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FIGHTING AGAINST THE CUTS



Photo by Henry Shorr / The Jambar

Students rally outside of Tod Hall before they submit their petition to save Jacob Labendz and the Center for Jewish and Holocaust Studies.

Students rally to save YSU professor

By Henry Shorr
The Jambar

Students and faculty gathered on the steps of Tod Hall on the morning of Jan. 12 to protest the removal of professor of Jewish and Holocaust studies Jacob Labendz. The two students in charge of the rally led the supporters inside and submitted a formal petition to the school to retain Labendz' position.

Labendz — among eight other full-time professors in designated “grow” programs — received notice that his contract would not be renewed for the upcoming

2022-23 academic year. As his program's funding comes from an endowment, some have questioned the reasoning behind his removal.

Led by history graduate student Brooke Bobovnyik and recent graduate Alexis Heldreth, the collection of supporters took turns sharing why Labendz and the program were so important to them.

“His position at Youngstown State University ensures the continuation of the Center for Judaic and

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YSU receives grant

Manufacturing consortium will be built downtown

By Henry Shorr
The Jambar

Youngstown State University received a \$2.3 million grant from the Air Force research laboratory to develop a hub-and-spoke consortium for hybrid manufacturing in the region. Pedro Cortes, assistant professor in the material science and electrical engineering department, will be leading the program.

“This is a grant that is pretty much done in collaboration with Oak Ridge National Labs, with Georgia Tech, University of Texas at El Paso and the Youngstown Business Incubator. We are really excited because they created this hub in the northeast part of Ohio and [it] can serve the whole region,” Cortes said.

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Holocaust Studies which is dedicated to Holocaust education through community outreach and educational programs on Jewish history, as well as academic courses for students at YSU,” Bobovnyik said.

She also brought up data on how little millennials and Generation Z collectively know about the Holocaust and paired it with the uptick in antisemitic actions in the Mahoning Valley to call into question if now is right time to sunset the program.

Heldreth, who graduated with a double major in history and religious studies and a minor in Jewish studies, also spoke on how important Labendz is to her and to the community.

“He is a brilliant scholar and he is an incredible professor who cares so much about his students, but for me he is an even better mentor,” Heldreth said. “Having mentors is so vital

to our experience here, and the fact that the administration doesn’t see that is disheartening.”

Heldreth reminded Labendz’ supporters the fight is not only about Labendz, but also the other programs now in flux because professors’ contracts were not renewed.

“This cause is very personal for me, but Dr. Labendz is not the only one affected. There are so many professors, like Dr. [Mustansir] Mir in the Center for Islamic Studies, who deserved this attention too because their work is vital,” Heldreth said.

The show of support overwhelmed Labendz, who came to the rally.

“The support means the world to me. I think what’s most important — and what I want to keep my focus on — is what’s good for YSU. And what’s good for YSU is the maintenance of programs like the Center for Judaic and Holocaust Studies, the Center for Islamic Studies,

and the maintenance and retention of good faculty at their homes,” Labendz said. “Personally, though, this has been an amazing testimony to the work that we’ve done. It’s a rare honor to be in a position like the one I’ve had for the last four and a half years, and I’m overwhelmed by these testimonies to how it’s changed the student lives, to the messages they’ve received, to the knowledge they produce.”

Heldreth closed her speech at the rally by reminding those attending that the fight for Labendz is just one being fought for.

“The campaigns and the activism don’t end here, because there are so many other people we should fight for because if the administration isn’t going to, I guess it’s on us,” Heldreth said.

After the speeches, Bobovnyik and Heldreth led the group into Tod Hall to formally submit their petition containing 903 signatures and 15 letters of testimony.



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PROGRAM TO HELP ENGINEERING STUDENTS



Photo by Henry Shorr / The Jambar

Pedro Cortes will be leading the new hub-and-spoke consortium for hybrid manufacturing at the Excellence Training Center.

Manufacturing

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The benefits of a hub-and-spoke model, according to Cortes, is greater specialization from different labs in specific parts of the project.

"We have, for instance, [University of Texas at El Paso]: they have expertise on infrared cameras, so they are going to help us a lot on understanding distortion and we're bringing in expertise from Oak Ridge that has plenty of scientists that have been remodeling for years, if not for decades ... Having the hub is very enriching, there are a lot of skills," Cortes said.

The grant allows for the purchase and installation of a 3D printing Mazak system which will be installed at the Excellence Training Center downtown, run by Jackie Ruller. This system, one of the first to be installed in the United States, uses a different method of printing that allows for more flexibility.

"The machine that we are going to be using is produced by Mazak and it uses wire. This is kind of unique in the idea of additive manufacturing 3D printing because you bring down cost ... And also, because it's hybrid it has subtracting, which is the common technology for removing scrap material or some parts of the whole. You are doing everything in a single shot," Cortes said.

There will be multiple YSU staff members on this

project. Associate professors Brian Vuksanovich, Holly Martin and Kyosung Choo will oversee certain aspects of the project. YSU students will also have plenty of opportunities to be involved with the project.

"They are going to have the opportunity to see the project and also get involved with the testing – undergrad students as well as graduate students. There are already students being hired onto the project, so they are going to have really hands-on opportunities on that very unique system," Cortes said.

He explained that his role will be to oversee the project and make sure the team involved is hitting their deliverables on time, all while bringing his own expertise on 3D printing and modeling to the project. He went on to describe the goals of this project.

"In the short term, we already have some milestones and some deliverables," Cortes said. "We need to provide the scientific foundations of how the machine works ... there is a learning curve so in the short term we need to fully understand how the machine works."

While there is still much to learn for the team on this project, Cortes has hopes the results they produce will be well worth the effort.

"In the long-term, we expect to create molds for the automotive and the aerospace industry that they actually can have and test and show why this could be the

solution, versus typical powder based electronic manufacturing from a safety and an economic point of view. The long-term [goal] is to show that this is a solution for 3D printing at least for these two sectors," Cortes said.

