

November: More Than Thanksgiving?

Friendsgiving - by Kara Porter

Thanksgiving in the United States is most traditionally known as a holiday where families gather on the fourth Thursday of November each year, and enjoy a delicious turkey dinner with side dishes of stuffing, green bean casserole, sweet potatoes, and much more.

While many people continue to celebrate Thanksgiving in this way, the celebration of “Friendsgiving” has gained popularity in recent history. According to Merriam-Webster’s dictionary, the earliest traces of Friendsgiving date back to 2007. With very few rules and expectations about hosting Friendsgiving, it is often viewed as a more informal affair than the traditional Thanksgiving celebration.

Most often, Friendsgiving takes place sometime around the Thanksgiving holiday, but it really can happen on any day. Friends, family, and acquaintances may all be invited to a single Friendsgiving meal. Oftentimes, guest lists consist of those living in the same geographical area. The host of Friendsgiving is typically expected to make the main dish, with guests bringing side dishes for a “potluck style” dinner. Otherwise, there are few other expectations regarding food during Friendsgiving. Many Friendsgiving meals follow the traditional turkey dinner, but other interesting themes include Friendsgiving brunch, Friendsgiving chili cook-offs, and vegetarian Friendsgiving.

With such flexibility, Friendsgiving is often a friendly alternative for those who may be unable to travel long distances on Thanksgiving (airfare tends to be expensive around the holidays, and winter weather can be unpredictable around much of the U.S.), for those with dietary restrictions, or for those who wish to give thanks for the support network that close friends can provide.

Interested in participating in Friendsgiving? A simple Google search will lead you to hundreds of recommendations for both hosting and attending!

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Black Friday, Cyber Monday, and Giving Tuesday

by Jennie Avery

So after you’ve eaten yourself silly at your Thanksgiving and Friendsgiving meals, you might be looking for something to do that doesn’t involve eating.

Black Friday, the day after Thanksgiving, is a day of crazy shopping deals and even crazier behavior on the part of some of the shoppers. Many people will line up before dawn to try to purchase a discount TV. Others will descend on shopping centers and malls to start their holiday shopping. If you are considering going shopping on Black Friday—go prepared. Expect long lines and crazy people (especially early in the day). Love deals but want to avoid the crowds? Then Cyber Monday might be the thing for you. The Monday after Thanksgiving is now known for the same kind of shopping deals you’ll find on Black Friday, but for online shopping.

Not into shopping? More interested in giving back after over-indulging in turkey and pumpkin pie? Then check out Giving Tuesday! This holiday on the Tuesday after Thanksgiving was created in an effort to counter the consumerism of Black Friday and Cyber Monday, by creating a day that focuses on embracing the spirit of generosity that the holiday season once represented. While there is a major focus on financial donations, individuals are also encouraged to give back by volunteering their time. For more information on how to get involved, check out givingtuesday.org.

Weathering the Winter in Illinois

by Kara Porter

With thoughts of building snowmen, sipping hot chocolate, and fresh fallen snow across the Quad, the winter season is certainly something to look forward to. However, the cold weather also brings some additional considerations for staying warm and safe throughout the season. Whether you're a winter weather veteran, or you're preparing for your first winter in Champaign, follow these tips for staying safe *and* enjoying the season:

Stay Updated on Winter Weather

Average winter temperatures in Champaign range from 15°F to 40°F, with the record lowest temperature at -25° F! Snow can range from a light dusting to several inches of accumulation on the ground. The weather can change rapidly in the winter, so be sure to keep an eye on the forecast. During the winter, you might come across the following weather terms:

Wind Chill: the temperature it feels like after factoring in wind conditions. Wind chill temperatures can be significantly lower than air temperature.

Winter Weather Advisory: winter weather is expected, including snow, sleet, or ice.

Freezing Rain: rain that freezes upon contact with the ground. Freezing rain can create a coating of ice on roads, sidewalks, trees, and power lines.

The [National Weather Service](#) provides weather updates, severe weather warnings, and further advice for staying warm in the winter.

Home Care

Furnaces or boilers should be checked by a professional at least once a year, preferably before frequent heating is needed. Furnace and air filters should also be replaced before frequent heating. Keep air temperatures at a minimum of 60°F to keep pipes from freezing, even when you are not home.

You may be required to clear snow and ice from sidewalks surrounding your home. For more information about city sidewalk snow removal ordinances, visit the [Champaign](#) or [Urbana](#) Public Works website.

Fun Activities

Be sure to try these before the snow and ice melts!

- Building a snowman
- Ice skating (the Illinois Ice Arena frequently holds [open skating hours](#))
- Sledding (the Arboretum and Orchard Downs are great places for this!)

