

Looking back to May 25, 2018

Written by Christy Hoots

The following information was entered into the May 25, 2018, edition of The Ledger Independent:

Women celebrate 100 years

Anna Pickrell and Florence Mitchell may not know each other, but they have more in common than anyone might imagine.

Both have birthdays within a few days of each other in May and both celebrated their 100th birthday this week.

Pickrell, a resident of the Maysville Nursing and Rehabilitation Center, was born on May 21, 1918, in Cincinnati. She eventually moved to a farm near Higginsport, Ohio.

Pickrell graduated from high school and worked as a secretary to the president of the FD Lawrence Electric Company.

"I took college classes at night while I was working," she said.

Pickrell's family held up a photo of her from her time at the electric company.

"Oh, that brings back memories," she said. "I remember that day. I was taking money to the bank. You can see the bags in my arms there. That's something you don't see people do today."

According to Pickrell, she married Stephen Pickrell in 1943. A newspaper article from the day said it was one of the largest attended ceremonies in the Augusta Presbyterian Church up to that day.

"It seems like so long ago," she said. "We grew up together; went to the same school. He was in one side of the desk and I was in the other seat. We never really noticed each other."

Pickrell said he would visit her while she was working in her father's store in Higginsport.

"I would help out at the store serving customers," she said.

After she and Stephen Pickrell married, she became a farmer's wife and helped to plant tobacco, soy bean and corn. They also raised cattle.

"We have a picture of her driving the tractor when she was younger," Pickrell's daughter-in-law, Shirley Pickrell said. "It's one of my son's favorite pictures of her."

According to Anna Pickrell's oldest daughter, Martha Buckler, her mother also raised turkeys and would dress and sell them before Christmas.

Pickrell said one of her fondest memories was handling the bookkeeping for her husband's store. He would sell and service surge milkers.

"Her faith in God has been tremendous all these years," Buckler said. "She's an amazing woman. When they lived on the farm, there were a lot of (homeless) people who came along. She would feed them whenever they came by. She liked to bake. I bet she's baked thousands of cookies. One of my teachers used to say she always liked having a Pickrell in class, because she knew the class would have goodies all year."

Anna Pickrell has five children, 15 grandchildren, 23 great-grandchildren and one great-great-grandchild.

She said she has no secrets to living to be 100 years old.

"It just sneaks up on you," she said.

At the Kenton Pointe Facility, Florence Mefford talked about the last 100 years of her life while sitting under a hair dryer in the facility's beauty salon.

Mefford was born on May 23, 1918, and grew up in Rectorville. She graduated from Orangeburg High School, where she met her husband.

"He was in the military, so we traveled around a lot; lived a lot of different places. We got married and moved from one place to the next," she said.

According to Mefford, during her husband's time in the military, they lived in Utah, Colorado, California, Tennessee and Ohio before returning to Kentucky.

One memory that stands out for Mefford was after she moved back to Kentucky.

"We had this trailer we were living in and I was hauling it," she said. "My husband was worried about taking it down Orangeburg Road, because he was afraid I would meet tobacco trucks or large vehicles on the narrow road. I hauled that trailer down (old U.S. 68). It was just me, a trailer and a 4-year-old on those winding roads."

Mefford said she has two children and two grandchildren. She has lived in the Kenton Pointe facility for five years.

She said he secret to living a long life is walking. "I've always been a walker," she said.

Quinn Minute: Middle school smells

Rix Quinn

I'm not sure I had much sense of smell until sixth grade. The only aroma I remember before that was dinner rolls in the elementary cafeteria.

But junior high was different. For the first time, many girls started wearing perfume. Guys started splashing on after-shave.

The aura in a small classroom was astounding. Imagine walking into a flower garden and inhaling the essence of spring mixed with a saddle and cheese.

The school hallway scents were variable. What you sniffed depended on what door you entered.

If you entered through the biology room, you smelled alcohol or formaldehyde. If you came in through the gymnasium, you sniffed either laundry detergent or dirty socks...depending if the giant washer was off or on.

Most kids chose the lunchroom entrance. Those fragrances changed, depending on the day of the week. The older the meat supply, the odder the smells.

For example, let's say the meat-of-the-week was turkey. On Monday we smelled appetizing sliced turkey and dressing.

On Tuesday, the entrée became turkey and gravy. On Wednesday, the daily special changed to turkey casserole.

On Thursday there were two selections. That might be either turkey soup, or fried turkey slices with special sauce. I never asked what the special sauce was, but I ate it.

