



# The Illinois Prairie Path Newsletter

[www.ipp.org](http://www.ipp.org)

Summer 2012

## Electronic Newsletter Delivery Now Available

Over the last few months, a volunteer team has been focused on communicating more frequently and effectively with The Illinois Prairie Path not-for-profit corporation (IPPC) members. The goal is to deliver relevant, easy-to-read, news briefs about the Illinois Prairie Path (IPP), volunteers, and communities along the Path.



**A look back.** Helen Turner, one of the founders of The IPPC, organized and published its first newsletter in 1963. Copies of her early newsletters (beginning in 1969) are available for viewing at [www.ipp.org](http://www.ipp.org).

**A look ahead.** Since then, all of The IPP newsletters have been printed and mailed to the homes of members. Today, it is possible to send newsletters electronically. Sending the newsletter to your e-mail address provides *immediate* delivery and reduces printing and postage costs.

**Your choice.** You may choose to continue receiving your newsletter through traditional mail or you may choose electronic e-mail delivery. **Please complete and return your reply card in the envelope provided by Friday, August 17.**

## Coming Soon - 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Illinois Prairie Path



On September 30, 1963, the *Chicago Tribune* printed a letter from naturalist May Theilgaard Watts proposing that the abandoned Chicago, Aurora and Elgin (CA&E) railway routes be converted into a public trail. Her letter inspired the development of the IPP and the rails-to-trails movement in the United States.

The publication date of her letter will be used as “book ends” for a year-long 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary celebration beginning September 30, 2012 and running through September 30, 2013. Information about events and volunteer opportunities will be posted throughout the year at [www.ipp.org](http://www.ipp.org).

We will be collecting stories from IPPC members throughout the year. **Question:** Have you been able to improve your health by spending time on the Illinois Prairie Path? Please send your story in 300 words or less to: The Illinois Prairie Path, P.O. Box 1086, Wheaton IL 60187. We'll be in touch.

## Volunteers Join DuPage County Trail Patrol



Soon, fifteen community volunteers, trained by the DuPage County Sheriff's Office, will patrol the Prairie Path in DuPage County. They will arrive in vehicles that look like police cars. As they bike the Path, they will use their radios to report unsafe conditions and activities, and they will provide assistance and information to trail users.

## Recent Path Improvements and Upgrades

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### ✓ **Tree-trimming by ComEd**

An important improvement of the IPP in 2012 has been the ComEd tree-trimming throughout the year and the subsequent windstorm on Sunday, July 1. ComEd's tree-trimming project manager noted their trimming meets the established required clearances under the power lines while retaining a shade canopy over the trail itself. The result is in compliance with the Trail Maintenance Taskforce October 2003 Report - *DuPage County Trail Maintenance Policy*. ComEd is removing the tall-growing trees from under its lines, along with the most-severely disfigured shrubs.

### ✓ **Widening of Butterfield Road near Warrenville**

The Illinois Department of Transportation has done a great job keeping the Aurora Branch and its link to Fermilab open throughout the project. While the highway project was underway, the Forest Preserve District was carrying its West Branch restoration project through the Warrenville Grove Forest Preserve. Vegetation management in that project can be instructive if we ever want to improve on the buckthorn-honeysuckle hedge along the IPP.

### ✓ **Kane County Blacktop Project**

During the third week of June, Kane County blacktopped the last remaining segment of the Elgin Branch, from Middle Rd south to the landfills.

### ✓ **New Forest Preserve Link to the Illinois Prairie Path**

DuPage County Forest Preserve District opened a new West Branch trail segment through Timber Ridge and another south of Ogden. They also added a short segment in Greene Valley Forest Preserve to ease the climb up to 79th St.

### ✓ **Invasive Species Removal**

Dave Gorman, Lombard's Annual Spring Clean Up team leader and Assistant Public Works Director, developed a new focus. Because the amount of rubbish along the trail has been decreasing every year, Gorman decided to focus clean up efforts on the removal of two invasive species - buckthorn and garlic mustard. "These two plants are taking over the Illinois Prairie Path and the Great Western Trail," Gorman reported.

On the city's website, he provided information about the damage these two plants can cause when left unchecked to the native plants along the trail. Required procedures for removing



Buckthorn



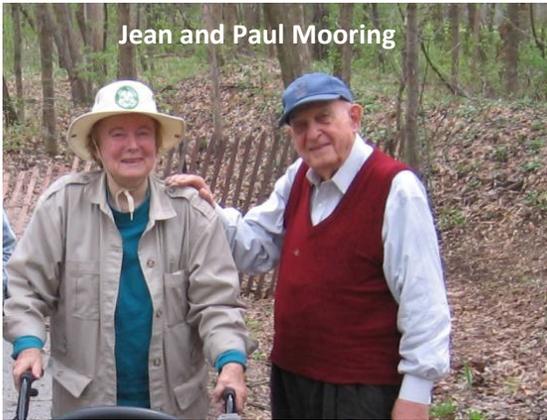
Garlic Mustard

and disposing of the plants helped volunteers understand the nature of the work involved. The outreach was successful. Over 150 volunteers agreed to help with the project. Because of the type of work involved, volunteers had to be age 10 or older.

