

THE ILLINOIS PRAIRIE PATH NEWSLETTER

FALL 1984



red oak

WHAT TO LOOK FOR - **Fall Color**

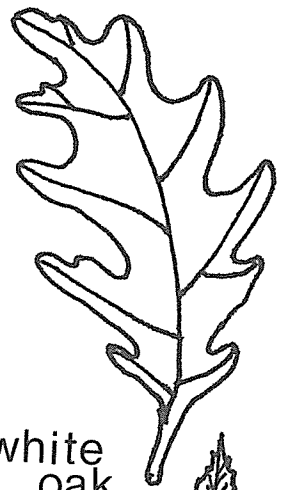
First to brighten the Prairie Path are the shiny composite leaves of the many clumps of staghorn sumac (*rhus typhina*). They turn all shades of red from magenta purple to orange and yellow. The stems are hairy and the red clustered berries stay on into winter. They are a favorite food of many wintering birds.

The red maple (*acer rubrum*) also turns early to a beautiful red-orange color. The bark of the red maple is often silver in color which makes a lovely contrast to the bright leaves. The sugar maple (*acer saccharum*) leaves turn a bright clear yellow. This hardwood tree is a favorite of many people because of its fall color.

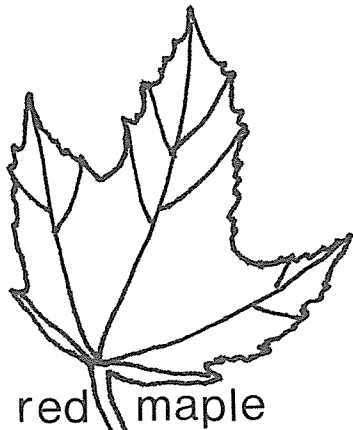
Last to color the path are the oak leaves. They are among the last leaves to form in the spring and many leaves of the red oak (*quercus borealis*) persist until spring when the new growth pushes them off. Oak leaves turn a lovely shiny, bronze red.

The most common tree of the Prairie Path is the box elder (*acer negundo*). It has clusters of golden seeds called samaras hanging from branches of gold leaves.

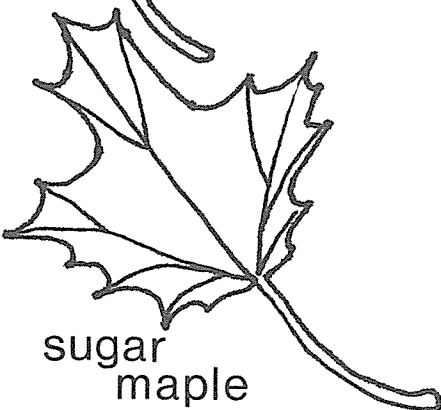
One way to preserve colored leaves is to iron them between sheets of wax paper. An easier way is to press them between sheets of clear contact paper making sure all the air bubbles are pressed out.



