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Thursday, February 22, 2024

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ONE LAST TIME



Misook Yun, a professor in the Dana School of Music, conducting an opera class. Photo by Elizabeth Coss / The Jambar

Faculty cuts avoided, 12 accept voluntary separation package

By Elizabeth Coss
The Jambar

The Office of Academic Affairs announced in an email Feb. 19 faculty cuts are no longer needed following collaborative efforts between Youngstown State University’s administration and faculty members.

According to interim Provost Jennifer Pintar, 12 faculty accepted a voluntary separation retirement package and will be compensated with 80% of their salary as severance for next year.

“Thirteen [faculty] applied. We did reject one and we accepted 12,” Pintar said. “We had one that

submitted their [VSRP] and we said no, that we really needed that faculty member to stay. The faculty member was fine with pulling their application back out. So, the total is 12 [faculty] that are going to be leaving the institution.”

The university offered a VSRP to tenured faculty employed in programs that underwent restructuring or are being sunset this academic year. In January, the university announced six degrees would be sunset and up to 13 faculty could face forced retrenchments if there weren’t enough VSRP’s accepted.

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Menstruation impacts athletes — period

By Gunnhildur Baldursdottir
Jambar Contributor

Gender equality is on the rise in sports, and so are studies on the impact the menstrual cycle has on training, competition and injury.

According to the National Library of Medicine, a regular 28-day menstrual cycle has four phases — menstruation, follicular, ovulation and luteal — that are regulated by four hormones. While this research defines four phases, some scientists argue a different number of phases exist, ranging from two to six.

Research from the International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health shows female athletes have greater strength when estrogen peaks during the late follicular phase and lower strength during the luteal phase, when progesterone increases.

Birna Varðardóttir, a Ph.D. student in sports and health science at the University of Iceland, was among researchers who established Iceland’s first research project on relative deficiency in sports, or REDs. Varðardóttir said evidence shows female soccer players could be more susceptible to injury around the ovulation phase.

“Sometimes [injury factors] can be a very bad cocktail. Studies have, for example, suggested that joint stiffness decreases around the ovulation phase, and this might explain why some females feel more prone to injuries around

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Faculty cuts

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Pintar provided The Jambar with a breakdown on how many VSRP’s were accepted per each department:

- Art Department: 3 out of 9 tenured faculty accepted a VSRP
- Dana School of Music: 7 out of 20 tenured faculty accepted a VSRP
- Fashion Merchandise Program: 1 out of 1 tenured faculty accepted a VSRP
- Geography Program: 1 out of 4 tenured faculty accepted a VSRP

Additionally in the Dana School of Music, one non-tenured faculty member will not have their one-year contract renewed.

While the VSRP enforces faculty departure at the end of the academic year, some faculty who accepted the VSRP may

still be required to teach summer courses depending on the program.

Retrenchments were in consideration following an Academic Senate meeting in January. YSU’s decision to cut degrees and potentially faculty faced public criticism through protests and a petition that garnered over 20,000 signatures.

Pintar explained the VSRP was part of the collective bargaining agreement, in an attempt to “exhaust all other means” of personnel reduction before retrenchment.

“[The reason] we’ve used this for the past three years actually is to offer an incentive just like a severance package, and many corporations do this,” Pintar said. “This one was very successful because it was directed to the areas that we really wanted to address.”

Pintar said YSU is committed to completing a continual evaluation process demanded by the state of Ohio.

“A lot of our money comes from the state and the federal government and we need to comply with their guidelines,” Pintar said. “We will always evaluate our programs. We hope that it doesn’t result in faculty loss or personnel loss, but it is a process where we have to work as a team. The faculty help with recruitment. The faculty help with retention, and the administration continues to work toward adding programs and guiding programs that pique students interest.”

Pintar said the university is grateful a resolution was met.

“We’re very grateful for the faculty members that did step forward and we’re happy that contributed to the resolution of the situation, but it’s not a long-term strategy to constantly have to go through processes like this, but we’re very happy when it turns out to be something more positive for the institution and for our students,” Pintar said.



Twelve professors accepted the voluntary separation retirement package.

Photo by Elizabeth Coss / The Jambar

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7-DAY WEATHER FORECAST

Thu.	Fri.	Sat.	Sun.	Mon.	Tue.	Wed.
High: 47°F Low: 37°F Chance of precip: 96%	High: 46°F Low: 20°F Chance of precip: 5%	High: 31°F Low: 19°F Chance of precip: 6%	High: 45°F Low: 34°F Chance of precip: 40%	High: 55°F Low: 45°F Chance of precip: 20%	High: 62°F Low: 50°F Chance of precip: 75%	High: 51°F Low: 28°F Chance of precip: 60%
 Rain	 Overcast	 A Few Clouds	 Mostly Cloudy	 A Few Clouds	 Rain	 Rain

Information courtesy of accuweather.com

EXTREME DATA COLLECTING

Radical research

By Matthew Sotlar
The Jambar

Youngstown State University recently received nearly \$450,000 from the National Institute of Defense to fund YSU’s “Research and Evaluation on Domestic Radicalization and Violent Extremism.”

The project’s goal is to collect online content deemed “radical” or “extremist” in order to examine and make connections between different extremist groups and ideologies.

Richard Rogers, an associate professor of criminal justice, is the project’s principal investigator. Rogers said the project’s data is collected from different areas across the internet.

“It’s a big data project,” Rogers said. “Data is being collected from social media, from discussion boards and websites, all places that focus on misinformation, extremism and conspiracism. So, we’re not talking about

Facebook, Twitter, or those kinds of things.” The project focuses on both sides of the political spectrum. Rogers said the project does not discriminate based on political affiliation.

“These issues are both on the right and left, and we are looking at both. You do hear this in popular discussions, there’s a lot of focus on groups like Neo-Nazis, and people say, ‘Well what about the left?’ We will have the ability to compare the two different sides,” Rogers said.

One aspect of the project is to understand violent extremist content. Rogers said his job is to find connections between the different types of data collected.

“We have over 14 million pieces of text that have at least 30 words. So, we’re developing a methodology that we can go through that [data] with and measure the level of violence and see what ideas it correlates with,” Rogers said.

Since the project strays away from mainstream media, researchers actively seek new material across the internet. Rogers said extremist websites tend to share a common theme with one another.

“A lot of them are sites and locations that work specifically in white extremism or on the left, overtly socialist. Some of the Q-Anon material, these are sites that are openly Q-Anon. I’d like to say we have the Q-Anon home world as one of the sites we’re looking at,” Rogers said.

Rogers said there was a spike in content following the Israeli-Hamas war, but a decrease after the beginning of 2024.

“It’s just not trendy to talk about these political issues right now. The one place we did see an uptick is in Oc-

tober with the start of the war in Gaza, and you could see that on both sides. There’s kind of an antisemitic extreme left and antisemitic extreme right, and both of them saw some spiking of activity,” Rogers said.

The project is set to run until 2028. Rogers said he and his team are hoping to see trends within the data when it concludes.

“When we get to the end, around year three in the grant, what we’ll really be looking at from all of the coding and things we’ve done to get up to that point is whether there is this convergence of ideas that is emerging,” Rogers said.

