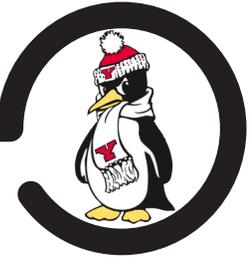


THE JAMBAR

The student voice of Youngstown State University since 1931

 YSU_JAMBAR

Thursday, January 11, 2024

 THEJAMBAR.COM


PRESIDENTIAL PROTEST



A Walk-Out Against Johnson will be held in protest of his first day, Jan. 22

Photo by Molly Burke / The Jambar

Students to walk out on Johnson's first day

By Molly Burke and Christopher Gillett
The Jambar

Youngstown State University students plan to walk out of classes at 10 a.m. on Jan. 22 outside of Todd Hall in protest of U.S. Rep. William "Bill" Johnson becoming YSU's 10th president.

The board of trustees announced in an email Jan. 2 that Johnson would start his presidency Jan. 22. The board hired him in November through a confidential search process which has received backlash from the YSU community — including donors, retirees, past presidents and alumni.

The Walk-Out Against Johnson's Presidency was organized by students Rose McClurkin, Aiden Hol-

derfield, Chris Cremers, Jenna Knowles and Grace Persing. McClurkin passed out fliers for the walkout at a protest against recent program cuts held outside Todd Hall on Jan. 10.

The group of students introduced the idea at a meeting McClurkin hosted at the Wick Avenue Public Library of Youngstown & Mahoning County on Jan. 8. Community members attended to express concerns about Johnson as his first day approaches.

McClurkin said the meeting was held to generate concrete ideas about how to protect academic freedom and create demands to YSU's administration.

Walk out, Page 2

Cutting down to business; YSU ends six degrees

By Elizabeth Coss
The Jambar

The first week of Youngstown State University's spring semester will be the last for a handful of majors at the university.

Six degrees will be sunset this academic semester, and no incoming students will be accepted into the following programs:

- Bachelor of Arts in Geography
- Bachelor of Arts in Music
- Bachelor of Music in Music Composition
- Master of Music in Music Composition
- Master of Music in Jazz Studies
- Bachelor of Science in Education in Art Education

According to the YSU News Center, these degrees will be phased out because of, "low enrollment, limited market demand and/or constrained growth potential."

While the interdisciplinary studio art and digital media/photography tracks technically are listed to sunset, these programs will undergo restructuring as different majors.

The interdisciplinary studio art and digital media/photography tracks will be merged to make a new major. The graphic and interactive design track will become its own separate major.

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STAFF**EDITOR IN CHIEF**[Molly Burke](#)mkburke@student.ysu.edu**MANAGING EDITOR**[Dylan Lux](#)dilux@student.ysu.edu**NEWS EDITOR**[Christopher Gillett](#)cmgillett@student.ysu.edu**SPORTS EDITOR**[John Ostapowicz](#)jfostapowicz@student.ysu.edu**ASSISTANT SPORTS EDITOR**[Cameron Niemi](#)cniemi@student.ysu.edu**SPORTS REPORTERS**[Madeline Hippeard](#)mehippeard@student.ysu.edu[Marissa Masano](#)mamasano@student.ysu.edu**GENERAL REPORTERS**[Sydney Fairbanks](#)sefairbanks@student.ysu.edu[Matthew Sotlar](#)mjsotlar@student.ysu.edu[Owen Bertram](#)orbertram@student.ysu.edu**HEAD COPY EDITOR**[Elizabeth Coss](#)eacoss@student.ysu.edu**ASSISTANT COPY EDITOR**[Hannah Werle](#)hewerle@student.ysu.edu**VOLUNTEER COPY EDITOR**[Maria Schwartz](#)meschwartz01@student.ysu.edu**HEAD DESIGNER**[Madison Fessler](#)mrfessler@student.ysu.edu**COLUMNISTS**[Alison Butz](#)albutz@student.ysu.edu[Matthew Sotlar](#)mjsotlar@student.ysu.edu**WEB MANAGER**[Christopher Gillett](#)cmgillett@student.ysu.edu**ASSISTANT WEB MANAGER**[Mohammad Haram Kafil](#)mkafil@student.ysu.edu**SOCIAL MEDIA CURATORS**[Abigail Long](#)aglong@student.ysu.edu[Grace Beerbower](#)gebeerbower@student.ysu.edu**BUSINESS MANAGER**[Mary Dota](#)mfdota@ysu.edu**Walk out**

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“We want to see transparency from our administration — not just the board. We want to see safety for all of our diverse students on campus. We want to protect academic freedom. Basically, my gist of this meeting is that we can brainstorm some concrete ways that we can think about doing that,” McClurkin said. “We could maybe have some very impactful demands that we can collectively ask for as a leading part of the student population and our alumni.”

McClurkin said it’s important to make the demands because many people have grown apathetic to Johnson becoming president, which she believes the board wants.

“I think our board is banking on us being quiet, so I’d like to not be,” McClurkin said.

Holderfield created the flier for the walkout. He said it’s worth trying to let the administration know the students’ demands.

“There’s this sense that we can’t really do anything, like no matter what we do it’s not going to make a difference,” Holderfield said. “There is a chance that we can change this. Their actions aren’t pointless. This is something worth putting energy into.”

At the meeting, attendees also discussed contacting local organizations for support and promoting more information about Johnson on social media. Students suggested creating pins, paint-

ing the rock and posting fliers on campus to “make it visible that he isn’t welcome here.”

Meeting attendees also expressed concern over Ohio’s Senate Bill 83. According to Ohio Capital Journal, if passed, Senate Bill 83 “would allow universities to fire tenured professors for a broad list of reasons,” and “shall not seek to indoctrinate any social political or religious point of view.”

The bill also “prohibits mandatory diversity, equity and inclusion training,” and says, “Ohio universities can only enter into a new or renewed academic partnership with a Chinese academic institution if there are certain ‘safeguards’ in place.”

Several meeting members said they believe Senate Bill 83 and Johnson’s hiring are part of a larger Republican-backed effort to negatively influence the higher education system.

Jason Long, a graduate student in the history masters program, said he is worried YSU is a test case for Ohio universities.

“With some of the concerns with academic freedom around the state, it seems as though YSU is serving as a test case for the state of

Ohio — a test case for how much politicization they can do to our state universities and to see if they can replicate it on other campuses,” Long said. “My fear is that YSU will be the first domino to fall.”

Michael Kripchak, who is running as a Democrat for Bill Johnson’s congressional seat, was at the meeting. Kripchak said he was worried about the future of education in the country.

“It’s hard not see a pattern that’s been happening with slowly delegitimizing education, saying that ‘it’s unimportant,’ saying that ‘politics need to come into it,’ and ‘We need to control what free thought is,’ because free thought is scary to those who are trying to control you,” Kripchak said.



Photo by Christopher Gillett / The Jambar

A meeting to discuss concerns over Johnson becoming president was held at the public library on Jan. 8.

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7-DAY WEATHER FORECAST

Thu. Fri. Sat. Sun. Mon. Tue. Wed.

| | | | | | | |
|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| High: 40°F | High: 42°F | High: 35°F | High: 24°F | High: 21°F | High: 19°F | High: 19°F |
| Low: 27°F | Low: 28°F | Low: 19°F | Low: 13°F | Low: 13°F | Low: 9°F | Low: 12°F |
| Chance of precip: 40% | Chance of precip: 82% | Chance of precip: 88% | Chance of precip: 25% | Chance of precip: 25% | Chance of precip: 58% | Chance of precip: 21% |



Rain



Rain



Snow



Overcast



Overcast



Snow



Partly Cloudy

Information courtesy of accuweather.com

History doesn't repeat, it rhymes

By Christopher Gillett

The Jambar

Youngstown State University has had nine presidents in almost 90 years, with U.S. Rep. William "Bill" Johnson becoming YSU's 10th president Jan. 22. Some presidential picks, including Johnson, have been divisive.

Similar to the controversy around Johnson, the YSU community felt blindsided in 1991 when the board of trustees selected Paul Dutton to replace retiring President Neil Humphrey.

Dutton graduated from YSU with a Bachelor of Arts degree in 1969 and served on the YSU board of trustees from 1978 to 1987.

Dutton was also a longtime lawyer with Harrington, Hoppe & Mitchell, had served on an advisory board for the Department of Energy from 1978 to 1981 and worked for the State Department from 1988 to 1995.

