

ILLINOIS INSITES

February/March 2001

As winter slowly melts away and temperatures begin to rise, spring quickly approaches and marks the perfect season for an Illinois adventure. To keep you updated on Illinois' latest news, the Illinois Bureau of Tourism has compiled a list of amazing sites and events to visit this season.

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 email at sarah.mathay@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

CHICAGO

African Heritage Festival- February 3-4, 5-6, 10

- Travel to Africa without leaving Chicago during this exhibit at the Field Museum, located on Museum Campus. Home to some of the world's finest exhibits, this museum is the ideal spot to explore displays on Africa's cultural and scientific heritage. Scientists from the Field Museum will be on hand to answer questions about their research on the continent. Stroll the halls listening to the sounds of Africa and experience the diversity of this vast continent. 312/ 656-7400

The Annual Chicago St. Patrick's Day Parade- March 17

- It's true! The Chicago River does run green for a few hours on St. Patty's Day! For more than 150 years, downtown Chicago has celebrated its long-standing Irish history and culture with an all-day celebration and parade featuring Irish dancers, lavishly decorated floats and traditional bagpipers. Don't miss all the shamrocks and fun at this year's extravaganza; it's sure to be bigger and better than ever. 312/ 744-3315

CHICAGOLAND

Evening with the Lincolns- February 3

- Share an intimate evening with Abraham and Mary Todd Lincoln at the Naperville Settlement as these impersonators provide a compelling presentation recounting their character's personal and political lives. Discover Lincoln's personal philosophies and Mary Todd's thoughts and beliefs as the night unfolds into a fascinating tale of 19th century history. 630/ 420-6010

Victorian Valentines- February 10-11

- The DuPage County Historical Museum in Wheaton wants you to put your heart into making a colorful holiday valentine for a special someone this Valentine's Day. Bring your imagination and heart-felt efforts and you'll be provided with scissors, paper and other goodies to create a lovely Valentine keepsake. Whether it's for Mom, Dad or even that special someone, drop-in for a while and put your creative efforts to work this Valentine's Day season. 630/ 682-6744

Pheasant Run Antique Show- March 9-11

- Antique collectors near and far are invited to discover memories of the past in St. Charles. From fine china and porcelain to old books and antique clocks, this remarkable show is now in its 28th season and has much to offer to the professional and novice antique enthusiast. With more than 150 antique dealers and inviting displays showcasing one-of-a-kind antique findings, you will not want to miss this antiquing event of the year. 630/ 515-1165

Spring Open House- March 11

- Hop into spring and experience myriad of beautiful flowers at the Oak Park Conservatory. Walk through a variety of flowering displays highlighting this season's blooming specialties including snap dragons, stock and sweet peas. Smell the primrose and pansies and stroll through the row of goodies at the observatory's indoor craft show. Relax your feet while listening to delightful music provided by a trio of performers. 708/ 386-4700

Getaway to Joliet

- If you're looking for the perfect place to try your luck, take in a show or spend the day at the I&M Canal, Joliet may be just the ticket. With four riverboat casinos all boasting a large assortment of games, endless dining and live entertainment opportunities, it's easy to see why Joliet is full of non-stop fun and excitement. Indulge in a show at the Rialto Square Theatre, elegantly restored to characterize a 1926 vaudeville movie palace. Offering more than 61 miles of trail, the I&M Canal is the perfect place to bundle up for a brisk walk or lace up your ice skates. Joliet offers several hotels and B & B's. To plan your weekend getaway, call an Illinois Travel Counselor at 1-800-2CONNECT or visit www.enjoyillinois.com

NORTHERN

Woodstock Groundhog Days- February 2-4

- Will the groundhog see his shadow this year? No one knows. But one thing that's easy to figure out is how to spend the three-day weekend in Woodstock. The festivities begin in the early morning on Saturday at the groundhog prognostication on the town square. After the groundhog arrives, head indoors for a hot breakfast and free viewing of the 1995 Bill Murray hit movie, "Groundhog Day," which was filmed on location in this Illinois town. Don't miss your chance to join in the groundhog storytelling, view an ice-sculpting demonstration, score 300 points in a game of bowling or even take a walking tour of the "Groundhog Day" movie sites. 815/ 338-2436

