



MAHONING VALLEY ADAPTS CHRISTMAS TRADITIONS

The Mahoning Valley Historical Society celebrates Christmas with both in-person and virtual events centered at the Tyler History Center. Photo by **Emily McCarthy/The Jambar**

EMILY MCCARTHY JAMBAR CONTRIBUTOR

“Memories of Christmas Past” draws many visitors to the Arms Family Museum. The annual exhibit of antique holiday decorations attracts large crowds, but this year, due to the crowds and limited space in the building, the Mahoning Valley Historical Society (MVHS) will close the museum’s doors Nov. 16 and move all Christmas events to its Tyler History Center location on Federal Street downtown.

Several different events and displays will happen both in-person and online.

H. William “Bill” Lawson, executive director of MVHS, said the displays will look different this year because of a big difference in the building.

“It will look a lot different than ‘Memories of Christmas Past,’” he said. “The Arms Family Museum is an old house that has been around since the early 1900s and the displays included many items from Anthony Worrellia’s personal antique collection. He is our Christmas architect and he would decorate the rooms in certain themes that would remind guests of their childhood memories.”

Jessica Trickett, collections manager of MVHS, said with extra space in the ballroom, they were able to make

a larger gift shop for visitors so they could spread out at a safe distance. Similar to the Arms Family Museum, some antiques will be at Tyler History Center, too.

“We are doing a big holiday gift mart on our ballroom level where people can come and look at both new and vintage merchandise,” she said. “[This is] something that has always been popular at our Arms Family Museum site.”

Trickett said other exhibits can be found in the museum.

“We also have a smaller exhibit in our community history gallery that features the Historical Society’s own collection of decor, ornaments, even some gifts that were given between family and friends,” she said. “[This includes] images of people in the community and how they celebrated the holidays in the past.”

Trickett also said while there are many differences this year, the whole staff was able to be a part of their Christmas experience, and some things will resemble previous years.

“It’s a multiple staff effort. Each of us has our areas that we normally work on ... we’re all kind of coordinating together to bring it to the public,” she said. “He [Worrellia] has definitely spearheaded the whole ballroom holiday shop. If you have liked what you have seen at Arms [Family Museum] in the past, he definitely has that feel, that flare, in the gift

shop at Tyler [History Center] this year.”

Dave Ragan, the communications manager of MVHS, said they’re preparing this year’s Christmas displays to depict Youngstown’s history.

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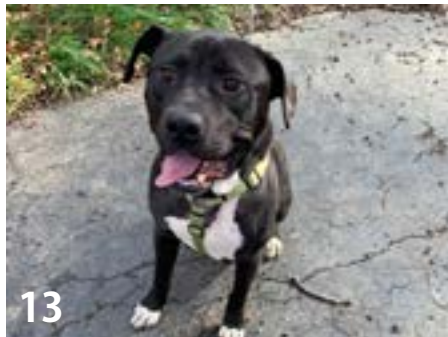


A Christmas elf antique at the Arms Family Museum exhibit. Photo by **Emily McCarthy/The Jambar**

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YOUNGSTOWN LIBRARY: VIBRANT HISTORY AND BRIGHT FUTURE

The Youngstown Public Library on Wick Avenue honors the history of its community with an expansion surmounting \$25 million. Photo by **Kamron Meyers/The Jambar**

KELCEY NORRIS

Since 1910, the Youngstown Public Library has served the community by providing a place to gather and learn. With a new \$25 million renovation of the main branch underway, developers hope to honor the past and create a space to brighten Youngstown's future with literature and events.

Expansions include a spacious public terrace where community members will be able to lounge with a good book or practice yoga in between the main building and St. John's Episcopal Church. Larger gathering areas, study rooms and a culinary literacy center to help people learn about healthy eating will also be added in the 6,000-foot expansion.

Prior renovations of the historic Andrew Carnegie library took place in 1954 and 1996. Before their removal in the 1950s, a large staircase and two lampposts beckoned visitors to the front entrance on Wick Avenue. These elements will be brought back to life in the renovation, slated for full completion in the spring of 2022.

Executive director Aimee Fifarek said the team prioritizes bringing back some of these elements in homage.

"In the past, especially with the renovation done in the '50s, we lost the great historic detail that made that building great," Fifarek said. "We wanted to get some of that beauty back into the project, like natural light, flexibility and space for people. If you look back at the historic photos, you'll see it was not about stuff when this building was originally built, it was about people space."

Rick Ortmeyer, lead architect with Bostwick Design

Partnership of Cleveland, collaborated with Fifarek's team to "create a 21st century library on Wick Avenue, leveraging the wonderful history of the existing building, but also demonstrating that the library is very forward-looking."

Ortmeyer, who designed 70 libraries in his career, said the flexibility and inclusivity of the community's needs were his focus.

"We wanted the community to see itself in this new expansion," Ortmeyer said. "The culinary literacy center is going to be truly unique, nationally, in terms of library programming and library space that supports that programming."

Janet Loew, library communications and public relations manager, coined the motto "vibrant history, bright future" for the renovation project.

"The project was also going to incorporate things our Founding Fathers never would have thought of ... in 1880 when we were formed," Loew said. "Bright future indicates we're moving forward with technology, new services, flexibility with the spaces introduced that we may not even be thinking of today that may come along in the next 25 years."

The open outdoor terrace and ability to collaborate with others safely can positively impact the community's outlook on life during trying times, according to Fifarek.

"We now have scientific research that says experiencing awe in nature and beauty around you can improve your mental health and general outlook on life," she said. "The

community has made decades of investments in us as an institution and this library, specifically, so we want to continue returning on that investment."

The team incorporates what was memorable about the facility for prior generations and expands on the possibilities for current needs. Paul Hagman from RBF CoLab, landscape architects from Pashek+MTR and CT Consultants will also bring their expertise to the construction process.

"The expansion is a handsome addition to this historic building, but not to try to replicate history. Instead, celebrate a modern vision looking forward, while still enhancing and restoring the beauty of the original building adjacent," Ortmeyer said.

CORRECTION, NOV. 19 EDITION:

Editor's Note: On Nov. 19, The Jambar published a story about Stambaugh Auditorium's new app featuring virtual performances, but there was a mistake describing it as a "dating" app. We apologize for this error, which has been corrected online.



BEEGHLY FELLOWS GET REAL WORLD EXPERIENCE

Business students (front row, left to right) Georganna Norris, Jenna Binsley, Kathryn Sewall and (back row, left to right) Bashar Rasoul and Ryan Sheffield, were named the 2020 Beeghly Fellows. Photo courtesy of YSU

KIERSTON RICHARDSON JAMBAR CONTRIBUTOR

The Beeghly Fellows internship program gives Youngstown State University students hands-on experience the classroom can't provide.

Jenna Binsley, senior marketing major and one of the Beeghly Fellows named this year, said she has numerous responsibilities with the internship.

