

# Rachel May Arrives Home At Last

By Paige Huston  
Herald Staff

A new baby is always an exciting prospect, even for a large family, but no one could have foreseen what lay ahead for Jeff and Amy Peavler Kircher of Harrodsburg.

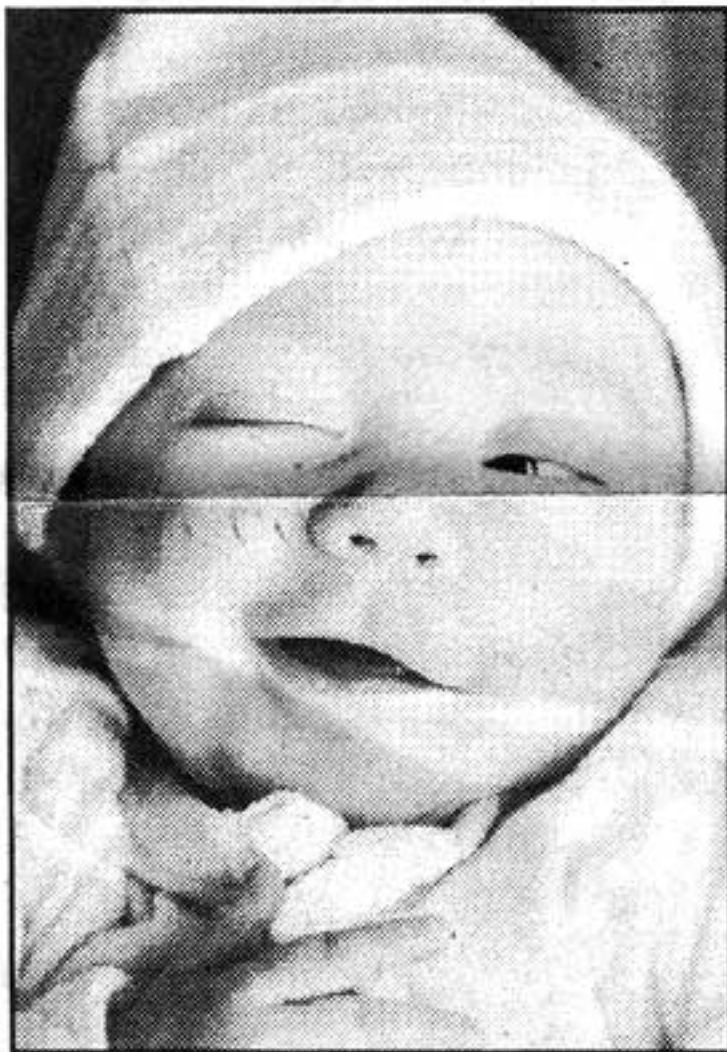
Not expecting their baby daughter's arrival until February, Mrs. Kircher was working as medical records director at the Harrodsburg Health Care Center, and Mr. Kircher had just taken a new job when their world got turned upside-down.

At 27 weeks pregnant, Mrs. Kircher had gotten used to the baby moving and kicking. In late November, the baby seemed to turn and settle into a new position. The next day, Mrs. Kircher noticed the baby wasn't moving as it usually did. She decided to call her doctor, who sent her to the hospital for testing.

