

Press Clippings 12/13/19

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Crooning for contributions

Salvation Army bell ringer organizes quartets to play around his red kettle

By: Gloria Casas



Craig Johnson has been an Elgin Salvation Army volunteer for 25 years. He organizes quartets to perform live Christmas music for the organization's annual Kettle Campaign.

There have been times when the temperature's been so cold the trumpet Craig Johnson uses to play with a quartet around a Salvation Army red kettle has literally frozen.

But every year, there's a moment that reminds him why he keeps doing it after 25 years, Johnson said.

Once it was an elderly woman who approached the kettle, thanked Johnson and his fellow musicians for playing in the cold, and dropped in a large donation, he said.

"She said the Salvation Army is a generous group who helped her father when he was in a desperate situation," Johnson recalled, choking up as he tells the story. The woman still remembered after so many years how the organization helped her family, he said.

Johnson, who taught at Willard Elementary School in South Elgin for 28 years, organizes a quartet to perform at a kettle location every Saturday between Thanksgiving and Christmas. For the last five years, they've been at Woodman's Market in Carpentersville because the Wisconsin-based company lets the group perform in its vestibule, Johnson said.

"It's really hard to play the horns in the cold," Johnson said.

Finding and scheduling musicians to volunteer at dozens of shifts over the holidays can be hard, he said, but he finds people are more willing to donate when there's live music, he said.

"The more you engage with people, the more they give to the kettles," said Rick Reigner, resource development director for the Elgin Salvation Army. "People appreciate the music and the effort being made and will contribute."

“It’s a win-win-win,” Johnson said. “It’s a win for the artists who enjoy making music. It’s a win for the shoppers because they can hear good music. It’s a win for the underserved who benefit from the contributions.”

Johnson has created a tradition at Woodman’s, Reigner said. Johnson’s quartet will be at the Randall Road store all day Dec. 14 and 21.

The Salvation Army provides musicians with music for 150 songs from which they can choose, Johnson said. The tradition is to have two high brass and two low brass musicians performing, he said.

The Red Kettle campaign is the Salvation Army’s biggest fundraiser, and the Elgin location hopes to raise \$235,000, Capt. Xavier Montenegro said. They’re at about 47% of their goal, down about 5% from where they were at this time last year, he said.

Reaching the goal is still possible if they’re able to get more volunteers out ringing bells, Montenegro said.

They have 45 locations and plenty of shifts through Christmas Eve, he said. And it need not be a big commitment like Johnson’s; many shifts are just a few hours, Montenegro said.

Funds raised by the Kettle Campaign are used for Salvation Army programs like its annual toy giveaway. Six hundred families are registered for this year’s giveaway on Saturday, Dec. 21, Montenegro said.

Anyone can register at a kettle location by going to ringbells.org . Donations are accepted on the Salvation Army’s website, centralusa.salvationarmy.org/elgin.

SPORTS

---Daily Herald---12/13/2019

Glenbard South ends rough stretch with win vs. Elgin

By: Gregg Voss



Glenbard South player Rocky LaPonte works her way past Elgin's Emma Carrero in the second half of the girls varsity basketball game at Glenbard South High School on Thursday.



Glenbard South player Ava Selvaggi looks to the basket despite pressure from Elgin in the second half of the girls varsity basketball game at Glenbard South High School on Thursday.



Glenbard South player Akayhla Dixon eyes the basket for a three-point shot in the second half of the girls varsity basketball game at Glenbard South High School on Thursday.



Glenbard South player Akayhla Dixon eyes the basket in the second half of the girls varsity basketball game at Glenbard South High School on Thursday.

Two out of three ain't bad.

Meat Loaf sang it. The Glenbard South girls basketball team lived it this week.

In a three-game stretch that started Tuesday, the Raiders successively lost to Bartlett and then beat Wheaton Warrenville South before drubbing Elgin 60-5 Thursday night.

Glenbard South jumped out to a 12-0 lead against Elgin and never looked back to improve to 5-3 overall and 3-2 in the Upstate Eight Conference.

Senior forward Akayhla Dixon led all scorers with 15 points, while senior guard Ava Selvaggi added 12. All nine players who saw the court for the Raiders scored.

"This is a hard stretch on us, three games in three nights," said Glenbard South coach Morgan Eufrasio. "We're still adjusting. We're looking for more kids to score and shoot. I think we have a lot of potential, and we've got a lot of work to do."

Selvaggi and senior guard Rocky LaPonte each had a 3-pointer and a layup in the game-opening spurt, with Selvaggi canning a layup at the first-quarter buzzer to give the Raiders a 14-4 lead. They rolled from there.

Three games in three nights is tough for any team. How did the Raiders do it?

"It's a lot on the body, but we are able to control our end of the court, and offensively, we slow it down, so it's helping us a lot," Selvaggi said.



Glenbard South player Ava Selvaggi battles Elgin's Jasmine Mann for the score in the second half of the girls varsity basketball game at Glenbard South High School on Thursday.

Added Dixon: "It's preparation, to get to where we want to be, because playing teams like tonight, we get to go over things we need to go over to play better teams."

We're roughly a month into the 2019-20 campaign. How does Selvaggi feel about where things stand right now for her team?

"We're starting to come together and it's showing lately," she said. "Playing teams like (Elgin) is a really good step for us and it shows what our potential is."

