



The Illinois Prairie Path Newsletter

December 2016

Remembering the rail-to-trail origins of the Path...



Copyright Michael Gasparino

"I was very young and lived in Chicago when I rode the Chicago Aurora and Elgin Railway (CA&E). It was in the late 1940s and early fifties when my mother and father would take me to my great-grandfather's summer home in Warrenville (near Route 59 and Ferry Road). My mother told me that she would also take me on shopping trips to Elgin. The CA&E had a small flag stop about a block from the summer home in Warrenville. We would have to raise the flag signaling the train to stop so we could board the train for Elgin.

Many years later when I married my wife, I purchased a home in Elmhurst. We lived at Rex Boulevard and Railway Street. We lived just three houses south of the CA&E tracks. I remember thinking, I once rode these tracks when I was younger. In 1981 Railway Street was renamed Prairie Path Lane. In 1980 I took a picture of the CA&E tracks just before they were removed to become home to the Illinois Prairie Path. When I was a boy, I rode the train, and when my sons were young we walked and rode our bikes on the same trail."

Michael A. Gasparino

F. Paul Mooring's Volunteer Legacy

For 51 consecutive years, Paul Mooring of Glen Ellyn donated his time, environmental and financial expertise, brilliance, and carpentry skills to his beloved Illinois Prairie Path.

Paul passed away on November 18. He had a Ph.D. in physics and worked at Argonne National Laboratory. He was a husband, father, grandfather, great grandfather - as well as a gardener, birder and avid reader.

Paul was President of the Illinois Prairie Path not-for-profit corporation for 21 years - through the Path's most difficult and significant challenges. Paul was active in the DuPage County Environmental Commission, the Conservation Foundation, and the Illinois Audubon Society. He continued to serve on the IPP's Board of Directors until his passing.

Paul and his wife Jean began volunteering in 1965 when converting the abandoned CA&E railroad line into a public footpath was just an idea, not a reality. Driven by determination, grit and purpose, the Moorings helped the founders give talks, organize field trips, generate extensive media coverage and meet with utility companies, civic leaders and state, county, and local officials to develop the awareness and support for a major trail system. The Moorings removed huge amounts of rubble from the trail, planted flowers, covered railroad ballast with limestone screens, built bridges, display cases and benches - all by hand.

Paul is featured in one of the Path's many videos, proudly talking about and honoring all of the volunteers who worked on the 1983 *Let's Build the Bridge* project, stating, "They told us the bridge would cost \$250,000. We built that bridge for \$25,000!"

The Moorings donated hundreds of Path documents and over 10,000 of their photos to the Path's Archives at North Central College. His Path Legacy Volunteer colleagues, who knew Paul for decades, remember him as a kind and warm human being, and see his passing as the end of an era, an era that will hopefully inspire others to serve with heart, determination and dedication.



Sidney Kenyon named new Trails and Paths Coordinator

Sidney Kenyon is the new senior transportation planner with the DuPage County Division of Transportation. In this role, Sid will take over as the trails and paths coordinator for the County. In addition, he will serve as a key staff member in the development of the County's 2040 Long Range Transportation Plan and a liaison to multiple County Board committees.



Sid possesses a diverse public service background. Immediately prior to working for DuPage County, he was the transportation planner for McHenry County's Division of Transportation—a role in which he served as the bike coordinator and the MCRide paratransit program administrator.

He has also worked in a planning capacity for the Northeastern Illinois Regional Transportation Authority, the US Department of Housing and Urban Development, and the City of Chicago's Department of Cultural Affairs and Special Events.

Hailing from the Land of Lincoln, Sid received his BA in Geography and Political Science from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, and his Masters in Urban Planning and Policy (MUPP) from the University of Illinois at Chicago. Currently a resident of Oak Park, in his free time he enjoys birdwatching, bonsai, and rooting for the Chicago Bears.

