

# Highwood Historical Society

MAKING HISTORY EVERYDAY

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**Letter from the President**

HHS: BUSINESS AS USUAL-- HHS had a wonderful summer hosting our exciting Terrific Tomato Contest and providing a booth with information to highlight our great WW II Veteran's program. Special thanks to our energetic and supportive HHS Board members who worked diligently to provide the materials and information to make these events successful. We hope you had the opportunity to stop by our booth to see all that was on display.

In October, Steve Draska provided an informative program, The Last of the Horse Soldiers" sharing data on General Philip Sheridan and General George Custer and the many battles fought by the cavalry in the 1800's. He captured our attention by his knowledge and great presentation of the facts during those turbulent times.

Now, we look forward to the holidays and finding ways for HHS to raise additional funds to support our programs. We hope you have purchased our Raffle Tickets giving you the opportunity to win a \$1000 or \$500 Visa card. If you haven't been contacted, there is still time to get tickets. Call HHS – 847-682-9039. The drawing is Wed. Dec. 6th at our Holiday Dinner Event to be held at Froggy's French Café. You need not be present to win. Information on how to register for the dinner is included in this newsletter. This is always a fun time to relax, enjoy holiday music and visit with your friends. Remember seating at Froggy's is always limited. Sign up now – deadline is Friday, December 1st.

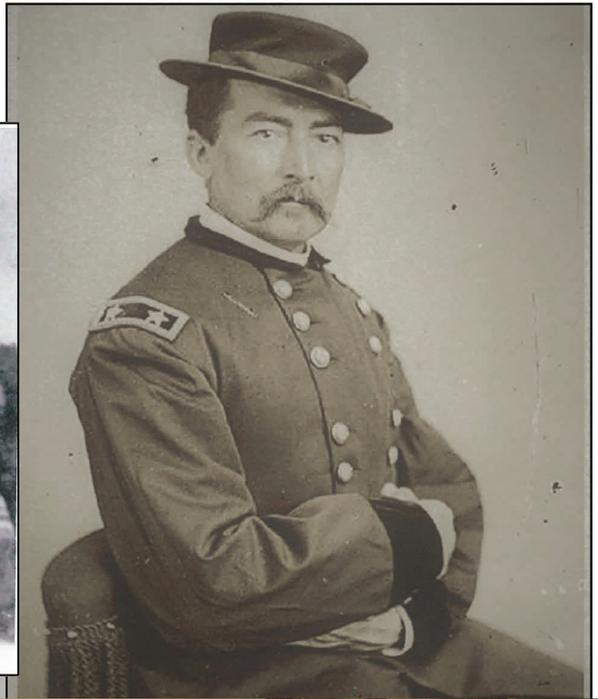
HHS will be participating at the Highwood Tree Lighting Ceremony on Saturday, November 18th at City Hall. Stop by and visit with us as we distribute goodies to the children and also sell raffle tickets! Remember HHS is a 501(c) 3 organization. We welcome donations of any amount. Keep us in mind as you make your end of the year tax deductible contributions. 100% of your money stays with HHS.

LOOKING AHEAD – 2018 is the 150th year of the founding of Highwood. The original plat, signed on August, 22, 1868, will soon be on display. You will be hearing more plans in coming months on how HHS plus other Highwood organizations will organize special events to honor this memorable year. If you have an idea to share on how or what you would like to see or occur, please send them to us. Highwood will be the place to be in 2018!

HHS participated in the Lake County Historical Alliance Photo Book project. We are among 30+ area historical groups. HHS submitted several photos and stories of items from our archives. These will be published and the book will be available for sale soon—cost is \$15. Our photo of the Little Guys jacket, one archive featured in the book, has raised much interest. The jacket and winning 1957 national and 1961 international team photos will be on display at the new Lake County Museum. Were any of you on those winning teams? The Discovery Museum formerly in Wauconda moved to Libertyville – It has been renamed the Dunn Museum and is now located at 1899 Winchester Road. Watch for more details as they become available.

