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Republicans call for unity heading to November election

Knox County Sheriff-elect Tom Spangler addresses the crowd at the Crowne Plaza on election night last Thursday. Photo by Ken Lay.



By Ken Lay

Area Republicans celebrated a big night at Thursday night's election return party in the Tennessee Ballroom of the Crowne Plaza Hotel.

The election brought an end to a pair of hotly contested primaries that became contentious at times. The winners, however, are looking to create unity for the party as it heads into November's General Election.

Glenn Jacobs, Tom Spangler and Justin Biggs won general elections Thursday and each called for unity

during their respective acceptance speeches. Spangler, who will be Knox County's next sheriff due to his victory over Lee Tramel in May's primary, and Biggs won the At-Large Seat 11 on county commission.

Jacobs, who had a tough race in May against Bob Thomas and Brad Anders, won in a landslide over Democrat Linda Haney and he'll succeed Tim Burchett as Knox County Mayor on September 1.

Burchett, who won the hotly-contested primary for District 2 in U.S.

Congress, will face off with Democrat and environmental activist Renee Hoyos in November's General Election.

In the other hotly-contested race, Bill Lee won the Republican governor's race, upsetting frontrunners Randy Boyd of South Knoxville and Diane Black.

Lee will run against Democrat and former Nashville Mayor Karl Dean.

"We have to put aside our differences for the good of the country."

Continue on page 3



Students, parents and interested citizens lined up to tour the newly constructed Gibbs Middle School during Eagle Fest, the grand opening of the school which was held on Friday, Aug. 3.

Eagles of all ages flock to Gibbs Middle celebration

By Pete Gawda

Since the eagle is the mascot of the new Gibbs Middle School, it was only appropriate that a real, live eagle be the featured guest at Eagle Fest, the grand opening celebration of the newly constructed school.

Mr. Lincoln, a bald eagle, was the star of the event which was held on Friday, August 3. The new school is located at 7625 Tazewell Pike, near Gibbs High School. Eagle Fest was a fun occasion because, in addition to Mr. Lincoln, there was music, food trucks, and booths representing various campus organizations and local businesses and churches, as well as tours of the new school.

Clear Springs Baptist Church gave away hot dogs served on Frisbees. The youth group from Fairview Baptist Church had a booth with games for children. There was a raffle to benefit the girls' soccer team, and folks could buy Gibbs T-shirts and other Gibbs merchandise to show their school spirit. The brand new school, which opens for classes on Wednesday, August 8 has a



Mr. Lincoln is handled by Spencer Williams of the American Eagle Foundation, a nonprofit dedicated to protecting the eagle and other birds of prey.

among other amenities, a well-appointed band practice room, art room, well furnished classrooms, a modern media center, an attractive cafeteria, and an impressive gymnasium and theater.

Everyone wanted to have their picture taken with Mr. Lincoln who was hatched at the American Eagle Foundation's Eagle Mountain Sanctuary in Pigeon Forge.

Board of Education mulls evaluations, Strategic Plan

By Anne Primm

All nine representatives attended Wednesday's Knox County Board of Education work session, as was Hannah Selph, the student representative. Chairman Pat Bouds began the meeting by reporting a few changes to the annual calendar. The Tuesday, October 16, 2018 school board meeting has been changed to Wednesday, October 17, 2018 and a November 14, 2018 meeting has been added. On September 5, 2018, there will be a special called meeting of the board where a new chairperson and vice chairperson will be elected. The new board will assume their duties on September 12, 2018. Bouds concluded her remarks by welcoming all the teachers back as August 1 was the first day of the school year for teachers.

Ninth District Representative Amber Rountree made a motion to add a discussion about prekindergarten and kindergarten evaluation after the Superintendent's Report. Her motion was seconded by Fifth District Representative Susan Horn. The motion carried.

Superintendent Bob Thomas announced the appointment of Daniel

Champion as the principal of Knoxville Adaptive Education Center. Thomas announced that August 7, 2018 will be Student Orientation Day for sixth and ninth graders at their respective schools. Lastly, Mr. Thomas welcomed, in advance, all students back to school on August 8, 2018.

The next item to be addressed was Rountree's addition to the agenda regarding Kindergarten Portfolio Assessment. Rountree identified an evaluation system used by the State of Tennessee as "flawed." This is unfortunate for our teachers, stated Rountree and requested that Superintendent Thomas write a firmly worded letter to the Tennessee Board of Education or to Candace McQueen pointing out the unfairness of the scoring procedures.

Eighth District Representative Mike McMillan expressed stronger feelings than some of the other representatives by calling the Tennessee Department of Education "incompetent."

"It's time we said it," declared McMillan. "And yes, Mr. Thomas should draft a strongly worded

Continue on page 3

Ethics Committee may change procedure rules Wednesday

By Mike Steely
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For the second time in recent years the Knox County Ethics Committee is considering changing its rules of procedure. Complaints against three commissioners and a sheriff's candidate during election season is prompting the ethics group to consider changes that would prohibit complaints filed by citizens from being considered within 60 or 90 days of a pending primary or general election.

The committee is also looking at placing a one-year time limit on filing ethics complaints against county officials and

candidates.

The major change in procedure being considered when the committee meets Wednesday at 8:30 a.m. is allowing ethics decisions to be determined by a majority (7 of 9) members present. Currently it takes a unanimous vote to end an ethics violation.

The committee may also consider requesting an interview with people making the complaint prior to a public hearing on the matter and the committee may vote to allow the chairman to require documents and other evidence prior to a hearing.

Surprises in Thursday's election

By Mike Steely
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Even the day-long rain didn't stop Knox County from voting in the August 2nd Primary and General Election. A total 81,165 voters cast ballots, close to the estimates hoped for by the Knox County Election Commission. Of those, 45,547 were early or absentee votes. Chris Davis, assistant administrator of the election commission, told The Focus Friday morning that the Democratic Party "came out in force" and offered the voters more candidates in more contests than in many years.

Probably one of the biggest surprises was the victory of Justin Lafferty for the Republican nomination in House District 89. Lafferty bested two well-known

political figures, former state Senator Stacey Campbell and former Sheriff Tim Hutchison. Lafferty pulled 30% of the party vote, Hutchison got 26% and Campbell got 21%.

Lafferty, a Farragut High School and UT graduate, goes on to face Democrat Colleen Martinez in the November election.

Libertarian Republican, insurance agent and professional wrestler Glenn Jacobs handily defeated Democrat Linda Haney to become Knox County Mayor. That victory garnered a lot of statewide and national attention. Oddly enough the larger Democrat Party turnout gave Haney 26,224 votes in the race compared to fellow Democrat Phil Braden's 21,916 votes in his

Continue on page 2

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