

THE ILLINOIS PRAIRIE PATH NEWSLETTER

Winter/Spring 1995

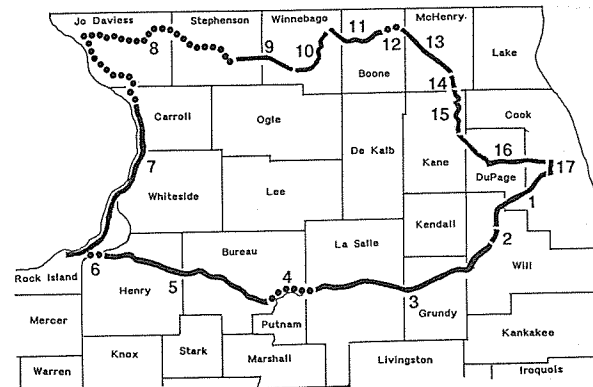
A Look to the Future: The Grand Illinois Trail

The name alone stirs the soul. As proposed by the Illinois Department of Conservation in its 1994 State Trails Plan, the Grand Illinois Trail will be the most ambitious trail in this state, a super circle 476 miles long, joining the Chicago area to the Mississippi.

The Illinois Prairie Path provides a vital 27.5-mile link in the trail, which will connect at least seventeen such individual segments and will cross the northern part of the state twice. (See map to right for names and locations of the segments.)

Most tantalizing is the southern leg, whose major components are the twenty-mile Centennial Trail now under construction, the 60.5-mile Illinois and Michigan Canal State Trail (55 miles already improved for bicycling), and the 75-mile Hennepin Canal State Trail proposed for development. The main problem area still in the conceptual stage is the 15.5-mile section between La Salle, the western terminus of the I & M, and Bureau Junction, the eastern terminus of the Hennepin Canal. The I & M Canal Corridor Association is working right now with IDOC and the CSX Railroad Corporation on a linkage along this active railroad corridor to join the two great canal trails.

It can and will be done, folks. There's a Grand Trail coming to Illinois!



THE GRAND ILLINOIS TRAIL

- 1 Centennial Trail; 2 Lockport Historical Trail, Joliet Heritage Trail and Local Streets; 3 Illinois & Michigan Canal State Trail; 4 Conceptual Linkage; 5 Hennepin Canal State Trail (segment); 6 Conceptual Linkage; 7 Great River Trail; 8 Local Roads; 9 Pecatonica Trail; 10 Rockford Area Trails; 11 Stone Bridge Trail and Long Prairie Trail; 12 Conceptual Linkage; 13 Crystal Lake-Harvard Trail (segment); 14 Prairie Trail (segment); 15 Fox River Trail (segment); 16 Illinois Prairie Path (segment); 17 Des Plaines River Trail (segment)

Components of The Grand Illinois Trail

from Illinois State Trails Plan

Of growing interest to trail enthusiasts is the long-distance interregional trail offering opportunities for multi-day trips. Many states are exploring the potential of linking state and local trails into interregional trails. In Illinois, the greatest potential for this type of trail is in northern Illinois where the majority of existing trails are found and where most trail users reside. As trail development proceeds in Illinois, other regions will evolve networks that can be linked to provide other interregional trail opportunities.

The proposed Grand Illinois Trail would provide a unique opportunity for the majority of the state's residents to ride or walk from their homes in the Chicago metropolitan area, access the trail, travel a southern or northern east-west route across northern Illinois to the Mississippi River corridor, and then return home on the other route.

The southern route of the trail starts at the Chicago Portage in Summit and follows the 20-mile Centennial Trail, the 2-mile Lockport Historic Trail, and the 4.5-mile Joliet Heritage Park Trail southwest to Joliet. Only the Lockport section exists; the other 24.5 miles are programmed for development.

The trail then proceeds 2.5 miles on city streets through Joliet and along the I&M Canal State Trail 60.5 miles southwestward to LaSalle. Most of the State Trail (55 miles) is improved for bicycling; the remainder is programmed.

The 15.5-mile section between LaSalle and Bureau Junction is conceptual, i.e., a means of accomplishing this segment has not yet been determined. It could potentially share an active railroad corridor with CSX, follow local roads or consist of a separate right of way.