"As a marketing major, they do play on your strengths, but they do help you improve your weaknesses," Binsley said. "I do market research and event planning. I also put together promotional materials and website audits. I also help clients with some social media strategies."

Binsley said being a Beeghly Fellow and working in the America's Small Business Development Center (SBDC) will help benefit her career in the future.

"I feel like working at SBDC they really work on cultivating your skills. I have really grown a lot in

terms of experiences I had," Binsley said. "I found that business consulting might be one avenue for my career when I graduate."

Binsley said being a Beeghly Fellow gives her a chance to become immersed in her major.

"We get to sit in on client meetings and get that hands-on experience. It's an experience you can't get in the classroom," Binsley said. "Being a Beeghly Fellow really solidifies that I do want to go into marketing."

Kathryn Sewall, senior accounting major and a Beeghly Fellow, said being involved in the program is important.

"It's kind of a way to give back to the community that's been so good to me these past four years at school," Sewall said.

She said the application process for the internship is simple.

"There's an email that is sent out to all the business students, and students can apply on the application

they sound in the email," Sewall said.

Ryan Sheffield, a senior management major with a focus in supply chain management and one of the Beeghly Fellows named this year, said he's gained skills while being a part of the program.

"I've gained skills like communication, interacting with clients and co-workers, professionalism and knowledge," he said.

Sheffield is in an internship program provided through the Beeghly family and John D. Beeghly, a longtime resident of Youngstown and business owner.

"He really helped the business community in the Valley," Sheffield said.

He said it makes him feel good when he gets feedback from small businesses and small family-owned businesses the Fellows help.

"It's very joyful because a lot of the work we do our clients are grateful for. It makes us feel like we did something to help that business out," Sheffield said.



YSU for Recovery offers a safe virtual sanctuary for students struggling with addiction to casually engage with people who can help. Photo courtesy of YSU for Recovery

SAMANTHA SMITH

Youngstown State University provides multiple services covering a variety of needs for students. One service includes the program YSU for Recovery, a biweekly online meeting where students dealing with substance abuse can join for a safe space to talk.

Mason Edmunds, prevention specialist for Meridian Healthcare, explained what YSU for Recovery provides for students.

"It started out a couple of years ago as an outreach initiative for students on campus who might be struggling with substance abuse or substance addiction," he said. "The form that YSU for Recovery has taken now is — it is a safe space that meets virtually every two weeks on a Monday."

The goal for the meetings is to create a respectful and safe atmosphere for those students to talk about what they are going through and talk to others about the topic, Edmunds said.

Since he isn't a registered counselor, he said these meetings don't replace therapy. His job is to bring up topics for students to discuss in confidentiality.

If a student really needs help, they can stay after the meeting to speak privately about resources available for use.

Ryan McNicholas, associate director of YSU's Andrews Student Recreation and Wellness Center, explained more of what the organization provides.

"They definitely will talk about what our campus resources are, like our student counseling services," he said. "Now we have licensed counselors

in that facility to help out students or provide extra help or direction on where to go if they need something individually."

Edmunds explained the organization is still trying to get more attention by promoting its social media and providing other ways for students to discover and look into the group.

"That's something we're still trying to figure out, to be honest, because the whole thing has been kind of new and ever-evolving, and trying to get the information into the hands of students is a difficult one, for sure," he said. "But we have electronic marketing all over campus, and we're trying to have a social media presence in some sense."

McNicholas said the organization also is promoted through the rec center's social media, as well as student counseling's social media.

He said it is a difficult topic to market and promote because the organization is not technically a support group or a replacement for rehab. For now, it's a safe space for sharing difficulties or directing others to resources.

"Be kind to yourself," Edmunds said. "Don't be afraid to mention it to somebody if you feel like it is an actual problem that's interrupting your day to day life, that's obviously affecting your health, your relationships, your academic success, professional success, all these things."

Any student interested in attending the meetings can contact Edmunds through email to register mgedmunds-guest@ysu.edu.

YSU RECEIVES \$2.2 MILLION FROM AIR FORCE INITIATIVE

KRISTA RITZ
JAMBAR CONTRIBUTOR

Youngstown State University electrical engineering students are provided job training opportunities in a multimillion dollar program from the U.S. Air Force.

Jason Zapka, assistant professor in electrical engineering technologies and program coordinator, has the role of trying to create an "excitement level" for students in the engineering program.

"If you can create early excitement, you have the potential of getting really good students that are happy and excited with the work they're doing," Zapka said.

As the need for electronics grows over time, Zapka said there is a gap in the number of people going into those fields. However, YSU offers many engineering programs for students.

"We have a lot of the courses within the electrical engineering and electrical engineering tech program already to discuss and give [students] the appropriate background to make them job-ready," Zapka said. "If [students] are interested, then they need only to pick one of those two programs, depending upon their area of interest, and we have something in place in that regard."

For this program, Zapka said the idea is to create an outreach ecosystem for K-12 students, as well as college students, to generate interest in microelectronics.

"We're learning more and getting students interested in this area," Zapka said. "We get more electrical engineering and electrical engineering technology programs, so there are more students trained and [will] have a background in it that are available in the workforce in the coming years."

Pedro Cortes, assistant professor of civil, environmental and chemical engineering, said this project experienced some minor setbacks.

Cortes said this program needs full

personnel such as research professors and an outreach coordinator. These positions are grant-funded and are expected to be filled by spring.

"We were expecting to start this summer, even before this summer," Cortes said. "With COVID, things went really slow, so we started six months later."

The initiative focuses on setting a safe and healthy environment for everyone involved. There are even plans for virtual communication.

"There's a lot of hands-on [activities] being planned so now we have to think about social distancing," Cortes said.

STEM Outreach coordinator Emilie Brown promotes this program in schools and throughout the community. She said she hopes many undergraduate and graduate students will be a part of this upcoming program.

"As a civilization, we can only advance as quickly as our workforce can fill the demand and, right now, there are still many holes to fill," Brown said. "We need more people pursuing higher education in critical STEM areas and ADMETE [Assured Digital Microelectronics Education & Training Ecosystem] seeks to create one of those pipelines and support students with scholarships and other resources as they work toward their degree."

The program will provide workshops, summer camps, internships, research assistant positions and scholarships for YSU students. These activities will help high school students become active within the field.

"There are plenty of opportunities available at YSU for students looking for them. I have seen students do amazing things here and go on to prestigious graduate programs, professional schools and employment," Brown said. "This particular program is important because it serves to fill a critical need in our ever-advancing technological world."



President-elect Joe Biden won the popular vote this year, but will the country respond with animosity? *Photo courtesy of Brett Sayles/pexels.com*

KRISTA RITZ JAMBAR CONTRIBUTOR

The recent presidential election revived tensions seen decades before between political parties.

Members of Youngstown State University reflected on the recent election and how a seemingly divided country can unite.