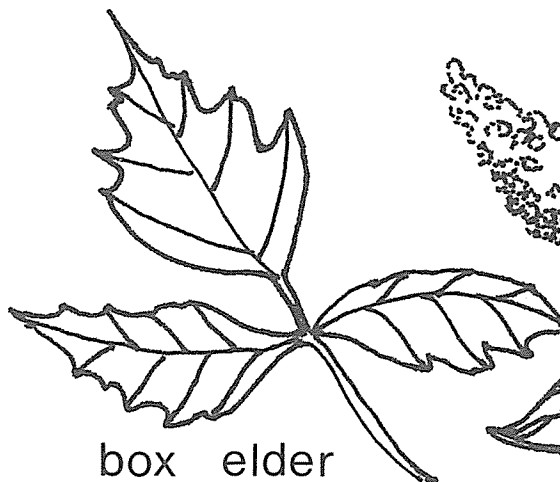
white oak



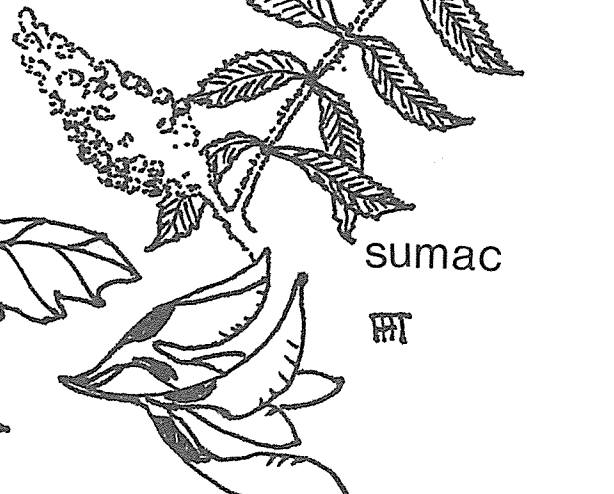
red maple



sugar maple



box elder



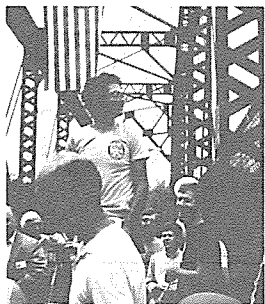
sumac



IT'S THE VOLUNTEER BRIDGE!

In tribute to the scores of volunteers who donated labor, money, materials and equipment to the project, the Prairie Path bridge in Wheaton received its official name at dedication ceremonies on June 16: Volunteer Bridge.

Chief engineer Phil Hodge presided over the festivities amid colorful balloons and flags and joked that the crowd was providing the first real test of the load-bearing capacity of the bridge. He also explained with a smile that the new spans are rusting because they are supposed to. They are made of Cor-Ten steel which will rust to a beautiful dark brown color in a year or two and will never need to be painted. Just like the Chicago Picasso! "The bridge proves," he said, "that we can do anything if we believe in ourselves and work together." Then he introduced volunteer Al Billingsley who had suggested the name of the bridge, and asked him to read the inscription on the bronze plaque. After attaching the plaque to a vertical beam of the old bridge Phil donned his welder's mask and with his usual panache (and a torch) cut the "ribbon" of steel re-bar tied in a bow. The crowd cheered and streamed across the bridge, some humming the theme song from "Bridge over the River Kwai".



Phil Hodge thanks co-workers and friends. . .



. . . at dedication ceremony on Wheaton bridge. . .



. . . and cuts steel "ribbon".

Among those present to applaud the restoration to usefulness of a historic structure and the creation of a new Wheaton landmark were Mayor Robert Martin and other city dignitaries; many Prairie Path board members past and present, including founding member Phoebe Ryerson from Aspen, Colorado; Miss Wheaton Belle; the Retired Rhythm Rascals Band playing foot-tapping music to a Dixieland beat; and dozens of bridge volunteers, many proudly wearing their **Let's Build the Bridge** T-shirts.

Path treasurer Joan Hamill summed up the feelings of everyone when she said, "We couldn't have done it without Phil Hodge." The bridge honors its engineer; and so do Phil's many friends in Chicagoland, who wish him godspeed as he leaves to pursue his career in structural engineering at the University of Minnesota. We can only say: Come back and see us sometime, Phil, and admire your baby. We all do!

NEW AMENITIES AT BRIDGE

A center of interest this summer for bicyclists and other Path users has been the two-sided rustic display case installed at the Liberty Street end of the Wheaton bridge just in time for the dedication ceremony. Designed by Paul Mooring, the handsome sign was built by DAVEA wood-working students under the direction of Bob Raukohl, using plans drawn by drafting students of Dan Thorse. Materials were supplied by the Prairie Path. Ed Zelenka, Superintendent of Parks for the Glen Ellyn Park District, did the routing of the letters for the sign.

Displayed in the two cases are a large revised Prairie Path trail map with information about the trail, **Happenings, 1984**, and three of the latest **NEWSLETTERS**. Larry Sheaffer plans to add pictures of "Plants of the Month" for prairie enthusiasts studying the adjacent demonstration prairie.*



Path members install rustic sign at Liberty Street.

An additional improvement at the site is a sturdy trash barrel, donated by the DuPage County Highway Department, painted by Jean Mooring and installed by Paul. Coming later will be a bench, similar to those in the Lincoln Marsh.

***Editor's Note:** A major portion of the funds to purchase the prairie plants, as well as the Boston ivy and upright yew now growing beautifully to cover the north abutment of the bridge at Wesley Street, was donated to the Path in memory of Margaret Lobik, conservationist and longtime loyal Path member.

PIONEERING — 1984

Jean Mooring reports with pride that her cousin Connie Carpenter of Boulder, Colorado (formerly Madison, Wisconsin), won the first gold medal for the United States at the Summer Olympics on July 29 in Los Angeles (Mission Viejo). Connie's event, the women's 50-mile bicycle road race, marked the first time that women had competed in Olympic cycling. Her gold medal is also the first ever won by an American cyclist, man or woman.