New data is uploaded at the end of each month. Anyone can view the data by going to rogersperspectives.com.

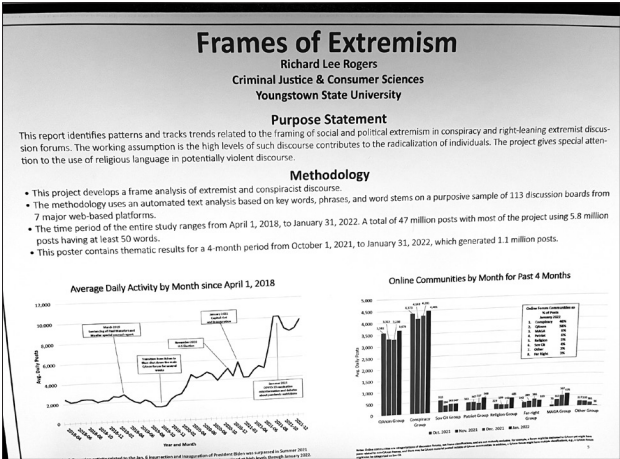


Photo by Matt Sotlar / The Jambar
Samples of Rogers’ data displayed in Cushwa Hall.

News Brief

Student Press Freedom Day

The Youngstown Press Club will host a Student Press Freedom Day celebration at 1 p.m. on Feb. 23 in the Schwebel Lounge of Kilcawley Center.

The event is sponsored by Youngstown Press Club, The Jambar, Jambar TV, WKBN-TV, The Business Journal, Youngstown State University’s chapter of Society for Collegiate Journalists, and The Anderson Program in Journalism at YSU.

Attendees will hear presentations from Jambar employees, including Molly Burke, Elizabeth Coss, Shianna Gibbons, Christopher Gillett and Dylan Lux. Music will be provided by John Ostapowicz and refreshments will be served.

The celebration is free and open to the public. The first 50 attendees will receive a free button from the Student Press Law Center.

Menstruation

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Research on menstrual cycles and exercise can be expensive, and results often remain unclear because of health factors. Varðardóttir said female athletes can track their cycles independently and monitor their symptoms to communicate their needs with coaches.

“It’s important not to demonize the menstrual cycle, that it’s not a monthly disturbance and just a complete hassle. We should rather try to educate people about where the changes happen and how important the menstrual cycle is,” Varðardóttir said.

Varðardóttir said while the conversation is essential, it’s important to respect female athletes’ willingness to discuss their periods or not.

“Some are just lucky that it has little effect on them, and they aren’t among those who feel this affects their success or capacity. It’s unnecessary to put too much power on something that’s otherwise not bothering them,” Varðardóttir said.

Among female athletes tracking their menstrual cycles is Norwegian native Tiril Eckhoff, a two-time Olympic champion and a 10-time world championship gold medalist in biathlon, which combines cross-country skiing and rifle shooting.

Eckhoff retired in March 2023 and left her mark as one of the first elite athletes to adjust her training to her menstrual cycle and share her knowledge openly.

According to the Norwegian Broadcasting Corporation, after Eckhoff stopped taking birth control pills in 2017, she began prioritizing her training according to her cycle for the 2020-2021 season. The season was the most successful of her career, with 13 World Cup victories, four World Championship gold medals and her first Crystal Globe.

“One must use their cycle to bring out the best in themselves,” Eckhoff said in October 2020 to “Kant ut,” a podcast about biathlon. The episode’s name was “La oss snakke om mensen og trening,” or “Let’s talk about periods and exercise.”

Ådne Ausland is a head coach of a cross-country skiing club and doctoral candidate at the University of Agder in Norway. Ausland is developing a research center called FIDES, or Female Inclusion and Development in Exercise and Sports Coach Education Program.

Ausland said research on menstruation is not “one size fits all.”

“There is a lot of good research being done today, but the best research you can do is on yourself because it’s so individualized,” Ausland said.

Ausland said coaches must also be educated on how to communicate with athletes about their health. After

interviewing sports coaches for his research, Ausland said he witnessed significant ignorance about menstrual cycles among male coaches.

“I recently talked to a track and field coach who has coached female athletes for the last 45 years. He said they haven’t talked about the menstruation cycle at all because it hasn’t been a problem,” Ausland said. “That’s what we have to get up against because it’s mostly stubborn adults. Many males don’t understand the value.”

Aron Gauti Laxdal, an Icelandic associate professor in sports science at the University of Agder, is a member of the FIDES research team. He said girls should be educated on menstrual cycles at a young age, especially those who want to excel in athletics.

“Let’s think about young girls in swimming. Those who have experienced a great upswing for years, but out of nowhere, there comes a flat line. Their improvements go backward because suddenly their bodies have changed,” Laxdal said. “This affects their motivation extremely. So, many of them quit.”

Laxdal said one of the main focuses of FIDES is to demonstrate women belong in sports and that their participation has its own value.

“They shouldn’t have to be trying to be like men or having to do things out of men’s presupposition, but showing that women’s sport is something independent,” Laxdal said.

Menstrual Cycles

Phases:

- Menstrual phase
- Follicular phase
- Ovulation phase
- Luteal phase

Menstrual hormones:

- Estrogen
- Progesterone
- Luteinizing hormone
- Follicular stimulating hormone

Information courtesy of the National Library of Medicine



Photo by Gunnhildur Baldursdottir / Jambar Contributor

The women’s volleyball team played against Wright State University on Sept 26.

An open discussion on Black history

By **Billy-Jack Colón**
The Jambar

Organizations at Youngstown State University hosted a panel on Black History Month from 10:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. on Feb. 13 in The Hub of Kilcawley Center.

Panelists from Student Activities, Black Student Union and African Caribbean Student Union gathered to talk about representation, acceptance and how Black history is taught at YSU.

One panelist was Madonna Pinkard, WFMJ's Community Relations director and adjunct professor of communications. Pinkard said she believes YSU needs to incorporate Black history courses.

"I would like to see a Black history course taught on the campus of Youngstown State University, not African history, not Africana — Black history," Pinkard said.

The panel also discussed the lack of Black educators in local schools. Pinkard said students can write to the Board of Education if they feel their school lacks repre-

sentation.

"If you're unhappy with it, write to the Board of Education saying 'I'd like to see you hire a Black teacher,'" Pinkard said.

Audience members could participate in the conversation. Several attendees asked panelists their opinions on topics such as the perception of race, microaggressions, macroaggressions, systemic oppression and more.

Chryshanna Jackson Leftwich, professor of politics and international relations, was on the panel. Jackson Leftwich said society constructed the idea of race.

"We talk about race, but we all know race is a social construct. We know that the reason race is on your grandfather's birth certificate, on my mom's birth certificate, but not on mine — it is because the government was dealing with discrimination based on that," Jackson Leftwich said.

Elijah Burch, graduate assistant and athletic academic advisor, was a panelist who discussed his upbringing with a multiracial household.

"I've had a different experience since I grew up in a multiracial household. My mother is white, Irish-Polish, and my dad is Black. I had no choice but to constantly integrate," Burch said.

Guests could also find quotes from popular Black figures on cards scattered on The Hub's tables and enter a giveaway to win books and other prizes.

