



Blue Jay

# THE ILLINOIS PRAIRIE PATH NEWSLETTER

Winter 1993

## What to See . . .

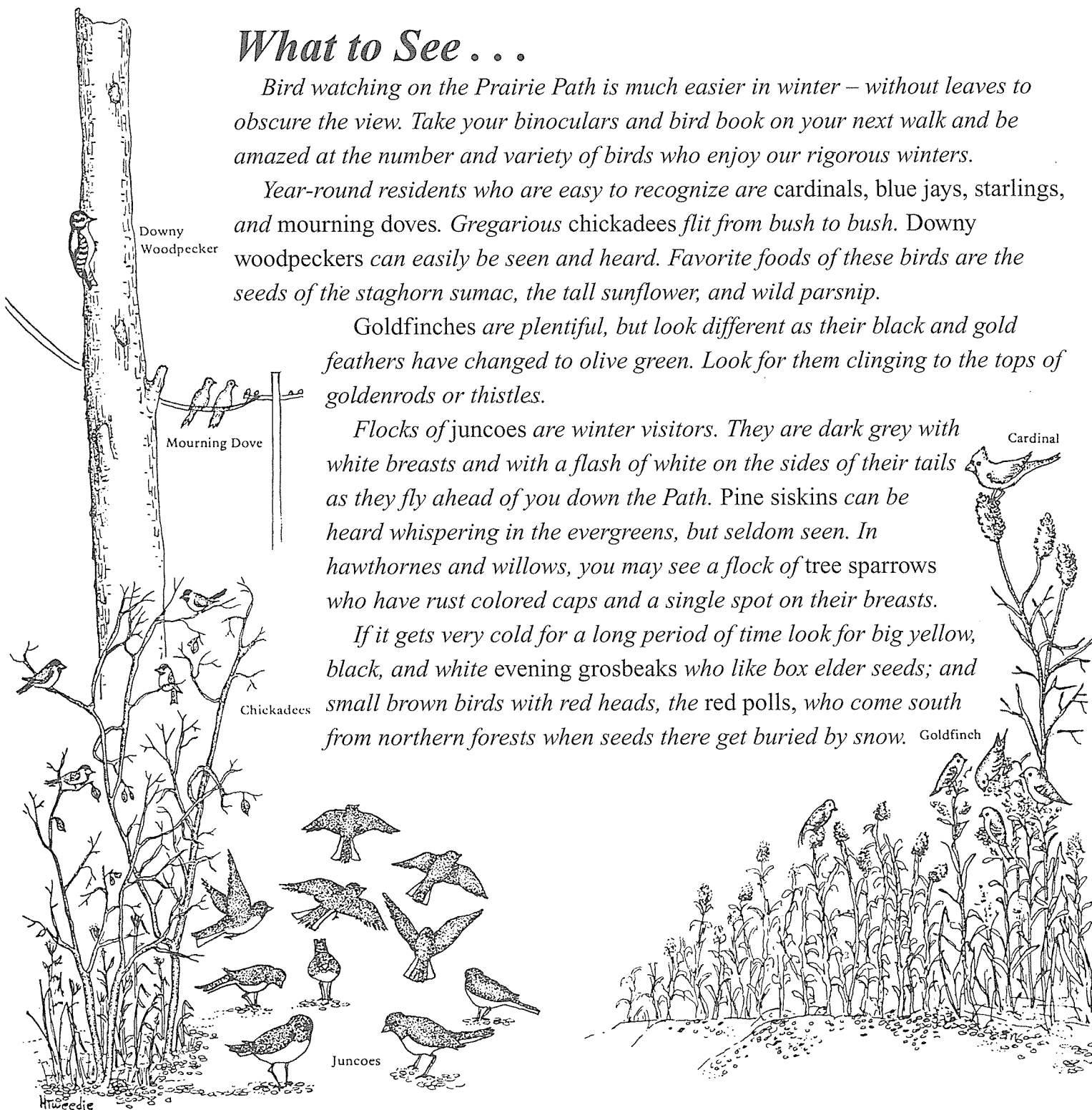
*Bird watching on the Prairie Path is much easier in winter – without leaves to obscure the view. Take your binoculars and bird book on your next walk and be amazed at the number and variety of birds who enjoy our rigorous winters.*

