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Oddball Illinois: A Guide To Some Really Strange Places (Oddball States)



Synopsis

There is more to Illinois than just cornfields and the Windy City. The Land of Lincoln has plenty of fascinating people, places, and things with unique and bizarre histories. Find these under-appreciated destinations the local Chamber of Commerce would love to forget: The Deli Sliced Duo; Popeye's Hometown; America's one and Only Hippie Memorial; Jesus in a Tree; Wild green parrots in the heart of Chicago; Scarlett O'Hara's green curtains; The Devil Baby of Hull House; A double-decker outhouse; Statues that weep; and many more sites.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

"(Pohlen's) prose makes reading the Oddball guides a delight" -- Salt Lake Tribune
"A romp" -- Arlington Height Daily Herald
"For those who are up to an adventure, but don't like to venture too far from home." -- The Tri-County News-Williamsfield Times Edition
"Interesting and unusual." -- Chicago Parent
"This is not your parents' travel book, but in the new millennium, all guides will be written like this." -- Chuck Shepherd, News of the Weird
"a veritable smorgasbord of oddities" -- Daily Herald
"one irresistible guidebook" -- Chicago Tribune
"this book demonstrates just how offbeat Illinoisans can get" -- CityTalk, PBS Chicago
"what a great job Jerome Pohlen has" -- Indianapolis Prime Time Magazine
Takes a wry look at some of those little discoveries that can make your travel day. -- The Courier

Jerome Pohlen is the author of the Oddball series and a regular travel commentator for 848 on

WBEZ, the Chicago affiliate of National Public Radio. He is a recent recipient of the Illinois Associated Press Broadcasters Award for Best Essay. He lives in Chicago.

As someone born and raised in Chicago I thought I was familiar with the many facts and strange things about Illinois; however, this book made me aware of how little I knew about "Oddball Illinois." This book covers the entire state from the big city of Chicago to the suburbs, north, south and central Illinois. This volume is organized into seven parts. Part one covers the many strange things about Chicago. Some of the things mentioned include the following: The loopy Loop, eccentric eateries, mini-museums, public art, riots in Chicago and other topics. The second part moves to the Chicago suburbs, and the many odd things about them. The third part is about the weird things in Northern, Illinois. Central, Illinois is covered in section four. The fifth section deals with Southern, Illinois. If you are looking for some unusual theme tours, section six will explain all about them. The final section is the epilogue which also includes the acknowledgements, recommended sources and the index by city and name. In conclusion, if you are from Illinois or one of our surrounding states, and have an interest in strange and usual things about a state, you might want to check out this book. It is an entertaining read. Rating: 4 Stars. Joseph J. Truncale (Author: Never Trust a Politician: A critical review of politics and politicians)

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Okay, here's the deal with this book- if you're like me and my friends and you drive around in search of adventure, this book is way awesome! "Oddball Illinois: A Guide to Some Really Strange Places" has tons of neat places to visit! Popeye's hometown, a broom museum and the sight of the Valentine's Day Massacre are only a few of the featured places. Some of the places are famous- The Museum of Science and Industry, and some are relatively unheard of- The Hindsdale Animal Cemetery. The greatest asset of this fine piece of literature is that it includes admission fees and visiting hours where applicable. And because it was written so recently, most of the info is very up-to-date. Jerome Pohlen is quite funny in his comments and makes this book a truly fun experience. SOME STUFF YOU MIGHT WANT TO THINK ABOUT BEFORE YOU EMBARK UPON ONE OF THESE ADVENTURES: An IL road map and internet directions can make finding some of the smaller towns much easier. Trust me on that one! Anyway, happy reading and enjoy some of those really stange places!

What a great travel book for people who want to see the uncommercialized part of our country. We're going to Illinois this summer, and now we can't wait to get there. The author provides directions and regional maps to interesting and sometimes just plain goofy places that a lot of the local residents probably don't even know about. The author's irreverent descriptions and comments, filled in with little-known historical "facts" about famous and infamous people and places have made us laugh out loud. This book reminds me of the old "On the Road" T.V. series when Charles Karault interviewed interesting people in little out-of-the-way communities. I hope this author has more books about other states. I'd love to have one about my area here in Central California. He'd have a field day.

If you're into Ira Glass, P.J. O'Rourke, or David Sedaris, you'll get into the humor of this book. It's filled with places you don't normally find in a guidebook like the world's largest bottle of catsup, Hitler's bicycle, and a two-story outhouse with the author's recommendation to "take the one on top." Most of the places have accompanying photos so you can see if The Choo Choo Restaurant is really your cup o' tea and the Chicago section is especially strong. Everyone I've talked to says, "This guy should come to MY neck of the woods", proving that there is enough tackiness in this country to go around.

Even if you don't live in Illinois or plan to visit, the offbeat humor in this book makes it well worth reading. More than half the book is given over to Chicago and the burbs. For the location of many sites mentioned in the book, you'll see the original structures have been torn down. So while you may go to where the 1st skyscraper was constructed, you won't see it today. The areas outside of Chicago are covered in much less detail. The author has included 3 maps covering northern, central, and southern Illinois to help with locating these more out of the way attractions. The book has a somewhat disturbing bent towards scenes of violence and death. Cemeteries are covered in detail as are sites of various tragedies.

This book is so fun to read. If you live in Illinois, you will love finding out the very strange things that exist in the Land of Lincoln. I live in Chicago, and there is a VERY large section of this book that deals with Chicago and it's wierdness. From cemeteries to strange house decorations to wild birds living in a local park.....Illinois is so much more than I ever imagined....and I've lived here for over 25 years. Get this book and put it on your coffee table, you will find yourself picking it up over and over again.

"Oddball Illinois," is a great guide to wacky and weird places around the state. Although there is a lot of places in Chicago, the book also talks about the burbs and Southern Illinois. I do wish that this book had more of the great photos that the other "Oddball," books have...otherwise this is a great book!

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