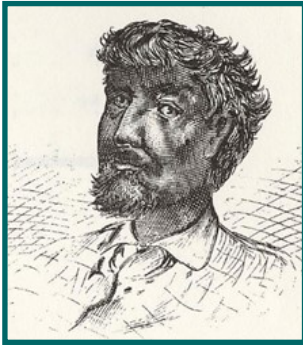


Black History Month in Illinois: Lesser-Known Stories by Lauren Karplus

February in the United States is Black History Month. In honor of Black History Month this year, ISSS would like to share with you a few notable individuals and historical events from Illinois.



1780s: Jean Baptiste Point du Sable, a black trader married to a Potawatomi woman, settled near Lake Michigan and established a successful trading and commerce

settlement. He is considered the "Founder of Chicago."

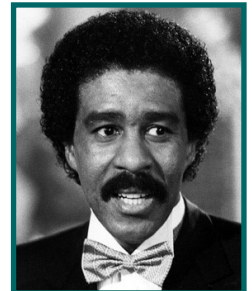
1700

1908: The 1908 Springfield Race Riot was sparked by a lynch mob forming after the arrest of two black men suspected of committing violent crimes against whites. The deadly riot which decimated the black district of the city led to the founding of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), which remains an important civil rights organization devoted to advancing justice for African Americans.

1800

1900-1930: The "Great Migration" of poor southern blacks to the northern US states increased Illinois' black population by 81%. Around the same time, "sundown towns" popped up all over Illinois, which violently kicked out long-standing black residents while preventing new ones from settling or even spending the night there.

1940: Richard Pryor was born in 1940 in Peoria, Illinois. Many comedians today consider him one of the most influential and edgy comedians in US history.



1900

1992: Illinois elected the first African American woman to serve in the U.S. Senate, Carol Moseley- Braun. She did not win re-election, but was later appointed Ambassador to New Zealand.



2000

Want information about events happening on-campus to celebrate Black History Month? Check out the events page on the Bruce D. Nesbitt African American Cultural Center (BNAACC) [webpage](#) for more details on upcoming events.

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Recipe Corner by Kara Porter

Love baking? We sure do! Here are a couple of recipes for you to enjoy during two popular Spring holidays celebrated in the United States: Valentine's Day and St. Patrick's Day. Want more information about these holidays? Check out past editions of the Cultural Newsletter [here!](#)

Red Velvet Sugar Cookies (for Valentine's Day)

Ingredients:

4 tablespoons unsalted butter, melted
1/3 cup sugar, plus extra for rolling
1 large egg yolk
1/2 teaspoon vanilla extract
1 teaspoon red gel food coloring
1/2 cup + 1 tablespoon flour
2 tablespoons unsweetened cocoa powder
1/4 teaspoon baking soda
1/8 teaspoon salt
6 white chocolate or chocolate heart candies

Directions:

Preheat oven to 350°F. Line a small baking sheet with parchment paper.

Combine the melted butter, sugar, egg yolk, vanilla extract, and food coloring.

Sprinkle in the flour, cocoa powder, baking soda, and salt. Stir until just combined.

Press the dough flat and evenly in the bowl. Divide the dough roughly in half (you should get about 3 cookies from each half).

Separate dough into 6 even sections. Roll each section into a ball and roll lightly in sugar. Space dough evenly on baking sheet.

Bake for 10-12 minutes, until dough spreads and starts to crackle on top.

Let cookies cool on baking sheet for 2 minutes before moving them to a baking rack.

After the cookies have cooled for another 10 minutes, press chocolate hearts into the center of each cookie.

Place cookies in refrigerator for 30 minutes to set.

Serve at room temperature.



Photo from: cupcakesncornbread.com

Irish Soda Bread (for St. Patrick's Day)

Ingredients:

4 cups all-purpose flour, plus extra for currants
4 tablespoons sugar
1 teaspoon baking soda
1 1/2 teaspoons salt
4 tablespoons (1/2 stick) cold unsalted butter, cut into 1/2 inch cubes
1 3/4 cups cold buttermilk, shaken
1 large egg, lightly beaten
1 teaspoon orange zest
1 cup dried currants or raisins

Directions:

Preheat oven to 375°F. Line a baking sheet with parchment paper.

Combine flour, sugar, baking soda, and salt using an electric mixer. Add the butter and mix on low speed until the butter is mixed into the dry ingredients.

