

The Kinney Brothers from Toller Hollow

By Brenda S. Bear

On May 3rd of this year, two Lewis County artists featured on the City of Vanceburg's new mural were Charley and Noah Kinney. These unforgettable brothers are fondly remembered by many, especially the older generation who either knew them personally or grew up hearing tales of their colorful lives.

Charley Kinney (1906–1991) and Noah Kinney (1912–1991) spent their entire lives in Toller Hollow with limited formal education. Charley attended school for three years, while Noah completed elementary school. In 1960, Noah married Hazel, and together, the three inherited the family's 35-acre farm. They lived a self-supporting lifestyle farming tobacco, raising chickens, hunting and raising a garden. The property included a barn, a henhouse, and several sheds that later became workshops for their art.

Charley, whose disability limited his ability to work the fields, contributed in other ways. He baked pies and crafted baskets from oak trees to help support the family. In the 1970s, the Kinney brothers began creating a distinctive form of folk art inspired by rural life and their Appalachian roots. Charley often used old window shades as his canvas, painting wild, vivid scenes of animals and nature. His art didn't hold back, sometimes it showed the harsher side of life, with blood and raw emotion. Even when he painted something simple, like an elephant or a snake, his bold colors and rough brushstrokes gave the pictures a sense of energy and movement, almost like they were alive.

In contrast, Noah's carvings, typically of a single animal mounted on a board, were gentler in tone. His depictions of lions and tigers came across as gentle and domestic, exuding a sense of harmony. The brothers shared their creations with neighbors and the surrounding community. From



Noah, his wife Hazel, and brother Charley Kinney.

what I've learned about the Kinneys, it seems that no one, including the artists themselves, fully grasped the significance of their work.

Music was also a central part of their lives. From an early age, the brothers played traditional Scott Irish tunes passed down through generations. Charley played fiddle and Noah played guitar. Their barn became a community gathering place, once described as the "spiritual epicenter of fiddle music in northeast Kentucky." Kentucky Master Fiddler Roger Cooper noted that their style wasn't bluegrass but rather "old-time music—like square dance music." He also remarked that Salt Lick was home to one of the region's earliest square dances.

Beyond performing, the brothers expanded their creativity by creating life-size puppets to accompany their music. They built three musical figures: Rose Marie, Kathy Lee, and Ann Mary, each playing a guitar, fiddle, or mandolin. Mounted on a crossbar and operated with a foot pedal, the figures were moved with the brothers' instruments, showcasing their inventiveness and talent for repurposing materials. Additional puppets included Matt, who "played" slide guitar, and "Old Dan Tucker," inspired by the 19th-century folk song.

Fellow musician John Herrod once recalled Charley

telling him, "You can't outdo nature, boys, nature's got everything beat ... whatever you're cut out for, that's what you'll do for the rest of your life." Coming from a man with only a third-grade education, the statement is a profound reflection of a life lived with purpose and authenticity.

Charley Kinney's first solo exhibition, Terrors, Holy and Otherwise: Works by Charley Kinney, was curated in 1992 by the Rasdall Gallery at the University of Kentucky. The Kinney's work has also been featured in numerous exhibitions, including Local Visions: Folk Art from Northeastern Kentucky (Morehead State University), Slow Time: The Works of Charley, Noah and Hazel Kinney (2006, Kentucky Folk Art Center), the Huntington Museum of Art (WV), Owensboro Museum of Art (KY), Passionate Visions of the American South (New Orleans Museum of Art), and the Birmingham Museum of Art (AL), among others. Their art was also featured in O'Appalachia: The 20th Century American Folk, Self-Taught, and Outsider Art.

Charley and Noah Kinney passed away within six months of each other in 1991. Through their music and their art, they left behind a legacy that continues to inspire and connect our own community and art enthusiasts.

Class of 1970 reunited

By Danny McCane

LCHS Class of 1970 reunited on Saturday, June 7, 2025. It was an evening of sharing memories and reflecting on the passage of time (55 years). What a great gift to reconnect after so many years and honor

one another. That is what a reunion is all about; lifting that period of our lives and being grateful that we had it and had each other. Twenty-two classmates, plus their guests, were able to attend. Thanks to the committee that worked so

hard to make the event possible, especially our emcees, Mort Adams, Joe LeMaster, and Danny McCane. The other committee members were Barbara Stafford McCann, Kathy Lykins Foster, Lykins Foster, and Sandra Tolle Rouse.