Wear Proper Winter Clothing

Dressing in several layers of clothes and wearing a warm coat is necessary in cold temperatures. Ears, hands, and feet can become chilled most easily, and so hats, gloves, boots, and scarves that can be wrapped around your face can help keep these extremities warm. Particularly if you think you'll be outside for a long period of time, hand warmer packets can be placed in gloves and boots for extra warmth, and you can buy them from a variety of local retailers.



Driving

Use caution when driving in the winter, as snow, ice, and wind can make driving conditions dangerous. Check road conditions before driving -the Illinois Department of Transportation [website](#) offers road condition updates. Notify friends when you will be traveling.



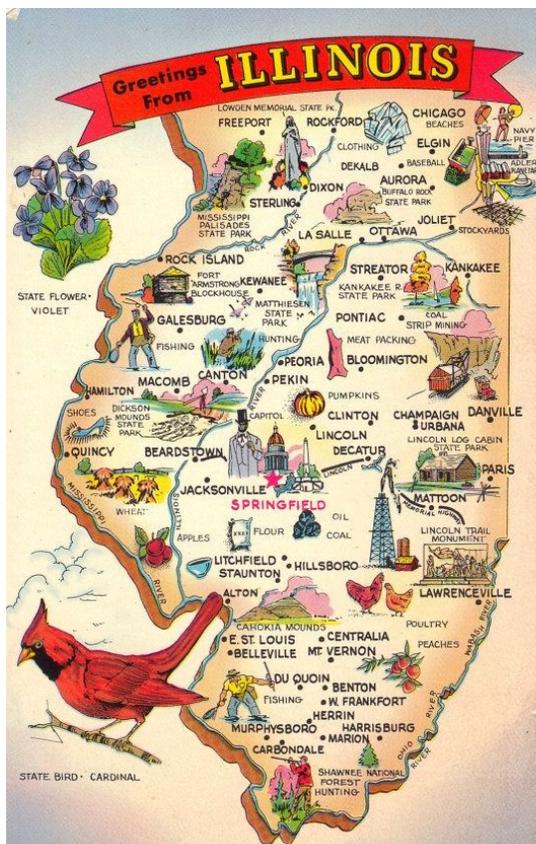
A Moment in Illinois History by Lauren Karplus

In this column, we will feature some lesser-known but important history from Illinois!

Ever had a class in Altgeld Hall? Wonder who it was named after?

It was named after John Peter Altgeld, a German immigrant and the 20th governor of Illinois who served from 1893-1897. Altgeld was much more than just another politician, however. As governor, he enacted the most progressive child labor and work safety laws in the country, appointed women to important government positions, refused to break the infamous Pullman strike by force, and increased funding for education.

He is most famous, however, for his role in the fallout of the Haymarket Massacre. On May 1st, 1886, hundreds of thousands of workers went on strike throughout the US demanding an eight-hour work day (celebrated as May Day by workers around the world today). Chicago was the center of the labor movement at that time, and there were many socialist and anarchist groups operated by German immigrants there. On May 3rd, police fired on the striking workers, killing at least two. On May 4th, the Chicago anarchists held a rally in response in Haymarket Square. Police arrived to disperse the protesters, and someone threw a bomb towards the advancing police. Police responded with fire, and 7 police officers and 4 workers were killed. The case was followed around the world, and strong anti-union clampdowns in the US followed. The German and Bohemian communities in Chicago experienced intense scrutiny. Despite no evidence being discovered as to who actually threw the bomb, seven anarchists were charged and sentenced to death. When Altgeld became governor, he pardoned the three men left alive who had not yet been killed. This pardon so enraged the opposition that he was not re-elected. The seven men had become martyrs to the labor movement worldwide by that time, so the pardon was Altgeld's most famous and important act as governor.





Hockey! by Nick Dunn



Hockey is an incredible sport. I mean that literally, I do not find it creditable. It shouldn't exist.

