

Press Clippings 2/27/2018

---Courier News--- 2/27/18

Elgin vigil promotes gun control measures

BY JANELLE WALKER

75-year-old Elgin resident, Earl Silbar said he owns guns, but believes changes need to be made to prevent acts such as the Stoneman Douglas High School shooting.

That's why Silbar was one of about 70 people who participated in an Elgin vigil Sunday to honor the 17 people killed in the Florida school shooting.

"I own guns for protection, but this is different," he said of the mass shootings which have occurred across the country. "We have had enough and are saying 'never again,'" Silbar said.

The vigil was organized by Cheryl Brumbaugh-Cayford of Elgin in response to the Feb. 14 shooting in Parkland, Fla.. She handed out slips of paper with the names and ages of all of those who died to everyone who came out to the corner of McLean Boulevard and College Green Drive.

The vigil also sought to gain attention for gun control, Brumbaugh-Cayford said. Some attending brought their own signs to carry, and she made 10 herself to hand out. She gave her last sign to a young man who came shortly after the 12:30 p.m. start time.

"We have a variety of people here from different groups," she said.

She has been working with a group, organized last year, called Fox Valley Voices for Democracy, but there were participants on Sunday from Fox Valley Peace and Justice, as well as another group called Indivisible, which organized after the 2016 elections, Brumbaugh-Cayford said.

The corner for the event was picked for its proximity to the Fox Valley Shooting Range, which is set to open this year.

Brumbaugh-Cayford noted that, although calls for more control on guns and gun sales come with each mass shooting, this time seems different.

Some students, including those who were at the school when the shooting occurred, have become vocal advocates for gun control since the shooting.

"We are hearing that from the student body," Brumbaugh-Cayford said, while noting that Florida Gov. Rick Scott has called for increasing the age one can purchase guns to 21.

"I think kids today know how to use their voices," to lobby for changes to gun laws, she said.

Natalie Pfister, age 10 of Elgin, asked her grandparents if she could join them at the vigil.

A student in **Elgin School District U46**, Pfister said her school does "lock down drills" in case of potential shootings.

"Sometimes it is scary, because they call us on the loudspeaker," for those drills, Pfister said.

She finds that scary because if there was a shooter in her school, that person would hear the same announcements as she and her classmates would, Pfister said.

She is aware of the shootings in U.S. schools because of the news, the student said.

"We should be talking about different stuff. This shouldn't be happening," she said.

Brumbaugh-Cayford said she began to get involved with calls for gun legislation reform after the 1999 Columbine, Colo., shooting.

She was ministering in Fort Collins, Colo., at the time. While she had no personal connection to the school, she knew other ministers working directly with families there.

"We are standing here for any school, anywhere," where shootings have occurred, she said.

The "vast majority" of motorists passing the protest and vigil were supportive, giving those gathered on the corner either a thumbs up or honking in support, Brumbaugh-Cayford said.

A few motorists yelled and cursed at the protesters, and one man made comments supporting Second Amendment gun rights — but also said he supported the protester's First Amendment rights of free speech, she said.

Silbar, the gun owner, said he thought arguments against gun regulation "is playing on fears."

But he was not sure what actions need to be taken to protect schools and public places from mass shootings.

Banning "bump stocks" that allow for more bullets fired per trigger pull, and increasing the minimum age to purchase guns were a start, however, Silbar said.

"People are energized now to speak out," for controls, he said.

Janelle Walker is a freelance reporter for the Courier-News.

---Daily Herald--- 2/27/18

U-46 trustees squabble over social media policy

BY MADHU KRISHNAMURTHY

Elgin Area School District U-46 school board members squabbled Monday night about a proposed social media policy that one board member views as an attempt to muzzle her comments.

School board member Jeanette Ward has filed a complaint with the Attorney General's office accusing the school board of violating the state's Open Meetings Act during a Feb. 3 self-evaluation by discussing how to prevent her from posting on social media, board President Donna Smith said Monday night.

Smith said outside legal counsel is preparing a response to Ward's complaint as required by the Public Access office of the Attorney General.

"We will send a copy of the audio of the meeting with the response," Smith said.

Board members who attended the Feb. 3 self-evaluation agreed on rules of board governance, including purpose and protocols, trustees' roles and responsibilities, and a code of conduct. Among the agreed-upon codes was that "board members will carefully consider what they post on social media before they post it, avoiding statements that might be volatile."