Using a fork or whisk, lightly beat the buttermilk, egg, and orange zest together. With the mixer on low speed, slowly add the buttermilk mixture to the flour mixture.

Combine the currants with 1 tablespoon flour and mix into the dough. The dough will be very wet.

Dump the dough onto a well-floured board and knead it into a round loaf. Place the loaf on the prepared baking sheet and lightly cut an X into the top of the bread.

Bake loaf for 45-55 minutes, or until an inserted toothpick comes out clean.

Transfer loaf to a baking rack to cool. Serve warm or at room temperature.



Photo from: recipegirl.com

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,

It is SO COLD outside. I can walk from my apartment to classes and back, but I am too cold to go outside for anything. What do I do when I’m stuck in the apartment all day besides study? I’m going crazy!

Please send help,

Sunshine

Dear Sunshine,

Oh boy. Looks like you’ve got a bad case of cabin fever. Cabin fever is feeling bored or cranky as a result of indoor isolation during the winter. And since the groundhog saw his shadow a few days ago, looks like we have another six weeks of winter to go (look up “Groundhog’s Day”).

Make a job out of being stuck inside. Some ideas: Do a home exercise program from Youtube videos. (Exercise gives you endorphins. Endorphins make you happy. Happy people don’t kill their husbands. They just don’t). Try cooking new recipes. For American cuisine, you can use the online “Betty Crocker’s Cookbook.” Get a pop-culture fix by watching some of the greatest American movies and TV shows. Clean your house like you’re getting paid for it. Go through your clothes and make a “donation” pile for ones you don’t wear anymore. Most importantly- maintain contact with your friends and family so you don’t feel isolated!

Stay warm, Sunshine!

Igor

Dear Igor,

Spring Break is coming up. I think I will be bored on campus without anyone here. What should I do?

Sincerely,

Student without a Cause

Dear Student without a Cause,

Have you talked to your friends about their travel plans? Maybe you could undertake an epic American Road Trip or visit New York City. If the friends already made plans, take a few short solo trips to nearby cities like Chicago, St. Louis, and Indianapolis. If you’re close to graduation, you can use the time to learn about your post-completion work authorizations like OPT, and job-hunt like crazy! Maybe you can take some time to finally buy souvenirs/ gifts for your friends and family back home. It’s been a crazy year so far, so you should know there’s also nothing wrong with just staying around town and relaxing a bit before classes start up again.

You’ll find your cause!

Sincerely,

Igor



DO NOT FEED THE SQUIRRELS!

Feeding squirrels causes them to lose their natural fear of humans, and can lead to squirrels DYING at the hands of other predators.

Squirrels carry DISEASES such as fleas, ticks, ringworm, and PLAGUE, all of which you can contract if you feed them.

Squirrels who are fed might start BITING humans!

And always remember- squirrels are basically rats with better PR!



Winter Olympics by Nick Dunn



Like every other human being on planet Earth, I love the Olympics. I love the friendly-ish rivalries, the spirit of sportsmanship, the stories of athletes overcoming incredible odds to represent their country on their sport's largest stage (in most cases, anyway). Unfortunately, these inspirational stories of human triumph only come around every four years. So imagine my surprise when, just two years after Rio 2016, I heard South Korea would be hosting the Olympics! "They're doubling the rate at which I watch track and field, swimming, diving, and the like from once every four years to once every two years," I thought. Boy was I wrong. Turns out these are the *Winter* Olympics! Who knew?!

Lots of people, apparently. The Winter Olympics are a hugely popular spectacle spanning a couple weeks in February every four years. Their roots are in the "Nordic Games," which ran from 1901 to 1926. The International Olympic Committee got in on the act in 1924. That first Games in Chamonix, France saw Norway run away with the total medal count. The US stunk up the place with a lousy fifth place showing, but we climbed to number two in 1928, and finally topped the medal table at the Third Winter Olympics in Lake Placid, NY in 1932. Unsurprisingly, Norway has a solid lead in all-time medal count with 329, with the US a respectably close second at 282.

