

Looking Back

Missing child sparks bill proposal

Editor's note: The dates listed in Looking Back reflect the date of the article's publication. The dates do not necessarily reflect the date of a specific incident occurring. Items taken from the files of The Sun and The Leader for this Looking Back page are as they appeared in the previous edition. This includes spelling of names and locations as they were spelled when published. We may use a unique item that we find interesting. It may seem odd and incorrect now, but we print it as it was published.

DECEMBER 25, 1941 Industry will aid government homes program

Retail lumber dealers, building contractors, and other key elements of the building industry are mobilizing throughout the country to push the Government's defense housing and home modernization programs at full speed, according to information gathered by Kentucky Homes Foundation. Other objectives of this campaign are farm building and the continued construction of small homes in non-defense areas with the over-flow of metals from direct defense requirements.

"The industry is recovering from the devastating publicity blow it was given in the SPAB policy statement of October 9," declared Don Campbell, Foundation Chairman. "The essence of the statement was an already existing fact shortages of critical metals in relation to all over defense and civilian demands. As far back as June 24, Kentucky Homes Foundation had pointed out that many civilian uses of copper, aluminum, steel and other metals had to be curtailed, and had offered evidence to support the proposition that home-building should be given No. 1 preference in civilian priorities on metals.

A recent survey shows approximately 950 vacant houses for rent in the Indianapolis Metropolitan District, while an additional 5,000 to 8,000 defense workers and their families are expected to be added to the city's population in the next months. With dew the United States at war, and defense industries 'shifting into high,' the immigration of workers should be even greater. The Indianapolis building industry is organizing its forces to meet this situation, and it will not fail at this critical point of the defense program.

"Kentucky Homes Foundation has been urging the formation of local committees to aid defense by securing and publishing information on all possible local contributions to defense production. The building industry and housing situation in each community should be included in any such local survey."

Deaths: George Washington Montgomery, Dec. 21

DECEMBER 27, 1951 Essay contest winners guests Rotarians here

The main feature of the entertainment program of the Rotary Club Thursday evening, December 20, was the community service program, under the direction of Chairman Tom Anderson. The Industrial Develop-

ment Committee of the Kentucky Chamber of Commerce recently sponsored an essay contest on "What My Community Needs." In Washington County there were approximately 300 entries by school children in the different schools of the county. The local contest was sponsored by the Rotary Club, Lions Club, Haydon Coal & Oil Co., Haydon Mill & Grain Co., Simms & Montgomery and Cowden Manufacturing Co. Winners were Peggy Lou Graham, Mackville, 1st; Ruth Eleanor Scott, 2nd, and Jean Turner, Mackville, 3rd.

The successful contestants, together with their parents, were guests of the Rotary last Thursday night, and the awards were presented to them. John T. McCabe, who read the essays, gave a statement of the general content of the essays on what the respective communities needed, in the judgment of the essayists. Principal subjects touched were radio station, local improvements of streets and roads and general improvements relating to health and sanitary conditions, and educational improvements.

Deaths: Valus Matherly, Dec. 24; Hugh D. Stiles, Dec. 20

DECEMBER 28, 1961 Local market has sold 9,253,862 pounds of burley

According to an official report from the State Department of Agriculture, 9,253,862 pounds of burley sold on the Springfield Loose Leaf Market during pre-holiday sales for \$6,233,305.46, an average of \$67.36.

The report shows the Springfield Market among the highest in the state, only a few of the thirty markets showing higher averages, these being a matter of only a few cents.

Pre-Christmas sales in Kentucky totaled a tremendous 340,117,050 pounds. That was 79,301,224 pounds more than was sold before the holidays last season. The total then was 262,815,826 pounds.

Payments to growers at this time last season totaled \$171,022,683.11, or \$56,673,003.26 less than this year. And this year's average so far, according to the State Department of Agriculture, is \$66.94 a hundred pounds. That is \$1.88 above the average of \$65.06 at this time a year ago.

The volume of burley coming to market since the closing last week has gradually dwindled and post-holiday sales will be light. The government estimate shows only about 15,000,000 pounds to be sold in the state.

Births: Lydia Brown, Dec. 18;

DECEMBER 30, 1971 Gas company limits large volume sales

Demands for natural gas that exceed new supplies immediately available require that Western Kentucky Gas Company impose limitations on large volume sales in order to protect supplies for all existing customers as well as for future residential customers, the company says.

