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THE STUDENT VOICE OF YOUNGSTOWN STATE UNIVERSITY SINCE 1931

Thursday, February 21, 2013

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The art of storytelling

Justin Carissimo
ASSISTANT NEWS EDITOR

On Friday night, Youngstown State University continued its celebration of Black History Month with a performance from poet Mwatabu Okantah.

A crowd of students and parents filled the seats in Kilcawley Center's Ohio Room to hear Okantah read his poetry. Guitarist Kwame Nyamekye sat in a chair next to Okantah, strumming a rhythm to accompany Okantah's words.

Okantah has performed with the Cavani String Quartet and the Rhodes Street Rude Boys, and he is the leader of the Muntu Kuntu Energy Ensemble.

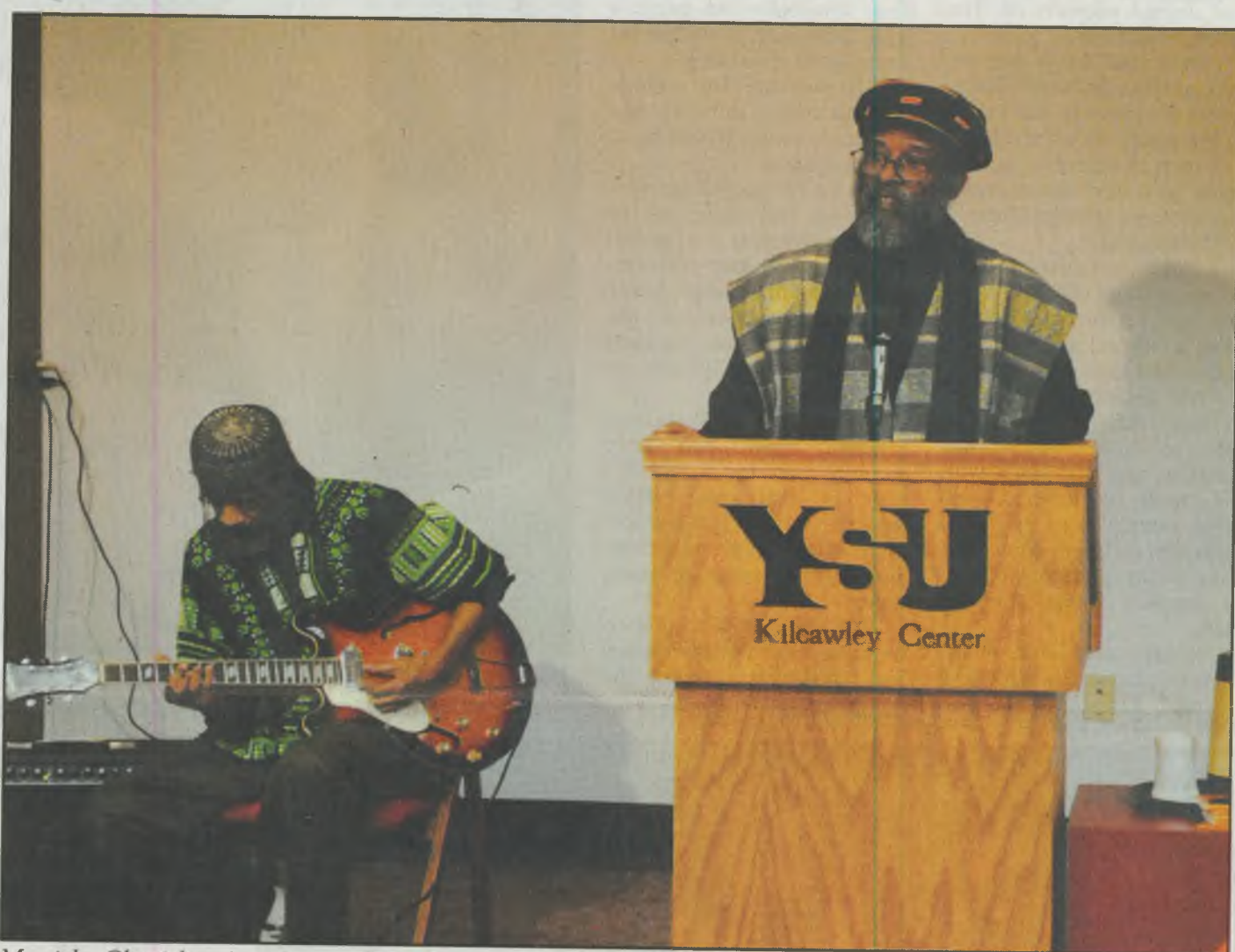
Shaneka Colpetro, a sophomore at YSU, said she enjoyed the way Okantah's words flowed with Nyamekye's guitar.

"He really read his poems with a lot of charisma and power. I thought the subject was interesting, and I really enjoyed it," Colpetro said.

The topic of the night was "Black Arts and the Civil Rights Movement." Okantah read excerpts from his book, "Reconnecting Memories: Dreams No Longer Deferred: New & Selected Poems."

Okantah said Black History Month is not just for African-Americans. He encouraged audience members to

STORYTELLING PAGE 5



Mwatabu Okantah recites poetry to an audience inside of Kilcawley Center's Ohio Room. YSU will continue its celebration of Black History Month throughout February. Photo by Justin Carissimo/The Jambar.

Collaborative commission creates fresh funding formula

Jordan D. Uhl
MANAGING EDITOR

Unless Youngstown State University's graduation rates increase, funding from the state will remain steady or decrease.

On Tuesday, Gov. John Kasich heralded the state's recently proposed higher education funding formula, which incentivizes boosting graduation rates.

"You think of anything worse, two or three years in a four-year school, huge debt, you quit. You got big debt, got no job, got no certificate. It doesn't work," Kasich said.

In September, Kasich appointed E. Gordon Gee, president of Ohio State University, to oversee a committee composed of presidents and representatives from various four-year and two-year institutions throughout the state. Its mission was to devise a new, balanced approach for distributing state funds.

Although no one from YSU sat on the committee, campus administrators were given ample opportunity to provide input from the school's perspective.

"Having that dialogue and conversation, at the very least, everybody gets to hear everyone else's circumstances," said Scott Schlick, a member of the YSU Board of Trustees.

Still, financial officers on campus don't exude much optimism about the school's financial future.

"Keep in mind that even in the best of circumstances, the funding from the state, a small percentage of what our income is, has been dropping over the years," said Gene Grilli, vice president for finance and ad-

ministration.

In 2001, state funding made up nearly 50 percent of YSU's annual revenue. Now, the amount is around 25 percent.

"Over time, it's been a constant reduction in our support from the state. I think everyone expects that to continue," Grilli said. "I don't think there's any question that with the amount of money from the state to higher education is going to diminish."

Previously, state officials primarily used enrollment numbers to decide how much an institution should receive. Now, 50 percent of state funds will be determined by graduation rates.

At YSU, the six-year graduation rate for students entering as freshmen in 2005 — the most recent year data was available — is 35.2 percent, the fourth lowest in the state system.

