

Salute to the Graduates...inside section

THE PIONEER NEWS

THURSDAY, MAY 28, 2026

WWW.PIONEERNEWS.NET

VOL. 143, No. 85 \$2

Good night for incumbents; Johnson next clerk

THOMAS J. BARR
THE PIONEER NEWS

SHEPHERDSVILLE – It was a good day to be an incumbent in Bullitt County during the May primary election.

Only one incumbent, in a constable's race, tasted defeat in an election with a turnout of 19.4 percent. There were no problems reported on election day.

But it might have been an even better day for Debbie Johnson.

Johnson, in her first race, outlasted five competitors to fill the seat created as long-time Bullitt County Clerk

Kevin Mooney opted to not run for a sixth term.

But, there is at least one more action that must be conducted by the Bullitt County Board of Elections before wrapping up the primary.

In the race for Second District magistrate, only nine votes made the difference.

Current Mount Washington city councilman Bruce Gooden collected 1,069 votes, compared to 1,060 for Gary Lawson, who had previously served as magistrate.

Through the absentee and early voting, Lawson entered May 19 with a nine-vote lead. However, Gooden

defeated Lawson on the election day voting at the polls by 774-756.

Mooney said Lawson had requested a recanvass, to be conducted on Thursday, May 28, at 9 a.m. in the clerk's office. This will entail a simple checking of the results from the machines with votes cast in that election.

It was the county clerk's race that drew the most interest in the primary election.

Johnson, who is a business owner and works for MSD, touted her experience as a key to succeed Mooney. She collected 1,935 votes, or 24.6 percent of the ballots cast.

Sheri Webber, wife of former state Rep. Russell Webber, was second in her first political race. Webber collected 1,684 votes (21.4 percent).

Cody Waters, an employee of the past 10 years in the clerk's office, finished in third place with 1,592 votes (20.25 percent) in his first race.

Another current employee in the county clerk's office, Rita Parsons, was fourth with 1,093 (13.9 percent) of the vote.

Constable Mark Williams was fifth with 874 votes (11.1 percent) and former state representative Allen Maricle was sixth with 682 votes

(8.7 percent).

Mooney said that after the general election, he expects to have a smooth transition. There is also required state training that Johnson must attend.

His hope is that his staff would not be affected by the change.

In other races:

*In the race for Bullitt County Judge/Executive, Jerry Summers will return for another term in office.

He outlasted Tony Thompson and Sheila Metcalfe.

Summers collected 4,053 votes,

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Celebrating Nichols Elementary

STEPHEN THOMAS
THE PIONEER NEWS

NICHOLS — A special celebration took place at the little school located in Western Bullitt County.

Nichols Elementary will shut down at the end of the 2026 school year. Those who were involved with the school will no longer have the building, but the spirit of the Nichols Elementary community will continue.

The school hosted "A Legacy Lives On: Echoes of Our Halls," an event combining a community celebration and reception with a student learning showcase.

The celebration portion included remarks from principal Lisa Rigazio, Bullitt County Public Schools superintendent Dr. Jesse Bacon, and assistant superintendent Dr. Adrienne Usher, who once taught at Nichols.

Special community awards were distributed by students, and a time capsule was filled with a token memory from each classroom. Cindi French's first grade class donated a pencil with a string tied to it, signifying the many teeth she helped to pull from students over the years.

The celebration ended with students and teachers performing the school's official theme song: "We are the Nichols Knights, we are the Nichols Knights, respectful, responsible, safe and cooperative, we are Nichols Knights."

The showcase portion of the day began in the school library, where guests poured through old yearbooks and photographs, many items provided by the Bullitt County History Museum.

Abby Overstreet's fifth grade class created a Nichols timeline displayed in the main hallway. Students presented the timeline to guests, sharing everything from the area's first log cabin schoolhouse in 1851 to the start of virtual learning during the Covid pandemic.

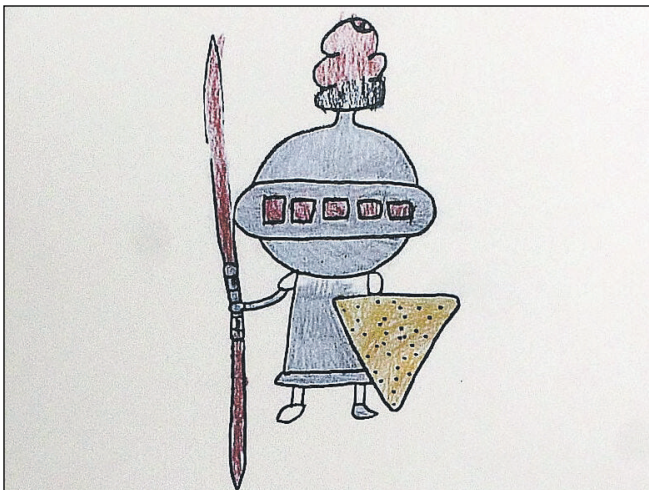
Overstreet mentioned a memory box for fifth graders, similar to the time capsule, where her students placed items to remember their last two years at Nichols.