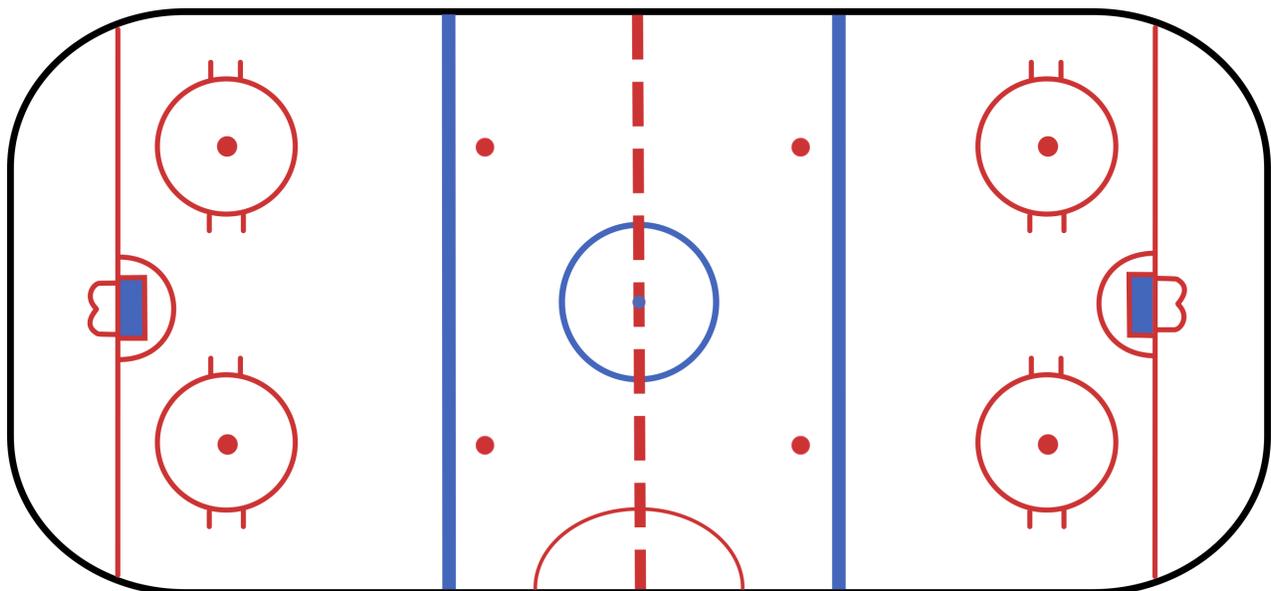
Hockey is a sport of unbelievable grace and skill. Talented and tough men and women put on about 8kg of equipment (over 20 kg for a goalkeeper), then sprint and glide and spin and stop and start on the ice with elegance and aplomb. Hockey is a sport of shocking violence, from open-ice hits to bonecrushing checks against the boards to straight up fist fighting (it's not allowed, but it's not NOT allowed).

Hockey is not a game. This isn't mere *play*. This has geopolitical implications. Two of the defining moments of the Cold War were Paul Henderson's game-winning goal against the USSR in the 1972 Summit Series ("HENDERSON scores for Canada!") and the United States defeating the Soviet team in the 1980 Olympics ("Do you believe in miracles?! THIS is unbelievable!"). Songs and movies have been made about these matches. Plural.

Hockey is a game of gratuitous beauty. Beauty is not required in such a brutish sport, played with sticks by people with knives strapped to their boots. Yet there it is, the unearned, unexpected gift of TJ Oshie's understated, almost casual scores on the 6th and 8th shots of the shootout with Russia in the preliminary round of the 2014 Olympics ("This guy's money, Eddie, unbelievable how good he is"). People paid to watch hockey are on record: this sport cannot be believed.

I couldn't believe when I moved to the University of Illinois that we didn't have an NCAA Division I hockey team, not here, not in the entire state. I couldn't believe what I read back in June in the Chicago Tribune, that the University of Illinois might be the answer to the state's complete lack of top-tier collegiate hockey programs. Nearly a decade after their 2008-2009 rise to international powerhouse status, the Chicago Blackhawks remain a premier program, with incredible attendance and statewide support. And while they're not financially backing Illinois Hockey (yet? fingers crossed...), Blackhawks president John McDonough has met several times with Illinois Athletic Director Josh Whitman, and has publicly supported the idea of keeping some of Illinois' 22,000+ youth hockey players at home for their college careers.

While we're waiting to join the big (college) leagues, we can still support our American Collegiate Hockey Association Illinois Hockey team right here on campus. We've got a lot of exciting home games in November and December, and at \$5 per student ticket, this is the cheapest, and rowdiest, sporting experience around. Check out Illinois-hockey.com for schedules and ticket info!



Ask Igor the I-20!

In this advice column, our resident “agony aunt,” Igor attempts to answer some of your burning questions about life, love, and America. If you have a question for Igor, email: askigortheittwenty@gmail.com

Dear Igor,

I’m staying on campus over winter break because I can’t afford to go home. All of my friends are either traveling or going home for the break, so I am worried I will be bored and lonely. What can I do?