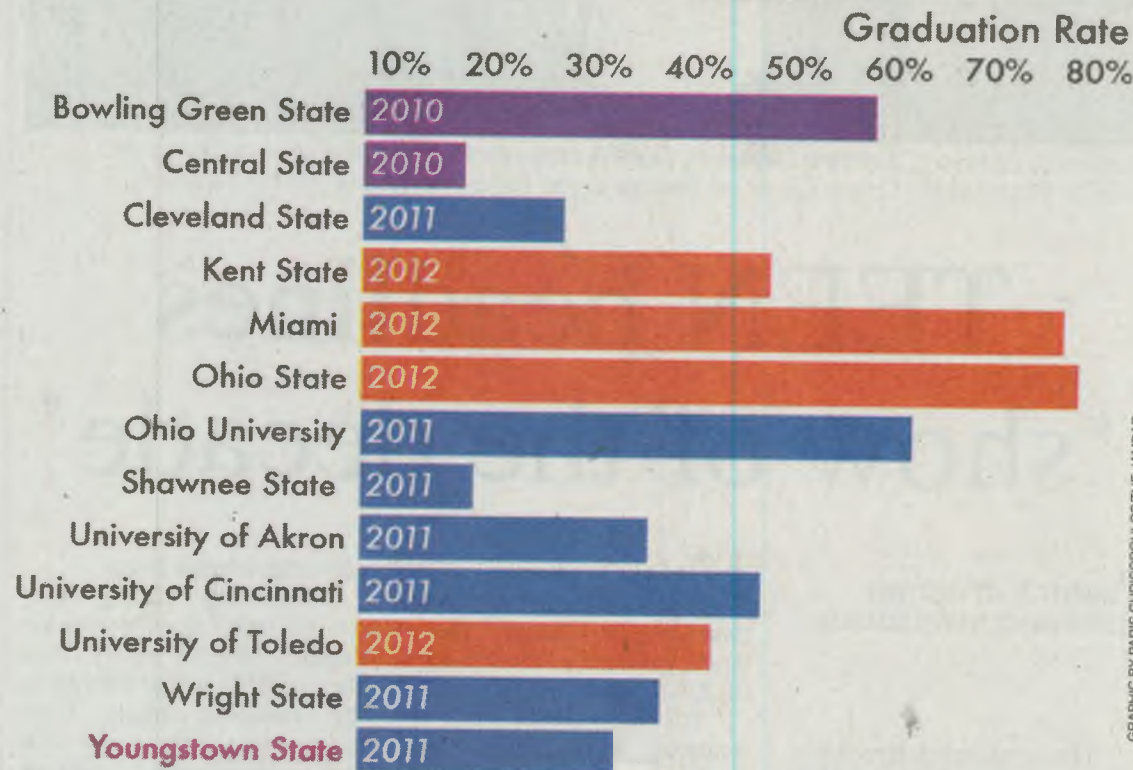
OSU boasts the state's highest rate — an 82 percent graduation rate for its 2006 entering class, meaning students who completed their degrees by fall 2012.

Using this data, the Ohio Board of Regents projects that YSU will receive an additional 1.1 percent in State Share of Instruction, or SSI, funding in fiscal year 2014, a \$408,743 increase.

"Any positive amount is a good thing, even if it's a small one," Schlick said. "It's not a large amount at all, but, at the same time, it's not a cut either. Anything that's not a cut, I see as having a positive impact on YSU."

Cleveland State University, which has a 30 percent six-year graduation rate, will receive a 5.1 percent increase in SSI — a \$3,343,568 boost.

Five of the 13 state universi-



ties in Ohio will experience cuts from the state. The University of Akron and the University of Toledo will witness nominal reductions in funding, 0.1 and 0.7 percent, respectively.

Deeper cuts will be made at Shawnee State University, 2.4 percent, and Central State University, 2.1 percent.

The largest reduction in funding will be for Bowling Green State University, which will encounter a 4.2 percent loss in funds, equating to \$2,847,652.

Overall, universities and their branch campuses will see a \$25,400,000 increase in SSI funding.

"You know, a lot of places in this country, they cut this higher education. We love higher education. It is one of the great as-

sets for the state of Ohio," Kasich said.

What the governor calls performance-based funding will be implemented for FY 2014, should it pass in the state Legislature. Given the Republican control of both the House and Senate, the proposal, which is included in the biennium budget bill, will likely pass.

"The university presidents signed off on this particular proposal, which signifies to me that this is something that could stay intact," said state Sen. Joe Schiavoni.

Before deliberations on the legislation begin, Schiavoni plans to meet with YSU President Cynthia Anderson to discuss the intricacies of the proposal.

Within the state Legislature,

Republicans hold 23 of the 33 seats in the Senate, and 61 of the 99 seats in the House.

Only FY 2014 projections are available, despite Ohio's budgeting on a biennial process.

"Per the recommendation of the Commission, several fiscal year 2015 formulaic factors will be studied and finalized during fiscal year 2014," a fact sheet released by OBOR states. Upon further review, alterations to the process will be implemented for FY 2015.

There is no clarification as to which variables will be subject to change.

"I don't know that part, and I'm not sure anybody does," Schiavoni said.

A vote on the budget bill is expected by June, and is expected to take effect on July 1.

YSU student's band heard on network television

Justin Carissimo
ASSISTANT NEWS EDITOR

Youngstown State University student Nicholas Sainato began playing drums in the fifth grade. Nowadays, he's the drummer of The Strange Familiar, which has been featured on "America's Got Talent," ABC's "Pretty Little Liars" and NBC's "The Biggest Loser," among other popular television shows.

The Strange Familiar formed after Sainato's former band, Another Found Self, played a high school rock off in Cleveland. He had the chance to meet Jeff Andrea and Kira Leyden, and played a couple of shows with them in 2006.

Andrea, the lead guitarist, said both groups were in a transitional phase when they first started projects on The Strange Familiar.

"Nick met us at our rehearsal space in North Hollywood. He came in and nailed it. He really didn't even get a chance to rehearse, but we knew he would be our drummer after we jammed together," Andrea said.

Leyden, vocalist and keyboardist, said she found inspiration for the band's name from a cultural anthropology course she took in college.

"My teacher said in order to study other cultures, you have to render the strange familiar, and that stuck with me. I really like to understand other people who might be radically different than you. Like walking around in other people's shoes," Leyden said.

Sainato said one of his favorite moments with The Strange Familiar was per-

forming at SXSW in 2012.

"There was a lot going on at the time. Our debut album just released, and we were even able to play with Ed Sheeran and Ingrid Michaelson. So, that was pretty cool," Sainato said.

When Sainato isn't with the band, he's performing with YSU's jazz and percussion ensembles. He admits that balancing his time performing with the band and finishing his schoolwork isn't always easy.

"To be honest, it sucks sometimes. It's worked so far, but it gets tough scheduling everything. When I was coming back home from Texas to Akron, I barely made it home for concert at school," Sainato said.