Five on the Fly- February 17-18

- Take a trip into history as you embark on a self-guided motor tour of five LaSalle County Museums. Begin your trip at this year's host museum, the LaSalle County Historical Society in Utica. Next stop is the Streatorland Historical Society, where you can learn about the area's artifacts and then it's on to the Union Depot Railroad Museum that features a replica of a 1940 depot telegraph office. Stop by the Hume-Carnegie Museum in Mendota to discover more about the Indian War. And, brush up on Boy Scout literature at the Scouting Museum in Ottawa. 815/ 431-9353

Irishfest- March 10, Irishfest Parade- March 17

- This holiday, celebrate shamrocks, good friends and fun times by throwing on some green and white and heading to Irishfest in downtown Dixon. Listen to traditional Irish music or stroll by historical and genealogical booths where you can learn about Ireland's history. The following Saturday, join in the fun at the Irishfest Parade as you watch decorated floats and Irish clans march through the center of town. After, head indoors to enjoy an authentic Irish meal of corned beef and cabbage. 815/ 288-3600

Egg Artists Show- March 24-25

- Be a real egghead this March and stop by this remarkable exhibit of painted eggshells at the Midway Village & Museum Center in downtown Rockford. Enjoyed by Russian Czars and kings and queens of Europe, the historic form of egg art features the splendor of authentic eggshells in all shapes and sizes. From ostrich eggs to finch eggs, these beautifully decorated shells are hand-painted, beaded, carved and even animated. Don't miss the illuminated and hinged-opening eggshells, where you're sure to find a surprise inside! 815/ 397-9112

Get Away To Rockford

- Rockford, Illinois' second-largest city, has it all! Start your weekend on time at the Time Museum which houses the world's largest collection of time-keeping devices or spend the day at the Riverfront Museum Park, home to six museums and associations including the Rockford Art Museum and the Discovery Museum. Escape outdoors and spend the day touring the Anderson Japanese Gardens and the Klehm Arboretum & Botanical Garden. With more than 30 antique shops, two major antique malls, several art galleries and specialty shops, Rockford is ideal for any shopping excursion. If you're ready for a night on the town, check out one of the several dinner theatres or area restaurants -- perfect for a romantic evening or a family outing. Rockford offers a large variety 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.

CENTRAL

Lincoln's Birthday Celebration- February 11

- The entire family is invited to attend the celebration of Abraham Lincoln's birthday at the Vermilion County Museum in Danville. Lincoln spent many a night's rest in this town en route to his various Illinois destinations. Stroll through special Lincoln exhibits to learn about his life accomplishments or speak with on-hand re-enactors dressed in authentic Civil War costumes. Join in the fun with the Lincoln impersonator as you nibble on a piece of cake in honor of our 16th president. 217/ 442-2922

Maple Syrup Time- February 17-18, 24-25

- It's tree tappin' time! Round up the family and discover the art of maple syrup making at the Lincoln Memorial Gardens in Springfield. Visitors can watch the entire process of maple syrup production from start to finish. The annual maple syrup tour begins with a tree-tapping demonstration and sap collection and finishes with boiling the sap into maple syrup. Don't miss your chance to taste-test the syrup at various stages of its production. 217/ 529-1111

Children's Weekend- March 24-25

- Bring the children to the Amishland's Country Indoor Village in Tuscola for a special weekend. See authentic reproductions of John Deere tractors as they compete in a tractor race. Other children's activities include storytelling, baby-crawling contests, live entertainment and children's games on the lawn. Take time to see the local children's art exhibit showcasing central Illinois' finest young talent. 800/ 500-3705

Decatur Quiltfest- March 30-31

- This annual festival of stitches and fun in the Decatur Civic Center is one of Central Illinois' best quilt shows. Attend a lecture or demonstration showcasing various techniques or browse through special displays of clothing, wall hangings and large and small quilts. This year, several quilts will be donated to Project Linus, a program designed to deliver security blankets to children who are seriously ill. With exhibits, contests and door prizes, you're sure to fall in love with one or several patchwork displays. 217/ 784-2603

Getaway to Decatur

- From theater and fine arts to outdoor recreation and shopping, Decatur, the "Pride of the Prairie," is abundant in character. Take in a show at Millikan University by the Performing Art Series or head over to Gallery 510 to see local artists and student exhibits on display. Spend time outdoors at the Rock Springs Center where you can hike trails of varying length -- or the Rock Springs/Fairview Bikeway where you can enjoy miles of paved biking and hiking trails. During your stay, make your way to historic Merchant Street where you can browse through specialty shops and sip coffee at a cozy cafe or stop by one of Decatur's three malls, perfect for the shop til' you drop experience. While in Decatur, stay in one of the area'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.