When Dutton's name came up, YSU students and faculty criticized him for his lack of experience in higher education compared to other candidates. Dutton was unsure of his qualifications too, withdrawing his candidacy during his interviews with the board, despite pressure from board members to stay in the race.

When the board announced its decision June 14, 1991, much of the YSU community was opposed. The vote happened in a closed-door meeting, violating Ohio's Sunshine Law, which requires public bodies to hold open meetings.

According to a series of articles The Jambar headlined

"Revolt!," the Academic Senate met and passed a vote condemning the board, while student government leaders also opposed the decision.

Local politicians were critical of the decision for similar reasons.

Following the backlash, the board unanimously withdrew the offer, with members conducting the vote over phone. Dutton accepted the vote, saying to The Jambar he would "continue to support the interests of YSU in whatever capacity I might serve."

The board later selected Leslie Cochran as president, whose tenure lasted from 1992 to 2000.

The YSU community lost faith in the board because of its choice of Dutton. Cochran recalled the atmosphere of his presidential appointment in his open letter to the YSU community condemning the board's selection of Johnson, stating after the "board-failed search ... the [YSU] community was in disarray."

Dutton later served on the boards of many other charities, foundations and universities and worked as an adjunct instructor of business ethics at YSU from 2014 to 2020. He died in May 2023.

Two decades after Dutton was selected, the university brought in Randy Dunn to be president, whose term — while not controversial — was shorter than expected.

Dunn studied education and served in education administration, including seven years as president of Murray State University.

Much like Johnson, Dunn was selected by a search firm, AGB Search, LLC, before starting in July 2013 on

a three-year contract.

Dunn promised to reinvent YSU's system, announcing plans for budget cuts focused on laying off classified employees as well as cutting into spending around university operations.

Lisa Garofali, the archives and records management specialist at William F. Maag Jr. Library, was at YSU during Dunn's administration. Garofali said Dunn seemed ready to revamp YSU.

"When he came in, he really had to get to work. He had to deal with the deficit, declining enrollment and things like that. It seemed at the time like he was meeting with people on campus, he was willing to work with everybody," Garofali said.

Despite Dunn's announcements, his term lasted from July 2013 to March 2014 — nine months. Dunn announced Feb. 17, 2014 he was leaving YSU to become president of Southern Illinois University. Garofali said the YSU community was surprised by his departure.

"We thought he would stay. We really did, and it was so shocking when — we come back in January and we find out he got hired somewhere else," Garofali said.

Dunn's new contract with SIU gave him \$430,000 a year, compared with \$375,000 at YSU.

Dunn was president of SIU until he was removed in 2018 after released emails and records showed plans to dissolve SIU's system.

After an interim period, Jim Tressel was selected YSU's ninth president.



Paul M. Dutton
Poland, O.

Photo courtesy of YSU Archives and Special Collections

Paul Dutton's 1969 yearbook photo.



While Randy Dunn was on a three-year contract as YSU president, his term lasted nine months.

Photo courtesy of The Jambar Archives

News Brief

New administrative positions

Several positions within Youngstown State University's administration have been reassigned since the start of the spring semester.

After former interim president Helen Lafferty stepped down, Dec. 27, 2023, Neal McNally, vice president for the Division of Finance & Business Operations, began serving as acting president. His term will conclude when U.S. Rep. William "Bill" Johnson becomes president, Jan. 22.

McNally announced in an email to the YSU community Jan. 8 that former provost and vice president of academic affairs, Brien Smith, has been moved to the role of special assistant to the president.

The email also announced that vice provost Jennifer Pintar has been appointed interim provost.



Photo courtesy of YSU

Neal McNally will serve as acting president until Johnson begins.

Cuts

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All students enrolled in degrees announced to be sunset will be able to complete their degrees.

The Academic Senate met Jan. 10 to discuss the sunsetting programs. A special meeting was held virtually to accommodate as many people as possible on short

notice.

Over 250 participants tuned into the informational meeting that featured professor or senator-selected speakers through request only.

Interim Provost Jennifer Pintar started the meeting by providing data and explaining areas facing cuts, both in programs and faculty.

Pintar said these decisions for program cuts were discussed with chairs and deans beforehand and have been in the talks for the past three and a half years through a review process.

Phyllis Paul, dean of Cliffe College of Creative Arts, said these decisions were not only collaborative but went through a structured process with the provost, deans, chairs and faculty of every college.

"There were a number of people who met with the chairs and the faculty, the deans," Paul said. "The chairs have been working really well, the faculty and chairs together in collaboration ... I don't want anyone to mistake that because we have an immediate reorganization ... on the horizon that this is the only

time the chairs and faculty are working to innovate, it's not. They've been doing that continuously and they've made some really great progress."

Brad Shellito, a geography professor, explained geography is more than just its major or students to the Academic Senate.

"We are frequently offering our courses to a wide variety of other students here at the university. In particular, we're seeing large numbers of both undergraduate and graduate students," Shellito said. "We're really servicing all of these other programs around campus, and to aid this, the geography program offers four different minors, it has a certificate program in geospatial science and technology, and a graduate certificate in the same."

The university also announced that no more than 13 faculty retrenchments will take place in the programs being phased out. Pintar said faculty can opt to separate through a Voluntary Separation and Retirement Package.

Pintar said program cuts can be difficult for many, including the university, and that layoffs can create an uncomfortable situation.

"This is not comfortable for anyone and we know it's hard for the faculty. They're going through a lot right now. It's their passion, it's their livelihood and we do feel for them," Pintar said. "We have to make uncomfortable decisions to make sure the university is viable for a long time."

Despite the sunsets, plans have been made for 16 new faculty positions available in 10 majors that have seen substantial enrollment and graduation growth in primarily STEM-related majors.

Four positions will open for chemistry and biology, computer science and cybersecurity, and engineering each. Two will open for nursing, and one will open for exercise science and forensic science.



Photo courtesy of ysu.edu

Cliffe College of Creative Arts was the first college announced to receive cuts.

The arts push back against cuts

By Elizabeth Coss
The Jambar

Youngstown State University announced Jan. 7 it will sunset four music degrees in the Dana School of Music this semester, with several other degrees being named for either reorganization or sunsets on Jan. 8.

The announcements come after fear spread through the Dana School of Music that it would face cuts or retrenchments following an Academic Senate meeting Dec. 6, 2023.

On Jan. 5, a petition to “Save Dana” began circulating, and by the end of the day, cuts were announced and the petition had garnered over 7,000 signatures.

An accompanying webpage, save-dana.com, was also created to outline why the community was afraid of potential sunsets, cuts and retrenchments.

Jan. 10 was a busy day around campus with a protest planned outside Tod Hall against cuts made to programs. Simultaneously, the rally began at the same time the Academic Senate met virtually to discuss what those cuts would officially be and what faculty could expect.

Diane Drapcho, a YSU alumni, attended the protest and said the cuts to the Art Department were “appalling issues.”

“You can’t just have STEM programs,” Drapcho said. “When it comes down to money, [artists] are nothing. We are the bottom of the rung and we’re always cut, we’re always cut. I don’t know how it’s ever going to change.”

During the Academic Senate meeting, Ewelina Boczkowska, who is a professor in the Dana School of Music, said the “assault” launched on the arts at YSU fails to fully show how Dana has benefitted the quality of life in the Mahoning Valley.

“[Dana is] a 150-year-old music school predating the institution, which became YSU. A petition to save Dana has drawn 20,000 signatures in three days — clearly showing that the community values what we do,” Boczkowska said.

Boczkowska, who is also a senator for the Academic Senate, continued and said false data was used throughout interim provost Jennifer Pintar’s presentation in both faculty and student numbers.

“All Dana faculty were arbitrarily assigned to majors that are different than our appointment letters. I was personally assigned to a major that doesn’t even exist. Every faculty attempt to correct these errors were rejected without any justifications,” Boczkowska said. “If this proceeds, the decisions to cut programs and faculty will have been based on false enrollment and employment data, arbitrary assignments of majors and a misunderstanding of music professions.”

Save-dana.com also states that during the Academic Senate’s December meeting, “Jennifer Pintar gave a presentation to the board of trustees on her ‘Academic Master Plan’ which could be considered the latest salvo in the administration’s War on Music.”

The post also alleges some of Pintar’s data on enrollment numbers were false.

