

# Looking back to June 22, 2018

Written by Jonathan Wright

The following information was entered into the June 22, 2018, edition of The Ledger Independent:

## Student STEM Camp held at SMS

**FLEMINGSBURG** — Children off from school saw no lull in activities this week as the Student STEM Camp kept them busy, but not too busy to have fun.

The Student STEM Camp was held at Simons Middle School in Fleming County from Monday through Thursday. Children, grades 3-8, participated in activities that involved science, technology, engineering and mathematics that were both entertaining and informative. Mendy High, Youth Service Center coordinator for Fleming County Schools, said students were having plenty of fun, while also building interest in STEM principles.

"We've just had a really, really good time trying to incorporate learning in the summer through a lot of science activities," she said.

This camp marks the second annual Student STEM Camp for the district. Mendy, along with other members of the Family Resource Youth Service Center, planned the camp for students. Activities ranged from building rockets launched with compressed air to working with state highway engineers to build model bridges and testing them with weight.

"The important thing that we're also doing is trying to teach the kids the science behind the experiments," High

said. "We learned last year we just had a lot of fun, the kids had a great time, but we wanted to go this year a little deeper into the science."

About 85-90 kids attended, according to High. She said the camp was a great way to get children out and motivated mentally as well as physically during summer break.

"This gives them a supervised area where they're learning something fun, they're with a caring adult," High said. "We're trying to create opportunities for them in the summer, so that kids can have a really good time and continue to support our schools by continuing their educational experience."

Jordyn Simmons, starting the fifth grade in the fall, said she really enjoyed the camp and the most interesting thing she learned was about chemical and physical reactions.

"We did a lot of fun stuff," Simmons said. "The first day we did tie dye shirts, I think that was the most fun part, and we did straw rockets and we're going to do stomp rockets today."

Science is one of the most important subjects to teach children in schools, according to Paul King, science teacher at Simons Middle School. King is glad to see an opportunity to educate students with the essential principles of scientific reasoning.

"All of your critical thinking is done in your science classes," King said. "One of those things that kind of goes on the wayside is everybody is putting efforts on math, everybody's putting effort on English, and science is probably one of the most important critical thinking steps that you can get at an early age." The camp concluded Thursday, with students spending the day at Double S Entertainment's bowling alley. While bowling, the children were shown the hidden mechanics in motion that resets pins and retrieves bowling balls. A hands-on experience for a hands-on camp.

"Having this allows them to come in here and get hands-on stuff, play with rockets, actually build things and get a better understanding of how things work," King said.

# Quinn Simple Scenes: Class reunion

By Rix Quinn

The old guy in the grocery line looked about two coughing spells away from the Promised Land. Gnarled and unshaven, he mumbled to himself while the clerk totaled his bill.

He noticed me as he reached into his pocket for change, and accidentally pulled out a set of teeth.

"Hey," he smiled, "remember me? I'm George, from biology class!"

Suddenly, I did remember. Back in tenth grade, we dissected the same frog. Disgusting!

George never comes to our high school reunions. That's too bad,

because he could make the rest of us feel lots younger.

My friend Ray was mascot at his school, and he wears a silly hornet outfit to every class gathering. On his drive there last year, he got pulled over...and it's hard to walk a straight line if you can't control your stinger.

He got to the party late, then made the entrance only a middle-aged pot-bellied hornet can. Across the room, he noticed Mollie.

She was a former cheerleader, and she remembered Ray immediately. And she looked great to Ray, whose glasses fit sort of funny on a hornet mask.

Funny how fast time flies. Just

when we understand school, we graduate. When we finally learn to comb our hair right, it falls out. And when we get our act together, there's no old friends around to watch the performance.

But reunions reconnect us with our roots...and roots remind us of our natural hair color. Ray and I both recommend them...if you don't dress like an insect.

Ever wanted to write your life story to share with family members? Here's the link to a series of simple steps you can follow to finish this project. And this Simple Scenes presentation is inexpensive, too: <https://payhip.com/b/b7mDQ>

# Kentuckians hope to see these three downtowns return to vibrant life

Tom Latek

Kentucky Today

**FRANKFORT, Ky. (KT)** – As chain stores, bypasses, and sprawling retail corridors continue to reshape America, many once-beloved downtowns have quietly faded into the background, even though locals still feel deeply attached to them.

Across the country, these historic Main Streets and old commercial districts often carry the bones of something special and increasingly hard to find: brick storefronts, railroad-era buildings, faded signs, old theaters, civic squares, waterfront blocks, and walkable character that newer developments struggle to recreate. Some have seen flashes of newfound investment, while others remain full of untapped potential, waiting for the right mix of restoration, small business energy, and local pride to bring them back to life.

To identify the historic Main Streets and downtown districts Kentuckians most want to see revived, MarketBeat, a financial media company, surveyed 3,012 respondents about the places they believe still deserve a comeback. The result is a ranking of corridors that continue to inspire nostalgia, civic pride and hope for a more vibrant future.