He also believes this project could give YSU an edge over other engineering programs.

"In the future, we can use that system to explore new materials and new processes, and that gives an advantage to the students to have that edge that other universities don't have," he said.

Cortes also noted the business value in this project. He explained the Youngstown Business Incubator's important part of the project. The incubator has extensive experience in attracting businesses and industries, which will boost the economics of this project. He also wanted to express that anybody who is interested can come to the Excellence Training Center to see this system.

"The machine is at the ETC, so if you ever want to stop by make contact with Jackie Ruller. We'd love to have visits from faculty, from students, but also from businesses so they could see why this could be an option for what they are trying to produce," Cortes said. "And still, we are heavily manufacturing in this region, so I'm pretty sure this could be an option for a lot of industries in the region."

Reorganization of Student Affairs leads to increased collaboration

By Henry Shorr
The Jambar

The three vice presidents in charge of each part of the Division of Student Affairs have found greater room for collaboration in the year since the department reorganized.

Joy Polkabla Byers, associate vice president of Student Experience, has found that since consolidating these different departments, the division of Student Affairs has more effectively aided students this past year.

“Our students have such unique needs and we need to pay attention to them. And being able to really focus on our unique areas that fall under the three of us has allowed us to become more expert in what we’re doing and helping with the resources to help students,” she said.

Polkabla Byers has worked at Youngstown State University for almost 17 years and has worn many hats. In her role as the head of Student Experience, she oversees the offices of Veterans’ Affairs, Campus Recreation, Student Activities and Housing and Residence life as well as many other aspects of the YSU experience. She takes pride in knowing that she is helping to “create that sense of belonging and passion for students.”

Polkabla Byers spoke about the impact the COVID-19 pandemic had on move-in and how the division overcame problems at the beginning of the semester.

“Right before move-in, we had some staff members and some students that ended up getting COVID, and we still had a job to do. Everybody stepped up — whether they were in enrollment management or if they were in the dean of students — we all focused on the students,” she said.

Elaine Ruse, associate vice president for Student En-

rollment and Business Services, spoke about this event as well. She said she was proud of how quickly everyone worked together to make things run as smoothly as possible for the students.

“It was a really proud moment for the three of us to be able to come out of a tough situation that could have really hurt our students who were trying to move in during a stressful period. That was a really visible example of where customer service was improved, not hindered,” Ruse said.

She is also appreciative of the expanded collaboration between the offices.

“It took a little bit of time to coordinate things, but we are doing great things in a collaborative manner because we each get to focus on the needs of our students for the areas we’re responsible for and yet we get to collaborate where there is overlap and referrals needed,” she said.

Ruse’s Student Enrollment and Business Services offices — which include Undergraduate Admissions and Financial Aid and Scholarships — have had to take on greater responsibilities during the pandemic.

Undergraduate Admissions offered numerous virtual recruitment programs in addition to testing-optional admission. The Office of Financial Aid and Scholarships had to implement applications and processes to administer and disburse \$26 million in HEERF funding while following federal regulations and implementing other COVID-19 appeal processes for loss of income and academic progress.

The pandemic created additional stress for students who were already experiencing financial or personal challenges. Ruse worked closely with both Polkabla Byers and Nicole Kent-Strollo to ensure the financial needs of the students were met.

“We all worked really well together before, so it’s been

nice to have these services working closer together under one umbrella,” Kent-Strollo said.

Kent-Strollo, dean of students and Ombudsperson — who previously developed and served as Director of the Office of Student Outreach and Support — finds that in her role in the division of Student Affairs, she is still doing much of what she did before, but more effectively.

“In the role that I am in — quite frankly — a lot of what I do, I did before. But at this point, I have the ability and authority to, in this position, make some quicker changes,” she said.

The Office of the Dean of Students has many services under its banner including Student Counseling Services, Community Standards and Student Conduct, Student Advocacy and Support, and Compass Family and Community Services — including Rape Crisis and Sojourner House. Kent-Strollo said having all of these services under the same office creates a more holistic approach to aiding students.

“We have all of those [services] under one umbrella, and a really outstanding team of people who are in those fields and are just so willing and capable of helping students who deal with very extenuating situations — things that without this assistance would serve as really big barriers to their ability to succeed as a student at YSU,” Kent-Strollo said.

The trifecta of Polkabla Byers, Kent-Strollo and Ruse is able to do more for students because this reorganization has made collaboration and referral between their departments much easier.

“Ultimately, that’s our goal. We want to recruit them and we want to retain them, and I take it personally when I find out a student is not having a good experience,” Polkabla Byers said.



Nicole Kent-Strollo and the Dean of Students’ office hold a resource fair to show students all the department has to offer.

Photo by Henry Shorr / The Jambar

COMING TOGETHER

Student Counseling Services offers new support groups

By C. Aileen Blaine
The Jambar

Though the pandemic has caused many to feel lonely or isolated, Youngstown State University's Student Counseling Services is kicking off the spring semester with some new groups and activities.

Ann Jaronski, director of Student Counseling Services, said it's sometimes difficult getting enough people together to have a meaningful group experience, but the pandemic has brought to light how many are craving connections with others.

"We've been so separate and apart for the last two years that coming together or being in the same space with people — just in and of itself — can be very healing for people," she said.

Jaronski acknowledged that though some may be unsure about joining support groups with strangers, Student Counseling Services will assist in fostering a helpful community.

"It's normal to be apprehensive or nervous going into the unknown," she said. "But that's normal. That's a piece of what we as therapists are trained to deal with."

In addition to the new groups sessions, counseling services has also joined resources with the Andrews Student Recreation and Wellness Center to offer the campus community biofeedback and light therapy devices for checkout.

