

**Highwood Historical Society**  
**P.O. Box 132**  
**Highwood, IL 60040**



**Oak Terrace School**  
**Blizzard 2011**

**It's time to renew your membership.**  
**RENEW your membership today!**

NONPROFIT ORG  
US POSTAGE PAID  
HIGHWOOD, IL 60040  
PERMIT NO. 10

# Highwood Historical Society News

Summer

Highwood, Illinois

2011

## The end of an era Scornavacco's

*By Leonora C. Cervac*

A Highwood landmark is gone. It stood on the corner of Washington Avenue and Railway Avenue (now Green Bay Road.) It was called "Scornavacco's Washington Gardens" and it was a big part of Highwood's history and lore.

In the twenties, Angelina and Alex Scornavacco moved from Chicago to Highwood and opened a grocery store on the front of their home on "Railway Avenue." Later, when prohibition was repealed in the thirties, Angelina and Alex opened an outdoor beer garden on the same property. They then rented out the grocery store to my parents, Frank and Edith Parenti. We lived in an apartment behind the grocery store.

I remember the families that lived on Washington Avenue. I especially remember the "kids." I hung around with Harold and Mary Lou Lowe, Billy Peterson, Bruce and Beverly Callen (Reno, Nevada was named after their great grandfather, General Jesse Reno), Polly and Dolly Vole (their father was a Highwood policeman), and the Defilippis boys.

We were the "Dead End Kids" of Highwood. For those of you who don't remember "the Dead End Kids"- they were a famous depression era group of kids of movie fame. We all played on the stage and outdoor courtyard of Scornavacco's lattice covered gardens in the daytime when the tavern was closed.

Louise and Erma Bedini lived in one of the Scornavacco's upstairs apartments, I remember that many considered Louise the most beautiful woman that lived in Highwood. Louise and Erma's father went turtle hunting and made turtle soup. He would hang the turtle shell in the backyard to dry.

Scornavacco's Washington Gardens was, for most of its many years, a celebrity hangout and one of Highwood's most popular bars. The restaurant introduced pizza to Lake County. Can you imagine- you couldn't get a pizza anywhere else in Lake County- because no one knew what it was?

Soldiers from Fort Sheridan considered Scornavacco's their second family away from home. It was a sports bar, players from the Cardinal's and the Bear's were steady

customers. Famous names like Charlie Trippi, Johnny O, Sid Luckman, Jonny Lujack, Ollie Matson, Paul Cristmand, Bruno Nagurski, Ed Sprinkle, Pat Harder, Frank Bernardi (Cardinal Player who was a nephew of Highwood resident, Adolph Baracani of Highwood), were all regular customers.

Angelina and Alex had four sons- Armand (Mondo), Tony, John and Eugene and four daughters, Francis, Nellie, Millie and Rose. Grandson Alex later opened a restaurant in Highwood called Alex's Washington Gardens. Another grandson, John Jr., was inducted into the Highwood Historical Society Sports Hall of Fame just last year.

Granddaughter Vickie Scornavacco Duffy, daughter of Tony and Ellen Scornavacco and her brother Alex Scornavacco, still live in Highwood on Washington Avenue. Vickie and Alex have made history of her own, Alex was owner of the "new" Washington Gardens Restaurant and both were an integral part of the Oak Terrace School PTA, putting on and sponsoring many mostaccioli dinner fundraisers for the school. Vickie and her husband Pat and Alex, have been very generous supporters of the Highwood Historical Society. The Scornavacco family made a tremendous mark in the history of our community.

I had a personal historical stake in the building that has been such a Highwood landmark because of my parent's grocery store. From the window in our apartment I watched it all happen.

