



THE ILLINOIS PRAIRIE PATH NEWSLETTER

WINTER 1983

What to look for . . . Chickadees

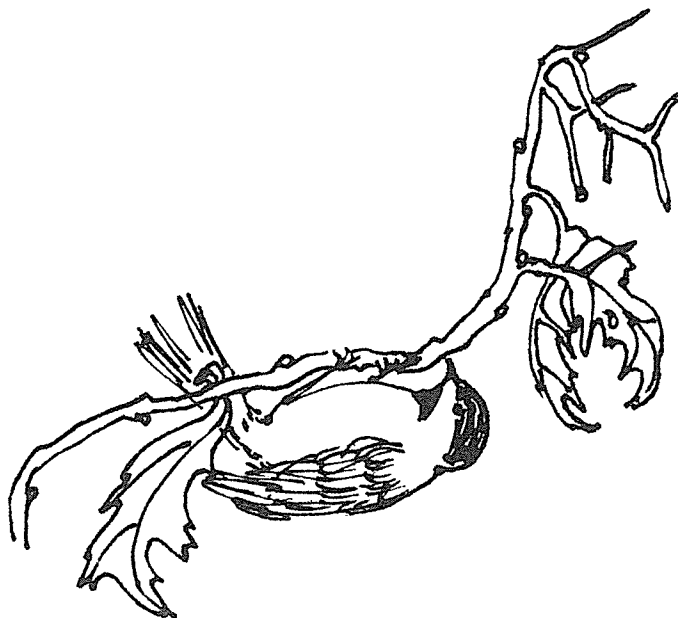
Black cap, white cheeks and black bib make the busy chickadee highly visible on the Prairie Path in winter.

Listen to its call — a chattered repetition of its name “chick-a-dee-dee-dee” and early in February it begins a sweet, clear, two-toned whistle sounding much like “phoebe” and amazingly loud for such a tiny bird.

Gregarious, often traveling in flocks except in mating season, friendly and curious — chickadees do migrate but most in our area are year round residents, raising one or two broods of 5 to 8 chicks from April to July. Some chickadees mate for life and have been known to live as long as 6 to 10 years, though winter ice storms take a fearful toll. Aldo Leopold wrote a wonderful story of a banded chickadee in “*Sand County Almanac*.”

Our Prairie Path chickadees eat constantly during daylight hours — grubs, seeds, insect eggs, aphids, larvae, berries, pine cone and alder seeds. The Path is a perfect habitat for them with its varied trees, shrubs and wildflowers.

Whistle their song – through your teeth is the best sound – and stand still for a close, rewarding sight of our energetic little chickadees. Welcome them to your feeder with their favorite sunflower seeds. Often chickadees are the first to try a new feeder and if they return, other birds will soon follow.



ANNUAL MEETING

More than seventy-five jubilant Prairie Path members and friends filled the auditorium at the DuPage County Historical Museum in Wheaton for the annual meeting on November 6. They had come to celebrate a year of achievement, which included the restoration of the Ardmore Avenue station in Villa Park, the surfacing of DuPage County's section of the Batavia Spur, and the completion of the Wheaton bridge reconstruction, the most ambitious Prairie Path project ever.

President Paul Mooring started the proceedings with a brief business meeting and tribute to May Theilgaard Watts, Path founder, who wrote her famous letter to the editor of the Chicago Tribune in 1963, twenty years ago, and began the rails-to-trails movement in the United States. Joan Hamill presented the treasurer's report; and new board members were elected to replace resigning board members Sophie Abenante, Path recording secretary and chairman of the Cook County committee, and Dick Diebold, chairman of the public relations committee, who originated the Spook Walk and the Prairie Path Happenings and also directed the restoration of the Ardmore Avenue station. Although they are very busy people, both Sophie and Dick have promised to remain as members of their respective committees to give newer members the benefit of their experience. The new board members are:

Nancy Becker of Hillside, who is a graduate of Monroe College, Monroe, Michigan, and is employed as a laboratory technician at Presbyterian-St. Luke's Hospital. A Path enthusiast, Nancy is anxious to work on extending the Path into Cook County;

Lynn Dostal of Wheaton, MBA from Cleveland State University and Regional Employee Relations Manager of Paperstock and Trucking with Container Corporation of America, Carol Stream. He is an avid gardener, bicyclist, and jogger who enjoys working on the Path. He has participated in the Batavia Spur cleanup and the Warrenville bridge project and has been a regular at the Wheaton bridge all summer.