Thanks,

Lonely in Chambana

Dear Lonely,

I’m glad you reached out! School breaks can be lonely when you are far from home and without many friends close by. Make a list now of things you’ve always wanted to do but never had time. Some things that might appear on your list include; explore somewhere close by, learn a new hobby, read a book, catch up on your favorite TV shows, try cooking something new, prepare for next semester’s classes, or order-in from a restaurant you’ve always wanted to try. You can also volunteer over break, and this may be a great way to meet some new people while doing something good. Communicate with friends and family who are far away by writing letters or sending care packages. If keeping yourself busy doesn’t seem to be working, remember that it’s ok to feel lonely sometimes, and don’t be afraid to reach out for help if you need it.

Take care,

Igor

Dear Igor,

I have an American host family through the International Hospitality Committee. They have invited me to Thanksgiving dinner at their house. I am nervous about how to behave. What gifts should I bring?

Thanks!

Best Guest

Dear Best Guest,

How wonderful that you will get to experience a traditional American family holiday with an American family! While a gift is not required or expected in American culture, it is a nice gesture which will be appreciated. It should not be something too expensive. A dish or packaged snack food from your home country or a traditional trinket from your home country would be greatly appreciated. Alternatively, flowers and chocolates are always great gifts! While at their house, you may be treated as one of the family, and American families have a wide range of ways they behave in their homes. The atmosphere might range from slightly formal to very informal. Just watch your hosts and do as they do. Offering to help cook/clean is considered very polite, so you should do that. If they refuse your help, that’s great, but if they accept it, help them gladly and know that refusing help and accepting help are both equally kind ways of treating guests in America.

Happy Thanksgiving,

Igor



ISSS Favorite U.S. Literature!

Now that the weather is getting colder, wouldn't it be nice to curl up under the covers with a cup of tea and a good book? Looking for something to add to your winter reading list? The ISSS Team shares some of their favorite U.S. literature.

Amira:

The Autobiography of Malcolm X as told to Alex Haley. A must read. It is an inspirational story that eloquently shares the strength of the human spirit, while providing a crucial American history lesson. Furthermore, it was pivotal in shaping my understanding of what it means to be an American.

Afroza:

Little Women by Louisa May Alcott. A charming story of four sisters and the adventures they have growing up as they learn about life.

Kirby:

The Tell-tale Heart by Edgar Allan Poe. Poe was best known for his dark poetry and short stories, and *The Tell-tale Heart* is a classic as it includes the perfect balance of crime, mystery, and the human experience. If you're up for some other spooky stories, check out Poe's *The Case of Amontillado* and his most famous poem, *The Raven*.

Leo:

The Illustrated Man by Ray Bradbury. It's something of a cliché to point out the prescient predictions of works of science fiction, but Ray Bradbury's *The Illustrated Man* stands out because it not only saw the future of technology, but also pointed to the ways in which this technology would change people's relationships with each other. Back when computers were the size of office buildings and ran on punch cards, Bradbury saw a world where children would grow more attached to their virtual reality toys than to their parents, and where married couples would become more connected to their counterparts' electronic doubles than to each other. Told through a series of 18 dreamy vignettes playing out on the tattooed body of a drifter, the *Illustrated Man* touches but doesn't dwell on nuclear warfare, despite this likely being a more common concern for readers in 1951 when it was published. Instead Bradbury follows imaginative social hypotheticals that have retained their relevance over decades. If interplanetary travel becomes possible, what could be its effects on race relations? If other planets are populated by intelligent beings, would our religions be relevant to them, or theirs to us? Who would proselytize to whom?

Lauren:

Black Boy by Richard Wright. *Black Boy* became an instant bestseller when it was published in 1945, and is one of Wright's many works credited with having a lasting impact on the civil rights movement. The book is a memoir wherein he describes his life as a boy growing up in an extremely impoverished and unstable family. It is a heavy read, but his stories of racism, poverty, and injustice are a jarring and visceral experience for the reader.

Nick:

Catch-22 by Joseph Heller. *Catch-22* is a hilarious and heartbreaking novel about the absurdity of war. The English term *catch-22* comes from this novel, and describes a situation with no solution because of contradictory rules. In the novel, World War II bomber pilots act crazy to get out of flying dangerous missions, but acting crazy to avoid danger is a sign of sanity, and thus they are considered fit to fly. This and similar absurdities are amusing at the start (you'll literally laugh out loud), but become increasingly serious, as the characters find that all these rules are simply masks for power.

Steph:

East of Eden by John Steinbeck. What I love most about this book is excellent character development that matches up with universal "human nature" themes throughout the novel. Love and hate, good and evil, rich and poor. This book is quite lengthy, but I found it hard to put down, as it is so well-written.

Will:

The Souls of Black Folk by W. E. B. Du Bois.

Have anything that you'd like to see in future Cultural Spotlight editions? Sports, holidays, local wildlife? Let us know! Email Jennie Avery at jsavery@illinois.edu with your suggestions for future content!