Cryshanna Jackson Leftwich, associate professor in politics and international relations, explained her thoughts on why there is so much division between the Democratic and Republican political parties.

"I don't think there is anything wrong with partisanship and different opinions and values," Jackson Leftwich said. "I think the problem that America faces is that we don't tend to want to hear the other side. You'll have Republicans or Democrats that will submit legislation and because it was submitted by a Republican or Democrat, they won't even consider it. They won't even look at it."

Jackson said studies show most Democrats and Republicans are more moderate. While there are extremists on the left and right, she said, the majority of individuals are in the middle and the dissent is due to single-issue voters.

Single-issue voters, according to Jackson, are people who support a political party based solely on one issue. One example she offered is people who vote Republican because they are pro-life yet still agree with many democratic views.

Regardless of the dividing issues, however, Jackson said it is better to focus on what unites the country instead of what divides it.

Associate professor in political science William Binning advises the conservative group on campus and said the country isn't in a healthy political environment right now.

"One thing that contributes to the current environment that we've been in for a couple of decades now is that we don't have any moderates or liberals in the Republican Party," Binning said. "We don't have any moderates or conservatives in the Democratic Party anymore."

Years ago, Binning said, the country was less divided than it is now, with political parties being more than just Democratic or Republican.

"In the Democratic Party, there were Southerners who were conservative. In the Republican Party, there were Easterners who were liberal. That moderated the parties and created opportunities for bipartisanship," Binning said.

Justin Shaughnessy, Student Government Association president, focuses on being a voice between the students and administration. He was a part of efforts to reach YSU students on the importance of voting in the weeks leading up to the presidential election.

"Our [SGA] initiative was helping students understand the election process, helping them be educated voters [and] helping them register to vote," Shaughnessy said.

He said he felt proud of YSU students and community members for voting in-person or by mail and was pleased by the voter turnout this year.

"If you only get 5% of an entire country to vote, then only 5% of people select the candidate. When you have a lot more [voters], it legitimizes that person's position, so I thought that that was a huge success this year," Shaughnessy said.

He recognized the tensions between opposing political views. He said he hopes the disagreements won't be indicative of the future.

Shaughnessy encouraged voters to not take people's political affiliations at face value and to have conversations with them instead.



GOWNS AND SOUNDS: ALUMNI LECTURERS VISIT YSU

Jason Monchief, an associate for the New World Symphony and the Chicago Civic Orchestra, participated in the alumni lecture series, *Gowns and Sounds*. Photo courtesy of **YSU**

SAMANTHA SMITH

Youngstown State University's Alumni Engagements hold virtual alumni lectures at least twice a month, providing alums the opportunity to talk about their journey in their career paths and fields.

Heather Belgin, associate director of alumni events, explained how this virtual lecture series came to be.

"The alumni lecture series came up because of the pandemic," she said. "We had to switch to virtual alumni programming as opposed to what we were used to doing in person. We thought that this would be a way for alumni to connect with each other and alumni who are successful in a wide variety of fields."

Each lecture has its own moderator to ask the alums questions the viewers may have.

Nov. 5, Angel Rivera, bridal gown designer and owner of

Angel Rivera Couture, was the first alumnus for November to talk about his career in fashion and design.

Rivera, during his lecture, talked about what it was like for him at YSU, how he first started his career and what he did to get where he is at now.

"I remember moving to New York," Rivera said during the lecture. "I was dressed in a complete suit because at that time for New York, you kind of had to walk around and drop off your resumes in the design and fashion district. Which was not the easiest thing to do when it was 90 degrees outside."

On Nov. 12, Jason Monchief, an associate for the New World Symphony and the Chicago Civic Orchestra, spoke about his journey in the music industry.

Monchief discussed what it was like for him starting in the industry, making a career of it and giving advice for those just beginning.

"Music is hard," Monchief said in the lecture. "You have to

be dedicated to a level, your level of dedication just has to be very high. Especially being a performer out there. Especially with all the things going on right now."

These lectures provide beneficial insight and information for students within the same majors as the alums.

"[The lectures] benefit students because we showcase such a wide range of successful alumni," Belgin said. "So when [students] tune in, if there's an alum in their field who's gone on to achieve career success, they might be able to pick up some tips."

Students can watch the lectures for free on the YSU alumni engagement Facebook page. If they missed the live lecture, students can watch them at any time on the page.

For those who do not have Facebook, they can email Heather Belgin at habelgin@ysu.edu directly for the live webex link to watch.



INAUGURAL LEGACY FOREST PROGRAM

In an effort to combat climate change, YSU's Legacy Forest student group planted a tree for every incoming freshman. Photo by **Samantha Smith/The Jambar**

DOUGLAS M. CAMPBELL
SAMANTHA SMITH

Thirty-three volunteers approached a small field with a pair of gloves in one hand and shovels in the other Nov. 19 at North Hine Street. Their goal? To create a series of micro-forests.

Youngstown State University's Legacy Forest was created by a committee of faculty and staff led by Lauren Schroeder, an emeritus professor, to combat climate change by implementing more trees into the community.

"This project will demonstrate the severity of climate warming and how we can become engaged in combating it. It's the most serious problem young people face in this generation. Led by activities like this, we demonstrate how serious it is and what we can do about it," Schroeder said.

Colleen McLean, an associate professor in physics, astronomy, geology and environmental science, described how the professors recruited the help of the university.

"We sent a letter to President Tressel with this proposal request," she said. "It was about February that Dr. Steven

Hanzely contacted the YSU Foundation and we were able to meet with them and that is when they gave us the green light."

McLean said the project was 100% donor-funded through the YSU Foundation, which financed Legacy Forests' purchase of trees.

The Legacy Forest aimed to plant one tree for every incoming freshman to YSU. Five species of trees were planted, which include: white pine, sycamore, black gum, sugar maple and tulip poplar.

At the inaugural location, 600 trees were planted. Roughly 1,200 trees for the remainder of the freshman class are planned to be planted for a project aimed for spring of 2021.

Due to COVID-19, the program implemented safety procedures to keep volunteers safe, such as enforcing mask-wearing, signing in, checking temperatures and sanitizing hands.

YSU President Jim Tressel, who attended the event, showed his support in the opening ceremony.

"So often people talk about things that need to get done and there are others that say, 'Do something.' You are doing

something that hasn't been done on a college campus. This makes us awfully proud," Tressel said.

Gianna Battaglia, a sophomore environmental science major, is excited to be a part of this project and hopes it inspires change.

"I hope that a lot of other people see it and think, 'Okay, if they're making that much of an impact, what can I do to make that much of an impact?' I hope a lot of colleges or universities and everything follow what we do," Battaglia said.

Mason Borawiec, a senior environmental studies major, is a member of the student committee for Legacy Forest and is heavily involved in promotion.

"As members of the student committee, we've handled the marketing and outreach wing of the Legacy Forest. Our committee made the logo and all of the promotional materials as far as posters," Borawiec said.