*Leonora Cervac is a current Board Member, Past President and founding member of the Highwood Historical Society.*

## The Lady Elgin Graves

*By Tom Scopelliti*

If you were able to attend the Highwood Historical Society General Meeting on June 13, 2011, you were treated to Valerie Van Heest's superb presentation on the tragic sinking of the *Lady Elgin* on Lake Michigan in 1860. Hundreds of passengers were lost and their bodies washed ashore along the Lake Michigan coast, including several bodies that were found east of current-day Highwood. For generations stories have persisted, stating that graves of a few of these poor souls were actually located in Highwood. In fact, in a newspaper article written in 1899, a reporter claimed to have visited the gravesites. However, he noted no specific location.

### Membership Form

June 1, 2011 through May 31, 2012

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

New Membership     Membership renewal

**Annual membership categories** (please check one)

Regular Member      \$15.00

Business/Organization    \$25.00

Donor                      \$50.00 to \$99.00

Patron                      \$100.00 and above

**Please make your checks payable and mail to:**

Highwood Historical Society

P.O. Box 132

Highwood, IL 60040

**Questions? Call (847) 433-2984**

### Mark Your Calendar Today

For our upcoming Events:

***Terrific Tomato Contest***

**Sign up ASAP**

**Pick-up August 16, 2011**

**(LEAVE TOMATOES ON THE VINE)**

**Judging/Awards during Garlic Fest**

**August 17, 2011**

***Calling all Caddies!***

**Friday, September 23<sup>rd</sup>**

**Exmoor Country Club**

**Highwood's Greatest Generation**

**Send stories and photos to**

**[Highwoodhistory@aol.com](mailto:Highwoodhistory@aol.com)**

**or**

**Highwood Historical Society**

**PO Box 132**

**Highwood, IL 60040**

**Or call**

**847-433-2984**

**BE A MEMBER.**

**SEND YOUR MEMBERSHIP NOW!**

Therefore, I invite all of you to join me and the Highwood Historical Society as we embark on a journey through history in an attempt to find the gravesites of the *Lady Elgin* victims that might be in Highwood. We will present information that we find in this and future newsletters. Remember, this is a work in progress and the information we are searching for is over 150 years old. We may or may not find the sites but I guarantee we will uncover bits and pieces of history along the way.

First, let us try to paint a literary picture of what this area was like at the time of the accident. On September 8, 1860, when the ship went down, there was no Highwood. William W. Everts and Reuben Jeffreys recorded the first plat map of Highwood in 1868, which included the southeastern section of Highwood. Various plats were added to the village until E. Ashley Mears recorded the northern section in the early 1870's. This meant that Highwood occupied a rectangular area that can loosely be described as having a western border at Western Ave., a southern border just south of Michigan Ave., a northern border just north of Euclid Ave. and extending into Fort Sheridan, and an eastern border in line with Lakeview Ave.

An 1861 plat map of the area shows that this future area of Highwood had only five landowners. Of these five properties, only two seemed to have houses or cabins. These were located on the south side of the only roadway of the immediate area that came in from the western farm towns, what is now called Prairie Ave. To the east of this area, things were quite different. Jacob Clinton Bloom had established the Village of Port Clinton in 1850. In 1860, the northern border of this lakefront community was current day Walker Ave., and it extended westerly and generally to the current eastern border of what would become Highwood. To the south Port Clinton extended to the new community of Highland Park, which would eventually incorporate Port Clinton into its own borders.

Although the residents of Port Clinton struggled through a severe cholera epidemic, the community had a sawmill, a pier, a general store, a schoolhouse, a post office, and, most importantly for our purposes, a lighthouse. This lighthouse was located just north of Broadway Ave., which was about a block south of Bloom Ave. Although the federal government in 1860 decommissioned this lighthouse, it was still operational at the time of the accident. Marvyn Wittelle describes Owen Monaghan, the lighthouse keeper, and his witnessing of some of the events of the *Lady Elgin* calamity in her book about Highwood, *28 Miles North*. Some of the victims washed up onto shore at or near the lighthouse. This Port Clinton Lighthouse also has added importance because it was used as a reference point as to where the graves were believed to be located.