*Year-round residents who are easy to recognize are cardinals, blue jays, starlings, and mourning doves. Gregarious chickadees flit from bush to bush. Downy woodpeckers can easily be seen and heard. Favorite foods of these birds are the seeds of the staghorn sumac, the tall sunflower, and wild parsnip.*

*Goldfinches are plentiful, but look different as their black and gold feathers have changed to olive green. Look for them clinging to the tops of goldenrods or thistles.*

*Flocks of juncos are winter visitors. They are dark grey with white breasts and with a flash of white on the sides of their tails as they fly ahead of you down the Path. Pine siskins can be heard whispering in the evergreens, but seldom seen. In hawthornes and willows, you may see a flock of tree sparrows who have rust colored caps and a single spot on their breasts.*

*If it gets very cold for a long period of time look for big yellow, black, and white evening grosbeaks who like box elder seeds; and small brown birds with red heads, the red polls, who come south from northern forests when seeds there get buried by snow.*



# A HORSE CALLED SMOKY

Connie Schmidt has sent us the following note and picture from Warrenville:

*"As you pass through Warrenville, notice the new park bench along the Prairie Path placed near the Gazebo at City Hall. This bench was donated by friends and family of Cindy Intravartolo in memory of her horse Smoky who died this summer. Cindy owned Smoky for 22 years and rode him as a trail horse throughout DuPage County. The plaque mounted on the bench reads, 'In memory of Smoky, a trusted friend to Cindy, who carried her for many miles along this trail. 1963-1993'"*



*Cindy Intravartolo remembers Smoky, her friend and companion.*

## AN OUTSTANDING ANNUAL MEETING

More than one hundred members and friends of The Illinois Prairie Path not-for-profit corporation attended the twenty-ninth annual meeting on Sunday, November 7. They filled the hall at The Abbey, the spacious and comfortable senior citizen center on St. Charles Road maintained by the Elmhurst Park District. The annual meeting was the final IPP-sponsored event for 1993, a historic year marking the thirtieth anniversary of the founding of the Illinois Prairie Path, the nation's first great rail-trail. (The rail-trail idea was born on September 25, 1963 when Path Founder May Theilgaard Watts wrote an imaginative and witty letter to the editor of the *Chicago Tribune* explaining how an abandoned railroad right-of-way could be transformed into a beautiful nature trail.)

*May Theilgaard Watts, founder of the Illinois Prairie Path. Photo taken at the Indiana Dunes, one of her favorite places, about 1960.*

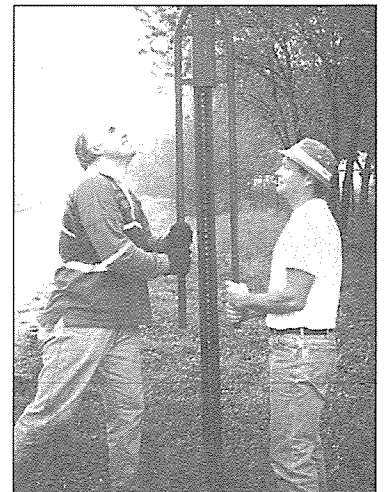
The annual meeting was also the last conducted by President Paul Mooring, who will be stepping down when a new president is elected at the December board meeting. "Twenty-one years is enough", said he. Mooring will remain on the board, however. As proposed by longtime IPP member Steve Rothman of Wheaton, the crowd accorded Mooring an appreciative ovation for his many years of dedicated service.

Before the business meeting President Mooring introduced the current members of the board and several past members. Elizabeth Holmes, Keith Olson, and Eugene

Pomerance. Liz Holmes, formerly of Wayne, is one of eleven spunky visionaries, The Illinois Prairie Path's first board of directors. Liz served as corresponding secretary for many years and her husband Sam Holmes was our first attorney; both were good friends of May Watts and Path Co-founder Helen Turner of Naperville.\*

*\*Editor's Note. The other seven members of the first IPP board of directors listed in the Articles of Incorporation of June 1, 1965, were: Raymond Watts (husband of May Watts), Naperville; Phoebe Ryerson and her husband George, Wayne; Jane Sindt and her husband Augustus (Gus), Naperville; Lillian Lasch, Morton Grove; and Dr. Warren Keck, Naperville.*

The major item of business was the election of five members to the board of directors as proposed by the nominating committee, chaired by Ken Moss. Since there were no nominations from the floor, elected by acclamation were incumbents Paul Aeschleman, Steve Hagar, and Paul Mooring and newcomers Steve Plumb and David Tate. Steve Plumb replaces Len Chabala of Maywood, who passed away this year; and David Tate replaces Jim Stewart, who resigned from the board this fall because of his family's move to Shabbona. Jim inspired and supervised several Eagle Scout projects to benefit the Prairie Path in western DuPage and Kane Counties during his term on the board; we will miss his enthusiastic



*October 16 Work Day. David Tate and Mark Newell use post driver to install IPP sign post near airport on Geneva Spur.*

“can do” spirit.

