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Taking it day by day

County Exec. Farrow provides cancer update

By Karen Pilarski
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WAUKESHA — After recuperating from an invasive cancer-related surgery, Waukesha County Executive Paul Farrow is back to work in a limited fashion. This week he is allowed to be at work for an hour and a half per day per doctor’s orders.

“It is better than the Teams calls and trying to do all that stuff like we have been the last couple of weeks,” Farrow said.

In September, Farrow announced he was diagnosed with mucinous adenocarcinoma, a rare type of cancer. His cancer is considered stage 4 and incurable, but the hope is to manage it.

In March he underwent CRS-HIPEC (cytoreductive surgery and hyperthermic intraperitoneal chemotherapy), which is a surgery that treats abdominal cancers that have spread to the lining of the abdomen.

The over 12-hour surgery went very well and the scan last week showed no sign of cancer in his abdominal cavity. This doesn’t mean he is in remission.



Courtesy of The Office of Waukesha County Executive Paul Farrow

On April 29, Waukesha County Executive Paul Farrow (pictured, center) received the Tommy G. Thompson Distinguished Public Leadership Award. Cate Zeuske (right) and Alexander Tahk (left) are on both sides of Farrow. In September, Farrow announced he was diagnosed with mucinous adenocarcinoma, a rare type of cancer. His cancer is considered stage 4 and incurable, but the hope is to manage it.

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Nelson named National Middle Level Assistant Principal of the Year

ELM GROVE — A middle school principal described as an educator who models excellence, collaboration, and care is being honored for her work.

The National Association of Secondary School Principals announced that Elizabeth “Liz” Nelson, associate principal of Pilgrim Park Middle School, is the 2025 NASSP National Assistant Principal of the Year for Middle Level Schools, in the award’s inaugural year.

“Liz exemplifies outstanding leadership and dedication in her role as associate principal at Pilgrim Park Middle School,” stated Principal Kelly Szesterniak. “Her commitment to building a safe, inclusive, and supportive learning environment has made a significant impact on both students and staff. This award is a testament to her commitment, hard work, integrity, and dedication to excellence.”

“During Liz Nelson’s five-year tenure at Pilgrim Park Middle School, she has helped lead a school culture grounded in inclusivity, accountability, and



Elizabeth “Liz” Nelson

growth. Under her leadership, the school offers 35 student-driven clubs and activities, fostering a strong sense of connection and belonging. Her implementation of a student support system focused on early intervention has helped decrease behavior referrals by 40% and contributed to a 12% increase in student-reported belonging. The school has consistently earned a ‘Sig-

nificantly Exceeds Expectations’ rating on the Wisconsin state report card,” the news release said.

“On behalf of Pilgrim Park Middle School and our entire school district, I would like to express our appreciation to NASSP for recognizing Liz Nelson with this honor,” said Dr. Mark Hansen, superintendent of the School District of Elmbrook. “We have exceptionally talented leaders in our schools, and we are thrilled to be able to acknowledge their contributions.”

Nelson received state recognition in November as the Wisconsin Associate Principal of the Year from the Association of Wisconsin School Administrators (AWSA), which sponsored her national nomination.

The announcement was made during the NASSP’s National Education Leadership Awards gala in Washington, D.C., which brought together State Assistant Principals of the Year, student scholarship winners, and national education leaders.

BCHS graduate receives Truman Scholarship

BROOKFIELD — A Brookfield Central High School graduate has won the Harry S. Truman Scholarship, now the third University of Cincinnati student to receive the scholarship. Harshman Sihra, a reproductive health advocate, is a future OB-GYN and public health policymaker.

“Sihra’s accomplishment is supported by UC’s focus on real-world experience, which allowed him to pursue research and advocacy work which address the unique barriers pregnancy presents for families, including significant efforts related to lowering the infant mortality rate locally,” a news release said.

As a student in the Connections Dual Admissions program, Sihra will be supported by the Truman Scholarship during his medical studies at UC’s College of Medicine after completing his bachelor’s degree in liberal arts with concentrations in medical sciences and sociology, as well as certificates in medical humanities and pre-medicine.

Sihra looks forward to graduating this year and continuing on to medical school.

“I started working with (the Nationally Competitive Awards office) specifically for the Truman since I was a freshman. In that first semester, I knew that the Truman Award was something that spoke to me so much because of my commitment to public service,” Sihra said, adding that his interpretation of public service is action-oriented. “I’m a person who doesn’t just sit on the sideline and complain. I’m going to do something.”

The Harry S. Truman Scholarship Foundation’s mission is to support new generations of public service leaders with a significant stipend toward graduate studies. Sihra was one of 54 scholars selected from a pool of 743 applicants and from 288 different colleges and universities.