That's it for this time. We will discuss the newspaper article and the many clues it contains in the next edition of the *Highwood Historical Society News*. *Tom Scopelliti is a Board Member of Highwood Historical Society.*

## St. James Church Celebrates 100 Year Anniversary

St. James Parish is celebrating its centennial with events scheduled all year long. We hope you will join us for the celebration, which will begin with a Mass with Bishop Rassas on September 18, 2011 followed by a reception, and will include events such as the annual Parish Gala and an all-school reunion. It will conclude with a Mass with Cardinal Francis George on September 23, 2012. Please see the schedule below.

We would love to use pictures that you may have of events taking place at the church or school in past 100 years. Please drop them off at the rectory marked with your name and phone number so they can be returned once we scan them. Thank you in advance for your help! An invitation to be a part of this celebration is extended to the entire community. We hope many of our parishioners and friends will join us.

### St. James Parish Centennial Celebration Timeline of Events:

<b>2011</b>	
Sept. 18	Opening Mass & Reception with Bishop Rassas
Sept. 25	Parish Pancake Breakfast
Oct. 16	Fall Harvest Fest
Nov. 6	Parish Craft Show & Bake Sale
Dec. 3	Festival of Friends
Dec. 11	Feast of Our Lady Guadalupe Celebration
<b>2012</b>	
Jan. 8	Peace Mass
Jan. 29	Catholic Schools Week Pancake Breakfast
Feb. 11	Valentine's Day Mass & Renewal of Marriage Vows
Mar. 17	Mostaccioli Dinner
Apr. 21	Dinner Dance Gala & Raffle
May 6	May Crowning
June 22-24	All-School Reunion Weekend
July 25	Feast of St. James Mass & Picnic
Aug. 12	Parish Picnic in Evert's Park
Sept. 23	Centennial Mass & Reception with Francis Cardinal George O.M.I.

**Please save these dates  
& Spread the word!**

## Highwood's Greatest Generation

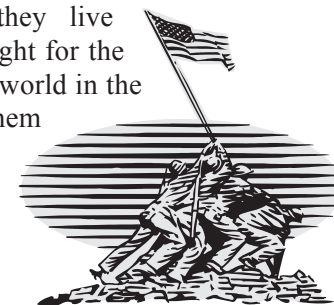
Everyday something remarkable happens in our community that deserves to be documented and preserved. Events happen, children are born, loved ones pass. Our goal as a historical society is to collect and preserve those "remarkable everyday events."

Perhaps the most truly remarkable thing about Highwood are the people that have called Highwood home. The most frequent calls we receive are calls seeking information about people that lived here. "Where were my grandparents married?" "What information do you have about this tragedy?" We even received a call from the United States Government seeking information about a Congressional Medal of Honor winner who died in the early 1900's because their great great grandson was seeking information.

Recently, so many of Highwood's Greatest Generation have passed. Their names and faces are as familiar to us as a blue sky. Their loss is a loss not only to their family, but also to our community. We were blessed to know them. They graced our lives in so many ways. In the years to come, when a great great grandchild seeks information about these extraordinary people where will they go to find out who they were, what their accomplishments were or how their lives affected this community or the world?

Please send a story and a picture about whatever member of Highwood's Greatest Generation played a role in your life. Were they a friend or a loved one? This generation lived through the depression and the Second World War. They saw the world move from roads paved with dirt to Wifi and cloning. No generation in history has seen changes like that, no generation in history has made such a difference to their community, their country or the world. Their story deserves to be told.

What year were they born? Were they born here or overseas? What stories did they tell you about the depression? The War? Did they live through the war in Europe, or fight for the USA? How did they change the world in the 50's and 60's? What made them laugh? Cry? What did they think about? What were their simple pleasures? And most importantly, what did they teach you?