Now, if international rivalry and incredible athletic spectacle alone isn't enough to entice you to watch (and seriously, you NEED to watch the snowboarding this year if you're not already. Red Gerard won gold in men's slopestyle at just 17 years of age, and as a parent more than twice his age, I watched his death-, gravity-, and credulity-defying run with a mix of awe and a desire to send him to his room for disrespecting his elders by making them look bad), maybe watch with an eye toward the Illinois delegation. Kevin Bickner already had the best US men's normal hill ski jump outing in Red Gerard's lifetime; he and fellow Illinoisians Casey Larson and Michael Glasder return to the slope in a few days for the large hill event. Speedskaters Shani Davis, Brian Hansen, and Emery Lehman look to shine in longtrack skating events, and Lana Gehring will do work on the short track. In a sport near and dear to the Midwest, Kendall Coyne looks to help the US women's hockey team finally break through and take the gold from Canada. And closest to home, our own fellow Illini Aja Evans, who competed in track and field at University of Illinois from 2008 to 2010, is now burning up the bobsled track as Team USA looks to achieve their first women's bobsled gold medal since 2002. Cheer on Aja on February 20, and visit Olympic.org for more information on all these incredible athletes, how to watch, and more.

Earth Day by Jennie Avery

Right now it feels like winter will never end, and the cold will be here forever, but fear not! Spring really is just around the corner, and in central Illinois it is a beautiful time of year with pleasant temperatures and blooming flowers. One great way to embrace the coming of spring and the beauty it brings to the world is by celebrating Earth Day. This year Earth Day falls on April 22. Originally created in 1970, Earth Day aims to bring attention to the environmental issues facing our planet, from stopping pollution and global warming to promoting clean energy and protecting endangered species. Back then, there was far less attention paid to these issues, and Gaylord Nelson, who at that time was a senator from Wisconsin, driven by the disastrous consequences of the Santa Barbara oil spill of 1969, created Earth Day to bring these issues to the forefront.

Today, people celebrate Earth Day by participating in activities that both celebrate our environment and work to protect it. Many of the parks and nature centers in and around Champaign-Urbana offer activities and events for Earth Day. Check out [Anita Purves Nature Center](#) and the [Homer Lake Forest Preserve](#). Every year around Earth Day the [Boneyard Creek Community Day](#) also takes place, giving members of the Champaign-Urbana community the chance to help clean up our local waterways.

Need more ideas to celebrate Earth Day?

- Plant a tree! (Make sure you get permission to plant and that the species is one that will survive and thrive in the local environment).
- Plant a mini herbs and spices garden in your kitchen or yard!
- Start recycling!
- Reduce your use of plastic bags! Take reusable bags to do your shopping!
- Avoid using plasticware and disposable cutlery! (Plastics end up in landfills and oceans and take FOREVER to decompose).
- Try eating a vegetarian diet for the day! (The meat industry creates large amounts of pollution, and also is responsible for deforestation in many parts of the world).



ISSS Favorite April Fool's Day Pranks!

Ah, April Fool's Day is just around the corner. A few members of the ISSS team share best (and worst!) April Fool's pranks. At the very least, you'll be on your guard against such practical jokes around the weekend of March 31st and April 1st, or who knows, perhaps you'll learn a few ways to get in on the fun!

Cheryl: "Probably the worst April fool's prank I ever experienced was when a colleague LIED about having put out brownies for the staff in the back of the office. I know I wasn't the only one to give him a piece of my mind about that!"

Nick: "My favorite April Fool's Prank was one I pulled on my officemates a few years ago. I sent out an officewide email announcing brownies in the back. I heard excited footsteps charging past my door, then shouts of disappointment and anger as my colleagues found I'd set out a plate of brown-colored letter *Es*. Brown Es. Hadn't laughed that hard in years."

Erin: "Live fish in the neighbor's kitchen sink? Does that count?"

Holly: "I worked in an ****unnamed**** office once where the students workers reversed everything in their supervisor's cubicle. In others words, her mouse was on the left side, all the bulletin board items (and there were a LOT) were switched to the other side. She found it impossible to work and put every back the way it was."

Kara: "Plastic wrap under lids. Think shampoo, conditioner, soap bottles. Feels full. Nothing comes out. Not the best I've ever heard, but it's fun."

Kimberly: "Now, don't do this to your roommate or anything, but sometimes I've had roommates try to catch me first thing on April 1st and try to convince me classes were canceled for the day."

Holly again: "I also fell for an April's Fool Day prank when on online publication posted a news story that Trader Joe's was coming to Champaign at the corner of Neil and Windsor. I was VERY excited especially since I live near there. The thing was I didn't see the story until AFTER April Fool's Day, so it didn't occur to me it might be a prank. For MONTHS, I tried to figure out where they were going to put it at Neil and Windsor, until one day I notice the date on the story. VERY CRUEL JOKE."



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!