"We know that the shorter days — the gray days — are not really conducive to uplifting people's moods, espe-

Upcoming groups include the following:

- **Telling Your Story:** 3 p.m. Feb. 2, 9 and 16
- **Managing Anxiety/Stress for a Healthy Life:** 12 p.m. every Friday
- **Managing Life Transitions:** 2 p.m. Feb. 1, 8, 15 and 22
- **Step Out of Social Anxiety:** 3 p.m. Feb 3, 10, 17 and 24; March 17, 24 and 31; April 7
- **Self-Care:** 12 p.m. March 15, 22 and 29; April 5
- **Gratitude — Finding Meaning and Thriving:** 3 p.m. March 30; April 6, 13 and 20

cially if they're sensitive to light," Jaronski said.

Light therapy can help reduce the symptoms of seasonal affective disorder, sleep disorders and forms of depression by using LED lights that mimic sunlight. The boxes can also help increase the effectiveness of antidepressants and mental health counseling.

As with any supplemental treatments, those with certain conditions should check with their health care professionals before engaging in biofeedback or light therapies. More information about the biofeedback and light therapy resources can be found on the counseling services' website.

For those considering seeking mental health assistance, Jaronski wants to reassure them that all appointments and matters discussed are kept confidential.

"We're not sharing information with faculty, friends, family or random people on the street," she said. "And we're used to talking to all kinds of people, we're used to talking to people who might not know what to say or how to say it."

The office also offers an after-hours hotline service for those who are having a mental health crisis or need to talk to a mental health professional.

"Mental health issues don't necessarily limit themselves to normal business hours," Jaronski said.

The hotline can be reached by selecting the menu option under the office's main phone number at 330-941-3737.



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The Penguins' guide to staying safe

By **Jillian McIntosh**
Jambar contributor

College campuses are a place where students are at risk of being victimized. Youngstown State University officials advise students to be proactive about their safety in social settings.

Dana Lantz, director of Equal Opportunity, Policy Development and Title IX, said the tampering of drinks is a concern she and her staff take seriously.

“Drink out of sealed containers that you open, travel with your friends and have a designated driver that can act as a bystander,” she said. “Never leave a drink unattended or take from other people.”

According to YSU nursing instructor Teresa Peck, a registered nurse with a Master of Science in nursing, it’s difficult to recognize if someone has been drugged when under the influence.

“If you notice your drink tastes funny, looks cloudy or changes color, or if you think you saw someone near or messing with your drink, do not drink and discard it,” she said. “Find a safe person immediately and tell them that your drink has been spiked.”

Lantz agrees, “Spiking drinks is something that we have to focus on preventing because after the fact, it’s too late.”

YSU police Chief Shawn Varso said there are reports of tampering of drinks at local bars in Youngstown.

“On campus itself, we have not had any evidence of that happening,” he said.

The YSU Title IX office handles reports for many

types of victimization, including assault and stalking, relationship stalking and discrimination on the basis of one’s sex or gender.

In cases of sexual harrassment, students can file a report to the YSU Title IX team by visiting ysu.edu/title-ix/reporting. Families of students, faculty, staff and community members can file a report as well.

Lantz said stalking is an additional risk students should be aware of.

“We have seen some complaints of stalking or what appears to be capable of developing into stalking,” she said. “And they typically happen over social media, texting and phone.”

Tracking devices, including Apple AirTags, can be used for stalking. The intended purpose of the device is to monitor the location of lost items.

Varso said there have been no reports to YSU police of technology-based stalking.

He said if a student finds such a device, they should immediately contact the police department at 330-941-3527 or visit the station.

“We can take a look at the device. If it is an Apple AirTag, we may be able to identify the owner who purchased it,” Varso said.

Apple released a software update that will notify the person by sound or iPhone alert if an unknown device is detected nearby.

Students who own Android products can download the app AirGuard. The app periodically scans for nearby tracking devices.

Students should take precautions and understand how to recognize the following symptoms:

- Feeling overly tired or going in and out of consciousness
- Feeling drunker than you would expect for what you have had to drink
- Slurring of speech
- Dizziness
- Shortness of breath
- Vomiting
- Confusion or loss of memory upon awakening

COVID-19 update

Sydney Stalnecker
The Jambar

Youngstown State University’s campus has been bustling with students, faculty and staff during the first two weeks of the semester. However, the number of reported COVID-19 cases has increased overall.

YSU reported 237 cases of COVID-19 during the first two weeks, 23 cases more than the 214 reported over winter break.

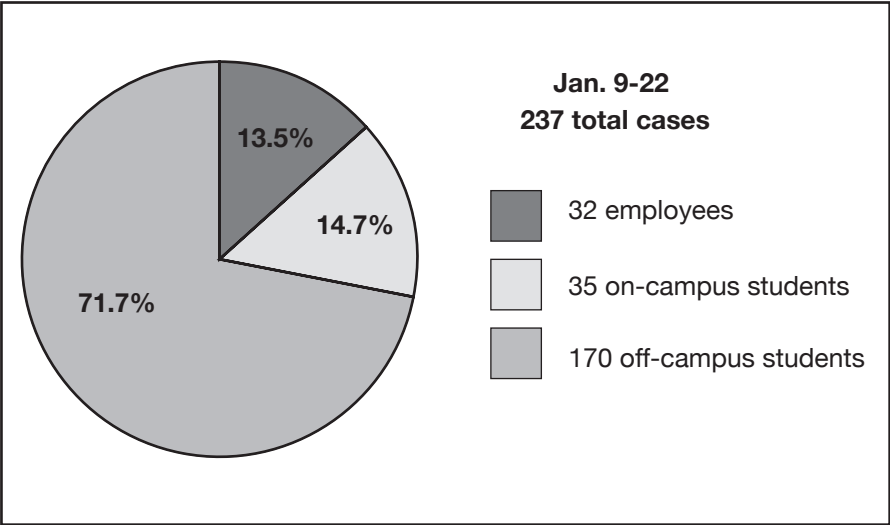
Of the 237 cases, 170 were students liv-

ing off campus, 35 were students on campus and 32 were employees.

However, only 79 of the 237 cases were reported during the second week of the semester. This shows a 50% decrease in cases from the 158 cases reported in the first week.