Please send your stories to [Highwoodhistory@aol.com](mailto:Highwoodhistory@aol.com). Or mail them to PO Box 132, Highwood, IL 60040

***Your membership matters!***

## "New" News

**HIGHWOOD RESIDENTS AND BUSINESS OWNERS – The CPAC committee would like to invite you to see the proposed Master Plan for Highwood. Join them on Thursday, August 25 from 7-9 PM at Oak Terrace School, 240 Prairie Avenue, for a Community Information Meeting about the proposed update to the Highwood Comprehensive Plan. There will be a presentation and question and answer session with Houseal Lavigne Associates, the firm working closely with the City in developing the plan. More information, including a copy of the proposed plan, can be found at <http://www.hlplanning.com/highwood>. In the coming weeks, copies of the plan will be available for viewing at City Hall and the Highwood Public Library (expected arrival 8/10) Contact City Hall at 847-432-1924 for additional information!"**

## ***I remember...***

**By Diane "Cookie" Lo Presti**

### ***Highwood Carnivals***

Every summer Highwood had two carnivals. They were set up at Oak Terrace School. The Despenzia family always ran the carnival rides. There were the normal rides, Ferris wheel, tilt-a-whirl, merry go round and little cars or airplane rides for the kiddies. Tickets were 25 cents apiece or 5 for a dollar. They also had some carnival games like of darts or balls to knock off of a shelf. If you won, you may of won a Kewpie doll made out of chalk. The women loved bingo. They could win prizes while the kids played. I think that was run by the city with donated gifts by local merchants. It was all before bingo at the churches. It was Riverview in Highwood.

### ***Community Center***

The best part of Highwood was the community center. All the kids met *everyone* there. I learned ballet and tap dance taught by Mary Mazzetta and cheerleading taught by Madreen Fiocchi and Beverly Campagini. We were the first cheerleaders when the team from Puerto Rico came to play Highwood Little Guys.

I remember summer nights when they showed movies on a screen set up on the wall of the fire station. There were bleachers set up for all to see. In winter there was a small ice rink. There was even roller-skating. But most of all I remember the dances on Friday night. I think I will always remember them and the good times we all had. God bless Don Skrinar, he put up with all of us. He made life in Highwood interesting and fun.





Heirloom seed-  
(n.) any seed  
handed down  
generation to  
generation and  
generally  
passed among  
individuals  
rather than  
sold in catalogs

In the July  
issue of the

incredible magazine the *National Geographic*, there is an excellent article called *Food Ark*. The article featured Seed Savers Exchange, a non-profit organization dedicated to saving and sharing heirloom seeds.

Scientifically speaking, heirloom varieties preserve the biodiversity amongst a particular species. Biodiversity is an extremely important concept. The lack of biodiversity contributed to the horrors of the Irish Potato Famine. But what's more important is heirloom tomatoes taste great!

Why are heirlooms so important to Highwood? What in the world does this have to do with the Highwood Historical Society's Terrific Tomato Contest? The answer is that Highwood's heritage and history can be traced back through those tiny little seeds, preserved for generations. Our local families have been growing their tomatoes in this fashion for years, and even the more recent transplants have taken up this tradition. In fact, our first place winners, Dominick D'Astici, Alfio Fabbri, and Jim Ulrich, are all tomato seed breeders.

It's that out-of-the box, yet traditional, approach that is unique to Highwood that led John Swenson and Seed Savers to partner with Highwood Historical Society in it's Terrific Tomato Contest. John has labeled this contest: "Important, not only for your community, but for the whole world."

