

4 museums off the beaten path

By Elyse Russo

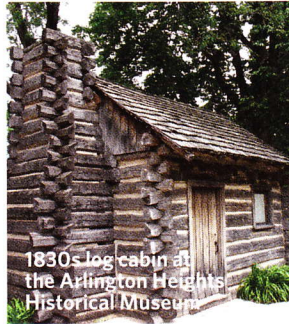
The Field Museum and the Art Institute are fantastic, but what about museums in your own backyard? A new—closer and more affordable—adventure awaits your family at one of these four often lesser-known institutions.



A kids craft morning



A staff member bumps heads with a bobcat



1830s log cabin at the Arlington Heights Historical Museum



Herposaurus, a prehistoric dinosaur

THE MITCHELL MUSEUM OF THE AMERICAN INDIAN

This 33-year-old institution offers tools, clothing and other artifacts from five major tribes in the U.S. and Canada. Touching tables allow visitors to feel the materials Native Americans used. And every Saturday morning, children are invited to make Native American-inspired crafts at Kids Craft Mornings (call ahead). The exhibit "Keepsake: Porcupine Quillwork," through February 20, showcases more than 30 quill-crafted objects. Through July 10, "Carved with Care: Zuni Fetishes and Carvings" displays more than 60 Zuni fetish carvings—small animal-shaped creations made from stones and minerals that are believed to hold supernatural powers or house spirits.

3001 Central St., Evanston
847-475-1030
mitchellmuseum.org
Adults \$5, children \$2.50

WILDLIFE DISCOVERY CENTER

A cross between a museum and an intimate zoo, the Wildlife Discovery Center gives families an opportunity to observe and learn about animals in reconstructed habitats. Species of birds, turtles, crocodiles, lizards and snakes at the center hail from Illinois as well as far-flung regions of the globe, like the Rhinoceros Viper of Africa and the Crocodile Monitor lizard of New Guinea. Snake-lovers will gush over the exhibit "Grass is Rattling," the largest public display of live rattlesnakes in the nation. If birds of prey pique your family's interest, check out the three outdoor enclosures for a red-tailed hawk, Harris' hawk and a great horned owl.

1401 Middlefork Dr., Lake Forest
847-614-4388
cityoflakeforest.com
Residents \$5, non-residents \$8

ARLINGTON HEIGHTS HISTORICAL MUSEUM

German immigrant and soda pop maven Frederick W. Müller decided to build his home and business in Arlington Heights in 1882. Fortunately for modern-day museumgoers, his factory, home, coach house and daughter's home have all been restored. Parents will enjoy the architecture of the Müller daughter's Arts and Crafts-style home, while children delight in the more than 1,000-piece doll display and the Lorraine Korenthal Dollhouse Collection. Hour-long tours on Saturday and Sunday take visitors through a replica of an 1830s log cabin and the Heritage Gallery and Shop, which features "Arlington Heights on the Move," an exhibit on the history of transportation.

110 W. Fremont St., Arlington Heights
847-255-1225 | ahmuseum.org
Adults \$4, children \$2

LAKE COUNTY DISCOVERY MUSEUM

Lake County is full of surprises—it was the location of the largest train robbery in U.S. history, for instance—and this museum is dying to share them. Children are encouraged to get hands-on at Kids Stops. Learn about Lake County's 10,000-year history on a raucous ride in the Vortex Roller Coaster Theater. Through June 26, the "Paleoart" exhibit presents reconstructed models and images of dinosaurs and other pre-historic beasts. And the newly opened exhibit "Civil War High Tech" is all about the technological advances that resulted from the war.

27227 N. Forest Preserve Rd., Wauconda | 847-986-3400
lcpd.org/discovery_museum
Adults \$6, seniors and students \$3, children \$2.50, children 3 and under free

Photos courtesy (L to R): Mitchell Museum, Wildlife Discovery Center at Elawa Farm, Arlington Heights Historical Museum, Tyler Keilor

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