BEST WISHES TO ALL FOR A HAPPY HOLIDAY SEASON. ENJOY TIME WITH YOUR FAMILY AND FRIENDS.

Teta Minuzzo, President



Thank you to all who joined us on October 18th for HHS Member Steve Draska's informative and passionate presentation, "The Last of the Horse Soldiers—General Sheridan and General Custer."



## SUPPORT THE HHS!

If you haven't already  
purchased your  
Annual Raffle Tickets,  
please contact us today!

\$10.00 ea.  
(3) for \$25.00 or  
(10) for \$50.00

1st Prize, \$1000 Visa Gift Card  
2nd Prize, \$500.00 Visa Gift Card

Prizes will be awarded at the  
HHS Holiday Dinner on Dec. 6th  
Winner need not be present.

Call 847-682-9039 for tickets.  
Good Luck!

### Recent Acquisitions

HHS is most appreciative to the following for their donations:

- Liz Cashmore- Book: [View from the Tower - History of Fort Sheridan](#)
- Annalisa and Larry DiVito – Four Plaques and trophies found in the American Legion Building
- Robert Moroney – Photos of Ralph Scornavacco from WW II and an invitation to a Masked Ball supporting the Little Opera House in Highwood
- Jackie Schechter – Three albums from Highwood City Council meetings on annexation and development of Fort Sheridan plus a folder of maps and future proposed changes within Fort boundaries
- Leonora Cervac – many items related to HHS programs and events, North Shore Magazine from 2006 with Highwood featured articles, copies of sports photo and 1900 fire at Fritches Grocery, and 50th Anniversary program from Italian Woman's Prosperity Club
- Villa Park Historical Society – 1909 album with clippings etc. from R. Pease, book – [28 Miles North](#) by Marvyn Wittelle, and six copies of the Fort Sheridan Tower newspapers from late 1960's

## A 'Highwood' Like the One I Grew Up With . . .

by Vera Morandi Pfifferling,  
as told to Adrienne Padrucci Inman

Regardless of your political leanings, Clinton is correct: It takes a village. My "village" was Highwood.

A small community of Italian immigrants, we traded meat, garden vegetables and homemade wine to each other in order to feed our families in the 1940s and 50s. We didn't have to worry about pesticides, everything was organic in my dad's garden. My father would leave for work at 5 in the morning to return at 4:30 pm when he tended his garden until it was too dark to see. Then he came into the house to work fixing shoes, as he was a shoemaker by trade. My Mom worked as a tailor for the Navy at Great Lakes and in her home as a seamstress for women's clothes. She made all of my sister's and my clothes. There wasn't much time or money for vacations or family outings. Paychecks were shared with relatives in need in Italy. We had no car, no washer or dryer (clotheslines dominated our yard), no dish-washer, no internet and no cell phones. What we had was family, church, and friends. That was priceless, but I didn't learn to appreciate it until I was much older.

Highwood was the springboard for the rest of my life. Family values were high in Highwood. I don't recall any of my friends having to deal with broken homes or dysfunctional families but then again if there were, these were facts that were well hidden. The community was small but supportive. My first memories of being cared for outside of our home while my mother worked, was by my cousin Leah Mordini. She lived in the Fabbri built home on Burchell Avenue. I got to be a flower girl in her wedding when I was four years old. My cousin Richard Azzi was the ring bearer. My mom made my dress. Leah took pride in being the ultimate homemaker. She cooked, she sewed and she was a kind, but firm mother to her two children, Danny and Margaret. I learned a lot from her.

Another of my care takers were Rose and Alfonso Burgoni on Highwood Avenue. "Fonso" was my godfather and was one of the kindest and gentlest people I knew. He worked for the city. I always felt that he took care of the ice rink just for me because I loved to skate. He would let me know when the rink was ready to use and would often stay late at the Highwood Park rink to watch over me. I was blessed to have them in my life. "Fonso" and my dad were raised in the same household in Italy and thought of themselves as brothers. They made wine together every year. The residue was used as compost in our garden. Visitors were in abundance when the wine was ready.

