

Press Clippings 11/30/2018

---The Courier-News---11/30/2018

Acorns may be saved thanks to Giving Tuesday

Annual day of charity benefits School District U46, other Elgin groups

By: Rafael Guerrero



- People fish from a pier at Hawthorn Hill Nature Center in Elgin, which offers a nature program for fourth- and fifth-grade students at nearby Hillcrest Elementary School.)

Thanks to the Mighty Acorns program, fourth-and-fifth-grade students from Hillcrest Elementary School get to visit nearby Hawthorne Hill Nature Center in Elgin to interact with nature on a first-hand basis. Instructors from the center also come to their classrooms to present ecology lessons.

“When you look at how people learn, the reality is they learn more by doing,” said Erik Anderson, a Hillcrest supporter and president of the local group The Healthy Non-Profit. “Being able to match classroom education with (the outdoors) is a marriage made in heaven.”

But the fate of the program, which costs \$6,830, was in jeopardy after this school year because of finances, Principal Teresa Winters said.

That was, until Giving Tuesday.

School District U46 and other Elgin groups pushed for donations as part of the annual day of charitable giving, which comes in the wake of Black Friday, Small Business

Saturday and Cyber Monday. It was one of several Elgin-area fundraising campaigns targeted on Giving Tuesday.

“We want to continue this experience for our students,” Winters said. “It is so near and dear in our hearts. Partnering with Mighty Acorns, it can bring new exposure to students at no cost.”

Winters said they collected almost \$2,300 on Tuesday via online and mailed donations. It’s expected the campaign will have raised between \$5,500 and \$6,000 once other donations arrive by mail and local organizations make donations, Anderson said.

Another Hillcrest administrator is putting together an application for a mini-grant that will be submitted to the School District U46 Educational Foundation, Winters said. The nonprofit foundation raises money and seeks private donations to help fund educational programs, scholarships and mini-grants to help teachers and students.

The educational foundation helped promote the Hillcrest campaign via its social media pages. The City of Elgin’s Sustainability Commission also promoted the school’s fundraising efforts via social media, Anderson said.

“This program is too important to let it dry up,” he said.

Other Elgin-area schools and school-related organizations also benefited from Giving Tuesday donations. The Elgin Math and Science Academy, the city’s first charter school, received \$2,905, and the Boys and Girls Club of Elgin collected \$35,900, according to the #ILGive leaderboard.

The Elgin Partnership for Early Learning, a group working with U46 to improve early childhood education offerings in the area, raised \$3,725 and the Alignment Collaborative for Education, the group assisting U46 in pursuing and adopting career pathways programs in the secondary schools, raised more than \$10,000 for its organization, Executive Director Nancy Coleman said.

---The Daily Herald---11/30/2018

Celebrating swifts, from Portland to Elgin

By: Jeff Reiter

Some say the most memorable birds are rarely the ones you expect to see. I agree, but there are exceptions. Let me tell you about one.

In September, I traveled to Portland, Oregon, for a nephew's wedding. Weeks before the trip -- OK, months -- I began studying up on the birds I might be able to see. It's what birders do.

I was especially interested in lifers -- birds I'd never seen before. A prime candidate, I quickly learned, was Vaux's swift. It's the western version of our chimney swift, and common in the skies over cities and towns. I'd be in Portland at the perfect time, too, when large numbers of Vaux's swifts gather before starting their fall migration. This was a bird I could expect to see.

The Audubon Society of Portland website put me in a fever when I found the page about Chapman Elementary School, site of a nightly Swift Watch throughout September. Since 1982, Vaux's swifts have used the school's old furnace chimney as a communal overnight roost. On some evenings, 40,000 birds pour into the stack, creating a spectacle.

I longed to see it. Wedding activities, however, were planned for all three nights of our stay in Portland. Sneaking away to Chapman, even for an hour, was not happening.

What's a birdman to do? Look up, of course. I see chimney swifts in broad daylight quite often around DuPage County. In Portland, I figured it would be the same with Vaux's swifts. Except it wasn't.

I birded in the city a bit on Friday morning, our first full day, in the green space along the Willamette River. Not seeing any swifts, I impulsively rented a bright orange bike -- Portland's version of Chicago's Divvy -- and looked up Chapman School on Google Maps. If I could find the school, surely there would be a few swifts cruising around its legendary chimney.

Getting to the school was a workout -- nearly three miles from city center, and mostly uphill. It was noon, sunny and unseasonably warm. A western scrub jay welcomed me, but no swifts.

Young voices drifted out the classroom windows as I surveyed the grounds, hoping not to be reported as a suspicious schoolyard character. The kids inside knew all about the birds, no doubt about that. The school nickname is the Swifts, and the student newspaper is the Swift Current.

A fence banner promoted the upcoming Chapman Swift Family Fun Run. On the grassy hill where the swift watchers gather, a three-sided kiosk dispensed information about Vaux's swift and the importance of Chapman School, one of the largest known roosting sites for the species.