Re-elected to the board were Bob Hargis, Nancy Hesler, Dan McGrath, and Larry Sheaffer.

Following the president's annual slide show report on Path achievements and problems encountered during the year, Philip Elfstrom, President of the Kane County Forest Preserve Commission and President-elect of the National Association of Counties, described the phenomenal popularity of the new Kane County bicycle trail system and showed on a large map the location of existing trails and also trails still in the planning stage. He indicated that planning is underway for bridges over the Illinois Central Railroad and Rte. 25 on the Elgin Branch of the Prairie Path, as well as for the acquisition and development of the Kane County section of the Aurora Branch. He said that the following week he would be walking on the Geneva Spur with Jack Knuepfer, Chairman of the DuPage County Board, and that something might be happening there too. Jack Knuepfer was in the audience, as were fellow board members Jane Spirgel and Barbara Purcell. Paul Clusen, ardent bicyclist and member of the Kane County Board, was also present.

Next on the program was Tom Merrion, right-of-way agent for the DuPage County Highway Department. He showed slides of work the highway department had done on the Elgin Branch of the Path this year, including pruning from Jewell Road to the Kane County line, resurfacing east of County Farm Road, and hauling and grading 4000 cubic yards of fill for the south ramp of the Wheaton bridge. He said the department had spent over \$42,000 on the Path during the year.

The last speaker was Path Vice President, engineer and bridge builder par excellence, Phil Hodge. He received a standing ovation from the crowd of well-wishers, many of whom had worked side by side with him during those long hot summer weekends when the bridge seemed an impossible dream. They knew it would never have been done without him, but he said it couldn't have been done without them either and had the pictures to prove it. Over eighty-five volunteers worked on the project site in Wheaton; forty-five certified welding students at the DuPage Area Vocational Education Authority in Addison fabricated the three new spans; and twenty DAVEA construction students decked two of the three spans. Actual cost to the Path was about \$21,000 because of the generous donation of labor by the volunteers and equipment and materials by many businesses. Phil announced that the official dedication of the bridge would be held in the spring after final grading and surfacing of the south ramp, planting of the slopes with prairie grasses and installation of a rustic park-style bulletin board at Liberty Street to mark the hub of the Path. He concluded, "It's been one of the greatest years of my life. I've had a ball!" The applauding crowd obviously agreed that it had been a privilege to have had a part in such a remarkable project, learning the joys of teamwork as well as the skills of bridge-building from a charismatic leader and teacher like Phil Hodge.

The meeting ended with cider and cookies provided by the Moorings.

LET'S NAME THE BRIDGE

The Illinois Prairie Path Board of Directors has decided to hold a contest to name the new Wheaton bridge. The rules are simple:

- a. Contestants must be Path members.
- b. Deadline for entries is February 6, 1984.
- c. The decision of the Path board will be final.
- d. The reward will be the honor of having the winner's suggested name chosen.

So put on your thinking caps, folks, sharpen your pencils, and mail those brilliant ideas to:

Name the Bridge Contest
The Illinois Prairie Path
Box 1086
Wheaton, Illinois 60189

* * * WE'RE ON TV! * * *

The Wheaton bridge project will be featured on Channel 2 TV's program, "Two on Two," at 10:30 p.m., Sunday, December 4. Interviewee Phil Hodge will tell the bridge story, illustrated with film clips and slides. Tune in!