Through YSU’s asymptomatic voluntary testing program, 97 people were tested during the first two weeks. Only 7 people tested positive, resulting in a 7% positivity rate.

Stay safe, Penguins!



LEARNING OPPORTUNITY

Free tax filing for YSU community

By Jessica Stamp
The Jambar

At Youngstown State University, the Williamson College of Business Administration is providing free tax services most Saturdays.

The WCBA can start scheduling anyone in the YSU community Feb. 5 until April 9 by appointment only.

The tax service program is called VITA, a volunteer income tax assistance program, and is offered as a credit course for students called income tax preparation. The course teaches students about tax law and tax preparation software.

Ray Shaffer, accounting professor in the department of Lariccia School of Accounting and Finance, believes this course is a good opportunity for students to learn tax returns and take advantage of it being free.

“Students actually get to talk to the taxpayers, so they

improve their communication and interviewing skills. They learn about the taxes and how to prepare them with the software, so it’s a great learning experience,” Shaffer said. “They get academic credit, and the taxpayers who come in love it because they get their taxes done for free.”

The program allows community volunteers and students in the course to participate in filing free tax returns. Taxpayers can simply drop off their information and come back when it’s done or wait while their taxes are being filed.

Over 20 students have started training for the course, and began preparing for taxes with an additional four to five experienced volunteers that return every year to help.

“We have about 22 students taking [the class] for credit and we have a couple more that are doing it as volunteers. Plus, we have four or five volunteers that

have come back year after year,” Shaffer said. “They’ve been doing it for at least 10-15 years, and they are experienced volunteers to help us review returns.”

Shaffer said the added volunteer helps eliminate any possible errors and mistakes that could occur while filing.

Students can start filing as soon as they gather the documents they need to file with. Documents that must be obtained are W-2 forms, forms 1099 and other information about income.

Shaffer recommends making an appointment as soon as possible due to spots being filled so quickly.

“A lot of people come back year after year ... They love the service. They like to talk to our students,” Shaffer said. “It makes for a nice day. Students learn a lot, not just in taxes, they learn how to communicate, how to work with people — it’s just that everybody wins.”

To schedule an appointment, call 330-941-2507.

Poetic beginning at YSU campus

By Elizabeth Coss
The Jambar

Youngstown State University has a new organization on its campus. The Poetry Club has started this semester with the attempt to help with engagement in reading, writing and enjoying poetry in all its forms.

Emily Vero, a sophomore integrated language arts major, started the club after noticing a lack of one at the university.

“I just wanted this to be a safe space for people to share work of their own or share work of another that they like, and really just build a community around a special interest — which is poetry,” Vero said.

She also plans on using the club as an opportunity to

accomplish some philanthropic goals.

“I want to host a book drive to donate books to maybe the Rescue Mission or local shelters around here,” Vero said.

Freshman linguistics and American Sign Language double major Jiana Gearo said she has wanted the club for a long time and looks forward to using the club as a creative outlet.

“You have the ability to get creative and do what it is you love to do,” she said.

Gearo also said one of the types of poetry she hopes to express in the club is spoken word.

“Spoken word is more like writing poetry that is more on social justice issues and things you’re passionate about,” Gearo said. “It defies the laws of what you think

about poetry.”

Junior psychology major Anthony DePascale joined the club as a way to get into more leadership positions while trying something new and he hopes other students will join too.

“I think we’ve already established a pretty good community. I’m pretty sure we have at least 10 to 20 students who are interested,” DePascale said. “You can just come and listen and see if you enjoy it.”

The club is still working on a meeting time and location but plans to have one set soon. For students interested in reaching out or joining the organization, reach out through any of the Poetry Club’s social media pages.

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Photo courtesy of Lauren Potts

Buster's Brigade and Artists of the Rust Belt will host the Winter Market event for a chance to have the community interact.

Annual Winter Market takes place at B&O Station Banquet Hall

By C. Aileen Blaine
The Jambar

Though the weather outside is frightful, Youngstown's B&O Station Banquet Hall will host its 13th annual Winter Market to chase the winter blues away with colorful arts and crafts.

Hosted by local nonprofit organization Buster's Brigade and artisanal group Artists of the Rust Belt, the event provides an opportunity for crafters, artisans and shoppers to engage with and support the community.

Lauren Potts, Artists of the Rust Belt administrator, said the market is an opportunity for couples to spend time shopping for Valentine's Day gifts outside of the traditional dinner date and box of chocolates.

"We always try to have the market before Valentine's Day, so if people want to get their significant other a unique gift, they can," Potts said. "Even if they want to go shopping together and pick some things out — they can do that, too."

The station's kitchen will be open for the duration of

the market, meaning that guests can grab a bite to eat between visits to vendors' boutiques. After a brief hiatus last year, participants are excited to return.

"The B&O Station is a beautiful venue and it has so much meaning in Youngstown, so we're really excited to be back another year," Potts said.

About 32 vendors are expected to be there, selling everything from jewelry and refurbished furniture to photography prints and gourmet treats. One thing the market strives to be is a haven for authentic artisans, meaning that vendors selling out-of-box or non-home-made products — while not barred from participation — aren't the focal point of the event.

"We try to keep it genuine at the market," Potts said. "We want it to be a way to support local artists and crafters and artisans, because they're all so talented. Not that those out-of-box vendors don't have a time or place, but that's not what our focus is."

Vendors include local businesses such as Sandpiper Soaps, Lunalu Artisan Jewelry, Rustic Lamps and Linda's Bee Farm.

Nichole Rich, owner of Art by Nichole, specializes in hand-painted dot mandala paintings on a variety of products, such as canvases, wooden boxes, candleholders, jewelry and handmade stones. She said she's participated in the Winter Market since 2017, and it's one of her favorite venues.

"All of the artists are incredibly talented, and it's a really great atmosphere," Rich said. "There's music, and the food coming out of that kitchen is always delicious."

The market is also an opportunity for the community to support Buster's Brigade. The organization directs funds to local animal shelters and rescues, including Angels for Animals, and will sponsor a raffle with donations from the artists.

