

WINTER, 1991

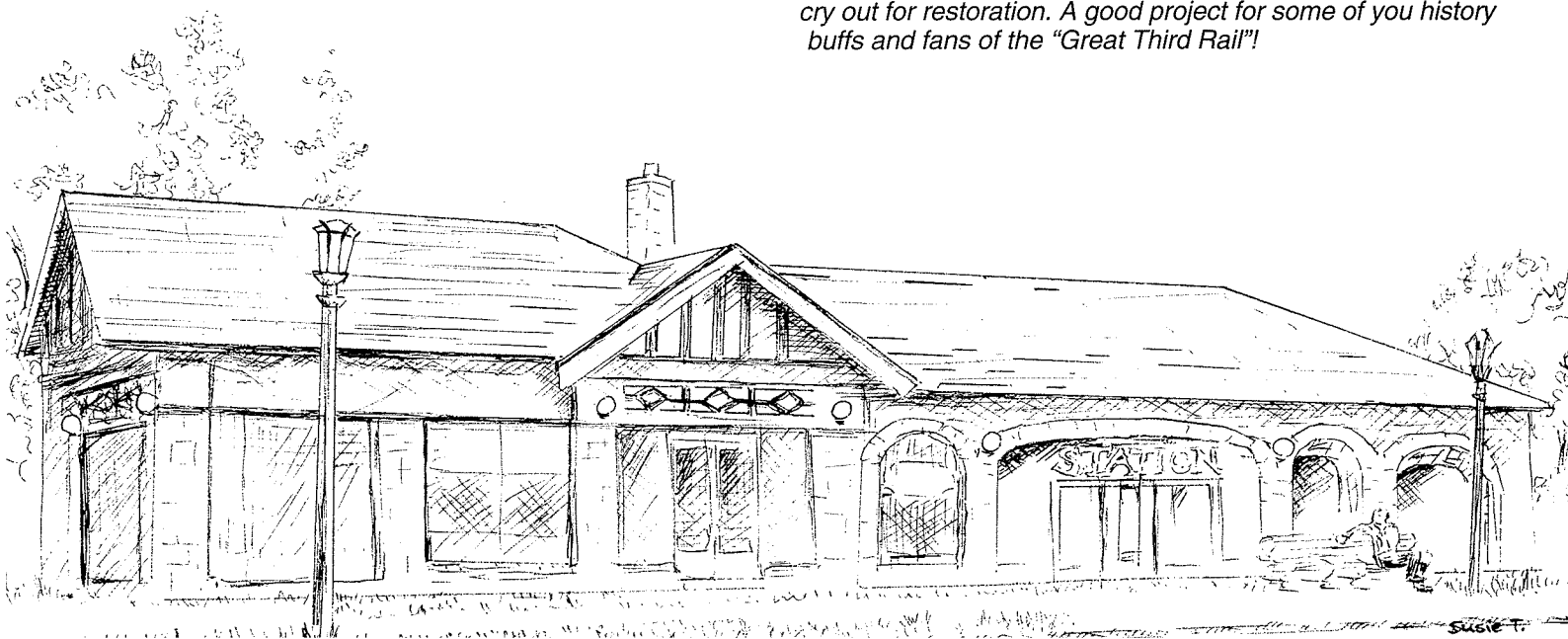
THE ILLINOIS PRAIRIE PATH NEWSLETTER

What to look for: Seven old railroad stations.

Many people know that the Illinois Prairie Path is built on the right-of-way of the historic Chicago, Aurora and Elgin electric commuter railroad. Only a few, however, mainly historians, know that several original "Roarin' Elgin" structures remain today and that they include the iron truss bridge over the North Western Railroad in Wheaton built in 1906, the covered platform next to the Fox River north of New York Street in Aurora, built in 1939 (see insert for picture) and seven former stations:

