

# Harlan’s Dakota Saylor digs deep with new single

**SPECIAL TO THE ENTERPRISE**

After lighting the fuse with his debut single "Letterbomb," Harlan singer-songwriter Dakota Saylor returns with "Six Foot Deep"—a haunting, mandolin-infused ballad that wrestles with burnout, addiction, and the quiet panic of losing yourself while the world keeps moving.

Out Friday the 13th (June 13, 2025), the new single trades the interpersonal flames of "Letterbomb" for something colder, heavier, and far more internal. Driven by an R.E.M.-inspired mandolin riff and Wonderwall-era Oasis chords—buried under the weight of a blue-collar funeral dirge—the track

is elevated by the soaring fiddle work of Natalie Tomlinson, a renowned eastern Kentucky musician known for her work with Sunrise Ridge and The Honkytonk Wranglers. Her bluegrass roots run deep, adding texture and tension to this moody blend of alt-country, folk, and mountain Americana.

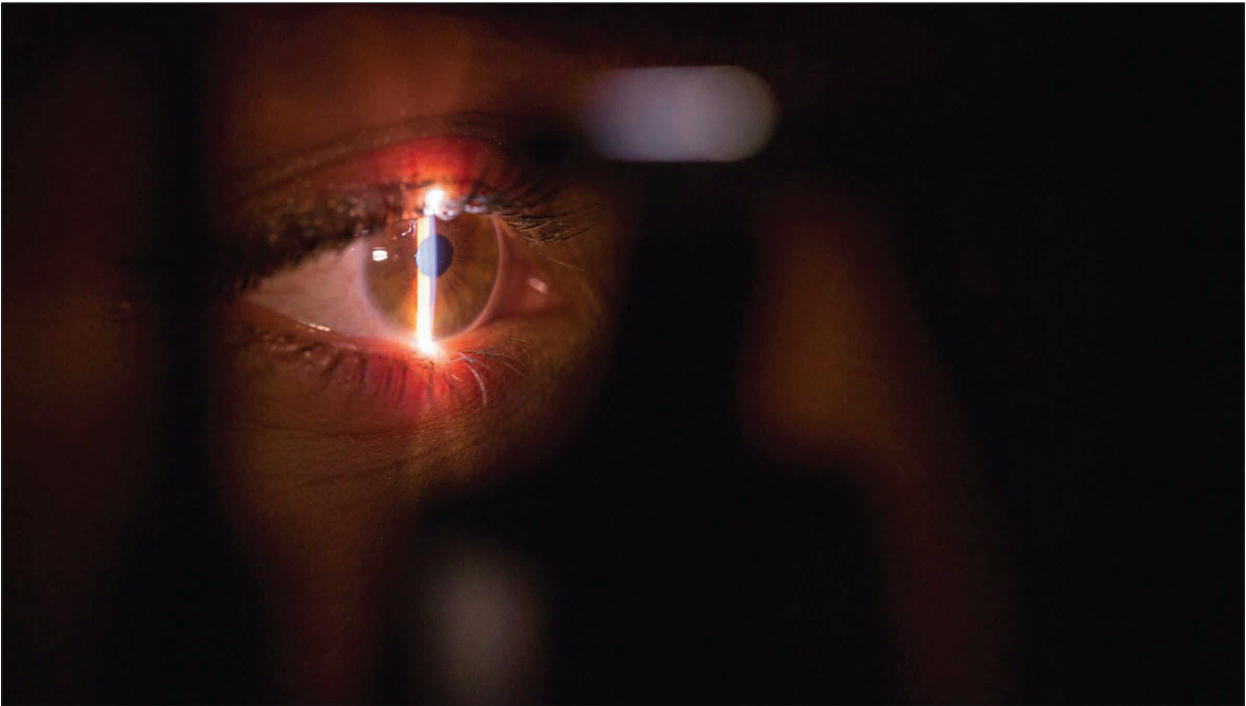
“It’s a song about getting stuck in a downward spiral,” Saylor says. “You’re clocking in and out, going through the motions, pouring out your pain through a bottle—trying to feel something—but nothing fills the hole inside.”

With lyrics like “Six foot deep, two foot wide / How does it feel being buried alive?,” Saylor doesn’t shy away from the existential. But there’s poetry in the darkness, and even a strange kind of comfort. It’s a song made for long drives, dim rooms, and moments when silence feels louder than anything on the radio.

Six Foot Deep is the second chapter in a growing catalog of what Saylor calls “class-conscious folk”—a collection of raw, reflective songs rooted in the rhythms and reckonings of rural Appalachian life. Fans of Jason Isbell, Counting Crows, and Nebraska-era Springsteen will find familiar ghosts here.

The single will be available on Spotify, Apple Music, and all major platforms on Friday the 13th—June 13, 2025.

# Protect your sight: What to know about ocular melanoma



(Photo by Brands&People/Unsplash)

**BY ADITYA BANSAL**  
University of Kentucky

When you think of cancer, eye cancer may not be the first thing that comes to mind. However, ocular melanoma — a rare but serious disease — deserves attention. It is the most common primary eye cancer in adults, and early detection can significantly improve outcomes.

