

Highwood Historical Society

MAKING HISTORY EVERYDAY

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

Italian Women's Prosperity Club turns 85	2
Lake County Discovery Museum	2
Historical Society Alliance Luncheon	2
The Booster Were My Team	3
"Highwood Takes the Field" Photo Montage	4-5
Raffle Tickets for Sale	4-5

P.O. Box 132
Highwood, IL 60040
tel: 847-682-9039
highwoodhistory@gmail.com

Board Members

Teta Minuzzo, President
Shirley Fitzgerald, Vice President
Jack Johnson, Treasurer
Barbara Sherony
Marianetti, Secretary

Lisa Cervac, Past President

Josephine Campagni
Leonora Cervac
Aldo Croveti
Angela Croveti
Sheila Dean
Adrienne Inman
Diane LoPresti
Tom Scopelliti
Amy Strege
Carol Ugolini

Visit us at the Evening Markets

Every Wednesday
in Everts Park

THANK YOU FOR YOUR MEMBERSHIP AND SUPPORT

The Highwood Historical Society is very proud of its long term involvement with the City of Highwood and the Highwood Chamber of Commerce. Look for us at the Wednesday Evening Market at Everts Park this summer. We also work with the Highland Park Nursing and Rehab Center to obtain family histories. Last year we held a very successful opera raffle that earned over \$5000. This year our Board members will be asking you to purchase raffle tickets to win box seats to a Sept. Cubs ballgame. Please buy a raffle ticket - You may be the winner! All funds raised by our organization help support our goals and mission.

We appreciate your generosity in donating many archival items, photos, news clippings, and city and school memorabilia for our collection. Let's hope we will soon find a new location and building to house all these beautiful materials. **Continue to help us secure a visible space in Highwood.** We want these items on display so all can see and learn the history of our community. Please contact us (847-682-9039) - we value your interest and support.

Teta Minuzzo, President

A Short History: The Highwood Historical Society has been organized since 1995 and incorporated as a 501(c)3 organization since 1996. Our mission is to support the preservation and collection of Highwood memorabilia. We recognize and honor the people who make and have made a major contribution to our unique and wonderful community. We provide fun and exciting events to encourage member and citizen participation. Membership dues and fundraising events support our mission and goals. Your help and donations keep us a strong, active and viable organization in Highwood.

Take a walk around Highwood to see many items provided by HHS:

- Mayor's framed portraits in the City Hall
- Sports Mural and Sports Hall of Fame Plaque at the Community Center
- Brass Plaque on the rock at the south entrance of Everts Park
- Plaque at the Highwood Fire Station to recognize Volunteer Fire Fighters
- Frequent displays at the Highwood Library and in the lobby of City Hall

Over these past 19 years, you have helped us

- Honor the USO and the men and women of the Army and Navy
- Recognize Highwood's Municipal Heroes
- Sponsor the "Main Event" to highlight Sports in Highwood
- Enjoy a Grape Stomp to share the fun and work of making wine
- Promote Highwood Gardens and Annual Terrific Tomato Contest
- Present Highwood history and highlight key individuals in Highwood—Mayor Fidel Ghini; General Philip Sheridan; North Shore Trains; Highwood Homes Project; Author Adria Bernardi *Houses with Names*; Author Edward Piacentini Bernardi *The Reluctant Patriot*

85 Years for the Italian Women's Prosperity Club

By Carol Ugolini



L-R: Lydia Baldriani, Esther Longobardi, Olimpia Fabbri, Mary Somenzi (first President), and Mary Gualandi, 1930

This year marks an impressive milestone for the Italian Women's Prosperity Club in Highwood. Founded in 1929 on the principle of simple kindness to your neighbor, the Club marks its 85th year this month.

The original members of a small sewing circle decided to share the burdens brought on by the Great Depression with each other. They came from the mountains of Modena, Italy, to America with very little, only their family's meager belongings and household skills. They settled in the Highwood area and were completely dependent on others to understand their new life, language, and customs. But what these women also brought with them was a deep sense of compassion.

The little circle of eight was transformed into a force for good in the community. Dances were organized, food was prepared, and festive fundraisers were held. All proceeds went to those in need. Throughout the years the Prosperity Club flourished and grew to 61 charter members peaking at 250 general members. Today the Club includes many second and third generation descendants who continue its original philanthropic mission. Whether aiding servicemen during wartime or supporting schools, hospitals and various charities, every member has been willing to lend a helping hand. Current Co-Presidents Josephine Galassini and Carol Ugolini are confident this tradition will continue for many years to come, "We will always continue the work of our founders. No one can function as a human unless he or she puts their hand out and gives hope and sustenance to those less fortunate".

The Italian Women's Prosperity Club will celebrate its anniversary with a dinner to honor its founders on Sunday, July 27, at the Bella Via Restaurant, Highland Park, Ill. Guest Speaker is Ed Bernardi. For more information and reservations, please call Carol Ugolini, 1-847-432-4514.