HONOR ROLL OF ILLINOIS PRAIRIE PATH BRIDGE VOLUNTEERS

1. Phil Hodge	24. Carol Schumann	47. Ralph Johanson	70. Barb Kozlowski
2. Lucy Ebisch	25. Jim Schumann	48. Tom Caesar	71. Lee Lasseigne
3. Paul Mooring	26. Mike Borgardt	49. Bonnie Hargis	72. Penny Haase
4. Jean Mooring	27. Ted Lothers	50. Tony Rosecrans	73. Ray Zick
5. Sam Wright	28. Florian Szmurlo	51. Brian Booth	74. Mike Gallagher
6. Bruce Larrabee	29. Nancy Hesler	52. Dave Stone	75. Roger Kadrmas
7. Wayne Webb	30. Steve Hagar	53. Bonnie Stone	76. Alan Kitchen
8. Al Billingsley	31. Louise Headen	54. Jack Wallace	77. Todd Hurlbert
9. Colleen Chamberlin	32. Dean Sasman	55. Steve Hall	78. John O'Hara
10. Matt Larrabee	33. Peg McDonell	56. Jim Breen	79. Donna McClenney
11. Lynn Dostal	34. Scott Schlien	57. Rick West	80. Donna Albue
12. Dee Tevonian	35. Rich Koto	58. Jitka Sek	81. Elizabeth Wright
13. Sandy Wright	36. Donn Schneider	59. Paul Irvin	82. Dan McGrath
14. Steve Joslyn	37. Bob Max	60. Frank Burbey	83. Tom Merrion
15. George Ocasio	38. Dave Gauger	61. Ron Woodward	84. Jerry Martin
16. Jim Zimmerman	39. Karen Fonte	62. Ed Happel	85. Greg Dreyer
17. Ron Tevonian	40. Sue Kimmel	63. John Wolff	86. Elaine McCluskey
18. Al Barczak	41. Vernon Cook	64. Paul Kurpis	87. Art McCluskey
19. Susan Terwedow	42. John Kacich	65. Bob Headen	88. Nick Gaubatz
20. Dick Wilson	43. Lori McAnally	66. Keith Gooding	89. Bob Raukohl
21. Nancy Wilson	44. Bill White	67. Paul Johanson	
22. Bob Hargis	45. Pat McCartin	68. Mark Burich	
23. Birt Hurlbert	46. Don Flick	69. Tom Scott	

TREASURER'S REPORT, November 1, 1982-October 31, 1983

Balance on hand, November 1, 1982

State Bank of St. Charles

\$ 781.43

SteinRoe Cash Reserves

30,355.10

Total \$ 31,136.53

Income

Donations

\$ 18,549.60

Dues

15,605.00

Sales (Maps, T-shirts, patches, "Guides")

1,417.20

Interest

2,564.00

Miscellaneous

21.00

Total \$ 38,156.80

Expenses

Path improvements*

\$ 18,601.47

Maintenance

2,736.35

Newsletter

2,228.66

Membership mailings

1,750.99

Printing

831.86

Office rent and telephone

578.33

Office supplies

560.84

Merchandise (T-shirts, etc.)

