

THE ILLINOIS PRAIRIE PATH NEWSLETTER

Spring 1983

What to look for - Spring wild flowers

Here are six common natives which bloom along the Prairie Path. Everyone recognizes the wild strawberry *Fragaria virginiana* with its 5 white petals and bright yellow center. The berries are harder to find as they are a favorite of birds, squirrels, mice and people.

"What's in a name?" Many common names are given to the two members of the lily family pictured here. Wake robin *Trillium recurvatum* has 3 dark red petals above 3 spotted leaves and 3 down curving sepals. It and the trout lily *Erythronium albidum* often grow in large colonies.

Toothwort *Dentaria lacinata* with 4 petaled white flowers, gets its name from the deeply cut leaves.

Two solomon's seal - the true *Polygonatum canaliculatum* with yellow green tiny blossoms which later become blue berries, and solomon's plume *Smilicina racemosa* with its terminal panicle of white flowers which become reddish brown berries grow beside the Path.

true solomon's seal

solomon's plume



MEMBERSHIP DRIVE BEGINS

Muriel Smith, Path membership chair, has started a campaign to quadruple membership and increase Path income. "Our members are the backbone of the Path", she says. "Their dues and donations have provided the money for many of the Path improvements we have been able to make over the years. However, because of the cost of our Wheaton bridge reconstruction project and all the other trail maintenance and development projects we are currently planning, we find that we must increase not only our total Path membership but also the dues each member pays. Some may be surprised to learn that the individual member does not pay his own way at the current rate of \$5. The cost of membership (NEWSLETTER, mailings, office supplies and rental, printing, etc.) is \$5.47 per member. Therefore, the board of directors has decided that as of April 1 the four basic rates will each go up \$5 but that applications mailed before that cutoff date will still be eligible for the lower rate in each category. Three membership forms are included with each Spring NEWSLETTER. If each member uses them to recruit three more we will reach our goal of 3000 new members."

Muriel also points out that surveys show the Path has tens of thousands of users, most of whom do not know that the wonderful and unique Prairie Path would not exist today without the continual vigilance and hard work of our organization with its 1200 members. She says, "We need to educate more people about what we are doing and show the world that we really do **Treasure our Trail!**"

KUDOS

Louise Headen, who served on the Prairie Path board from 1969 to 1980 as publicity chair and from 1976 to 1980 as NEWSLETTER editor as well, is now handling public relations for the Wheaton bridge project. This talented writer has generated favorable coverage in most area newspapers, including pictures in the Tribune and Sun-Times and several enthusiastic editorials. Because Louise works so effectively and without fanfare, the Prairie Path board would like to take this opportunity to congratulate her and thank her for an outstanding job.

Another dedicated Path volunteer is current board member Ray Nelson. As corresponding secretary, Ray receives and processes all mail and telephone calls directed to the Prairie Path office at the Members' Room in Wheaton. He spends many hours on Path business helping to insure a smooth-running operation -- much appreciated by his fellow board members. Ray also serves on the Wheaton Environmental Development Commission and in his spare time keeps in the swim of things at the B.R. Ryall YMCA. Now he is eagerly waiting to process the thousands of new memberships we hope to generate from our membership drive!

TRAIL CONNECTION TO COOK COUNTY FOREST PRESERVES?

On February 10 representatives of the Prairie Path, the Northeastern Illinois Trail Association, and the Cook County Forest Preserve District met with the mayor, village board and staff of the Village of Maywood to outline a plan for a trail linking the eastern terminus of the Prairie Path at First Avenue, Maywood, to the Cook County forest preserve trail which runs along the DesPlaines River to Lake County. The proposed trail link would run east from First Avenue to the river along the abandoned Great Western Railroad right-of-way and then north one-quarter mile along the west bank of the river to Madison Street and the bridge across the river connecting to the Cook County forest preserve trail on the east bank. The river site is a completed landfill which is about to be developed. This enlarged DesPlaines River trail in turn could become a vital part of the long-dreamed-of Tecumseh or Heartland National Scenic Trail, which would run for 2600 miles from the Canadian border in northern Minnesota to the Everglades at the southern tip of Florida. The Prairie Path would be an important side or feeder trail. Trail enthusiasts attending the meeting included IPP board members Paul and Jean Mooring of Glen Ellyn and Len Chabala of Maywood, NITA representative June Rebechini, Liz Feltmann, and Roy Froelich, and Richard Buck, landscape architect of the Cook County Forest Preserve District. June Rebechini, executive director of NITA, showed slides of canoeists, hikers, bikers, and horseback-riders enjoying the DesPlaines River trail; and then Paul Mooring showed a few slides of Prairie Path volunteers working on our Path and people of all ages using it. At the end of the meeting Mayor Joe Freelon invited the NITA, IPP, and FPD representatives to walk through the site when the weather improves and discuss the plan in more detail.

COUNTY STARTS MAINTENANCE PROGRAM

The DuPage County Highway Department began a much-needed program of Prairie Path maintenance in the late fall of 1982. According to Tom Merrion, right-of-way agent, department crews spent over 700 man-hours with chain saws, mower, and chipping machine and cut back the encroaching trees between Jewell Road and Route 59. They also repaired an eroded area near the bridge over Kline Creek. Jack Andrews, highway maintenance manager, directed the work. The Prairie Path board agrees with the county that safety for Path users requires maintaining an opening at least twelve feet wide and twelve feet high. Pruning will proceed as time and weather permit until all sections of Path in the unincorporated areas (some eighteen miles) have been done. The Prairie Path board will, of course, cooperate with the highway department in planning and providing regular, ongoing Path maintenance.