A pioneer of a different sort is Jean herself, nominated by members of the Prairie Path board as a woman leader in DuPage County in the field of community service. Sixty-seven women so nominated and representing seven fields of endeavor were honored as women who are still pioneering at a luncheon on May 18 sponsored by the YWCA - West Suburban Area to celebrate the Y's 125th anniversary.

Jean credits her father, the late Elbert Hand Carpenter of Madison, descendant of a pioneer Wisconsin family and enthusiastic outdoorsman, with inspiring her work for the Prairie Path. "Daddy loved nature and promoted every kind of outdoor activity, especially bicycling, figure skating, canoeing, sailing, and gardening. He also influenced Connie's interest in bicycling and ice skating. He would be pleased to see how popular both the Prairie Path and the sport of bicycling have become in the last few years... Now wouldn't it be great if we could only get Connie to come and ride her bike on the Path...?!"

SUMMER MAINTENANCE PROJECTS

In July Contractor Dennis O'Neill (A-1 All American Services, Glen Ellyn) and his assistant Bob Bain hauled and spread approximately 28 tons of grade #8 crushed limestone and thirty-five tons of limestone screenings on 700 feet of trail under the I-290 and I-294 bridges between Elmhurst and Berkeley. They also removed a truckload of trash from the site with the help of George Johnson, Glen Ellyn. Cost to the Path was \$1,250. This project, begun last fall, was finally completed after the Illinois Department of Transportation generously hauled away six truckloads of broken concrete dumped there over the years by midnight haulers.



Bob Bain spreads limestone screenings on Path under I-290 bridge, Elmhurst.

This whole improvement was inspired by the Illinois State Toll Highway Authority, which cleaned up and graded the Prairie Path right-of-way under its I-294 Tri-State bridge last year and then laid down a base of crushed limestone to indicate where the Path should go.

The Prairie Path board is grateful to IDOT, ISTHA, and the municipalities of Berkeley and Elmhurst for their cooperation on this project. We are confident that the Path will be restored to its present condition or better when IDOT completes the I-290 bridge reconstruction planned for this fall.

Also resurfaced in July was a quarter-mile section of Path north of the DuPage County courthouse between Washington Street and Cross Street in Wheaton. Dennis and Bob hauled and spread approximately 42 tons of grade #8 and 56 tons of screenings at a cost of \$1,750. This was strictly hand work with wheelbarrows, rakes and shovels because it was impossible to drive a truck in the narrow space reserved for the Path. The Path has now been widened from two to approximately six feet. Preliminary pruning of the maple trees lining this section was done by the Moorings and Bob Hargis.

Bob Hargis, who was elected Path vice president at the July board meeting replacing Phil Hodge, reports that landscaper Dennis Benton of Warrenville mowed a two- to three-foot strip along both sides of the Path on seventeen miles west of Wheaton in July. Cost to the Path was \$850.

YOUTHS PRUNE IN WARRENVILLE

On June 22 100 young people and ten adults from the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, Naperville, and other area wards carried out a brush-clearing project on the Path in Warrenville. Board member Larry Sheaffer supervised. The energetic group widened the Path in several sections between Winfield Road and Williams Road and carried the brush to central pickup areas. Path members who helped agreed that the youthful workers had done a fine job. (They finished in the nick of time, just before the heavens opened with a mighty downpour of rain and hail.)

VILLA PARK PLANS

Irene Martin, member of the new Villa Park Prairie Path Improvement Organization, writes that the group has begun plans to make the area between the Villa Avenue and Ardmore Avenue stations a garden park and focal point for village activities as visualized by landscape designer Rob Eggers. Landscaping is being planned; picnic facilities are in place; and funds are being raised for the purchase of old-fashioned lights.

The Villa Avenue station has been for several years the home of the Villa Park Historical Museum and is open every Sunday from 1:30 to 4:30 p.m. The Ardmore station, designated a National Historic Site, is in the final stages of renovation. It will be opened as a comfort stop as well as a place for disseminating information about the Prairie Path, the Historical Museum, the Villa Park Chamber of Commerce, and other groups.