My parents and sister first lived in Madrid, Iowa, where my father was a coal miner. Though my sister tells me he loved working in the mines, the mines there eventually closed and he had to find work elsewhere. He also contracted Black Lung disease. He eventually died in 1976 of pneumonia and heart failure. When they moved to Highwood, they lived upstairs from Mary's store on Palmer Avenue and eventually lived with my mom's best friend Irene Crovetti, whom I called Nona. Nona was mother to Charlie Crovetti and he and his wife Mary had three children, Janice, Ruthann and Irene. We moved into our home on Railway Avenue (which eventually became Green Bay Road) when I was a small child. Nowadays, you might have called the house a fixer upper or maybe you would just call it cheap. Nonetheless, it worked for us and continued to be my home for many years.

My neighborhood was full of good people. Martha Vanoni lived next door and was a constant playmate. Mary Margaret Marino lived around the corner on Sheridan Avenue. Her parents would take day trips to interesting places in Illinois and I would accompany them. It was fun. Her parents Nick and Micki were incredibly nice to me, and Micki would often talk with me as if I was an adult. I was flattered and learned a lot from her.

George Baines lived down the street next to the Roof family, across from Bobby Palmer's family. If I recall correctly, Tim Russell, Marvin and Madrene Fiocchi, Dede and Roselyn Nardini and Nancy Christianson all lived nearby.

Nick Marino and Roy Dransfeldt were both long time respected members of Highwood's police department. Mr. Dransfeldt's family lived in our neighborhood too. The Dransfeldt's children included Ruthie, Doris, Norma Jean, Ronnie and at least one other who was younger. I think her name was Marilyn. Mary Ann Yurkonis was the youngest to move into our neighborhood and I remember her being good at math. She had to be if she wanted to play Easy Money or Monopoly with us. They moved into the Bernardoni house next to Mary Margaret Marino. It was hard saying goodbye to my good friend Jimmy and his older sisters, Frannie and Judy Bernardoni when they moved to California. I never heard from them again.

Washington Gardens was on the north side of my house in Highwood. When I was very young, I had fond memories of the ice cream cones and fudgesicles from the corner store, and later pizzas and roast beef sandwiches from Washington Gardens. Washington Gardens became a favorite go-to place for dates in high school.

I lived across the street from the "pit", a repair depot for streetcars. This was a main transportation system for travel along the North Shore, unless you were in a hurry, and then the

Northwestern was there to speed you to the city with many optional stops in between. Though it is a little nostalgic to think about these wonderful means of transportation up and down the North Shore, there were tragedies associated with the trains. Injuries of people working on the streetcars, cars stalling out on the tracks and getting hit by a fast train and even people walking in front of a fast train completely oblivious of the oncoming danger. The trains had become so much a part of our lives that we often took them, and the dangers they posed, for granted. I learned to respect the trains and forever was wary of them.

Memories make us who we are, but most important are those people who have had roles in our memories that have had the most influence on us. Our best friends, our teachers, people in town who helped shape who we would finally become.

Remember Contri's? I was there almost every day buying bread, or lunchmeat. Remember Sheek's? This was my mom's preferred weekly grocery store. They delivered. Imagine that! We were always treated respectfully. We were customers. They needed our business. But, we needed them too. They knew us. There were no credit cards at that time – just cash and a tab that eventually got paid. They trusted us and we trusted them too.

Remember Laeglars and Bernardi's? They were the first stop before you went to the Doctor for what ailed you. Most of the time, they had advice to give you – often in terms of a home remedy, other times an urgent nudge to see your doctor. We could depend on our doctors Bernardi and Lustigman, and our dentists Ugolini, Anderson and Fiocchi to provide us with good care.