195.00

Insurance

300.00

Legal

187.50

Miscellaneous

239.64

Total \$ 28,210.64

Balance on hand, October 31, 1983

State Bank of St. Charles

\$ 1,444.63

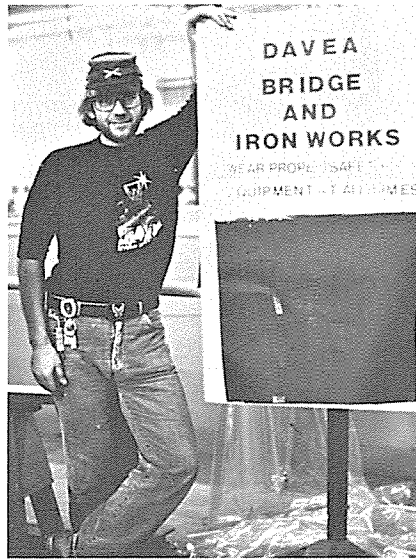
SteinRoe Cash Reserves

39,638.06

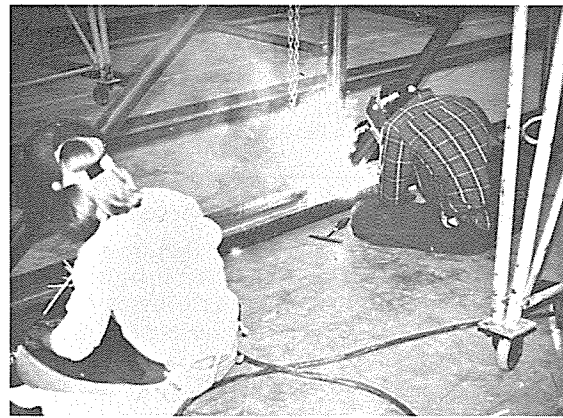
Total \$ 41,082.69

* Includes \$18,309.47 for the Wheaton Bridge Project.
A few bills for the bridge are still outstanding.

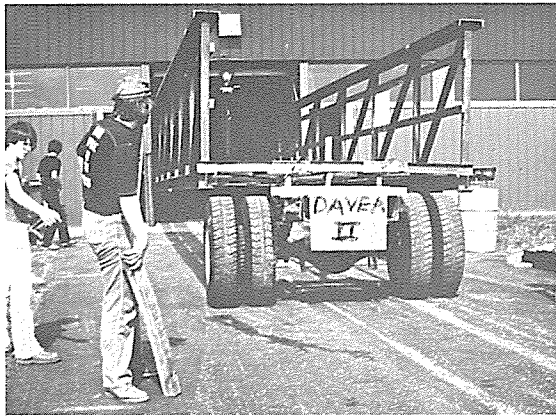
The Prairie Path Bridge: *How We Did It*



Al Barczak, welding instructor at DAVEA, DuPage Area Vocational Education Authority.



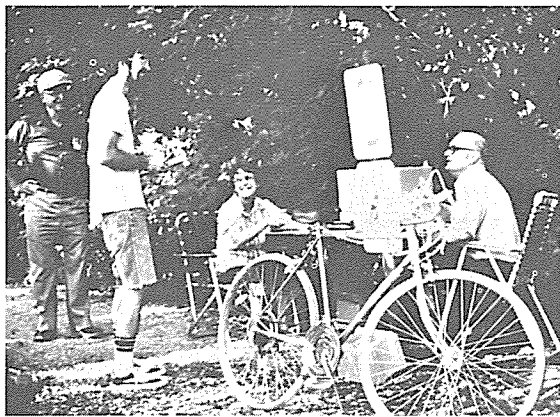
Certified welding students fabricate bridge.



A bridge is born.



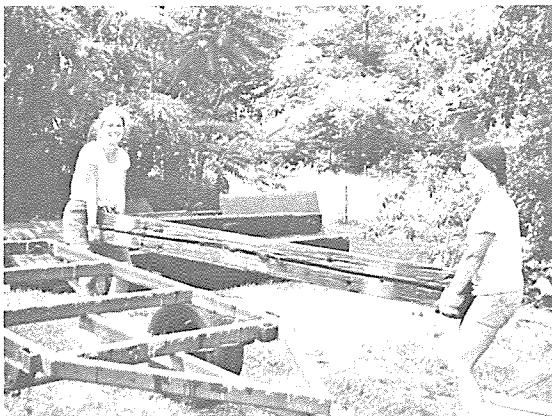
DAVEA students, proud of their work, smile for the camera on newly-installed bridge in Wheaton.



Prairie Path information booth at north end of bridge, Wesley and Western, was manned every weekend all summer.



Volunteers loading old bridge timber onto trailer.



