNECT or visit www.enjoyillinois.com.

Tea & Tarts with the General's Lady – May 13

- Travel back in time in Galena as critically acclaimed actress Lucy Miele presents a dramatic interpretation of Julia Dent Grant, wife of General Ulysses S. Grant. You'll learn what life was like in this period and enrich yourself with the history of the Grant family. This is just one of the many historical tributes that occur at regular intervals in the town. 800/343-6562

Galena: City of Charm and Character. This quaint town is rich in history and beauty. Tour the historical district and the many exquisite mansions and museums. The Belvedere Mansion was originally built in 1857 for steamboat magnate J. Russell Jones and is now on the National Register of Historic Places. The Dowling House is Galena's oldest home and was built of limestone in 1826. Today, the house is filled with a vast collection of Galena Pottery. Combine this tour with a discounted visit to the Belvedere Mansion. Enjoy a wonderful night's stay at the DeSoto House Hotel or one of the numerous B&Bs. To plan your weekend getaway, call an Illinois Travel Counselor at 1-800-2CONNECT or visit www.enjoyillinois.com.

Central

Mr. Lincoln's World – April 1-14

- Abraham Lincoln was a man of integrity and honesty. His loyalty to his hometown of Springfield was apparent throughout his life. In early April, observe interpreters reenact the life and political career of Abraham Lincoln.

Springfield offers numerous other sights to see, including Lincoln's law offices, the Illinois State Historical Library or the Lincoln Depot where Lincoln boarded a train to Washington D.C. to lead the country. Visit Lincoln's home in the historic district, Lincoln's tomb or the Lincoln Memorial Garden and Nature Center. 217/785-7960

The Heart of the City Alive in Springfield. If you're a Frank Lloyd Wright fan, stop by an early example of his architectural genius. The Dana-Thomas House State Historic Site is full of interesting art, glass and antique furniture. The whole family will delight in a visit to the Henson Robinson Zoo, which features several endangered species and houses 300 animals and 14 acres of wildlife. Visiting the Illinois Korean War Memorial, Illinois State Military Museum and the Illinois Vietnam Veterans Memorial State Historic Site are all ways to pay tribute and to reflect on the men and women who have served our country. Springfield is home to numerous hotels, camping grounds and B&Bs to ensure a good nights rest. To plan your weekend getaway, call an Illinois Travel Counselor at 1-800-2CONNECT or visit www.enjoyillinois.com.

Eastern Illinois Forestry Conclave – April 8

- This weekend in Westville, watch college sports as you've never seen before. Colleges across the country join together to compete in old-fashioned forestry events. Contestants will participate in speed chipping, log rolling and other lumberjack-style events. 217/662-2142

Spring Escapes in Danville. The city of Danville lies close to Westville and is full of five magnificent parks. Visit Kickapoo State Park, Kennukuk Cove County Park, Forest Glen Preserve, Lake Vermilion, Harry "Babe" Woodyard State Natural Area or the Middle Fork State Fish and Wildlife Area. If you're a fan of the movie *Babe*, visit the Danville Stadium, which served as the setting for this movie. This 1946 ballpark was originally built for the Brooklyn Dodgers now serves as the home for the Danville Dans. Before the weekend is over, enjoy dinner at the Colonel Harmon Mansion, now a restaurant and

dinner theater. Danville has numerous hotels, motels and charming B&Bs to stay at during your weekend getaway. To plan your weekend getaway, call an Illinois Travel Counselor at 1-800-2CONNECT or visit www.enjoyillinois.com.