The trail then follows the Hennepin Canal State Trail 75 miles westward to Green Rock, which is proposed for development. A 10-mile link between Green Rock and Milan is conceptual.

From Milan, the trail proceeds north 63 miles along the Mississippi River on the Great River Trail to Savanna. Several sections totaling 15 miles exist; 9 miles are programmed; 5 miles are proposed; and 34 miles will be routed on local roads.

The sections of the trail between Savanna, Galena and Freeport are dependent upon local roads, potentially totaling 88 miles, until other options are available. The feasibility study underway for U.S. 20 between Galena and Freeport by the Illinois Department of Transportation will address bicycle use and therefore facilitate an alternative route for the Trail between these communities.

Just east of Freeport, the trail follows the 18-mile Pecatonica Trail eastward to Rockford. This entire section requires improvement.

The trail then follows local roads, existing bike trails and trail initiatives for 20 miles through the Rockford metropolitan area north to Roscoe and the 4-mile Stone Bridge Trail programmed for improvement. At the Winnebago-Boone county line, the trail becomes the 14.5-mile Long Prairie Trail across Boone County; 6.5 miles are existing; 8 miles are programmed for improvement. The 4.5-mile connection between the Boone-McHenry county line and Harvard is conceptual.

At Harvard, the trail follows the proposed Crystal Lake-Harvard Trail 19.5 miles southeastward to a connection with the Prairie Trail in Crystal Lake. The trail then proceeds 5.7 miles southward to the northern end of the Fox River Trail in Algonquin.

REPORT ON THE ANNUAL MEETING

President Paul Aeschleman called to order the 30th annual meeting of The Illinois Prairie Path not-for-profit corporation on Sunday, October 30, 1994 at the Elmhurst Park District community center in Eldridge Park. (The meeting was held a week early to accommodate several board members who could not have attended on the first Sunday in November.)

Approximately eighty members and friends were present, including Elmhurst Park District Commissioners Ken Moss, Gene Pomerance, and Norm Smalley; DuPage County Board member Roger Kotecki; former IPP Vice President Bob Hargis and former Office Manager/Membership Chair Bonnie Hargis of Charleston, Illinois; and author Jim Hochgesang of Lake Forest, who is writing a book on trails in DuPage County.

President Aeschleman reported a year of steady progress for the corporation, especially in the areas of finance and membership, and a major improvement for the trail with the completion by the Illinois Department of Transportation of the handsome pedestrian bridge over Rte. 59 on the Elgin Branch. He announced publication of the first full-color IPP map, prepared under the direction of Paul Mooring with the assistance of staff and facilities at Northern Illinois University, and printed by ABS Graphics, Addison. Treasurer Steve Plumb announced that the IPP's net worth had increased over last year because Path income had exceeded expenditures for the first time since 1991 (see Treasurer's Report, p. 7). This good news is the result of the outstanding effort by Membership Chair David Tate, who reported a total of 1500 members (including VIPs), a gain of 536 new memberships. David gave an excellent

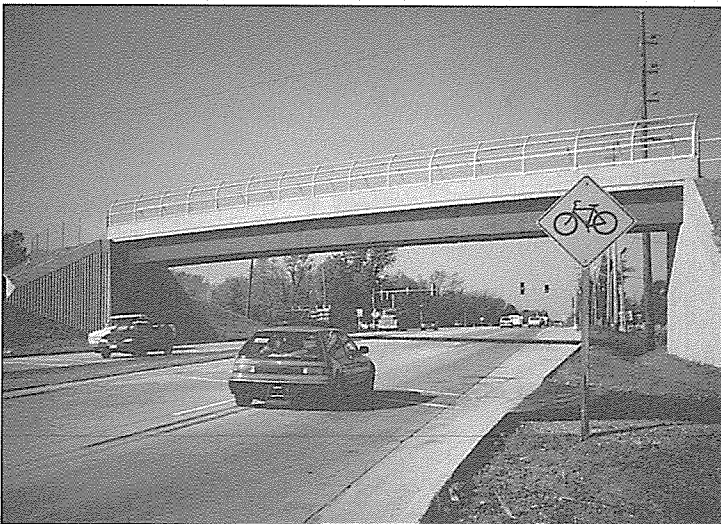
visual presentation showing all the services The Path provides which cost money and our various creative ways of promoting memberships. He thinks the free maps available at our display cases and at bike shops have been especially effective.