Shoring up embankment at Wesley St. ramp with bridge timbers

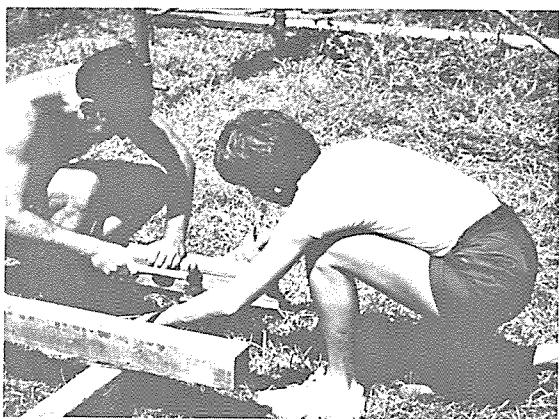




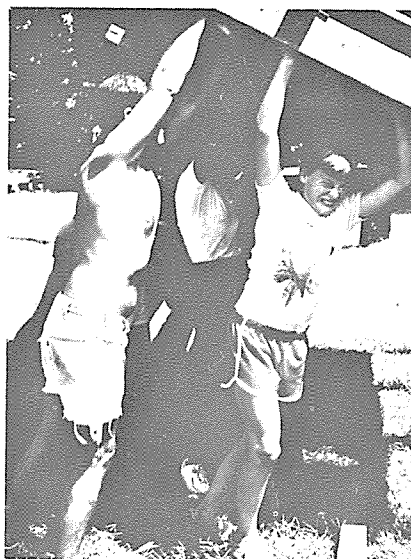
Drilling holes in old pier for anchor bolts.



Tying re-bars to reinforce new concrete.



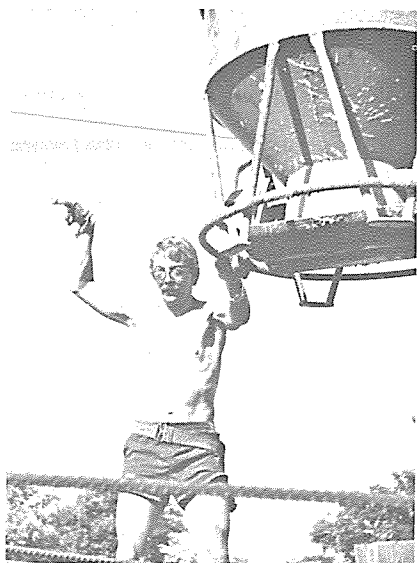
Assembling concrete form.



Hoisting heavy form into place.



Crane lifting bucket to concrete pier.



Directing crane operator.



Smoothing freshly-poured concrete.



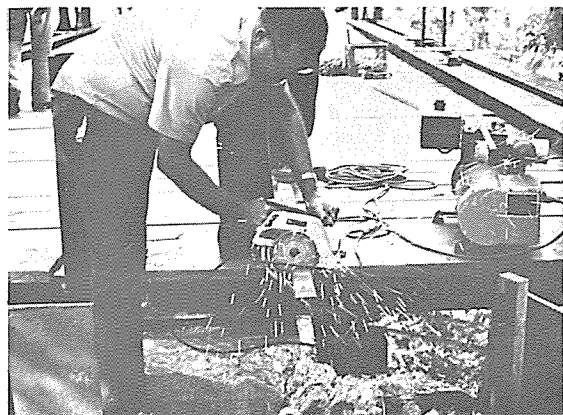
Pouring concrete at north abutment.



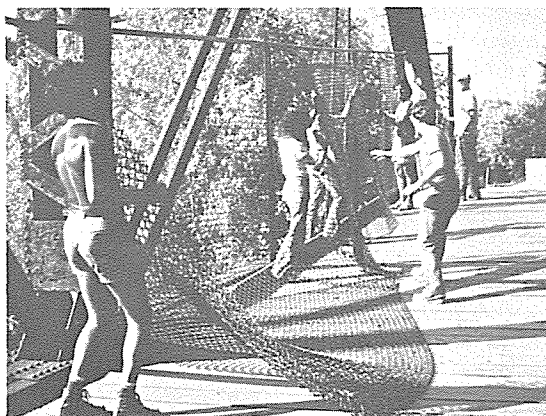
Drilling holes in timbers to deck old bridge.