I soon gave up the vigil, glad for having made the effort but disappointed by the lack of swifts. I coasted back to the downtown Marriott.

At the wedding Saturday night, it occurred to me that hope wasn't lost. All those swifts needed to exit the chimney at some point. What if I returned to Chapman School on Sunday morning?

And that's what I did, waking early and pedaling back up the hill in the dark. Calm silence greeted my arrival at the school as the skies began to brighten. Maybe I was too late.

At 6:20 I spotted a single swift fluttering near the top of the smokestack. My Vaux's lifer! Seven minutes later, the chimney erupted with departing birds, chittering loudly and ready for another day of feeding on the wing. In 10 minutes every bird was out.

I was the only apparent witness at Chapman, and I wondered how many people were on the hill 12 hours earlier, watching the swifts tuck in for the night. Judging by the full trash cans, I missed quite a party.

Six days later I got another chance. This time the party was in Elgin, outside Abbott Middle School, site of Kane County Audubon's fourth annual Chimney Swift Sit. The scene at Abbott was just how I imagined the one at Chapman, but on a smaller scale.

We were watching chimney swifts, not Vaux's, but you'd never know the difference. Just after 7 p.m. the volume of swifts grew rapidly as they swirled clockwise around the school's giant stack. About 15 minutes passed before a few birds started to drop in, first a trickle and then a steady flow. Like a vacuum, the chimney seemed to pull in the swifts until the air was clear and quiet.

About 2,000 swifts entered the Abbott School chimney. We know this because Marion Miller counted them. Marion maintains the Facebook page "Chimney Swifts Over the Fox Valley," and with KCA works on chimney swift conservation. The species is declining, primarily due to habitat loss. Large, uncapped chimneys are increasingly scarce.

Residents of the Abbott School neighborhood were curious. Who were these people with binoculars and folding chairs watching a school on a Saturday night? Marion and others happily explained, even passing out a KCA brochure about chimney swifts and how to help them. The accidental onlookers went to bed wise to an amazing slice of nature just outside their front doors. Maybe some will pull up a chair next year.

The swifts of Portland and Elgin greatly enriched my 2018 birding year. Vaux's swift and chimney swift -- two crowd-pleasing aerialists, 2,000 miles apart, performing nights (and mornings!) in September for those who care to watch.

- Jeff Reiter's column appears monthly in the Daily Herald. You can reach him via his blog, Words on Birds.



- Roughly 2,000 chimney swifts swirl into Abbott Middle School's smokestack in Elgin during Kane County Audubon's evening watch event in September.



- Swifts are aerial specialists, feeding entirely on flying insects.



- The chimney at Chapman Elementary School in Portland, Oregon, is a legendary West Coast roost for migrating Vaux's swifts.



- A display outside Chapman School tells the story for swift watchers who gather every evening in September.

SPORTS SECTION

---Daily Herald---11/30/2018

Balanced South Elgin shoots past Larkin

By: John Lemon



- Larkin's Marcus Green, left, defends as South Elgin's Vincent Miskiewicz hauls in a rebound during varsity boys basketball in Elgin on Thursday night.



- Larkin's Marcus Green takes a shot as South Elgin's Drew Cwik defends during varsity boys basketball in Elgin on Thursday night.
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- Larkin's Marcus Green makes a three-point basket against South Elgin during varsity boys basketball in Elgin on Thursday night.
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- Larkin's Victor Perez Jr. works past South Elgin's Lane McVicar during varsity boys basketball in Elgin on Thursday night.
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- Larkin's Jashon Johnson-Neals, right, guards as South Elgin's Vincent Miskiewicz works under the hoop during varsity boys basketball in Elgin on Thursday night.
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- Larkin's Trace Boley, center, grabs a rebound against South Elgin during varsity boys basketball in Elgin on Thursday night.
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- Larkin's Jashon Johnson-Neals, front, and South Elgin's Kendis Wiley jostle for a rebound during varsity boys basketball in Elgin on Thursday night.
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- South Elgin's Drake Montgomery glides through traffic en route to the hoop during varsity boys basketball in Elgin on Thursday night.
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- South Elgin's Vincent Miskiewicz takes an outside shot during varsity boys basketball in Elgin on Thursday night.
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- Larkin's Jashon Johnson-Neals, left, and South Elgin's Vincent Miskiewicz tip off to begin the game in varsity boys basketball in Elgin on Thursday night.

The one-two punch of senior point guard Drake Montgomery and 6-foot-7 senior Vince Miskiewicz are well known to all South Elgin opponents.

The Storm showed they have plenty more punch Thursday night in their Upstate Eight Conference opener at Larkin.

Miskiewicz started the game with a tip-dunk on his way to 19 points and 16 rebounds. Montgomery finished with 15 points, 5 rebounds and 4 steals.

But they had help. Senior Jace Warrick and freshman Drew Cwik both made four 3-pointers, scoring 17 and 13 points, respectively. With four starters in double figures, the Storm pulled away in the second quarter and led comfortably throughout the second half of a 69-58 victory.

