

Abraham Lincoln

Lauren Karplus

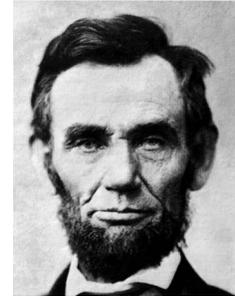
Illinois' motto is the "Land of Lincoln," and in February, we celebrate Lincoln's birthday. But who exactly was Abraham Lincoln?

He was the 16th president of the United States and served from 1861 until his assassination in 1865. He believed that the southern states should free their slaves, and when he was elected president, the southern states formed the Confederate States of America and went to war against the northern states. As the Civil War progressed, he led the northern states to victory and also pushed the thirteenth amendment to the US Constitution through Congress, thus permanently ending slavery in the United States.

Lincoln was born desperately poor, and spent part of his childhood in nothing but a hole in a hill called a "dugout". He had almost no formal schooling, and largely taught himself to read and write. As a young man, he was an avid and successful wrestler, and was defeated only once in approximately 300 matches. As an adult, he became a lawyer and practiced law throughout central Illinois. Later, when he ran for various political offices and the presidency, he gave many famous speeches in the town squares of Champaign-Urbana and the surrounding Illinois towns.

Today, you can see signs about these speeches outside of the downtown Urbana courthouse, where he also practiced law. On campus, you can see his statue in Lincoln Hall, where students rub his nose for good luck before exams. On the wall is a copy of his speech at Gettysburg, called the Gettysburg Address. This speech is one of the best-known in American history and is considered by many to be beautifully written.

Illinoisans are very proud to come from the state of Abraham Lincoln, and you can see this in the many buildings and streets that are named after him here.



In this issue:

Abraham Lincoln	1
Visit the Land of Lincoln	1
Celebrating Black History in the US	2
Galentine's Day	3
Kids on Valentine's Day	3
Get Ready for Valentine's with ISSS	3
Ask Igor the I-20!	4
College Basketball	5
ISSS Favorite Movies	6

Visit the Land of Lincoln

Jennie Avery

Abraham Lincoln, as you read above, was a fascinating man. If you want to get a fuller picture of who he was and what his life was like, just one hour away is Springfield, where you can find some great sites to learn more!

Lincoln Library - Houses documents from the life and presidency of Lincoln and also holds special exhibitions.

Abraham Lincoln Presidential Museum - Features exhibits ranging from traditional galleries to video, live action, and interactive presentations spanning the entire lifetime of Lincoln.

Lincoln Home - Take a guided tour of Lincoln's ACTUAL home in Springfield! Walk through the halls and rooms where the 16th President lived.

Old State Capitol - Take a short guided tour of the former capitol building or wander through yourself.

Celebrating Black History in the United States

Melissa Chin

In the United States, February is nationally recognized as Black History Month. Every year, we dedicate this month to Black artists, political leaders, inventors, and other important figures whose accomplishments throughout history have helped to shape modern-day American culture. While many of these leaders battled race-based discrimination and oppression that once prevented them from being recognized for their contributions to society, today, we use Black History Month to highlight the stories of these leaders and honor their legacies.

February's Black History celebration was originally established in 1926 as a week-long event that coincided with the birthdays of Abraham Lincoln and Fredrick Douglass during the second week of the month. The United States government eventually expanded the celebration to a whole month in 1976 as part of the festivities for the United States Bicentennial, which marked the 200th year since the founding of the country. Today, the month is celebrated with various festivals, museum exhibits, and documentary specials that are widely attended and watched across the country. There are plenty of opportunities for members of the University of Illinois community to get involved in these festivities.

Opportunities to Celebrate Black History Month in Illinois

All month long, the University of Illinois Bruce D. Nesbitt African American Cultural Center (BNAACC) will be hosting a series of events highlighting forms of Black cultural expression such as spoken word and Gospel, and delving into discussion topics surrounding leadership, intersectionality, and social activism in black communities within the University of Illinois community and beyond. You can learn more about BNAACC's events [here](#).

If you plan on visiting Chicago this month, there will be plenty of additional opportunities for you to learn about the history and culture of Black communities within the United States. The events held across the city will include concerts, film screenings, and poetry and literature readings, as well as discussions focused on historical and modern-day progressive social movements for Black equality. You can find a list of these events [here](#).

Even if you do not have time to attend Black History Month events this February, there are endless resources in your local library and online that can help you to learn more about the significance of the contributions that Black Americans have made to this country throughout history. The History Channel's Black History Month site is a wonderful resource that will give you an introduction to the importance of this month and the stories of the people that it celebrates. You can access this site [here](#).

I hope that you find these events and resources to be educational and inspiring as you explore these important layers of American history!



Galentine's Day?

