

THE ILLINOIS PRAIRIE PATH NEWSLETTER

WINTER 1986

What one trail lover looks for on the Path —
a poetic tribute by Donald G. Westlake, Wheaton:

THE PRAIRIE PATH

West from Chicago the C.A. & E. had been
carting commuters away from their labors
To Lombard, Aurora, and Elgin and Wheaton—
to homes and to spouses and families and neighbors.

Gone are the traces of ties and steel rails; ah, yes,
gone are the trains that were powered by spark.
All the rattle and clang are but memories now
on the Path—May Watts' dream of a linear park.

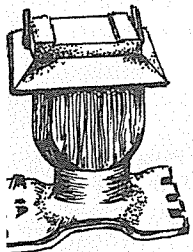
Riders on horseback pass walkers and joggers,
while cyclists and runners—they also abound.
There are botany students in search of their samples;
sly birdwatchers spy, and they hark to the sound.

Year-round we see bluejays, so brash and aggressive,
and black caps of chickadees flashing about,
While the cardinal pairs of a color so brilliant
are flirting in treetops by lyrical shout.

The views are as varied as varied can be,
as the woodlands and meadows give way to deep fens
With their cattails, marsh grasses, and muskrats and frogs,
and with vigilant woodchucks who peek from their dens.

The Path makes a statement of Nature's raw beauty
and humankind's action when given good cause.
It's a place to find peace in the midst of confusion,
an orderly haven in which to take pause.

Still is found
sometimes along
the path.



C.A. & E. electric insulator assembly



ANNUAL MEETING

At the DuPage County Historical Museum in Wheaton President Paul Mooring opened the meeting by introducing all current and former board members in attendance. After the treasurer's report was presented by Joan Hamill (see insert), membership chair Dee Tevonian announced that as of the meeting date, November 2, the Path had 1,599 dues-paying members who had contributed a total of \$18,013. Donations were \$7,587, making a combined total of \$25,600.

Jon Duerr, chairman of the nominating committee, announced the names of the board members whose terms were expiring and all of whom had agreed to accept renomination: Susan Aisenbrey, Nancy Becker, Brent Coulter, Robert Hargis, Nancy Hesler, and Larry Sheaffer. Brent had been elected to the board in August to complete the remaining term of Lynn Dostal, who had resigned for personal reasons. Lynn will be long remembered as one of the most highly-skilled and enthusiastic workers on the Volunteer Bridge project and we wish the best for him and his family. Brent holds a Bachelor's Degree in Civil Engineering from Vanderbilt University in Nashville and a Master's in Urban Planning and Transportation from the University of Iowa. An avid cyclist and longtime friend of the Path, he has cheered our progress through 6½ years as a planner with the DuPage County Regional Planning Commission and 1½ years with the county division of transportation where he rose to become superintendent. He is currently employed at Cemcon Ltd., Wheaton. All the nominees were unanimously reelected.

Mooring then presented the president's report listing the ups and downs of the year just past. Two major setbacks were the loss of our insurance in January and the subsequent termination of our twenty-year lease with DuPage County. On the brighter side Mooring cited the signing of a consultation agreement with DuPage County, under the terms of which the county would provide liability coverage for volunteers working on Path projects with permits from the county. He also reported that the county division of transportation has assumed responsibility for major trail maintenance and development and has already made significant improvements this year.

The principal focus of the president's report was on the implications of the summer/fall issue of the **News of DuPage**, the county's official newsletter. This publication carried a two-page story about the county's plans for preserving and enhancing a "45-mile linear park" called the "DuPage Parkway". The accompanying map showed the Illinois Prairie Path all right but with each of the three branches plainly labelled "DuPage Parkway". Mooring told the 60 persons in attendance at the meeting that at this point the IPP board had become very concerned about this apparent change of the Path's name, and he then gave a chronology of the name of the trail.