"There's a small charge at the door, but it's for a really great cause," Rich said. "Buster's Brigade helps animals get the care they need."

The market runs from 11 a.m.–5 p.m. Sunday, Feb. 6. Admission is \$1 at the door. For more information, visit the event's page on Facebook.

LET IT SNOW

Penguins have fun in the snow

By Elizabeth Coss
The Jambar

For over a week, Youngstown State University has been covered in snow, and faculty and students have made the most out of the almost 13 inches covering the grass.

Donald Priour, associate professor in physics and astronomy, built not one, but two igloos between the Ward Beecher Hall and Maag Library.

Priour found the act of making the igloos both rewarding and satisfying enough to stay the night in the first igloo he built Jan. 18.

"I occupied the igloo for approximately five hours between about 11:30 p.m. and 4:30 a.m. Tuesday evening until I decided to vacate the structure and take a quick nap in my office prior to my morning class," Priour said.

To stay the night, Priour brought pillows, a waterproof blanket, a comforter and a smaller blanket, and he used plastic containers as makeshift tables for various items like gloves, glasses and a can of Dr Pepper.

Priour saw building the igloos on campus as an opportunity he couldn't pass up, noting not just his enjoyment from the experience of making the igloos, but also the university's.

"I also have often thought that at a fundamental level, most — if not all — of us are kids at heart, and it can be rewarding and invigorating to do something challenging simply for the sake of doing that thing. Also in that vein, I wanted to set up a space for members of the campus community to enjoy," Priour said.

Faculty weren't the only ones taking advantage of fun in the snow. One student, Spencer Tatta, a sophomore marketing major, saw the weather as an opportunity to not only enjoy the snowfall, but to also build a giant snowman on campus.

Tatta started working on the snowman Jan. 19 in the afternoon and finished it that night with the help of others at the university.

"I started the snowman on my own, but people saw and joined in. Through the day, I had 50+ people help me build the snowman," he said.

Tatta said he started the snowman as content for his YouTube channel, and he constructed it somewhere for everyone to see.

While some enjoyed the snow on campus, YSU's grounds department was busy managing the snow on the roads and keeping them free of ice.

David Ewing, associate director of Grounds, said YSU sets routes for its snow trucks then sends them out onto the roads.

"We have dump trucks with salt spreaders on the back of them, so we'll plow them and salt them," Ewing said.

Grounds also plows the sidewalks, entrance ways, steps and parking lots at the university.

Ewing said as far as unplowed sidewalks are concerned, it falls on the owner of the property to clear the snow.

For any questions about YSU's snow treatment process, students can call the grounds department at 330-941-7200.



A friendly snowman sits outside of Tod Hall, cheerfully greeting students and faculty.

Photo by Elizabeth Coss / The Jambar

TESTING GROUP COMMUNICATION

YSU team-building programs are personalized to challenge any team

By Aaron J. Frantz
Jambar contributor

The Andrews Student Recreation and Wellness Center welcomes all teams and groups to join its custom team building and challenge course program. The program is intended to increase communication skills while also stimulating team chemistry.

R.J. Markowitz, coordinator of Youngstown State University's Adventure Recreation, is the leader behind the program offered at YSU.

"The activities are structured in a way that they can go through an activity [or] challenge and then talk with the facilitator about the skills they used or didn't use during the game," Markowitz said. "They can then take what they learned and apply it to their real-world team."

He said the addition of the high ropes course helped campus and community groups grow.

"The addition of the high ropes course gave groups the opportunity to grow together as a group while taking on a challenge together," Markowitz said.

Bailey Simon, marketing major and student supervisor at the rec center, assists custom team building programs. His focus is to help teams communicate and

"We will have groups of various ages and sizes come through and play a lot of games,"... "We try to help build that chemistry, not only while they are in the program but after when they leave."

— Bailey Simon,
marketing major and student supervisor at the rec center

function better as a team.

"We will have groups of various ages and sizes come through and play a lot of games," Simon said. "We try to help build that chemistry, not only while they are in the program but after when they leave."

Some of the other activities provided in the team-building program include climbing the rock wall, indoor or outdoor games and challenges. Games and challenges are curated for each team's desires and are designed to encourage critical thinking, trust, commu-

nication, leadership and most importantly fun, even though it might seem scary to some.

"There might be a little bit of fear involved, but when they are able to face it as a group it really helps bond and unites a team together," Simon said.

Markowitz said the custom team-building program has received nothing but positive feedback from the groups, teams and staff who have completed the program.

"The elevated course was indeed a challenge for each person in our group who participated. Watching those who were fearful find the courage to take part and be able to connect the physical challenge to life's challenges was wonderful. The staff was excellent in making us feel safe and helping to reduce our anxiety," Eastern Gateway summer program participants said.

Simon is passionate about the program and wants those who participate to have a good time while also sparking a team's chemistry.

"When they build their chemistry and are able to see that they can work together and trust each other, everything starts to fall into place," Simon said.

THE JAMBAR POLICY

Since being founded by Burke Lyden in 1931, The Jambar has won nine Associated Press Collegiate Press honors. The Jambar is published weekly in the spring and fall semesters. The Jambar is free for YSU students and faculty.

EDITORIAL POLICY

The editorial board consists of the editor-in-chief, managing editor, news editor, sports editor, arts and entertainment editor and head copy editor. These opinion pieces are written separately from news articles and do not reflect the opinions of any individual staff member. The Jambar's business manager, multimedia journalists and non-writing staff do not contribute to editorials, and the adviser does not have final approval.