With this exciting new partnership, how could we not add a new category to our list, reserved just for heirloom varieties? And then we thought, for the first time ever, and *only* for the heirloom tomatoes, *let's taste them!*

Of course John Swenson will be one of the tasting judges. We are also excited to welcome the following as a tasting judge: Local chef and food connoisseur Larry Aronson. Larry was the founder of the My Pi Pizza chain or as the Chicago Botanic Garden's chili pepper cart man; Sam Darin, the Botanic Garden's *Tool Man*; Rick Beldin, the CBG's Horticulturist and teacher of the *"Let's Grow Together"* classes at the garden; Ermanno Amidei of Amidei Mercantino and Fabrizio Galli of Pastificio (and Tour Crafters); as well as several "secret judges." All are professionals that know a perfect tomato when they see it.

Points will be awarded for taste, aroma and appearance. The winner of the "heirloom only" contest will be dubbed **Highwood's Tastiest Tomato.**

**But you don't have to have an heirloom tomato to participate!** Tomatoes will be judged in more than 28 categories, from Most Terrific (Grand Prize), to Largest Overall, to Cutest. **The competition is fierce!**

With all of that said, the question remains "Who's got the Most Terrific Tomato in Town?" Is this YOUR year?

To submit your name to be a participant, search the HHS's Face book events page for Terrific Tomato Contest and click "Attending," or call 847-433-2984 or email us at [Highwoodhistory@aol.com](mailto:Highwoodhistory@aol.com). Whichever way you do it be sure to include your name, telephone number and address. Only residents of Highwood or Highwood Historical Society members in the immediate vicinity of Highwood may participate.

**THE RULES**

**DO NOT REMOVE THE TOMATO FROM THE VINE!** We want to take pictures of our tomato submissions on the vine. Collections will occur on Tuesday August 16, 2011.

Judging will occur and prizes will be announced at Highwood's First Annual Garlic Fest on Wednesday August 17, 2011.

Aldo Crovetto will be reprising his role as Capo di Pomodori, (Captain of Tomatoes) in order to tally the points and award the prizes in each category.



The Grand Prize winner will have a sign in their front yard proclaiming them *King of the Tomatoes*. Each category will have a winner who will receive bragging rights... until next year's competition anyway!

To learn more about the Seed Savers organization, please visit [www.seedsavers.org](http://www.seedsavers.org). To read the article, visit <http://ngm.nationalgeographic.com/2011/07/food-ark/siebert-text>.