"The students wanted to do one for just this class," she said. "I had them for both fourth and fifth grade."

Taelynn Warren donated a special memory to the box: In fourth grade a friend cut a small piece of her hair, then glued it onto an eraser and decorated with a face on one side, with her hair sticking out at the top.



Stephen Thomas



My knight is holding a Dorito and a Light Saber because I like Star Wars and Dorito's are my favorite snack.
~Harley H. (1st grade)

Stephen Thomas



Stephen Thomas

An emotional Cindi French embraces fellow teacher Amy Ferrell during a community celebration ceremony at Nichols Elementary.

"I'm pretty sure it's a head band," she laughed as she showed the eraser.

Austin White said meeting his friends and making new friends was his favorite memory from attending Nichols.

"It's a fun school to go to,"

Austin said. "I've known Mrs. Overstreet for almost five years, and Mrs. (former Nichols teacher Elizabeth) McBroom. They taught me all the way through."

Ximena Barajas and Sophia Rutledge both remembered the time they came to school

dressed as aliens.

"We are really close at school," Sophia said. "I remember once when we were both laughing and then we both spit up the milk we were drinking at the same time."

Skyler Gordon is also in the fifth grade class. She has a brother, Cayden, in first grade and a sister, Delaney, in kindergarten. Skyler was happy to have the experience of attending Nichols but was sad for her siblings.

"Everybody at home feels upset because I grew up here," she said. "I'm upset that they won't get to have the same memories."

Taelynn also has a first grade brother, Charles, but had more reasons to be sad about the closing.

"Almost half my family, on my Mom's side, went to this school," she said. "We never thought it would shut down. Charles has special needs, so it will be trickier for him."

Like her students, Overstreet has been with Nichols for five years, including two with the graduating fifth graders. She admitted that the class, and the school, would remain special to her.

"They mean everything," she said. "I've been so blessed to teach these kids and to develop these relationships."

The kindergarten class spoke with their families and mentors, creating written and illustrated pages to show Nichols' legacy which they displayed to visitors.

The youngest students still shared their own memories as well. Colton P'Pool loved the school's special area and gymnasium. Zac Huff enjoyed learning to read with the help of sight words. Delaney Gordon enjoyed seeing her teacher, Lauren Thornsberry, each day.

A Mount Washington resident, Thornsberry is wrapping up her third year at Nichols. She will next teach closer to home at Old Mill Elementary, with principal Brittany Joiner, a former Nichols teacher.

"I've been here three years... three wonderful years," said Thornsberry. "I drive 45 minutes each way, and it is worth every minute of that time. It's so wonderful to work in a place that feels like home."

Mrs. French's first graders, with assistance from Art/Music instructor Elizabeth Yates, created images of the school's knight mascot holding items that represented themselves and their school

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Candidates flood office prior to June 2 filing deadline

THOMAS J. BARR
THE PIONEER NEWS

SHEPHERDSVILLE – Candidates for the November general election have flooded the offices of the Bullitt County Clerk over the past week.

With a deadline of Tuesday, June 2, for the non-partisan races looming, things have heated up quickly.

In the city of Mount Washington, a pair of current councilmembers have filed for the office of mayor.

Greg Gentry and Layne Abell have filed for the office. Incumbent Stuart Owen had indicated that he would not be seeking a second term.

The cities of Fox Chase and Pioneer Village have seen a number of candidates file for mayor.

In Pioneer Village, with Gary Hatcher not running after 30 years of service, councilmember Peggy Druin has filed for the mayor's position. Also filing is former councilmember and previous candidate for mayor, Darlene Riedling Herps.

And the first to file is

newcomer Danny Allen.

In the city of Fox Chase, incumbent Owen Taylor is once again being challenged by councilman David Selby.

The primary determined that incumbent Larry Dangerfield and former councilmember Jennie Fleming would be on the ballot for the mayor's seat in Lebanon Junction.

As of Friday, several mayor positions have only a single candidate.

In Shepherdsville, Jose Cubero is still unopposed as he seeks a second term.

Hillview city clerk Karen Richard is the lone candidate to file to succeed the retiring Jim Eadens.

In Hebron Estates, Jerry Clark is the lone candidate as he seeks re-election.

And in Hunters Hollow, former mayor and current councilmember Rick Israel has filed to return to the city's top office. Incumbent Shawn MacInyre has not yet filed for a second term.

The number of candidates running to town boards has

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ALL PHOTOS by THOMAS J. BARR

Memorial Day 2026

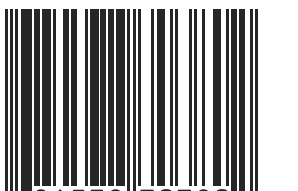
The Bullitt County VFW Post 5710 and its Auxiliary hosted the annual Memorial Day observance Monday morning on the courthouse lawn. State Rep. Peyton Griffiee was the guest speaker at the observance. The Bullitt Central JROTC presented the colors.



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