

Elgin FALL 1993

THE ILLINOIS PRAIRIE PATH NEWSLETTER

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Lombard

Villa Park

Elmhurst

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VOICE OF THE PEOPLE

FUTURE FOOTPATH?

Naperville, Sept. 25—We are human beings. We are able to walk upright on two feet. We need a footpath. Right now there is a chance for Chicago and its suburbs to have a footpath, a long one.

The right of way of the Aurora electric road lies waiting. If we have courage and foresight, such as made possible the Long trail in Vermont, and the Appalachian trail from Maine to Georgia, and the network of public footpaths in Britain, then we can create from this strip a proud resource.

Look ahead some years into the future. Imagine yourself going for a walk on an autumn day. Choose some part of the famed Illinois footpath. Where the highway crosses it, you enter over a stile. The path lies ahead, curving around a hawthorn tree, then proceeding under the shade of a forest of sugar maple trees, dipping into a hollow with ferns, then skirting a thicket of wild plum, to straighten out for a long stretch of prairie, tall grass prairie, with big blue stem and blazing star and silphium and goldenrod.

You must go over a stile again, to cross a highway to another stile. This section is different. The grass is cut and garden flowers bloom in great beds. This part you may learn, is maintained by the Chicago Horticultural society. Beyond the garden you enter a forest again; maintained by the Mor-

CHICAGO TRIBUNE, ton arboretum. At its edge begins a long stretch of water with mud banks, maintained for water birds and waders, by the Chicago Ornithological society. You notice an abundance of red-fruited shrubs. The birds have the Audubon societies to thank for those. You rest on one of the stout benches provided by the Prairie club, beside a thicket of wild crab apple trees planted by the Garden Club of Illinois.

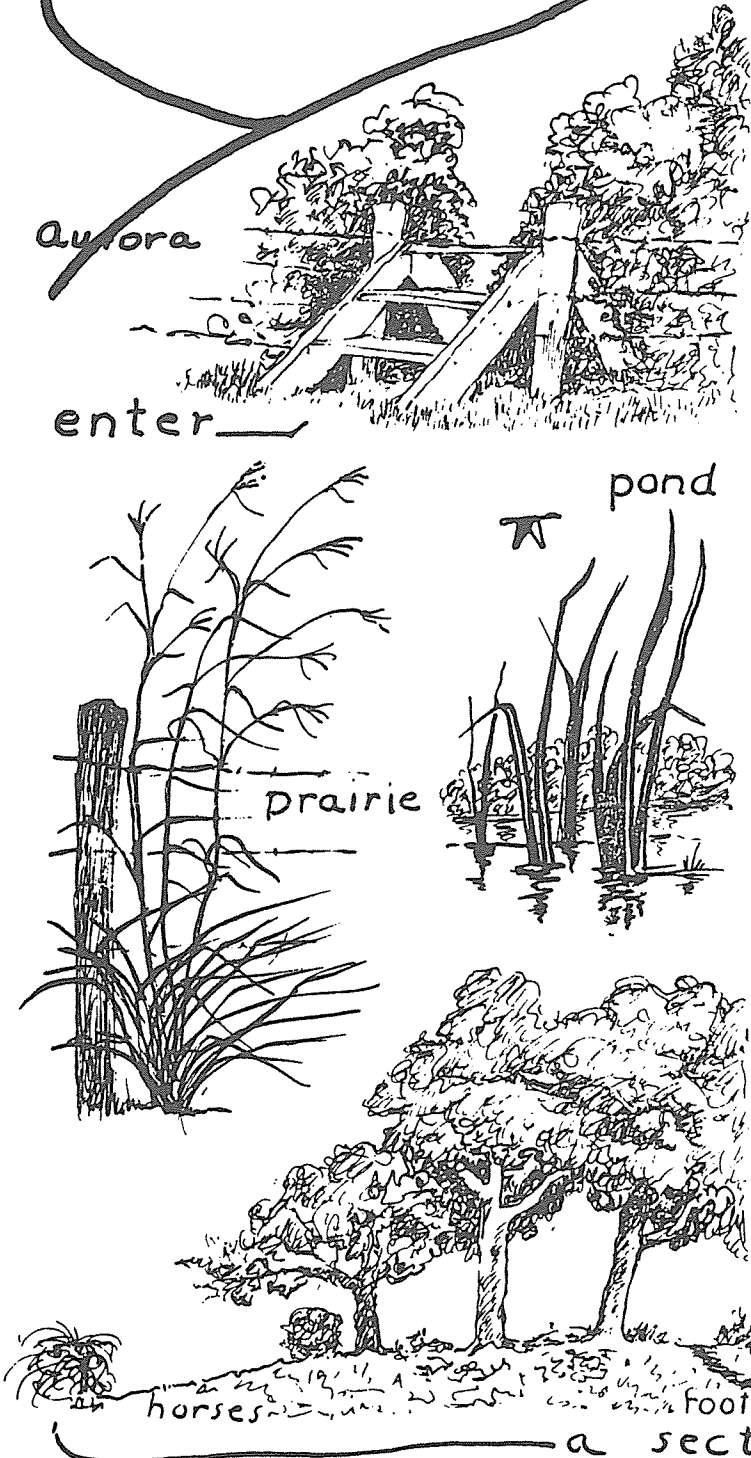
Then you walk thru prairie again. Four Boy Scouts pass. They are hiking the entire length of the trail. This fulfills a requirement for some merit badge. A troop of Scouts is planting acorns in a grove of cottonwood trees. Most of the time you find yourself in prairie or woodland of native Illinois plants. These stretches of the trail need little or no upkeep. You come to one stretch, a long stretch, where nothing at all has been done. But university students are identifying and listing plants. The University of Chicago ecology department is in charge of this strip. They are watching to see what time and nature will do.