HHS tours the Lake County Discovery Museum

Several of our Board Members recently visited the Lake County Discovery Museum in Wauconda, IL, for a behind the scenes look at their collections and museum offerings. Most importantly, our team was educated and advised about the latest trends in archival storage of documents, photographs, and artifacts. The Museum will be moving from its current Lakewood location in Wauconda to a larger facility in the Lake County Forest Preserve General Offices in Libertyville, doubling the amount of exhibit space. Hours are Monday thru Saturday, 10am-4:30pm, and Sundays, 1-4:30pm. Admission is \$6 for adults and \$2.50 for children. Discounts for Seniors and Tuesday visits. Please contact the Museum for details, tel: 847-968-3400 or visit www.lcfpd.org/discovery_museum.

**Congratulations to the
Highwood Chamber
of Commerce.
This year marks their
45th Highwood Days
Celebration!**

HHS hosts Alliance Luncheon

The Highwood Historical Society was pleased to host the April 23rd meeting of the Lake County Historical Alliance. This is a group representing 32 Lake and McHenry County Historical Societies. Over 45 members attended and had the opportunity to view historical displays on Highwood and Fort Sheridan and present information about their respective organizations. The meeting and luncheon was held at Bridie McKenna's Irish Pub. This was the first time that the Highwood Historical Society was able to welcome and share its unique history with other historical groups all working to preserve, promote and share the history of their communities. Many in attendance had never been to Highwood and we were proud to showcase the jewel we all know it to be.

The Boosters Were My Team by Cynthia Krol

There is something magical about the combination of baseball and summertime. Whether you attend a major league baseball game or a child's T-ball tournament, the excitement is contagious. Now imagine you are a young boy from a small town and your baseball heroes are your gas station attendant, your handyman, and your next-door neighbor. This was Highwood in the 1930's.

I recently met with HHS Member Geno Bagatti one morning at McDonald's (Highwood's version of CNN's *Crossfire*) while researching various teams in Highwood. What I discovered was a fascinating history of one man's love of the game, the people, and the town of Highwood. He grew up on the top end of Burchell Avenue, "across the street from Dr. Risjord," and he could hear the games played at "Charlie Mordini Field" (our current ball park) calling him to come and watch, price was usually a dime or a quarter to get in. Games were played all over town on any open field, especially the corner of Everts & Prairie Ave, Maggi's field on Western Ave (H.P. sub-division) and on the site of the HP Rehab Center (the "Pavillion" on Pleasant Ave).

One of Highwood's earliest teams was the Highwood Athletic Club (A.C.'s) established around 1921. They played various HP, North Shore, and Chicago teams, drawing huge crowds along the North Shore Line. The A.C.'s had winning records until they disbanded around 1929. In the early 1930's, Frank Nustra formed the Highwood Indians who played football and basketball as well as baseball. These Depression Era teams were vital to community morale, offering much needed entertainment. Around 1933, Bert and Marino "Flip" Maestri established the Highwood Boosters. Their original clubhouse was located above the Colombini/Somenzi store on North Avenue and later moved to a house near the current St. James Rectory.

A little divine guidance didn't hurt, as they were considered to be one of the strongest teams in the tri-state area, even playing the Stateville Penitentiary Team in Joliet. The majority of the players were from Highwood, but it was well-known that Flip Maestri and others scouted and "relocated" a few minor-league players to join the Highwood Boosters. They were active until 1941, when many of the players enlisted or were called into service for World War II. Several of Highwood's players reached the professional level, including Al Glossup, Fritz Bernardi, and Bruno Somenzi.

If you are a fan of baseball, you can recall a favorite team from your youth. For Geno, it was the Highwood Boosters of 1940:

"Ziggy" Zanotti at 1st, Ozzie Digani at 2nd, Pete Castelli on 3rd, Primo Palmetti at short, Armondo Lenzi at left, Caesar "Pat" Pasquesi at center, Pitchers Harry Skidmore, Fritz Bernardi, & Bruno Somenzi. These men inspired him to follow his own dreams of playing professional baseball.

Geno played for the Highwood American Legion Team of 1949, winning the 10th district and 2nd division championships. He graduated in 1950 from HP High School and attended Northwestern University. His summers were spent pitching semi-pro ball in Deerfield and Lake Forest. These leagues were intended to feed players into the minors, as college baseball scouting was just beginning to take shape.