But Friday was scary. That's when the special became Turkey Surprise. I won't say what the surprise was, but I got surprised twice.

That's when I invented my own new Friday ritual: sandwich-from-home.

Were you born between 1946-1964? Would you like to know more about the generation called Baby Boomers? You can order Rix's book on that generation today. Just go to: <https://www.amazon.com/BABY-BOOMERS-SPEAK-learned-whatever/dp/1419683039>

Kentucky's reading and math gains show education reforms are producing intended results

National report ranks Kentucky among the nation's top-performing states for academic growth as literacy, numeracy and school leadership reforms continue statewide

Submitted by the KY Senate Majority Caucus

FRANKFORT, Ky. (May 21, 2026) — Senate Education Chair Steve West, R-Paris, says Kentucky's national recognition for reading and mathematics growth reflects years of focused work by educators, school leaders and lawmakers to strengthen classroom instruction and improve student outcomes statewide.

A new Education Scorecard report produced by researchers at Harvard University, Stanford University and Dartmouth College ranked Kentucky fifth nationally in reading growth and eighth nationally in mathematics growth between 2022 and 2025.

The report also recognized several Kentucky school districts for exceptional academic progress, while Marion County Schools was highlighted nationally as a case study for evidence-based instruction, literacy training, instructional coaching and efforts to strengthen direct student-to-teacher engagement in the classroom.

"This recognition belongs to Kentucky teachers, principals, students and families who stayed committed to the hard work of improving classroom outcomes," West said. "Kentucky made a decision several years ago to refocus on foundational learning, support educators and invest in proven instructional practices. We are now seeing measurable results from

that work."

The report specifically linked reading improvement in states, including Kentucky, to comprehensive science-of-reading reforms and evidence-based literacy instruction initiatives. Researchers also identified growing concerns nationally surrounding classroom distractions, social media use and declining student engagement. During the 2025 Legislative Session, Kentucky lawmakers approved legislation restricting student cellphone use during instructional time to help schools maintain more focused classroom learning environments.

During the 2022 Legislative Session, West championed the Read to Succeed Act to strengthen early literacy instruction across Kentucky schools through teacher training, literacy intervention and evidence-based reading practices. During the 2024 Legislative Session, lawmakers adopted a similar approach to mathematics instruction through House Bill 162, championed by Rep. James Tipton, R-Taylorsville, which established early intervention systems and additional student supports focused on foundational math skills.

In recent years, the General Assembly has paired those reforms with significant education investments, including \$22 million for the Read to Succeed program, more than \$10 million for the Mathematics Achievement Fund

and additional funding to support school leadership development and classroom instruction statewide. The legislature also increased SEEK funding for the seventh consecutive biennium.

West said Kentucky's recent education reforms have focused not only on improving student achievement, but also on strengthening instructional leadership and giving schools greater flexibility to support innovative classroom strategies.

During the 2026 Legislative Session, lawmakers approved Senate Bill 4 to establish a statewide leadership development framework for school principals and Senate Bill 263 to expand flexibility for schools pursuing innovative instructional models while maintaining accountability standards.

"Strong schools depend on strong classroom instruction and strong leadership," West said. "The goal has never been a quick fix or a political talking point. The goal has been to help more Kentucky students learn to read proficiently, build strong math skills and graduate prepared for future success. This recognition shows Kentucky is making meaningful progress."

The Education Scorecard findings are based on assessment data from roughly 35 million students nationwide and are part of a broader national research effort examining long-term academic trends and student performance.

Traffic Advisory: Paving work begins Tuesday, May 26 on US 68 in Mason County

Submitted by LeAnn Norton
Kentucky Transportation Cabinet District 9

FLEMINGSBURG, Ky. (May 22, 2026) – Paving work begins Tuesday, May 26, on US 68 Maysville Bypass in Mason County. Asphalt resurfacing work will take place on this section from the intersection of US 68X (Milepoint 10.41) to approximately 0.7 Miles north of Downing Drive (Milepoint 15.20). Paving work will include all driving lanes, shoulders, and ramps.

The work is expected to take 2-3 weeks to complete. During the project, traffic should slow down and watch for flaggers. Traffic should expect delays and if possible, use alternate routes to navigate around the road work.

Traffic can utilize US 68X, US 62, and KY 9 to navigate around the road work.

Work is being done by HG Mays Corporation under a \$1,575,365.00 Kentucky Transportation Cabinet contract.

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