The student committee also created a website, promoted the group through Instagram and plans to create a Facebook page.

For more information, students can visit Legacy Forests' website.

STUDENTS, FACULTY SHARE INTERNATIONAL HOLIDAY TRADITIONS

C. AILEEN BLAINE JAMBAR CONTRIBUTOR

From roasted pig to sweet pastries, several Youngstown State University students and faculty relay interesting holiday traditions typically celebrated in their home countries.

From countries including Ecuador, Italy, Great Britain and Puerto Rico, the university hosts a diverse student and faculty population, with each member celebrating unique holiday traditions.

Paulina Montaldo, adjunct professor of Spanish, is from Chile but grew up in Quito, Ecuador.

“One of the traditions I miss the most is the fun of celebrating New Year’s Eve with what we call the ‘Old Year,’” Montaldo said. A papier-mache doll dressed in old clothes is burned in the street at midnight. Groups of friends dress in costumes and ask passersby for change to “pay for the [doll’s] funeral and support the widow.”

“But in reality, the few coins you get that night go to pay for the New Year’s party,” Montaldo said.

For the Christmas and New Year’s meals, many eat turkey, she said, while others prepare the more traditional hornado, a roasted pig. For dessert, fried pastries called *pristinos* are served with honey.

Due to Ecuador’s location in the southern hemisphere, holidays such as Christmas and New Year’s Day occur in summer. Many people celebrate by dancing in the streets and watching fireworks.

Emily Dawes, senior history major, comes from Great Britain.

Her family’s tradition consists of a Christmas Eve meal at a restaurant, followed by gift wrapping. Christmas Day is celebrated with gift exchanges and a lunch meal shared with

family.

Some dishes traditionally served during the Christmas season include brandy butter, mulled wine, cheese and cauliflower, and roasted parsnips, Dawes said. Pigs-in-a-blanket, Christmas cake and Christmas pudding are also shared.

Of the differences between holiday celebrations in the United States and Great Britain, Dawes said many pertain to food. For example, Christmas cookies aren’t eaten in her home country.

“Americans here tend to not have as many side dishes as English Christmases seem to,” Dawes said. “[But] England and America are pretty similar in how they celebrate Christmas, it’s just that England has extra steps to how one celebrates.”

Judin Balella is a marketing junior from Italy. He said his family’s holiday celebrations share similarities with those in the U.S.

For the winter holidays, lights and decorations adorn many town centers in Italy. Christmas Eve and Christmas Day are spent eating, visiting family, exchanging gifts and playing games like bingo, Balella said. Italians often go to church on these days.

At midnight on New Year’s Eve, many in Italy eat 12 grapes for good luck, and they share a meal of boiled pig leg served with lentils.

La Befana occurs the night of Jan. 5, when a “witch” delivers candy to well-behaved children and “coal” candy to misbehaved children. This is when the Christmas tree is to be taken down.

One of the differences between Italian and American Christmas traditions regards gifts, Balella said. Italians typically give only one gift to each recipient, whereas many Americans receive multiple gifts from each giver.

Yesarily Sanchez Rivera is a criminal justice major from Puerto Rico. As a child living in Puerto Rico, one of her favorite holiday celebrations was Three Kings Day held Jan. 6.

“It is basically our second Christmas. We put grass in a box or shoe box for the ‘camels’ to eat when the three kinds come to drop us our gifts,” Rivera said.

Now living in Youngstown, her family celebrates the New Year by preparing a large dinner, playing music and watching fireworks.

Common dishes eaten during the holidays include *arroz con gandules*, which is rice with pigeon peas, and *ensalada de papa*, which is potato salad. *Coquito*, or “little coconut,” is a thick drink made from coconut milk, cinnamon and rum, and it originated in Puerto Rico as a traditional Christmas beverage.

“Puerto Ricans are very caring and enjoy family time,” Rivera said. “Everyone celebrates in their own way, which just shows how much we enjoy special holidays.”



Families in Great Britain enjoy Christmas pudding during the holidays, according to international student Emily Dawes. Photo courtesy of **James E. Petts/Creative Commons**

THANKSGIVING AMID THE CORONAVIRUS

DOUGLAS M. CAMPBELL

During this year’s Thanksgiving feast, a feeling of uncertainty is served to some students as the spread of the coronavirus continues into the holiday season. According to the Ohio Department of Health, as of Nov. 25, there are 414,009 cases of the coronavirus.

Students and their families are faced with a change in their holiday celebrations, such as Briana Dent, a junior psychology major.

“It’s going to be hard because I’m used to seeing every one of my family members. We have a big family, so it’s going to be different this year,” Dent said.

The state of Ohio recently issued 14 states with travel advisories as coronavirus cases increase. This forced some students to adjust their plans by staying on campus or remaining in Ohio.

“We are having separate family dinners just so we aren’t together in one area. My grandma is 80 and healthy, so we are doing our own Thanksgiving and traveling to some of our family’s houses and not staying for long, family members farther away we will meet on Zoom,” Dent said.

Other students such as Sally Frederick, a junior in an

individualized curriculum plan, gave back to others during the holiday instead of having a traditional feast.

“In November up until Christmas, any fast-food we purchase, we will buy a gift card for the same amount and give it to a homeless person, that’s how we celebrate,” Frederick said.

Likewise, Justin Shaughnessy, a master’s degree candidate and president of Student Government Association, along with other members in the SGA, helped students stuck on campus with the Penguin Pantry.

SGA members helped students fill out applications and supplied them with food outside the pantry’s holiday operating hours.

“For Thanksgiving break, we really encourage our students to fill the form on the website prior to Thanksgiving, that way they will have the stuff they need. During the break, we will be available to help fill out orders as they come in ... and placed so students can pick them up,” Shaughnessy said.

The most-requested items were hygiene products such as toothpaste and toilet paper.

Like the Penguin Pantry, the Student Counseling Services was also closed during the break. However, the after-hours service

was available for students and faculty to utilize, connecting students and staff with a mental health professional at any time or on holidays.

Ann Jaronski, director of student counseling, said the service started in February 2020. It enlists help from a committee called “Protocol” that manages crisis intervention and stabilization.

“We are very excited to have this so that students have an opportunity to get in touch with a mental health professional regardless of whether we are open or not,” Jaronski said.

To use this service, students can call the Student Counseling Services’ phone number and press one after the automated message. The call will then be transferred immediately to a professional.

“This has been an ongoing challenging year for all of us. The more that we can support each other in those challenges, the better off I think we are,” Jaronski said.

Those wishing to connect to a mental health professional can call the after-hours service at 855-473-1088.



