

Editor's Note



Chicago, Illinois, the third largest city in the United States, is the city we “visit” in this issue. Chicago is a city with a rich (sometimes infamous) history and many attractions for visitors.

My first trip to Chicago was during high school, when I was one of the editors of my school newspaper who got to attend a journalism conference at the Palmer House, a large hotel in the heart of the city. It’s hard to say what my classmates and I enjoyed more about that trip—learning about journalism from professionals or exploring the elegant lobby of that hotel and its arcade of inviting shops.

Over the years, I have returned to Chicago many times, mostly to visit friends. One friend, for a time, lived near Wrigley Field, home of the Chicago Cubs. One summer she and I walked to the ballpark for a quintessential American experience—attending a baseball game on the Fourth of July. What could be more American than watching our national sport on our nation’s Independence Day?

Whatever the season, when I go to Chicago, I like to spend time by Lake Michigan. This great body of water (307 miles long and, at its widest, 118 miles across) is more like a sea than a lake. Its deep blue expanse, often dotted with white sails, flows into the horizon. Depending on the season, I have swum in the lake, scoured its beaches for sea glass, and shivered at the sight of its icy edges frozen in waves by winter winds.

Besides the lake, Chicago has a river—the Chicago River—that runs through the city. On my last trip to Chicago, I took a boat ride on the river with some friends. We cruised along, admiring some of the city’s finest architecture. Then we traversed the locks that allow boats to pass from the river to Lake Michigan. Out on the lake, we watched the sun set behind the Chicago skyline. It was peaceful away from the city, the water lapping against the boat, as we looked back at the silhouette of skyscrapers haloed by a pink sky. Later, as we cruised toward shore, the Ferris wheel on Navy Pier was a festive circle of yellow light against the night sky. That boat trip was a lovely way to end that day in Chicago.

But your time with Chicago is just beginning. Turn the pages of this issue, and you’ll learn more about the landmarks I’ve mentioned (and many others) in the feature article. And the lesson plan will tell you an interesting fact about the Chicago River. I hope you’ll enjoy learning, and teaching, about the Windy City.