He then spent 12 months serving during the Korean Conflict and due to a letter in his service file written by Flip Maestri, Geno found himself pitching in a tournament for the Armed Services Far East Championships near the 38th Parallel. Upon his return, he transferred to Lake Forest College and played a little, however his arm was never the same, thus ending his baseball career. He then moved on to a successful career as



Highwood American Legion Undefeated 10th Division Champions, 1949

Top Row: Coach Lou "Gigi" Piacenza, Bruno Ponsi, Jerry Walz, Bob Castellari, Ernie Rabattini, Bruno Giangiorgi (Sponsor)
 Mid Row: Lou Guentz, Geno Bagatti, Frank Picchietti, Larry Dean, Buddy Giangiorgi, Renzo Marchetti
 Front Row: Hal Freberg, Robert Fiocchi, George Glader, Sam McMaster, Art Bock

an insurance lobbyist.

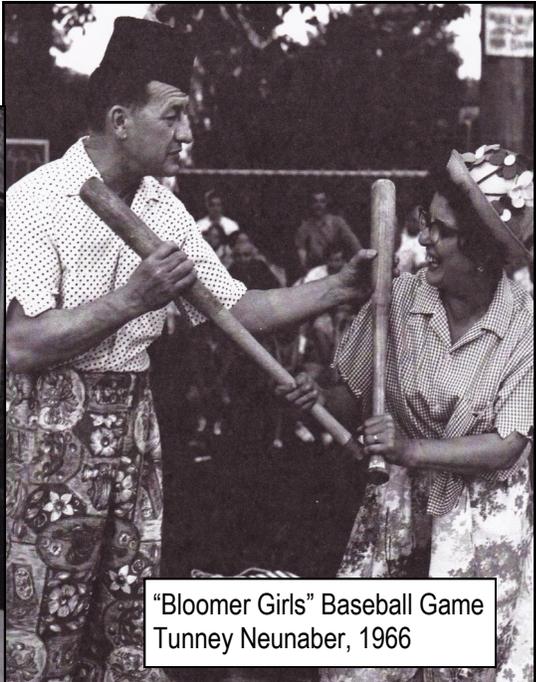
Like many other servicemen, the game changed while being away. Men's fast-pitch softball was the new game in town, sponsored by many local taverns. Rec Center youth programs flourished under Don Skrinar, Dorothy Biagi, and Marv Baker and I am happy to report that, today, you can still catch the excitement of a game at old "Charlie Mordini Field".

We wish to extend our condolences to the family of Battista "Bud" Ronchetto, who died on July 1st, at the age of 103. Bud was one of the last surviving members of the Highwood Indians.

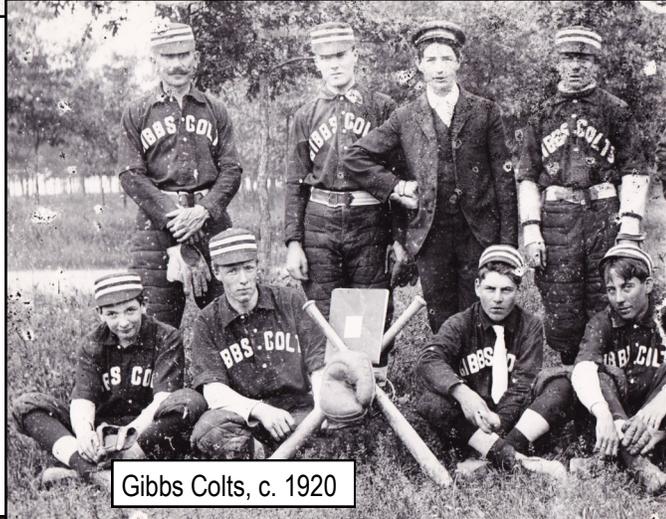
Highwood Takes the Field!!!



Russells Team, c. 1955



"Bloomer Girls" Baseball Game
Tunney Neunaber, 1966



Gibbs Colts, c. 1920



Women's Softball, 1940's



Silver Dollar, Men's Softball, 1980's



Highwood Boosters
c. 1938



Little League Champs, 1955



Original Concession Stand, c. 1950's

Top Row: Coach Skrinar, Tim Russell, Terry Somenzi, Chuck Pascal, Alex Scornavacco, Bobby Palmieri
 Mid-Row: Dick Campagni, Marvin Fiocchi, Chuck Mau, Ted Zagnoli, Jack Peterson
 Front-Row: Steve Kadison, Don Witty, Steve Simon, Sarge Ori, Mike McLaughlin