Front row: Jerry Bloomfield, Barbara Stafford McCann, Julia Esham Clark, Carolyn Moore Butler, Donna Jones Caudill, and Diane Lewis Moore. Second row: Roger Maddix, Connie Stamm Shaw, Sandra Tolle Rouse, Kathy Lykins Foster, Laquita Ruckel Chaney, and Randy Blaine. Third row: Frank Hardy, Marsha Bentley Collins, Jim Shaw, Wayne Wright, Ruth McCleese, Joe LeMaster, Cathy Carrington Kamer, Mort Adams, Jeff Cooper, and Danny McCane.

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Dear Editor,

We hope everyone enjoyed the Vanceburg July Jubilee and the Fireworks Display on July 4th and July 5th, 2025. A lot of planning and hard work went into this Celebration. We would like to thank the following people: Vanceburg City Street employees, Vanceburg Police Dept. officers, Vanceburg Fire Dept. Firemen, for their help before and after the fireworks. The following organizations, businesses and people were responsible for this event being a success: City of Vanceburg, Superior Fibers, Coroplast, Gaydos Funeral Home, McDonald's, Trace Creek Construction, Super Quik, Ideal Wheels, Farmers Cooperative Insurance, Vanceburg Electric Plant Board, V.F.W., Vanceburg Hills Nursing Home, Vanceburg Lions

Club, Howe Farm Supply, Dickerson/Globe Funeral Home, First Guaranty Bank, Tram Construction Inc., Lewis County Pawn, Pinnacle Bank, Vanceburg Primary Plus, T&K Insurance, Bethesda Assembly of God Inc., Richard Howerton Engineering, Skeeter Shaw, Duke Dunnigan, KY 08 Towing, Steve Applegate Auto Sales, Tire World, Ginn Services, Vanceburg Save A Lot, Crawford's Florist, D&F Building Supplies, G & H Towing, Vanceburg Food Mart, Liberty Insurance, WKKS, Lewis County Herald, John Clark Oil, Richard Walje, Riverbend Pub and Grill, Valley Motors, Johnny Bivens, Farm Bureau, Woodmen of the World, Kimberly at Bubbles & Board, Sunset Rental of New Boston, Richard Evans, Lionel Cooper, Gar-

rison Shortstop, Holder & Lykins, Tom Bertram, Thompson Custom Design, Peoples Bank of Ohio, Lance Gifford, Eric and Andrea Bloomfield, Kenny Ruckel, Ben and Leslie Collier, Stephen McGinnis, Mayor Dane Blankenship, Chris McGlone Osman Pharmacy, April Ruark, Greta May, Taylor Ruark, Joe Paul Gilbert, and Joe Billman, Journey's Jumpys, Jason and Jessica Bryant.

Thanks to Lewis County Shooting Sports for their help with the 5K Run. Lewis County Sheriff's office for use of their golf carts.

If we forgot anyone we apologize and again we would like to thank everyone for their help and hard work during this event.

Thank you,
July Jubilee Committee

Legislative Update

State Representative Patrick Flannery



June ends with full slate of committee meetings

As we moved from June into July, the legislative interim continued with a full agenda of interim joint committees (IJC), statutory committees, and task force meeting to discuss a wide variety of topics in preparation for the 2026 Regular Session. I have included summaries of the meetings here, but you can also watch them yourself on the legislature's YouTube page, @KYLRC Committee Meetings.

IJC on Families and Children: Members discussed the Center for Courageous Children discussed their summer camp programs and spoke about how they have been able to serve more than 22,000 Kentucky children with disabilities and chronic illnesses since 2008. Next, the panel discussed state guardianship and awareness initiatives being pursued by Adult Protective Services. Finally, the committee discussed the annual report of the External Child Fatality and Near Fatality Review Panel, which found a decline in firearm related child injuries and fatalities but also an increase in drug related child overdose and ingestion cases.

IJC on Local Government: Lawmakers met with the Kentucky County Clerk's Association about electronic reporting for land records. Although nearly all counties are now engaging in electronic reporting and scanning historical documents, the verification process for older records is time-consuming. The committee also discussed Area Development Districts. They serve as crucial councils of governments, unifying city and county administrations to collaboratively address regional needs. Additionally, members heard from the Kentucky Association of Counties and Kentucky League of Cities about local taxing sources.

