Season's Greetings

It’s not often that we here in Central Illinois get a real snow day. But as Peoria digs itself from over twelve inches of snowfall thanks to the Groundhog Day Blizzard of ’22, Peoria Pons would like to share some highlights over the past Holiday Season. In this issue, we recount some of the most interesting recent events from our local community and recognize a few of our own Student Interest Groups.

So put down that snow shovel, take a break from whatever you’re studying, grab some hot chocolate, and find a cozy reading place. And do enjoy this special Holiday-themed issue.
Upcoming Events

**Peoria Art Guild**
Ongoing Event
203 Harrison St, Peoria, IL, 61602
Check out some of the classes that the Peoria Art Guild is offering:
https://www.peoriaartguild.org/currentclasses

**Peoria Rivermen Hockey Game**
Sunday, February 27th
Peoria Civic Center
3:15PM
Come join our Peoria Rivermen face off against the Vermillion Bobcats on the ice!

**UICOMP March Blood Drive**
Tuesday, March 15th
UICOMP Room A100-2
10:00AM to 3:00PM
To schedule an appointment, go to https://www.redcrossblood.org/ and use sponsor code UICOM

**Match Day**
Friday, March 18th
Embassy Suites, East Peoria
10:00AM Social / 11:00AM Envelope Opening
Please mark your calendars for the Match, as we congratulate our current M4s in the Class of 2022 as they take the next step in their medical training!

**Research Day 2022**
Tuesday, March 29
Location TBD
Abstract submissions are now being accepted. The submission deadline is the end of the day on February 28th. The keynote speaker will be Dr. Rhonda Magee, Professor of Law, from the University of San Francisco.
Annual Halloween Party for Children with Diabetes

What’s Halloween without sugar? That’s a question families may find themselves struggling to answer if they are raising a child with diabetes. Luckily, patients in Peoria had a healthy and easy option for this year’s Halloween festivities. On Saturday, November 6th, the UICOMP Pediatrics Student Interest Group hosted a trick or treat event for patients with diabetes, with invitations sent out to patients of the Pediatric Diabetes Resource Center at OSF. The kids were given a bag of sugar-free candies, and had a wide variety of options for activities, including toilet paper mummy wrap, bin-ghost (bingo), arts and crafts, a photo booth, pumpkin toss, and more. Due to COVID restrictions, the event was held outside, which meant that the usual activities had to be adjusted. However, this did not stop the event from going smoothly.

Nejla Ghane (M3) from the Pediatrics Student Interest Group had this to say: “Based on the feedback we got this year, the parents were grateful to meet other families with a child with diabetes. One mother remarked how there are only 2 other children with diabetes in her 7-year-old daughter's school district, and because they are both in HS, the kiddo doesn't have very many other people to connect to. They drove 1.5 hours to our event this year! I think the kiddos just enjoy being kids and meeting people that they can relate to. Type 1 diabetes is a life-changing diagnosis and some level of ‘normalcy’ can be comforting for these kids.”

Grant Williams (M2)
The Public Employees for Community Concerns (PECC) is a group of African-American City of Peoria employees who joined together to try to enlighten and empower African-Americans and the community as a whole. Their mission statement is to provide an extension of local government to the minority community, promote networking among public employees, facilitate and advocate discussion of the community's concerns and increase the visibility of public employees within the community.

For over 20 years, they have organized an annual luncheon in honor of the birthday of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Their speakers have included Dr. Maya Angelou, James Earl Jones, Martin Luther King III, Ambassador Andrew Young, Michael Eric Dyson, Condoleezza Rice, and Danny Glover. This year's speaker is Sybrina Fulton, the mother of Trayvon Martin.

Medical students with UHP were able to provide blood pressure checks for Peoria community members who attended the luncheon. Students were also able to listen to powerful keynote speaker Sybrina Fulton who reminded us that it has been 10 years since the controversial death of Trayvon Martin and to empower us to seek the change we want to see. She is a role model to many and the luncheon was a beautiful way to celebrate and participate in a day dedicated to Dr. King.