Jackson Leftwich said students who want to learn more about African Americans can participate in local events, such as those hosted by BSU or African American churches.

"Going to some of the different events that are more of a fun setting and not always an 'Oh, we're gonna learn something' setting, where you can kind of relax in a social setting. I think that's a good start," Jackson Leftwich said.

The panel also included Jordan Record of the Student Affairs Program, BSU President Julian Johnson and Student Government Association Rep. Zayda Storm.



Panel speakers (from left to right): Elijah Burch, Zayda Storm, Julian Johnson, Jordan Record, Madonna Pinkard and Chryshanna Jackson Leftwich.

Photo By Billy-Jack Colón / The Jambar




John Scalzi will speak at the HATH conference on Feb. 22 in the DeBartolo Hall Auditorium.

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JOHN SCALZI
7PM | Thursday, Feb. 22
DeBartolo Hall Auditorium | Room 132



John Scalzi, multiple Hugo Award winner and New York Times bestselling author, will speak to the YSU and Youngstown community at 7PM on Thursday, Feb. 22 in DeBartolo Hall Auditorium, Room 132 about the state of the science fiction genre today. After his talk, he will answer questions and hold a book signing. Refreshments will be available afterward in the DeBartolo lobby.

This event is free and open to the public as the first Grace Ruth Memorial Speaker Series which is part of the annual History Across the Humanities conference.

More information is available here:
ysu.edu/history-across-the-humanities

Photo (left) courtesy of @jscalzi on Instagram. Photo (right) by Tala Alsharif / Jambar Contributor

Award-winning author to speak at YSU

By Tala Alsharif
Jambar Contributor

Best-selling science fiction author John Scalzi will speak at the History Across the Humanities conference at 7 p.m. on Feb. 22, in the DeBartolo Hall Auditorium.

This year's HATH conference features a science-fiction theme in film, literature and pop culture.

According to his website, Scalzi has won multiple awards for his work, including the Hugo award, a top award in science fiction. He also won the 2016 Governor's Award for the Arts in Ohio.

At the conference, Scalzi will discuss the genre of science fiction and the direction it's going in.

"The current state of science fiction is as good as it's ever been, with more and more diverse writers and stories," Scalzi stated.

Scalzi stated he first gained interest in the genre when he started reading it in elementary school.

"I stay engaged with it as a writer because it is a very flexible genre," Scalzi stated. "You can just write about every other type of fiction within science fiction itself."

Christopher Barzak, an English professor at

Youngstown State University, stated students can benefit from hearing about Scalzi's influence and knowledge on the genre of speculative fiction.

"He has a vast store of knowledge of the history and the current state of speculative fiction and its impact on our lives," Barzak stated. "He's also incredibly funny and down to earth. Students will not only be educated by hearing his talk, they'll be entertained."

Barzak stated Scalzi's writing is forward-thinking and reflects current society.

"Much of his work can also be categorized as satire and parody, which is humorous and tends to skewer many of our stereotypes in society," Barzak stated.

Scalzi stated he often integrates social and political topics in his storytelling, which he finds easy for stories about humans.

"I integrate them into the storytelling because complex social and political issues exist in the real world," Scalzi stated. "To ignore them would be to ignore a significant part of the human experience."

Laura Beadling, a professor in the Department of English and World Languages, said she's a long-time fan of Scalzi and often teaches his novels. She is currently

teaching one in her young-adult literature class.

Beadling said she enjoys Scalzi's recent books because they're fast paced and snarky, which she believes students will enjoy.

"I would encourage everyone, if they don't know Scalzi, pick up one of his books and see if it's for you. He's really fun," Beadling said.

According to Barzak, Scalzi is also the former president of the Science Fiction and Fantasy Writers Association, where he had positive influences on the publishing industry.

Scalzi hopes students will walk away from his speech with more knowledge of the real world of writing and publishing.

"I'd like them also to see a place for themselves in the community of science fiction writers, readers and fans," Scalzi stated.

Beyond his novels, Scalzi engages with fans through his blog *Whatever*, where he shares his thoughts on writing, politics and pop culture.

His upcoming project, the seventh book of the "Old Man's War" series, is set to come out in 2025.

Outdoor commons coming to campus

By Nicholas Bianco
Jambar Contributor

Youngstown State University will have a new outdoor common area on the lawn between DeBartolo Hall and Lincoln Avenue by spring 2025.

The project is an initiative of Student Government Association. Jordan Pintar, president of SGA, said the plan is to make the space welcoming to students.

“Our goal is to be able to put something there to attract students to that area,” Pintar said. “Essentially, just bringing more vibrant liveliness to that spot that is now open.”

The location of the lawn was previously part of the M60 parking deck. In August 2023, the deck was replaced with the M60 parking lot, freeing up space for the lawn.

According to Pintar, the common area will resemble the Daniel H. Becker Family Fountain Commons.

“One thing that I really love about our campus is we have a ton of trees per square foot on our campus,” Pintar said. “[The lawn] would be a great place to add trees, bushes and shade so that it’s kind of resembling the environment that the fountain is right now.”

Pintar and SGA Executive Vice President Sofia Meyers met with YSU President Bill Johnson on Feb. 14 to discuss the project’s progress and funding. Pintar said Johnson directed SGA to the newly established Government Affairs Office, which can help with funding.

“There is state and federal grant opportunities for the beautification of college campuses. So, we are looking to continue that conversation to get one of those grants secured to make this a reality,” Pintar said.

Pintar said Johnson expressed

enthusiasm in making the area a nature-oriented space for the community.

“We mentioned a [Pete the Penguin] statue that we’re hoping to get, and he really loved that idea,” Pintar said. “It’s just going to be making sure we can actually make it feasible.”

The project’s first goal is to put solar panel tables on the lawn, giving students a place to do work, charge electronic devices and eat lunch.

Myers said SGA representatives are collaborating on what else should be placed in the common area.

“We’re just looking into options on what we could possibly do with that [to] better impact students and the community members and get people more involved on campus and just create a better space in that area,” Myers said.

Other ideas for the space include incorporating art statues, an archway, trees, bushes and an amphitheater.

At an SGA meeting, Parliamentarian Austin Winger-Kailer suggested placing an electronic billboard in the area to promote campus events.

“There’s flyers and stuff around, but sometimes it doesn’t get around to everybody,” Winger-Kailer said. “It would be a nice addition for everyone to kind of know what’s going on.”

Pintar said she hopes to bring a Rotary Club-sponsored little library to the area. SGA has been implementing little libraries on campus since the fall semester.

“We have a little library the community really loves,” Pintar said. “I’ve seen a lot of people use that and I think that that green space would also be another great space for that little library.”

The common area project is expected to begin fall 2024.

A snapshot of student life

By Sydney Fairbanks
Jambar Contributor

Many students work with media outside of classes, either through Youngstown State University organizations or as entrepreneurs.

Junior biology major Mickenzie Mosti is one student who has created her own photography business.

After taking a break from studies to travel internationally, Mosti began her photography journey in July 2020.

“I then decided to shadow my really good friend who is a photographer,” Mosti said. “I shadowed with her for two years, and now this year, I’ve launched my own business.”