WESTERN

Chocolate Festival- February 10-11

- It's a chocolate lover's dream! Make Valentine's Day especially sweet this year at the 19th century Browning Historic Mansion in Galesburg. Tantalize your nose with the sweet smell of fresh goodies or nibble on a piece of savory chocolate pie. From your favorite homemade chocolate tarts to rich dark chocolate cakes and creams, this event is sure to satisfy even the pickiest sweet tooth!
309/ 343-2485

WIU Jazz Festival- February 15-17

- Shine up the trumpet and clean the trombone, it's all jazz, all weekend in Macomb! Enjoy more than 70 groups from local and international artists ranging from full-scale jazz bands to three-piece combos. Begin the weekend at the all-pro jazz combo jam session on Friday night or watch as area junior high schools and college jazz bands compete for first place on Saturday. Improve your skills at a jazz clinic or catch the weekend's final performance with the WIU Jazz Studio Orchestra. 309/ 298-1505

Country Treasures Folk Art & Craft Show- March 2-4

- Homemade, handmade and especially-made goodies of all sorts will be on display during this spring arts and crafts show extravaganza at the Peoria Civic Center. You're bound to find something you love as you stroll through more than 100 booths filled with handmade treasures, primitive and wearable art, custom furniture and gourmet food. Pick up a piece of country-inspired art or just spend the day among treasures made with heart. 217/ 228-6600

Symphony in Bloom- March 9-11

- Make your way through the "Kaleidoscope of Color" at the Quad Cities' Expo Center in Rock Island. Designed and produced by local landscape and flower organizations, make sure to see all 30 garden and floral creations on display. Whether it's breakfast to the tune of the three-piece jazz combo or a relaxing afternoon with tea in the garden, you're sure to have an enjoyable day. Make time to attend the gardening lecture series and be sure to check out this year's featured item, a 32-foot walk-through kaleidoscope. 319/ 322-0931

Getaway to the Quad Cities

- Weekend adventure starts in the Quad Cities! Start your trip at the Mississippi River Visitors Center located on Arsenal Island with an eagle-watching tour accompanied by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. Check out the Quad City Botanical Center that offers hidden gardens and hundreds of flowers and tropical plants. Don't miss the John Deere Pavillion or the Black Hawk State Historic Site, both are must-see attractions in the Quad Cities. Explore the historical neighborhoods of Rock Island and save time to sip a cup of coffee in "The District" the quaint downtown section of Rock Island. 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.

SOUTHERN

Downtown Bridal Walk- February 18

- Before you say "I do," visit downtown Effingham's historical shopping district as it becomes a giant wedding wonderland. Pick out your favorite floral display or see examples of the latest styles in bridesmaid's dresses. Meet with professional photographers and discuss how to capture your special memories or sit down with a local travel agency representative and plan a honeymoon to remember. If a wedding is in your future, you will not want to miss this event! 217/ 342-3106

Fete du Bon Vieux Temps- February 24

- It's an affair to remember! Begin the day in the early afternoon at the 18th century Cahokia Court House and watch costumed living-history participants re-enact court cases from Illinois' colonial days. Afterwards, take a horse-drawn carriage through various Cahokia historical sites or check out the recently renovated 1810 Jarrot Mansion and Holy Family Log church. The kids will love the special storytelling hour at the Boismenu House. In the evening, put on your best mask for the Colonial Mardi Gras Ball and dance to old-time fiddle music. 618/ 332-1782

St. Patrick's Day Celtic Celebration- March 17

- With a full day of Irish-flavored fun and festivities in downtown Murphysboro, this year's Celtic celebration is sure to make your friends green with envy! Gear up for the 5K Run/Walk through town and make sure to put a shamrock in your hat for the Irish parade. Try your hand at the Irish stew cook-off, pick up a trinket at the arts and crafts fair, or even enter yourself in the lawn mower race. 618/ 684-6421

Revolutionary War and Colonial French Encampment- March 17-18

- Spend a living history weekend at the Fort Kaskaskia Historical Site located at the confluence of the Mississippi and Kaskaskia Rivers in Ellis Grove. This former French trading post will be a buzz with Revolutionary War and Spanish military re-enactors as well as Native American tribes portraying life in Illinois as it was in the 1770s. Listen to the beat of the drum as they head into battle or try some traditional French food prepared over an open fire. 618/ 859-3741

Getaway to Belleville

- As one of Illinois' oldest towns 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. Browse through antique and specialty shops in Belleville's historic downtown or enjoy tasting some of Illinois' finest wines at nearby wineries and vineyards. 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.

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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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