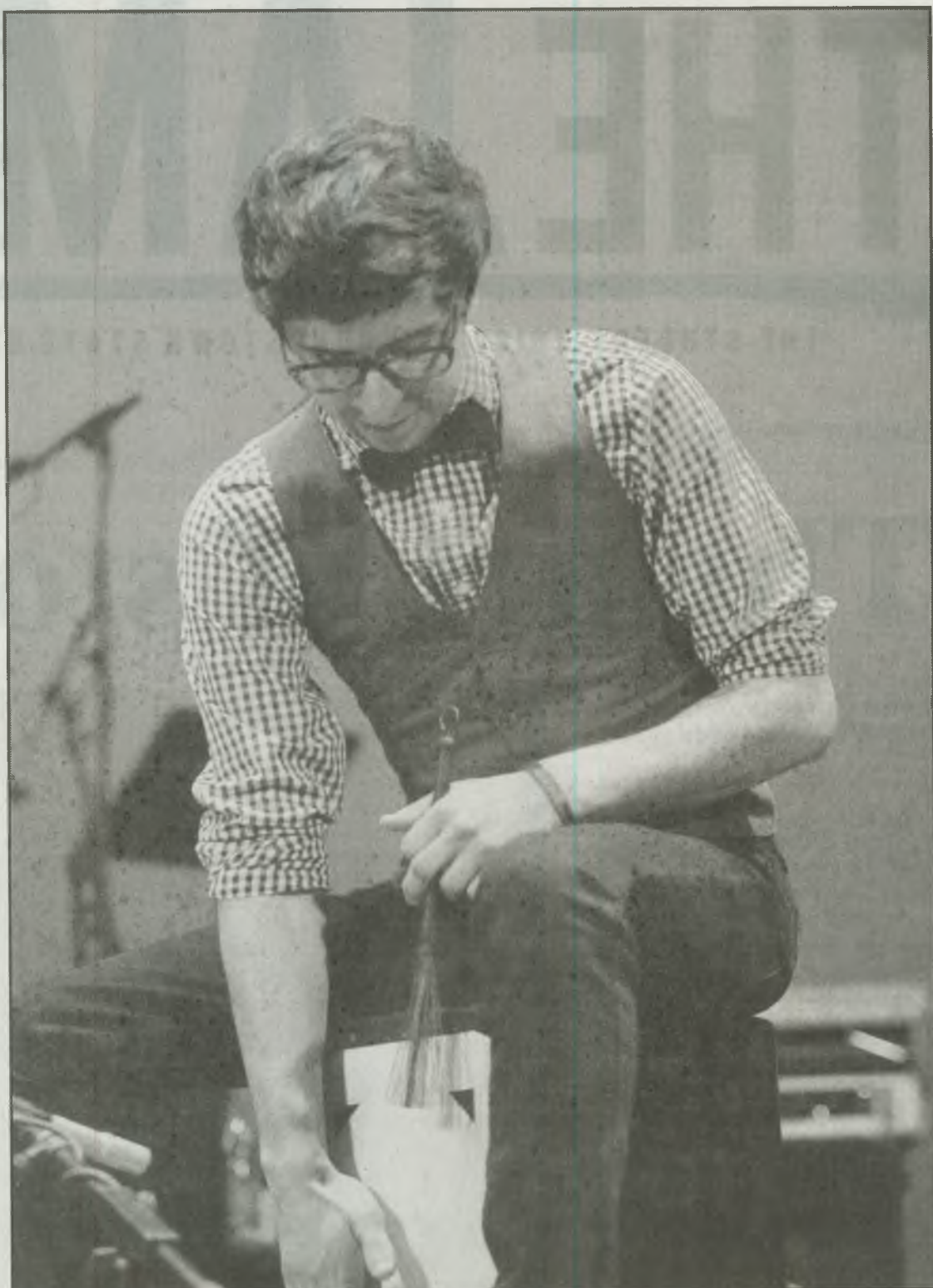
Sainato's biggest influences have been his parents, who have always supported him. Musically, he gains a large influence from his favorite band, Coldplay.

His message for college students trying to break into the music scene would be to stay persistent.

"A lot of people get discouraged, but there are so many different avenues. There's television, performing and writing songs. Some that people don't take advantage of. As long as you keep working at it, you'll find your way," Sainato said.

When the band first came together, they had only enough cash for a month's stay in California. They took a chance and eventually landed spots on television and then resumed living there.

The Strange Familiar is working on writing songs and preparing to enter the studio again.



Nicholas Sainato, a YSU junior, plays the cajon drum for a performance with his band, The Strange Familiar. Photo courtesy of Nicholas Sainato.



Katherine Lieberson, Kristina Lieberson, Jane Hershops and Lizzie Lieberson, the lineup for TEEN, played at the Lemon Grove on Sunday night. Photo courtesy of Jeremy Balderson.

TEEN headlines 'show of the decade'

Justin Carissimo
ASSISTANT NEWS EDITOR

The acclaimed Brooklyn-based music group TEEN came to the Mahoning Valley over the weekend to perform at the Lemon Grove.

While lead songwriter Kristina Lieberson was playing with Here We Go Magic, she started developing ideas for a music project with her two sisters, Katherine and Lizzie Lieberson, and their best friend, Jane Hershops.

"I started making these solo recordings while I was still in HWGM. When I was done, I wanted to put a band together to play it live, so I grabbed my sisters and best friends," Kristina Lieberson said.

TEEN's latest release landed them a spot on Time magazine's "11 Great Bands

You Don't Know (But Should)" list. In addition, their single "Better" made Rolling Stone's "Best Songs of 2012" list.

"It's wonderful to be featured in blogs and music magazines, but being featured in a magazine like Time is a whole different thing," Hershops said. "It's something our parents or even grandparents can relate to and will tell their friends. They're like, 'Wow, you're in Time!'"

Working with her sisters on the project has been great so far, Kristina Lieberson said.

"I mean, we fight the way sisters do, but it always resolves quickly," she said. "Writing music together is surprisingly easy."

Jacob Harver, owner of the Lemon Grove, thought it was a long shot to book TEEN, but after contacting the band's booking agent, he

was able to land them.

"We were calling Sunday's concert the show of the decade. What's really cool about TEEN is that they have this timeless sound. They have a late '60s, early '70s feel to their music," Harver said.

Kristina Lieberson said some of their biggest musical influences have been Al Green, Cocteau Twins and Kate Busch. TEEN hopes to influence younger musicians that are just breaking onto the music scene.

"My advice would be to work hard. Write and play every day," Kristina Lieberson said. "Don't get discouraged, and have confidence in what comes out of you naturally."

The Van Allen Belt also performed Sunday night. Following TEEN, a dual DJ set by Rope and TYGER ended the night with a dance party.

Butler leaves Horizon League

Drew Zuhosky
REPORTER

In May 2012, Butler University announced that its athletic programs would leave the Horizon League for the Atlantic 10 Conference, beginning in the fall of 2013. However, on May 29, Butler declared that it would begin its time in A10 this season, one year early.

Butler is a member of A10 in all sports except football, which the conference does not support.

The university's men's basketball team has been the school's claim to fame over the past several years, making it to the Division I Men's National Championship in 2010 and 2011. James McGrath, associate athletic director and sports information director at Butler, said the HL and A10 are pretty much the same dog with the same bark.

"Coach Brad Stevens has repeatedly said that the competition in both leagues has always been fierce and that winning a conference game is hard, especially on the road," he said. "When you step out on the court, a conference game is going to be hard, regardless of the name on the conference."

Trevor Parks, sports information director at Youngstown State University, said that Butler's departure created some scheduling headaches.

"I think that was kind of a tricky thing for most schools because we expected Butler to be in the league this year," Parks said. "Then, when they weren't, it's become kind of

a hodgepodge of dates where teams are supposed to be playing."

With Butler out of the picture, the team to beat in the HL is up for grabs, he said.

"I think we're looking for the next team to get there," Parks said. "The nice thing is that we have nine schools that think they can be the team to take the next step. Hopefully, YSU is one of them."

Even without Butler, competition in the HL is still fierce, especially in conference play.

"Once it gets to January, you've got to bring your 'A' game pretty much from Jan. 1 to the end of the season," Parks said.

As is the case with any conference, early league games are vital to a school's tournament resume.

"If you screw up in January or February, then by the time you get to March and April, you're so far behind the eight-ball that you really can't get any momentum going," Parks said.

Parks wouldn't rule out the possibility of Butler being scheduled as a nonconference opponent.

"I would think the teams in the Horizon League have a good enough relationship with Butler that there could be some nonconference games down the road," he said. "I guess it just depends on maybe where Butler wants to go with their schedule."

Parks said YSU had a good rapport with Butler's athletics department.

"It made them better being a part of our league, and I think it made us better being a part of their league," he said.

The Yo* Magazine



Are you a writer, designer or photographer looking to contribute to an award-winning regional arts and culture magazine?

If so, The Yo* Magazine, a subdivision of The Jambar, welcomes your involvement — and involvement from all YSU students, faculty and staff.

A meeting to discuss this semester's issue of The Yo* Magazine will be held at 2 p.m. on Friday, Feb. 22, in the basement computer lab of Fedor Hall.

For more information, email yomagazineysu@gmail.com, or call 330-941-1991.

