

THE ILLINOIS PRAIRIE PATH NEWSLETTER

FALL 1983

What to look for...Sunflowers

Sunflowers are composites. The flower heads are clusters of many small flowers growing together; the center disk is composed of tiny flowers and the rays are flowers. This is the largest family of flowering plants and sunflowers are the most colorful members. Blooming in late summer and into fall, many different sunflowers bloom along the Prairie Path.

The sawtooth sunflower - *helianthus grosseserratus* - is our most common sunflower growing tall in the ditches and short in dry places, but blooming everywhere in abandoned fields, roadsides, vacant lots, especially abundant in wet places.

The annual sunflower or common sunflower - *helianthus annuus* - is a miniature of the domestic sunflower grown for seed. Heart or spade shaped leaves are rough as is the stem. The center is dark brown as it turns to face the sun. Birds have planted our Prairie Path sunflowers.

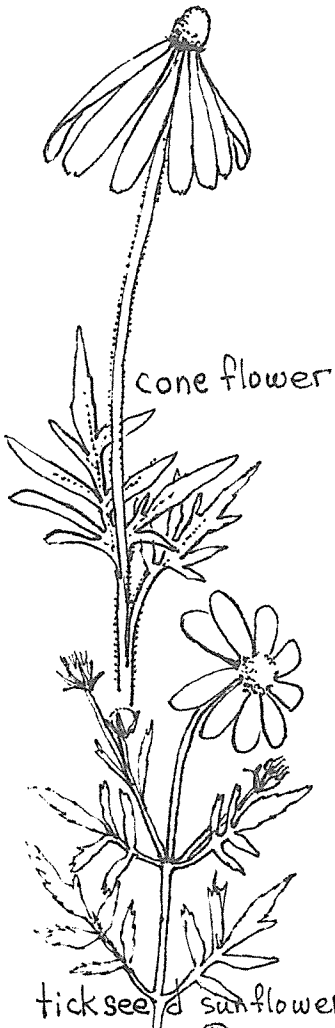
Sneezeweed - *helenium autumnale* - can be easily identified by its petticoat of three scalloped petals. Does it make one sneeze more than other sunflowers? Who knows?

Blackeyed susan - *rudbeckia hirta* - is a much admired sunflower with sturdy hairy stems blooming all over the midwest. The pioneers found it in the prairies and kept it in their gardens.

The tall yellow coneflower with deeply cut leaves - *natibida pinnata* - also is a prairie flower. Its long reflexed petals move in the wind like a ballerina's skirt.

Tickseed sunflower - *bidens aristosa* - pictured here is the brightest member of the stick tight family - *bidens* - so called because the seeds have tiny prongs which catch in one's socks, slacks or the dog's coat and so travel everywhere.

All these sunflowers are natives and add to the color to be found in the fall along the Prairie Path.



cone flower



tickseed sunflower



sneezeweed



Black eyed Susan



annual sunflower



sawtooth sunflower

ARDMORE AVENUE STATION OPENS

On the Fourth of July the restored Chicago, Aurora and Elgin station at Ardmore Avenue in Villa Park was opened for the first time to public inspection during the all-day Lions Club Fun Festival. Proud Villa Park residents noted with approval the new roof, the refinished doors and overhang, the sandblasted cobblestone walls and pillars, the latticed windows (now made of durable plexiglass), the two rest rooms, and the plans for the burglar alarm system to be installed by the village in August. Although some interior painting still needs to be done, the major part of the restoration has been completed; and the building now stands as a charming reminder of Villa Park's history as well as a focal point of present-day civic activity. It will serve another vital function as a way station for Prairie Path users, providing on weekends rest facilities, drinking water, and Path information.

Dick Diebold, Prairie Path board member and director of the project, says, "A lot of hard work has gone into this over the past year; and there have also been some setbacks, like the rainy night last summer when I rode my bike into a pothole in Glen Oak Road near Glen Ellyn and dislocated my shoulder. That slowed us down some but it didn't stop us, thanks to our friends in Villa Park, especially John Sinibaldi, Chris Wunschl, Bob Boke, Charles Vitkus, Don Olson, Harold Kammes, Vernon Boldrey, Irene Martin, Patty Christophersen, and Judy Zubka.

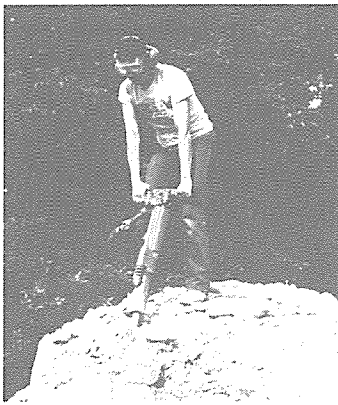


THE RESTORED ARDMORE AVENUE STATION.

