



Blue Jay

THE ILLINOIS PRAIRIE PATH NEWSLETTER

Winter 1993

What to See . . .

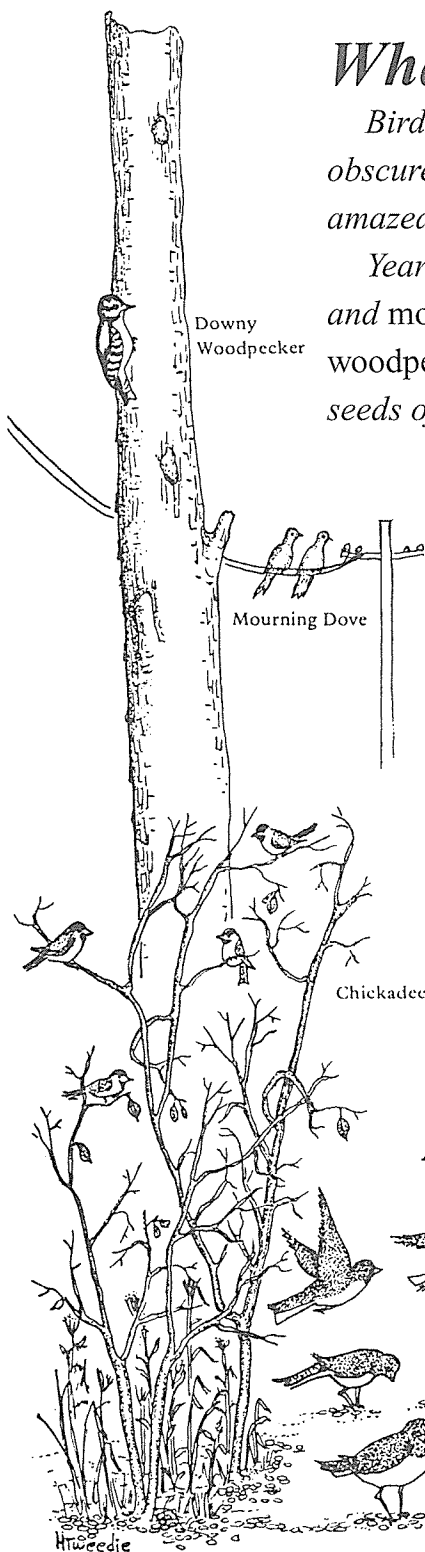
Bird watching on the Prairie Path is much easier in winter – without leaves to obscure the view. Take your binoculars and bird book on your next walk and be amazed at the number and variety of birds who enjoy our rigorous winters.

Year-round residents who are easy to recognize are cardinals, blue jays, starlings, and mourning doves. Gregarious chickadees flit from bush to bush. Downy woodpeckers can easily be seen and heard. Favorite foods of these birds are the seeds of the staghorn sumac, the tall sunflower, and wild parsnip.

Goldfinches are plentiful, but look different as their black and gold feathers have changed to olive green. Look for them clinging to the tops of goldenrods or thistles.

Flocks of juncos are winter visitors. They are dark grey with white breasts and with a flash of white on the sides of their tails as they fly ahead of you down the Path. Pine siskins can be heard whispering in the evergreens, but seldom seen. In hawthornes and willows, you may see a flock of tree sparrows who have rust colored caps and a single spot on their breasts.

If it gets very cold for a long period of time look for big yellow, black, and white evening grosbeaks who like box elder seeds; and small brown birds with red heads, the red polls, who come south from northern forests when seeds there get buried by snow.