Youngstown State University
2013 AFRICAN AMERICAN HISTORY MONTH CELEBRATION

Power of the Month
 "If a shabby little you and you look back, you see both dollars." (Gambia, West Africa)

Saturday, Feb. 2
 Noon to 6 p.m., Chestnut Room, Kilcawley Center
THE AFRICAN MARKETPLACE
 The African Marketplace features a wide variety of vendors from the U.S. and Africa as they display and sell African outfits, artifacts, artistic creations, books and jewelry. The marketplace also celebrates African culture in music and dance, provided by the highly talented Harambee Youth Group of Youngstown.

Thursday, Feb. 7
 7:30 p.m., Chestnut Room, Kilcawley Center
THE AFRICAN AMERICAN PYRAMID AWARDS
 A presentation and awards ceremony celebrating the achievements of outstanding Youngstown City Schools students. Teachers, mentors and parents who have devoted service to student honorees will also be recognized.
 Co-sponsors: The Family Empowerment Institute and Youngstown City Schools

Wednesday, Feb. 13
 Reception: 5 p.m., Art Gallery, Bliss Hall
 Panel Discussion: 6 p.m., Zona Auditorium, Butler Institute of American Art
AFRICAN ART DISPLAY
 By Saitou Omar Njie
 Saitou Omar Njie grew up in The Gambia, West Africa. In a family of artists. He developed an interest in the arts, especially in the magic of color and patterning on fabric, and studied art and architecture at Hamilton College in New York. He is on the roster of Teaching Artists for the Pennsylvania Council of the Arts and the Pittsburgh Center for the Arts.
 Co-sponsor: The College of Fine and Performing Arts at YSU

Friday, Feb. 15
 7 p.m., The Ohio Room, Kilcawley Center
"BLACK ARTS AND THE CIVIL RIGHTS MOVEMENT"
 Keynote lecture by Mwatabu S. Okantah
 Mwatabu S. Okantah is an assistant professor and Post-Residence for the Department of Pan-African Studies and director of the Center of Pan-African Culture at Kent State University. An author of several published poems, he holds degrees in English and African Studies from KSU and a master's in Creative Writing from City College, New York. Also a performer, Okantah has collaborated with the Cavani String Quartet, the Rhodes Street Rude Boys, and leads the Muntu Kuntu Energy Group.

Saturday, Feb. 16
 1 p.m., St. Augustine Church, 614 Parmelee Ave., Youngstown
SAVE NUBIA PROJECT SEMINAR
 Manu Ampim
 Manu Ampim is a professor of History at Contra Costa College and of Africana Studies at Merritt College. In addition, he is historian, primary researcher and director of Advancing the Research. He holds his master's in History/African American Studies and is the author of several publications. His latest project draws upon his archaeological research of the classical African civilizations of Ancient Kush and Nubia, which are now in danger of being permanently flooded.
 Co-sponsors: The Africana Studies Program at YSU and the P. Ross Berry George Washington Williams Historical Society

Tuesday, Feb. 19
 7 p.m., The Ohio Room, Kilcawley Center
WITH GRACE I STAND
 One-woman play by E.P. McNight
 E.P. McNight depicts trailblazing African American women in this entertaining production. A graduate of Fordham University, New York, she received her master's degree in Educational Psychology. McNight is a poet, actress, writer, producer, host, teacher and a member of Screen Actors Guild. She currently travels throughout the country with her highly acclaimed show, "I Question America: The Legacy of Fannie Lou Hamer."


Thursday, Feb. 21
 7 p.m., The Gallery Room, Kilcawley Center
"AFRICAN CULTURAL HERITAGE: MISSING VALUES IN THE QUEST FOR MODERNISM"
 Lecture by Dr. Emmanuel Christian Nyarko
 Dr. Nyarko is a Ghanaian educationist whose specialization is in Art Education. He obtained his Ph.D. from Ohio University, where he was a Fulbright student, and has been a lecturer at the Kwame Nkrumah University of Science in Kumasi, Ghana. He was a member of the Board of Trustees of the Center for National Culture in Kumasi and president of the Ghana Association of Visual Artists.

Saturday, Feb. 23
 7 p.m., Chestnut Room, Kilcawley Center
AFRICAN MUSICAL EXTRAVAGANZA
 By Toby Foyeh and Orchestra Africa
 Toby Foyeh is the leader of the Toby Foyeh African Orchestra and attended Berklee College of Music in Boston and Howard University, Washington, D.C. The orchestra specializes in African music with its origins in the traditional Yoruba ethnic group of Nigeria and focuses on a dynamic melange of jazz, rock, pop and Latin rhythms or "Afrijam" music.
 Co-sponsor: The Office of Student Diversity at YSU

Monday, Feb. 25
 7:30 p.m., Jones Room, Kilcawley Center
BLACK FACULTY RESEARCH SHOWCASE
 Black Faculty Research Showcase is a celebration of Youngstown State University's Black faculty—an opportunity for them to share their research for feedback and general discussion. Presenters include Dr. Frank Akpaddock of the Regional Center for Urban Studies and author of *City in Transition: Strategies for Economic Regeneration of Inner-City Communities—The Case of Youngstown, Ohio*; and Dr. Victor Wan-Tatoh, director of the Africana Studies Program and author of *The Toxic Influence of Religion in Recent Presidential Elections*, among other accomplished faculty. There will be a book signing at the end of the event.

Events co-sponsored by:


For further information about African American History Month events, call the Africana Studies Program at 330-941-3097.
 Event parking is available at the Lincoln Deck and lot M24, next to McDonald's on Fifth Avenue.



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NEWS BRIEFS

YSU prof reports back on Fulbright experience in Turkey

Linda Strom, an associate professor of English, is the 11th Fulbright Scholar in YSU's history and is now in her second semester in Turkey. As a Fulbright, Strom is teaching in the American culture and literature department at Hacettepe University, which is located in Ankara. Turkey was her first choice because of its history and culture. The Fulbright Program is an international exchange program, and recipients are picked on the basis of their academic or professional achievement, as well as demonstrated leadership potential in their fields. Previously, Strom served as an exchange professor for YSU at Taiwan's Lunghwa University of Science and Technology. She arrived in Turkey in September and will remain there until June 15.

Dana welcomes musicologist for lecture

Musicologist Kendra Preston Leonard will lecture in Bliss Recital Hall at 4 p.m. on Friday. The musicology guest lecture, titled "Music for Warrior Women," is presented by YSU's Dana School of Music and sponsored by the Dana Research Society, and it is free and open to the public. Parking is available in the Wick Avenue deck for a small fee. Leonard's work focuses on women and music in 20th century America, France and Britain; music and screen history; and music and disability. For more information about the Dana Research Society and its musicology guest lectures, email Ewelina Boczkowska at eboczkowska@ysu.edu.

POLICE BRIEFS

Hole found in wall of Courtyard Apartments

Early Sunday morning, a YSU police officer investigated a hole in a hallway wall on the first floor of the University Courtyard Apartments; the hole appeared to have been caused by someone punching the wall. The hole had not been reported or observed by the previous officer's walk-through, although he did state that the room near the hole was in the process of clearing out from a gathering held earlier. The room's residents said they didn't know who had caused the hole. Footage of the incident will be reviewed.

Student notifies police of damage to car

Around 3 p.m. on Sunday, YSU Police were sent to the Lyden House parking lot on Madison Avenue after a 19-year-old male student reported that his 1998 white Mercury had been damaged.

Police, fire departments dispatched after fire alarm activation

On Sunday night, a YSU police officer responded to a fire alarm activation at the University Courtyard Apartments. Upon his arrival, though, the Youngstown Fire Department had already cleared the call. The reason for the fire alarm activation is unknown, however. No smoke was detected, and the YPD reset the fire panel.