Two new members and three incumbents were elected to The IPP board of directors. The three incumbents are John Kacich of Berkeley, Jean Mooring of Glen Ellyn, and Bob Rawls of Warrenville. The new members are Tom Yule of West Chicago, replacing Chris Joyce of Wheaton who retired last year because of other commitments, and Tom May of Carol Stream, who replaces Joan Hamill of Wayne. Joan served with distinction on the board of directors beginning in 1966, longer than any other member, and will continue in her honorary position as chairman of the board.

Tom Yule is a physicist at Argonne National Laboratory. He has a B.S. in physics from John Carroll University in Cleveland and a Ph.D. in experimental nuclear physics from the University of Wisconsin, Madison. Long interested in civic affairs and the environment, Tom is a former president of the Indian Knolls Homeowners Association and an original member of the West Chicago Environmental Concerns Committee, which is spearheading the effort to develop a We-Go bikeway network. An avid cyclist himself, Tom likes to point out that he bought his house because it backs up to the Illinois Prairie Path.

Tom May has a B.A. in finance from the University of Iowa and is currently working on his M.B.A. at Illinois Benedictine. Another enthusiastic cyclist, he has biked on all sections of the IPP. He was recruited for the board by Ken Moss and Joan Hamill when he stopped at our display table in Elmhurst last August. He wants to help out on work days and would like to get more people involved as IPP users and volunteers.

Following a question period, board member Ken Moss introduced the two principal speakers: George Bellovics, landscape architect with the Illinois Department of Conservation, who gave an overview of the Grand Illinois Trail; and Mike Ulm, who told of his work as executive director of the 5,000-member Illinois Rails-to-Trails Conservancy. He lobbies on trail-related bills in Springfield and supports the efforts of grass-roots trail groups around the state. He is also promoting the possible railtrail connection between the I & M Canal and the Hennepin Canal. Mike explained that this southern leg of the Grand Illinois will be an important link in the proposed American Discovery Trail, planned to cross the country from coast to coast. Bellovics stated in response to a question that the department of



Illinois Prairie Path bridge over Rte. 59, built by Illinois Department of Transportation, opened in fall, 1994.

conservation will spend close to one million dollars to upgrade the Cook County section of the IPP and hopes to go out for bids this spring.

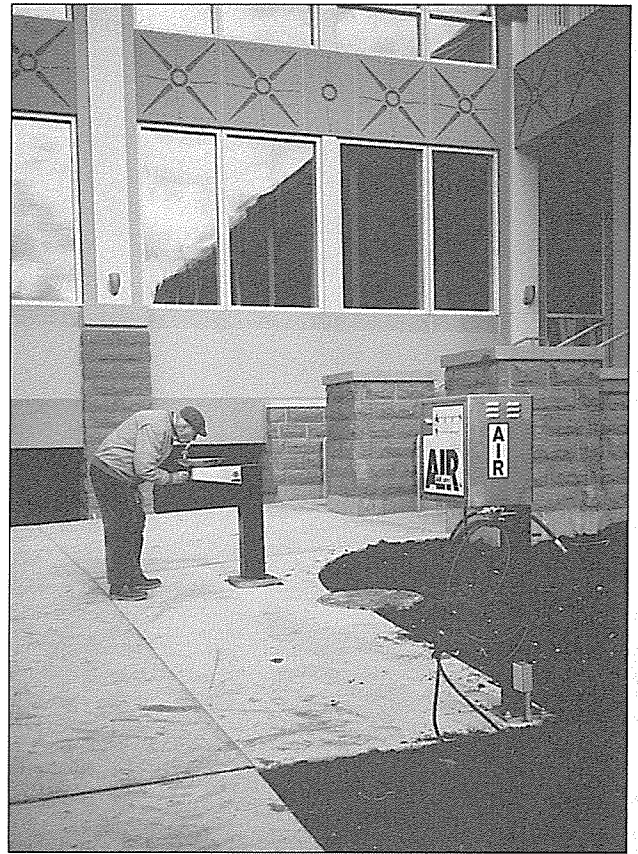
Wearing his other hat as director of park services for the Elmhurst Park District, Steve Plumb gave an update on the Salt Creek Greenway Trail application for ISTEA (Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act) funding, which had just been denied. (However, see story, p 4.)