William H. Neal, President of Western Kentucky Gas, headquartered in Owensboro announced that effective January 1, 1972, the company will no longer accept the space heating and boiler requirements of new commercial customers, or permit increases in

the capacity of this type of equipment to present commercial customers. A limitation on industrial customers has previously been imposed by the company.

According to Neal, "Our first obligation must be to our existing customers, as well as to insure adequate availability of gas for continued residential growth."

This nation is not running out of natural gas. What we are facing today is an energy gap created by an expanding economy that developed a runaway demand for all forms of energy. Regulation and environmental restrictions stifled exploration and development of new gas reserves. This has resulted in a shortage of natural gas available for use right now."

Deaths: Baker Spalding, Dec. 27; John William Mobley, Dec. 25

DECEMBER 30, 1981 Court to review pot ruling

The U.S. Sixth Circuit Court of appeals will reconsider its landmark Oliver decision, a ruling that could affect federal cases involving Marion and Washington counties who are charged with manufacturing marijuana.

A majority of the 13 justices on the court earlier this month agreed to hear the case en bloc, according to a spokesman in the federal appeals court clerk's office. The rehearing will probably begin in early February.

The Oliver decision—handed down in August—upheld a federal That district court judge's ruling that prevented state police from using marijuana as evidence in a case involving a farmer from South-central Kentucky.

In 1980 state police found acres of marijuana in Marion and Washington counties. They often used helicopters to search for the weed, then landed and destroyed it.

Most of the searches in 1980 were made without warrants.

None of the cases involving 17 Marion counties and two men from Washington County have been heard in federal court, where manufacturing marijuana is a felony. Their trials have been postponed pending the outcome of the Oliver case.

State police said they searched Oliver's fields in July 1980 after receiving a tip that marijuana was growing on the farm.

Oliver's farm had no trespassing signs on it, the gates were locked and no marijuana could be seen from the road.

As the narcotics detective walked across the farm they were stopped by someone who thought they were hunters. The detectives were told to leave. They refused and continued to search the fields until marijuana was found.

Deaths: Mary Cecilia Yates, Dec. 26; Ethel Curry Sallee, Dec. 20

Births: Samuel Milton Adams III, Nov. 20

DECEMBER 31, 1991 Hearing set on bypass US 150 plans

The state Transportation Cabinet will hold a public hearing Jan. 30, 1992, in Springfield to discuss plans to rebuild US 150 and to construct a bypass around the city.

According to State Sen. Dan Kelly, of Springfield, Sen. Kelly met with of-

ficials from Washington and Marion Counties last week to discuss the rebuilding plan.

"The public hearing is being held as a legal requirement, for the state to announce the findings of the environmental impact study (on the proposed route of improved section of US 150)," Kelly said.

"But at the public hearing, all the issues will be discussed. The public can comment on the location of the bypass---whether they want it to go north or south of the city and they can comment on the construction timing of the bypass and the US 150 reconstruction projects."

There has been much discussion of both portions of the proposals regarding US 150 bypass around Springfield and the improvements of the road between Springfield and Texas.

The controversy surrounding the bypass is concerned with its route. The state has proposed four different routes that would connect Bardstown Road west of Springfield to Perryville Road (US 150) east of the city. Three of those routes run south of Springfield and one of the proposed routes is located north of the city.

Sen. Kelly said that residents will have an opportunity to express views on all the issues at the Jan. 30 public hearing. "The floor will be open for discussion of all the issues," he said. "The environmental study is the legal reason why the hearing is being held, but the state will be here to listen to whatever people want to talk about."

Sen. Kelly also said that because President Bush signed into law legislation that would pump more money into road projects across the nation, the state Transportation Cabinet has expressed concern that the bypass might be built before the reconstruction of US 150 between Springfield and Texas. Those residents point to fatal accidents along the road and have expressed a desire for the road reconstruction to take place before the building of the bypass. Sen. Kelly said that residents will have an opportunity to express views on all the issues at the Jan. 30 public hearing.

"The floor will be open for discussion of all the issues," he said

Sen. Kelly also said that because President Bush signed into law legislation that would pump more money into projects across road the nation, the state Transportation Cabinet was currently in the process of rethinking its Six Year Road Plan with a view toward expanding.

He said that he and other Washington County representatives at last week's meeting had urged the state to consider moving up the proposed renovation of the whole stretch of US 150 from Springfield to Perryville. Currently the renovation project for the whole length of road would not likely see construction this decade, although the project is under consideration.