University Theater Presents

BROKEology

By Nathan Louis Jackson

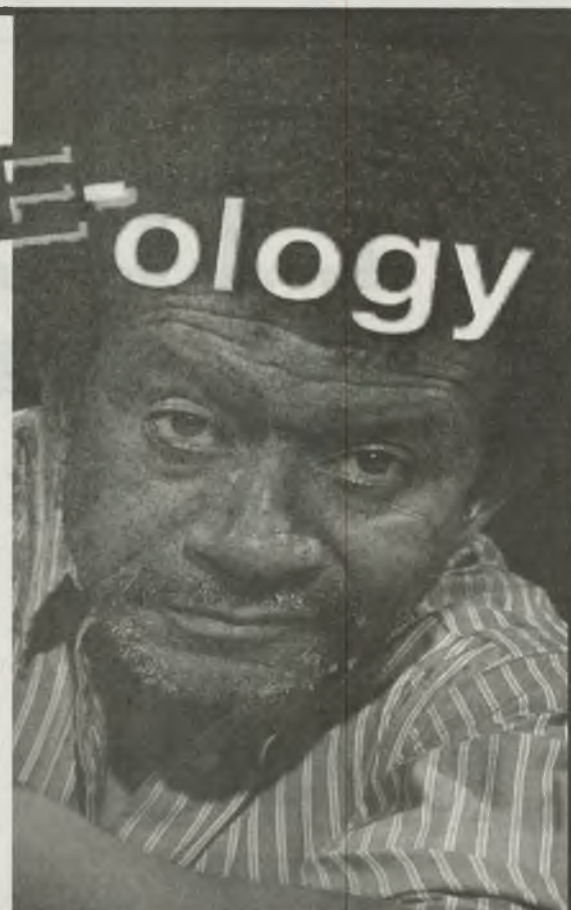
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Feb. 24 & Mar. 3, 3:00 p.m.

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Planetarium shines a light on upcoming laser shows

Caitlin Sheridan
REPORTER

On Friday and Saturday, the Ward Beecher Planetarium will host a series of laser shows set to the music of The Beatles, Led Zepelin and Pink Floyd. The weekend's offerings will also include shows on black history, lasers in astronomy, black holes and the history of the telescope.

Created by Prismatic Magic, the prerecorded laser programs that will appear at Youngstown State University feature colored beams that will "draw" patterns or images that correlate to the music.

The laser shows are free and open to the public, as are most planetarium shows. However, a donation of \$1 per person is suggested.

Curt Spivey, planetarium engineer, won the weekend of laser shows while attending the Great Lakes Planetarium Conference, held

in Pittsburgh during the fall semester, after dropping his business card in a bin for the drawing.

"We are excited to bring this to YSU and the Mahoning Valley," he said. "We look forward to bringing programs like this back, and we hope it encourages more people to come to our regular planetarium shows."

Spivey said he'd always "like to have something like this available, if the schedule permits."

"We can rent these laser systems," he said. "If we

have the opportunity to bring something like this to the planetarium, we try to."

The weekend's laser shows will be a first for Patrick Durrell, an associate professor of astronomy.

"It is a different kind of show than our traditional science show," he said. "Occasionally, we like people to come out and see what we have done to our facility. We want more people to come and see some of our science programs and some of the neat things we do."

Sarah Ragan, a sopho-

more, said she finds it interesting that the planetarium will present laser shows.

"It will bring a different opportunity for the public to participate in," she said.

Seating is first-come, first-served; doors will open approximately 15 to 20 minutes before the show time. All programs are 40 minutes long.

For more information about the Ward Beecher Planetarium and its shows, visit <http://www.wbplanetarium.org> or call 330-941-1370.

The future of YSU's English Festival

Justin Carissimo
ASSISTANT NEWS EDITOR

With the Youngstown State University English Festival's 35th anniversary in April, the English Festival Committee gathered inside the Presidential Suite of Kilcawley Center for a news conference on Wednesday to announce the beginning of their endowment campaign.

The campaign has already surpassed its halfway mark by raising \$52,456 of the committee's \$100,000 fund-raising goal.

The English Festival has attracted more than 3,000 middle school and high school students annually to participate in writing games, hold book discussions and meet various authors.

Angela Messenger, director of the Writing Center and an English Festival Committee member, shared her childhood memories of the festival with attendees of the news

conference.

"As a naive middle school and high school student, I took for granted that something like the English Festival existed all over the country," Messenger said. "We are very fortunate to have a festival of this scale in our region."

By serving on the English Festival Committee, Messenger said she wanted to give back to an event that was an important part of her formative years.

"I want to make sure this is an experience my children and thousands of others get to share for years to come," Messenger said.

Major donors include the Beeghly Family Foundation, the Salvner family, Scott Schulick, the Guy family, Rick Shale and Bege Bowers.

The English Festival Committee is trying to ensure that students are receiving a meaningful experience when coming to campus. Even though the event is run almost entirely by a volunteer effort, it still costs money that

the committee must raise annually.

Bowers, a retired associate provost and English professor at YSU, told news conference attendees why they should consider donating.

"It's just a lot of fun," she said. "Why do I encourage everyone that's been involved with the festival to give? It's so the experiences that began in 1978 will still exist for students in 2078."

Bowers noted that the original logo for the festival included three words: read, write and grow.

"It's my wish and expectation that students will read, write and grow at the English Festival for many years to come," Bowers said.

The 2013 English Festival is scheduled for April 17 through April 19 on YSU's campus. This year, the festival will hit the mark of 100,000 student attendees.

To find out more information about the festival or to donate to the campaign, call development officer Shanna Blinn in university development at 330-941-3119.

STORYTELLING PAGE 1

remember their roots, explaining that they're important regardless of background.

Okantah asked audience members if they owned smartphones, and more than half raised their hands.

"If you don't know who you are and where you have come from, how smart is your smartphone?" Okantah asked.

As an 18-year old freshman at Kent State University, Okantah began to write. When a writing instructor required Okantah to keep journals, he was surprised by how therapeutic it could be.

"Writing became the process through which I discovered myself and my heritage," Okantah said.

After earning bachelor's degrees in English and African studies at KSU, he then received a master's degree in creative writing from the City College of New York.

Around this time, Okantah decided that he was going to become a griot poet. A griot is a storyteller in western Africa who keeps history alive through poetry and music.

Anna Kasamias, a freshman at YSU, said most people would be uncomfortable speak-

ing about the subjects Okantah covered on Friday.

"I thought it was great. He brought up how American culture tries to commercialize everything, [and] how Native Americans and the African culture have basically become lost and overlooked," Kasamias said.

Okantah first learned how powerful words could be after he read Richard Wright's "Native Son" and "The Autobiography of Malcolm X."

"I could express and discover myself at the same time. Being introduced to the world of black literature changed my life forever," Okantah said. "I wanted to learn how to write words that could make people feel the way I felt reading those books."

Okantah said he believes that diversity will become a reality when everyone learns and respects the stories of others.

"Ultimately, as students, we get out of it the exact measure of the energy and effort we put into it," Okantah said.

Okantah said that through education and the celebration of Black History Month, students will "learn how to live — not just make a living."

Skeggs Lecture Series

Bob Woodward

Presidential Leadership and
the Price of Politics

Thursday, April 4, 2013 at 7:30 p.m.

Stambaugh Auditorium, Youngstown, OH



Since 1971, **Bob Woodward** has worked for *The Washington Post* where he is currently an associate editor. He and Carl Bernstein were the main reporters on the Watergate scandal for which *The Post* won the Pulitzer Prize in 1973. Woodward was the lead reporter for *The Post's* articles on the aftermath of the September 11 terrorist attacks that won the National Affairs Pulitzer Prize in 2002. In 2004, Bob Schieffer of CBS News said, "Woodward has established himself as the best reporter of *all time*."

