

French fleur-de-lis flag

THE ILLINOIS PRAIRIE PATH NEWSLETTER

SUMMER 1986

WHAT TO LOOK FOR - **Blue flag iris**

Though it is not in the Lily Family, the French called the white iris *fleur-de-lis*, meaning *flower of the lily*. A stylized iris design, also called fleur-de-lis, became the emblem of the kings of France in the twelfth century A.D. In 1376, King Charles V chose three golden fleurs-de-lis on a blue field for his coat of arms.

The Iris Family (*Iridaceae*) features plants with creeping stems shallowly buried in soil, bearing swordlike leaves set edge to edge and a few short-lived showy flowers ranging through all shades and colors. The parts of the flower come in threes: three sepals which hang down; three petals which curve upwards; and three curved style-branches covering the three stamens in the center.

The Prairie Path has its own regal fleur-de-lis, the violet-colored large blue flag or *Iris versicolor*. This beautiful flower's special habitat is pond margins, marshes and meadows in neutral or slightly acid soil. Its range is Manitoba and southern Labrador south to Minnesota, Wisconsin, Ohio and Virginia; and it blooms in late spring and early summer (May - July). Good places to see the blue flag iris along the Path are in marshy areas just west of the West Branch of the DuPage River near Prince Crossing Road and on both sides of the EJ&E Railroad in Wayne.



Wheaton Beautifies Path

April 25th was Arbor Day in Wheaton. To mark the day the city sponsored a tree-planting ceremony in the little unnamed park at the corner of Front and Wesley Streets over which passes the Prairie Path Volunteer Bridge.

Mayor Robert Martin read the City Council proclamation to an appreciative crowd of city officials, members of the Wheaton Environmental Commission, Prairie Path board members and local residents. The resolution urges "all citizens to plant trees to gladden the hearts and promote the well-being of present and future generations." Other speakers were Gordon Chambliss of the Environmental Commission and Path President Paul Mooring. Mooring thanked Wheaton for all the encouragement and help given to the Path during the last twenty years and said, "Without the support that communities like Wheaton have given us, the Illinois Prairie Path could not have become such a great recreational asset."



Joe Bremer, Wheaton Public Works Department, paints pier of Volunteer Bridge. The job required more than 15 gallons of paint.

Mayor Robert Martin (right) and Paul Mooring turn over first shovelfuls of dirt at Arbor Day ceremony near Volunteer Bridge.



City Horticulturist Larry Steele, who has designed much of the new landscaping which makes the Wheaton central business district so attractive, supervised the planting of the six trees: two white oaks, one bur oak, and three white pines. Coming soon, he said, will be colorful annuals and perennial plants for the small raised garden at the west corner of the park.

Other improvements noted were the grading of the park area last year and the recent painting of the Volunteer Bridge piers in an attractive natural concrete color by the Wheaton Public Works Department. As the crowd dispersed, some were heard to say that this little park on the Prairie Path is too pretty not to have a name and that perhaps there should be a "Name the Park" contest. Sounds like a good idea to us. How about it, Wheaton?

DuPage County Plans Bright Future for Prairie Path

In the wake of the Path's January insurance crisis and with the full cooperation and encouragement of Chairman Jack Knuepfer, the DuPage County Board through its Highway Committee has authorized the following actions:

1. Assistant State's Attorney Patrick Jaeger has drawn up a consulting and service contract between DuPage County and The Illinois Prairie Path, under the terms of which the Path would be required to provide consulting services to the County and to obtain from the County Superintendent of Highways permits for its volunteer activities and projects. The County in turn would defend, indemnify and hold harmless the Corporation and/or its officers from liability arising from the Corporation's performance of its permitted duties and responsibilities when carried out in a lawful manner. This protection is a great benefit to the Prairie Path, which has been able to obtain only one insurance quote offering the required coverage but costing \$12,800 for the first year, almost half of our anticipated annual income. The IPP board believes this would be unacceptably costly to our membership and will, therefore, probably sign the consulting contract when it is modified in accordance with the recommendations of our IPP attorney, Walter P. Maksym.
2. Mr. Jaeger has also drawn up a "DuPage Parkway Special Use Permit" for municipalities, charitable organizations and other groups seeking to use the Path for special events. It states that they must obtain additional permits as required by units of local government to protect the County during the event, provide proper signage and traffic control, remove all litter, not block the trail, not damage trees or other appurtenances, and not permit the use of alcoholic beverages on the DuPage Parkway (Illinois Prairie Path).

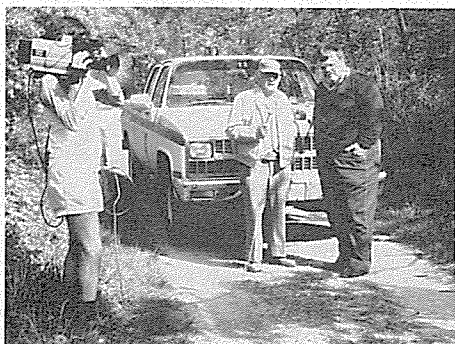
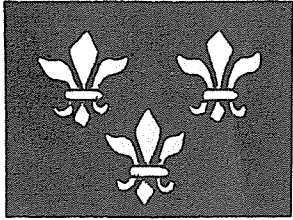


Photo by Jean Mooring

Board member James Mackay records comments of Paul Mooring during inventory inspection of Path with Tom Merrion of County Highway Department. (See page 3, objective C.)



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