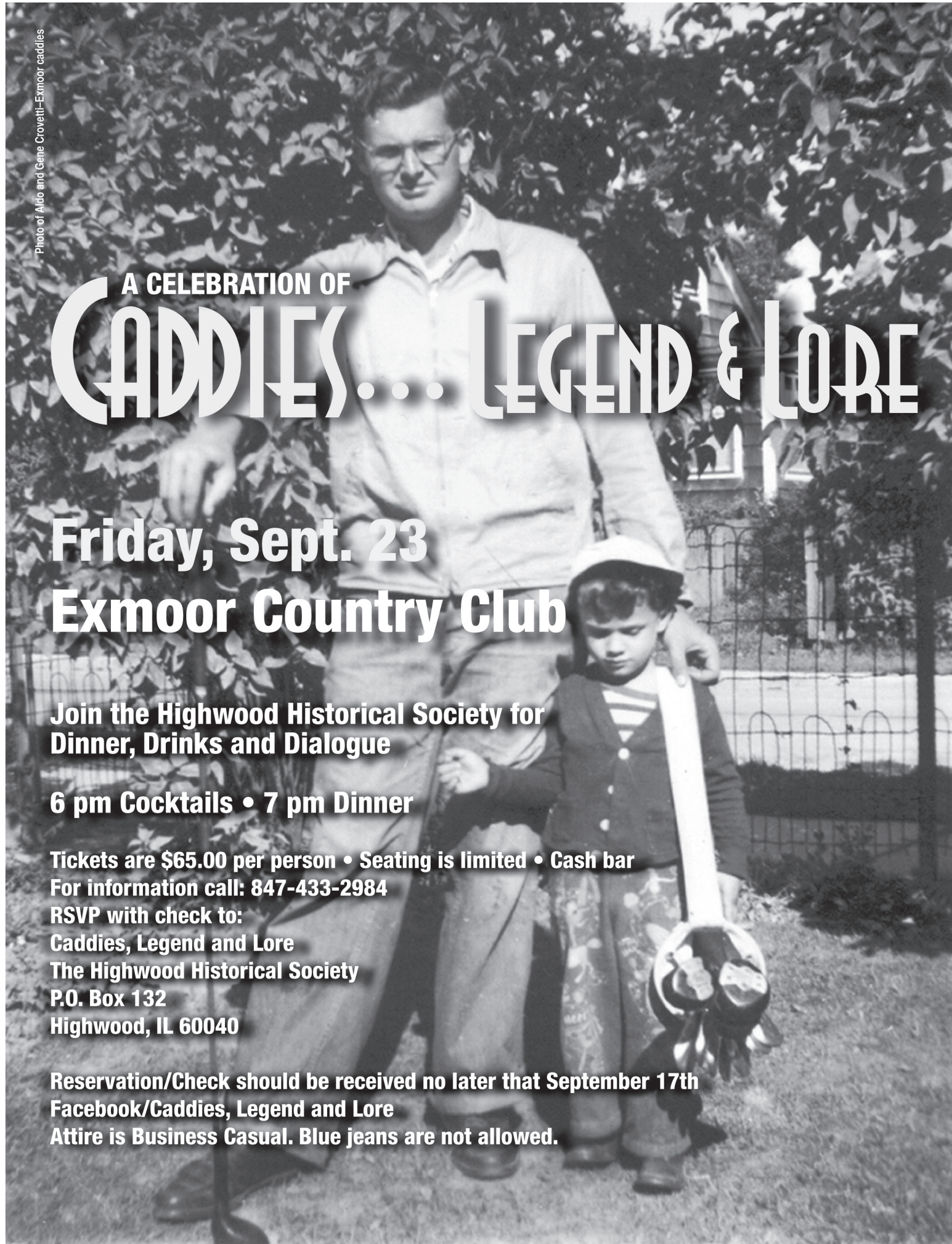


Photo of Aldo and Gene Crovetto - Exmoor caddies

A CELEBRATION OF  
**CADDIES... LEGEND & LORE**

**Friday, Sept. 23**  
**Exmoor Country Club**

**Join the Highwood Historical Society for  
Dinner, Drinks and Dialogue**

**6 pm Cocktails • 7 pm Dinner**

**Tickets are \$65.00 per person • Seating is limited • Cash bar**  
**For information call: 847-433-2984**

**RSVP with check to:**  
**Caddies, Legend and Lore**  
**The Highwood Historical Society**  
**P.O. Box 132**  
**Highwood, IL 60040**

**Reservation/Check should be received no later that September 17th**  
**Facebook/Caddies, Legend and Lore**  
**Attire is Business Casual. Blue jeans are not allowed.**



## Caddies...Legend and Lore

Being a caddy was an opportunity to pay bills, help parents struggling during the depression and after, raise spending money and meet people from outside of the neighborhood. Caddying was hard work and it was fun!

We've grown up listening to the stories our friends have told about caddying at the various country clubs in the area. When an ex-caddy tells a story, you can bet it's a story to tell. There will be plenty to hear on September 23.

**We hope you join us, on Friday, September 23 at Exmoor Country Club** to celebrate *Caddies...Legend and Lore*. Old Friends, great stories and more fun than pitching' nickels.

The following are a sampling of stories we've collected to date. Send your story to [Highwoodhistory@aol.com](mailto:Highwoodhistory@aol.com)

### Caddy John "Joe" Pett- Exmoor, Lake Shore and Bob O'Link- 1953

Joe Pett's house ran alongside of Exmoor Country Club. He started caddying at Exmoor at the age of 12. In the 1950's a caddy was paid \$1.00 for 18 holes and \$0.25 tip. After a year and if he was able to carry 2 bags he made \$2.50 for 18 holes.