Deaths: Edward Dan Gerton, Dec. 21

DECEMBER 26, 2001 Son of Washington County man stands for the first time in 17 years

Paralyzed from the chest down since age 15, Rod Bobblitt, 32, recently was able to stand on his feet for the first time in 17 years.

The University of Kentucky Chandler Medical

Center is involved in the rehabilitation aspect of the research program which has enabled Bobblitt to stand up, transfer to a bed and get items off a counter, tasks most people take for granted, but ones Bobblitt never thought he would be able to do again.

He underwent an eight-hour procedure in February in Cleveland during which a small electrical device was implanted into his abdomen. Electrodes from the device are attached to several muscle groups in his legs and back and can be triggered with an external device. When activated by Bobblitt, the device sends an electrical signal which stimulates the muscles stiffening them and forcing Bobblitt into a standing position.

The device makes it possible for Bobblitt to practice standing at home and he is also involved in an exercise program at the UK Medical Center to help him strengthen his leg muscles.

Reflecting upon the wreck that put him in a wheelchair, Bobblitt said he was injured in a motorcycle accident in Washington County at age 15. He suffered severe internal bruises, lost nine units of blood internally and was in intensive care for two weeks.

Bobblitt is practicing transferring from his chair to a bed and doing other activities and hopes he will be able someday to stand at a counter.

When asked about his interest in mechanics, he laughed and said. "I've always been a poor man and had to work on my own vehicles. I work part time at a Corvette shop in Nicholasville for parts on my car. I've also hauled junk and stripped tobacco - I can strip the heck out of some burley."

Bobblitt drives a 1980 Corvette that is equipped with hand controls for accelerating and braking and he can get himself in and out of the car and into his wheelchair and now carries his walker with him.

He has made his home accessible to his needs including installing an elevator. "I and my two dogs live alone on the farm," he said.

He said everyone he has worked with at the University of Kentucky Medical Center has been nice. "I haven't met anybody with a negative attitude. I think I scare them with some of the things I do," he said of his weekly therapy sessions.

When asked what advice or words of encouragement he would give to others confined to wheelchairs, he said, "I will talk to anyone about this or about being in a wheelchair. I consider myself a professional in a wheelchair. I'd be glad to help anybody out anyway I can on how to get their homes handicapped accessible. I've learned to modify everything to be able to accomplish tasks. Sometimes, you have to do things completely backwards you just have to figure out what it takes to accomplish a task."

DECEMBER 28, 2011 Missing child sparks bill proposal

It was a scary scene when Randall Chesser, a seven-year-old autis-



December 26, 2001
Rod Boblitt demonstrates how he can now stand for short periods of time by using an electric stimulator device.

tic boy from Willisburg, went missing for 45 hours in September, but that incident is the inspiration for a new state bill proposal.

No Amber Alert was issued after Chesser was reported missing because he had not been abducted, and concern about the potential of a similar situation without an alert being issued has swayed some people to push for change.

State Rep. Brad Montell, R-Shelbyville, has proposed bill that would expand the search process for a missing person with developmental disabilities. Montell said news of Chesser's ordeal sparked support for a new bill.

"That got the ball rolling, because when that happened it brought this whole issue to life," he said. "It showed that we didn't have a way to immediately alert folks that we were dealing with a developmental disability with this missing child, and that can make all the difference."

Montell was contacted by Debi McMurray after she saw news reports that Chesser was missing, but no Amber Alert could be issued. McMurray inspired Montell enough that he has proposed the creation of the Chase Alert, named for McMurray's 22-year-old autistic son, Chase.

"During that ordeal she became very concerned that there was no way to alert search and rescue and the community exactly what situation they may be encountering," Montell said. "Anytime you're dealing with someone with a developmental disability, they're particularly vulnerable."

Montell said no other state has established a bill similar to the one he's proposing; and the Council on Developmental Disabilities was able to help with the final language of the bill. An excerpt from the proposed bill states:

"A search for a missing person, who is known or reported to have a developmental disability, including, but not limited to autism, shall be immediately reported as a Chase Alert to the local emergency management director, the local search and rescue coordinator if different from the emergency management director, the department of state police and any on-duty officer in a division of emergency management."

Montell is confident in the bill's potential to pass because it isn't a politically-driven proposal. He said he believes Democrats and Republicans will support the bill if early feedback is any indication.