Steve Plumb, whose wife is Linda, is a longtime friend of the Illinois Prairie Path, and is employed as Director of Park Services for the Elmhurst Park District, which leases and manages the Elmhurst section of the IPP. Holder of a B.S. degree in Outdoor Recreation from Colorado State and an M.S. in Administration from Penn State, Steve worked for the Glenview Park District for seven years before his current fourteen-year tenure with the Elmhurst Park District. A competitive bridge player and a reader who loves mysteries, Steve is also an avid camper and boater whose non-motorized fleet includes a canoe, a kayak and a sailboat.

David Tate holds a B.S. in Accounting and an M.B.A. in Finance from Indiana University and is currently employed by Budget Rent-A-Car Corporation, Lisle, in their financial planning department. David and his wife Benna live in rural Winfield next to the Illinois Prairie Path. Proximity to the trail is the main reason they bought their house, they say. They are out on the Path whenever they get a chance and especially enjoy hiking, biking, and in the winter cross-country skiing on the Path through Timber Ridge Forest Preserve. Whether feeding wild birds, repairing IPP mile markers, or picking up trash, the Tates are always doing something to benefit the environment. They have also adopted the IPP section near their home between Jewell Road and the Great Western Trail (west of Prince Crossing) for regular monitoring.

Other Business included approval of the minutes of the last annual meeting, the announcement by Treasurer Joan Hamill that her treasurer's report would appear in the next *Newsletter* (see page 8), and the membership report (given by Jean Mooring in the absence of Membership Chair Karen Stewart). Current membership stands at 1365 including 124 non-paying VIPs.

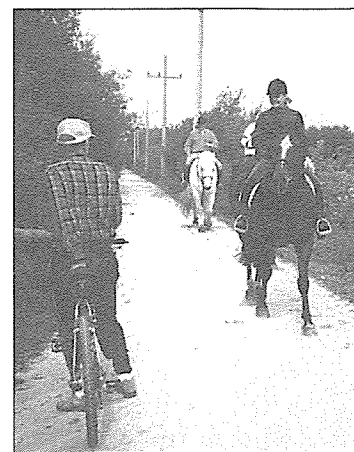
In his president's report, Paul Mooring stated that 1993 had been a year of controversy for The Illinois Prairie Path and mentioned five areas of concern: the Commonwealth Edison plan to install high voltage power lines and cut down many trees on a three-mile stretch of the Path in Warrenville; the Summerfest carnival on the IPP in Villa Park which obstructs normal Path usage and subjects nearby residents to unlawful noise levels; the soon-to-be-completed bridge on the Elgin Branch in rural West Chicago to carry IPP users safely over widened Rte. 59; the restoration of a remnant prairie next to the IPP in Elmhurst between Spring Road and Salt Creek which will necessitate the removal of some undesirable trees; and the ongoing vandalism problem, mainly shown by graffiti on structures along the Path. Pictures are on pages 4 and 5.

Under the heading of New Business several persons

spoke. Donna Bruzek of the May T. Watts Society of Naperville told the membership about the work of the society in restoring May Watts' historic home and gardens in Naperville. She brought along a very interesting folding screen table-top display prepared by Carole Mayer, head of garden restoration for the society, showing how the project is progressing. For example, noted landscape architect Tony Tynzik and Mrs. Mayer

did a walk-around of the garden, from which she did a diagrammatic rendering. Old stumps, a dying apple tree and several trash trees have been rooted up and removed. Winklers Tree and Landscaping donated their services (almost \$1000 worth) to trim the three stately Norway maples on the property. Volunteers from the North Central College Green environmental group have done a late fall cleanup of the gardens. The society is now ready to develop a Master Plan to be ready for spring planting. Persons interested in helping to preserve the memory of May Watts through this exciting project are invited to call Carole Mayer at 355-4020.