"When we started this restoration, we said we would turn the old station into a showplace, and I think we have. The village board and local citizens are so pleased and enthusiastic they are talking about improving the entire Prairie Path throughout the village. A young landscape architect and graduate of the University of Illinois who grew up here, Rob Eggers, has even drawn up an excellent plan for such a development. Good things are happening in Villa Park!"

THANKS, LUCY

Lucy Ebisch, first assistant to professional engineer Phil Hodge for the Wheaton bridge project, returns to her engineering studies at the University of Wisconsin in September. She has spent the entire summer since June 4 working on the project, gaining valuable field experience and giving us the benefit of her many talents and skills. Prairie Path board members and co-workers agree that the bridge would not have progressed as it has without her as a vital part of the team. A list of her contributions includes the following:



LUCY EBISCH OPERATES JACKHAMMER ON CENTER PIER.

Did her share of operating the 100-pound jackhammer to demolish the old concrete center pier,

Drove Phil's pickup truck with a trailer behind, carrying a heavy air compressor on two long round trips to Brookfield,

Welded and painted many of the steel beams used as substringers to support the new wooden decking on the old railroad bridge,

Burned bolt holes in the old steel beams with a cutting torch,

Drilled holes in planks and bolted them in place,

Carried her end of many railroad ties up and down the embankment and built retaining walls with the ties and rebars,

Supervised crews shoring embankments and building retaining walls,

Helped drill concrete piers to accept anchor bolts in preparation for pouring new concrete,

Painted part of the signs with names of donors to publicize the project on the site,
Observed the work of a surveying team determining boundaries of the C.A. and E. right-of-way,

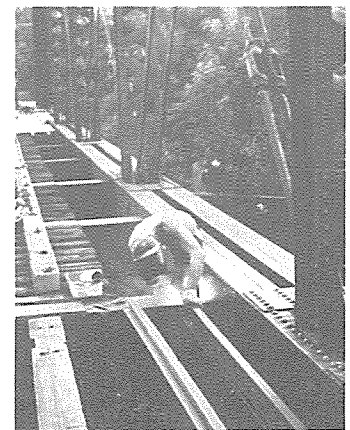
Worked every Saturday and Sunday from dawn to dusk doing whatever needed to be done on site, often in temperatures of 90 degrees or higher,

Spent hours during the week on the telephone recruiting volunteers and promoting donations of equipment and material.

As if all this weren't enough, Lucy even found time and energy to go on the Prairie Path-sponsored 120-mile bike ride in June and to work a week in July, Monday through Friday, at a local camp for inner-city children.

Says project director Hodge, "The Prairie Path is lucky to have such an unusual team of capable, determined volunteers working on the bridge, Lucy ranks right up there as one of the best. She has what it takes to be a good engineer."

We all say thanks, Lucy. May you build many more bridges of friendship, as well as steel.



VOLUNTEER WELDS STEEL SUB-STRINGER ON OLD BRIDGE.

WHEATON BICYCLE PATROL

What are the Wheaton police doing on the Prairie Path? Well, they are riding bikes on it every Saturday and Sunday, all summer long. Cpl. Jim Zeigler, interviewed on patrol, explained that fourteen officers of the Police Reserve Unit are participating on a part-time basis. They use a Ross bicycle donated to the department by Midwest Auto and Bicycle, Wheaton. They patrol the entire Path on all three branches within the city limits and go as far as Jewell Road on the Elgin Branch and Center Street on the Aurora Branch. They are radio-equipped and have assisted with a few minor accidents. Wheaton tried the program last summer on an experimental basis after hearing that Glen Ellyn had a similar police bicycle patrol on the Path. It was so successful that it was expanded this year to run from the first weekend in June to the last weekend of September.

According to Chief Carl Dobbs, citizen response to the program has been phenomenal. "People have a feeling of security when they see our officers out there", he says; "and it's good for our men to meet the public in this way and get some exercise too. It's great public relations."

Editor's note: The Prairie Path board hopes that other municipalities will follow the example of Wheaton and Glen Ellyn because bicycles are much better than motorcycles or squad cars for patrolling a recreational trail where motor vehicles are unwelcome.