Concluding the program, Jean and Paul Mooring presented their annual slide show highlighting the year's major (and minor) happenings on the Path. These included the opening of the pedestrian bridge over Rte. 59, the Great Mile Marker Mixup, the solving of the Mushroom Mystery, various work days, and the debut of the second floating casino at the end of a branch of the Prairie Path, this one on the Fox River in Elgin. "Now all we need to complete the picture," smiled Jean, "is a casino on the Des Plaines River in Maywood." The crowd of environmentalists and outdoor people just laughed.

Following the meeting, everyone enjoyed cider, cakes and cookies provided by the members of the board and/or



Fox River Trail/Illinois Prairie Path passes under Grand Victoria Casino, Elgin.



Casino operators provide a drinking fountain and compressed air for trail users.

their spouses. The most spectacular treat was a delicious cake made by Benna and David Tate in the shape of the Illinois Prairie Path. It even sported mile marker posts and the names of towns at the various trail heads.

The table centerpiece was a beautiful arrangement of roses donated by the Elmhurst Park District. Several other bouquets of roses from the same source decorated the room, which itself was donated for our use by the park district. We are deeply grateful to the Elmhurst Park District and the citizens of Elmhurst for their long-standing commitment to the trails movement in general and to the Illinois Prairie Path in particular.

Components of The Grand Illinois Trail (continued from page 1)

The trail continues 11.5 miles southward along the Fox River to a connection with the Illinois Prairie Path in Elgin.

The trail follows the Prairie Path 27.5 miles southeast to Wheaton and east to Maywood. All but the easternmost 4 miles are improved. The .5 mile linkage between Maywood and the Des Plaines River Trail is proposed. The trail completes the loop by following 7.5 miles of the proposed Des Plaines River Trail south to Summit.

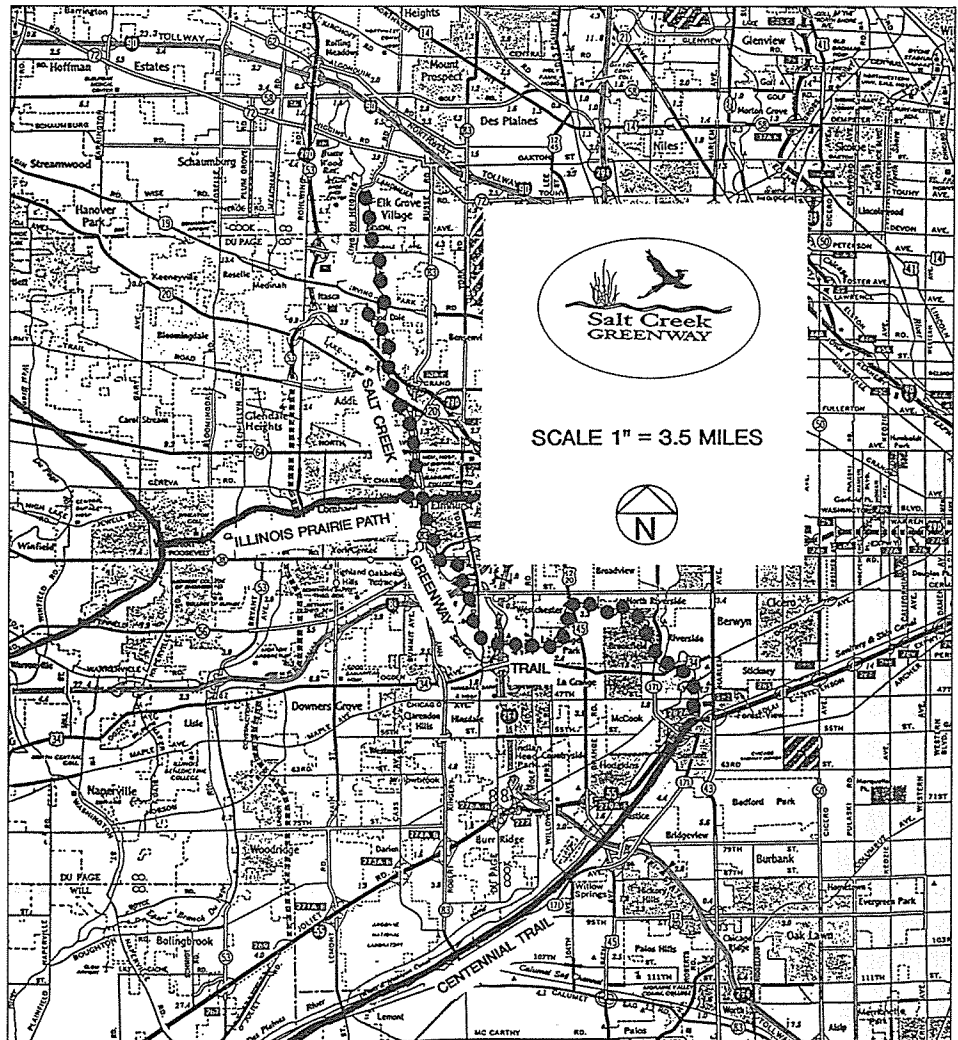
The Grand Illinois Trail totals 475.7 miles and consists of 129.2 miles of existing trails; 62 miles programmed for development;