Pintar said her data is from several years worth of research and primarily from the 2021-22 and 2022-23 academic years. She believes the “Save Dana” initiative is presenting the 2023 14th Day Fall Enrollment Data, explaining the difference in the figures.

“I get my data from Jeanine Herman in Institutional Research and so you have to remember when that presentation [from the December senate meeting] was originally developed was back in September, October — when we didn’t have the Fall 2023 14th Enrollment Report,” Pintar said.

Joe Carucci, director for the Dana School of Music, said a lot has been done in terms of refining the music programs for years, and that these efforts will continue.

“We’ve been working really hard at Dana already to innovate our curriculum all the way across the board. We’re offering cutting-edge programs for our students,” Carucci said. “I’m optimistic that we’ll find some solutions with this reorganization that will help Dana ultimately continue on a path for innovative curricula and opportunities to serve our students.”

The Jambar attempted to contact a contributor to save-dana.com multiple times and received no response.

Editor’s Note: Molly Burke and Matt Sotlar contributed to this report.



Students protested against program cuts outside Tod Hall on Jan. 10 while the Academic Senate met virtually.

Photos by Molly Burke / The Jambar

Recruiting for the ranks



Photo by Dylan Lux / Jambar Contributor

Maddie Keister in the team's rain-filled matchup against Cleveland State.

By Dylan Lux
Jambar Contributor

Youngstown State University brings in many freshmen and transfers for its 21 varsity sports each year, which are credited to the scouting teams of the university.

The scouting or recruiting teams for each sport vary, as most varsity sports at the university rely on the coaching staff for scouting up-and-coming players.

For the 2023-24 season, the YSU men's basketball team brought in nine new members, which include seven transfers and two true freshmen.

Athletes on the men's basketball team are from schools all over the country, such as Northern Kentucky University, Tennessee Tech University and Merrimack College.

Fifth-year senior Ziggy Reid, who transferred from Merrimack, averaged 23.7 points and 4.7 rebounds per game and shot 65.8% from the field in last season's Northeast Conference Tournament after leading the Warriors to the title game.

The YSU women's soccer team also added more freshmen to its roster, as 11 of its 33 total members are in their first year of eligibility.

Eva Sunjevaric, freshman forward on the soccer team, saw valuable minutes this past season as she played a total of 483 minutes — the most of any freshman in the 2023 season.

Sunjevaric played in 13 total games last season with four starts. She had two shots on goal for the year with five total shots. Her highest-minute total in a single game was 71 — out of 90 minutes total per soccer game — against Canisius University.

Sunjevaric graduated from Brecksville-Broadview Heights High School in 2023. She said the soccer team had a welcoming environment which brought her to the university.

"[With] the coaching staff and the team, it felt like home here, the culture of the team is very good, and I felt like I would fit in the best here," Sunjevaric said. "The coaching staff made me feel welcome and at home, and that was a big part of my reason for coming here."

Sunjevaric said the team's head coach Brian Shrum and associate head coach Josh Green reached out to her.

"Brian and Josh [reached out] after one of my showcases, and then I came to camp, and after that, I came on my visit ... and I loved it here," Sunjevaric said.

The team also added junior midfielder Maddie Keister from the University of Pittsburgh this offseason.

Keister said Shrum reached out to her, and the transfer process moved fast.

"I entered the [transfer] portal [at the] end of spring, and I was kind of open to any options," Keister said. "I received an email from coach Brian Shrum ... I asked [Shrum] if I could stop by ... and actually the process happened really quick."

Shrum and several team members came to Keister's visit to show her around the university. Keister said the other girls "did really well" with showing her campus and bonding with her.

As for the message Shrum sent to Keister, she said he kept it simple.

"It was short. It just said, 'Hi, if you're interested in hearing more about our program, just send a thumbs up back,' and that was it," Keister said. "I sent him a thumbs up, and then we had a call after that."

Keister played in 14 games for the Penguins last season and started in 13. With two goals on the season, she contributed to YSU outscoring opponents, 18-15, this season in games she was part of.

The Pitt transfer also accumulated eight shots on goal and 18 total shots since becoming a Penguin. Her two goals were game-winners this season, including a free kick goal against the University of Akron and Indiana State University.

News Brief

Women Retirees to offer scholarship

By Patricia Taylor

The scholarship committee of the Women Retirees of Youngstown State University is accepting applications through March 1.

The scholarship is awarded to a full-time, junior female student who maintains a minimum 3.0 GPA. The recipient must be a U.S. citizen and enrolled in a degree-seeking program.

Information about the scholarship is available at ysu.edu/finaid/scholarships. Application forms may be printed from the website or picked up at the Office of Financial Aid and Scholarship located on the second floor of Meshel Hall.

Improving student experience on Penguin Shuttle

By Molly Burke
Jambar Contributor

Youngstown State University's Student Government Association is collaborating with Support Services to improve transportation services on campus by adding tracking to the Penguin Shuttle, YSU's free campus shuttle.

The project will require cooperation with Western Reserve Transit Authority, the contract manager for the shuttle.

SGA Vice President Jordan Pintar said SGA and Support Services are working to implement a feature on the YSU App that would redirect students to the WRTA On Demand app, where they would be able to track the shuttle.

"Once a driver gets there, they would hook up that the bus is there. [Students] would be able to see it on [the WRTA] app. So, it would show in real time where

the bus is driving at, obviously where it's going to with its next step," Pintar said.

Pintar said tracking the Penguin Shuttle will improve convenience and safety for its riders.

"[Tracking] would give students the opportunity to be in a room and say, 'oh hey look the shuttle will be here in five minutes,' and then you can go walk outside and see it there," Pintar said.

SGA representatives started the project last year. Pintar said she hopes it will be completed by spring or summer 2024.

"This is a project that our last president, Maguire Franko, had started," Pintar said. "I'm really hoping that it will be done within the next spring semester into the summer. That's my goal, but if not, we are compiling all of the information needed to implement this, so it's something that can definitely continue to be taken into the next couple years."

Danny O'Connell, director of Support Services, said the tracking technology will be similar to that of an Apple AirTag.

"In essence, it's like fleet tracking. You could put an AirTag on your car ... and that's a similar technology," O'Connell said. "The trucking industry has probably done more for these types of apps than anybody."

The Penguin Shuttle is funded by the federal government, so the tracking will be covered by its federal grant, which is managed by WRTA.

Before the shuttle receives tracking, SGA and Support Services are refining the Penguin Shuttle's routes for each of its loops to improve the consistency of the shuttle's run time.

"This is the first step. If we get the routes down ... if we're running the shuttles on time, appropriately and properly, we might say, 'that might not be the in-

vestment we want to make,'" O'Connell said.

SGA President Alexander Papa said Support Services have been following the shuttle to document which routes are the most popular.

"With the shuttle tracking, what they're doing right now is tracking all the different turns, all the different stops of the shuttle. So, I think they're actually focusing more on trying to figure out what routes are popular, what routes aren't [and] hopefully expanding that," Papa said.

SGA is also working to incorporate bus stop signs on campus and improve accessibility of information about the Penguin Shuttle.

The Penguin Shuttle's loop times and pick up locations can be found on its website.

Get cooking — that's good looking

By Elizabeth Coss
The Jambar

During the fall semester, Youngstown State University students interested in the culinary arts started a new club. The Cooking Club offers a hands-on learning experience for students to try diverse foods and learn new skills in the kitchen.

The club meets in Meshel Hall's cooking lab, which features everything students may need, from ovens and stoves to any utensils such as pots, pans, cutting boards and blenders.

Addison Kern, a freshman exercise science major, is president of the Cooking Club. Kern said one of the club's goals is to teach students recipes they can make on their own, while keeping meals cheap, healthy and easy.

"We make healthy options that are easy to make outside of our club," Kern said. "If you're a college student who's living in a dorm and you're getting tired of your campus food, it's an option for you to come once every other week, to come make something that's different than what you're usually eating, and something you can bring back and make

yourself in a dorm."

Before winter break, students went over how to read recipes and learned measuring styles, prepared seasonings, made chicken noodle soup and decorated cookies to celebrate the holidays.

This year, the club is planning to make meals from different cultures. Kaitlyn Eger, a freshman exercise science major, is the vice president and said each meeting will focus on a different culture.

"One week we'll do Mexican, some weeks we'll do Japanese, American — just to learn — that way we can keep the interest of all different varieties [of foods]," Eger said.

The club also accommodates students' dietary needs and restrictions, according to Eger.