"Every night we have someone else who can step up," Warrick said. "We're that kind of team. We focus on driving, kicking out to the shooters and I think that's what happened tonight. It just clicked for us tonight."

Larkin (1-4, 0-1) got off to a good start. Before the game the Royals welcomed back players from last year's team that finished fourth in the Class 4A state tournament, then they unveiled a banner hanging on the south wall.

Marcus Green made two early 3-pointers and a pair of free throws as the Royals took a 16-10 lead after the first quarter.

Jashon Johnson-Neals drove for a basket early in the second quarter for an 18-11 lead before the Storm answered with a 22-4 run to close the first half and lead 33-22 at halftime. Montgomery penetrated for consecutive baskets and a 19-18 lead, and South Elgin (4-1, 1-0) never trailed again.

Warrick scored 13 of his points in the first half including a corner 3 on an assist from Miskiewicz just before the buzzer.

"It was nice to see somebody else stop up, see some younger players step up and be leaders and make things happen," South Elgin coach Brett Johnson said. "It was the team chemistry on the court. They distributed the ball and got enough open looks."

Johnson-Neals scored three straight baskets in the third quarter for the Royals who got as close as 38-31. Another South Elgin freshman, Lane Mcvicar, knocked down a 3 for a 10-point lead, which the Storm extended to as much as 65-44 midway through the fourth quarter on Montgomery's steal and layup.

Green and Johnson-Neals led Larkin with 15 and 14 points, respectively.

"We really focused on locking down (Victor) Perez and (Pierre) Black," Warrick said. "We know they are two senior leaders and had good years last year so we tried to key on them and deny the ball when we could and make other guys beat us."

The Storm held those two seniors to a combined 16 points. Freshman Damari Wheeler-Thomas scored 6 points in the fourth quarter to help Larkin close the game on a 14-4 run.

South Elgin shot 50 percent from 3-point range in the game, sinking 11 of 22. It was a different story for Larkin who made just 9 of 34.

"We missed some but we have to get some better ones," Larkin coach Deryl Carter said. "It's part of the learning process. An open 3 isn't always a good shot. Sometimes circumstances, time, score, the way you got open. That's a lot to teach guys but as long as they are teachable they will learn."

It still was a memorable night for Carter getting to see the 2018 state banner unveiled.

"People comment to me all the time, when are you going to get over that? You don't get over that," Carter said. "That's why it's called history. We've won conference championships, we've won regionals but something like that deserves to stay on there. We'll remember it forever for sure."

Cole reaches 1,000 in Streamwood's win

By: Allen Oshinski

Streamwood went ahead early and stayed there Thursday. The Sabres downed visiting Glenbard East, 70-60, in both teams' Upstate Eight opener.

Late in the game, Streamwood senior Keenon Cole made 2 free throws to go over the 1,000 point mark for his career.

"When I first came into high school, knowing about 1,000 points, I thought it would be pretty hard," Cole said. "I just wanted to be next. I've been a part of this system since I was a kid. It's had a big impact on my basketball career. That means a lot to me, working hard, just playing varsity for 2 years and these last 5 games. It's just been a great accomplishment for me."

Cole scored 10 of his 24 points in the fourth quarter as Streamwood (2-3, 1-0) held off repeated charges by the Rams. He added 10 rebounds, 4 assists, and 2 blocks.

Nikola Sinik also scored 24 points, hitting 8 of 11 from 3-point range. He grabbed 8 rebounds.

Kozyae Wright added 9 points and Zach Marquez 8 for the Sabres.

Streamwood never trailed and the game was tied for only the first 11 seconds before Sinik nailed his first 3-pointer. But the Sabres never led by more than the final 10-point margin. Every time the Sabres seemed on the verge of blowing the game open, the Rams came back.

Streamwood led 57-50 after Sinik's final 3-pointer of the night, but back-to-back baskets by Daron Hall got Glenbard within 57-53.

An odd 3-point play gave Streamwood some breathing room. Zach Marquez made a layup and got fouled, but cramped up and had to leave the game. Jeremy Lunz came in and made the free throw to make it 60-54, but Hall answered with a 3 at the other end.

"We just made enough plays," said Streamwood coach Kent Payne. "We had guys making shots. Nikola (Sinik) started out real hot and they did a real good job guarding Keenon initially. We said at halftime that they weren't going to let him beat them. We put him in a different position because every time he brought the ball up the floor they doubled him. So we tried to move him around a little bit and he did a great job."

Alijah Nelson led Glenbard East with 15 points. Hall scored 11 of his 13 in the fourth quarter to help keep it close. Deon Cook had 9 points off the bench, all in the first half, for Glenbard East (1-4, 0-1).

But the combination of Sinik outside and Cole inside forced the Rams to make some tough choices about who to guard.

"He (Sinik) did a great job shooting the basketball tonight," said Glenbard coach Scott Miller. "You've got to pick your poison a little bit."