1. At Villa Avenue on the Prairie Path's Main Stem in Villa Park. Now the home of the Villa Park Historical Museum and IPP Visitor Center, this Tudor-style station (pictured below) was built in 1929 and is listed on the National Register of Historic Places.
2. At Ardmore Avenue in Villa Park. Dating from 1910, this attractive building is an example of the Prairie School architectural style developed by Frank Lloyd Wright; also on the National Register, it houses the Villa Park Chamber of Commerce.
3. At 630 Stafford Place on the IPP Aurora Branch, Warrenville. Completely remodeled, this station has been transformed into the present-day Warrenville City Hall.
4. At Prince Crossing Road on the IPP Elgin Branch. Though now dilapidated, the old Ingaltion station in its heyday contained the railroad ticket office at one end and a Commonwealth Edison substation at the other (see insert for picture).
5. At Army Trail Road in Wayne near the Elgin Branch. This charming one-room building (upper left) was moved from its original location many years ago and has recently been restored by its present owners, Mr. and Mrs. John Ashe. It is complete with a Wayne sign, shutters, a window box, benches inside and out, and soon, Mrs. Ashe hopes, an old pot-bellied stove.
6. At Kenyon Road in South Elgin. The old Clintonville CA&E station now houses the Valley Model Railroad Association headquarters.
7. At Wilson Street, Batavia, the end of the IPP Batavia Spur. Now all-but-forgotten, this station was located on the basement and first floor levels of an old two-story building with a limestone facade next to the Fox River on the south side of the street (see insert for picture). Still in existence are the boarded-up doors and possibly a ticket window. The street-level floor is also vacant but could be restored to accommodate an antique shop or other tourist attraction.

Five of these historic buildings are in good repair; but two, the Ingaltion station at Prince Crossing and the Batavia station, cry out for restoration. A good project for some of you history buffs and fans of the "Great Third Rail"!



A GREAT ANNUAL MEETING

More than seventy-five members and friends came to the 27th annual meeting of The Illinois Prairie Path not-for-profit corporation on November 3rd. The record-breaking crowd proved unfounded any earlier fears that the new location in the Student Resource Center at College of DuPage might lower attendance.

President Paul Mooring conducted the business meeting after introducing all the current and former board members present. The minutes of the 1990 annual meeting were approved as was the 1991 treasurer's report presented by Joan Hamill (see insert). Karen Stewart reported that the current membership is now 1304. Five board members whose terms were expiring this year were re-elected: Joan Hamill, John Kacich, Jean Mooring, Bob Rawls, and Dick Wilson. One new board member was elected to replace Bob Hargis, who had resigned and moved from the area in September. Paul Aeschleman of Elmhurst is a graduate of the University of Illinois with a Master's degree in agronomy (soil microbiology) and is employed as a recycling specialist with Waste Management Company in Oak Brook. He is also a regular IPP bicyclist and jogger and lent his professional expertise to the Earth Day cleanup this year. Bonnie Hargis, the other half of the Hargis team, has not yet been replaced on the board; but her volunteer job as office manager has now been assigned to Karen Stewart, wife of board member Jim Stewart. The board has decided that the work of the office manager, though it has always been handled on a volunteer basis by a board member, has become too time-consuming and should therefore be a paid position. Hence The Illinois Prairie Path now has its first employee. We are still searching for a board member, preferably in the Wheaton area, to replace Bonnie. Before concluding the business meeting President Mooring spoke briefly about two problems currently facing the board: the imminent sale of the old county courthouse property, which makes necessary the determination of a legal route for the Illinois Prairie Path between Washington and Cross Streets in Wheaton; and the proposed installation of Commonwealth Edison high-tension lines along some 3-1/2 miles of the Prairie Path in the Warrenville area. Paul pointed out that Com Ed does have the legal right to use its easement in perpetuity on the right-of-way, but our board is still hopeful another route can be found. Over the years Com Ed has been a cooperative friend of the Path, having granted easements and



Com Ed owns most of IPP Geneva Spur and has just buried its 34 KV lines at DuPage County Airport. All vegetation has been removed.

leases for various trail segments; and The Illinois Prairie Path board hopes this good relationship can continue in the future to benefit both the utility and the trail users.

Board member Ken Moss, Elmhurst, who had arranged the program, introduced the speakers and noted that the Illinois Prairie Path was the first rail-trail in the nation (actually in the world!) and that it pioneered a movement which now includes 428 rail-trails in the U.S. with a total length of 4644 miles and an estimated 54 million users in 1990.

The featured speaker was Ed Hoffman, Supervisor, Division of Planning, Illinois Department of Conservation. He congratulated The Illinois Prairie Path volunteers on their success in making a public-private partnership work for more than twenty-five years with the cooperation of federal, state, and local agencies and said that the Department of Conservation is trying to replicate successes like the IPP statewide.