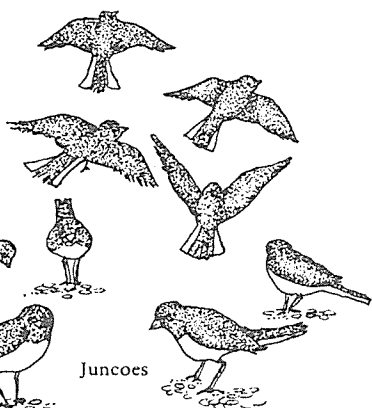


Downy Woodpecker

Mourning Dove

Chickadees

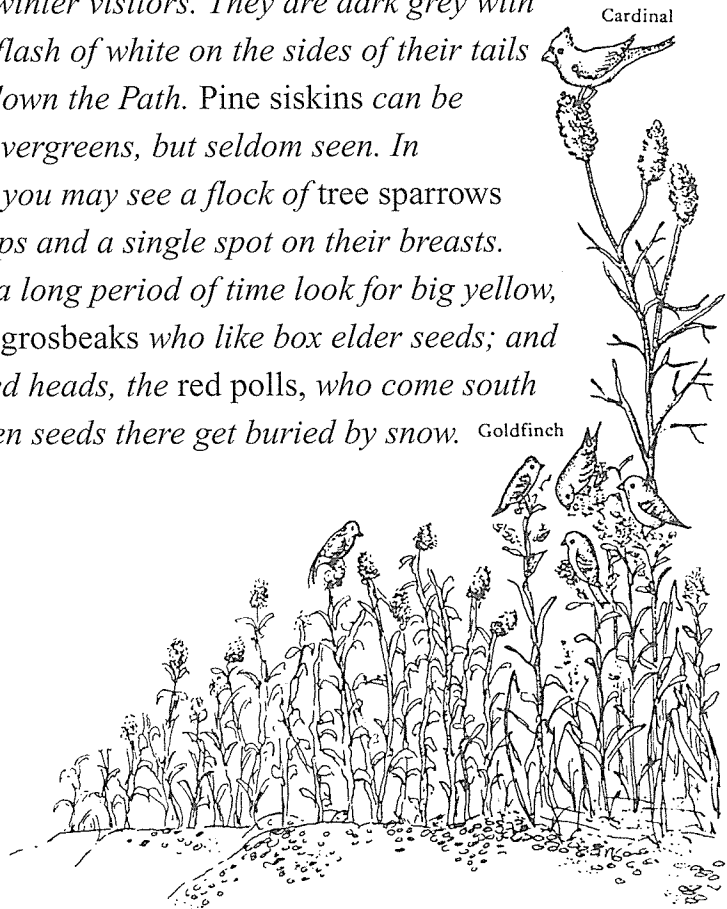
Hweeie



Juncos

Cardinal

Goldfinch



A HORSE CALLED SMOKY

Connie Schmidt has sent us the following note and picture from Warrenville:

“As you pass through Warrenville, notice the new park bench along the Prairie Path placed near the Gazebo at City Hall. This bench was donated by friends and family of Cindy Intravartolo in memory of her horse Smoky who died this summer. Cindy owned Smoky for 22 years and rode him as a trail horse throughout DuPage County. The plaque mounted on the bench reads, ‘In memory of Smoky, a trusted friend to Cindy, who carried her for many miles along this trail. 1963-1993’”



Cindy Intravartolo remembers Smoky, her friend and companion.

AN OUTSTANDING ANNUAL MEETING

More than one hundred members and friends of The Illinois Prairie Path not-for-profit corporation attended the twenty-ninth annual meeting on Sunday, November 7. They filled the hall at The Abbey, the spacious and comfortable senior citizen center on St. Charles Road maintained by the



May Theilgaard Watts, founder of the Illinois Prairie Path. Photo taken at the Indiana Dunes, one of her favorite places, about 1960.

Elmhurst Park District. The annual meeting was the final IPP-sponsored event for 1993, a historic year marking the thirtieth anniversary of the founding of the Illinois Prairie Path, the nation's first great rail-trail. (The rail-trail idea was born on September 25, 1963 when Path Founder May Theilgaard Watts wrote an imaginative and witty letter to the editor of the *Chicago Tribune* explaining how an abandoned railroad right-of-way could be transformed into a beautiful nature trail.)

The annual meeting was also the last conducted by President Paul Mooring, who will be stepping down when a new president is elected at the December board meeting. “Twenty-one years is enough”, said he. Mooring will remain on the board, however. As proposed by longtime IPP member Steve Rothman of Wheaton, the crowd accorded Mooring an appreciative ovation for his many years of dedicated service.

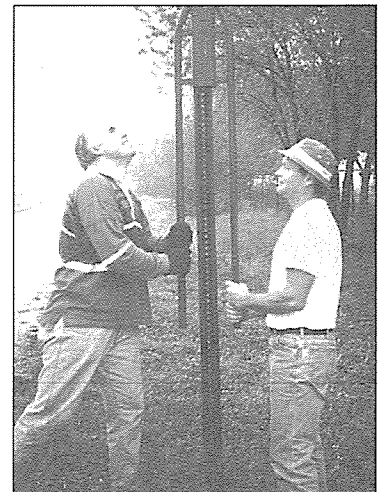
Before the business meeting President Mooring introduced the current members of the board and several past members. Elizabeth Holmes, Keith Olson, and Eugene

Pomerance. Liz Holmes, formerly of Wayne, is one of eleven spunky visionaries, The Illinois Prairie Path's first board of directors. Liz served as corresponding secretary for many years and her husband Sam Holmes was our first attorney; both were good friends of May Watts and Path Co-founder Helen Turner of Naperville.*

**Editor's Note. The other seven members of the first IPP board of directors listed in the Articles of Incorporation of June 1, 1965, were: Raymond Watts (husband of May Watts), Naperville; Phoebe Ryerson and her husband George, Wayne; Jane Sindt and her husband Augustus (Gus), Naperville; Lillian Lasch, Morton Grove; and Dr. Warren Keck, Naperville.*

The major item of business was the election of five members to the board of directors as proposed by the nominating committee, chaired by Ken Moss. Since there were no nominations from the floor, elected by acclamation were incumbents Paul Aeschleman, Steve Hagar, and Paul Mooring and newcomers

Steve Plumb and David Tate. Steve Plumb replaces Len Chabala of Maywood, who passed away this year; and David Tate replaces Jim Stewart, who resigned from the board this fall because of his family's move to Shabbona. Jim inspired and supervised several Eagle Scout projects to benefit the Prairie Path in western DuPage and Kane Counties during his term on the board; we will miss his enthusiastic



October 16 Work Day. David Tate and Mark Newell use post driver to install IPP sign post near airport on Geneva Spur.