Mosti’s services include timeless and lifestyle photography for \$75 an hour and wedding photography for \$175 an hour. Mosti said she plans on raising her prices once she builds clientele.

For timeless and lifestyle photography, Mosti said she loves taking pictures of people and animals with close attention to the detail.

“I really like capturing the details and making sure that people can just remember the day the way that I saw it instead of just going through the day and not seeing the whole picture,” Mosti said.

Carter Cook, a sophomore multimedia communications major, is the videographer for the Division of Student Affairs and Athletics Department at YSU. Cook was introduced to videography through an Austintown community television class his freshman year at Austintown Fitch High School.

Cook said videography is more than just

pointing a camera and recording.

“There’s such an art behind what a creator can make of [videography]. There’s artists that can paint, and I think, especially with photography and videography, it’s how the creator makes the video,” Cook said.

The YSU Communications Department offers high-end equipment for students to borrow, such as large video camcorders, DSLR cameras, lighting kits, tripods and audio recording devices.

Equipment can be checked out from equipment checkout on the second floor of Bliss Hall for personal or school use.

While students in media have priority for equipment check out, all students can partake.

Dan McCormick, studio manager and broadcast engineer, said the studio allows students to test gear that they may be interested in purchasing.

“They can get their hands on something, really put it through its paces, and say ‘you know what, that camera I was going to buy, I don’t think that’s the one for me. I think I’m going to get something like this’ based on the experience they had with something we offer to them freely,” McCormick said.

McCormick said content creation can be an outlet for students to learn about industries, places or perspectives.

“If I’m helping someone promote a handbag that they make from scratch, I’m going to learn about the entire process. If you’re a curious person, it’s very rewarding to find out about things that you normally wouldn’t have a first-person view of,” McCormick said.



Mosti’s dog and wedding detail photos.

Photos courtesy of Mickenzie Mosti

Devoted docents at the Butler

By Christopher Gillett
Jambar Contributor

Lying between the music of Bliss Hall and the books of William F. Maag Jr. Library is the Butler Institute of American Art, one of the nation's oldest art museums and the first in the country dedicated to American art.

The Butler relies on about 65 volunteers — called docents — to educate visitors and the local community on the numerous artworks displayed.

Ruth Cole has been a volunteer docent for over 25 years. Before becoming a docent, Cole taught at Youngstown State University and at Austintown Fitch High School. While she taught at Fitch, Cole brought her students to the Butler. She also featured speakers in classes, including Louis Zona, the Butler's executive director, and Al Bright, a prominent local African American artist.

Cole said her favorite part of being a docent is sharing the museum's joy with visitors.

"My favorite part of being a docent is the people I meet and take [on tours]. I enjoy their surprise and their joy when they come to the Butler and see what a collection we have here," Cole said. "[The Butler is] very welcoming. It's — a word that younger people that I know use quite often — awesome."

Russian native Irina Perlman has been a docent for 14 years. Perlman said she started docenting because of her interest in American art.

"My entire life I was exposed to great art, European art, Russian art. I did not know anything about American art. I didn't know it. I did not understand it. So, I thought [docenting] would be a great way to study it and try to connect with it. And once I started, there was no stopping," Perlman said.

Docents are required to take classes for months before starting. Along with giving tours around the Butler, docents perform outreach by offering art lectures

to children at local schools, retirees and people with physical or cognitive disabilities.

Docent Beth Lowe said she found the teaching intimidating, but it taught her to be a guide.

"The way our class was taught [was] we were not supposed to be the sage on the stage, but the guide on the side. So, our purpose is to look into the painting to help people when they leave here to go to another museum and look for different elements of art and appreciate the art," Lowe said.

Docent David Paull said teaching taught him how to appreciate art with different groups of people.

"There are different ways of walking through the museum with a group of fourth graders than there are with a group of high school students, or if you're with adults, or if you're maybe with some populations that might be physically or mentally challenged," Paull said.

Lisa Rohrbaugh, a docent who is also a part-time employee at the Butler, said she finds guiding tours meaningful.

"I've found that I just love giving people tours, whether it's a planned tour or somebody just walks off the street and they want a little tour," Rohrbaugh said. "[A visitor] may say, 'I only have 20 minutes,' and then I'll say, 'That's fine. 20 minutes is good, whatever you need.' But then sometimes it's two-and-a-half hours later and they'll say, 'I guess we needed more than 20 minutes.'"

The Butler saw decrease in visitors during the pandemic, prompting the museum to incorporate "strolling," where docents walk around the museum to answer visitors' questions. When volunteering, docents also wear name tags.

Joyce Mistovich, director of education at the Butler, said the docents are the museum's treasure.

"The docents are really the true treasures of this museum. They are really intelligent. They are so genuinely giving of their time and expertise," Mistovich said.



Some docents' favorite art pieces at the Butler. Photo by Christopher Gillett / Jambar Contributor

Riding the Rapid to Cleveland rock

Hitchin' a ride with The Frans

By John Ostapowicz
The Jambar

Bus drivers and train riders are just a few inspirations for the Cleveland-based band The Frans. The band is preparing to release its debut self-titled album dedicated to public transportation on March 1.

The Frans consists of lead vocalist and guitarist Cameron Mays, guitarist Gabriel Xavier, bassist Hope Wondowsky and drummer Matt Tufano. Each member of the band has a common goal: to spread the importance of the Regional Transit Authority.

Formed by Mays and Xavier, the musical partnership began at Cleveland State University in a film studies class over a conversation about a local plant store. Mays said the pair shared interest in guitar and began to write music, leading to the creation of The Frans.

"I'd been wanting to fix a band up

and it seemed natural to join up together because of our shared interests," Mays said. "We have a lot of interests in the same music and a lot of different tastes, which was a good balance."

The pair began to experiment with the notion of what it means to ride a bus in a city bustle or a train in the countryside.

The Frans keeps its musical format simple but adds lyrical and crunchy tones to give a pop-punk feel to its tracks.

From Bo Diddley to the Ramones, the band takes inspiration from punk rock, delta blues and classical genres. Lyrically, Mays and Xavier are drawn to The Beatles's commercial-pop success and Bob Dylan's songwriting.

"That's something I was interested in exploring. That kind of verse, chorus, bridge, easy and simple pop tunes," Mays said.

The key to the band's musical adaptations is taking old songs and

adding different elements. For Xavier, the band can grab the attention of new fans with this trick.

"We take from really old music that nobody young listens to because then it sounds new to them," Xavier said.

The upcoming album will feature three previously released tracks, "Rail City Gun," "Ride The Bus" and "Subway Sally," which are a part of a waterfall release.

To coincide with the album, The Frans will perform at The 5 O'Clock Lounge in Lakewood on March 2. The band will then hit the road on a tour to perform at several venues from St. Louis to Pittsburgh.

The band will make a brief stop in Youngstown at 7:30 p.m. on March 14, at the Wickyards. Doors open at 7 p.m. and admission is \$5 at the door.

The Frans's self-titled album will be available to stream on Spotify, YouTube and Bandcamp.



Photo courtesy of Bailey Maine

Cameron Mays (left) and Gabriel Xavier (right) playing guitar.