World Premiere "Illinois Amish Quilt Collection" – Throughout April

- Arthur is the home of the "Illinois Amish Quilt Collection." This collection contains more than 100 quilts from the mid 1800s through the 1950s. Quilting participants will be competing for awards in various categories. 800/545-7300

11th Annual Raggedy Ann & Andy Festival – May 20-21

- Raggedy Ann is honored in Arcola this month on her 85th birthday. The festival includes the red-head's memorabilia, entertainment, parade, arts and crafts and antiques. Creator Johnny Gruelle's family will be in town for the festivities and is available to sign any licensed Raggedy Ann or Andy product. 800/336-5456

Amish Country Weekend Getaway. The towns of Arthur and Arcola both display the beautiful Amish countryside. Experience the Amish way of life at the Illinois Amish Interpretive Center. You'll learn about traditions and history and explore an authentic house, barn and buggy. Take home slices of Amish life including, quilts, rugs, kerosene lamps, toys and sweets. Continue your weekend in Tuscola where you can shop 'til you drop. The Factory Stores at Tuscola offers more than 60 factory outlet stores full of great bargains. Whether you're in Arthur, Arcola or Tuscola enjoy a comfortable nights stay at a hotel or B&B. To plan your weekend getaway, call an Illinois Travel Counselor at 1-800-2CONNECT or visit www.enjoyillinois.com.

Western

Sandburg Days Festival – April 12-15

- Galesburg is the city that honors one of America's greatest poets, and this festival celebrates his life and legacy. Two-time-Pulitzer-Prize-winning poet and Lincoln biographer Carl Sandburg will be celebrated for all his achievements. Children's events include The Prairie Dash, a run/walk for children 2-10 and a variety of hands-on activities. 309/343-2485

Civil War Reenactments – May 19-21

- Observe military encampments and mock battles in Farmington as actors portray a day in the life of the Civil War. This page out of history is a perfect learning experience for kids of all ages. 309/245-4458

Arts Alive in Peoria. The next stop on your weekend adventure is the city of Peoria, which rests on the banks of the Illinois River. You will be entertained all weekend long at the Apollo Fine Arts and Entertainment Center, Corn Stock Theatre, Peoria's Players Theatre or Haberdasher's Dinner Playhouse. World records have also been achieved in Peoria; the Lakeview Museum of Arts and Sciences holds the world's largest solar system model and is the largest museum of its kind in Western Illinois. A visit to the Wheels O' Time Museum will let you travel back with an extensive look at vintage and classic automobiles, gasoline engines, airplanes, jukeboxes, model trains and more. To plan your weekend getaway, call an Illinois Travel Counselor at 1-800-2CONNECT or visit www.enjoyillinois.com.

Criterion of the Quad Cities – May 28-29

- Watch hundreds of bicyclists take to the streets of the arts and entertainment district of Rock Island for an exciting Memorial Day race. The festivities begin on Sunday with bicycle street sprints. The following day

brings eight bicycle races, in-line skate races, bicycle stunt performers, family activities and food booths. All ages can participate in the various events. 309/788-7800

Indian Heritage Rich Within Quad Cities. The Quad Cities provide an abundance of activities for a weekend getaway. Before the bike races, visit the Black Hawk State Historic Site. This is one of the largest Native American centers in the country and features the home of Black Hawk, a famous Sauk warrior and leader. This site also contains 200-acres of land and an educational nature preserve and hiking trails. While visiting the site, stop by the Hauberg Indian Museum, which is the world's only museum devoted exclusively to the Sauk and Fox Native American Tribes. One of Quad Cities newer attractions is the Channel Cat Water Taxi. Sail along the Mississippi River on a ferry that connects Moline, Bettendorf and the village of East Davenport. The 49-passenger ferry provides transportation to and from the cities. Enjoy accommodations and amenities at the many hotels and B&B's throughout the Quad Cities. To plan your weekend getaway, call an Illinois Travel Counselor at 1-800-2CONNECT or visit www.enjoyillinois.com.