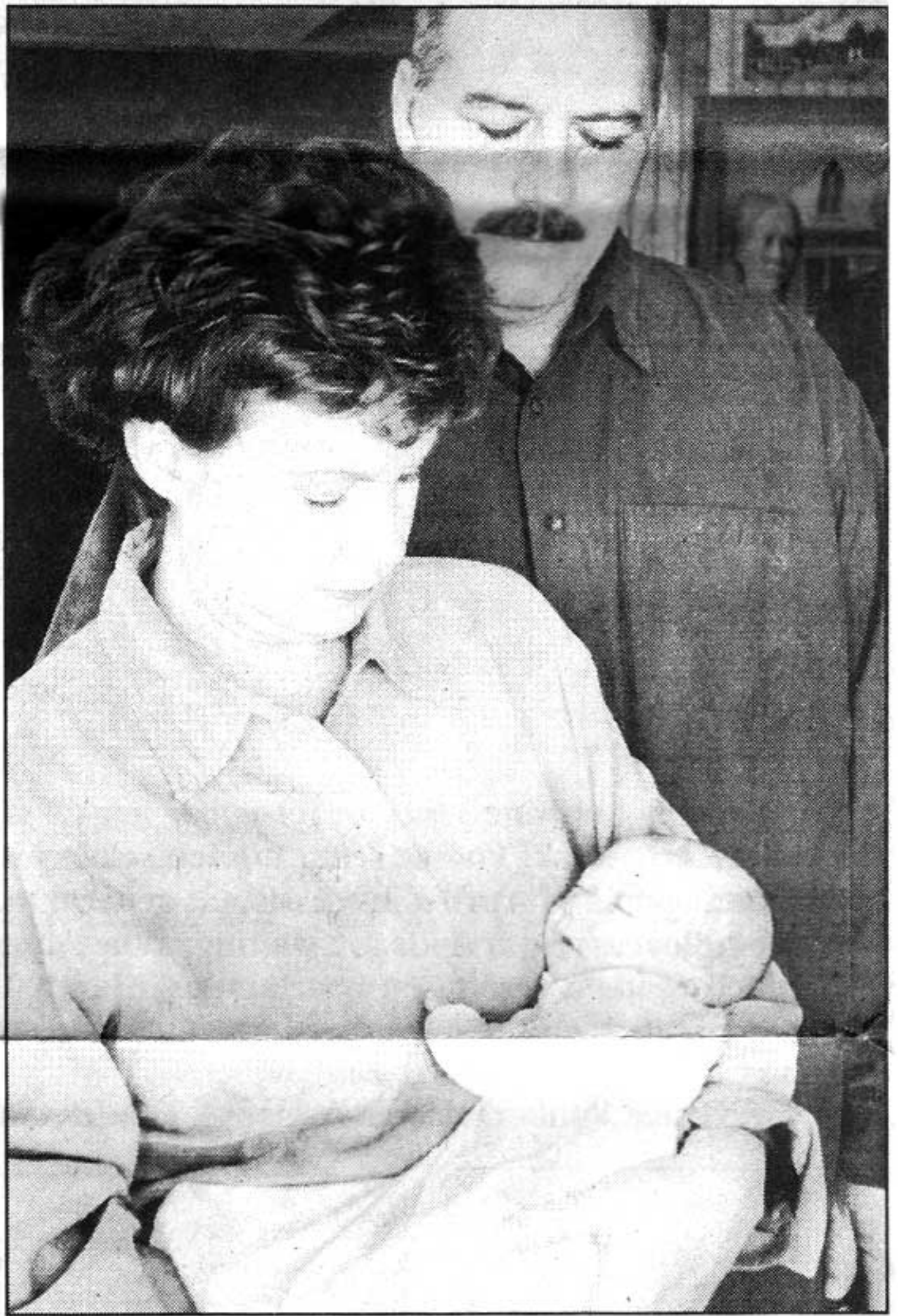
As soon as the medical staff at the hospital saw the test results, they determined that the baby needed to be born immediately to have any chance of survival. In just 20 minutes, the doctors had performed a c-section and whisked little Rachel May off to the intensive care nursery.

Rachel weighed less than two pounds at birth and was 13 inches long. She was barely bigger than a 20-ounce soft drink bottle. Being born so many weeks prematurely (she was due Feb. 23), Rachel had many hurdles to cross. She suffered through close calls with apnea and bradycardia, allergic reactions to medication, digestive problems and more. In all, she was given 15 blood transfusions.

A couple of weeks after her birth, and after taking a turn for the worse, doctor's decided to transfer Rachel to the University of Kentucky Medical Center where they could provide the level of care she needed. That



RACHEL MAY KIRCHER



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**Jeff and Amy Kircher no longer have to drive to Lexington every day to see their little girl. Rachel May came home March 8.**

same week, Mr. Kircher, who had not missed a day of work since Rachel's birth, was told he was being fired from his job because the business could not afford the risk that he might suddenly be called away due to an emergency with the baby. After days of worrying and searching for a new job, Mr. Kircher found employment with Freedom Dodge in Lexington just in time for Christmas.

It wasn't until New Year's Day, more than a month after she was born, that Rachel's parents were permitted to hold her. They spent day after day sitting at her cribside, praying for the best. In all, Rachel was hospitalized for 100 days. She came home Wednesday, March 8, and is now almost 4 months old and weighs six pounds.

The Kirchers have received cards, letters and encouraging e-mails from friends and acquaintances across the country. They've even heard from a woman in England who learned about Rachel through a mutual friend. "Everyone has been so supportive," they said. "People have prayed for us and brought

us food. It means more than we can say."

Rachel is still battling problems, but the Kircher's doctor said her prognosis is good. After spending so much time at the hospital and getting to know other parents of children in the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit, the Kirchers are helping to start a support group for parents who are going through what they experienced.

For parents whose children are hospitalized, the Kirchers have the following advice: ask lots of questions. Get all the information you can, and don't let the doctors intimidate you. "Go with your instincts," said Mrs. Kircher. "We felt the doctors were taking things too fast with Rachel, and when we insisted they not push her so hard, she started doing better."

Rachel's grandparents are Brent and Bonnie Peavler of Harrodsburg, and Otto and Wilma Kircher of Cincinnati, OH. Her great-grandparents are John D. Brown of Burgin and the late Georgia Brown, and Ruth Peavler of Burgin and the late Bush Peavler.