Perhaps obviously, it was a rough night for the Maroons (2-5, 0-4), who were missing three starters. But it was a good time for coach Nick Bumbales to take stock in his squad as we head into the month point of the season.

"They are improving in a lot of different facets of the game, but it's just not showing on the scoreboard," he said. "We just tell them to get a little bit better every night and if we continue to do that, we'll come to another win. We've got a couple of wins under our belt, and once we get a couple of our starters back, we'll be in better shape."

Four Fox Valley locals named to IBCA Hall of Fame

By: Jerry Fitzpatrick



Elgin High School grads Marcus Smallwood (left, pictured at NIU) and Marcus Howard have been named to the IBCA Hall of Fame.



Daily Herald file photo

Three local players and a familiar voice gain induction to the Illinois Basketball Coaches Association Hall of Fame next spring.

The Elgin duo of Marcus Smallwood and Marcus Howard, Kaneland player Dan Witt and Dundee-Crown public address announcer Chuck Feldmann will be inducted at a May 2 ceremony at Illinois State University, the IBCA announced recently.

Howard and Smallwood started as sophomores on Elgin's 1997-98 Elite 8 team. Their Maroons defeated Naperville North 69-58 to clinch a Class AA state berth before losing to Whitney Young in a quarterfinal.

Along with 2011 IBCA Hall of Fame inductee Sean Harrington, Smallwood and Howard helped the 1997-98 Maroons win 31 games, still a school record.

"They were inseparable for our program so I'm glad they are going in together," said former Elgin coach Jim Harrington, himself an IBCA hall of famer. "Not only were they both outstanding basketball players, but they were team guys who played both ends of the floor."

Smallwood was named Upstate Eight Conference Player of the Year as a senior after he averaged 19 points, 11.2 rebounds and 3.1 blocks per game. He finished as Elgin's all-time leading shot blocker (382). His 1,201 career points ranked seventh in program history at the time.

Smallwood went on to play on scholarship at Northern Illinois. He was named all-Mid American Conference as a junior and honorable mention as a senior. He finished as NIU's 11th all-time scorer with 1,276 points.

Smallwood played professionally in Europe for 10 years, eight in Germany. He is a retired business developer living in Texas.

"It's pretty cool," Smallwood said of the honor. "I had a lot of good times playing at Elgin with my teammates and coach Harrington. To have a good memory of that solidified like this is really awesome."

Howard was named all-UEC as a senior, when he averaged 17.1 points, 5 rebounds and 3.8 assists and led the league in 3-point field goals made.

Howard played on full scholarship at Indiana State University. He started as a freshman on the 2001 team that upset Oklahoma in the first round of the NCAA Tournament. He finished his ISU career eighth all time in 3-point field goals and 10th in steals.

"It's a great feeling," Howard said of the honor. "Obviously, you don't play the game to get in the hall of fame or what not, but when you are recognized for your accomplishments and what you did in high school and college, it is pretty special. I'm definitely excited and honored. The cool thing is I'm going in with a really good friend of mine."

His old teammate feels the same way.

"He's someone I'm proud to go in with. He's still a good friend to this day," Smallwood said of Howard. "You always have to have a complement and he was always that other part."

Old School: Witt is a 1969 Kaneland graduate who played four years at Illinois State.

According to his Kaneland Hall of Fame biography, Witt, 68, played three varsity seasons for the Knights. The deadeye shooter scored 40 points in his second varsity game as a 5-foot-5 sophomore.

A two-time unanimous all-Little Seven Conference pick, he was named all-state as a senior. Witt signed the first full NCAA scholarship at Illinois State and started all four years alongside Doug Collins, averaging 11 points.

"There are hundreds of great high school and college players that play in the state of Illinois every year, so it's really an honor and a blessing to be recognized and inducted into the Illinois High School Hall of Fame," Witt said Thursday. "Doug Collins was one of the first inducted to the IBCA Hall of Fame so it's nice to join Doug again in this type of basketball arena."

The accidental announcer: Chuck Feldmann began his public address career as a fill-in.

One night in 1985, the scheduled announcer for the Dundee-Crown basketball game was unable to make it.

Al Zinke, D-C's longtime wrestling coach, pressed Feldmann to handle the duty. It turned out to be a job the 1980 Jacobs graduate truly enjoyed.

"After doing it that night I thought, 'I can do this,'" Feldmann said. "And I looked forward to doing it again."

Feldmann threw himself into the gig. He picked up pointers by attending Chicago Bulls games and games at DePaul, Northwestern, Chicago State and Loyola. He listened to what the announcers said and how they said it "because I wanted to do it right," he said.

Feldmann likes to have fun. After identifying the officials, he inserts fictitious hometowns for them like Walla Walla, Wash. or whatever far-flung town he recently discovered on the atlas. The tradition started years ago when Feldmann joked that referees Dave and Mike Zierk were on work release from the Joliet Correctional Center. "It took on a life of its own after that," he said with a laugh.

Feldmann's most impressive achievement? Three times he announced all 32 games of the Dundee-Crown girls basketball holiday tournament -- eight games a day for four straight days. The IBCA will induct him as a "friend of basketball" on May 2.

"It's overwhelming that people thought enough to follow through and make it happen," Feldmann said of the honor. "I couldn't be prouder and I'm really humbled by the whole thing."