He listed many trails IDOC is currently interested in seeing developed, including the state-owned Cook County section of the

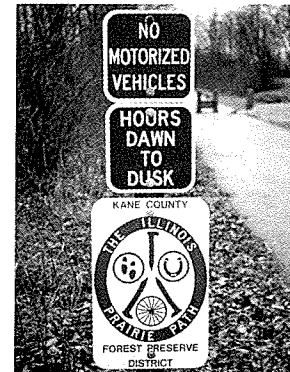


Illinois Department of Conservation officials inspect IPP in Cook County, November, 1991. Pictured in Bellwood are Bruce Clark, Director, Office of Planning and Development, IDOC, Rick Pietruszka, IDOC Trails Coordinator, Len Chabala, Ken Moss, and Paul Mooring, IPP. Photo by Jean Mooring.

IPP. The outlook for trails is favorable because funding is now available for the

state bikeway program from the \$2 vehicle registration fee, which generates about \$4.6 million per year. Current projects of IDOC include: a railbanking study consisting of a series of eight reports dealing with economics, tax implications, homeowner concerns and other aspects of rail-trail conversions; and the development of a statewide trail plan. IDOC has contracted with the Openlands Project and the Northeastern Illinois Planning Commission to develop a plan for Northeastern Illinois. Early next year they will be holding public meetings, which trail advocates should attend.

Next to speak was Jon Duerr, Superintendent of the Kane County Forest Preserve District and former IPP board member. He thanked the membership on behalf of Arlene Shoemaker, President of the Kane County Forest Preserve Commission, for the IPP logo signs we donated this year to identify the sections of the Prairie Path



New IPP logo sign on Elgin Branch at Kenyon Road in Kane County.

owned and maintained by the Kane County F.P.D. His board remains very supportive of trails in Kane County and is currently working with the mayor of Geneva to find a satisfactory route for the three-block segment of the IPP Geneva Spur leading to Bennett Park on the Fox River. He is trying to enhance natural areas along trails, and he is also working with Joan Hamill of the IPP to provide more equestrian trails in Kane County. He plans a major sign program next year to answer his trail users' perennial question, "Where am I?"

Chuck Tokarski, Chief of Traffic Plans and Programs for the DuPage County Division of Transportation, reported that state matching grants have been finalized for the completion of the IPP Geneva Spur (he had staked the route with forest preserve district staff the previous week and expects bids to be let next summer) and also for the completion of the Great Western Trail as far as Schmale Road. The section connecting to the Illinois Prairie Path west of

(Continued on next page)

Scenes from Annual Slide Show



Volunteers paint out graffiti on bridge abutment at East Branch of the DuPage River, Lombard. From left in foreground: Ed Marsh, Hope Marsh, Nancy Wilson.



Bob Hargis and Jim Stewart replace signs at Molitor Road.

Volunteer Projects



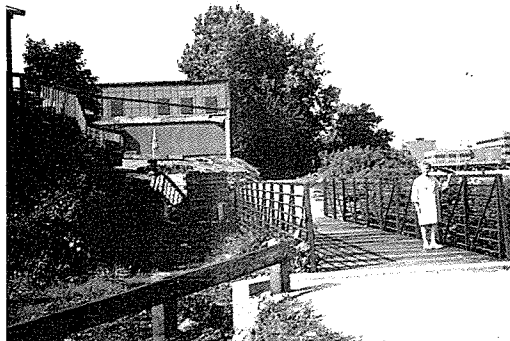
Mark Newell, Paul Mooring and Ken Moss help install decorative wood screen to hide Sani-john on IPP near Warrenville City Hall.



Jean Mooring empties trash from a barrel east of Hill Ave., Glen Ellyn, as she has done for many years. She takes it home and adds it to her own garbage for collection.



Mother and daughter enjoy a winter ride on the Illinois Prairie Path in Warrenville.



New bridge on Fox Valley Park District riverwalk between New York St. and Illinois St., Aurora.



Birdwatchers on the Path at Lincoln Marsh.

WHEATON PARK DISTRICT'S FOURTH ANNUAL WINTER HIKE AT LINCOLN MARSH

For this hike, which is offered in cooperation with The Illinois Prairie Path not-for-profit corporation, we'll meet at the Prairie Path's Volunteer Park (corner of Liberty St. and Carlton Ave.) and walk to the Lincoln Marsh. Once at the marsh, we'll stroll through its skeletal landscapes searching for old savannas and the "forgotten prairie". Before our return, we'll be treated to hot stew, biscuits and a warm beverage cooked over a fire. The total distance is about three miles. (Children 8-12 must be accompanied by a paying adult.) For ages 8 and over; January 25, Saturday, 9:00 a.m.-12:30 p.m. (#4-601-02). Limit 25. \$3/resident; \$5/non-resident.



New boardwalk leads into beautiful Lincoln Marsh.

Jean C. Mooring, Editor

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