Woodward has authored or co-authored 17 books, all of which have been national non-fiction bestsellers. His most recent book, *The Price of Politics* (September, 2012), based on eighteen months of reporting, is an intimate, documented examination of how President Obama and the highest profile Republicans and Democratic leaders in the United States Congress attempted to restore the American

economy and improve the federal government's fiscal condition.

Woodward was born March 26, 1943, in Illinois. He graduated from Yale University in 1965 and served five years as a communications officer in the United States Navy before beginning his journalism career at the Montgomery County (Maryland) Sentinel, where he was a reporter for one year before joining *The Washington Post*.

The lecture is free and open to the public.

Tickets are **mandatory** and seating is on a first-come, first-serve basis.

Ticket distribution will be limited to four per person and must be picked up between 8:00 a.m. and 8:00 p.m. March 25 through March 27 (or until they run out) at the Information and PC lab in Kilcawley Center located on the YSU campus. Tickets must be picked up in person.

For more information call the YSU Alumni and Events Office at

330-941-3497

'Avenue Q' lights up Youngstown Playhouse



The cast of "Avenue Q" — Claire Jeannette Blackledge, David Lynch, Travis Ascione, Aaron Kubicina, Alexis Shellow, Brianne Kochunas, David Croach and Stacy Anderson — will perform three more dates at the Youngstown Playhouse on Friday, Saturday and Sunday. Photo by Justin Carissimo/The Jambar.

Justin Carissimo
ASSISTANT NEWS EDITOR

"Avenue Q" took the stage at the Youngstown Playhouse over the weekend, reminding audiences that everyone's life "purpose is the flame that lights a fire under your ass."

The Youngstown Playhouse will host three more showings of the suggestive puppet show on Friday, Saturday and Sunday.

The play is a satirical counterpart to educational shows like "Sesame Street."

"Avenue Q" is a comedic musical that tells the story of a fresh college graduate named Princeton who moves into a crummy apartment in New York City.

In the city, Princeton meets an Internet porn expert, a sex worker and a homosexual Republican. Each character helps Princeton come closer to his true purpose in life.

To help complicate Princeton's situation even further, two furry puppets named the Bad Idea Bears rest on Princeton's shoulders and encourage him to make rash decisions.

Claire Blackledge and Aaron Kubicina, both Youngstown State University students, contributed large roles to the production. Kubicina played the role of Princeton, while Blackledge played the role of his antagonists.

Blackledge, a junior majoring in musical theater at Youngstown State University, landed the role of the Bad Idea Bears and said she had a fun time getting into character.

"There was no limit of being over the top. I'm a very fun and energetic person with a spunky and crude sense of humor, so playing the bears came natural to me," Blackledge said.

This marked Blackledge's first performance at the Youngstown Playhouse. She said her debut was a positive experience due to the help of her fellow actors.

"Everyone was very welcoming, kind and willing to show me around because I was new to this theater," Blackledge said.

She had a great time portraying the funny side of her characters, but said she also took away life lessons from the play's story.

"People have this perception on what life should be. You never know who you're going to meet or what obstacles life will throw your way, but it's up to us to make the best scenario out of every situation," Blackledge said.

Lester Malazia is directing the play, which is a winner of the Tony "Triple Crown" for Best Musical, Best Score and Best Book. Malazia said the play "is innovative, but it's sort of raunchy — just like real life."

Malazia said shows like "Avenue Q" should be acted out more often.

"I wasn't sure how people would react, but it's connected with audiences across the whole spectrum," Malazia said.

After directing Sunday's performance, Malazia said the character he relates to the most would have to be Princeton.

"It reminds me of when I first moved to New York. I was incredibly naive, and I was always worried about what was going to happen next," Malazia said.

Malazia, a New Castle native, has been directing for more than 35 years and has worked with Seaside Music for more than 20. Some of his friends were featured in the original debuts of "Avenue Q."

The production may not be suitable for children, but more mature audiences will relate to themes of prostitution, drinking, homosexuality and surfing the Web for porn. More importantly, they will also be reminded to laugh throughout life's highs and lows.

For more information, contact the Youngstown Playhouse at 330-788-8739.

Stepping out of the shadows

Marissa McIntyre
ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT
EDITOR

Many young girls dream that their hobbies will one day thrust them into the limelight. For one Youngstown State University student, the dream of seeing her stories on the shelves of bookstores across the nation just may be coming true.

Lauren Blake's supernatural teen novel, "The Shadow Shifter," is being published by Hound Comics, Inc. and is set for release on Wednesday. The book is the first in a series of three that will focus around a young boy in an alternate version of our reality, where beings called "shifters" manipulate the world we live in.

James Patrick Hain, an adjunct English instructor, said Blake is an imaginative writer and that her book has the potential to take off. It's a "page-turner," he said.

"The interesting thing about her work is she creates these worlds that feel organic, and she has these relatable characters with interesting power," Hain said.

Last summer, while on a fate-filled trip to Steel City Comic Con, Blake met repre-

sentatives from Hound Comics. She was later hired for an internship with the company. After some time under their employment, Hound Comics was interested in seeing Blake's work.

After two years, and hundreds of editing phases, Blake's book will be hitting shelves at Barnes & Noble this spring. The book will also be available electronically on eBooks and amazon.com.

"When I found out, I cried," Blake said. "It's been quite a journey."

Blake said the series is in the same vein as the "Harry Potter" and "Lord of the Rings" series. She said "The Shadow Shifter" is an easy read and anticipates reader reaction.

"If I saw this book in stores, I would want to read it," said Kristen Sirakis, Blake's cousin.

Sirakis said she has read the first chapter and can't wait to continue reading.

Blake put the final touches on the book over winter break. She has dedicated the novel to Sirakis, who had even accompanied her on the Steel City Comic Con trip.

"We're really close. I've been there since the beginning, and she has been writing since middle school," Sirakis said. "She was really excited. She

kept saying, 'I'm an author!'"

As Sirakis and Blake looked through the first finished copy of the book, Sirakis said she had to do a double take when she came across her name on the dedication page.

"It's surreal to think my name is going to be one of the first things readers see," she said.

Blake said she's gotten discouraged along the way and that the story itself has taken many twists and turns. She also says that sticking with it proved worthwhile.

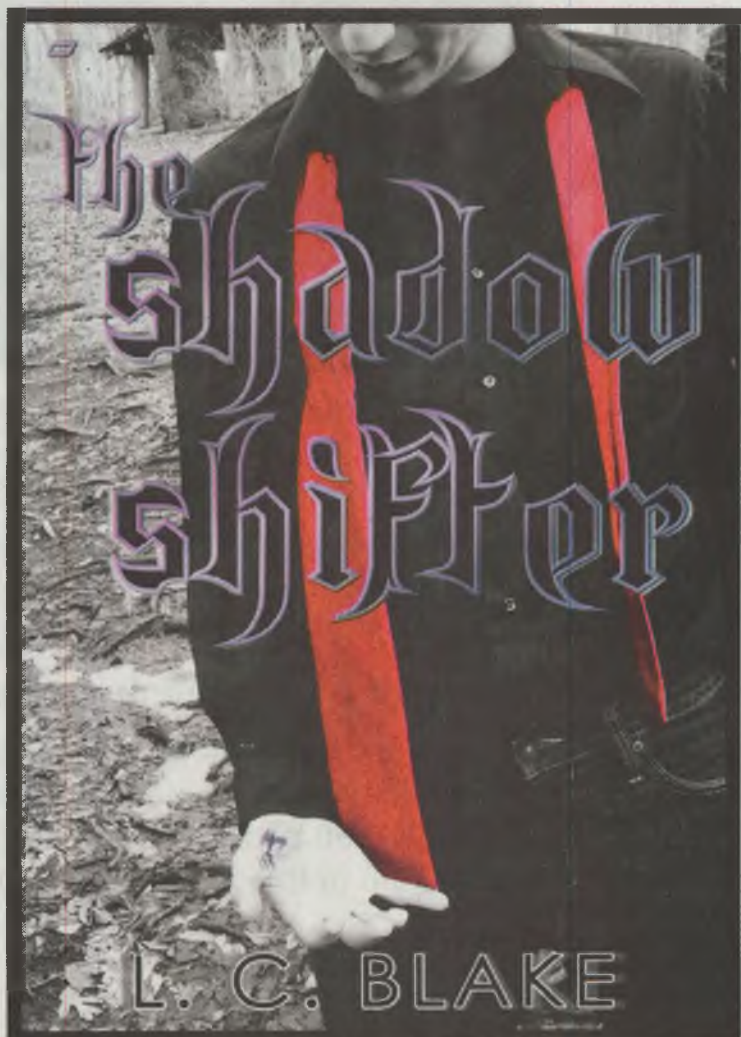
"I'm not going to say it was easy. It was really hard. But, if you want to get published, you can't get discouraged," she said.