You catch occasional glimpses of bicycles flying past, along one side. The bicycles entered thru a special stile admitting them to the bicycle strip. They cannot enter the path where you walk, but they can ride far and fast without being endangered by cars, and without endangering those who walk.

That is all in the future, the possible future. Right now the right of way lies waiting, and many hands are itching for it. Many bulldozers are drooling.

MAY THEILGAARD WATTS

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horses a section footpath bicycles

1993 VILLA PARK CARNIVAL VIOLATED STATE LAW

Villa Park held its Summerfest Carnival on the Illinois Prairie Path again this year from July 15 to July 18 with two additional days for set-up and take-down. Local residents had sought a temporary injunction to prevent the carnival from being held on the Prairie Path. Their petition was denied by Judge S. Keith Lewis, who reportedly told the plaintiffs they were un-American to pursue a legal remedy after exhausting all administrative channels. The judge did not admit evidence about last year's noise, lights, crowds that obstructed the Illinois Prairie Path, improper signs, and damage to the Path and its surrounding right-of-way by heavy carnival trucks. He was interested only in the promises of carnival promoters who swore this year would be different.

In all fairness we can state that some improvements were made. The Prairie Path was not completely blocked by a ride as was the case last year. However, Path bicyclists still had to dismount and walk their bikes through the crowds as they did last year. There were no electrical cables snaking across the Path to trip the unwary; this time they were buried. There were fewer rides but they were still very noisy, and the heavy trucks again damaged the grass and made ruts in the surface of the county-owned DuPage Parkway. The IPP logo sign at Ardmore Avenue was covered with a makeshift taped-on sign reading "Please

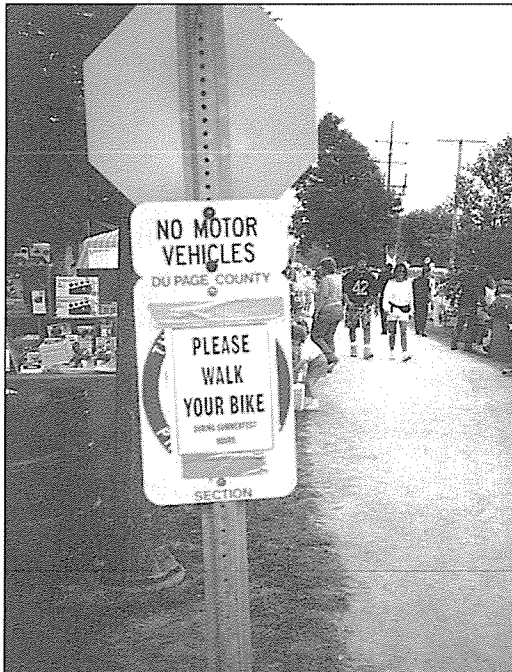


Patrons of this ride swing high over Prairie Path.

Walk Your Bike". The large Summerfest sign located six to ten feet west of the sidewalk was obviously installed on county property without a permit.

The promoters of the carnival, the Village of Villa Park and its Summerfest Commission, and the Villa Park Rotary and Kiwanis Clubs, swore in court that they would obey all applicable local laws and obtain the necessary permits; the Rotary Club put this in writing when it obtained the special use permit from DuPage County, owner of the site in question (except the gazebo).

Believing that the carnival should comply also with state law, the homeowners decided to test the carnival's compliance with the Illinois EPA noise regulations for residential areas. Accordingly, they commissioned Richard Gullickson, a Certified/Industrial Hygienist at



IPP logo sign is obscured by carnival sign reading "Please Walk Your Bike."



IPP cyclist walks his bike through crowds.