**What is ocular melanoma?**

Ocular melanoma (also called uveal melanoma) develops from melanocytes, the cells that produce pigment in the eye. Although it accounts for only about 5% of all melanoma cases, it is the leading cancer that originates inside the eyeball in adults.

The uvea — the eye’s middle layer — includes the iris (the colored part), the ciliary body (involved in focusing) and the choroid (a layer rich in blood vessels). Most cases begin in the choroid.

**How common is it?**

In the United States, ocular melanoma is diagnosed in about 5 out of every 1 million people annually, translating to roughly 2,000 new cases each year. Though rare, the disease requires vigilance because

of its potential severity.

**Warning signs**

Early-stage ocular melanoma often causes no symptoms and may only be detected during a routine eye exam. As the tumor grows, you might notice:

- Blurry vision or loss of side vision
- Flashes of light
- Floaters (spots drifting across vision)
- A growing dark spot on the iris
- A change in pupil shape

These signs don’t always mean cancer, but any new visual change should be checked promptly.

**Risk factors**

Factors that may increase risk include:

- Age: More common after age 60
- Light eye color: Blue, green or gray eyes carry higher risk
- Family history: Rarely, it can run in families

**Diagnosis, treatment and prognosis**

If ocular melanoma is suspected, your doctor will refer you to an eye cancer specialist. Diagnostic tests typically include a detailed eye exam and imaging, such as ultrasound.

Treatment options vary by tumor size and spread, and may include:

- Radiation therapy
- Surgical removal
- Laser therapy
- Targeted or immunotherapy (if spread is detected)

The prognosis for small, localized tumors is generally good, with high rates of vision preservation and local tumor control. However, about 50% of patients with ocular melanoma may develop metastasis — most commonly to the liver — which can complicate outcomes. Close follow-up is essential.

**Why awareness matters**

Though rare, ocular melanoma can be vision- and life-threatening. Regular eye exams, especially for people over 60 or those with light-colored eyes, are key to catching it early.

# Obituaries

Obituaries are placed online at HarlanEnterprise.net on a timely basis, as they are received. Review current listings, archives or place an obituary at HarlanEnterprise.net/category/obituaries

**Deadline for print publication:**  
Wednesday publication deadlines Tuesday, 10 am EST

## DEATH NOTICES

Johnny “Mick” Fortner, 77, of Robbins Chapel, Va., died June 8, 2025.  
Michael “Jake” Casolari, Jr., 27, of Harlan, died June 10, 2025.  
Danielle “Dann” Grubbs, 28, of Baxter, died June 5, 2025.  
David Thomas, 48, of Baxter, died April 26, 2025.  
Nick Caudill, 38, of Baxter, died June 15, 2025.

## Harlan County School Board approves construction, mentorship program

**BY JOE ASHER**  
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The Harlan County Board of Education met in a special session on June, 3, to discuss issues including roof projects at multiple facilities and a mentorship program for new teachers.

Chairman Gary Farmer called the meeting to order before asking Superintendent Brent Roark to bring the board up to speed on roofing projects at Cumberland and Evarts Elementary Schools.

“We put out for bid the installation of roof sections at Cumberland and Evarts,” Roark told the board. “Those bids came back far better than expected. The low estimate on Cumberland was \$1.16 million, it actually came back in at \$939,000.”

Roark said the estimate for Evarts was also lower than expected.

“Evarts’ low estimate was \$645,000, it came in at \$597,000, so it’s \$48,000 under the low estimate,” Roark said. “We were real pleased with the bids on the installation.”

Roark noted the meeting was primarily about the roofing project. He mentioned he had set some guidelines for the project.

“It can’t impact the start of school, and it can’t impact the safety of our kids at school while they’re doing this,” Roark said. “He assured me that it won’t.”

A board member made a motion to accept the bids for \$939,000 for the roofing project at Cumberland and \$597,000 for the roofing project at Evarts. The motion passed with no opposition.

The board also discussed a new teacher mentorship program.

“We’ve been doing a much, much better job with our special education,” Roark said. “We’ve also been doing much better with our overall mentorship programs.”

Roark explained that overall mentorship involves all new teachers rather than being limited to special education teachers.

“We’ve been using a grant” Roark said. “It was called Deeper Learning, it was paying for mentors for these new teachers...this was something I was really loving, it was good for us, it was helping our district, the cost on it is not huge...but the Deeper Learning initiative went away. The grant expired.”

Roark told the board he strongly recommends keeping the mentorship program in place.

“We’re going to have to pick up the bill,” Roark said. “I’m going to ask the board if you would consider the proposal I put forth to continue our mentorship program and pay for it out of general fund money.”

Roark noted every new teacher would be required to go through the mentoring program.

Board member Hiram Fields made a motion to fund the mentoring program, seconded by board member Scott Sherman. The motion passed unanimously.

In other board activity:

- The board approved a use of facilities agreement with Harlan Little League;
- A first reading of the KSHA Annual Policy Update was performed;
- The board approved a trip for the Harlan County JROTC to Camp Pendleton.

21

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