According to Joe, mad loopers were young boys or men who were there all the time. He remembers, in particular, two brothers whose father had died. The boys caddied as much as they could to help support the family. The Caddy Master was aware of their situation and made sure that they got out as much as possible, even twice a day.

Joe said it was really a melting pot of kids. He remembers a lot of Italian kids who couldn't even speak English sitting in the caddy shed waiting to be called out to caddy. "I think this is where a lot of kids from Highwood learned their love of the game of golf and met the friends they kept a lifetime."

### Caddy Ed Piacentini Bernardi- Exmoor 1939

Excerpts from his book "*Of Long Ago Caddies and Exmoor Kings. Of Exmoor Places and forgotten things.*"

#### IT PAYS TO KNOW SOMEBODY

In 1921 my father's oldest sister arrived at Ellis Island from Italy, where she married Roberto Saielli\*, a newly crowned U.S. citizen. Immediately after the ceremony she was allowed to enter the country, boarded a train and three days later was introduced to the newlyweds' one room "apartamento" in a place called Highwood,

Illinois. (\*Great Uncle of current Exmoor member: Robert Saielli)

A few months later my father, along with his uncle, made the long trip from the hunger and poverty of the Tuscan/ Modenese Apennines for the promises of the dirty coal pits of west central Texas. As soon as he arrived in Texas, my aunt began writing; no, she begged my father, Nello, to leave the mines and come to Highwood. She was sure he could find a job at something called "un clobbo di golfo"!

In early April of 1922, taking a few clothes, a new leather wallet containing a few dollars and with lungs already dusted with the fine soot of those mines, my father left his uncle, the barroom philosophers, the Texas tumbleweed and snakes and took the long 5 day train ride to Highwood.

His new brother-in-law, Roberto Saielli, worked at a place called Old Elm Country Club where, since 1916, the greens keeper was his own brother-in-law, Adelmo Bertucci. Roberto also had a brother who had been working, since 1916, at a place called Exmoor Country Club. My father was in seventh heaven; as soon as he arrived in Highwood he had his choice of a summer job at either Exmoor or Old Elm.

#### AND SO MY STORY BEGINS

He selected Exmoor and my story begins; for he was to remain employed by Exmoor for the next 47 years! My dad was 22 years old when he started to work on the golf course. Exmoor had celebrated its 25th Silver Anniversary the year before. Forty seven years, non-stop; winter and summer, with no vacation time, until the mid-1960s, when he retired as one of the first employees to receive Exmoor's new pension benefits!