"We have a couple of dairy intolerances. We have a pineapple allergy and we have a latex allergy," Eger said. "As we get more people, we're going to have to start working around more dietary restrictions ... but it can teach you — if you don't have the ingredients for something — you can figure it out."

Julieann Cheng is the club's advisor and a part-time faculty member in the

Health Professions Department. Cheng said cooking is a way to connect students with different backgrounds and mentioned, "anyone can cook."

"It's been great to see the interest and there has been a lot of diversity amongst the students here in the club and the interest in the food items they want to cook and [learn] how to make," Cheng said.

Cheng explained the Cooking Club works alongside Students in Dietetics to promote nutritional education and craft recipes.

If the recipes students make have leftovers, Cheng said these portions will be distributed to the Rescue Mission of The Mahoning Valley later that day.

"The Rescue Mission loved that idea," Cheng said. "It may be up to five extra meals [prepared] and then we

can drop them off."

In March, the Cooking Club and the Students in Dietetics will team up for National Nutrition Month to create a program to share information on nutrition and cooking. The Cooking Club is also planning a raffle and food drive later in the year.

The club's first meeting is scheduled for 6:30 p.m. on Jan. 22 and will feature a guest demonstrator.



Photo by Elizabeth Coss / The Jambar

Both gas and electric stoves are available for students to use in Meshel Hall.

There's 'No Place Like Home'

By John Ostapowicz
The Jambar

Over 10,000 miles away from Youngstown, the Australian indie rock-pop band Vacations is preparing to release its third studio album Jan. 12 titled, "No Place Like Home."

The 10 song LP is the band's first with Canadian record label Nettwerk Music Group as the four person band adds to its discography of "woozy guitar pop."

Vacations was formed in 2015 by singer-songwriter and frontman Campbell Burns in Newcastle, New South Wales. With the addition of Jake Johnson, Nate Delizzotti and Joseph Van Lier, the band found mainstream success with the release of its EP "Vibes" in 2016.

Two of the band's songs are certified Gold in Canada, Australia and Poland. The track "Young," was certified Platinum in the U.S. Globally, Vacations has racked up over 1 billion streams across all music platforms.

"No Place Like Home," produced by Burns and John Velasquez, combines the band's signature indie sound with Americana influences. The inclusion of a synthesizer, acoustic guitar, piano and lap steel guitar add a twist to the indie-pop genre.

Four singles were a part of a waterfall release leading up to the album. The opening track "Next Exit" has accumulated over 9 million streams across streaming platforms. The song has also received airplay on SiriusXMU, where it sat at No. 1 for two consecutive weeks.

"No Place Like Home" will feature previously released tracks "Terms & Conditions," "Midwest" and "Close Quarters." Each track on the album has its own

genre, with "Close Quarters" dabbling in surf rock and the self-titled track centered around a groovy bassline.

Burn's move to Los Angeles prompted him to write about his departure from Australia to the U.S. as a bittersweet goodbye.

"You could interpret 'No Place Like Home' as a breakup song about needing to find where you actually belong," Burns said.

The album will also include six unreleased tracks, with "Over You" getting a music video on the band's YouTube channel to coincide with the album's release. The track dives into '80s new wave with bright guitar tones and pays homage to synth-pop.

"No Place Like Home," continues to show off Vacations' skill set, with an instrumental track titled "Arizona" and a fade out intro on the closing track "Lost In Translation."

Although Vacations didn't release a new album for three years, the band stayed busy as it traveled to the U.S. in October 2022 to play a sold-out show at The Fonda Theatre in Los Angeles.

Vacations rounded out 2023 in North America at The Novo in Los Angeles on Nov. 12, hit the Auditorio Nacional in Mexico City on Nov. 15 and returned home to Australia to begin a busy 2024.

In February, Vacations will perform at the St. Jerome's Laneway Festival with stops in Brisbane, Sydney and Melbourne. The band will play alongside notable artists such as Steve Lacy, Dominic Fike and d4vd.

"No Place Like Home" will be available on all streaming services Jan. 12. The band's upcoming shows are listed on its website.

Photo courtesy of Andrew Boyle



Vacations is made up of Campbell Burns, Jake Johnson, Nate Delizzotti and Joseph Van Lier.

Q&A with lead singer Campbell Burns

The Jambar: What was the reasoning behind the name Vacations?

Burns: Jake and I used to play a game where we would shoot band names back and forth at each other. When we had our first show booked, we still didn't have a name, so when we were asked we tried again and settled with Vacations, the name stuck. I'm genuinely surprised no one else claimed it first.

The Jambar: If you had to pick a favorite track off of "No Place Like Home," what would it be?

Burns: At this moment in time, I'd pick the closing track "Lost in Translation." For me, it barely feels like a song, it goes against conventions and that's what makes it interesting for me. I wrote it as a letter to my younger self, knowing what I know now.

The Jambar: It feels as if the band is always one step ahead. Is there any new material in the works after the release of "No Place Like Home?"

Burns: I love that! We've already started writing ideas for the next project. When I was initially writing for "No Place Like Home," I had two very different directions. I'm exploring ideas and concepts at the moment. I think the initial stages can be the most exciting because you have no idea where you'll go.

The Jambar: With summer around the corner and a new album to promote, is there another U.S. tour in the works or plans to hit venues in Australia or Europe?

Burns: All of the above, we'll be going worldwide! But this time, responsibly. Our tour routing last year was frantic but I'm glad we put in the work, it's all led to this moment.

Photo courtesy of Charlie Hardy



Photo courtesy of Charlie Hardy



McDonough Museum to open spring exhibits

By Sydney Fairbanks
The Jambar

The McDonough Museum of Art will welcome five new art collections for its spring exhibits with an opening reception from 5 to 7 p.m. on Jan. 19. The exhibits and related performances will run until March 2.

The featured artwork will be on both levels of the museum and will feature a variety of mediums.

The lower level of McDonough will feature work by Lauren Semivan and Roberley Bell.

Semivan is a photographer from Detroit. Her piece “A Map Both Distant and Concrete” will feature photographs that fluctuate between abstract and reality.

Bell is an artist from Massachusetts. Inspired by nature and time, her piece, “Always in the Lake,” is made up of abstract sculptures and drawings that allow for viewer interpretation.

The top floor of the museum will have works from Jonathan Brewer, Morgan Bukovec and Posters Without Borders, an organization that creates posters about social issues.

Brewer is the audio video engineer and coordinator for Cliffe College of Creative Arts. His piece titled “Quemar Las Naves” is a double sound booth audio piece that highlights the lack of communication in society.

Brewer said his audio piece comments on society by giving the user an opportunity to communicate with a person that they can see, but the sound will be distorted so they can’t understand their message.

“It’s kind of commenting on the echo chambers that we put ourselves in with social media and our friend groups,” Brewer said. “We surround ourselves with people who think like us, when in reality, as a society, as a culture, as a world, we do our best

when we work together and bridge those divides.”

Morgan Bukovec is an artist from Cleveland whose exhibition, “are you on the menu,” consists of embroidered guest checks on the distasteful comments she received while working as a woman in the service industry.

Bukovec will host a lecture at 5:30 p.m. on Jan. 31 and a performance at 5:30 p.m. on Feb. 28. Her performance will allow the audience to share the unpleasant comments they have received as well.

Claudia Berlinski, director of McDonough Museum, said the exhibits are meant to compliment one another. The upper floor will focus on social commentary while the lower floor focuses on color and linear aspects.

“It’s almost like what I refer to as ‘art for art’s sake.’ It’s this sort of color-form, space kind of thing going on there. I think they’ll complement each other,” Berlinski said.

Berlinski said she chose the artists because she enjoyed seeing their work elsewhere and thought their proposed ideas sounded interesting.

