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---Elgin Courier-News---

Elgin's July Fourth parade to feature nautical theme

By GLORIA CASAS

Elgin's Fourth of July parade grand marshals will fit right in with this year's Ride the Wave nautical theme when the event kicks off Wednesday.

This year's grand marshals are active and retired United States Navy servicemen and servicewomen, parade committee volunteer Jason Pawlowski said. He has helped organize the parade since 2010.

While some of the planning is second nature, "it is always exciting and fun, but different every year," Pawlowski said. "There are challenges to sift through. The parade has always been popular in Elgin, and it is fun to put together."

On average between 10,000 and 15,000 people attend the parade, Pawlowski said. The Elgin community really gets behind the parade, he said. There are anywhere from 700 to 800 parade units including the Jesse White Tumbling Team, the Medinah Motor Corps., and **School District U46 marching bands**. A relatively new entry is the Pack Drumline, which has performed throughout the Chicago area.

A day full of patriotic events start at 9 a.m. with the National Anthem performed at the intersection of Slade and Douglas Avenues by the American Legion Post 57's Tricia Derringer. The parade then continues south on Douglas Avenue through the heart of the city's downtown.

A viewing area with bleachers will be set up south of Kimball Street where local actress Valerie Kessler will perform the National Anthem, and Pawlowski will provide color commentary. Bleacher seating is first come, first served, but Pawlowski said there's not a bad seat along the route.

The parade ends at Highland Avenue around noon, according to the city's website.

Parking restrictions along the route begin at 6 a.m., and streets surrounding the route will be closed at various points during the parade, the city's website said. Grove Avenue and Brook Street will be closed except to local traffic for parade staging, Pawlowski said.

Presence Saint Joseph Hospital in Elgin sponsors the Fourth of July parade. The theme ties in with Gail Borden Public Library's Extreme Deep Mission to the Abyss and Our Fox River exhibit and its summer reading program, Dive into Reading, Pawlowski said.

After the parade, families are invited to the 5th annual Americana Jubilee at Side Street Studio Arts, 15 Ziegler Court, from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.

The old-fashioned Fourth of July event features a bake-off, pie-eating contest, visual art exhibit, family entertainment, and music. Side Street Studio Arts, Blue Box Café, Elgin Fringe Festival and the city of Elgin are sponsors.

Elgin's Fourth of July celebrations end with fireworks at Festival Park immediately following a Grand Victoria Casino concert where Kool & the Gang and the Commodores are scheduled to perform.

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SPORTS

Drake's stake: Montgomery looks to be a senior leader at point guard for South Elgin boys basketball

By PAUL JOHNSON

South Elgin point guard Drake Montgomery doesn't see too much of a difference.

As a junior, Montgomery averaged 15.1 points last season, ranking second on the team. As a senior, he will be the leader on and off the court this season for a Storm team with high expectations.

And he gets it.

"Being a point guard, the responsibility comes with it," Montgomery said. "I definitely feel like I have more responsibility. I'm looking forward to controlling the game. I feel like I can lead them in the right direction."

South Elgin coach Brett Johnson knows he has a luxury welcoming back a point guard with experience.

Montgomery, an all-conference selection, averaged 4.9 rebounds and added 137 assists and 82 steals in his 27 games last season. He also shot 80 percent from the free-throw line, 53.7 percent from the field and 37.3 percent from 3-point range.

“He just needs to be a leader and take control,” Johnson said of Montgomery. “He’s got the ball in his hands. He’s so good in the transition game. We have to take advantage of his ability to move and use his body to find ways to score and kick out.

“Those are the things that are going to get him looks to play at the next level, and that’s what he wants to do.”

Montgomery will have help with the return of Vince Miskiewicz, South Elgin’s leading scorer last season. The energetic 6-foot-7 forward averaged 16.5 points.

“Vince is fun to play with,” Montgomery said. “It takes a lot off of my shoulders. It gets my assists up. He’s crazy about the game. He loves it.”



South Elgin coach Brett Johnson directs his team in the Hoop Mountain Summer Shootout at Batavia on Friday, June 15, 2018. (Brian O'Mahoney / The Beacon-News)

Miskiewicz’s ability around the rim produced an average of 12.3 rebounds, and he also shoot 67.3 percent from the floor. He made 80.1 percent of his free throws, adding another level to his game.

“He’s already taken leaps and bounds forward,” Johnson said of Miskiewicz. “He’s being a senior leader alongside Jace Warrick and Drake Montgomery. They’re leading the team through what they do, their communication.

“I have a good group of kids right now. I think we can only get better. We show it in spurts in games.”

There is plenty of returning firepower for the Storm, but they are using the summer to get used to their new supporting cast.

“It’s going to be a good group,” Montgomery said. “With the players we have around me and Vince, I think we can do some really good things.

“It’s a really cool group. I have expectations of winning the conference. We feel like we can beat anybody.”

The other thing on Montgomery’s mind is a shot at playing in college. Between his work with South Elgin and his travel team, Montgomery is enjoying that process as well.

“It’s been my goal since I was like 10,” he said of playing in college. “It’s really fun knowing that it’s close and I just have to work my butt off.”