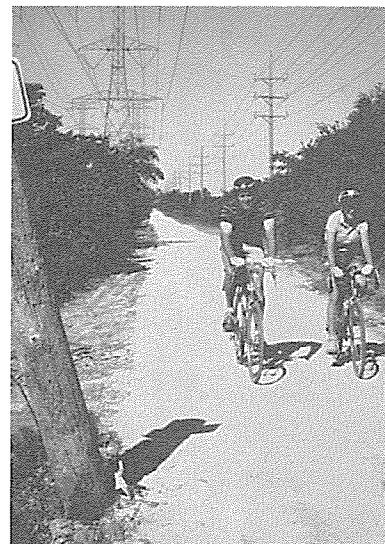
1. In 1964 the Committee for the Illinois Prairie Path was formed by May Theilgaard Watts and her friends.
2. In 1965 The Illinois Prairie Path was chartered as a not-for-profit corporation by the State of Illinois.
3. On May 10, 1966 the newly-formed not-for-profit corporation signed a lease with DuPage County to establish a "prairie path" on the property that the county had just acquired from the CA&E Railway.
4. In 1967 the first Illinois Prairie Path signs were installed on the trail.
5. Not until October 7, 1969 did the DuPage County Board pass a resolution naming those parts of the old railroad right-of-way that it owned the DuPage Parkway "for the sake of convenience". It should be noted that there are parts of the Prairie Path in DuPage County that are not on the county-owned former railroad right-of-way called the DuPage Parkway. A good example is the half-mile stretch on Brooks McCormick's property at Saint James Farm. Obviously, by definition, the Kane County and Cook County sections of the Illinois Prairie Path can not possibly be on the DuPage Parkway either.
6. On August 26, 1986 the DuPage County Board passed a second resolution relating to the name of the trail, which reads in part. . . "The Illinois Prairie Path has worked tirelessly for many years to enhance all aspects of the **DuPage Parkway**". . . and has been "actively involved in the promotion of this valuable natural resource known as the **DuPage Parkway**. . ." (Italics ours). Immediately after this an article naming the entire three-county trail the DuPage Parkway appeared in the official DuPage County newsletter.

Mooring concluded, "I recently appeared before the Highway Committee and asked it to introduce a resolution to be considered by the county board to officially name the Prairie Path in DuPage County, ILLINOIS PRAIRIE PATH (DUPAGE COUNTY SECTION). That the committee would not agree to do. . . This has been a great personal disappointment to members of our board. . . I might add that both the State of Illinois and the Department of the Interior of the United States have officially recognized the Path's name as the Illinois Prairie Path."

Next to speak was Jean Mooring, board member, Glen Ellyn, who said: "I believe the whole controversy over the Prairie Path name is caused by a failure of communication. The members of the DuPage County Board do not know how deeply hurt the members and friends of The Illinois Prairie Path are by the county board's failure to recognize our work in creating and developing the trail for more than twenty years. The only way this recognition can be shown is by officially naming the trail Illinois Prairie Path (DuPage County Section). The reason the county board members do not know how we feel is because we have never told them, and we never told them because we didn't know it was a problem until the county newsletter came out.

"The fact is that there is no legal reason for the county board not to name the trail Illinois Prairie Path.

"Therefore, I believe that the members and friends of The Illinois Prairie Path can be confident that the DuPage County Board will be glad to recognize our work by approving our resolution to name the trail. I move that the members of The Illinois Prairie Path instruct their Board of Directors to submit to the DuPage County Board for its approval the following resolution officially naming the trail within the boundaries of DuPage County ILLINOIS PRAIRIE PATH (DUPAGE COUNTY SECTION)."



Aurora Branch of Prairie Path southwest of Molitor Road was surfaced this year for first time by DuPage County.

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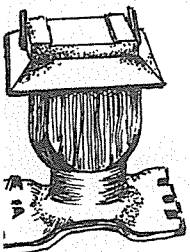
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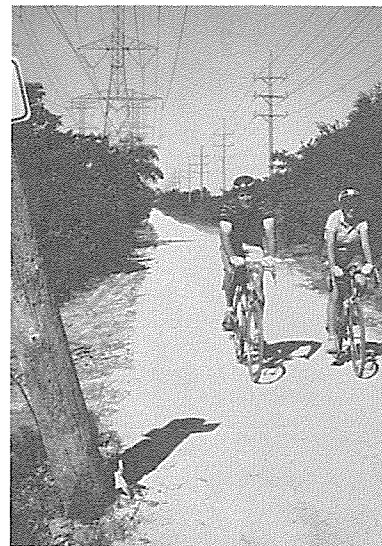
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