Ward declined to attend that meeting, but on Monday questioned "what constitutes volatile" for social media posts.

Smith said board members should be careful about what they post on social media no matter what.

"All boards have policies," she said. "They are aspirations agreed upon on how board members want to conduct themselves. There is no other way to hold board members accountable. The only consequence that you can have on this is in a voting booth."

After debate over whether "volatile" should be taken out, officials decided to leave the set of agreements as is for a vote at the next meeting.

Board member Traci O'Neal Ellis criticized Ward for boycotting the Feb. 3 self-evaluation saying she ought to have raised concerns there.

"You didn't respect this board enough to show up and debate with us," Ellis said.

Ward said the reason she did not attend the meeting was because "I have not been shown respect during those board self-evaluations."

"I believe there are things covered in those board self -valuations that are not appropriate to be discussed in closed session," she added.

Ward, who was elected in May 2015, previously accused the board of violating the Open Meetings Act during at a Jan. 25, 2014, closed meeting.

That meeting also was a board self-evaluation with the help of an Illinois Association of School Boards official, and included an evaluation of then-Superintendent Jose Torres, who resigned in August 2014 to head the Illinois Mathematics and Science Academy in Aurora.

After reviewing the audio recording, Ward maintained "inappropriate discussions took place."

Ellis and Ward also have squabbled before on each other's controversial social media posts.

"This doesn't restrict anybody from doing anything at all," Ellis said. "We ought to be holding ourselves to a higher standard."

Ellis and board member Veronica Noland also criticized Ward for calling out CEO Tony Sanders on social media rather than in private.

Ward defended her actions, saying if Sanders makes comments in public, then she has the right to scrutinize him publicly.

"My employer are the people who elected me and I'm going to continue doing what I have been doing," she said.

---Daily Herald--- 2/27/18

Former District 158 chief aims to tackle safety, teacher shortage, pension reform

BY MADHU KRISHNAMURTHY

safety, education funding and a teachers shortage are some of the issues John Burkey hopes to address in leading the group representing the largest K-12 school districts statewide.

Burkey, former superintendent of Huntley Community School District 158, is the executive director of the [Large Unit District Association](#).

Created in 1976 by a group of superintendents, LUDA provides networking, professional development and advocacy for 53 large unit school districts with more than 3,500 students. It hosts three yearly conferences for superintendents and administrators to collaborate and share ideas.

The group's advocacy work in Springfield has influenced legislation affecting schools, such as the state's adoption of an [evidence-based funding formula](#) and changes to [student disciplinary policies](#), said Burkey, who was District 158's superintendent 12 years.

Member districts include Barrington 220, Batavia 101, Burlington 301, Algonquin 300, **Elgin Area U-46**, Elmhurst 205, Geneva 304, District 158, Indian Prairie 204, Kaneland 302, Lake Zurich 95, Naperville 203, Round Lake Area 116, St. Charles 303, West Aurora 129 and Wheaton-Warrenville 200.

With recent school shootings stoking a national conversation about gun control, security remains a huge issue.

Burkey expects to be part of any discussion whether teachers should be armed -- an idea floated by President Donald Trump after the Feb. 14 Parkland, Florida, school shooting in which 14 students and three adults were killed.

The statewide teacher shortage and talk of shifting pension costs onto school districts also are hot topics.

Licensing laws need to be relaxed to make it easier for out-of-state teachers to get certified here, Burkey said.

"We want teachers to be prepared, but (certification) has become too cumbersome and (is) keeping people from coming to Illinois," Burkey said. "The largest export in Illinois is college freshmen. We have more and more high school kids leaving Illinois to go to college out of state. That's a terrible brain drain (and) not being able to come back here to teach, Illinois is really losing out."

State education officials this year are studying teacher shortage and retention, credentialing and diversity of the teaching force.

"We want to have the best qualified people in schools but we need to be able to find them," Burkey said.

With Illinois' financial woes, pension reform needs to happen, but shifting the burden to schools is not the solution, Burkey added.

"The pension shift is a terrible idea ... the benefits given under the pension were created by the state. School districts have no say in that. To push the pension cost onto districts does nothing but shift the problem. Districts are going to have to, in a draconian way, cut services or they are going to have to raise property taxes."

Burkey lives in Huntley and has a fifth-grader and high school freshman attending District 158 schools.

