



THE ILLINOIS PRAIRIE PATH NEWSLETTER

WINTER 1983

What to look for . . . Chickadees

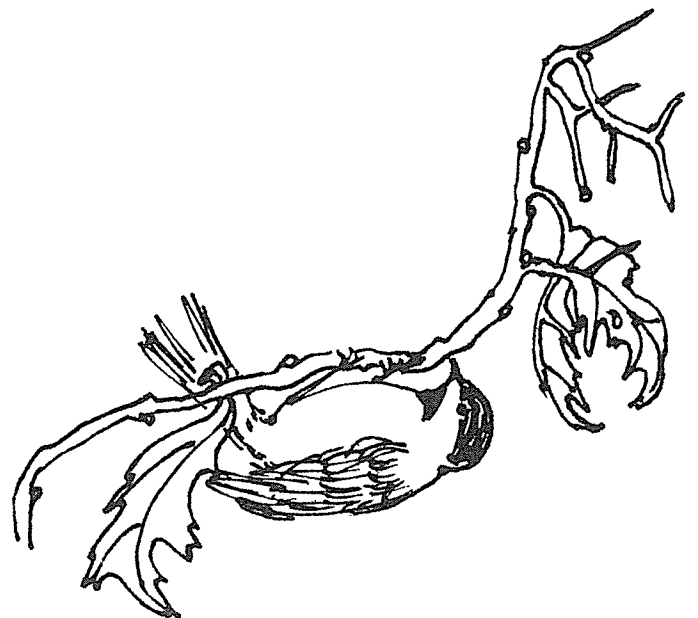
Black cap, white cheeks and black bib make the busy chickadee highly visible on the Prairie Path in winter.

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.