Jennie Avery

Most people have heard of Valentine's Day – a holiday celebrating love, which was named after St. Valentine who was martyred for aiding Christians during the reign of Claudius Gothicus, and is observed in February because there is some evidence that maybe that's when birds mated in the Middle Ages. There is no definitive reason for why Valentine's Day was created, why it's celebrated in February, or why it was named for this saint. So instead of listing all of the possible reasons for why this holiday exists, let's talk about another holiday with a clear creation story:

Galentine's Day! This holiday was created by the character Leslie Knope on the popular television show Parks and Recreation as a way to recognize and celebrate the wonderful women in our lives. As Leslie Knope put it: "...it's only the best day of the year. Every February 13th, my lady friends and I leave our husbands and our boyfriends at home, and we just come and kick it, breakfast-style. Ladies celebrating ladies..." Since its first mention on the television show, Galentine's Day has become a widely celebrated holiday among American women. Celebrated on February 13th (the day before Valentine's

Day), it encourages women to celebrate each other's strength and awesomeness!

So this February 13th, I invite ALL of you to celebrate the wonderful women in your life!

Happy Galentine's Day!



Kids on Valentine's Day

Lauren Karplus

In American schools, most children give each other colorful greeting cards (valentines) on Valentine's Day. They can be homemade or bought in a store. Most schools require that students give a card to every student in their class so that no one feels left out. Some schools also allow students to bring in sweet treats such as chocolate, candy hearts, or cupcakes to share. Many children decorate and make their own heart-shaped valentines on or before Valentine's Day. In many families, parents give their children valentines and sometimes a small treat or gift to accompany it.

Get Ready for Valentine's with ISSS!

Looking for a fun way to prepare for Valentine's Day? On February 9th, come bake cookies and make homemade Valentine's cards with ISSS! Click the flyer below for more details!

VALENTINE'S BAKING PARTY!

Come get in the Valentine's Day spirit with ISSS!
We'll be baking and decorating cookies and making homemade Valentine's cards to get ready for the holiday!

Date: Thursday, February 9th
Time: 5:30-8:30pm
Place: Orchard Downs Community Center

To RSVP please contact Jennie at jsavery@illinois.edu

[@ISSSillinois](https://www.instagram.com/ISSSillinois)
[@ISSSillinois](https://twitter.com/ISSSillinois)
[facebook.com/illinoisISSS](https://www.facebook.com/illinoisISSS)

ILLINOIS INTERNATIONAL
International Student and Scholar Services



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 a poor college student on a budget. I recently joined an online dating site and would like to meet some people. My question is- how do I date cheaply while not appearing like a jerk? A meal at every date can get expensive.

-A dating daredevil

Dear Daredevil,
OMG, that’s so exciting! Way to get out there and meet some people! Yes, it is very possible to do a classy date without paying big money for a fancy dinner. Since first dates usually have some element of awkwardness to them, picking an activity can be a great icebreaker and usually doesn’t break the bank. Take them ice-skating at the ice arena, go on a stroll through the arboretum and the Japan House garden, volunteer together, or play a sport you both enjoy at the ARC. If you or your date are not so much into movement- visit one of many foreign film screenings which occur regularly on campus, attend a special guest lecture on a topic you both are interested in, or just do a coffee date at one of the local (non-chain) coffee shops. Also- remember that Krannert has special student ticket prices which don’t break the bank. Happy dating!

Take care,
Igor

Dear Igor,
I am in a major that is dominated by other men, and they often talk about being “friend-zoned” by the few hot girls in the program. I am also a dude, so I just laugh along, but I’m not really sure what the friend zone means. Can you explain it?

-Friendly zoned

Dear Friendly,
Umm....Stop laughing with them. Like, sorry guys, but the friend zone is an invented social concept made up by entitled people. Basically, two people have a friendship but one of the people in the friendship is only participating in the friendship because they are harboring secret romantic feelings for the other, and are just waiting for the day for the other friend to wake up and realize what was next to them the whole time. This is problematic because guys who believe in the friend zone think that since they are a nice guy to a woman, they should really be receiving some kind of romantic or sexual reward. Friendship doesn’t come with strings. Next time your friends joke about the friend zone, ask them point blank if they have ever asked these women on a date. If they haven’t, you can tell them to either ask them out or just be a friend to these women.

Take care,
Igor

Dear Igor,
I am a girl who hasn’t dated much. In my culture, it’s not really a thing. However, there’s this really cute American boy in my study group. I think he likes me, but I’m not sure. He is really thoughtful and often teases me and makes me laugh. Sometimes we stay at the library late talking about things besides school work. He’s never talked about other girls around me, and I feel like we’re really close at this point. We got dinner once after our study session when he wanted to try food from my country. Why hasn’t he asked me out?

-Lovesick in the Engineering Library

Dear Lovesick,
He TOTALLY likes you. Maybe. Probably. Who knows? Here’s the thing about American guys- sometimes they are not as direct in their interest as you might expect. Even though our movies show adults going on fancy dates and bringing each other flowers, that’s not the reality of how most Americans meet their partners. With the added challenges of dating apps and “hookup culture” on college campuses, sometimes it can be really hard to tell who is interested in a romantic relationship, who just wants a casual fling, and who wants a platonic friendship. It sounds like you guys are casual friends already. Which is great, because scientific studies have shown that couples who started out as friends have better relationships. If you’re interested in dating this friend, just ask him out! There is nothing wrong with saying “hey, would you like to go on a dinner date with me on Friday?” Then he’ll get the message loud and clear. If he says no, or says he likes you as a friend, you can just enjoy the friendship. If he says yes- have fun on your date!