Perfumed performers take on Youngstown



Photo by Sydney Fairbanks / The Jambar

Girl Cologne poses on the stairs at Penguin City Brewing Company.

By Sydney Fairbanks
The Jambar

A small band from Cleveland performed in Youngstown on Feb. 16 at Penguin City Brewing Company.

Girl Cologne, made up of vocalist Jenna Seeman, guitarist Cade Cubbison, drum-

mer Parker Disalvo and bassist Spencer Kmiecik, performed with Riley Burke Band, The Velvet Gentlemen, and Franklin Dead Rose.

The four members united through the music summer camp School of Rock during the pandemic and began booking gigs in 2021.

The name Girl Cologne comes from Cubbison, who could not remember the word for perfume.

"I snuck a lady friend over and they stunk up the house with their perfume, and I was telling [Seeman] the story and I could not remember the word perfume. So, I was like 'oh, her girl cologne, or whatever,'" Cubbison said.

Girl Cologne advocates for chronic illnesses, as Seeman struggles with postural orthostatic tachycardia syndrome, also known as POTS, and chronic migraines. The band also shows support for the LGBTQ community, stands against capitalism and donates a large portion of merchandise proceeds to relief for Palestinians affected by the Israel-Hamas war.

Kmiecik, who is transgender, said it's

important to have representation in the music industry.

"If I saw myself when I was 12, I'd be like, 'Okay, that person who I don't even know what their gender is, but they look like they're confident and they're comfortable. And if they can do it, then I can,'" Kmiecik said.

Girl Cologne describes its sound as indie rock and alternative. Seeman, who writes most of Girl Cologne's lyrics, said inspiration comes from her personal experiences and interests.

"It's just like, 'I guess I just needed to talk about this,' and then after I write it, I'm like, 'oh, that was very obvious what that was about,'" Seeman said.

The group's first single "Let Me Know" has accumulated over 7,000 streams on Spotify. Kmiecik said it was shocking to see thousands listening to the band's music.

"To have something on Spotify with over even 1,000 [streams] is crazy to me. It's like, you always see — especially with smaller bands — less than 1,000 on all their streams. It's nice to actually see

numbers," Kmiecik said.

The band has released six songs and has one album in progress. Seeman said the group plans to release more singles that reflect the album before they begin recording it.

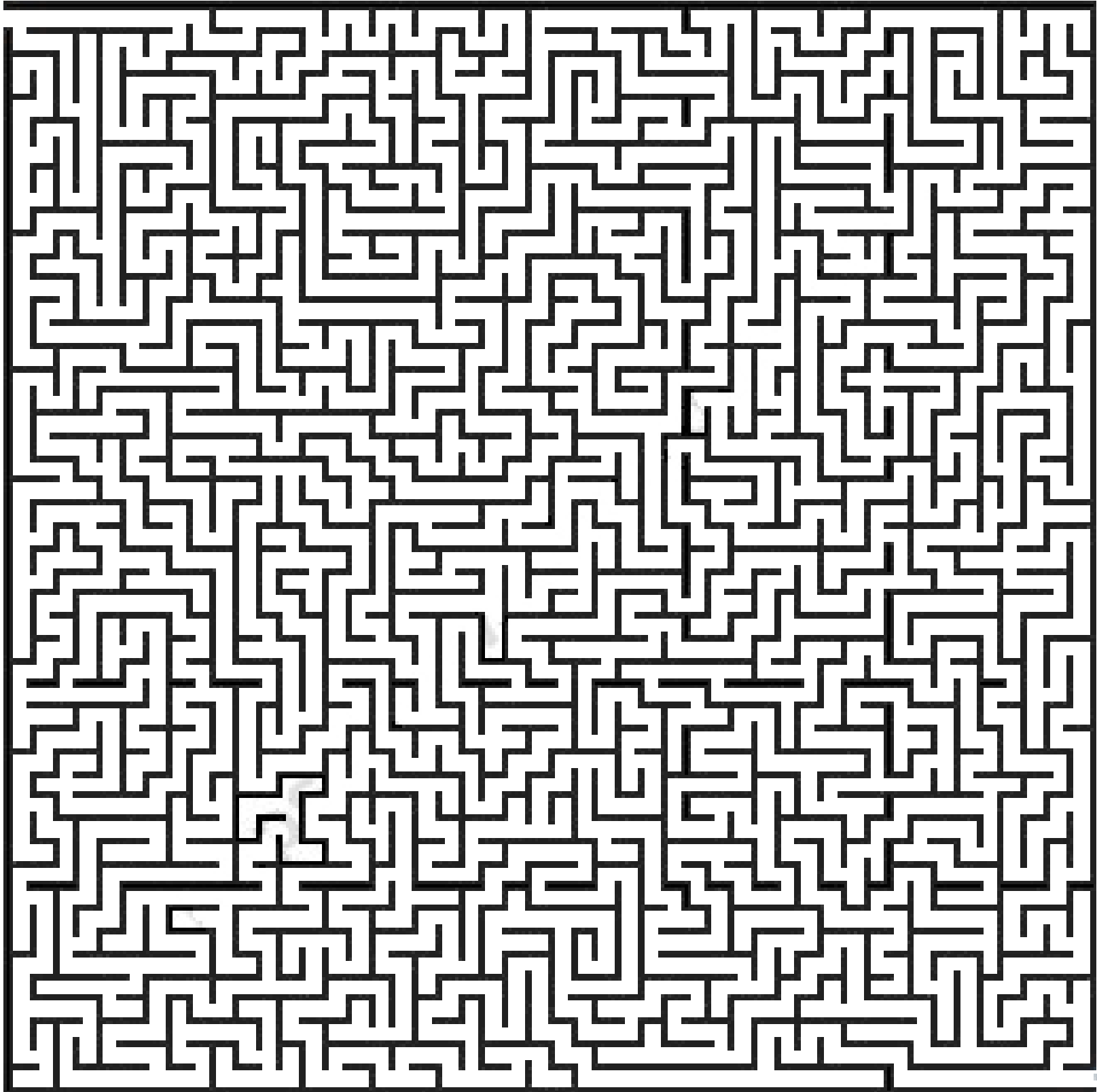
"It's just not as up-tempo. I mean, not all of our songs are. It's just it's leaning more towards the last few [songs] that we've had come out as opposed to the first few," Seeman said.

To achieve Girl Cologne's sound, Kmiecik said the group works on memorizing songs to perfect them.

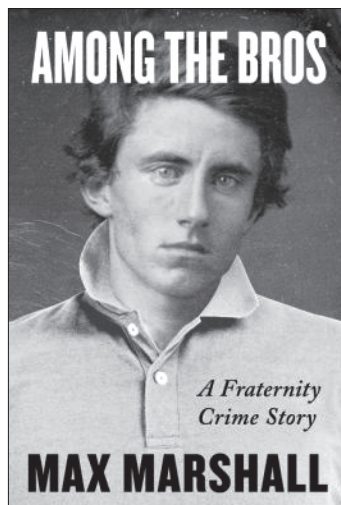
"We practice every single week, even when we don't have shows. So, consistency, and over time, it sounding more and more cohesive is kind of what I feel like helps us narrow down what we want to sound like," Kmiecik said. "Last year at this point, we sounded completely different than we sound now, and I think we're just dialing in better what we want it to sound like."