INDEPENDENT DEVELOPER CREATES VIDEO GAME USING SON'S ARTWORK

Independent video game developer Thomas Kildren incorporates the art his son, who is on the autism spectrum, created into the video game he's developing, called "Booper, Get Home!" Photo courtesy of **Thomas Kildren**

ETHAN J. SNYDER
JAMBAR CONTRIBUTOR

In the world of video game development there is a genre known as indie games. One developer of this genre is getting a hand from an organization close to Youngstown State University.

According to independent game designer Ron Gilbert, an independent "indie" video game is fully created by individuals or smaller development teams, known as indie developers, without the financial and technical support of a large game publisher.

Thomas Kildren of Cleveland is an independent video game developer who's creating a virtual reality game based on the art of his son.

"When we first discovered our son was on the autism spectrum, we were amazed at his ability to draw," Kildren said. "It was almost as if there was a different way that he was trying to communicate with the world."

Kildren has been developing his game "Booper, Get Home!" for three years. He said he initially had difficulties

finding time to develop it.

"I'm a stay-at-home dad who was only able to work on it if I got up at 5:30 a.m. and squeezed in a little [development] time before the whole house got up," Kildren said. "I'm a chef, tech support, teacher and housekeeper all at once."

Kildren's project is a virtual reality platforming exploration game about a lost child on an adventure to find his way home. The amount of virtual reality games on the market is growing, and Kildren said he wanted to take advantage of that.

"Kids see this new tech and they certainly want to try it, but other than a few various titles, there's very few kid-friendly offerings. I wanted to make something centered more around exploration and problem solving, as well as helping others," Kildren said.

Hoping to secure extra funding, Kildren entered his company, Fletcher Studios, in the Youngstown Business Incubator's Virtual Pitch Competition.

The YBI Virtual Pitch Competition is an annual event where entrepreneurs can film themselves giving a virtual pitch of their startup ideas, which are then voted on by the public.

Whichever startup secures the most votes wins a cash prize of \$5,000.

According to Corey Patrick, director of Entrepreneurial Services Program at the YBI, the 2019 competition saw 43 startups apply, 350 attendees and more than \$1 million invested in various startups. In 2015, UBI Global in Stockholm recognized YBI as the No. 1 high-impact incubation program in North America.

Kildren said he hopes to use his game as an opportunity to grow from a solo indie developer into a micro studio. Instead of developing games by himself, he hopes to hire locally and work with some of the raw talent in the northeastern Ohio area.

"I'd also like to have part of the proceeds to go to Autism Awareness and Acceptance," Kildren said. "Hopefully, I can show that kids on the spectrum can contribute in different ways."



STUDENT-RUN ORGANIZATIONS GO VIRTUAL

Student organizations, like YSU's Anime and Manga Club, have embraced the struggles of COVID-19 by finding other ways to meet. Photo by **Zach Mosca/The Jambar**

ZACH MOSCA

The fall 2020 semester has been difficult for Youngstown State University students for a multitude of reasons. Student-run organizations struggle with obstacles like varying class modalities and new COVID-19 regulations.

At the start of the semester, the majority of student-run organizations were unable to meet in person due to social distancing guidelines. The organizations allowed to meet in person had strict guidelines to follow.

Nathan Williams, president of YSU's Anime and Manga Club and president of the American Chemical Society (ACS) on campus, said the Anime and Manga Club was still allowed to meet because of the limited number of people who showed up for meetings.

"[Kilcawley Center] actually said at one point along with the state's legislation that we would have to keep our meetings under 10 people. Luckily, since our meetings are pretty small anyway, we were able to comply with that," Williams said.

However, on Thursday, Nov. 12, YSU President Jim Tressel announced the university would transition fully online for the rest of the semester starting after Thanksgiving break. As

such, the Anime and Manga Club, as well as other clubs that met in person, will transition online.

Aaron Whitaker, president of YSU's Video Entertainment Gaming Association (VEGA), said the club played online games on a Discord server throughout the semester. However, attendance for the online meetings is not as high as it was for in-person meetings.

"Given that we went online, attendance has been a bit different. The VEGA Discord server is 40 [students] strong, but activity has been low," Whitaker said.

Fraternities and sororities also had to adjust their methods of activity. Olivia Wall, panhellenic delegate for Alpha Xi Delta, said in addition to meeting on Zoom, fundraisers now are conducted virtually.

"We do a lot of social media bingo cards to try to raise money, and there's also been a lot of fundraising through Facebook or emailing people and telling them our story and why we're trying to raise money, so it's been more of trying to do that rather than having a meeting through Zoom or Webex," Wall said.

When looking ahead, Wall said it will still take some time

to truly get back to normal even after the pandemic.

"In the future it's going to take a little while to get back to normal, even once everything does open back up again," Wall said. "I think it will be odd getting used to having in-person events and switching back to the normal platform of fundraising and seeing 50 people every week. It's going to be interesting."

Williams said he's doing what he can to bring joy to his acquaintances during the pandemic. Even if running and attending meetings for organizations is drastically different this time around, he said he wants the Anime and Manga Club to be a way for students to decompress and "keep their chins up."

"A lot of students aren't feeling a strong attitude towards groups, they're not feeling as motivated this semester, and throughout the whole pandemic. We're just doing what we can to keep people's spirits high and continue going," Williams said.

FROM LITERATURE TO TRUE CRIMES: ONE PROFESSOR'S JOURNEY TO YSU

JESSICA STAMP
JAMBAR CONTRIBUTOR

For Suzanne Diamond, English professor at Youngstown State University, the journey to YSU was a long and challenging trip, but her love for teaching and education helped her overcome the difficulties.

Diamond has many publications on film and British literature, including an essay on Aileen Wuornos, arguably the most famous female serial killer. She also co-edited a freshman reader titled "Literacies: Reading, Writing, Interpretation" and wrote a scholarly essay, "Food for Thought or 'Mental Chewing Gum': Truman Capote's Crime Adaptations and Cultural Memory Work."

What Diamond's publications have in common is her interest in true crime and its adaptation and function as a culture memory project.

"A culture story or myth-making ... students shouldn't think of mythology as something that happened in ancient times. Myth-making is something that we continue to do," Diamond said. "Your 'self' is an ongoing story. We are stories we tell ourselves, so tell yourself a good one."

Diamond has been teaching at YSU for around 20 years. She teaches 19th-century British literature, introduction

to film study, mythology in literature and some general education courses.

"I've always had an attraction to education ... and I knew college was a place where I came alive," Diamond said.

Diamond worked a series of entry-level jobs before becoming a first generation college student. At the age of 26, Diamond went to college at Rutgers University in New Jersey, where she earned her master's and doctorate degrees in English.

"In English, I always felt like there was somebody critical on the other side," Diamond said. "It's not always fun to be criticized with your work ... But you know there was always somebody on the other side of an essay trying to make me better and I realized that they were helping me."

Throughout Diamond's education, she saw many forms of teaching.

"I was always like observing my teachers and seeing what things that they did that were constructive and what things that really didn't work or even really destructive," she said.

Diamond said she tries to use the best of her past experiences as a student when teaching.