PROBLEM-SOLVING IN LOMBARD

During the week of August 21 - 25 a trouble spot on the Prairie Path right-of-way in Lombard east of Westmore was transformed into a place of beauty and serenity. Neighbors' complaints about juveniles' loitering, littering and loud parties in the dense undergrowth beside the Path resulted in prompt action on the part of three agencies most directly concerned: the DuPage County highway department, administrator of the right-of-way for the owner, DuPage County; Commonwealth Edison Company, holder of an easement in perpetuity on the property; and the Village of Lombard forestry department. After consultation with the Path's Lombard representative, secretary Donna Albue, the three agencies cooperated on a comprehensive program of selective tree cutting and pruning, brush removal and trash cleanup.

The Prairie Path board commends everyone involved in this remarkable Path improvement and reserves a special pat on the back for hardworking eagle scout candidate Scott Bain (brother of Bob), who, as the leader of a group of scouts from Troop 51, spent the five days picking up truckloads of brush and junk, including everything from refrigerators and bedsprings to auto parts. A big thank you to all of them from all of us. And a suggestion to the Lombard police department: How about checking with the City of Wheaton about their successful Prairie Path bicycle patrol by uniformed officers and implementing a similar program in Lombard?

A NOTE TO MEMBERS FROM DEE TEVONIAN, MEMBERSHIP CHAIR

"Your financial support and encouraging words make our volunteer hours a joy. To date this year we have 1088 paid members for \$22,738. Special thanks to you for using the new renewal cards; they have streamlined our book-keeping system. Members who had renewed late in 1983 will be receiving their notices in December.

Encouraging words department

From a bridge user: ". . .please accept the additional \$100 in appreciation of a job well done last summer."

A new member: "Having enjoyed many hours of use of the IPP I wish to become a member friend."

From an individual: ". . .sorry it's all I can do at this time."

A runner sending an additional \$100: "Appreciate your help. . .my favorite place to run."

A long time member: "Sorry, I must drop my membership this year. I'm moving but have been pleased to have been a part of the IPP the past 16 years. . ."

From an organization: ". . .you are to be commended for the accomplishments you have made over the past year; we are proud to be a part of it."

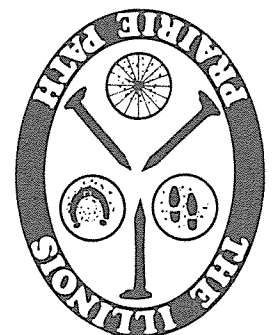
And we are proud to be united with all of you in maintaining and supporting **OUR Path!**"

FALL ACTIVITIES, rain or shine

- Saturday, September 15 **Work Day**, to install chain link fencing on three new spans of Wheaton bridge. Meet at 9:00 a.m., Wheaton Lumber Co. parking lot, Wesley Street. Information: Paul Mooring, 469-4289, and Dick Wilson, 299-7882
- Saturday, September 15 **Bike Trip Overnight** at Fabyan's Woods. Meet at 9:00 a.m. at Ardmore Ave. and IPP, Villa Park (#7 on map). Return Sunday, 2:00 p.m. Thirty miles each day. For information and gear transport call Don Flick, 530-7519. Phil Hodge will return for this!
- Sunday, September 16
- Saturday, October 20 **Work Day**. Meet at 9:00 a.m. Information: Dick Wilson, 299-7882.
- Friday, October 26 **Fourth Annual Spookwalk**. Scary, supervised two-block walk. 7:00 to 8:00 p.m. Montclair Avenue and IPP, Glen Ellyn (Three blocks east of Main St.). Donation: \$1.00 each or \$2.00 per family. Information: Dick Diebold, 469-6465.
- Sunday, October 28 **Fall Walk**. Meet at 10:00 a.m., Members' Room, Rathje Park, Roosevelt and Delles, Wheaton. Easy five-mile round trip. Bring lunch to eat in Atten Park. Information: Donna Albue, 627-7155.
- Sunday, November 4 **Annual Meeting**. 2:00 p.m., DuPage County Historical Museum, 102 E. Wesley, Wheaton. Featured speaker: DuPage County board chairman, Jack Knuepfer. Information: Bob Hargis, 668-7377, or Paul Mooring, 469-4289.
- Saturday, November 10 **Work Day**. Meet at 9:00 a.m. Information: Dick Wilson, 299-7882.
- Saturday, November 17 **Hike to "Catacombs"** in Cook County. Meet at 9:30 a.m., York Road and IPP, Elmhurst (#4 on map). Park at northwest corner of York State Bank parking lot. Eight-mile round trip. Bring lunch. Information: Paul Mooring, 469-4289.

RETURN POSTAGE GUARANTEED
DATED MATERIAL

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