Remember our mailmen. Deep snow, icy steps and barking dogs never interfered with Bruno Pagliai delivering the mail. And of course, thanks to Dino Caselli too, who worked to service our requests at the post office. Service was a personal thing then, whether you were on the giving or the receiving end. They are appreciated.

St. James had its own set of memories for me, with some of my dearest coming from Sister Mary Judith in the seventh grade. I was able to thank her for her guidance and now I have come full circle to my own parents, my sister, my classmates and my friends, without whom I could not have become the person I am today. To my mom, who could be tough and self-centered, she made sure I looked neat and my nose was clean. To my sister, I am grateful she didn't throw me under the train when she lost patience with me.

To Mary Mazzetta, I'm sorry, but I really wanted to be a ballet dancer not a tap dancer. To Anita Ori, I tried to play the damn

accordion but I could never be as good as you. Having said that, I did build some muscles carrying that blasted thing from my house to the Labor Temple across the tracks on Highwood Avenue for my lessons. To Patty O'Conner, you were always so happy but my face gets tired when I smile that much. To Adrienne (Pedrucci), thank you for making me feel so coordinated. To Joyce Dati, did you have to do everything right?

This year, 2017, my husband and I celebrated our 47th anniversary. We have two sons. Paul, our oldest, has a mental illness. It has been a painful part of our lives but we are grateful that he is a gentle person, a gifted artist and a very intelligent person. One day I hope things will get better for him. My younger son, David is married to a first generation, beautiful, Native American. They have two children. Harrison will be four in October and Scarlett will be two in November. They are my joy and I am so grateful for them. Now, it is important for us to provide support and guidance for our children and grandchildren. Paul lives in Asheville and David and his family live in Washington DC.

It does take "a village" and I am hopeful that where ever they live they will find a "Highwood" like the one I grew up with.



Most Terrific Tomato Winners (and HHS Members!): John & Luana Cioni

## 10th ANNUAL TERRIFIC TOMATO CONTEST RESULTS

The Most Terrific Tomato in Town:  
John and Luana Cioni

Winner of the People's Choice Award:  
Mickey Fiore

Best Ox-Heart: Anita and Walter Ori

Best Plum: Mickey Fiore

Greenest Ox-Heart: Antionetta DeBellis

Sexiest Tomato: Mary Miotti

Most Beautiful Color: Vic Campagni

Best Big Boy: Bill Piacenza

Funniest Tomato: Mike Miotti

Best Heirloom: Michael Koenitz-Hudac &  
son Charlie

Prettiest Beefsteak: Wally Roscher

Most Uniform Shape: Megan Towns

Most Uniform Red Color: Colleen Boilini

Prettiest: Yones Lawler

Best Globe Shaped: Lilia Bolek

**Congratulations John & Luana, and to all  
the contestants, we'll see you next year!**



**HIGHWOOD HISTORICAL SOCIETY**  
**PO BOX 132**  
**HIGHWOOD, IL 60040-0132**

Looking for the perfect  
 gift? Give the gift of  
 Highwood History!  
 \$20.00  
 Annual Membership  
 Contact us today!



**PLEASE JOIN US AT THE**  
**2017 "Holidays in Highwood" Dinner & Raffle**

**Wednesday, December 6th, 2017**

**6:30 pm, Froggy's Restaurant**

**\$50.00 per person, Cash Bar**

**Appetizers, Salad, Choice of Entrée, & Dessert**

**Please Make Checks Payable to: Highwood Historical Society**

**Mail to: HHS**

**P.O. Box 132**

**Highwood, IL 60040**

**Seating is limited. Please  
 respond by Friday, Dec. 1st.**

**Total Attending:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Total Payment Enclosed:** \_\_\_\_\_

| Name(s) of Attendee(s) | Beef<br>Bourguignon | Salmon |
|------------------------|---------------------|--------|
|                        |                     |        |
|                        |                     |        |
|                        |                     |        |
|                        |                     |        |