Kentuckians' top 3 picks:

#1. Broadway, Paducah. Broadway still carries the feel of a classic Kentucky river-city corridor, lined with older commercial buildings and reminders of

Paducah's transportation and trade history. The city developed into an important inland port due to its location near the meeting of the Tennessee and Ohio rivers. While parts of downtown remain active, many residents still believe the historic core could support a much fuller return of everyday street life and commerce.

#2. Winchester Avenue, Ashland. Winchester Avenue still reflects the scale and confidence of a downtown shaped by river commerce, railroads, and heavy industry along the Ohio River. Ashland became closely associated with steel production during the 20th century, helping drive much of the city's economic growth and downtown development. Even now, many locals feel the corridor deserves a broader revival that matches its historic importance and architectural presence, and new streetscape investments are beginning to add the kind of energy that makes that future feel closer than ever.

#3. Cumberland Avenue, Middlesboro. Surrounded by the Appalachian mountains, downtown Middlesboro still has the distinctive layout and historic character of a town built during Kentucky's late-1800s coal expansion. Middlesboro is famously located inside the meteor crater basin known as the Middlesboro Crater, giving the city an unusually dramatic setting. Today, the downtown still feels like a place with strong identity and plenty of untapped revival potential.

# Setting the tempo for Kentucky's future teachers

Submitted by Eastern Kentucky University

**RICHMOND, Ky. (June 18, 2026)** — Kentucky continues to face a teacher shortage, creating challenges for school districts across the state. The 2025 Kentucky Educator Shortage Survey noted more than 2,400 total vacancies across school districts in the Commonwealth, including 671 certified teacher vacancies. Also in the survey, 72% of districts reported an observed decrease of the number of qualified candidates applying for positions over the past two years.

As the need for qualified educators rises, Eastern Kentucky University (EKU) is helping close the gap by preparing the next generation of teachers, including those in music education. As EKU celebrates 120 Years of Excellence in Education in 2026, the university continues its longstanding legacy of preparing educators who serve communities across Kentucky and beyond.

"At EKU, we are committed to preparing future teachers to enter the state's workforce and meet the needs of our communities," said EKU President David McFaddin. "EKU has long held a reputation for excellence in teacher education, and this expands to our subject-specific teaching degrees, like music education. Our School of Music is highly renowned, representing EKU on a national stage."

The path to EKU for Harper Grizzle, music education major from Ashland, Kentucky, began years before she enrolled.

"I attended Foster Music Camp and met Dr. Waters, Dr. Campbell and Dr. Wolf," Grizzle said. EKU's

Foster Music Camp is the second oldest music camp in the country, welcoming middle and high school students to practice their music skills each summer. "They made me feel so at home and capable of being a music education major. It was an easy choice for me," Grizzle continued.

EKU's School of Music offers a Bachelor of Music degree with concentrations available in music composition, music performance, music industry and music education. The music education option leads to initial licensure as a certified educator in the Commonwealth of Kentucky, and students prepare to teach music in all genres, at all levels.

Across all music degree options at EKU, students gain performance and professional experiences that shape their future careers. Music performance major Eva Cook was the first EKU student chosen to attend an American String Teachers Association (ASTA) Convention as a collegiate masterclass performer and was also the concertmaster of International 2025 Brevard Institute, an internationally recognized summer institute. Cook, along with other EKU music students, performed as the collegiate string quartet at ASTA 2024. Other music students have been selected to perform at the Michigan State University Conducting Symposium and the University of Illinois Conducting Symposium and have gained hands-on exposure at venues such as the Cincinnati Shakespeare Company. Grizzle was among 41 students from EKU Choirs to perform at New York's Carnegie Hall in March.

Additionally, faculty members collaborate with graduate and undergraduate students to present mobile percussion clinics at regional schools, extending EKU's impact in music education beyond campus.

The local, national and international recognition of opportunities provided through EKU's School of Music helps students stand out as they enter the workforce.

After graduation, Grizzle wants to make a lasting difference in the classroom with the experiences she has gained at EKU.

"I hope to be teaching high school choir and helping students develop both their musical skills and their confidence," Grizzle said. "I also plan to continue my education by pursuing a master's degree in music education so I can keep growing as a teacher and musician."

For Grizzle, music education is about more than performance.

"To me, success as a musician means continuing to grow while also making a positive impact on others through music," she said. "It's not just about performing well, but also about inspiring students and audiences to appreciate music in meaningful ways."

As Kentucky works to address its teacher shortage, students like Harper Grizzle represent the future of education in the Commonwealth. EKU's School of Music plays an important role in that effort. Through hands-on training, performance opportunities and mentorship from experienced faculty, students are equipped with the skills and confidence necessary to step into Kentucky classrooms.

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