HIGHWOOD HISTORICAL SOCIETY BASEBALL RAFFLE

1st Prize: (4) Box Seats—Chicago Cubs vs. LA Dodgers—Sun. 9.21.14

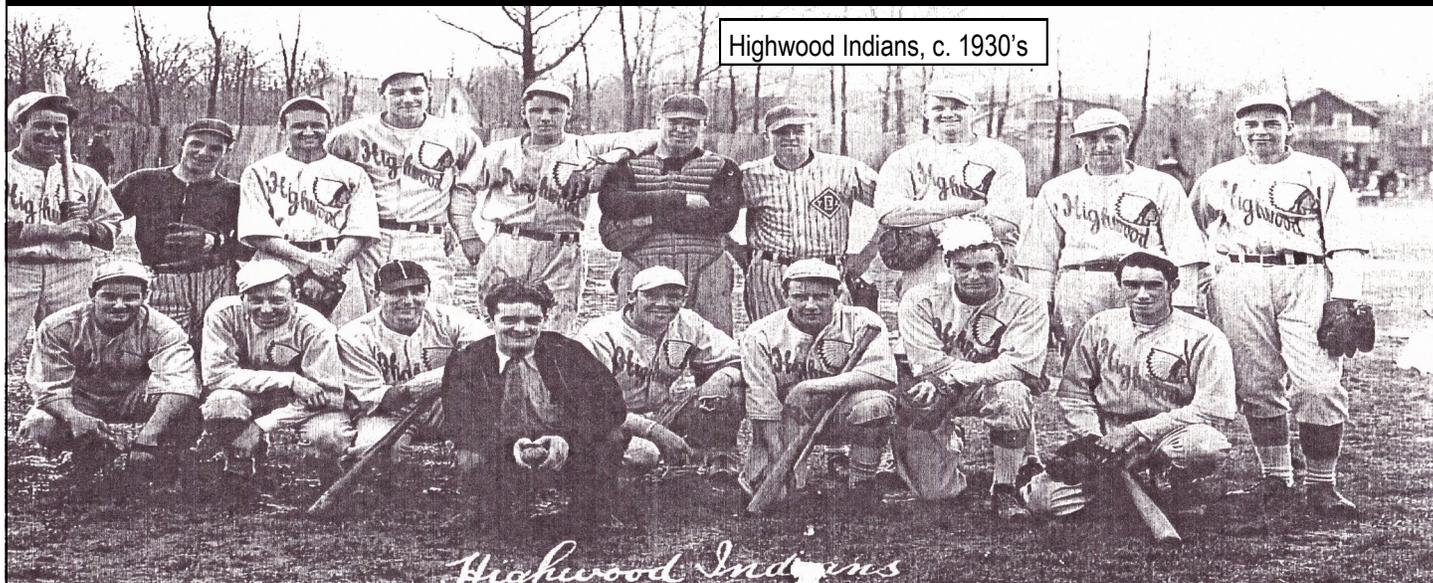
2nd Prize: \$150.00 BUFFO'S Pizza Party

3rd Prize: Baseball Gift Basket

Tickets: \$10.00 each or (10) for \$50.00

Drawing to be held August 27th

Purchase at the Evening Market in Everts Park or call 847-682-9039



Highwood Indians, c. 1930's

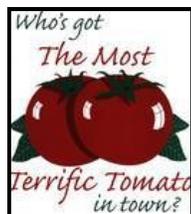
Highwood Indians

Back Row: Bruno "Cooney" Zaccanti, Jim Bernardini, Nello Castellani, John Shelton, Jim Hickey, B. Bartoaluzzi, Unknown, Unknown, Joe Fini, Ossian Carlson
 Front-Row: Joe Gualandri, Harold Grandt, Ed Malpelli, Domenic "Sheik" Giangiorgi (Manager in tie), Corrado "Crack" Giangiorgi, Angelo Nardini, John Ariano, Jim Sommerville

HIGHWOOD HISTORICAL SOCIETY

PO BOX 132
HIGHWOOD, IL 60040-0132

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



It's not too late to enter the
2014 Most Terrific
Tomato Contest
Call 847-682-9039

Danger: This **MAY** be your last newsletter if you have not renewed your 2014-2015 membership. If you are not sure, please call 847-682-9039.

Help preserve the history of Highwood . . .
tell your friends & family about the Highwood Historical Society!

Name: _____
Address: _____

Phone: _____
email: _____

June 1, 2014–May 31, 2015

_____ New Member _____ Renewal

Annual Membership Categories (please check one)

_____ Family \$20.00

_____ Business/Organization \$25.00

_____ Donor \$50.00–\$99.00

_____ Patron \$100.00 and above

Call
847-682-9039
with any ques-
tions.

Thank you for
your continued
support!

Mail Membership Form and Payment to:

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

WANTED: YOUR STORY

"The Swedes of Highwood"

We are looking for early history of Swedish settlement in Highwood. Early residents include the Carlson, Lindstrom, Wicklander, Johnson, and Engstrom families, just to name a few.

Did you attend Swedish services at the Wesley Methodist Church of Highwood (red brick American Legion Building, corner of Everts & Highwood Ave)?

Do you have old photos, artifacts, and most importantly, any family stories to share? Note: If you do not wish to donate photos or artifacts at this time, we would be more than pleased to safely scan or photograph your items for our digital collection.

Please call 847-682-9039
or email:
highwoodhistory@gmail.com