“can do” spirit.

Steve Plumb, whose wife is Linda, is a longtime friend of the Illinois Prairie Path, and is employed as Director of Park Services for the Elmhurst Park District, which leases and manages the Elmhurst section of the IPP. Holder of a B.S. degree in Outdoor Recreation from Colorado State and an M.S. in Administration from Penn State, Steve worked for the Glenview Park District for seven years before his current fourteen-year tenure with the Elmhurst Park District. A competitive bridge player and a reader who loves mysteries, Steve is also an avid camper and boater whose non-motorized fleet includes a canoe, a kayak and a sailboat.

David Tate holds a B.S. in Accounting and an M.B.A. in Finance from Indiana University and is currently employed by Budget Rent-A-Car Corporation, Lisle, in their financial planning department. David and his wife Benna live in rural Winfield next to the Illinois Prairie Path. Proximity to the trail is the main reason they bought their house, they say. They are out on the Path whenever they get a chance and especially enjoy hiking, biking, and in the winter cross-country skiing on the Path through Timber Ridge Forest Preserve. Whether feeding wild birds, repairing IPP mile markers, or picking up trash, the Tates are always doing something to benefit the environment. They have also adopted the IPP section near their home between Jewell Road and the Great Western Trail (west of Prince Crossing) for regular monitoring.

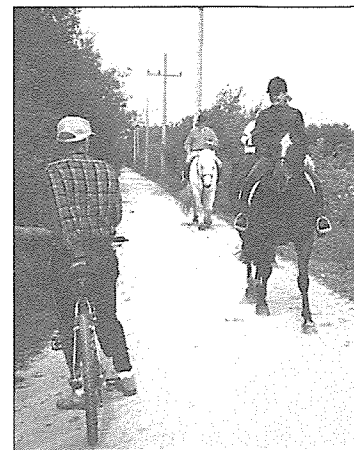
Other Business included approval of the minutes of the last annual meeting, the announcement by Treasurer Joan Hamill that her treasurer’s report would appear in the next *Newsletter* (see page 8), and the membership report (given by Jean Mooring in the absence of Membership Chair Karen Stewart). Current membership stands at 1365 including 124 non-paying VIPs.

In his president’s report, Paul Mooring stated that 1993 had been a year of controversy for The Illinois Prairie Path and mentioned five areas of concern: the Commonwealth Edison plan to install high voltage power lines and cut down many trees on a three-mile stretch of the Path in Warrenville; the Summerfest carnival on the IPP in Villa Park which obstructs normal Path usage and subjects nearby residents to unlawful noise levels; the soon-to-be-completed bridge on the Elgin Branch in rural West Chicago to carry IPP users safely over widened Rte. 59; the restoration of a remnant prairie next to the IPP in Elmhurst between Spring Road and Salt Creek which will necessitate the removal of some undesirable trees; and the ongoing vandalism problem, mainly shown by graffiti on structures along the Path. Pictures are on pages 4 and 5.

Under the heading of New Business several persons

spoke. Donna Bruzek of the May T. Watts Society of Naperville told the membership about the work of the society in restoring May Watts’ historic home and gardens in Naperville. She brought along a very interesting folding screen table-top display prepared by Carole Mayer, head of garden restoration for the society, showing how the project is progressing. For example, noted landscape architect Tony Tyznik and Mrs. Mayer did a walk-around of the garden, from which she did a diagrammatic rendering. Old stumps, a dying apple tree and several trash trees have been rooted up and removed. Winklers Tree and Landscaping donated their services (almost \$1000 worth) to trim the three stately Norway maples on the property. Volunteers from the North Central College Green environmental group have done a late fall cleanup of the gardens. The society is now ready to develop a Master Plan to be ready for spring planting. Persons interested in helping to preserve the memory of May Watts through this exciting project are invited to call Carole Mayer at 355-4020.

The next speaker was Joe Schrantz of Villa Park, leader of the residents whose lives were disrupted in July of 1992 and again in 1993 by the noise, lights, and crowds generated by the Villa Park Summerfest carnival on the Prairie Path. Seeking to have the carnival moved to another site on grounds of non-compliance with various local zoning laws, the residents first appealed to the sponsors, the Village of Villa Park, the local Rotary, Kiwanis and Masons, and to the DuPage County Division of Transportation (DuPage County owns the right-of-way). When the administrative appeals failed, the residents turned to the circuit court but soon found their complaint rendered moot when the village and county changed their zoning laws to allow the carnival to proceed. A request for a temporary injunction also failed because the judge relied on the defendants’ promises that this year’s carnival would obey all laws. The 1993 carnival was held as planned on the Prairie Path. However, the residents had another card to play: they hired a professional sound engineer who took readings during the 1993 carnival and found that the noise levels greatly exceeded statutory maximum levels enforced by the Illinois Pollution Control Board. Therefore, the residents have now appealed to the State for relief and



Equestrians pass a cyclist on Path at Pratt’s Wayne Woods Forest Preserve, Wayne.