Zaphrirah Chin (M1)
Herb-of-the-Month

Salvia officinalis | Garden Sage

The science of herbs is fascinating and as a monthly feature, we here at Gardening Club plan to share our unique experiences with herbs. By no means are we herbalists; we only wish to herbaceously add to your medical school life in quirky and informative ways. This month’s feature is *Salvia* "Sage"

Sage is a Mediterranean herb with many medicinal and culinary properties. It can be used to preserve meat, as an antiseptic, and its extract has been found to improve memory and cognitive ability in mild to moderate Alzheimer’s disease in healthy individuals. The latter is due to its rich history as brain-enhancing tonics and its ability to influence the effects on amyloid-beta, cholinergic activity, neurotrophins, oxidative stress, inflammation and anxiolytic/antidepressant behaviors that are all relevant to cognitive activity and performance. Read more here: https://rdcu.be/cFGil

While the Gardening Club does cultivate Sage in its medicinal garden, we are currently in transition for the colder months and our Sage will be back in the Spring for your available use. As a winter splurge, I highly recommend visiting a local nursery or grocery store for these simple hacks.

**All-purpose surface cleaner:** Mix a handful of fresh sage, leaves, and stem, into a metal pan. Add 1.25 cups of water, cover, bring to a slow simmer for 20 minutes, then let cool. When the liquid has cooled, strain and pour into a plastic or glass bottle. Add 2 tablespoons of baking soda and 8 drops of lemon juice. Shake well. Use to clean sinks, bathroom, and kitchen surfaces. Store in a refrigerator for up to 1 week.

**Herbal room spray:** Use two handfuls of sage and repeat the method above but stop after letting the fresh sage cool. Strain cooled liquid into a spray bottle and spray about a room.

**Drying Sage:** Separate leaves from the stems and lay on a flat surface covered with cheesecloth. Place out of direct sunlight in a dry, airy room for 2 weeks; I recommend a closet and laying additional cheesecloth over the leaves to prevent dust. Tie in a bundle to burn and herbalize your room or use dried sage for your tea endeavors. Remember, dried herbs taste noticeably different and are more potent than fresh herbs.


Zaphrrirah Chin (M1)
SIG Spotlight In this section we ask you, the readers, about the student interest groups that you’re involved with. Each month, we highlight a group and find out what they do and why you should join.

In this edition of SIG Spotlight, Katherine Floess (M3) and Board Game Club President tells us more about the SIG, why it is important, and how you can get involved.

What made you start this SIG?
I started Board Game Club as a fun way to build community among my fellow medical student classmates. I recently became more interested in the hobby, and this club seemed like the perfect opportunity to explore new games. Medical school is often quite busy and intense, so I wanted Board Game Club to be a fun place where students could destress as well as build community and just do something different than studying or being in clinic. The club is also an opportunity to meet new students from different classes; we have members ranging from M1 to M4. Furthermore, I do think that board games have applications to medicine. For example, many games require critical thinking as well as collaboration, skills very important to medicine.

Who should join?
Anyone should join our club! Board Game Club is very informal; we require no commitment. We meet either at the school lounge or at a member’s apartment to play games. We also welcome new players to board games! We explain every game before we play and always include beginner-friendly games, so there’s no need to have prior experience. I’m also hoping to host online games so that we can continue to play even when COVID considerations make holding in-person events difficult.

What does your SIG do?
Our SIG hosts board game nights! We offer multiple options for board games at our game nights and everyone can decide what games we want to play! We also always offer food at board game nights because no one can play games on an empty stomach.

What are your SIG’s goals for this year?
Since this is our first year as a SIG, I would like to make sure that it becomes an established and integral part of UICOMP. Additionally, I would like the medicinal plant garden to be up and running fully in the spring!

When is your next meeting?
Our next meeting will be in February, exact date TBD.

Is there anything else we should know about your SIG that you didn’t get to discuss?
Nothing!

For those who want to join, whom should they contact?
Please contact Katherine Floess kfloess2@uic.edu AND join our Board Game Club discord --- https://discord.gg/gFM8SMXmKq

Tahsin Zaman (M3)
OTHER ANNOUNCEMENTS

Know of anything Pons-tacular?

We are always looking for stories, events, or accomplishments that happen around UICOMP. If you have a story you’d like to see included in the Peoria Pons, please email written articles to the Pons team. Keep all articles to 250 words or less; photos are always encouraged. Deadline: 25th of every month.

THE LIST OF STUDENT INTEREST GROUPS AND CONTACT INFO
Click here

THE LIST OF ELECTED STUDENT LEADERS 21-22
Click here

Winter Break Student Highlight

Chicago is one of the very few places in Illinois where you can live ten minutes away from a beach. My family, living on the South Side of Chicago, often admired a quiet suburban life, but Lake Michigan was one of the things that made our small abode in the city invaluable. This year, we went to Siesta beach to celebrate Christmas. And I can say that it was not only the serene beauty of the beach that made the trip special, but also the precious memories associated with an endless body of water and my family. We were away from home this Christmas, but the effect we shared never was.

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