Bending re-bar for "Great Wall of Wheaton," built of bridge timbers to shore up ramp at south end of bridge, north of Liberty Street.



Cutting steel post for chain link fencing on old bridge.



"Stretching fence"



Shoveling concrete for south abutment.



Crowd on old bridge watches crane lower new Front Street span into place.



Drilling bolt holes for last plank on completed bridge.

LETTER FROM A FAN

Jack Kinder, who has lived on Plamondon Court in Wheaton since 1968, is moving to Hilton Head Island, South Carolina, this fall. He has written us the following letter of appreciation:

"The only thing I'll miss upon leaving Wheaton is the great Prairie Path. I have introduced five grandchildren to its biking, sledding, walking pleasures. My favorite trip is to get on the Path near our Court, ride to Wayne, then take Army Trail to Dunham Road to Country Club Road to Rte. 25 to St. Charles, Geneva and Batavia (on the Fox River Bicycle Trail), and then back on the Aurora Branch — a great bike ride! I doubt there is a better bike path anywhere in the U.S.A. than the Prairie Path. I will remember it fondly!"

Editor's note: If you think the trail is good now, Mr. Kinder, we invite you to come back and try it in a couple of years and see the improvements we are continuing to make as money becomes available. In the meantime, happy biking!

TWO NEW PARKS

This summer Wheaton and Glen Ellyn have each developed a mini-park and totlot adjacent to the Prairie Path. Both parks feature slides, swings, and other playground equipment. Wheaton's new Prairie Path Park is located south of Roosevelt Road north of Arbor at the end of Park Ave. Especially welcome to Path users on hot summer days is the drinking fountain. This \$12,000 recreational project is being financed through a \$6,000 Milton Township grant and Wheaton Park District matching funds.

Glen Ellyn's park is north of Walnut at the end of Longfellow and has just been named Walnut Glen. This was the winning name submitted by kindergartener Danny Skweres in the recent park district-sponsored contest. The park is located on the site of the former Public Service Co. substation which provided power for the Chicago, Aurora and Elgin electric railroad. It features a small paved parking lot for Path users. The Glen Ellyn Park District in cooperation with the Village of Glen Ellyn developed this popular park at a cost of \$8000 in an area of Glen Ellyn where it was greatly needed because recreational open space is limited.

OH NO — IT'S THE LAKE ELLYN MONSTER!

True to form, the legendary Lake Ellyn Monster stalked Glen Ellyn again on Friday night, October 28. In its familiar haunts between Montclair and Taylor, the monster was recognized by many who had searched for it in previous years. Whether witch, vampire, gravedigger, zombie, ghastly executioner, hanged man dangling still kicking from a tall tree, maiden in distress, saucy temptress or chainsaw menace, the monster in all its forms was greeted by the fearfilled walkers with shudders and screams. Most puzzling was a new apparition, a large black blob with one red eye, which uttered piercing shrieks alternating with weird music. Rumor had it that this uncanny creature had oozed in from Dayton, Ohio, (where Margaret Mooring lives) just to help the monster that night.

After all the hubbub had died down, Dick Diebold and his fellow Spook Walk conspirators found that the fundraiser had produced \$124 for the Prairie Path treasury.