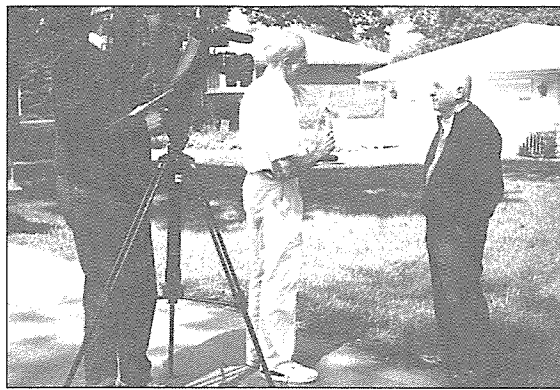
The next speaker was Joe Schrantz of Villa Park, leader of the residents whose lives were disrupted in July of 1992 and again in 1993 by the noise, lights, and crowds generated by the Villa Park Summerfest carnival on the Prairie Path. Seeking to have the carnival moved to another site on grounds of non-compliance with various local zoning laws, the residents first appealed to the sponsors, the Village of Villa Park, the local Rotary, Kiwanis and Masons, and to the DuPage County Division of Transportation (DuPage County owns the right-of-way). When the administrative appeals failed, the residents turned to the circuit court but soon found their complaint rendered moot when the village and county changed their zoning laws to allow the carnival to proceed. A request for a temporary injunction also failed because the judge relied on the defendants' promises that this year's carnival would obey all laws. The 1993 carnival was held as planned on the Prairie Path. However, the residents had another card to play: they hired a professional sound engineer who took readings during the 1993 carnival and found that the noise levels greatly exceeded statutory maximum levels enforced by the Illinois Pollution Control Board. Therefore, the residents have now appealed to the State for relief and



*Equestrians pass a cyclist on Path at Pratt's Wayne Woods. Forest Preserve, Wayne.*



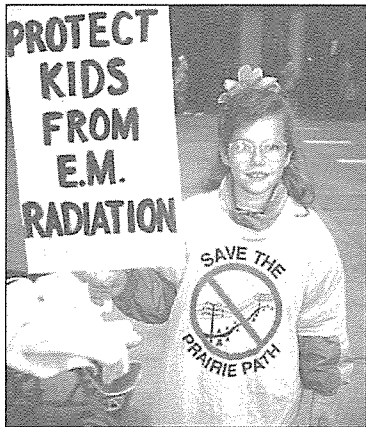
Contractor's crew pours concrete into caissons for east abutment of IPP bridge over Rte. 59. October, 1993.



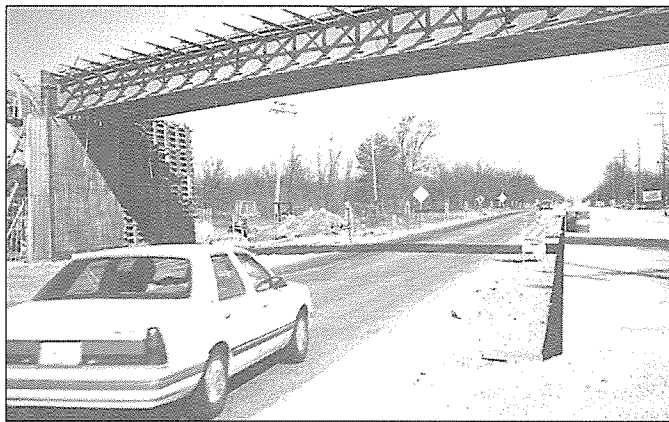
◀ Channel 7 reporter interviews Paul Mooring at home for story on IPP bridge over Rte. 59.



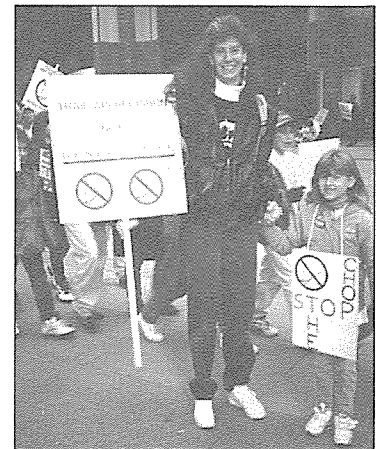
July Work Day. Dick Wilson, Paul Mooring and Nancy Wilson replace planter in front of Port-o-let screen at Army Trail Road, Wayne.



Young IPP Friend from Warrenville protests Com Ed's plans at rally, State of Illinois Jim Thompson Center, Chicago, October 13.