WE LIKE YOU TOO, MIKE

This report, passed on to us by Nancy Alex and printed in its entirety, appeared in the KID'S NEWS, November, 1982, the first monthly newspaper produced by the children of Mrs. Donna Brown's second grade class at Wayne School, Wayne. Writes Nancy, "I thought the Prairie Path board would appreciate a young person's view. The untold hours of time, sweat and tears are appreciated by many who don't even know whom to thank."

A FUN WALK by Mike Argyris

A prairie path is fun. A prairie path is very fun but some people don't like prairie paths at all. For me I like prairie paths because I can hunt for crickets and grasshoppers and look for snakes and most of all I like the fresh air!

HERE IT IS - THE WHEATON BRIDGE!



Artist's conception of the Wheaton bridge as it will look when restoration is complete. Target date for the ribbon-cutting ceremony is September, 1983.

VILLA PARK STORM SEWER

Villa Park is installing a 2 million-dollar storm sewer system, a portion of which has been laid under the Prairie Path from Euclid to a point 60 feet west of Ardmore. Work on this section of 48-inch pipe is now complete, according to village engineer Richard Glenz. The Kenny Construction Company of Wheeling, Illinois, is the contractor and has been cooperating with the village to minimize disruption and inconvenience to Prairie Path users. The company, which is responsible for restoring the Path to its original condition, is now grading and putting in limestone, to be added to as necessary when settling occurs. The finished Path will be eight feet wide and will curve gently. Grass will be planted in the spring. Bicyclists hope that Villa Park will seize this opportunity to resurface and widen other portions of the Path, especially in the area of the skating rinks west of Ardmore, so that the whole Villa Park section will be improved this year.

SPRING ACTIVITIES, Rain or Shine

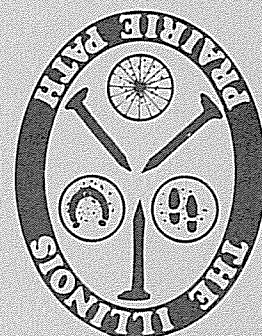
- Saturday, April 16 - **Batavia Spur Cleanup.** Meet at 9:00 a.m., at Bilter Road and Path. (Butterfield Road to Butterfield development entrance road, called DuPage Parkway. South to Bilter. West 1/2 mile.) Wear clothing to protect against poison ivy. Bring pruning saws, plastic bags, and lunch. Leader: Dan McGrath, 584-7637.
- Saturday, April 23 - **Spring Prairie Path Cleanup** in all villages and along entire length of Path. Wear gloves and bring garbage bags. Coordinator: Larry Sheaffer, 665-4408.
- Sunday, May 1 - **Woodland Wildflower Walk.** Meet at 1:00 p.m. in parking lot next to Path north of Walnut at end of Longfellow in Glen Ellyn. (Two blocks east of Bryant). Easy one-mile hike identifying wildflowers. Leader: Larry Sheaffer.

- Sunday, May 8 - **Horseback Ride.** Meet at 9:30 a.m. at Smith Road and Path. Bring own horse; no rentals. Leader: Jerry Martin, 293-0034 or 584-0622.
- Saturday, May 21 - **Spring Bird Hike** to spot and identify birds of Illinois. Meet at 9:00 a.m. at the trailer court, northwest corner of Geneva and County Farm Roads. Bring binoculars. Those who wish to stay in afternoon may bring lunch. Leaders: Paul Mooring, 469-4289, and Muriel Smith, 293-1139.
- Saturday, June 4
Sunday, June 5 - **Two-Day, Long Distance Bike Ride.** Sixty miles per day; 120-mile round trip; camp overnight; must carry own gear. Meet at 9:00 a.m. at Nancy Hesler's in Oak Meadows. Leaders: Phil Hodge, 627-7362 and Nancy Hesler, 293-1062.
- Saturday, June 11
Sunday, June 12 - **Backpack and Campout.** Meet at 12:00 noon, Sat., Pleasant Hill Rd. and Path, Wheaton. Backpack to Pratts Wayne Woods. Camp overnight and return by 2:00 p.m., Sun. Bring own food and gear. Leader: Phil Lacivita 595-9547.
- Sunday, June 19 - **Hike to Warrenville Grove.** Meet at 9:00 a.m., Members' Room in Rathje Park, Wheaton (Delles and Roosevelt). Eleven-mile round trip. Bring lunch and drink. Leader: Dick Wilson, 299-7882.
- Saturday, June 25 - **Wayne Township Mounted Patrol Jamboree.** Fun and food for whole family. Noon to midnight. Prince Crossing Stables. Coordinator: Jerry Martin.
- Sunday, June 26 - **Purple Coneflower Prairie Walk.** Meet at 1:00 p.m., Elmer J. Hoffman Park in Wheaton (North on Prospect from Hill Ave., #11 on Prairie Path map). Leader Larry Sheaffer.

— Jean C. Mooring, Editor —

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