130.5 miles proposed for development, 124.5 miles of local roads and streets; and 30 miles in the conceptual planning stage.

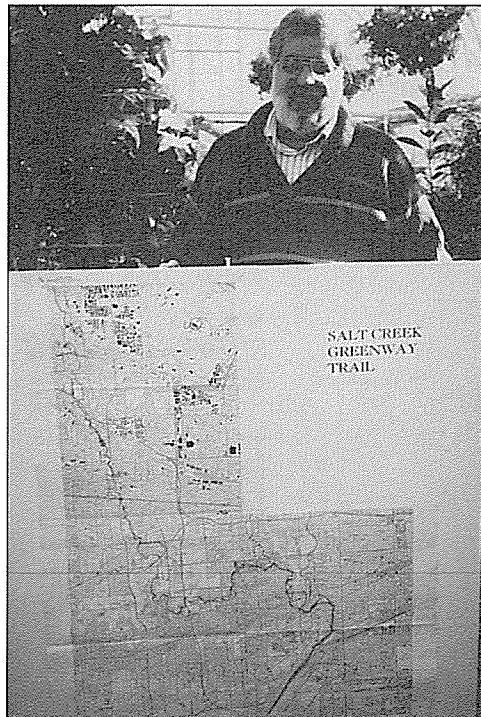
The Illinois Department of Conservation is currently working with the Illinois Department of Transportation and the Illinois Historic Preservation Agency on the trail. A feasibility study for the trail will be carried out in 1994 in consultation with potential local partners so that progress can continue on what will be a multi-year effort to bring a new and exciting trail opportunity to Illinois.

SALT CREEK GREENWAY TRAIL GETS A BOOST

Steve Plumb, director of park services for the Elmhurst Park District and coordinator of the Salt Creek Greenway Trail proposal, reports some unexpected good news. The Forest Preserve District of DuPage County, lead agency in applying for the necessary federal grants [ISTEA/ITEP (Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act/Illinois Transportation Enhancement Program) and CMAQ (Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality)], received word in January that the CMAQ grant originally denied last November by CATS (Chicago Area Transportation Study) has now been approved in the amount of approximately \$739,000 in federal funding for the trail. This money will pay 80% of the cost of engineering design and construction paperwork, the first two phases of the \$7.7 million project. The remaining 20% will be paid by the forest preserve districts, park districts, and communities which are co-sponsoring the project.



Schematic diagram of Salt Creek Trail showing connections to Illinois Prairie Path and Centennial Trail



Steve Plumb with large map of Salt Creek Greenway Trail.