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The Jambar encourages letters to the editor. Submissions are welcome at thejambar@gmail.com. Letters should concern a campus issue, must be typed and must not exceed 400 words. Submissions must include the writer's name and telephone number for verification, along with the writer's city of residence for publication. The Jambar does not withhold the names of guest commentators. Letters are subject to editing for spelling, grammar and clarity. Letters will not be rejected based on the views expressed in them. The editorial board reserves the right to reject commentaries and letters if they are not relevant to our readers, seek free publicity, fail to defend opinion with facts from reliable sources or if the editorial staff has decided that the subject has been sufficiently aired. The editorial board will request a rewrite from the submitted writer based on these requirements. The Jambar will not print letters that are libelous, threatening, obscene or indecent. The views and opinions expressed in letters and commentaries on the opinion page do not necessarily reflect those of The Jambar staff. Editorials do not necessarily reflect the opinions of the faculty, staff or administration of YSU.

Quote of the week

'My idea of good company, Mr. Elliot, is the company of clever, well-informed people, who have a great deal of conversation; that is what I call good company.'
'You are mistaken,' said he gently, 'that is not good company, that is the best.'

— Jane Austen, Persuasion

CROSSWORD KEY
FROM JAN. 13 ISSUE

1 H
2 P E N N Y
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6 V A C C I N
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46 B E E G H L Y
47 W H I T E

The Jambar Editorial

Winter Wonderland

The spring semester fills some students with dread. Every weathered northeastern Ohio college student knows to expect the chilling temperatures and snowfalls.

Seasoned Youngstown State University students expect the sidewalks to be untouched by shovels and roads to be poorly plowed. Part of every students' morning routine consists of leaving extra time to prepare for and work around the road conditions.

This year has been no different.

During the past two weeks, there've been multiple

snowfalls. Some sidewalks remain completely covered despite there being two weeks to clear them. It is not unknown that these sidewalks are heavily used by students, staff and the general Youngstown community.

Sidewalk clearing responsibilities fall on the City of Youngstown, private building owners and YSU Grounds. Even if there is a lack of employees, there should be a way to manage clearing sidewalks — especially those used as frequently as the university's.

Sidewalks aren't the only issue, either. Parking lots have also been poorly plowed. On some days, it has

been difficult to see the lines in the open parking lots. The snow has also been piled up in a manner which shortens some parking spaces.

Despite these inconveniences, YSU students, including us at The Jambar, have been having fun in the snow.

We encourage you to embrace your inner child and take some time to enjoy this crazy amount of snow. Build a snowman, make a snow angel or have a snowball fight. Don't let Youngstown's poor road maintenance bring down the cheer of the winter wonderland.

The Jambar Column

Taking struggles in stride

I was born with a rare mutation of my RYR1 gene. This mutation causes extreme muscular weakness and pain, along with other things. With this, I have learned to advocate for myself and other disabled people over the years.

Yet, that didn't stop me from developing internalized ableism. For as much struggle as I have in my daily life, there was one thing I took pride in: while I had the support of those around me, I didn't use mobility aids.

I settled for struggling every day. That felt all right. I accepted the way it was, it made me feel normal. At least if someone didn't know that something wasn't typical, they wouldn't be able to look at me and tell.

Even if I was struggling, I felt like less of a "freak."

But then the pandemic hit. From March 2020 to August 2021, I didn't walk much on a daily basis. Upon returning to campus, I found myself even weaker than before. Just getting through the day was painful and exhausting. I was at my lowest physical point.

Worst of all was my balance. I have always had trouble, but when I returned to campus, I could barely stand still with-



Mac Pomeroy

out stumbling. It got to the point where I could no longer walk alone down the hallway. My professors were wonderful and agreed to walk me to my car, but I no longer had any independence on campus. It wasn't worth appearing "normal."

Pride and the fear of being seen as a burden to others can act as great barriers in our daily lives. There often seems to be a set path for how we need to act and behave, even if we hurt ourselves in the process.

On Oct. 3, I went into my family's storage room and grabbed the cane that used to belong to my grandmother. Some practice that evening quickly showed an improvement in my stability. I already knew that this was the right next step.

Mentally preparing to take it to campus was another challenge. I felt as though the cane was some huge flashing sign screaming, "LOOK AT ME." I texted my friends to warn them about my new companion and prepared a much more

subtle outfit than I normally wear to avoid drawing any extra attention.

Heading to class the next day, I found myself wishing I had left the cane in the car. People kept glancing at me. My heart felt like it was going to explode out of my chest and I was going to faint. Still, it was too late to ditch the stick, so I kept pushing forward.

That day, I was able to handle myself. I did not feel unsafe nor the need to walk with anyone else. I wasn't afraid.

Every day, things got easier. By relying on the walking stick, I was less pained and exhausted everyday. I felt better than I had in a very long time.

Every day, I cared less about what people might think.

The fear of being seen as less than by others for doing what is best for yourself is not limited to disabled people — it's rather common.

Maybe it's that you don't speak up when you need help, or you struggle to admit something is wrong out of fear of being a burden. Maybe you've been dealing with a life-damaging problem on your own because it seems better than having people know something is wrong.

Stop that. If keeping up with society's

perceived expectations is causing you harm and suffering, then stop worrying about it. Struggling is never worth that extra bit of pride. Being frustrated and keeping your difficulties to yourself does not make you more likable, nor does it alleviate anyone else's problems.

Stop worrying about going outside of the norm if it helps you live a more fulfilling life.

The day I started using my cane, I was worried about people staring and judging me. And they did look. I know now they weren't looking at me. They heard the click as the tip hit the tile, and looked to see what the sound was.

Once they realized what the noise was, no one cared. They went back to their own thoughts and their own problems.

Now, I am living a more secure life. I even learned to embrace the cane, taking the whole flashing sign thing a bit literal by getting a light up acrylic cane. And I love it. I love how the bolder cane matches me, and I love the ease it brings.

No amount of social stress or anxiety is worth giving up the freedom it brings to my life, nor is it worth any resistance you have in yours.

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At Jambar TV by the Jambar

Track and field breaks records

By John Ostapowicz
The Jambar

Junior Erin Bogard set a new school record in the women's pole vault, clearing a 4.05-meter bar at the Youngstown State University Icebreaker on Friday, Dec. 3, 2021.