Hain said her persistence worked in her favor.

"I've noticed that she is extremely driven. She worked hard to get this far," Hain said. "Lauren is a living example of persistence. Take rejection as a learning experience."

Blake plans to celebrate the book release with her close friends and family. She encourages others to pursue their writing dreams.

"I truly think that anyone can write. There is no such thing as 'bad writing,'" Blake said.



Youngstown State University student Lauren Blake is preparing for the release of her first published novel, "The Shadow Shifter." It will be available at Barnes & Noble and Amazon.com on Wednesday. Photo courtesy of Lauren Blake.

Follow the money

Much like the Statue of Liberty, this school has historically accepted the huddled masses yearning to breathe free. You needed to actually try to get turned away from a desk on campus.

As Ohio changes the funding formula to more heavily favor graduation rates over enrollment, YSU's stay-as-long-as-you-need atmosphere is no longer cost-effective.

Now, quick, efficient changes to university operations need to be implemented in order to increase performance in the new system.

Universities will potentially be rewarded for students who actually get degrees, which makes YSU's open enrollment policy more detrimental than beneficial.

A conditional enrollment policy was implemented last year, but it's hard to imagine a university, especially one struggling mightily to counter continually decreasing enrollment levels, to begin turning away tuition money on the basis of subpar academics.

YSU is now between a rock and a hard place. Lose money from tuition dollars by cultivating a heightened academic climate, or continue to rely on tuition dollars from students who don't necessarily deserve to be on a university campus to compensate for losses in funding.

Financially, the past few years have been rocky.

A 3.5 percent decrease in enrollment triggered a \$7 million nosedive in YSU's operating budget in fall 2011. In fall 2012, the second consecutive year of enrollment declines caused another deficit, this time around \$2.7 million.

On Tuesday night, Gov. John Kasich touted the vibrant state economy. Unemployment rates have decreased almost 4 percent over the past two years. He said "jobs" 25 times, and rightfully so, as Ohio has seen an increase of 120,400 jobs since Kasich took office.

But that's the last thing YSU needs.

Economical improvements result in empty chairs in college classrooms. From fall 2011 to fall 2012, Ohio's university system witnessed a 1 percent decrease in enrollment overall, while the entire higher education system shrunk by nearly 6 percent.

YSU has one of the lowest graduation rates in the state, because unprepared students are added to class rosters without a second thought. And when they drop out, they're left with thousands in debt and no education.

The development and growth of Eastern Gateway Community College has provided refuge for regional residents who want higher education but aren't fully prepared for the work.

As tough as it may be, YSU may need to bite the bullet for a year or two and start turning people away. Once YSU starts filtering lesser-qualified students, then it'll start reaping the rewards.

JAMBAR POLICY

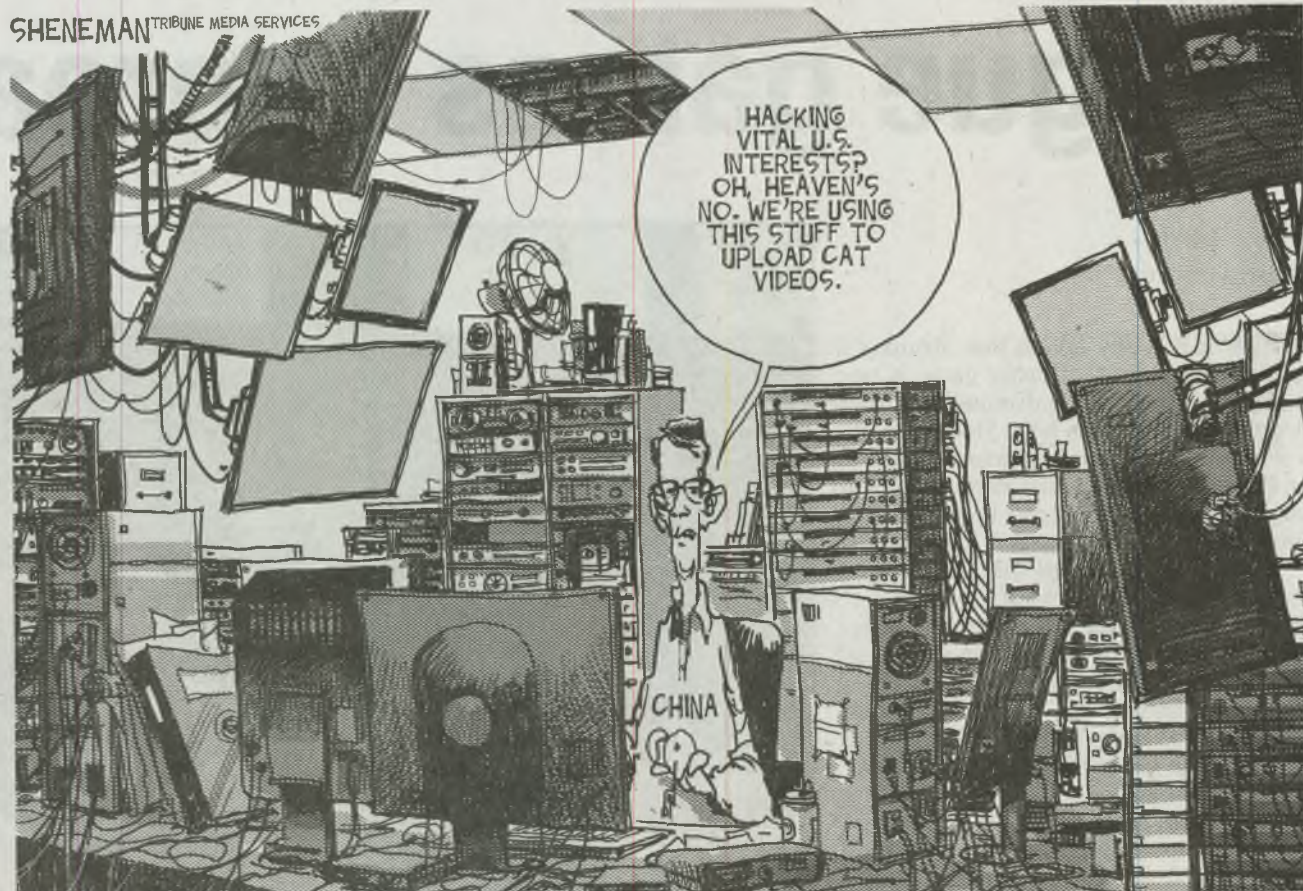
Since being founded by Burke Lyden in 1931, The Jambar has won nine Associated Collegiate Press honors. The Jambar is published twice weekly during the fall and spring semesters and weekly during the first summer session. Mail subscriptions are \$25 per academic year. The first copy of The Jambar is free. Additional copies of The Jambar are \$1 each.