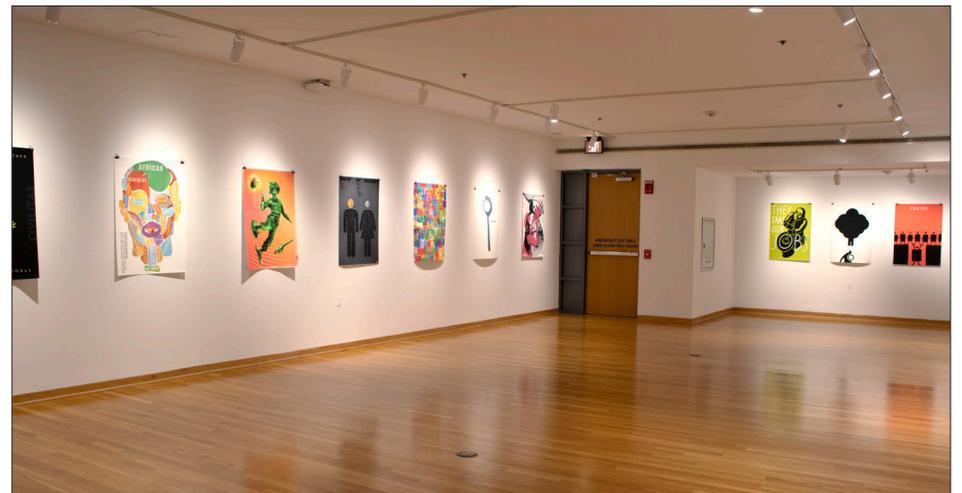
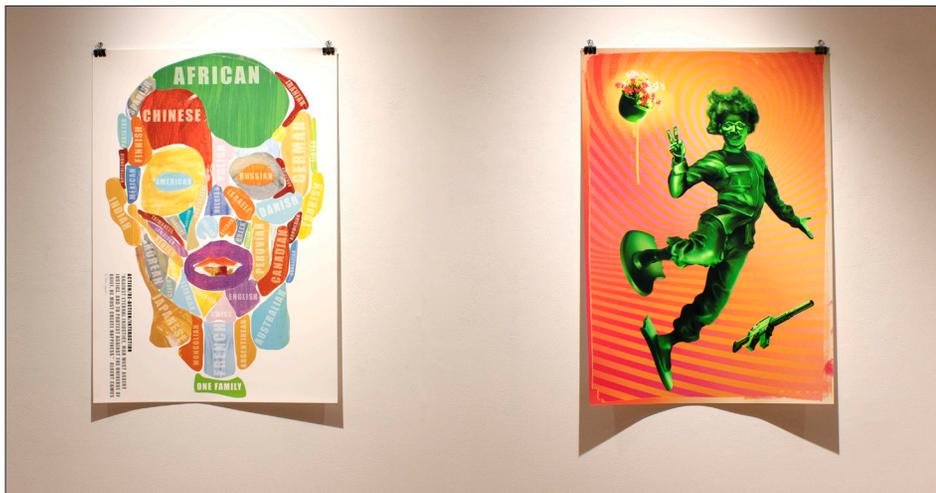
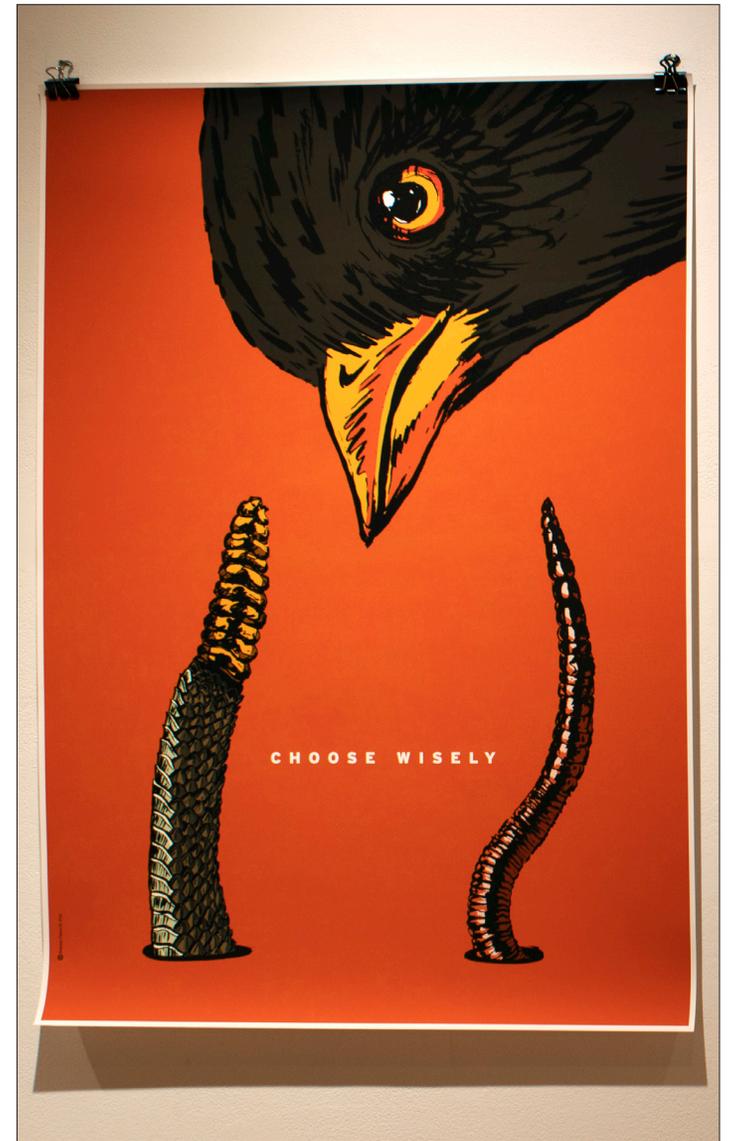
“I like to find things that might address the different media that we teach here as well as different concepts,” Berlinski said. “Anything that might inspire the students to think about how things could be with their work or inspire their work.”

Bruce Maciejewski’s work on completing unfinished films will also be available for viewing March 20.

In April, the museum will host a meeting for National Poetry Month. The annual art and design exhibition, put together by the Student Art Association, will also take place in the spring.

The last exhibition of the semester will be the BFA exhibition with graduating seniors’ work.

McDonough Museum will announce the official event dates on its website throughout the semester.



McDonough Museum is preparing its spring exhibits for Jan. 19.

Photos by Sydney Fairbanks / The Jambar

LEXIPHILES UNITE!

Write off the bat with Lit Youngstown

By **Matt Sotlar**
The Jambar

Lit Youngstown is kicking off 2024 with a series of new activities open to the public in the Youngstown area.

The non-profit and community-based organization primarily focuses on creative writing and storytelling. Lit Youngstown hosts community events, such as its Readers Series with local writers which took place at Westside Bowl on Jan. 3.

Director of Lit Youngstown, Karen Schubert, said Youngstown State University student attendance is on the rise at Lit Youngstown events, including the Readers Series.

“We loved seeing more students coming to the open mic. It’s great to hear their creative voices,” Schubert said.

In addition to the Readers Series, Lit Youngstown also hosts meetings for the Lexiphiles Unite! Writer’s Guild. The group is centered around creative writers supporting other creative writers, and meetings are held every first and third Saturday of the month.

On Jan. 16, Lit Youngstown will host a virtual fundraiser with a benefit reading from Youngstown-based

authors and YSU graduates, Sara Kolat and Christopher Barzak.

Schubert said there is a surprising amount of authors with roots in Youngstown.

“There are so many writers in Youngstown or in the Youngstown diaspora, it’s really exciting. We wanted to have a chance to celebrate their work,” Schubert said.

All proceeds generated by the fundraiser will benefit Lit Youngstown directly.

A poetry reading called Uplifting Palestinian Voices will be held Jan. 24. Four poets and four translators for non-English speaking poets from five countries have submitted material for the reading. Following the reading, there will be a discussion on the translations.

On Feb. 3, Lit Youngstown will sponsor Just Desserts, a literary winter gala fundraiser, at Culturati Studios in Youngstown. Schubert said the gala is a great way to involve the community in creative writing.

“[The gala] will include a literary costume contest. I don’t know what the theme will be this year, but last year it was a book title. It was so much fun seeing the creative embodiment of book titles. There will also be music and readings, just a really fun night,” Schubert said.

Lit Youngstown will work with Mill Creek MetroParks

for a poetry hike Feb. 17. Schubert said the organization is grateful to partner with Mill Creek.

“For the first time, we will be collaborating with Mill Creek,” Schubert said. “We really love to collaborate with community partners to bring literary works to many different settings and also to just hold up the great institutions that we have here. So we’re really excited about this partnership.”

The hike will include poetry readings and writing and will conclude with a bonfire.

This year, Lit Youngstown will host a City Youth Poet Contest. Schubert said the organization will highlight one poet from an area high school.