Senior Wyatt Lefker also set a new Youngstown State record at the Icebreaker as he cleared a 5.15-meter pole vault which offset his previous record of a 4.95-meter vault set during the 2021 indoor season.

On Jan. 15, standout senior Sean Peterson broke the Youngstown State 1,000-meter run record, posting a time of 2:22.17. The previous record was held by Youngstown State alumnus R.D. Go-dright, which was set in 2006 with a time of 2:27.70.

Although Peterson was debuting in his

first 1,000-meter run, he and his coach knew that going into the race, he had a chance to break the school record if he executed to his full potential.

"Coming into the meet, me and my coach knew that there was a good chance I could take the record, so it was just a matter of executing," Peterson said.

Peterson has had an impressive career at Youngstown State. He was named the Nike Horizon League Track and Field Men's Runner of the Week twice for the weeks of March 30, 2021, and April 13, 2021. He was named the Alfreeda Goff Men's Indoor Track and Field Player of the Year in 2021 as he posted an incredible time in the men's 1-mile run with 4:17.68.

Peterson also won his fourth consecutive men's 800-meter run title with a time of 1:54.63, making him the first runner to accomplish this feat in Horizon

League history.

In regard to his career, Peterson said he's happy that he has been given a lot of opportunities and is thankful for all the people he has met along the way.

"It's been a fun experience. I've met a lot of people, got to go to a lot of cool places for meets and got to make fun memories with a lot of people here," Peterson said.

On Saturday, Jan. 21, 2022, Youngstown State's standout stars were back in action at the Youngstown State University Collegiate Invitational in the Watson and Tressel Training Site.

Bogard was the highlight of the event as she broke her previous record at the Youngstown State University Collegiate Invitational by clearing a 4.11-meter bar on her third and final attempt.

Senior Suerethia Henderson had a record breaking day as well, setting a new

Youngstown State Collegiate Invitational record in the 200-meter dash with a time of 24.57 to earn her second event win of the season.

Lefker also performed well as he cleared 4.97-meters in the men's pole vault to place second in the event, which makes that his third top three finish on the season.

Freshman Victoria Lanese had a noteworthy day at women's high jump as she cleared 1.74 meters on her first attempt, nabbing first place in the event. This is the third straight event victory of the season for Lanese.

The Youngstown State track and field team is back at the WATTS on Friday, Jan. 28 and Saturday, Jan. 29 to host the annual Youngstown State Mid-Major Invitational. The meet is slated to begin at 3 p.m. Friday and 10 a.m. Saturday.

Women's bowling rolls into spring season with a striking start

By John Ostapowicz
The Jambar

The Youngstown State University women's bowling team traveled to Deptford, New Jersey, this past weekend to compete in the Northeast Classic at Bowlero Deptford. The three-day tournament kicked off at 10:55 a.m. Friday, Jan. 21 with a strong start to the day.

The team was able to set a new standard for the highest Baker's match with 1,164 pins. The team's five-match total of 5,321 pins was also a new school record by more than 100 pins as the previous record was 5,229 pins, which was set back in February 2021.

The high pinfall put Youngstown State in second place in the tournament behind Vanderbilt, with one more day of qualifying.

Women's bowling head coach Doug Kuberski reflected on last semester and said the team needs to improve its execution, teambuilding and communication skills.

"We took a lot of our notes and reflections from the semester break and did a solid job as a group putting them into our process," Kuberski said in an interview with ysusports.com

Junior Megan Grams, sophomore Madyson Marx, sophomore Kirsten Moore, freshman Jade Cote and senior Emma Wrenn bowled from start to finish as they topped 1,040 pins in four of their five sets.

The Youngstown State bowling team also captured a victory over No. 12 ranked Duquesne University 1,045-958, as well as a win over 17th-ranked Long Island University 1,075-926.

The Penguins also won against 18th-ranked University of Maryland-Eastern Shore 1,1164-999. In the team's only loss of the day, it fell to 14th-ranked Delaware State 930-1,107.

On Saturday, Jan. 22, the women's bowling team was able to earn a pair of wins over top-five ranked opponents to earn a chance to compete for a tournament title Jan. 23.

As a team, the Penguins went 3-2 in head-to-head matches on Saturday as they were able to add 5,075 pins to their record-breaking total from Friday's matches. The 5,075 pinfall was the second-highest total pinfall for a traditional round in program history.

The women finished just three pins behind Vanderbilt University with a pin total of 10,396 in their 10 qualify-

ing matches.

Individually, Wrenn was the difference maker as she had the second best five-game set of her career with 1,076 pins allowing her to tie for 16th place.

Grams was only 11 pins behind her fellow teammate with 1,065 pins, placing 23rd.

Moore finished 30th with 1,039 pins, Cote placed 58th with 949 pins, and Marx placed 59th with 946 pins.

On Sunday, Jan. 23, the Youngstown State bowling team made school history by defeating top-ranked Sam Houston State University twice to finish third at the Northeast Classic. It was the first time in school history that the Penguins beat the NTCA top-ranked team.

Youngstown State averaged a whopping 217.6 pins, which made school history as the team's highest tournament average.

Kuberski felt that over the three-day tournament, the team grew closer and worked in sync with each other as well as having fun down the stretch.

The Youngstown State bowling team is on the road Jan. 28-30 at the Prairie View A&M University Invitational at the Training and Research Center in Arlington, Texas.



Photo courtesy of Robert Hayes

Michael Akuchie scored his 1000th career point Jan. 13 against Northern Kentucky.

Major milestone hit for senior men's basketball player

By Cameron Stubbs
The Jambar

The Youngstown State University men's basketball team has passed the midway point of the season, going 10-10 overall while only going 4-6 in conference play. As of now, it's sitting in eighth place in the conference.

With the team underachieving so far, there are a few bright spots that have shined through for the team. One of those bright spots is senior forward Michael Akuchie and his career points as a Penguin.

Akuchie, a 6-foot-8-inch senior from Plantation, Florida, just became the 41st player in program history to record 1,000 total career points. This achievement was accomplished in the home loss against Northern Kentucky on Jan. 13. Akuchie finished the night with 12 points, but that was not enough to overpower the Norse as the game was lost 68-67.