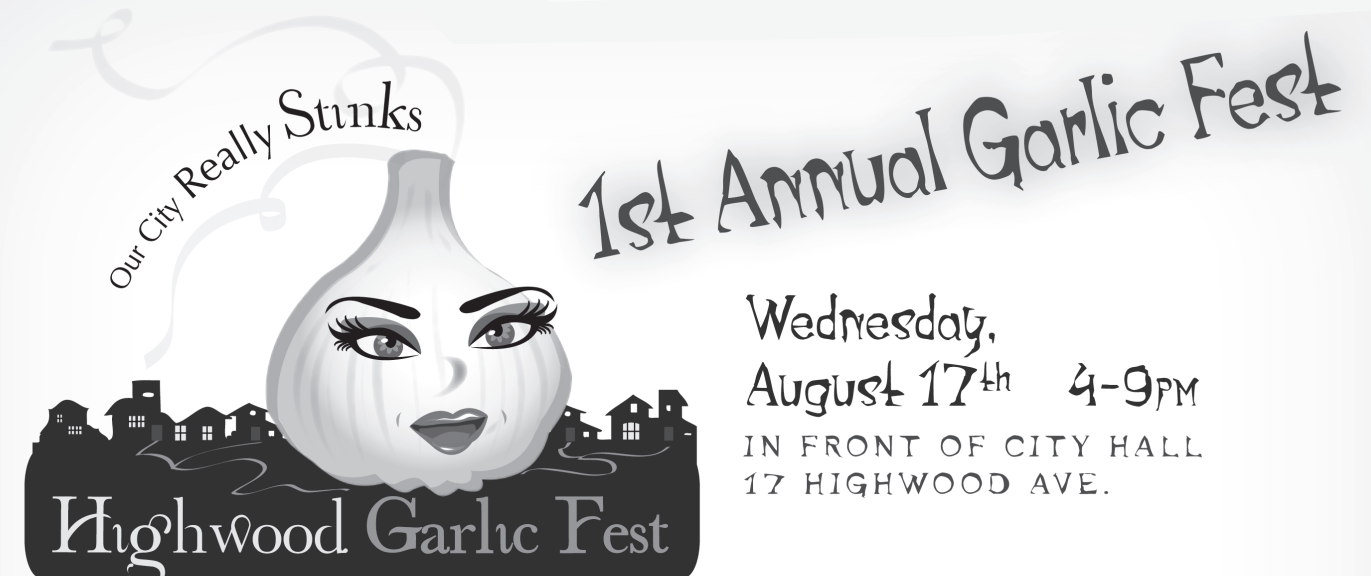
He performed a myriad of tasks including the watering and cutting of fairways, plowing snow and "making" ice for the curling and skating rinks. Exmoor, his family's salvation during the terrible depression years, was his life's work, his church and his America.

As a toddler I often accompanied my father whenever he worked late afternoons and early evenings. I hit my first golf ball off of the second tee (we lived just north of the tee) when I was seven or eight years old. My first Exmoor caddy dollar was earned in 1939 when I was nine years old. There followed hundreds and hundreds of "loops" over the years.

### Aldo Crovetti- Exmoor Country Club 1939

*First Loop-* In the summer of 1939 I began the fires of many experiences as a caddy at Exmoor. I started like others as a Class B caddy. I cared for Mrs. Powers on a Sunday afternoon. For nine holes I made \$0.69. Whoopee! But it was a start.

celebrate  
highwood



1st Annual Garlic Fest

Wednesday,  
August 17th 4-9PM  
IN FRONT OF CITY HALL  
17 HIGHWOOD AVE.

Dozen's of stinky vendors will come out on Wed., Aug. 17th from 4-9pm, during Highwood's infamous Evening Gourmet Farmers Market to taste some of the most unusual garlic recipes, from the out of the ordinary garlic candy, ice cream and drinks to the more usual pasta, butters, sauces, etc. The smell of garlic will surely lure people from all over the Midwest to Highwood during the **First Annual Garlic Fest!**

#### OTHER GREAT HAPPENINGS INCLUDE



Garlic Queen Contest

Garlic Queen Talent Show on August 10

come to Farmers Market the week before to see the rising talent on the North Shore and pick your favorite.

Garlic Queen Contest: Crowning on August 17 at 8pm  
Sign up at [www.highwoodgarlicfest.com](http://www.highwoodgarlicfest.com) to register (no charge) Voting begins Aug. 1 and takes place at [www.highwoodgarlicfest.com](http://www.highwoodgarlicfest.com) and costs .99¢ per vote.

Taste of Garlic Competition  
People's Choice Award in Sweet and Savory categories.



Miri Avalanche Ice Cream Eating Contest

Topped with, you guessed it, a scoop of garlic ice cream - yummm.  
Sponsored by the Cooling Station.



Terrific Tomato Contest - Highwood Historical Society  
Highwood-grown tomatoes judged by world renowned experts.  
Visit the Terrific Tomato Facebook page to enter your tomato.

PROUDLY SPONSORED BY

**NORTHBROOK**  
TOYOTA • SCION

**PIONEER PRESS**  
YOUR LOCAL SOURCE

**La Casa de Isaac**



celebratehighwood.com