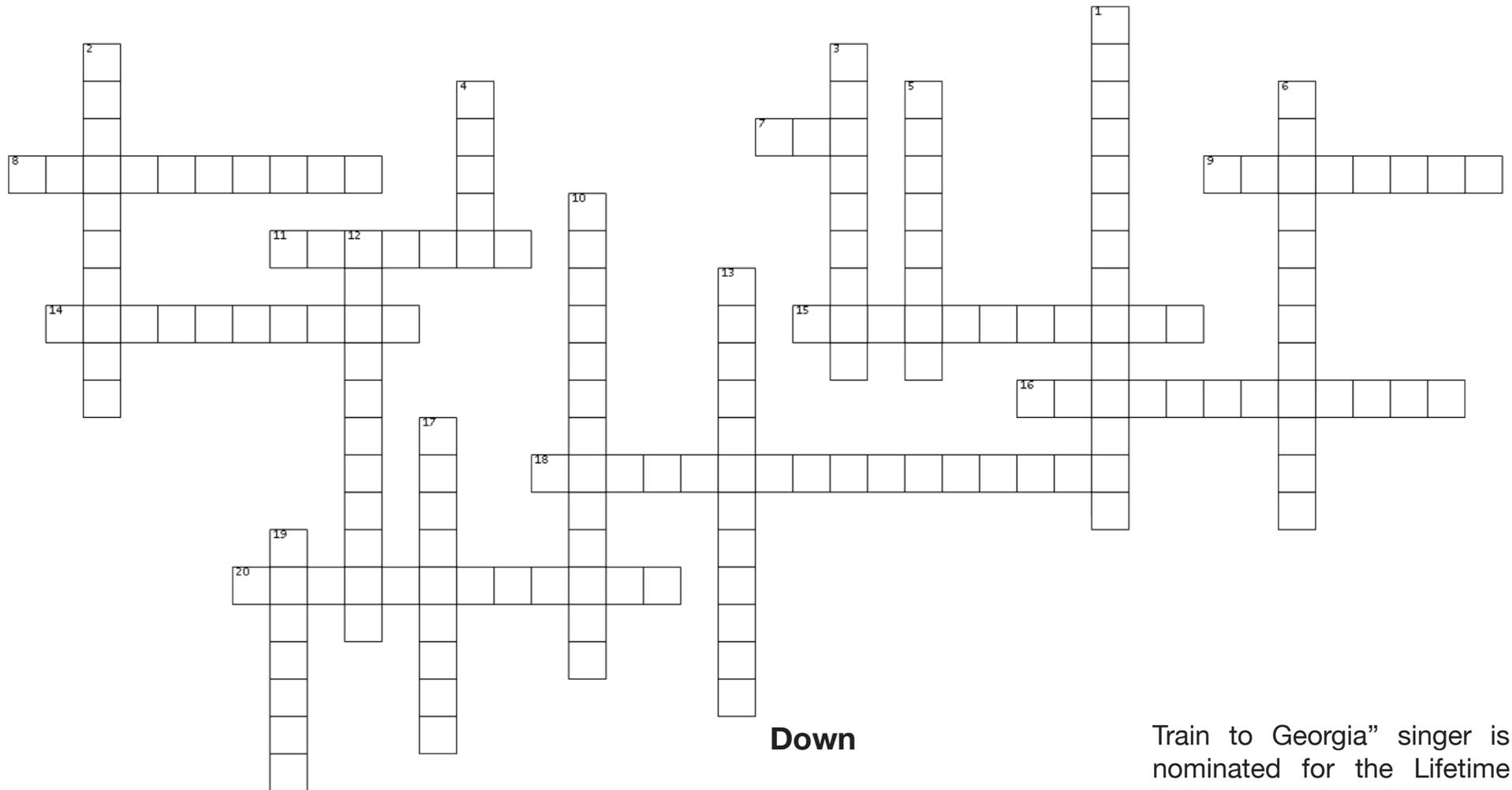
“With support and funding from Mahoning County commissioners, we will be kicking off a City Youth Poet Contest. This will be for current students who are in Youngstown and Warren public high schools. This will be a series of writing workshops that will culminate in a contest, and the winner will receive a \$5,000 scholarship,” Schubert said.

Lit Youngstown will also partner with the Public Library of Youngstown & Mahoning County for the contest.



Lit Youngstown will partner with the public library for its City Youth Poet Contest.

Photo by Christopher Gillett / The Jambar



* There are no spaces between words

Across

7. This artist has nine Grammy nominations including one for Album of the year for her second studio album "SOS"
8. This South African comedian is hosting the Grammy's for the fourth consecutive year
9. This docu-series focusing on the life of the late Tupac Shakur is nominated for Best Music Film
11. The Foo Fighters are nominated for the 32nd time with their song that means to

- be saved from danger
14. This Australian-born YouTuber turned recording artist is nominated for his house-pop song "Rush"
15. Her tenth studio album "Midnights" is nominated for Record of the Year
16. This artist is nominated for her record "What Was I Made For?"
18. This Youngstown native is nominated for his second Grammy
20. This singer and actress is nominated for Album of the Year with her album "The Age of Pleasure"

Down

1. Baby Keem and Kendrick Lamar are nominated for the Best Rap Performance with this song
2. This ex-Disney star is nominated for her song "Flowers" and its host album "Endless Summer Vacation"
3. This Vermont-born folk-pop singer is nominated for Best New Artist
4. This is the number of new categories debuting at the 2024 Grammy's
5. This Grammy nominee for Song of the Year is named after the 2003 movie starring Uma Thurman
6. This seven time Grammy award winner and "Midnight

- Train to Georgia" singer is nominated for the Lifetime Achievement Award
10. This artist featured Earth, Wind & Fire on her debut studio album "Jaguar II"
12. Greta Van Fleet is nominated for the fifth time with their 2023 album named after grabbing parts of space
13. This singer and musician is nominated twice for his work with artists like Taylor Swift and Lana Del Rey
17. This 80s heavy metal band is nominated for their record "72 seasons"
19. Olivia Rodrigo is nominated for Record of the Year with this song named after a supernatural creature that drinks blood

The Jambar Column

New year, new me

Each new year, people often set a variety of resolutions. For some, they only keep up with their goals for a month or so, but for others, it can actually bring around change.

The most popular New Year's resolutions include working out regularly, eating healthier and reading more.

This ultimately brings lots of business to gyms and book stores, and people spend less money on junk food, even if it's only for a few months.

From someone who works in retail as a curbside pickup person, having to constantly lift heavy cases of soda up and down all day gets tiring. I've noticed that some store regulars have been cutting back on sugar intake since the beginning of 2024.

I remember a couple years ago my family decided to eat healthier for our resolution, and my sister made a comment about how I would be the first to fail. Now, I am a very petty person — so I took that personally.

I ended up lasting the longest with the healthy eating lifestyle for more than half the year. I ended up giving up on it because I love pasta way too much to eat spaghetti squash for the rest of the year.

That year, I tried many new foods and gave others another chance, including broccoli. To this day, I still can't stand



Alison Butz

the taste of broccoli.

With the job I picked up this summer, I find myself being able to enjoy certain foods without worrying too much about calorie intake anymore.

At work, I walk over 20,000 steps a day, and I can choose whether or not to take a lunch break. I find myself getting cardio in everyday, with two days of break per week.

This year, I set a realistic resolution for myself. In previous years it has been learning something new. I am hoping to learn how to crochet with help from one of my closest friends.

I have always wanted to learn how to crochet, and when I met my friend and found out that she has an amazing talent with crocheting, I hoped to learn how to make cute little animals by the end of 2024.

However, I also find myself trying to be a better person each year as well. Whether this is paying it forward however many times a month, or overall being a nicer person, I hope to be the person that I would love to have in my life.

Quote of the Week

“Ah! que la vie est quotidienne. (*Oh, what a day-to-day business life is.*)”

— Jules Laforgue,
Franco-Uruguayan poet

The Jambar Editorial

The war on gender

For 15 days after Ohio's Congress passed House Bill 68, transgender youth across the state waited in anticipation to hear if Gov. Mike DeWine would veto the decision that stripped them of the ability to receive life-saving care.

Sponsored by Rep. Gary Click, House Bill 68 would ban gender-affirming healthcare for minors, including hormone-replacement therapy, puberty blockers and surgeries.

The bill would also prevent trans girls from competing on sports teams that align with their gender identity and require mental health professionals to evaluate patients for mental-health disorders, trauma and abuse before diagnosing them with a “gender-related condition.”