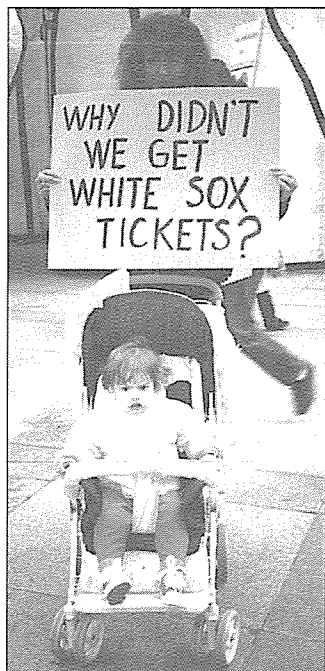
IPP bridge over Rte. 59. November, 1993. West end.



A leader of the Friends of the Prairie Path, Connie Schmidt, and children carry signs reading, "Trail appreciation - not desecration" and "STOP THE CHOP."



▲ Walk to remember May Watts, September 25, near Wayne. Fifteen IPP fans enjoyed a rainy day on the Path.

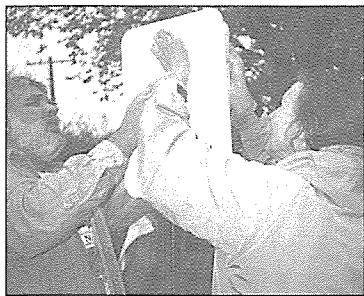


◀ The real question: Why did the Illinois Commerce Commission hearing examiner get special Com Ed box seat tickets to the White Sox games? Hearings will resume with new unbiased hearing examiner.



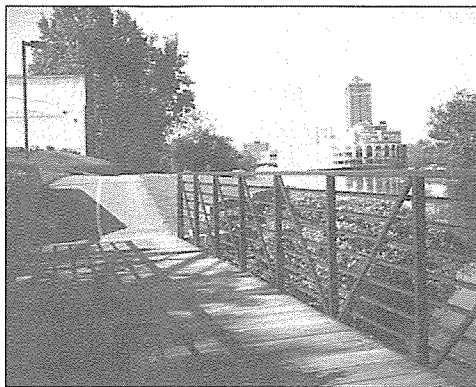
Warrenville aldermen Bill Murphy and Bob Siebert, John Bengel of Friends of the Prairie Path, and Mike Formento DuPage County Board, carry sign reading, "Has the Illinois Prairie Path been sold for box seats?"



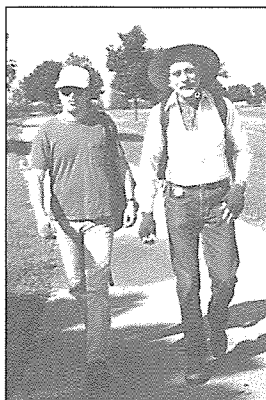


October 16 Work Day. Steve Plumb and Nancy Wilson put up IPP sign in Wheaton.

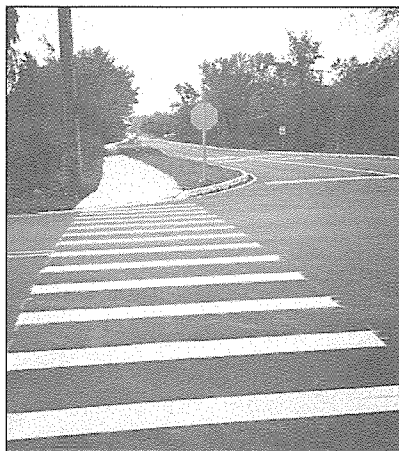
New section ▶ of Fox River Trail is located on Chicago, Aurora and Elgin R.R. r/w north of Aurora. IPP thus leads to Hollywood Casino (upper right).



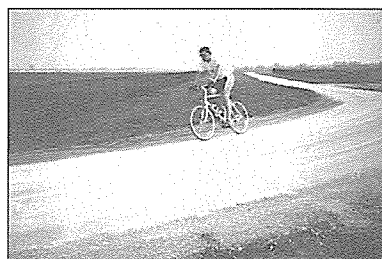
Adjacent homeowners often build bridges from their property to the IPP. This handsome one is in Lombard.



◀ Leader Dick Wilson and late-comer hurry to catch up with Fermilab loop hikers on June 5. National Trails Day.