STOP SIGN STILL NEEDED AT PRESIDENT STREET AND CRESCENT

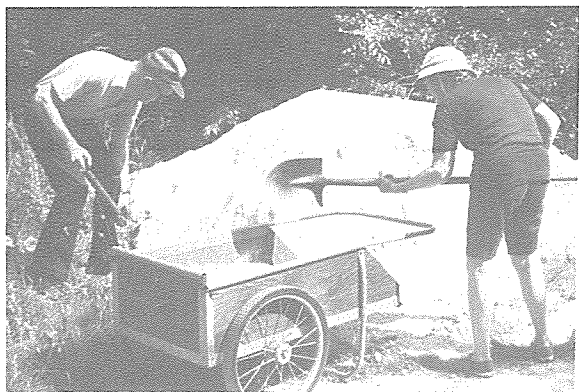
At the request of Path board member Larry Sheaffer, who lives on President Street in Wheaton, the Prairie Path board urges Wheaton Path members to join us in opposing removal of the existing stop sign on the south side of Crescent in connection with the widening of President. We believe that safety of thousands of Path users will be jeopardized unless northbound traffic on this heavily-traveled street comes to a full stop before crossing Crescent and the Path. Letters should be sent to Mayor Robert Martin and the city council.

BOY SCOUTS INSTALL MILEPOSTS

The zero point is located at Liberty and the Path just south of the famous Wheaton bridge and a few hundred feet west of Founders Park. Beginning here in June, Glen Ellyn Boy Scout Troop 45 installed ten handsome rustic mileposts made of 4-foot railroad tie sections along the main stem of the Path to the Cook County line at Elmhurst. Scout Tom Gorman, advised by Path board member Bob Hargis, planned and carried out the work for his Eagle project. Fathers of the boys donated a router for inscribing the mile numbers on the posts and an auger for digging the holes. The Glenbard West track team supplied a measuring wheel for siting the posts, and the Prairie Path contributed 800 pounds of Sakrete costing \$25. The ties, used but still good, were scrounged by the boys along the North Western tracks in West Chicago.

The Prairie Path board congratulates Tom Gorman and Troop 45 for an excellent job and promises to have similar mileposts installed on the Elgin and Aurora Branches in the near future.

PATH IMPROVEMENTS



BOB HARGIS AND JEAN MOORING SHOVEL LIMESTONE SCREENINGS AT WARRENVILLE BRIDGE.

Warrenville. On June 25, with temperatures in the high 90's, nine stalwart Path members built wood railings on both sides of the bridge over the West Branch of the DuPage River. They also shored up both approaches and resurfaced them with limestone screenings. These measures will enhance the safety of Path users. The nine were: Linda Davis, Lynn Dostal, Bob Hargis, Ed Happel, Paul and Jean Mooring, George Sterk, and Dick and Nancy Wilson.

Glen Ellyn. On July 14 and 15 contractor Dennis O'Neill and his assistant Bob Bain resurfaced 200 feet of the Path east of Montclair, 50 feet west of Prospect, and 100 feet north of the Mayflower Storage. The village paid for the work from its 1983 Revenue Sharing allocation of \$3,000 for the Prairie Path. Still to be done this year is the resurfacing of both sides of Taylor and rough sections east of Taylor. In early August the village also installed a yellow diamond-shaped warning sign reading HILL CAUTION WALK BIKE at the top of the ramp on each side of Taylor.

Editor's note: The ultimate solution to the perennial problems at Taylor Avenue of steep slopes, surface erosion and safety hazards is the construction of a pedestrian bridge over Taylor. The Glen Ellyn Sesquicentennial Commission might consider this as a project.

Wheaton. On July 21 and 22 as the thermometer hovered around 100 degrees, Paul and Jean Mooring cut down encroaching weedy trees and pruned back the shrubbery to make an opening 12 feet wide and 12 feet high along the ¼-mile section of Path between Lincoln and the ramp at Wesley. Bob Hargis also did some pruning here earlier. The pruning was done to demonstrate proper pruning technique and also to permit a city front-end loader to haul in clay fill to rebuild the embankment at the bridge. Dennis O'Neill then delivered three loads of stone, one each of 3-inch rock, grade #9, and

limestone screenings to resurface the cinder ramp down to Wesley. In one day, July 26, Dennis and Bob Bain laid by hand using only wheelbarrows, shovels and rakes, 7 tons of 3-inch rock and topped this with 7 tons of grade #9 for a base. The following Saturday Bob Hargis and two volunteers, who happened by, laid 7 tons of limestone screenings and tamped it down with a rented compacting machine.

For its part this summer the always cooperative Wheaton Public Works Department helped the Prairie Path in a number of ways when it resurfaced the trail north of the College Avenue parking lot, cut down the curbs on both sides of Founders Park, finished demolition of the old center pier at the start of the bridge project, and installed a STOP sign at the foot of the ramp.

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 \$5 plus \$1 for handling and postage. Please send check 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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