Members and guests gather at the Path's Annual Meeting

Approximately 50 people attended the Path's Annual Meeting on Sunday, November 6 at 2 p.m. in the Wheaton Memorial Park Leisure Center. Erik Spande, President of the Path's Board of Directors, welcomed everyone.

Presentation of a grant from Clarke

The meeting opened with a presentation by **Emily Glasberg**, Entomologist from Clarke, a family-owned business focused on public health, mosquito control and aquatic habitat management. Clarke awarded a \$23,000 grant to support the Illinois Prairie Path's efforts to maintain and improve the trails for current and future generations. Clarke's **One for Tomorrow** program recognizes and supports non-profit organizations that are striving to restore and/or preserve the environment, wildlife and food production. Clark has been committed to incorporating sustainable practices throughout its service programs and product development.



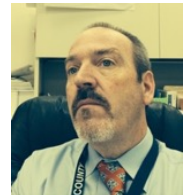
Emily Glasberg presents the Clarke donation to Erik Spande

Speaker Rob Sperl - Path's Annual Business Meeting

Second on the agenda was a very brief business meeting. The Path's financial year begins on November 1 and ends October 31. Path Treasurer Rob Sperl provided the 2016 Annual Treasurer's Report. In summary, the Path's Annual Revenue was \$94,866 and Annual Expenditures were \$47,532. The Path's Cash Balance on hand at the end of July 2016 was \$140,525. *The 2016 Annual Report is available on the Path's website at www.ipp.org.*

Speaker John Loper - Path Year in Review

John is the Chief Transportation Planner for the DuPage County Department of Transportation. His presentation highlighted the county's 2016 Path improvements, and he identified more improvements scheduled to be completed in 2017.



John Loper

Speaker Jessica Ortega - North Central DuPage County Regional Trail



Jessica Ortega

Jessica is a Landscape Architect with the Forest Preserve of DuPage County. She is currently working on the final remaining segments to complete the North Central DuPage County Regional Trail and the West Branch DuPage River Trail. The entire trail is complete except for the segment that will connect existing trails in Bartlett, west of IL 59, through Pratt's Wayne Woods Forest Preserve in Wayne to the Illinois Prairie Path – Elgin Branch. The Forest Preserve District recently received \$1,500,000 in Surface Transportation Program (STP) funds for the construction of this final remaining segment and is currently working on Phase I engineering for the project.



Roger Kotecki (left), long-term Path advocate and member, provided music throughout the event.

John Luxem (right) of the DuPage Sheriff's Office talked with John Marconnet, Path Board member, and other guests about trail safety issues.



New "look and learn" signage at Elmhurst Great Western Prairie

Last February **David Price**, Horticulturist for the Elmhurst Park District, and **Eric Keeley**, Volunteer Steward at the Elmhurst Great Western Prairie, attended a Path board meeting to secure matching funding for 12 interpretive signs for their prairie.

These signs were designed, built and recently installed by the Elmhurst Park District on a shoe-string budget.

THANKS CLARKE VOLUNTEERS! (Photo below). In mid-September over 20 employee volunteers from Clarke worked for three hours, removing invasive species from the prairie!



IPP volunteer Richard Diebold returns a painting with a story

Former IPP volunteer (and long-distance cyclist and fine woodworker) **Richard Diebold**, his daughter-in-law Joanne, and his wife Freda attended the IPP's September Board meeting to return a painting that had been given to him by Jean Mooring.

In the early 1980s Richard organized a hike for parents and children from Wheaton to Pratt's Wayne Woods. A young engineer, Phil Hodge was on that hike. In Wheaton, bikers had to go down a deep slope (at the CA&E railway), cross the tracks and then scale the opposite slope by rope to get back on the Path. After the event, Richard and Phil asked Jean Mooring about building a bridge over the CA&E. Their suggestion inspired the *Let's Build the Bridge* project that was completed in 1983. The painting features bikers and an image of the bridge that was built by volunteers.