Lonely cyclist ▶ pedals on new section of IPP Geneva Spur bypassing extended DuPage County Airport runways.



◀ New West Chicago Section of IPP Geneva Spur is widened sidewalk paralleling Main Street extended to Prince Crossing Road.



Waste Management Inc. has contract with IPP to empty trash barrels in unincorporated DuPage County.



Paul Mooring and Jim Stewart repair vandalized display case at Bilter Road on Batavia Spur, March 18. The vandals struck again in October.



Another new section of Fox River Trail in Elgin (also on former CA and E r/w) will soon lead to a second casino river boat, coming next year.



◀ Dick Wilson, Paul Mooring and Jim Stewart install new display case to replace original vandalized case at Westmore in Lombard, on May 22.

Three months later most ▶ of the door had been ripped off, so we removed display case remnant. About September 26 vandals spray-painted gang graffiti on the wooden stand, memorial bench and trash barrel.



expect their complaint to be heard in January. Joe Schrantz said that the residents had already spent a lot of money on legal fees in this cause and he thanked the IPP membership for our assistance in paying the engineer for the noise study. He asked the membership for further help with the fees for the lawyer and the engineer who would have to testify before the Pollution Control Board. In response, Board Member Jean Mooring proposed the following motion, seconded by Ken Moss: "Believing that the Villa Park Summerfest carnival is a totally inappropriate use of the Illinois Prairie Path and its right-of-way, the membership of The Illinois Prairie Path corporation in support of the noise pollution complaint of the Villa Park residents, agrees to spend up to \$2000 for legal fees and \$1000 for engineering testimony in the prospective hearing before the Illinois Pollution Control Board." The motion was approved unanimously by the membership. A ruling favorable to the plaintiffs should cause DuPage County to deny next year's carnival permit and thus force permanent relocation of this event.

The third speaker under New Business was Keith Olson, former Illinois Prairie Path board member and currently co-chair of the Great Western Prairie Advisory Group sponsored by the Elmhurst Park District. Keith discussed the park district's development plan for the prairie, which will restore it to its full glory as a remnant of Illinois' once-predominant native landscape. He explained the district's tree-cutting program of removing weedy trees that shade the sun-loving prairie plants and offered to lead a brief field trip to the prairie, located only a short distance from The Abbey, after the meeting. (Several attendees accepted the invitation.)

After the routine postponement of the obligatory annual board meeting to the first Tuesday in December, Mooring turned the meeting over to Master of Ceremonies Ken Moss, who had arranged the program for the afternoon. The featured speaker was George D. Berndt from the U.S. Department of the Interior, Interpretive Specialist for the hundred-mile-long Illinois and Michigan Canal National Heritage Corridor. Born in Germany, Mr. Berndt came to the United States as a boy with his family in 1948 and settled in Ohio. After college and two years in the U.S. Army, he embarked on a National Park Service career and served as a park ranger/historian at many national parks. His current assignment is to help create a Corridor-wide consciousness among the general public and the interpretive staffs at the numerous state, county, and local parks, museums and historical societies in the Corridor. An important part of the

interpretive program is the beautiful video Mr. Berndt presented, showing the old canal with its locks and bridges, historic structures like the Gaylord Building in Lockport, biking and hiking trails, and museums with artifacts from the days of the area's early Indian inhabitants and the French traders to the present era of European-American settlers, farmers, miners, and industrialists. Throughout the video today's Illinois citizens are shown enjoying the woods and waters and natural beauty of the Corridor's many parks, of which perhaps the most famous is Goose Lake Prairie State Natural Area, containing one of the largest expanses of tallgrass prairie remaining in the Midwest. Mr. Berndt offered a tantalizing glimpse of the pleasures ahead when the Illinois Prairie Path is ultimately linked to the I and M Canal Corridor.

The second featured speaker was new board member Steve Plumb, who reported that the Elmhurst Park District

has applied for a \$778,000 grant from Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act (ISTEA) funds to build a 1.8-mile asphalt bike path along the west side of Salt Creek from Ben Allison Park just north of the Illinois Prairie Path to Eldridge Park north of Butterfield Road. There is already a footpath covering most of the same distance on the east side of the creek. (See map on page 7). Steve explained

that this section of the Salt Creek Greenway could link with other bicycle paths in Oak Brook and along Salt Creek in Cook County and produce the *first direct connection* from the Illinois Prairie Path to the Illinois-Michigan Canal.\*

