

Staying home not such a bad (spring) break

Area features wealth of diversions

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Spring break is right around the corner. Some fortunate students will be on a cruise ship through the Caribbean Islands; some will ski the mountains of Colorado; and others may just take a weekend trip to the Wisconsin Dells. For those stuck in the suburbs for spring break, however, Illinois features many diversions to fill up the longer, rainier days of spring.

Thanks to Good Friday, spring break starts one day early this year. Those who won't be among the thousands of people seeing Avril Lavigne at Allstate Arena can catch punk-poppers The Starting Line (touring with Bayside, Four Year Strong and Steel Train) at Wrigleyville's Metro on Friday, March 21, at 6 p.m. The following night, at 6:30 p.m., garage rock band Louis XIV will play the the same venue.

Other concerts to look out for during spring break include Three Days Grace with Breaking Benjamin and Seether at the iwireless Center in Moline on March 27. Another option is Rockford's very own Cheap Trick, who will be playing at the Assembly Hall in Champaign on Friday, March 28, at 7:30 p.m. or Saturday, March 29, at the NIU Convocation Center in DeKalb. For more information on concert events, see ticketmaster.com

For those interested in sports, the Chicago Blackhawks will play the St. Louis Blues March 23 at 2 p.m. at the United Center. See ticketmaster.com for more information.

Movie releases during spring break include *Drillbit Taylor* and *Shutter*. According to movies.yahoo.com, *Drillbit Taylor*, featuring Owen Wilson, is a comedy about a low-budget bodyguard who is hired to protect high school freshman from a bully. *Shutter*, on the other hand, is a horror flick about a young photographer and his wife who get more than expected on their honeymoon to Tokyo. Both films open March 21. See www.movies.yahoo.com for more information on theatre showings and movie ratings.

Spring break will give students the perfect chance to visit the Edward Hopper and "Watercolors" by Winslow Homer exhibits at The Art Institute of Chicago, an display that will end May 10. Do not forget to bring a student ID for a discount on tickets. Another exhibit featured by The Art Institute of Chicago is the photography collection of Ed Ruscha. According to the official website of The Art Institute of Chicago, Ed Ruscha is a conceptual artist of the late 1950s. His work was an inspiration for Jeff Wall, a photographer whose work was recently exhibited at this museum.

The Chicago Shakespeare Theatre's (CST) "Short Shakespeare!" productions feature a 75-minute production of *Romeo and Juliet* every Saturday at 11 a.m. Also, Navy Pier's CST will present a three-hour performance of *Othello*. For more information, call the box office (312) 595-5600 or visit www.chicagoshakes.com.

Starting March 19, The Field Museum will be featuring an exhibit titled "Mythic Creatures: Dragons, Unicorns, & Mermaids." If mythical creatures do not interest, one can visit the "Exploring the Arctic Seafloor" exhibit. According to the official website of The Field Museum, this exhibit features photographs of the undersea mountains near the North Pole taken by Chris Linder on an icebreaking ship.

Aquatic enthusiasts can touch a stingray in Stingray Bay at the Brookfield Zoo, open 10-4:30 p.m. The Adler Planetarium & Astronomy Museum offers the opportunity to experience the Milky Way galaxy with the daily showing of the movie *Black Holes: The Other Side of Infinity*. Daily show times are at 10:45 a.m., 12:15 p.m., 1:45 p.m. and 4 p.m.

Off the beaten path, another art display is the Andy Warhol Silver Clouds exhibit featured at the Loyola University Museum of Art. The official website of the Loyola University Museum of Art describes the exhibit, featuring silver helium-filled pillows that float to create what the museum's website describes as a "heaven-like" experience for visitors walking through it. Students can view the exhibit for free with student ID.

To observe the first signs of spring in nature, visit the Chicago Botanic Gardens. On March 29 and 30, 10 a.m.-4:30 a.m., there will be an Ikenobo Ikebana Show. According to www.chicagobotanic.org, this show features traditional Japanese flower arrangements that will follow the year's theme of design inspired by architecture in Chicago. During the show, there will be flower-arranging games and floral demonstrations.

Another option is to take a tour of The Chicago Theater. For \$5 a person, one can explore the historical and architectural highlights of the building. According to www.thechicagotheatre.com, this venue tour includes the backstage area, the lobby areas and the auditorium. These tours are given every Tuesday at noon.

The Museum of Contemporary Art (MCA) is now featuring an exhibit entitled "Recent Acquisitions: Focus on Chicago." In January, this exhibition started out as only displaying work of Chicago-based artists. MCA's website explains that since the beginning of March it also includes an international collection. The museum is closed on Mondays, gives free admission on Tuesdays and is discounted other days for students with IDs.

The Notebaert Nature Museum features an interactive exhibit that explores the biological origins of music. According to www.naturemuseum.org, this exhibit features a sound proof Jamming Room where one can create music and play back a song. There is also a Bioacoustic Lab where one can compare the human voice to other animals. The Power of Sound and Music Theater plays songs and sounds from all over the world. There are many other highlights of the exhibit, including a huge wall-mounted xylophone that visitors can play. Admission to the museum is free on Thursdays and only \$7 with a student ID on other days.

With all these activities a train, bus or short car ride away, getting "stuck" at home over spring break is not such a bad thing.