Pigs on Parade – May 31 – August 20

- From cows to pigs, Illinois is always featuring animals on parade. Galesburg will have 60 artist-created life-size pigs on parade in a partnership with the Western Illinois Library Alliance. As you wander through the town, you'll see such famous pigs as W.C Squeals, Luke Stywalker and Elvis Pigsley. In August the pigs will be auctioned off and the proceeds will go towards the library alliance.
309/343-6118

Galesburg's Endless Spring Possibilities. Galesburg is an excellent destination point for the weekend. Start off with a tour of the Browning Mansion. Restored to the 1886 Victorian era and decorated by the Galesburg Historical Society, this mansion is listed in the National Register of Historic Places. Later stop by the Central Congregational Church, which was

constructed in 1898 and features beautiful rose windows. The recently-opened Discovery Depot is a great spot for children to experience an interactive museum. Before leaving, make time for the Seminary Street Historic Commercial District. These downtown buildings and stores have been restored and now thrive as restaurants, specialty shops, historic antique malls, bakeries and wineries. Galesburg has a camping facility, quaint B&Bs and a variety of hotels and motels to stay during your visit. To plan your weekend getaway, call an Illinois Travel Counselor at 1-800-2CONNECT or visit www.enjoyillinois.com.

Southern

Morel Mushroom Weekend -

March 31 – April 30

- This all-inclusive weekend in Jonesboro will definitely be one to remember. Larry "Tree" Lonick, the world's foremost morel expert, guides groups through both the woods and the kitchen and even gives away some of his secret mushroom recipes. The weekend includes mushroom seminars, guided hunts, discussions, all meals Friday and Saturday and lodging at the Trail of Tears Lodge & Sports Resort. 618/833-8697

Southern Illinois Festival of Irish Music and Dance – April 28-30

- Aye, St. Patrick's Day isn't the only time to celebrate. Lads and lassies will gather this weekend in Carbondale to enjoy live performances of Irish jigs and music. For those interested in learning what it takes to wear the green, there will be workshops held for musicians and dance enthusiasts. Discover how to play instruments such as the pennywhistle, fiddle, guitar and flute. 618/453-4530

Nature Blooms in Carbondale. Your visit to Carbondale would not be complete without exploring the Shawnee National Forest. There are endless activities within the 250,000 acres of land. Explore trails, canoe along the Cache River and hike to the Garden of the Gods to see amazing rock formations. The Southern Illinois University- Carbondale Touch of Nature Environment Center is a great stop for nature enthusiasts. This center is dedicated to outdoor, environmental and experiential development. They provide courses in canoeing, backpacking and rappelling. The state lodges surrounding the area provide a serene atmosphere and make an excellent place to lodge for the night. To plan your weekend getaway, call an Illinois Travel Counselor at 1-800-2CONNECT or visit www.enjoyillinois.com.

Wild West Weekend – April 28-30

- Stick 'em up! Grafton transforms into a John Wayne movie set as re-enactors roam the streets this weekend. This family-fun weekend features stagecoach rides, pony and horse rides, an old fashioned barn dance, shoot-outs, hold-ups and authentic Western cuisine. 618/786-2315

Sail the Mississippi River in Grafton. The Pere Marquette State Park and Lodge is the perfect place to enjoy the beautiful spring weather by day and to curl up at night in a cozy room or cabin. Grafton's beauty lies in part with the Mississippi River. Fill your day with picnic lunches, boat rides and fishing trips in this pleasant river town. Continue with a walk around and the charming antique and specialty shops in the Grafton's Antique District is located on Main Street. To plan your weekend getaway, call an Illinois Travel Counselor at 1-800-2CONNECT or visit www.enjoyillinois.com.

Spring Wine Festival – May 13-14

- The award-winning wine will be flowing this spring in the delightful town of Alto Pass. The Alto Vineyards are stocking the shelves for the Spring Wine Festival this weekend. Take part in tours and discussions and you'll leave an expert wine connoisseur. Wonderful food, music and of course, wine by the glass will fill this weekend

with spring spirit. 618/893-4898

Too Good to Pass By. Alto Pass has much more to offer in addition to its winery. Walk along the Quetil Trail Nature Walk. This is the path of the former Cairo and Narrow Gage Railroad. Next explore a 1900s schoolhouse filled with old school charm and memories. Your accommodations will be complete at Alto Pass's B&Bs, camping and nearby hotels. Complete your weekend with a trip to Grand Tower's Devil's Backbone Park where you can enjoy the activities and beauty of spring at this scenic park that overlooks the Mississippi River. 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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