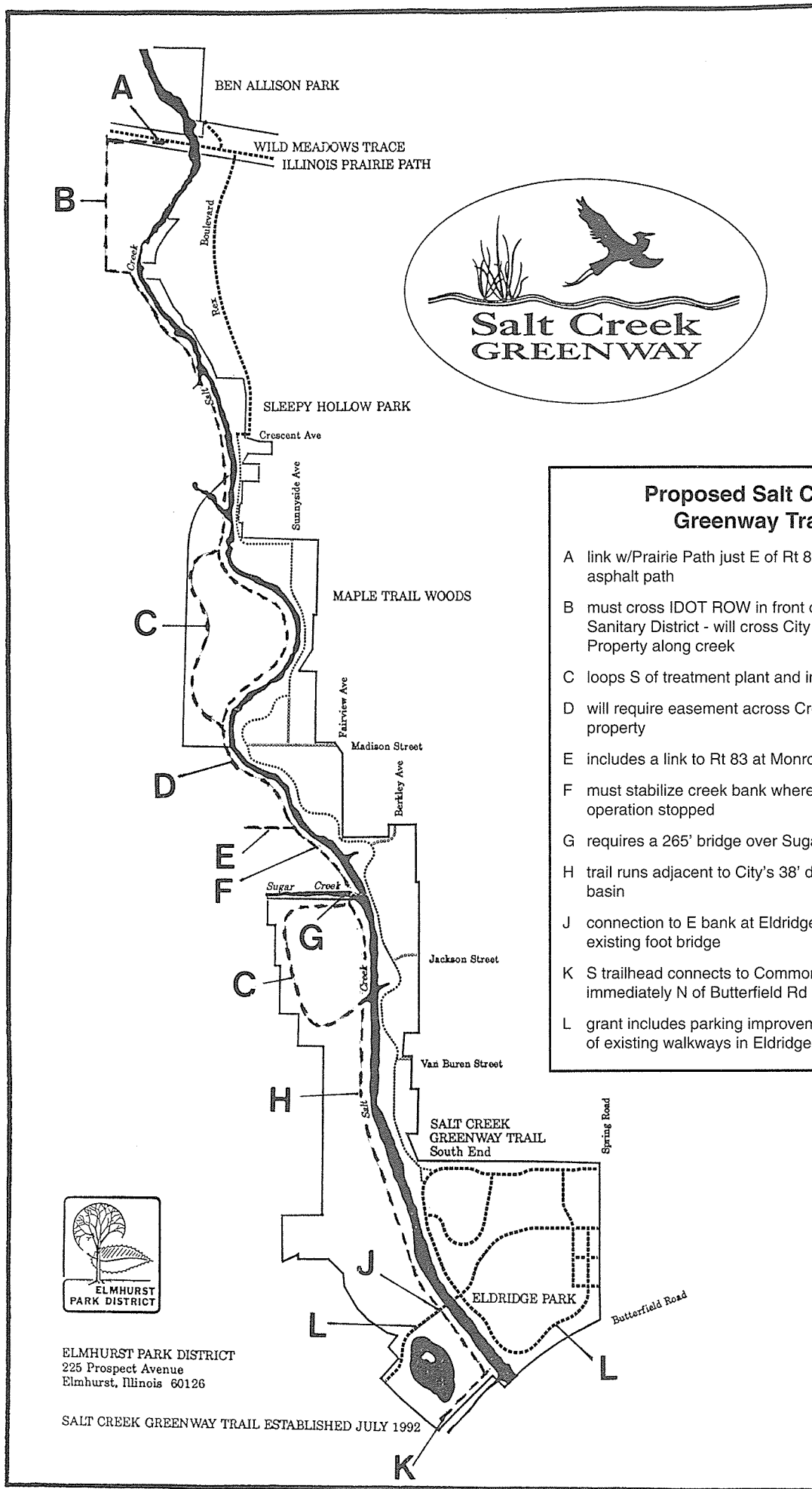
*\*Editor's Note: We plan to print maps in the Spring Newsletter showing all existing and proposed trails along Salt Creek.*

Last on the agenda was Jean Mooring, who presented the Moorings' annual slide show to much applause. (See pictures on pages 4 and 5.) After the laughter had subsided, Ken Moss commented, "This show is so good we ought to take it on the road!"