Ohio's legislatures passed the bill on Dec. 13, 2023, with a vote of 62-27 in the House and 24-8 in the Senate.

With The National Library of Medicine finding “82% of transgender individuals have considered killing themselves and 40% have attempted suicide, with suicidality highest among transgender youth,” it's clear gender affirming care is life saving.

A veto from DeWine could overturn the decision, and the next two weeks saw LGBTQ Ohioans and parents of trans youth speaking out, pleading that DeWine understand the danger of the legislation.

DeWine vetoed House Bill 68 on Dec. 28, 2023.

According to The Columbus Dispatch, DeWine said he signed the veto because he listened to the families of trans youth.

“Parents looked me in the eye and told me that their child is alive today only because of the gender-affirming care that they have received. And youth who have transitioned to a new gender told me that they are thriving today because of that transition,” DeWine stated.

After the veto, there was a glimpse of hope for trans youth in Ohio, feeling that

maybe — after decades of losing family, friends and partners to crippling dysphoria, discrimination and hatred — someone might be looking out for them.

The feeling was fleeting.

DeWine signed an executive order Jan. 4 that banned all transgender Ohioans from receiving gender-affirming surgeries until they are 18.

Despite acknowledging the importance of gender-affirming care, DeWine still chose to take two steps back.

Ohio's House followed suit and voted to override the veto Jan. 10 with a vote of 62-28.

The Ohio Senate will vote Jan. 24 on whether to override the veto. The bill will go into effect if the Senate gets 60% of the vote.

Many people fail to understand that there are already several barriers to receiving gender-affirming care, especially for trans minors.

The National Library of Medicine explains that these barriers include the cost of care, bias within medical fields, and the need for parental consent for minors.

Many express concern over the irreversibility of gender affirming care. However, AP News reported in 2023 that only 1% of 8,000 surveyed trans teens expressed regret in their medical transitions.

Still, DeWine chose to hear the outcries of his constituents and ignored them anyway. Ohio's representatives chose to uphold an agenda based on hatred instead of listening to the truth.

DeWine put it best himself when he said, “These are gut-wrenching decisions that should be made by parents and should be informed by teams of doctors who are advising them.”

Nevertheless, DeWine and Congress continue to disregard facts and act with malice.

The government has shown it's willing to let transgender youth die.

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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JambarTV by The Jambar

Phantoms hockey returns to home ice

By Cameron Niemi
The Jambar

The Youngstown Phantoms hockey team returned to its home ice rink inside the Covelli Center as it took on the Omaha Lancers in a two-game series. The team looked to rebound from a 6-4 loss Jan. 4 against the Lancers.

The Lancers came into the series ranked last in the Western Conference with five wins on the season.

While the Lancers jumped out to a 1-0 lead in the beginning of the first game, the Phantoms tied the game by the end of the first period.

In the second period, Omaha outscored Youngstown, 4-2. The Lancers added another goal to the total to secure its sixth win of the season.

The second game took place Jan. 5 where the Phantoms lost in an overtime shootout by a final of 3-2.

Both teams went scoreless in the first period. The Lancers scored first in the second period and took a 1-0 lead. The Phantoms quickly responded with two straight

goals before the end of the period and took the 2-1 lead heading into the third.

Omaha tied the game in the third period and sent the game into overtime. Both teams played stout defense in overtime, and the game went to a shootout. The Lancers scored on their final attempt to secure their second straight win against the Phantoms.

Despite being swept at home and losing their fourth straight game, the defending 2022-2023 Clark Cup Champion Phantoms still have 33 games remaining in their regular season.

Head coach Ryan Ward spoke about the losses and what the team learned with the second half of the season underway.

“The biggest thing for us, coming back from break, is just the consistency of effort. The league gets really good the second half of the year,” Ward said. “We’ve had some adversity with guys out, injured and sick.”

The Phantoms have a 17-8-3 record for the 2023-2024 season. They are tied for fifth place in the United States Hockey League and tied for third in the Eastern

Conference.

The team will play six straight games on the road in a 15-day span before returning to Youngstown inside the Covelli Center on Jan. 27.

Ward still has high expectations for his team and he spoke about the chance to capitalize on the six-game stretch on the horizon despite having one of the youngest teams in the league.

“We have a pretty good schedule here just from an opportunity standpoint. We have some guys that are leaving Saturday to play in the top prospects game. It’s a next man up mentality and for us we have to make sure that we are giving ourselves a chance to compete and win every night,” Ward said.

The Phantoms will start their road trip in Iowa for two games. The team will first take on the Des Moines Buccaneers at 7 p.m. on Jan. 12 and the Waterloo Black Hawks at 6:05 p.m. on Jan. 13.

The games can be watched on FloSports or listened to on WDRB radio.

Women’s basketball continues Horizon League slate

By Marissa Masano
The Jambar

Over winter break, the Youngstown State University women’s basketball team rounded out non-conference play with a 4-6 record. It will continue the remainder of the season against Horizon League Opponents.

The team lost to Wright State University, 82-68, on Dec. 29, 2023. Senior Malia Magestro scored a season-high 22 points and led the team in made 3-pointers, free throws and rebounds.

Fifth-year Emily Saunders was the Penguins’ second-highest scorer with 14 points, and senior Lindsey Linard recorded a career-high 10 points.

The Penguins fell behind early as the Raiders scored the game’s first eight points. Within the second quarter, the Penguins cut the lead to four, but the Raiders took a 37-28 lead heading into halftime.

YSU outscored WSU, 22-19, in the third quarter and headed into the fourth quarter with a score of 56-50.

Wright State extended its lead to 15 points to claim the victory inside the Bee-

ghly Center.

Youngstown State defeated Indiana University–Purdue University Indianapolis, 58-56, on Dec. 3, 2023. Saunders led the Penguins’ scoring efforts with 19 points and nine rebounds.

The largest lead for either team was four points, and the Penguins held a 50-49 lead with under four minutes in the fourth quarter. IUPUI tied the game at 56-56 with 24.4 seconds left.

Fifth-year Shay-Lee Kirby made two go-ahead free throws with 1.4 seconds left to secure the Penguins’ first Horizon League victory of the season.

For Kirby, the team’s relentless efforts down the stretch helped them secure the win.

“We just have to make sure when it comes down to the final minutes — and it’s close like that — to just stay calm, don’t try to do too much, stay relaxed and play good [defense]. I think that’s what we did, and to get a stop, that gave us some momentum,” Kirby said.

The Penguins continued their home-stand Jan. 3, defeating Oakland University, 70-63. Fifth-years Dena Jarrells and Paige Shy led the Penguins with 18

points.

At halftime, the teams were tied at 32. Youngstown State started the third quarter strong, outscoring the Golden Grizzlies, 19-4, and taking a 57-44 lead.

YSU maintained the lead and finished the game, with 51.1% shooting from the field.

For head coach John Nicolais, the team benefitted from moving fluently as a team with the basketball.

“We moved the basketball, and that was the biggest thing. We spaced well, we moved, we got penetration. We were able to kick for inside-out looks and got high percentage shots around the basket,” Nicolais said.

The Penguins traveled to Cleveland State University on Jan. 6 where the team was defeated, 79-37.

Saunders posted seven blocks — the most blocked shots by a Youngstown State women’s basketball player in 20 years.

The senior’s seven blocks are also tied for the sixth-most by any Division 1 player this season.

The Penguins turned the ball over 25 times, and junior Haley Thierry was the

team’s highest scorer with seven points.

The team’s offense struggled as it shot 20.6% overall and was 6-for-33 from long distance.

The women’s basketball team is back in action against the University of Wisconsin-Green Bay on Jan. 11. Tip-off is scheduled for 1 p.m. and the game will be broadcasted on ESPN+ and 570 WKBN.



Photo by Dylan Lux / The Jambar

Emily Saunders high-fives fans as she is announced in the starting lineup.

PENGUINS MISS TEXAS MIGRATION

Football's historic year in review

By Madeline Hippeard
The Jambar

The Youngstown State University football team finished its 2023 season with an 8-5 record, including its first appearance in the NCAA FCS playoffs since 2016.

In the first round of the playoffs, senior wide receiver Bryce Oliver broke the school record for total career receiving touchdowns when he caught his 26th against Duquesne University on Nov. 25, 2023.

The previous school record, last broken in 1979, was 25 receiving touchdowns in a season.

Oliver said the work he has done with senior quarterback Mitch Davidson over his time at Youngstown State University helped him break the school record for total career touchdowns.