“Harshman’s career at UC clearly demonstrates the public service ideals of the Truman Foundation,” said UC President Neville Pinto, who announced the award to Sihra amid longtime mentors and supporters. “We look forward to seeing all that he will accomplish in his final year and as he pursues medical school at UC.”

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Brookfield Central HS student wins National Merit Leidos Scholarship

BROOKFIELD — Alice Chen, a Brookfield Central High School student, received a National Merit Leidos Scholarship.

Headquartered in Reston, Va., Leidos is a global science and technology solutions and services leader working to solve the world’s toughest challenges in the defense, intelligence, homeland security, civil, and health markets. The company’s 32,000 employees support vital missions for government and commercial customers.

National Merit Scholarship Corporation released the names of the first group of winners in the 70th annual National Merit Scholarship Program. Approximately 830 high school seniors have won corporate-sponsored National Merit Scholarship awards financed by about 124 corporations, company foundations, and other business organizations. Also included in this category are awards supported by several foundations and individual donors who have established endowments with NMSC.

Scholars were selected from students who advanced to the final level in the National Merit Scholarship competition and met criteria of their scholarship sponsors. Most of these awards are renewable for up to four years of college undergraduate study and provide annual stipends that range from \$1,000 to \$10,000 per year.

NMSC will name recipients of National Merit \$2,500 Scholarships on May 7, and winners of college-sponsored Merit Scholarship awards on June 4 and July 14. By the conclusion of this year’s competition, more than 6,930 academic champions will have won National Merit Scholarships worth approximately \$26 million.

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Brookfield student’s stop-action video ‘Hang’ receives recognition

Sam Slowik’s films promote perseverance and positivity

By Karen Pilarski
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BROOKFIELD — Brookfield Central student Sam Slowik’s stop-action film “Hang” resonates with anyone who has tried to assemble a project, career or a relationship only to watch it fall apart suddenly. In “Hang,” a Lego minifigure with the help of his sidekick “Rig” tries to assemble a space shuttle to the music of the Milwaukee band Bad Crime’s song “Hang.”

The instruction manual is laid out and Rig wears a handy construction hat. At one point there is an elevator music interlude as the music pauses and the minifigure sips a mug of coffee. After putting it together the minifigure sits in the shuttle ready to take off when suddenly the project crumbles around him. The trusty sidekick instantly pulls out the manual with a nudge for the duo to start over.

Stop-action is not new to the filmmaker. Slowik began making stop-motion films when he was 10. He has self-learned stop-motion techniques and film styles by studying other films and tutorials.

Continuing the story

Last year, Slowik produced “Learning To Fly,” which was animated at 15 frames per second using his laptop and camera. When it came to the storyline, the teen wanted something that was inspiring and uplifting. He also wanted to have a friend in the film.

“You can’t do everything on your own, you need help. That just kind of came into my head. It got sorted out while I was animating,” he said.

This time around “Hang” came about due to some networking and being at the right place at the right time.

The Elmbrook Film Festival was coming up and Slowik was hoping to do a music video. Slowik’s dad, Mike, sold T-shirts to members of Bad Crime, a Milwaukee punk band, and a collaboration formed.

“It was the matter of choosing a song that would fit with the story I wanted to make. We listened to a few of their songs with my dad. I picked one out that had a good length for a 3-minute film festival and just picked one that would fit a montage of an action training video,” Slowik said.

The music was put in after he completed the animation. His intent was to make a video that showed Legos making more Legos. The pause when the minifigure casually drinks coffee was done for comedic effect but also because the song was two minutes long. It was used also to stretch the video into longer than 3 minutes for the festival.

The use of the same characters from “Learning to Fly” was meant to show a series of storylines.

“I wanted to continue to build the story from my first film for the film festivals and possibly building more character for them as well,” he said.

Slowik thought it would be funny for his characters to get on the shuttle after the long training montage only for it to collapse.

“They just get right back up again and start building again after the music starts,” he said.

While the animation process took Slowik 40-45 hours, the editing process was quick due to finding sound effects and sounds to fit into the right spots.

Promotion and praise

Just like his award-winning debut film “Learning To Fly,” the “Hang” film is also receiving recognition. The film took home the title of Best Overall at this year’s Elmbrook 3-Minute Film Festival and has since been recognized in multiple festivals across Illinois, New York and Wisconsin.

The film was officially selected to screen at the 2025 Milwaukee Film Festival. Sam’s film will appear as part of the Milwaukee Youth Show, a program spotlighting outstanding work by young filmmakers. Screenings run through May 8 at the historic Oriental Theatre.

Slowik said the most rewarding part of the film was having different audiences view it with hope it will gain traction and gain more recognition. With another film under his belt, Slowik is considering moving beyond Legos and using stickybones which are poseable mannequins. It would allow more realistic movements and human emotions.