The Salt Creek Trail will reduce automobile congestion and air pollution by promoting non-motorized travel among thirteen communities, major commercial areas like Oak Brook Center and Woodfield Mall, three METRA stations in three communities, sixteen PACE routes in five communities, two industrial parks, nineteen forest preserves, dozens of local parks, and the Brookfield Zoo. Of course, it will also connect the

Illinois Prairie Path to the Centennial Trail/Illinois-Michigan Canal Trail and thus help complete the Chicago area link of the Grand Illinois Trail.

We hope the ISTEA funding will be available to complete this important project, now expanded to begin at Ned Brown Forest Preserve near Elk Grove Village in Cook County. (See map.) We trail users can help by contacting our legislators.

THE PRAIRIE PATH NEEDS YOU

At the suggestion of President Paul Aeschleman, The Illinois Prairie Path board of directors has reorganized its committee structure with openings for Path members who would like to volunteer their help without having to attend board meetings unless they so desire. The new committees are:

- Projects and Maintenance
- IPP Advocacy
- Membership Services
- Marketing and Fundraising
- Special Projects
- Newsletter
- Planning
- Nominating

Some major maintenance projects that need volunteers include painting the steel bridge over the East Branch of the DuPage River between Lombard and Glen Ellyn and restoring the IPP prairies at Volunteer Park and Hoffman Park in Wheaton. A special project that is on the drawing boards now is the landscaping of the 1000-foot section of the old Chicago, Aurora and Elgin right-of-way that is currently the strip of blacktopped parking lot north of the former county courthouse in Wheaton, now National-Louis University. A beautiful plan for this 80-foot-wide strip has been prepared by noted landscape architect Anthony Tyznik. The resulting park with the Prairie Path meandering through it will enhance the Wheaton central business district and provide an attractive setting for the university. Ideas for other special projects are always welcome as are suggestions for Newsletter stories and help with regular maintenance, fundraising and advocacy. Whatever your interests and talents, we have a place for you. Just call The Illinois Prairie Path, 752-0120, or write us at P.O. Box 1086, Wheaton, IL 60189.



Illinois Prairie Path r/w north of National-Louis University is blacktopped, includes two rows of utility poles, and needs landscaping. Trail is now on CNW r/w north of maple trees (right).



Volunteer Prairie needs weeding and re-seeding after removal of three tall cottonwoods by PADS (People Associated to Deliver Shelter).

WEST CHICAGO PRAIRIE EVENTS

Sunday, March 19

Restoration Work Day. Clearing invading brush and/or raking in seed. 9:00 a.m. - Noon.

Saturday, April 1

Restoration Work Day. Clearing invading brush and/or raking in seed. 9:00 a.m. - Noon.

Saturday, April 15

Birding Trip. Good mix of winter residents and early arrivals. 7:00 a.m. - 11:00 a.m.

Saturday, April 22

Restoration Work Day. Raking in seed. 9:00 a.m. - Noon.

Saturday, May 6

Birding Trip. Summer residents, migrating warblers and sparrows. About 50 species. Annual DuPage County Spring Bird Count. 7:00 a.m. - 11:00 a.m.

Saturday, May 27

Birding Trip. Summer residents and migrating warblers. Should see Yellow-breasted Chat. About 50 species. 6:00 a.m. - 8:45 a.m.

Saturday, May 27

Prairie Flower Field Trip. Good displays of Golden Alexander, Shooting Star, Hoary Puccoon, Wild Blue Indigo, Yellow Star Grass, Prairie Violet, Cream Indigo, and many others. 9:00 a.m. - Noon.

All events start at the West Chicago Prairie parking lot located on the east side of Industrial Drive between Western and Downs. Information: Mel Hoff, (708) 393-4715, or JoAnn Monge, (708) 961-2041, day or evening.

Special trips can be arranged for groups.

A BICYCLE COMMUTER SPEAKS OUT

September 23, 1994

Dear Illinois Prairie Path,

After reading your fall newsletter, I wanted to provide further evidence of bicycle commuting in the area. I work at Fermilab, in a group with 18 people. Of that group, two people bike to work throughout the entire year, and another three regularly ride in during the warmer months. All five of us use the Illinois Prairie Path for some part of our rides. Another six in the group have some experience bicycle commuting. There are many other bike commuters at Fermilab, with one-way distances ranging from 2 to 18 miles!