"Teachers who saw me as an 'A' student even when I felt like I'm 'B+' level. I would be that 'A' student because they

saw that in me. They saw me as capable," she said.

Jeff Buchanan, acting chairman of the English and world languages department, said Diamond contributes to the department by being heavily involved with the students.

"She knows where she wants to get students and she's pretty careful about developing assignments that serve those goals and help students get to where she's going," he said.



*Suzanne Diamond's 20-year career has been shaped by 19th-century literature and a love for learning as a first-generation college student. Photo courtesy of **Suzanne Diamond***

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

DEAR EDITORS:

A food desert is considered to be an area that has limited access to affordable and nutritious food. In Youngstown, supermarkets and grocery stores are scarce. This is especially the case on campus at Youngstown State University. It is extremely important for students who live on campus to have access to fresh produce and nutritious items for many reasons.

On YSU's campus, there are multiple dining halls, fast food restaurants, convenience stores and sit down restaurants. The one major thing lacking is grocery stores. There are a select few surrounding the Youngstown area, but none easily accessible to YSU students. This poses a major problem for students who do not drive or do not have another mode of transportation to get to the store. Access to fresh produce will promote healthy eating and provide more variety of food for the students to choose from. Not only will grocery stores give students choices, it will enhance their health.

Benefits of eating healthy include weight loss, better moods, improved memory and strong bones and teeth. A college student deals with a tremendous amount of stress and often has a lot on their plate. Their academic performance and overall health will benefit from having access to fresh produce.

Lastly, having access to a grocery store can allow the students to save money. As we all know, college and housing on campus is extremely expensive. Any amount of money saved by a college student can be beneficial. Spending money quickly adds up for someone who buys fast food or meals at a restaurant multiple times a week. Grocery stores provide students with a cost-effective way to purchase food and will allow them to save money over their time in college.

Adding grocery stores around the Youngstown State University campus will benefit the student residents for many reasons. It will allow students to save time, money, and it will benefit their overall health. In a time where unhealthy behaviors such as eating are so prevalent, we as a community need to do what we can to provide access to healthy alternatives for the students at Youngstown State University.

Sincerely,

JUSTYN MADICK

THE TALE OF M.L. RICECAKE

MAC POMEROY

It was the weekend after the election. My sister, her partner and I had just gone to Boardman and done some light shopping and were heading back home. Then, suddenly, we saw a dog on the side of the road.

Of course, there are tons of dogs in that particular neighborhood, and it isn't unusual for a pet to walk away from home. However, this dog looked lost and confused. We drove by, but debated on what to do. We are all huge animal lovers, and while we wanted to help, we were unsure. We didn't know what the dog's temper was, plus my sister has a severe dog allergy.

Finally, we decided to loop around; we wanted to see if he was okay. He had walked away from where we saw him originally, and when we found him again, it was clear something was very wrong.

He was part pitbull, so skinny you could see his ribs and his head was bigger than his body. There was a rope buried deep in his neck. My sister's partner got out of the car, and the dog approached with caution. The scent coming from the dog was the worst thing I have ever smelled, and despite nearly a month passing since this happened, my stomach is still turning at the memory.

Thoughts began to fill my head.

"What happened? Who did this? How long has it been since someone last took care of you?"

Then, we all wondered the same thing: what do we do next? It was a Saturday night, all the animal shelters would be closed. He needed help now. So I called my friend, Lizziey, who is part of an animal rescue organization.

Well, technically a cat rescue, Campus Cats, but ... close enough. He had short ears; if you squinted the right way, he was just a big cat. Lizziey answered on the first ring.

"Lizziey, we need your help. Where do we take him? What do

we do?" I said, hoping she would have an answer.

"Take him to my home," she said.

We spent the next hour trying to lure him into the car, doing whatever we could. We tried to get him to follow using rice cakes we found in the backseat. Eventually, we gained his trust enough to pick him up and put him in the back.

We drove him as fast as we could to Boardman, a 15 minute drive. The smell was so horrible we wore our face masks and rolled down the window. Even then, I nearly threw up.

The dog was such a good boy during this ride. He sat down and didn't even bark; he just seemed happy someone was being nice to him. The rope in his neck had caused an awful wound, and he was bleeding.

We got him to Lizziey's home, and she immediately took him. Lizziey and fellow Campus Cats rescuer, Briana, got the rope from his neck, and reassured us he would be okay. The two of them then took him to the emergency vet hospital, where he had surgery.

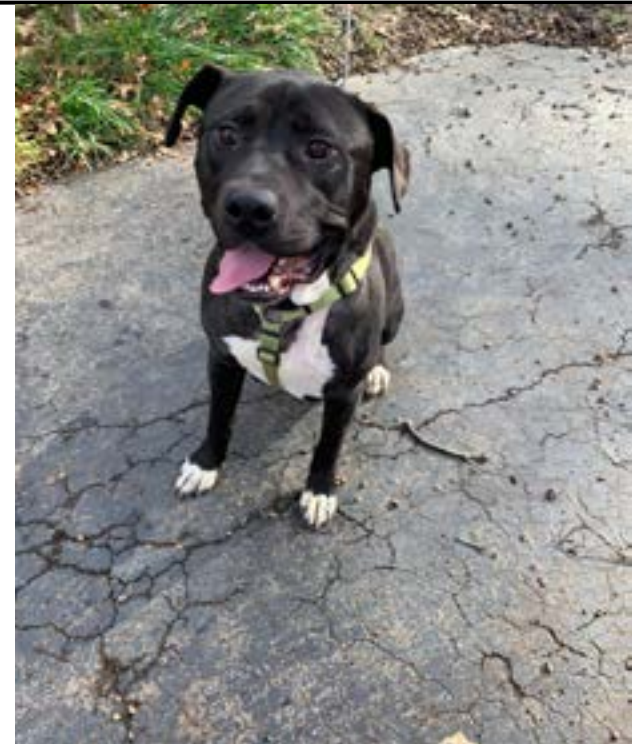
That was nearly a month ago.

He is much better now. The dog, now known as M.L. Ricecake, is being fostered by a member of Campus Cats. He has gained so much weight and is such a big boy now, but still a very loving boy. I will forever be grateful to them for helping save him.

This is not a story I am telling to boast about a good action I did. Really, my effort was minimal in terms of everyone who worked to help him.

All around us are those who need help: people who are struggling, animals who are hurt. Too often do we just look aside and keep driving forward, never stopping to see what is actually happening.

During the pandemic, we cannot pull over for any wandering stranger and ask if they are okay, but that is no excuse to not



M.L. Ricecake was emaciated when Mac Pomeroy found him, but now in foster care, he's healthy. Photo by Mac Pomeroy/The Jambar

display kindness. There are ways you can help from six feet apart.

Donate to local animal charities, or call friends and loved ones to make sure they are okay. See if any local organizations need volunteers. Keep an eye out for any way to make the lives of those around you brighter.