Girl Cologne will perform at 8 p.m. on March 8 at the 5 O'Clock Lounge in Lakewood.

Maze



Penguin Book Nook with The Public Library

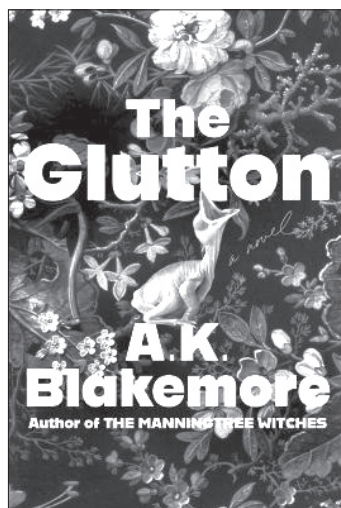


Nonfiction review

Among the Bros: A Fraternity Crime Story

by Max Marshall

A deep dive into the historically corrupt and hidden side of campus fraternities. Marshall takes us back to 2018 when he visits the College of Charleston to unravel one of the most shocking campus crimes of the past decade.



Fiction review

The Glutton

by A.K. Blakemore

A strange and sad man at the turn of 19th century France has a sickly and insatiable appetite. Upon finding himself bedridden and in the care of a nun, Tarare is presented to us in the most vulnerable and vile way a lonely man can be found.

Upcoming programs

Monday, March 4

6 to 7 p.m.

Intergenerational Chess &
Checkers Club

No registration required

Tuesday, March 5

4 to 5 p.m.

Pizza Cross Stitch-Along (Event
1 of 5)

Registration required

Thursday, March 7

6 to 7 p.m.

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Have something to say to The Jambar?

Write a Letter to the Editor!

Email The Jambar at

thejambar@gmail.com

The Jambar Column

Ohio weather sucks

We need to have a serious discussion about Ohio weather. I have lived in Ohio my entire life, and nowhere else on Earth are there weather patterns like there are in Ohio.

Last Friday, I left my house at noon, and it was sunny — practically warm. I got home at 9:30 p.m. and almost drove into a ditch from all the snow and ice on the road. What kind of sick joke is this? Is the entire state cursed, or is this weather localized entirely to the Mahoning Valley?

I remember during the Plague Year — 2020, for those who didn't pick up on it — it was snowing in May. I think Robert Frost wrote a poem about snow, but then again, what poet doesn't write about snow?

Summers in Ohio are always erratic. Some days are dreadfully hot and humid. Growing up, I always heard my grandparents complain about humidity, and I'm finally starting to understand what they were talking about.

On any given day, it can be 56 degrees with a wind chill of 43, and the next day, it'll be a high of 79. Youngstown is an excellent example of an unstable climate. Perhaps years of pollution caused by endless steel production took its toll on Youngstown's climate and environment ... I wonder.

I always look forward to summer, even during the summer. The idea of days upon days with no rain is simply bliss. No rain means no snow, which means safer roads. In my high school years, I may have abused my car's traction system doing donuts in icy parking lots, but



Matthew Sotlar

those days are over. Now, all it takes is one snowflake on the ground and I'm staying in.

How do I occupy my time inside? Well, as I write this column, I'm snowed inside my house. It's

like I'm in "The Shining," but Stanley Kubrick isn't here to wildly alter the story and make it nearly unrecognizable from the novel. If you'd like to hear more of my thoughts on classic cinema, let me know.

One thing I've noticed that never changes based on the weather is deer. Rain, snow, sleet or hail, they will run in front of your car. Maybe they'll stand in the lane and just stare at your car and wait for you to stop before they run back the way they came. Deer probably won't survive the apocalypse.

I think my favorite part of winter is the last few weeks where the snow melts and there's finally some hints of green. That's when I switch all my playlists from dreary winter music to upbeat spring and summer music.

That stretch from mid-March to May might be the longest part of the year — always waiting for summer to slowly make an appearance, only for five straight days of rain to ruin it all. But isn't that just one of the perks of Ohio weather?

Don't take my cynical assumptions to heart. I love a nice stormy night in the summer or watching snow fall in December. I just don't like driving in it, but then again, who does?

The Jambar Editorial

'I love you, red solo cup'

We talk about your friends and the places that you've been. We talk about your dreams and we talk about your schemes. After two weeks since his passing, we're talking about Toby Keith instead.

A country singer known for his arrogance and cut-the-crap attitude captivated an American-proud following that established Keith as a legend in the music industry.

In 1993, Keith released his debut album which shared his namesake. The lead track "Should've Been A Cowboy" continues to dominate his discography with over 200 million streams on Spotify.

The song pays homage to modern-day cattle herders, cowboys in classic Western movies and romanticized a simple life of stealing hearts. The song acts as a lyrical tribute to John Wayne, Paul Newman and Gary Cooper — actors many Americans grew up seeing on a TV screen as true-grit cowboys.

Keith died Feb. 5 after battling stomach cancer following a diagnosis in 2021. He was 62.

Beyond his music, Keith built a reputation of respect from other artists, including Brooks & Dunn, Dolly Parton and Willie Nelson.

Hits like "Red Solo Cup" established Keith amongst a college crowd. Let's be clear — you're not really in college until you can recite that entire song, and the cups have to be red. These are simply the best receptacle for barbecues, tailgates, fairs, festivals and — of course, college parties.

But songs like "Courtesy of the Red, White, and Blue," resonated with a post-9/11 American fan base rattled by tragedy.

Patriotic songs with a backbone of American pride continued throughout Keith's career with another radio hit,

"Made in America."

The song was based on a lack of American-made goods, according to Keith. This spawned his idea to revive a factory in his home state and create his own American-made clothing line.

"There's a plant at Shawnee [Oklahoma] — a clothing plant — and this guy's wanting me to make jeans and t-shirts that are actual made-in-America products, and it'll reopen that plant at Shawnee if [the deal] comes through," Keith explained to The Oklahoman. "That's kind of where we got the idea to write a song about people that only buy American-made products to support the economy."

Keith announced his own clothing line, TK Steelman, in 2009.

According to Rolling Stone, Keith "often seemed frustrated with the perception of himself as a conservative" and voted as a registered independent since 2008 — openly supporting former President Barack Obama.

Despite this, Keith is also known for his controversial performance for former President Donald Trump's inauguration in 2017. He said, "the president of the frickin' United States asks you to do something and you can go, you should go."

Keith wouldn't want people talking about his politics or the girl-group Dixie Chicks — we'll honor the latter because the controversy lasted longer than much of our audience has been alive.

If anything, we'll let Keith stand on the issue with an out-of-context line, "a little less talk if you please. A lot more loving is what I need."

While Keith may not be standing here today, he'll be living in our radios through "How Do You Like Me Now," and other American classics.

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PENGUINS GIVE MUSKETEERS FROST BITE

Men's tennis takes down Xavier

By Cameron Niemi
The Jambar

After four straight games on the road, the Youngstown State University men's tennis team returned to the YSU Indoor Tennis Center on Feb. 16 and 18 for two matches.