The sophomore student is eyeing a career in filmmaking or animation. Next school year Slowik is enrolled in a video production class at Waukesha County Technical College. He is taking it as part of Elmbrook’s Start College Now program. It allows public school juniors and seniors who meet certain requirements to take courses at a Wisconsin technical college for high school and technical college credit, according to the district’s website.

“I’m pretty excited,” Slowik said.

To view Slowik’s film visit <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gMoDRGD5C8k>.



Courtesy of Mike and Sam Slowik

Brookfield Central student Sam Slowik (pictured) created the stop-action film “Hang” to the title song by Milwaukee band Bad Crime. In the photo he moves a Lego minifigure for a scene.



A screenshot from Brookfield Central student Sam Slowik’s film “Hang,” which tells a story of a Lego minifigure and his friend “Rig” making a space shuttle.



A screenshot of Brookfield Central student Sam Slowik’s film “Hang” that shows a Lego minifigure taking a sip of coffee during a break. The film is set to the song “Hang” by the Milwaukee band Bad Crime.



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Ashley was born and raised in Wisconsin. She acquired her Bachelor's degree from UW-Parkside in 2017. Prior to veterinary school, she worked at Hallett Veterinary Hospital as a veterinary assistant and continued to work here during veterinary school breaks. She obtained her Doctorate of Veterinary Medicine from UW Madison School of Veterinary Medicine in 2025.

In her free time, Ashley likes to horseback ride, read and spend time with her husband, daughter, and their 2 dogs (Kevin and Karl).

Farrow

From Page 1

“The other part of the surgery, they were able to remove a third of my intestines and the omentum, the layer around my abdomen cavity, that was sent off to pathology because that is where a lot of the cancer was,” he said.

The final diagnosis of Farrow’s type of cancer was Goblet cell adenocarcinomas, it is one of the most aggressive abdominal types of cancer.

“For me that means I will be doing these types of scans and blood workup about every three months. I have already started working with my oncologist, my surgeon so if it comes back or when it comes back, we will have a good attack plan in place and ready to go,” Farrow said.

If it comes back, the decision on the table is whether to continue chemotherapy or targeted immunotherapies that might be considered.

Despite the health challenges, Farrow remains committed to working on the 2026 budget and representing the county.

“If you ask my wife (Amy Farrow), the hardest thing was keeping me from working and actually rest,” he said.

His surgeon told him to wait 10-12 weeks post-surgery to go back to work. It has been over six weeks and Farrow is back in the office.

“In one hour in the office I can get so much done engaging with people,” he said.

Farrow’s goal is to be in the office two to three half-days per week by the end of May. As he regains his strength, Farrow hopes to be in the office for longer durations.

Farrow is finding other positive aspects to keep him moving which include a bundle of joy. He announced in winter that he is expecting his second grandchild in July. The Farrow couple already have a 2-year-old grandson. Due to weight restrictions from the surgery, he hasn’t been able to be around his grandson. They have kept in contact via FaceTime, and he looked forward to seeing him in person.

“My surgeon jokes I can start exercising now so I can lift the little one in July,” Farrow said.

For now, Farrow is keeping positive and working on what he can do. There was a ProHealth Care Cancer walk that he planned to participate in.

“Wherever I can interject my story and how people should be reaching out to others especially when they are diagnosed. Try not to do it alone. You need the strength of family and friends to get through this. That is what we continue to push,” he said.



Courtesy of The Office of Waukesha County Executive Paul Farrow

Each year the bipartisan award recognizes Wisconsin leaders who have devoted themselves to public service, worked to promote responsible public policy and demonstrated exceptional leadership. Farrow received the award with environmental and conservation advocate Tia Nelson. Pictured from left to right: Scott Jensen, Jeff Neubauer, Tia Nelson, Tommy Thompson, Paul Farrow, Robin Vos, Cate Zeuske and Alexander Takh.

Farrow receives Tommy Thompson leadership award

WAUKESHA — Waukesha County Executive Paul Farrow was presented with the Tommy G. Thompson Distinguished Public Leadership Award at the state Capitol building in Madison.

The bipartisan award recognizes Wisconsin leaders who are devoted to public service and work to promote responsible public policy, as well as

demonstrate exceptional leadership.

“It’s never been about me, but truly the people I serve with. It encompasses what public leadership is all about. We work for the people on tight budgets and that ability to work with people is what I dive into. It’s my passion, gives me purpose and fills me with excitement,” Farrow said.

Farrow received the award with environmental and conservation advocate Tia Nelson. Farrow has been county executive since 2015, previously serving in the state Assembly and state Senate. He followed in the footsteps of his mother, Margaret Farrow, who served as lieutenant governor.

“I know my mom would be proud. She epitomized what it

meant to be a public servant. I am fortunate and humbled to follow in her footsteps and continue her legacy,” Farrow added.

Previous winners include U.S. Representative David Obey, U.S. Representative Thomas Petri, Justice David Prosser and former Legislative Fiscal Bureau Director Bob Lang.

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