Please be safe this holiday season, Penguins. This has been a very hard semester, and sadly I believe next semester will be just as rough. I miss seeing you all on campus. I will see you all next semester, in my next article. This is Mac Pomeroy, signing off from another strange semester.

GETTING INTO THE HOLIDAY SPIRIT

THE JAMBAR
— EDITORIAL —

It's the end of the semester, some of us are graduating and the rest of us are just excited to have some time off. This year's Christmas break raises a lot of questions. Are we safe to go back to work at our part-time jobs? What are classes going to look like next semester if the virus keeps spreading? Right now, we shouldn't worry about that.

It is finally a happy time. Time off we can enjoy! This semester has been one of the most difficult with all the different modalities and the dozens of different websites we've had to use to for our classes. Now that we don't have to appear in Webex or Zoom calls every day, we can get into the holiday spirit.

Since you can't really go out — stay in. Snuggle up with a nice fleece and watch some Christmas movies, read a book, bake cookies; try and find something enjoyable during the time off to really boost your spirits.

Christmas in only 22 days away and in 29

days the horrible year that is 2020 will finally be over. The calendar will flip to 2021. We can only hope the new year will bring with it better fortune.

Take this winter break as an opportunity to really break in those twinkle lights, record some TikTok videos to laugh at with your friends, set up a virtual movie-night and drink hot cocoa with your loved ones. No matter what curveballs we've faced in the past 11 months, we can take this final month of the year to reflect on the fact we're still here; we made it. But, luckily, the chapter is coming to a close and next year comes with a new semester and new journeys. Every challenge is an opportunity to learn, grow and be better prepared for any challenges 2021 may bring.

While the pandemic doesn't seem to be coming to a close along with the year 2020, we can still enjoy the holiday season and winter break ahead.

STUDENT ATHLETES MENTOR LOCAL KIDS

JOSEPH CHAPMAN

This semester, Youngstown State University Athletics partnered with Big Brothers Big Sisters of Mahoning Valley and the Youngstown Community Initiative to Reduce Violence through a mentorship program. Athletes across all sports at YSU joined the program to share knowledge with local children.

Antoine Cook, junior psychology major and defensive end for the football team, talked about the impact his mentees have on him.

“Learning from what they go through and what they came from is just such a humbling experience for myself,” he said. “Keeping me sane and helping me understand that life is short and to appreciate every little moment and every little thing. Other people’s lives could be for worse or better, it doesn’t matter, you still want to brighten someone’s day.”

Cook also encouraged more people to become mentors.

“How you became who you are now, can be another benefit towards another person. You got to let everybody know your story. So I try my best to let people know where I came from. How I grew up. Just sort of showed the [mentee that] this is a person that actually overcame so much adversity,” Cook said.

Tim Johnson, director of player personnel for YSU Football, talked about the positive mentality of the players who volunteer.

“Most of the kids that if not all of the kids on the football team that volunteers are aware on how to be selfless. And I don’t think that they’re doing it to be superheroes. I don’t think they’re doing it for the attention,” he said. “They all went over there [thinking], ‘Where are the youth? Where are the kids? I want a kid that I can help in these times.’ We got a lot of selfless guys who really do give their time and their energy to something that’s greater than them. And my hat’s off to him for being selfless.”

Johnson also discussed how they would like to move the mentorship program online due to the pandemic. Mentors and mentees will be able to meet on Zoom and Webex. Virtual matching will also be added.

Looking to the spring semester and the potential for football to be played, Johnson said they plan to involve Little Brothers and Sisters in games to build and support the community.

Brian Higgins, program director of Big Brothers Big Sisters of Mahoning Valley, talked about this program’s potential.

“Using student athletes, they’re already mentors,” he said. “Once this pandemic is slowed down, this collaboration is going to explode. I just see the potential in so many different

avenues.”

Higgins also discussed the time commitment involved in becoming a Big Brother or Sister.

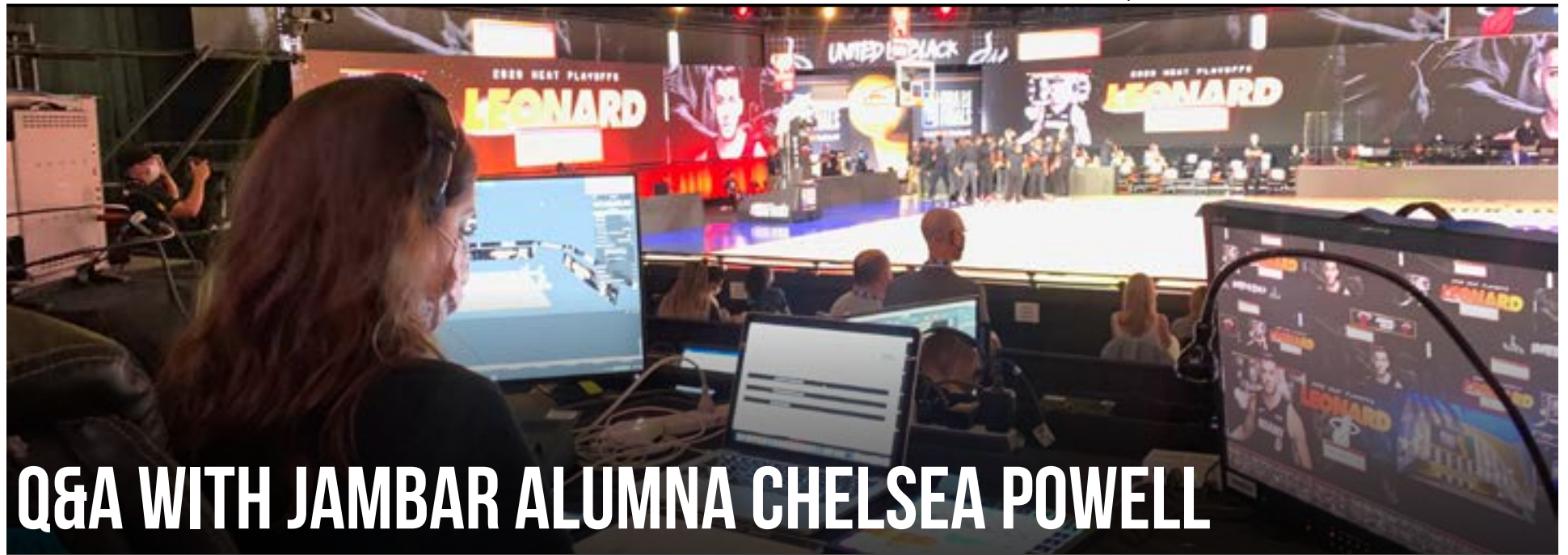
“What we like to stress is we’d love everybody to walk through these doors become a Big Brother [or a] Big Sister, but we also want you to know that it’s a commitment because we are putting you in a lot in the life of a child,” he said. “But if

you’re willing to do that, I don’t know many other volunteer experiences where you can make that big of a change.”