SPORTS SECTION

---Daily Herald--- 2/27/18

Elgin downs Streamwood; Larkin up next

BY SCOTT MILLER

The beat goes on at least one more game for head coach Mike Sitter and the Elgin High boys basketball team -- and a big game it will be.

Sitter, who after 11 years is leaving at the end of the season to take over as athletic director at Hampshire, will get one more shot at Elgin's arch nemesis Larkin in Tuesdays Class 4A regional semifinals at St. Charles North. The Maroons advanced after knocking off Streamwood 53-43 in the opening round on Monday.

Larkin and Elgin will meet for the third time this year. The Royals have won the last 15 meetings between the two teams.

"It will be nice to get another chance to play Larkin," Sitter said. "It's been a while since we've beat them, so we have our work cut out for us. It will be a fun atmosphere and that's what the postseason is all about. We'll need to make our shots and take care of the basketball. We can't be stagnant on offense. We have to be active to give ourselves any chance."

Elgin took care of business against the Sabres with a strong defensive effort, limiting Streamwood to just 15 of 47 (32 percent) and forcing 21 turnovers. The Maroons held the Sabres' top scoring threat, Keenon Cole, to just 5 points.

"It's nice to see young men execute a game plan," Sitter said. "The goal was to limit Cole in the post. Roy Panthier did a real nice job denying him the ball and the other guys did great with help side defense."

The Maroons took control with an 8-0 run midway through the second quarter to go up 20-14. A couple of baskets during the run came off steals, including a slam dunk by Dan Toolsie, who had a team-high 14 points.

"I'm only 5-foot-11 so I don't get too many chances to do that," Toolsie said. "But I like to do it because it always gets everybody going. The big thing for us tonight was everybody helped get this win. It wasn't just a couple guys. Everybody stepped up."

The Maroons (11-18) led by at least 5 points the rest of the way.

Daz Cooks gave the Maroons a spark off the bench with 9 points in the second half.

"Daz gave us a lot of energy," Sitter said. "And we needed it. He was able to get into the lane and create. He gave us another scoring option. He got the hot hand and we rode with him the rest of the way. He was pretty much out there the whole second half."

Streamwood (11-19) struggled to get anything going offensively in part because Cole was hobbled by an ankle injury the he suffered in the Sabres' last game.

"Keenon being hurt definitely set us back," Streamwood coach Paul Kowalyszyn said. "Throwing over the top to him wasn't an option and they did a great job of fronting him."

It's a tough loss, but I think the program took some good steps forward. It's the first time we have had double digit wins in a long time. We have a good core returning. We just have to continue to teach them a better understanding of the game."

---Daily Herald--- 2/27/18

Bartlett rolls past Glenbard North

BY ALLEN OSHINSKI

Bartlett's boys basketball team wanted to start fast in its regional opener on its home court Monday night.

After a couple of early hiccups, it was mission accomplished. The Hawks raced to a 17-5 lead after one quarter and coasted to a 71-42 victory over Glenbard North in the Class 4A Bartlett regional.

Austin Gates led 4 Hawks in double figures with 14 points.

Bartlett (15-12) built some momentum heading into Wednesday's matchup with Batavia.

"It was definitely nice to start the playoffs off hot, get up early and basically just get the team rolling for Wednesday night," Gates said. "We need a good practice tomorrow and then we need to come out the same way we came out tonight."

Both teams went scoreless for about 3 minutes, but the Hawks quickly built an 8-0 lead and never looked back. The lead ballooned to 41-15 by halftime. Despite a couple of sloppy stretches in the second half, the Hawks were never seriously threatened.

"One of the big things we really wanted to focus on was getting off to a good start on our home court," said Bartlett coach Jim Wolfsmith. "I thought the first couple of possessions at the beginning of the game were a little bit rough, but we found the inside of the lane and got some easy baskets. They played really good defense in the first quarter and built the kind of lead you want to start a game off with."

Ben Tompson added 13 points and Ben Fisher and Garrett Jurina contributed 12 apiece for Bartlett.

Led by Fisher and Jurina with 6 rebounds each, the Hawks dominated the backboards, 39-15. They also forced 20 turnovers.

It was a chance for everyone to see action at least one more time on their home court. Twelve different players scored for Bartlett.

Andrew Wolf had 3 points and 5 rebounds, and Nick Wolf chipped in 4 points off the bench.

Kris Bulseco finished with 16 points and Lee Rady added 14 for Glenbard North. Tony Wilder had 6 points and 5 rebounds, but the Panthers could never dig out of the big hole.