IJC on State Government: Legislators first heard from the Kentucky Center for Statistics, an agency that collects and links data to evaluate education and workforce efforts in the commonwealth. The presentation covered the agency's history, mission, products, funding sources, and the Kentucky Longitudinal Data System. Next, the Kentucky Department for Libraries and Archives provided members with a general overview of its organizational, operational, and budgetary structure and functions. Finally, members heard from the Kentucky Library Association about the structure and funding mech-

anisms of public libraries, as well as some of the work public libraries are doing to support communities.

IJC on Veterans, Military Affairs, and Public Protection: Members heard testimony from the Kentucky Department of Veterans Affairs as well as the Finance and Administration Cabinet regarding consistent and ongoing issues with the HVAC system at the Radcliff Veterans Center, a long-term care facility. Specifically, members questioned officials why it has taken so long to be addressed, to what extent has the delay affected the facility's capacity, and when residents can expect results. Officials stated many factors contributed to delays, and the project is scheduled to be complete by March 2027. Members also heard testimony about a proposed measure to exempt veterans from the motor vehicle usage tax.

Medicaid Oversight and Advisory Board: Legislators held their first meeting of the legislative interim this week where lawmakers received an overview of the purpose and goals of the advisory board, discussed the committee's priorities moving forward, and the guiding of policy-development over the coming months. Members also received an update on the state's Medicaid Program, reviewed recent changes under HB 695, and discussed the ongoing changes regarding Medicaid eligibility.

Capital Projects and Bond Oversight: Lawmakers met to receive an update from the Finance and Administration Cabinet on projects to enhance clean water access across the commonwealth and renovate multiple public schools in Kentucky. They approved a new lease for the UK HealthCare Speech Language Pathology Clinic and authorized renovations to the Louisville Detention Center. Members also heard from the Kentucky Communications Network Authority, and discussed efforts to safeguard continuous access to communications infrastructure statewide.

Commission on Race and Access to Opportunity: Members examined barriers faced by minority-owned businesses in Kentucky and explored practical solutions. A variety of business officials addressed key systemic challenges faced by minority owned businesses such as access to capital, discrimination, and lack of financial literacy. Commission members also heard about initiatives that have helped miti-

gate these barriers with competitive loan programs and networking opportunities. Emphasis was placed on building partnerships, encouraging entrepreneurship, and creating a level playing field that allows all Kentuckians to succeed through their hard work and innovation.

Artificial Intelligence Task Force: Members of convened to begin the task force's second year of work, focusing on AI's growing and evolving role in Kentucky. The Kentucky Chamber of Commerce provided testimony on the status of federal and state legislation regarding AI and discussed benefits and risks of AI adoption. Members then heard from the Commonwealth Office of Technology regarding the current status of this year's SB 4, which introduced some of Kentucky's first regulatory frameworks for AI. Members discussed the importance of a consistent federal approach, data privacy concerns, and the role of AI in education.

Disaster Prevention and Resiliency Task Force: Members received an update on the state's response to catastrophic flooding in April from the Division of Emergency Management. The task force also discussed how other states prepare and address natural and manmade disaster planning and how communities may better prepare for flooding.

Housing Task Force: Lawmakers received a brief update on the state and nation's current housing shortage, which includes rentals and homes for sale in every county. If unaddressed, the shortage is expected to grow to nearly 287,000 by 2029. Like most problems, this stems from multiple causes, including natural disasters, rising costs, labor shortages, and high interest rates. Committee members met with the Kentucky Housing Corporation, Bluegrass Institute, and Pew Charitable Trusts to continue their work exploring solutions. Acknowledging the urgency, members doubled down on their commitment to doing what could be done on the state level, drawing on best practices and stakeholder input to address affordability and increase housing supply across the Commonwealth.

As always, I can be reached anytime through the toll-free message line in Frankfort at 1-800-372-7181. You can also contact me via email at Patrick.Flannery@kylegislature.gov and keep track through the Kentucky legislature's website at legislature.ky.gov.

July Jubilee Parade winners



July Jubilee Parade 1st place winner, Bridge Church.



2nd place, Southern Manor.



3rd place, Remington Stone, Hudson Stone and Willow Burris.

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