Akuchie, known for his paint presence, is also a well-schooled student. During Akuchie's high school years in Florida, he finished with a 4.2 GPA and was a 4-year letter winner. Averaging 17 points, eight rebounds and five assists per game, which was good enough to land him on

the Miami Herald All-Broward Second Team.

Coming north all the way to Youngstown State to play basketball and to major in marketing management would be tough on anyone making that trip, but Akuchie has made the most of it. Surrounded by new obstacles, he has no fear of any of them.

"It means a lot. I'm not from here — this is a new place, new family, new people, everyone has welcomed me with open arms. The love that people have shown me. [I'm] thankful for everything that they showed me. All the work that I've put [in] over my five years is paying off," Akuchie said.

Akuchie came to Youngstown State ready to make an impact, and the evidence of that has already been seen. In his second career game at the collegiate level, Akuchie scored a career high 28 points in just 21 minutes against the Franciscan Barons.

Continuing to grow throughout his sophomore season, a very different Akuchie was born in his junior season. Scoring in double figures 14 times this season was seven more than his previous two seasons combined. His senior season was highlighted by his Horizon League record of 24 rebounds, a double-double perfor-

mance in overtime against Robert Morris.

Now in his fifth year, Akuchie is averaging 12.8 points with 7.2 rebounds per game. The second half of the season will have to be even better for him and the Penguins.

"I expect a lot of good things, a lot of confidence from a lot of people, a lot of patience," Akuchie said. "We've [played] every team basically except for a couple. People understand the league more, understand when they're going to get their shots, understand roles a little bit more. I imagine everybody will calm down, play their game. I feel we'll do really well in this second half of conference play."

Akuchie was more excited grabbing his 700th rebound for the team than scoring his 1,000th point.

"When I'm being effective or I'm scoring or I'm drawing attention, I feel like that allows [my teammates] to play their game, be free, be a threat, be aggressive, just play freely. It helps me, too," Akuchie said.

Akuchie and the Penguins look forward to playing the University of Wisconsin Green Bay Phoenix at home Jan. 27, hoping to start the fire they need to get back on top in the division.

Women's basketball suffers first conference loss

By Kyle Wills
The Jambar

The Youngstown State University women's basketball team had mixed results at home, splitting the weekend homestead against conference opponents.

On Jan. 14, the women won big against Robert Morris University 69-46 despite having an off night offensively. The team shot 24-for-72 combined and 10-for-35 beyond the arc. However, it used 21 forced turnovers to help them leap past the Colonials.

Senior Lilly Ritz and junior Paige Shy carried the offense as Ritz finished with a double-double of 21 points and 15 rebounds while Shy was on fire from the 3-point line, draining five of her eight shots from deep. Her five shots from long range accounted for all 15 of her points.

Two days later, the Penguins again struggled offensively, as they lost to Indiana University-Purdue University Indianapolis in overtime 76-68. The team had an almost identical showing, shooting 24-for-71 combined and 9-for-35 from the 3-point, while also forcing 22 turnovers.

Despite having over 20 turnovers, the Jaguars shot 52% overall as a team to help them stretch past the Penguins.

Senior Chelsea Olson fouled out in the last quarter and was unable to play in the extra period. Head coach John Barnes said not having the team's leader in overtime was an enormous blow.

"I felt like we were defeated after they made that run

[at the end of the game] and then not having Chelsea — our body language wasn't great. Chelsea's an All-Conference player, so that was a big part," Barnes said.

Sophomore guard Malia Magestro said it was challenging not having their point guard, but the team also needed to play a complete game.

"It was hard having [Olson] out. We let go at the end of overtime, we felt defeated a little bit. We knew it would be a battle, so we just needed to play 40 minutes," Magestro said.

The following week on Jan. 20, Youngstown State once again battled Robert Morris on the road as senior guard Megan Callahan's late game heroics helped put the Penguins on top 59-57.

Callahan finished the game with 13 points on 5-for-13 shooting, including 3-for-8 behind the 3-point line. Her final shot from deep at the buzzer changed fortunes for the Penguins.

Ritz recorded a double-double of 16 points and 10 rebounds, while Magestro was also in double figures with 11 points and found the net on three of her four 3-pointers. Sophomore guard Lexi Wagner made the most of her minutes off the bench, scoring 11 points on 3-for-5 shooting.

As a team, Youngstown State had issues controlling the ball as it committed 16 turnovers in the game.

Two days later, the women once again battled the Colonials for the third time in two weeks. The Penguins were once again victors 61-44.

Ritz had a monster game on the glass as she finished

the contest with 18 rebounds to go along with 17 points. She also was a force in the paint, blocking two shots. Her performances last week gained her recognition, and she was awarded this week's Nike Horizon League Player of the Week.

Magestro also had a big game, scoring 14 points on 4-for-7 shooting, including a last second layup to end the first quarter.

As a team, it was phenomenal at the line, converting 17-of-21 free throw attempts. Defensively, the Penguins held the Colonials to under 30% shooting and to 3-for-14 beyond the arc, while also forcing 10 turnovers.

Youngstown State had better control of the ball this time around against Robert Morris as it struggled to keep possession in its previous contest. Coach Barnes would love to constantly see this kind of play.

"We definitely took care of the ball better. We only had 11 turnovers, so that's pretty good. If we can stay in the 9, 10, 11 area, I'll take that day in and day out," Barnes said.

The victory was also recorded as win 300 for Coach Barnes's career. It marked win no.144 at Youngstown State, but he also won 156 games while at the helm of Michigan Technological University women's team.

The Penguins are back in action next weekend for a two-game home stint at the Beeghly Center, facing off against University of Detroit Mercy and Oakland University. Tip-off against the Titans is slated for Jan. 28 at 7 p.m.



Malia Magestro scores 14 points against Robert Morris Jan. 22.

Photo by Kyle Wills / The Jambar