"We need to remove as much as we can at least twice a year," Gorman added. **The Village of Lombard will host a removal of invasive species on Saturday, November 10.** The IPPc hopes to eventually implement this wonderful program in all of the IPP communities that participate in the Annual Spring Clean Up.

# Volunteer Spotlight

## Life-long IPPc Volunteers



Jean and Paul Mooring

In 1965, Paul Mooring, Jean Mooring and Dick Wilson became volunteers and began a life-long passionate commitment to developing, maintaining and improving the Illinois Prairie Path. All three of them have been volunteering for 47 consecutive years! Dick met his wife Nancy on the trail in 1971 and she has been volunteering for 40 years.



Dick and Nancy Wilson

**Combined, these two couples have given over 180 consecutive years of volunteer service - as trail and bridge builders, as leaders and members of The IPPc board of directors, as citizen advocates and communicators.**

The Moorings and Wilsons carry on the legacy of a large group of tenacious volunteer founders and charter members who worked decade after decade, building a magnificent trail system by hand and heart. They removed tons of rubbish along the Path, planted flowers and trees, built foot bridges over streams, laid finely crushed limestone trails, built 15 large wooden trail display case stands in the Moorings' backyard, secured water fountains and portable toilets, and often met with and petitioned decision-makers regarding trail-related issues. On Saturday, April 28, in spite of cold, damp weather, both couples participated, as always, in the Annual Spring Clean Up of the Illinois Prairie Path. The Moorings (Paul is 91, Jean is 86) greeted the Glen Ellyn clean up team. The Wilsons (Dick is 86, Nancy is 74) were leaders of the Elgin/Oliver Square clean up team.

## 2012 Spring Clean Up

Hundreds of volunteers braved cold temperatures and rain to participate in The IPPc's Annual Spring Clean Up. Special thanks to the twelve team leaders who organized managed the clean ups: **Ed Barsotti**, Aurora, Naperville; **Dick and Nancy Wilson**, Elgin/West Chicago; **Bob Hoel**, Elmhurst; **David Peterson**, Geneva; **Andrew Letson**, Glen Ellyn; **David Gorman**, Lombard; **Lennel Grace** and **Marcus Scaggs**, Maywood/Bellwood; **Pride Commission**, Villa Park; **Jennifer McMahon**, Warrenville; **Scott Hensey**, West Chicago/Geneva Spur; **Tracy Vought**, Wheaton; **Erik Spande**, Winfield. **THANKS to all who volunteered!!!**



Lombard Pride 2012



Winfield



Elgin/West Chicago



Wheaton



## Welcome New IPPc Board Members

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### Erik Andersen

Erik, a resident of Downers Grove, has biked on the Illinois Prairie Path for almost 20 years. He enjoys biking on trails that are long enough to offer a variety of scenes, alternate routes and accessibility to a wide number of communities. He's found that the Path offers all or these characteristics – and so much more. The serene beauty of a solo morning ride under a canopy of shade trees on a warm summer day is hard to beat. Views of rivers, prairies, forests and wildlife – and all in a safe path environment – are a constant reminder that this Path is a precious asset that must be safeguarded.



Recently retired, Erik decided to spend some of his newly found spare time with an organization whose mission to maintain and improve the Path was in line with his own. After a full career in the corporate world, he believes that many of the same skills used on the job can also be used to assist the IPPc Board.

He is currently working on the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Committee and specifically helping to plan and manage a scholarship program that will be offered to local high school students in early 2013.

### Don Beacom

Don moved to Wheaton in 1983 and selected a home, in large part, because of its proximity to the Path – which he knew would be a great resource for his running and biking. Since then, Don has logged hundreds of miles on what became a cherished resource – the crushed limestone and immersion in a natural setting to nourish his need to keep everything in perspective.

*Pictured is Don and his daughter, Briana, after completing the 2011 Seattle Marathon.*



Professionally, Don is an adjunct professor for Keller's Graduate School of Management preparing students to make good decisions about Information Technology. Don spent many years in the software industry on the technical side of the sales process. Currently, Don manages the faculty teaching over a hundred courses at DeVry University preparing students to be computer programmers, systems managers, database administrators and other technical endeavors.

In addition to his strong bond to the IPP Don enjoys gardening, reading and, of course, tinkering with technology. He is currently working on the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Committee helping out with a couple of technical initiatives.

## Your Time, Your Talent

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**IPPc Archive Volunteers** - Help sort, scan and file important IPPc archives. Help find photos and relatives of IPPc founders. Contact Mary Jo Malach at [maryjomalach@gmail.com](mailto:maryjomalach@gmail.com) for more information.

**IPPc Graphic Designer Volunteer** - Design our newsletter and electronic bulletin templates for easy use. Contact Don Beacom at [DonBeacom@aol.com](mailto:DonBeacom@aol.com).

## About This Newsletter

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The Illinois Prairie Path non-for-profit corporation (IPPc) is a volunteer “friends of the Path” board of directors that provides amenities, advocacy and support services for the Illinois Prairie Path, including this newsletter. **Thanks for being an IPPc member.** Contributors to this issue include Charlie Johnson, Erik Andersen, Don Beacom, Bob Sobie, Martha Sobie, Mary Jo Malach.