Those interested in becoming a mentor can call CIRV at 330-742-8778. Parents interested in getting their children involved can call Big Brothers Big Sisters of Mahoning Valley at 330-545-0002.



Antoine Cook, junior psychology major and defensive end for the football team, described his experience as an athlete mentor as humbling and inspiring. Photo courtesy of **YSU Sports**



Alumna Chelsea Powell served as a game presentation director for the Washington Wizards, seeing firsthand the NBA's efforts to take the game to a virtual level. Photo courtesy of NBA

JORDAN BOITNOTT

Chelsea Powell, a 2010 Youngstown State University graduate and former Jambar editor-in-chief, had a unique experience this NBA season. Powell was able to spend the season inside the NBA bubble.

Powell is a game presentation director for the Washington Wizards. A game presentation director is part of a group making games feel like a home game for the players. The presentation team plays graphics, sounds and music on the court in the Orlando bubble in an attempt to make the game feel as natural as possible and like they have a home court advantage. In the interview, Powell talked about her unique experience in the bubble.

Q: What was life like in the bubble?

A: Life in the bubble was strange at first, but I was surprised how quickly I adapted to the environment. I was kept on a pretty regimented schedule — I was working one or two games a day — and the routine really helped. I love the job and love the sport, so I immersed myself into the reason I was there: work to put on the best show for the NBA and

the fans watching at home. The long hours, days and months were really rewarding. The NBA put a great group of people together to work in Orlando, and we became like a family pretty quickly. There was a small group of us who stayed the entire time — from July to October — and I consider that group of people now lifelong friends.

Q: What precautions were taken for COVID-19 inside? How did they affect your ability to do your job?

A: We did daily testing for the entirety of the stay. We also did daily symptoms checks, wore masks at all times and remained socially distant from others. I wouldn't say this had any affect on how I did my job — if anything, it made me feel very safe when working the games or being around others.

Q: Were you able to interact with any of the players or were they kept separate.

A: The NBA staff group stayed at the Coronado Springs — the same resort where several teams were also staying, like the Lakers and the Bucks, so I would see players all the time when I'd go to get food or see them riding bikes or walking

around. I, of course, gave them their space to enjoy their free time off the court, but would say “hello” in passing — especially when passing anyone on the rental bikes ... that's just good manners.

Q: Did you stay for the whole time or leave after the Wizards were eliminated?

A: I helped produce games for the entirety of the bubble. The NBA created a game presentation group that focused on all teams, not just the teams we all individually worked for. I produced games and directed content for all 22 teams in the bubble, not just the Wizards games — though I did get to work a few Wizards games in Orlando which was really nice — felt like home! In the finals, I worked the home games for the Miami Heat, including the championship game, which was such a cool experience.

Q: Is being in the bubble something you'd be willing to do again?

A: I definitely would do it again. The experience was great, and the product that was created for the fans and players was incredible to be a part of.

CONT. FROM PAGE 1: CHRISTMAS TRADITIONS

“There's a strong tradition of decorating windows for the holidays in downtown Youngstown, more so in the era of department stores and whatnot,” he said. “What we're trying to do is create this nostalgic feel and a reminder of what it was like to see decorated windows ... back in earlier decades. We have a beautiful display kind of installed there now.”

Ragan said there are many virtual experiences being offered as well, some of which have already started.

“We decided to balance it because going online provides a safer alternative for people that aren't necessarily comfortable going out during this winter season,” he said. “We are going

to control and provide social distancing, require face masks and all of that here at Tyler, but online we have a series of programs that are available through our website and through our social media pages.”

Ragan says their Facebook pages and YouTube also offer many programs. MVHS began a version of Mahoning Valley artiFACTS, which is shared via its Facebook page. The holiday edition will run until Dec. 30.

With many different events taking place, Ragan said the best way to see what is available is to go to the museum's website.

FARMERS' MARKET OFFERS VIRTUAL ALTERNATIVE

C. AILEEN BLAINE

With the holiday season approaching and gift-shopping underway, Austintown Farmers' Market offers a virtual Christmas market highlighting small businesses and shops in the Mahoning Valley.

Shannon Lehn, Austintown Farmers' Market manager, started the market in 2014 after realizing there were no established farmers' markets in the Austintown-Canfield area. Since then, the market expanded and now hosts vendors from around the Valley, selling a variety of homemade goods.

"I am very excited that we can allow our community to be a part of supporting local businesses and artisans while also staying safe," Lehn said. "I would like to explore the opportunities for our community to be more involved with the market in an online format, but nothing beats seeing each other in person."

Due to state guidelines and recommendations, the usual holiday basket raffle, photos with Santa and other community engagement events were canceled or moved to the market's Facebook page and website. The Facebook page offers online activities, games and interactive posts to the community for chances to win prizes.

David Bisignani, owner of Buckeyes and More, sells nut rolls, chocolate-covered caramels, apricot cookies, buckeye candies and pies. He started the business 18 months ago when his previous job was eliminated in a downsize. Despite not being trained in business, his background in manufacturing, engineering, purchasing and healthcare help him with his business.

Bisignani said he attributes many of his sales to repeat customers who found him through various markets and vendor events, including Austintown Farmers' Market.

"If it were not for the farmers' markets, I would not have been able to sell much of anything this year, so I am grateful for the work the market manager does," Bisignani said.

Kristin Bodendorfer, owner of DIVA Donations, sells handmade Christmas tree ornaments made from vintage wedding and prom dresses unable to be used by a clothing closet through the virtual market. She also runs a shop in North Lima called Devoted DIVAs Boutique, which carries other homemade crafts and

accessories.

Bodendorfer said she wants to continue participating in the virtual market.

"I just love being able to go to an outdoor space and support local vendors, so this year, because it's virtual, I still wanted to try and support," she said.

Sarah Drabison, integrated language arts graduate of Youngstown State University, runs an Etsy shop called A Smidgen of Everything selling scrunchies, ear warmers, face masks and scrubbies. Through the virtual market, she also offers wooden signs, wine glasses and jewelry, all of which she designs and makes herself.

She learned about the virtual Austintown Farmers' Market while attending its Halloween craft show. After finding the market's website and signing up, she was

able to upload photos and list the prices of her products.

"I'm hoping that more people will learn about A Smidgen of Everything," Drabison said. "I'm hoping this market allows me to get my name out there and meet people in the community."

Drabison said it's important to support small businesses.

"Even if you don't like anything from my shop," Drabison said, "there's amazing vendors out there."

The Christmas Market event started in mid-November and will continue until Dec. 21, the last date for pickup. Those interested in viewing products or learning more can visit its website or follow the market's social media pages.



Austintown Farmers' Market offers a virtual Christmas Market until Dec. 21. Photo courtesy of Austintown Farmers' Market