CONNECTIONS TO KANE AND COOK COUNTIES

On four days in early November the Prairie Path surfaced one-half mile of trail on the Batavia Spur from Bilter Road to the Kane County line, eliminating one of the missing links between the Path and the Fox River Bicycle Trail. The contractor, Pete Nelson Trucking (Dave Harvel), put down 368 tons of 3-inch rock, 462 tons of grade #8 crushed limestone, and 189 tons of limestone screenings at a total cost of \$7,767.85. Difficulties encountered were overhanging branches, narrowness of the trail which prevented vehicles from passing each other and slowed the work, woodchuck holes completely undermining the trail at one point, and a swampy area which almost trapped one truck. The job would have been impossible without the preliminary mowing done by Dennis Benton of Warrenville and the pruning done by Nancy Hesler and the Moorings on a drizzly day the week before.

At the other end of DuPage County the Prairie Path is closing another gap, under the Tri-State Tollway and I-90 between Elmhurst and Berkeley. Dennis O'Neill, Sunrise Landscaping (now known as A-1 All American Services) is the contractor who, in October, delivered and spread by hand 42 tons of 3-inch rock and 42 tons of grade #8 crushed limestone at a cost of \$1500. A top dressing of screenings will be added after the City of Elmhurst finishes cleaning up the piles of broken concrete and other debris on the site. The Village of Berkeley has already removed many truckloads of junk from its side of the Cook County line. The Illinois State Toll Highway Authority has also done a fine job of cleaning up and grading under the toll road and has even put down a base of grade #8 limestone for the Path.

Jean Mooring supervised both of these construction projects on behalf of the Prairie Path board. Neither of these major expenditures appears in the treasurer's report because the bills were submitted after the end of the fiscal year.

THREE NEW BENCHES

In October, Bob Hargis, Paul and Jean Mooring, and contractor Dennis O'Neill installed three redwood and steel benches on the Elgin Branch of the Path. Two overlook scenic vistas in the Lincoln Marsh and the third is located at Geneva Junction, where the Geneva Spur begins. The benches, manufactured by Landscape Structures, Inc. of Delano, Minnesota, were purchased from Newtoys of LaGrange for \$500 including shipping. Installation cost \$196. They are a gift to Path users from Mr. and Mrs. Claude W. Youker of Wheaton, who hike the Path frequently between Lincoln and County Farm Road and think there should be comfortable places "where senior citizens can sit down."

LUCY EBISCH RECEIVES AWARD

The Ambassadors' Club, social arm of the Greater Wheaton Chamber of Commerce and Merchants Association, has chosen Lucy Ebisch, Phil Hodge's assistant for the Wheaton bridge project, to receive its first award for outstanding contributions to the City of Wheaton.

The citation reads as follows:

Lucy Ebisch is hereby designated OUTSTANDING CITIZEN by the Wheaton Ambassadors' Club. This Award is presented in recognition of untold, unselfish Hours of Volunteerism; for Dedication to the continuing task: keeping our City a vital place to Live — Work — Play.

The Prairie Path board members agree this award couldn't have been given to a more deserving person. Congratulations, Lucy!

PRAIRIE PATH T-SHIRTS NOW AVAILABLE

—Good quality white cotton, short sleeved, knit shirts. Green trim on neck and sleeves. Prairie Path logo on left front. Sizes: Children - medium and large; Adults - small, medium and large. Extra Large, special order. Each \$6 plus \$1 for handling and postage. Please send check payable to the Illinois Prairie Path and order to Hillside Cyclery, 4049 Washington Street, Hillside, Illinois 60162.

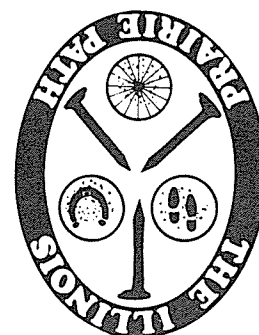
—Prairie Path Patches \$1.25 each.

—*The Illinois Prairie Path - A Guide* by Helen Turner. Gives history, geology of Path. Many illustrations of wild flowers, trees, animal tracks seen on the Path. Each \$1.50. For quantities of 10 to 20 \$1 each; 20 or more \$.75 each. For patches and book please send order to Illinois Prairie Path, Box 1086, Wheaton, Illinois 60187.

— Jean C. Mooring, Editor —

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