Take care,
Igor



College Basketball

Nick Dunn



In this edition of the Cultural Newsletter Sports Page, we turn our attention to College Basketball. Since we're in the heart of the NCAA season, we'll take a look at how our Fighting Illini are doing, our prospects for the rest of the season (and post-season), and how you can get involved.

You know your cousin who's really smart but just never applies himself? At family gatherings, your aunt paints a rosy picture of his latest dead-end job and assures you he's on his way up, while your uncle just shakes his head in quiet disappointment before heading into the kitchen for another drink? Then you know the 2016-2017 Illini.

The early season exhibition games led to the usual good early-season record. The early season tournaments yielded a mixed record, with us beating the teams we should have, but without really rising to the challenge of more elite teams. With some of our tougher matchups still ahead of us, we're a mediocre 13-9 overall, and 3-6 in the Big Ten.

While there have been flashes of solid play, we've often looked like a team without an identity. It's never a great sign when you ask a die-hard fan for good news, and they pause a full ten seconds, and say, "well, we've got this new player coming in next year that we're excited about." For news on how that turns out, follow <https://twitter.com/IlliniMBB>.

And yet, the mood around Illini basketball is still high. The newly renovated (arena-formerly-known-as-The-Assembly-Hall-but-now-known-as The) State Farm Center is an NBA-quality venue offering great seats and a great fan experience at every price level. The Orange Krush student group is still hype every single home game (<http://illinipride.com/index.aspx?path=mbball>). And speaking of home games, we play much better here in Champaign-Urbana. With a 10-2 home record, you're likely to catch us at our very best if you catch a game at the State Farm Center (<http://www.statefarmcenter.com/>).

Besides attending a game, there are many ways to get involved. First, you can often catch the Illini games (and other major sporting events) televised at the Courtyard Café at the Illini Union. Second, keep your eyes open for March Madness, the basketball tournament held every March. Because it features the 68 best teams in the country, you won't see the Illini, but you *will* see some great basketball, some future NBA players, and maybe even a Cinderella story or two. Finally, a fun way to take part in March Madness itself is to participate in a tournament pool, where you fill out the tournament bracket (or table) and try to guess the winners. After Selection Sunday (March 12) when the teams are named, you can fill out a paper bracket as part of a pool at work or with friends, or you can play on sports sites like yahoo (<https://tournament.fantasysports.yahoo.com/>) or espn (<http://www.espn.com/mens-college-basketball/bracketology>).

Vocab:

Bracket: A visual representation of the tournament matchups, with the winners of one game playing the winners of another game, and so on. Points are assigned for each game winner you predict correctly, with more points for the later, bigger games.

Bracketology: This made-up word referring to the pseudo-science of predicting basketball winners is proof that there's no length Americans won't go to in taking our sports too seriously.

Cinderella Story: Similar to the eponymous servant girl in the old fairy tale, a Cinderella basketball team outperforms all expectations, catches national attention, and maybe even wins it all.

Final Four: This year's Final Four will be the first couple days of April, and will feature the final four teams left in the NCAA tournament.

March Madness: the NCAA tournament, played mostly in March every year, but culminating in April.

ISSS Favorite Movie Love Stories

With Valentine's Day quickly approaching, the ISSS staff shares their favorite movie love stories to make you feel all warm and fuzzy inside! Enjoy!

Dylan – The Wedding Singer - Why? Steve Buscemi delivers possibly the funniest and most awkward toast to the bride and groom you might ever have the chance to witness!

Lauren - Before Sunrise - An American man meets a French woman on a train, and they spontaneously spend a day together walking around Vienna talking about life and love. The movie expresses a deep longing to be completely understood by another human being, with a cliffhanger ending leaving you wondering about their destinies. Don't worry- there are equally beautiful sequels where the plot continues!

Martin - Star Trek II: The Wrath of Khan - Instead of romantic love, come here for the platonic love between crewmembers. Also an alien worm and a submarine battle in space.

Nick - Top Gun (1986) - Best love story on this list for so many reasons, but let's just focus on the soundtrack. Pete "Maverick" Mitchell and Charlotte "Charlie" Blackwood meet to the Righteous Brothers' You've Lost That Loving Feeling, bond over Otis Redding's Dock of the Bay, become a thing to Jerry Lee Lewis' Great Balls of Fire, and don't get me started about Berlin's Take My Breath Away.

Stephanie – Clueless - A modern-day spin on Jane Austen's movie novel Emma, set in Beverly Hills, California. Cher is pretty, popular, and wealthy, but cannot find love. She thinks she finds love in one of her classmates, Christian, but it turns out that he doesn't feel the same way about her. At the end of the movie, she ends up in love with someone she least expected. You'll have to watch the movie to find out who it is!

Will has two:

Love Actually (yin) and Closer (yang) - They represent the best and worst of relationships. They're both rather extreme in their own ways, but efficient.

Dracula - Just because of one line: "I have crossed oceans of time to find you" –Dracula to Mina



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!