In the Feb. 16 match, the Penguins hosted Northern Illinois University for the first time since Feb. 18, 2022. This season, NIU defeated YSU, 5-2.

YSU took the doubles point and jumped out to a 1-0 match lead. Sophomore Nishant Dabas and freshman Onder Balci played the No. 1 doubles and picked up a 7-6 win.

Juniors Nathan Favier and Harry Fouzas played together for the first time this season and secured a 6-4 match victory in the No. 2 doubles match.

As the team moved to singles matches, YSU took a 2-1 match lead as Balci won his sets 6-4, 6-3, in the No. 4 singles spot. The Penguins were defeated in their four remaining singles matches.

The loss against NIU extend-

ed the team's losing streak to five games.

The Penguins continued their homestand as Xavier came to town Feb. 18. Youngstown State snapped its losing streak with a 4-3 victory over the Musketeers. The last time the Penguins defeated the Musketeers was Feb. 21, 2021.

The Penguins secured two wins in doubles as they took the 1-0 advantage in the match. In the No. 1 doubles match, Dabas and Balci picked up a 6-2 victory.

Favier and Fouzas won their match, 7-5, against Xavier's No. 2 doubles team. Despite losing in No. 3 doubles, YSU had the advantage and went into the singles match with a lead.

YSU had its first singles match win as Balci swept Xavier's No. 4 singles 6-0, 6-0. This put the Penguins up 2-0 in the match.

The Penguins fell to the Musketeers in No. 2 singles, which gave Xavier its first point, trailing 2-1.

Fouzas extended the Penguins' lead with a 6-3 and 6-1 win in the No. 5 singles matchup. Trailing 3-1, Xavier fought back with a win

against YSU's No. 1 singles and made the match a close contest, 3-2.

The Penguins secured the victory against Xavier as junior William Rassat won his No. 3 singles match in three sets, 6-7, 6-2, 6-1, which gave YSU its fourth point of the match.

Rassat said he felt confident securing the

match win for the team and staying locked in after losing his first set.

"I knew I was playing well also in the first set when I lost. I knew I was doing the right things," Rassat said. "I just continued playing well, staying calm and hitting my shots and at the end it turned out to be okay."

Dabas and Balci were named Under Armour Horizon League Tennis Doubles Team of the Week on Feb. 21.

Dabas said being named doubles team of the week gave him and Balci confidence.

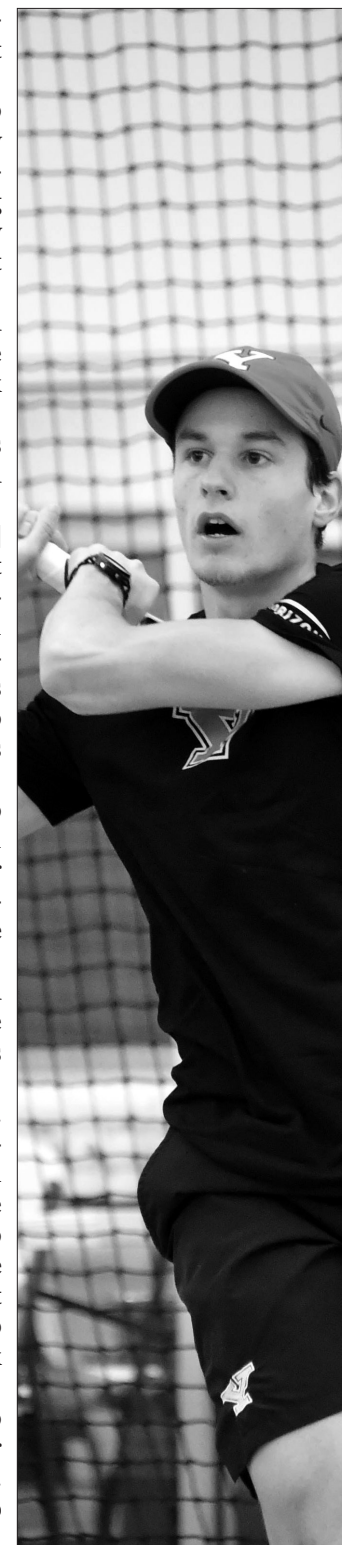
"It means a lot to me and [Balci] because we helped the team a lot in doubles, and we helped them secure the doubles point at the No. 1 spot," Dabas said. "Being the doubles team of the week just gives us more and more confidence to go out there and win more matches for Youngstown."

With the win, YSU moves to 4-5 overall on the season and 4-1 at home. The Penguins have four more non-conference games remaining before Horizon League play begins in late March.

Head coach Kody Duncan said the win against Xavier shows the team's strength, but the break is much needed.

"[Xavier is] a very good team. We came out on top, and it's really starting to show that we can handle adversity and we have the capabilities to do what we want to do this year," Duncan said. "We need it. There's a lot of guys that are tired and we need to regroup and be ready for these spring break matches."

Youngstown State will have two weeks off before starting another three-game road trip in Tennessee. YSU will face off against Lipscomb University at 2 p.m. on March 6.



Head coach Kody Duncan (top left), Nishant Dabas (bottom left) and William Rassat (right) at the match against Georgetown University on Jan. 28.

Photos by Dylan Lux / The Jambar

A championship for the record books

By Marissa Masano
The Jambar

The Youngstown State University men's and women's swimming and diving teams traveled to Indianapolis to compete in the Horizon League Championships from Feb. 14 to 17.

Both the men and women placed fourth overall. The men collected 417 points over four days, while the women scored the most points in program history with 474. Both sides also matched their best finishes in program history.

Oakland University swept the championships for the 11th consecutive season, with their men's and women's teams scoring 876.5 points and 909.5 points, respectively.

On Day One, the YSU women's 800-yard freestyle relay team set a school record to earn a podium finish.

The team of senior Brooke Schutte, junior Hailey Clark, and sophomores Miriam Frass and Madelyn Mahoney clocked

a time of 7:26.75 to finish third and set a school record relay mark.

The men's 800-yard freestyle relay team of seniors Gavin Webb, Christian Taylor, Jasper Liekens and Rares Druga swam a time of 6:37.94 to set a school record and finish fourth in the event.

Leading off in the men's 800-yard free relay, Webb broke the individual 200-yard free record with a time of 1:39.08.

Starting Day Two was the women's 500-yard freestyle. For the Penguins, Frass finished second to secure a podium finish with a 4:54.13.

In the men's 500-yard freestyle, Webb secured a podium finish for the second straight year with a time of 4:26.42.

The women's 200-yard freestyle relay team of junior Oliwia Kaniak, graduate student Chiara Vetter, Mahoney and Frass tied a school record set in 2015 at 1:35.09. The team finished fifth.

The men's team of Druga, sophomore James Slessor and seniors Darren Laing and Gavin Redden finished fifth with a

record breaking time of 1:21.3 in the 200-yard freestyle relay.

Day Three was highlighted by Frass becoming the Horizon League champion in the women's 400-yard individual medley.

The sophomore clocked a time of 4:21.37 to win the event by over three seconds and set a new school record. Frass is YSU's first women's swimmer to become a Horizon League champion since 2013 and the third in program history.