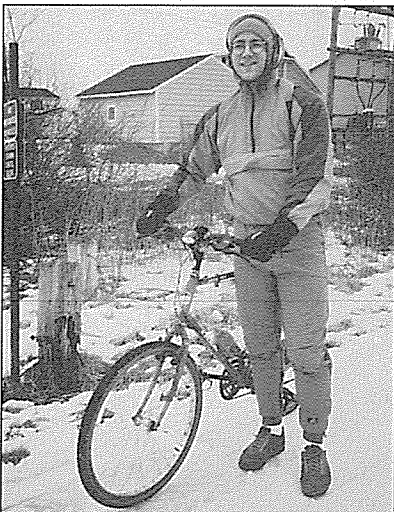
In my own case, I have biked to work over 95% of all workdays the past three years. It was surprising how the exercise and moderate clothing kept me sufficiently warm on very cold days, and I haven't had to call in sick yet. Depending on the weather, my ride ranges from 5 to 14 miles on the IPP, Fox River Trail, Fermilab trails, Blackwell trails, and/or safe residential roads. A primary consideration in our last three home searches was a safe bicycling route to work. Despite each of us working, my wife and I found it unnecessary to have a second car.

While many of us bike to work at Fermilab, there is plenty of room for improvement here and at other places of employment! For moderate length commutes, the time it takes to bike and then shower at work is not much more than showering at home and driving during rush hour. If there are no showers at work, either take it slow in the morning or rinse off in the washroom. Clothes for work can either be carried in a backpack or brought once by car for the entire week. Finally, there probably is an out-of-the-way, safe place to park the bike. For all the physical, mental, environmental, and economic benefits I have found in bicycle commuting, I am amazed that more people do not make an effort to do it. Try it!

Editor's Note: This letter says it all and we agree completely. Just try it!



A little hard-packed snow on the trail does not keep Ed Barsotti from using the IPP on his daily commute.



Wearing a helmet and dressed for cold weather, Ed pauses to describe the various trails and bikeways he rides to and from Fermilab.

Sincerely,

Ed Barsotti

Ed Barsotti
2935 Barberry Court
Aurora, IL 60504

Treasurer's Report

Nov. 1, 1993 - Oct. 31, 1994

(Unaudited)

Balance on Hand:	\$42,242.02
State Bank of St. Charles	\$5,619.47
SteinRoe Cash Reserve	\$36,622.55

Revenue	Total
Donations	2,957.55
Dues	19,738.00
Sales	1,191.76
Interest	849.40
Fund Transfers	5,631.22
Miscellaneous	988.07

Total Income **31,356.00**

Expenditures	Total
Salaries and Wages	
Office Mgr	6,896.25

Services	
Legal and Consulting	4,000.00
Postage	2,311.06
Printing	7,307.00
Telephone	317.06
Trash Removal	1,269.75
Portable Toilet	840.00
Post Office Box	35.00
Miscellaneous	214.62

Supplies	
Office Supplies	529.74
Maintenance Supplies	101.84
Maps	935.00
Miscellaneous	78.92

Capital Improvements	
Special Projects	175.00
Prairie Restoration	809.84
Sign Replacement	185.14

Fixed Charges	
Office Rent	0.00
Villa Park Hist. Soc	1,000.00
Fund Transfers	4,303.00

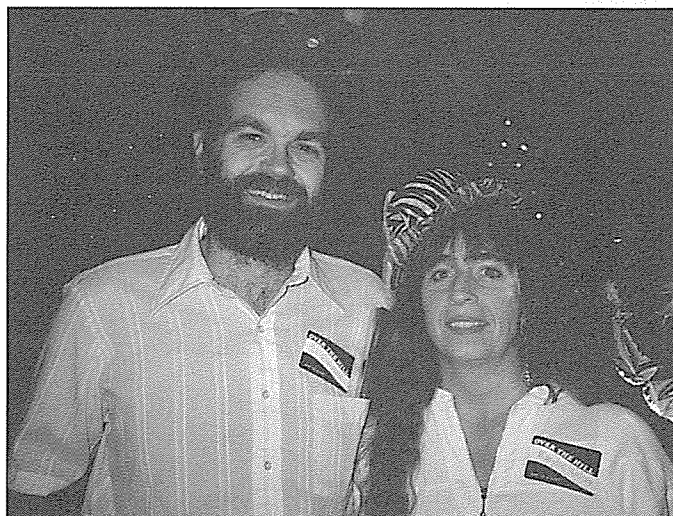
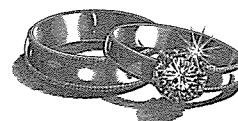
Total Expenditures **31,309.22**