"It's a testament to the work Mitchell and I put in throughout the offseason or just since I've been here. I think you guys see the stuff we do on the field but it's a lot that goes into that off the field," Oliver said. "It's a blessing for sure to have that record."

Throughout his career at YSU, Oliver had 147 receptions for 2,065 yards. In the 2023 season, he caught eight touchdowns.

Senior quarterback Mitch Davidson completed 256 of 368 passes thrown for 3,088 yards, earning a 69.6% completion percentage.

Davidson became the first quarterback since 2013 to start every game in the season. He set the school records for completions, yards thrown, pass attempts and completion percentage in one season. Davidson also set a record for number of games with 300 passing yards with four.

Throughout his career at Youngstown State, Davidson threw for 4,978 yards and 40 touchdowns over 30 games. He also rushed for nine career touchdowns, five of which came in the 2023 season.

The Penguins scored 27 rushing touchdowns during their 2023 season.

Ten of the 'Guins rushing touchdowns were scored by senior tailback Dra Rushton who ran for 664 yards on 163 carries. Senior tailback Tyshon King rushed for 1,011 yards on 187 carries for the Penguins, scoring nine touchdowns throughout the course of the season.

Junior cornerback Troy Jakubec intercepted a team-best four passes, the most in one season since 2016.

Head coach Doug Phillips said he believes the Penguins' performance on the field this year helped them become a great team.

"It comes down to offense scoring points, defense being relentless and stopping the run, and special teams being superior. We'll go back on film and there's probably a lot of things we need to clean up and get better at, but I couldn't be prouder of our players, our coaches, our fans, our community," Phillips said.

Youngstown State finished the season with wins against Valparaiso University, Robert Morris University, Southern Illinois University, Illinois State University, Missouri State University, Indiana State University and Duquesne.

The Penguins also defeated Murray State University for the first time in program history.

Offensively, the 'Guins led the FCS in possession time averaging 35:06 per game.

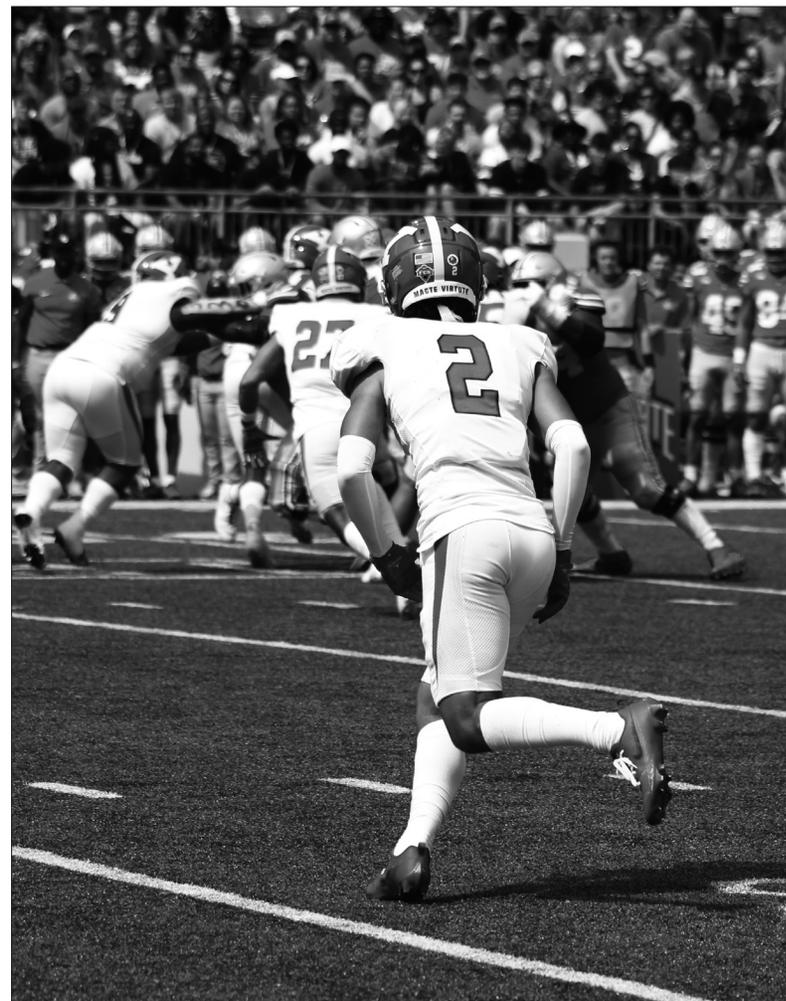
YSU averaged a school record of 243.1 passing yards per game. The former record, set in 1972, was 235.8 yards per game.

On average, the Penguins scored 32 points per game last year, the most in a season since 2013.

The offense set two other school records in terms of scoring. First, the 'Guins set a record for number of over-40-point games with six games this season. They also set a new school record for scoring 30 or more points in six consecutive games.

Defensively, the Penguins allowed the fewest rushing yards per game since 2012 at 102.2 yards allowed.

YSU football will kick off the 2024 season Sept. 7 against Valparaiso.



Defensive Back Troy Jakubec eyes up the ball against the Buckeyes.



Junior C.J. Charleston reels in a tough catch over a Missouri State defender.

Photos by Dylan Lux / The Jambar

‘Paint the Town Red’

By Dylan Lux
The Jambar

While Youngstown State University students took a break after the fall semester, the YSU men’s basketball team took to the court and continued its season slate.

The team started its win streak after a home victory versus Cleveland State University and road wins against Robert Morris University, Ohio University and Western Michigan University.

Youngstown State played four straight games in the Beeghly Center, hosting Bethany College, Westminster College, The United States Naval Academy and Oakland University to restart Horizon League play.

The team also played Northern Kentucky University on the road and hosted the University of Indiana University–Purdue University Indianapolis.

Against Western Michigan, the team pulled out a close 72-68 victory, with the leading scorer for the game being fifth-year Ziggy Reid with 25 points on 9-17 shooting.

In the team’s return home, it passed the century mark in its next two victories, with a 107-70 victory over the Bethany Bison and a 117-45 win over Westminster.

Against Bethany, sophomore John Lovelace Jr. led the game in scoring with 23 points, including 10 field goals.

Junior EJ Farmer had 20 of the team’s 117 points against Westminster, with fifth-year Brett Thompson contributing a double-double with 13 points and 10 assists.

Navy stood in the way of a seventh-straight win for the Penguins, but 23 points from fifth-year Brandon Rush proved too much for the Midshipmen. Fifth-year DJ Burns also had a double-double performance, putting in 19 points and 13 rebounds. Burns had three blocks and a steal in the win.

Going into the matchup with Oakland, head coach Jerrod Calhoun gave much praise to Oakland and its toughness — especially its schedule and players.

“They have played the 12th hardest schedule in the country. They’ve been at Illinois, at [The] Ohio State

[University], at Xavier [University],” Calhoun said. “They’re big, they’re long, they’re tough — a very good team [that will] be right at the top of this conference.”

The Penguins’ win streak ended at seven games after a 88-81 loss to Oakland in the Beeghly Center. YSU shot 44% from the field and 43% from three. The team shot 56% from beyond the arc in the first half and just 25% in the second half.

The leading scorer for the ‘Guins was Reid, who had 16 points and led the team in rebounds with seven.

Back on the road against Northern Kentucky on Jan. 4, YSU held a 45-36 lead at halftime. Despite the early advantage, 29 points from NKU guard Marques Warrick led a comeback for the Norse, handing YSU its second straight loss, 79-76.

Attempting to break the losing streak at home, YSU hosted IUPUI on Jan. 7. YSU was down at the half, 32-31, but managed an 11-point advantage over the Jaguars in the second half to secure a 75-65 victory.

Thompson was the game’s leading scorer with a season-high 20 points — all in the second half. He shot over 50% from the field at 7-13 while also tallying 6 assists.

YSU will return to the court at 6:30 p.m. Jan. 10 to take on conference foe Purdue University Fort Wayne. The Mastodons are 13-3 overall with a 4-1 Horizon League record — first in the conference. The game can be watched on ESPN+ and live stats can be viewed at ysusports.com.

YSU will also be at home at 9 p.m. on Jan. 12 against Wright State University, which will be nationally televised on ESPN2. YSU is hosting a “Red Out” for the game, encouraging Penguin fans to wear red.