The meeting concluded with cider, cakes and cookies provided by IPP board members and spouses. The beautiful and fragrant arrangement of fresh fall flowers from the Elmhurst Park District greenhouse was made by park staffer Ed Hoffmann. Before and after the meeting Dick and Nancy Wilson manned the table where Prairie Path maps, patches, *Guides*, T-shirts and caps were available for sale. Everyone agreed that The Abbey was an excellent site for the annual meeting and appreciated the cooperation of the Elmhurst Park District in making it available.



*Villa Park 1993 Carnival beer tent was pitched in street adjoining IPP right-of-way. Alcoholic beverages are prohibited on the Prairie Path by County ordinance.*



### Proposed Salt Creek Greenway Trail

- A link w/Prairie Path just E of Rt 83 - 10' wide asphalt path
- B must cross IDOT ROW in front of Salt Creek Sanitary District - will cross City Treatment Property along creek
- C loops S of treatment plant and in oxbow area
- D will require easement across Crown Metals property
- E includes a link to Rt 83 at Monroe Street
- F must stabilize creek bank where dredging operation stopped
- G requires a 265' bridge over Sugar Creek
- H trail runs adjacent to City's 38' deep detention basin
- J connection to E bank at Eldridge Park across existing foot bridge
- K S trailhead connects to Commonwealth Ave immediately N of Butterfield Rd
- L grant includes parking improvements and lighting of existing walkways in Eldridge Park

# Treasurer's Report

November 1, 1992 - October 31, 1993

(Unaudited)

Balance on hand, November 1, 1992

State Bank of St. Charles .....	\$2,421.13
SteinRoe Cash Reserves .....	\$54,455.45
<b>TOTAL .....</b>	<b>\$56,876.58</b>

Income

Donations .....	\$1,388.94
Dues .....	15,405.50
Sales (maps, T-shirts, Patches, "Guides") .....	1,298.00
Interest .....	1,198.68
Miscellaneous .....	524.34
<b>TOTAL .....</b>	<b>\$19,815.46</b>

Expenses

Capital Improvements .....	\$7,475.32
Maintenance .....	1,542.99
Office Manager (wages) .....	5,079.25
Social Security .....	1,284.00
Membership Mailings and Services .....	2,548.41
Printing (including "Newsletter") .....	8,495.32
Office Rent and Telephone .....	422.41
Office Supplies .....	982.50
Merchandise for Sale (maps, T-shirts, etc.) .....	0.00
Trash and Waste Removal .....	2,021.40
Villa Park Historical Society (a) .....	1,000.00
Legal .....	3,000.00
Miscellaneous .....	598.42
<b>TOTAL .....</b>	<b>\$34,450.02</b>

Balance on hand, October 31, 1993

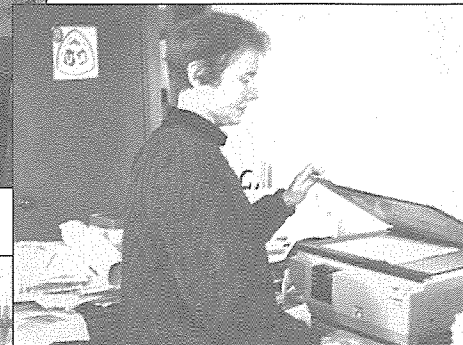
State Bank of St. Charles .....	\$5,619.47
SteinRoe Cash Reserves .....	36,622.55
<b>TOTAL .....</b>	<b>\$42,242.02</b>

(a) Illinois Prairie Path Visitor Center

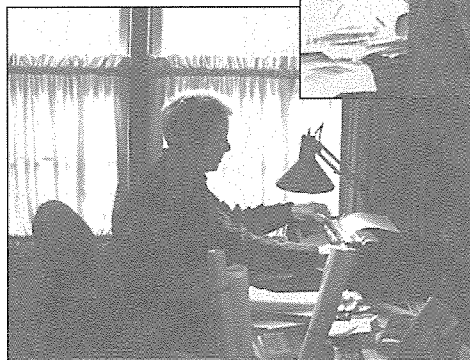
## Our Editor at Work



◀ The editor's filing "system" needs an overhaul.



▲ Jean's Canon copier is indispensable.



◀ Editor Jean Mooring types the Newsletter on her trusty Olivetti electric.

— Jean C. Mooring, Editor —

MEMBERSHIP RATES:	Individual \$10
	Family \$15
	Organization/Supporting \$20
	Contributing \$25
	Sustaining \$50
	Patron \$100
	Lifetime \$500



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