Balance on Hand:	\$42,288.80
First Chicago Bank	\$5,622.63
SteinRoe Cash Reserve	\$36,666.17

PHIL HODGE ENGAGEMENT ANNOUNCED

The exciting news from South Connellsville, Pennsylvania is that former Illinois Prairie Path Vice President Phil Hodge is planning to be married on June 10. Phil, a structural engineer, masterminded The IPP's most ambitious project: the rebuilding of Volunteer Bridge in Wheaton in 1983. His fiancée is Marjorie (Margie) Kubelick, a pilot like Phil, and the mother of three teenagers, Jason, Lisa, and Eli.

On behalf of all of Phil's Prairie Path friends and admirers we wish him and his new family great happiness. Some of us plan to attend the ceremony and congratulate them in person.



Phil and Margie photographed at a birthday party for a friend in '92.

SPRING ACTIVITIES, rain or shine

■ Saturday, March 18

Work Day at the West Chicago Prairie. Brush clearing along IPP. Meet at 9:00 a.m. at MacQueen Drive and the Path south of Hawthorne. Bring pruning shears, loppers and small saws. Dress for the weather. Leaders: Mel Hoff, (708) 393-4715 and Paul Mooring (708) 469-4289.

■ Sunday, April 23

Earth Day Celebration sponsored by the Forest Preserve District of DuPage County at Danada Forest Preserve. Booths showcasing environmental groups' products and services. Entertainment, refreshments and trail activities. 11:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

■ Saturday, April 29

(or as determined by each municipality)

Earth Day Cleanup along entire length of Illinois Prairie Path. For information call:

Maywood, Paul Aeschleman 848-6023
 Bellwood, Susan Wisniewski 493-1316
 Hillside-Berkeley, John Kacich 544-7524
 Elmhurst, Steve Plumb 279-8690
 Villa Park-Lombard, Dick Wilson 299-7882
 Glen Ellyn, Jean Mooring 469-4289
 Wheaton, Kay McKeen, Environmental
 Improvement Commission 653-8776
 Winfield-West Chicago, David Tate 682-1449
 Wayne, Joan Hamill 584-3567
 Warrenville, Bob Rawls 393-6720

■ Saturday, May 13

Bird Walk to look for spring migrants. Meet at 9:00 a.m. at Pratt's Wayne Woods Forest Preserve. Take Rte. 59 to Army Trail Road; then west to Powis Road; north to forest preserve entrance; drive to far back parking lot. Lunch is optional. Leaders: Dick Wilson, (708) 299-7882 (8:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m.); and Paul Mooring, (708) 469-4289.

■ Saturday, June 3

National Trails Day Hike. Ten-mile round trip on the IPP. Meet at 9:00 a.m. in Rathje Park in Wheaton [located on the northwest corner of Roosevelt Road (Rte. 38) and Delles St., two blocks west of stoplight at West St.] Bring lunch and drink. Leader: Dick Wilson, (708) 299-7882 (8:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m.)

■ Sunday, June 4

National Trails Day Festival, Albright Park, Warrenville, sponsored by TROD (Trail Riders of DuPage). 12:00-2:00 p.m. Social gathering, speakers. Refreshments available.
 2:00-4:00 p.m. Equestrian trail etiquette demonstration.

— Jean C. Mooring, Editor —

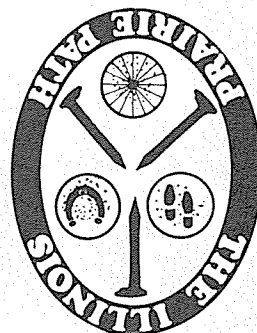
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	Family \$15
	Organization/Supporting \$20
	Contributing \$25
	Sustaining \$50
	Patron \$100
	Lifetime \$500



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