In the women's 100-yard breaststroke, Vetter finished runner-up at 1:03.6. The graduate student became the second Penguin to finish runner-up for the women since 2018.

The women's 400-yard medley relay team of Vetter, Frass, and sophomores Anna Kozinska and Allison Ramirez Romero earned a podium finish. The team finished third with a time of 3:49.54.

In the men's 400-yard individual medley, junior Dominic Bono broke his own school record in the prelims with a time

of 3:51.74. In the final, he finished fourth with a time of 3:52.95.

On the fourth and final day of the Horizon League Championships, Webb earned his third consecutive Horizon League title.

Webb finished first for the third straight season in the men's 1650-yard freestyle with a school-record time of 15:09.6. Fellow teammate senior Christian Taylor finished runner-up with a personal record of 15:27.32.

In the women's 1650-yard freestyle, Frass earned a podium finish with a time of 16:56.27 to place second in the event for the second straight season. Clark finished third at 16:59.35 to make her first career podium finish.

The Penguins will travel to the National Invitational Championship in Ocala, Florida and the NCAA Zone C Diving Championships in Louisville, Kentucky from March 14 through 16.

Penguins fly too close to Phoenix

By Madeline Hippeard
The Jambar

The Youngstown State University women's basketball team broke its four-game win streak with a loss to the University of Wisconsin-Green Bay on Feb. 17 for a Senior Day matchup.

Fifth-year senior Emily Saunders scored the first point of the game at the 9:26 mark of the first quarter. Green Bay responded with an 8-0 run, making the score 8-1.

The Penguins shut down the Phoenix defensively and regained the lead with two minutes left in the first quarter.

The Phoenix outscored Youngstown State, 16-9, in the second quarter to extend their lead to 33-19 by halftime.

In the third quarter, fifth-year senior Dena Jarrells scored two 3-pointers within 25 seconds, bringing the score to 35-28. Fifth year seniors Shay-Lee Kirby and Mady Aulbach followed Jarrells' lead with a 3-pointer each, bringing the 'Guins within four points of Green Bay.

Interim head coach John Nicolais said the 'Guins struggled offensively in the beginning of the season but they've come together as a team, which he credits to their success.

"We were struggling to shoot early on, but we've kind

of gotten into a flow of things, and we're moving the basketball around a lot better, sharing the basketball, taking quality shots. Things are just starting to click now for us where it wasn't necessarily clicking early on," Nicolais said.

Despite a made free throw from Saunders bringing the Penguins one point behind the Phoenix at 35-34, Youngstown State was unable to regain the lead.

At the end of the third quarter, Green Bay held the lead at 50-41.

Throughout the fourth, the Phoenix continued to widen their lead, defeating the 'Guins, 71-59.

The loss against Green Bay was a stark contrast to the Penguins' victory at Wright State University on Feb. 14.

The 'Guins scored the first eight points of the game in Dayton and continued to outscore the Raiders throughout the night.

By halftime, Youngstown State led by 22 points with a score of 45-23.

Wright State was unable to match the 'Guins efforts after an 11-1 run in the third quarter.

The Penguins' offense continued to heat up, keeping their lead up by at least 18 points throughout the fourth quarter, resulting in the team's fourth consecutive road win.

Junior forward Haley Thierry credits the Penguins'

defense to their recent success.

"I'm really proud of our defense. I feel like our defense has had a huge impact in the last four games and I feel like that's what's helped us win. Whether it's zone or man, building off of that offensively or in transition, it's really helped us," Thierry said.

With three games left in the regular season, Youngstown State will look to bounce back on the road against Northern Kentucky University.

Tip-off is scheduled for 7 p.m. on Feb. 24 inside Truist Arena in Highland Heights, Kentucky. To view the game live, visit ESPN+ or listen live on 570 WKBN.



Photo by Dylan Lux / The Jambar
Paige Shy and Jen Wendler celebrate after Wendler's basket on Senior Day.

A strenuous slate to start the season

By Dylan Lux
The Jambar

When a team hires a new head coach, the season ahead can be difficult. The same can be said when a team's first two matchups of the year are Power Five opponents. Both of these statements hold true for the Youngstown State University women's lacrosse team.

In July 2023, Youngstown State hired Rob Harris as the head coach of the women's lacrosse team.

The Grand Valley State University graduate started coaching as an assistant coach and director of lacrosse operations for GVSU from 2009-2011. He then became the head of recruiting and defensive coordinator at Adams State University.

Harris also worked as an assistant coach at Florida Southern College, which ranked as high as 10th overall in Division II Lacrosse Rankings during Harris's tenure.

Harris began his head coaching career in 2013, when he joined Davenport University.

The Panthers moved to Division II in 2018. The following year, Harris led Davenport to a Great Lakes Intercollegiate Athletic Conference Tournament appearance and to the tournament's final round in 2021.

During the 2021 season, the Panthers were ranked in the Division II Top 25 for the first time in school history.

After his coaching success at the Division II level, Harris joined YSU and began his career against two Power Five schools in his first games as head coach.

Game No. 1 saw the Penguins land in Eugene, Oregon for a matchup with the University of Oregon on Feb. 9, where the Penguins were defeated, 19-8.

For game No. 2, YSU had a home match against The Ohio State University on Feb. 16.

At the end of quarter one, the Buckeyes took a 6-0 lead. By halftime, OSU led 12-1, as freshman attacker Ava Kreutzer scored her first career goal nabbing the Penguins' lone point.

Youngstown State netted the first two goals of the second half. Freshman attacker Brooke Peck and freshman midfielder Grace Rund each scored to cut the lead to single digits.

Rund's goal was the first of her collegiate career, but not her last of the matchup.

Ohio State led, 13-3, at the end of the third quarter and scored a goal just 15 seconds into the fourth quarter. However, YSU scored the next three goals in

the game.

Rund, sophomore attacker Ally Garrett and freshman attacker Lena Cox all scored to cut the lead to 14-6.

An Ohio State goal followed, then the Penguins responded with the fourth career goal of freshman midfielder Katie Grottenthaler.

Rund scored her third goal of the match — giving her a hat trick — and sophomore midfielder Jade Shearer scored, but ultimately, it was too late.

Despite outscoring the Buckeyes in the second half, 8-5, YSU fell by a final score of 17-9 inside the Watson and Tressel Training Site.

The nine points Youngstown State scored on Ohio State was the most by any opponent of the Buckeyes so far this season.

The Penguins will return to the field at 4 p.m. on Feb. 24 to take on the Duquesne University Dukes on Rooney Field in Pittsburgh.

The teams have met in two previous matchups — one in Pittsburgh in 2022 and one in Youngstown in 2023. Duquesne won both matches by a final of 19-15 and 16-13, respectively.

Junior Duquesne defender Hanna Pawela was named the Atlantic 10 Conference Defensive Player of the Week for her performance against Eastern Michigan University.

Youngstown State will look to get past the defensive front of the Dukes if the team wants to garner its first win of the season.



Grace Manser is introduced in the starting lineup. INSET: Brooke Peck looks to pass to a teammate during a home match.

Photos by Dylan Lux / The Jambar