OUR SIDE POLICY

The editorial board that writes Our Side editorials consists of the editor-in-chief, the managing editor and the senior copy editor. These opinion pieces are written separately from news articles. They draw on the opinions of the entire writing staff and do not reflect the opinions of any individual staff member. The Jambar's business manager and non-writing staff do not contribute to editorials, and the adviser does not have final approval.

YOUR SIDE POLICY

The Jambar encourages letters to the editor. Submissions are welcome at thejambar@gmail.com or by following the "Submit a Letter" link on thejambar.com. Letters should concern campus issues, must be typed and must not exceed 500 words. Submissions must include the writer's name and telephone number for verification, along with the writer's city of residence for printing. The Jambar does not withhold the names of guest commentators. Letters are subject to editing for spelling, grammar and clarity. Letters will not be rejected based on the views expressed in them. The editorial board reserves the right to reject commentaries and letters if they are not relevant to our readers, seek free publicity, fail to defend opinion with facts from reliable sources or if the editorial staff decides that the subject has been sufficiently aired. The editorial board will request a rewrite from the submitting writer based on these requirements. The Jambar will not print letters that are libelous, threatening, obscene or indecent. The views and opinions expressed in letters and commentaries on the opinion page do not necessarily reflect those of The Jambar staff. Editorials do not necessarily reflect the opinions of the faculty, staff or administration of YSU.



The views of this artist do not necessarily reflect those of The Jambar.

Earth remains safe for now — but what about next asteroid?

McClatchy Newspapers (MCT)

Although the probability of a meteorite crashing in their backyards shouldn't keep ordinary people up at night, scientists who study such matters are worried.

The meteor that streaked across the Russian sky Friday startled scientists worldwide with its audacity, even as it triggered a window- and roof-rattling shockwave that injured more than 1,000 people in the city of Chelyabinsk.

Astronomers on Friday had their eyes skyward on a separate object, the much larger asteroid known as 2012 DA14. It was coincidence that it came so close to Earth at the same time a meteoroid flamed into the atmosphere over Russia's Ural Mountains, NASA scientists said.

Still, scientists are paying attention to the paths of future near-Earth objects. One nonprofit space research foundation plans an infrared telescope that will be able to detect more meteorites that have potential to inflict damage on world cities.

"This is public safety. We're doing this because we believe it needs to be done," said former Apollo astronaut Rusty Schweickart, the chairman emeritus of the B612 Foundation, a nonprofit dedicated to protecting Earth from asteroids. Its name comes from the children's book by Antoine de Saint-Exupery. B612 is the asteroid home cared for by the Little Prince.

There is no surefire system to scan the skies for threatening asteroids, particularly ones that came in at the angle of the meteor over Russia. So in the near future, the best hope is better monitoring of the meteorites that, typically, orbit in a belt between Mars and Jupiter.

Science also has few options for knocking incoming asteroids off course, which was part of the early work done by the B612 Foundation. Scientists are researching how to avoid a major asteroid impact, but they have nothing workable yet.

Scientists, led by NASA, track thousands of such near-Earth objects.

They're only a fraction of the asteroids in the solar system, however. There are about 500,000 near-Earth asteroids the size of 2012 DA14. Of those, less than 1 percent have been discovered, NASA said.

Until 20 years ago, there was even less ability to track them — and Asteroid 2012 DA14 itself was discovered by amateur astronomers at the La Sagra Sky Survey operated by the Astronomical Observatory of Mallorca in Spain.

The gaps in knowledge are precisely why B612 was founded, Schweickart said. They have plans to deploy in 2018 an infrared space telescope; its purpose will be to discover asteroids that could do serious damage to Earth.

Their telescope still would be unable to capture asteroids the size of the one that entered the atmosphere near Chelyabinsk, Schweickart said. But it will capture many more of those the size of Asteroid 2012 DA14.

"The purpose is to discover most — we're not going to get all — of the asteroids that are out there," Schweickart said. "All of them are much bigger than the one that hit Russia this morning. I'm not counting things that break glass, I'm talking about things that will wipe out cities or more."

There's little appetite in Congress right now to increase spending, but Friday's double-whammy may have changed some minds.

"As the world leader in space exploration, America has made great progress for mankind," the chairman of the Science, Space, and Technology Committee, Rep. Lamar Smith, R-Texas, said in a statement. "But our work is not done. We should continue to study, research and explore space to better understand our universe and better protect our planet."

It's also a matter of national security, said Rep. Rush Holt, D-N.J., a physicist and the former assistant director of the Princeton Plasma Physics Laboratory.

He cited congressional testimony from 2002, when a meteor exploded over the Mediterranean at a time of particularly tense relations between India and Pakistan. If the meteor had exploded over India or Pakistan, one military leader warned, it might have been misidentified as a nuclear attack.

"There should be some tens of millions in annual funding in order to meet the goal that Congress has set, which is to follow anything of significance in the asteroid/meteor category," Holt said. "And we're not doing anything close to that."

And yet, Smith said in his statement, "Fifty years ago, we would have had no way of seeing an asteroid like this coming."

Astronomers were giddy Friday as NASA broadcast live from one of the best space-viewing points in the world, the Gingin Observatory near Perth, Australia.

"What an exciting day. It's like a shooting gallery," said Paul Chodas of NASA's Near-Earth Object program at the Jet Propulsion Laboratory in California. "We have two rare events of near-objects approaching the Earth on the same day."

The two objects had different trajectories, and the asteroid monitored worldwide on Friday was much larger — about the length of half a football field.

The asteroid was the closest known — or accurately predicted — object of its size to fly by Earth. Unlike the Russian meteor, scientists were aware of it and accurately predicted that it would come closer than some weather and communication satellites but leave them unharmed. Those satellites orbit about 23,000 miles up; the meteorite came within about 17,000 miles from Earth.

There was never a risk the large asteroid would collide with Earth, but if one of its size were to hit here, "its crater would be larger than Monaco," astrophysicist Neil deGrasse Tyson, host of the "StarTalk" radio program, said Friday on Twitter.

Smaller meteorites crash to Earth daily — they can be seen as "shooting stars." But most aren't found, said Marc Fries, a research associate at Smithsonian's Museum of Natural History. Many fall into the ocean, which covers 70 percent of the Earth. Or they enter the atmosphere in remote places where they go unseen.

Few are as dramatic or as big as the one caught on video in Russia. Thanks to the dashboard-mounted cameras that many Russians use to deter police corruption, the asteroid's meteoric path was filmed from cars.

Campus Connection

What's making you angry today?



"My journalism ethics class. ... There is a student that is a conspiracy theorist, and he talks the whole class."

Patric Judis, Freshman



"Early morning classes. ... I work the night shifts, and I don't have enough time to do my school work or sleep."

Emily Linamen, Sophomore

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

With all of the negativity that seems to be associated with college students these days, it is nice to see when some of our young people know the true meaning of helping one another.

As a person with limited sight capabilities, I am often overlooked when walking around campus. On

Wednesday, the weather was particularly bad, and because of the whiteout conditions, I could not maneuver the sidewalks.

Thanks to the kind generosity of Frank McDowell, an engineering student from Lowellville, I was able to make my way from the public library to Pete's Place.

Words alone cannot express my true appreciation for this good Samaritan. As a 1983 graduate of YSU, I fully appreciate the students of today.

Thanks again.

Gene DeCapua Canfield

League games approach

Steve Wilaj
SPORTS EDITOR

If there was any notion that Saturday's nonconference BracketBuster game is unimportant, it was quickly dismissed by head men's basketball coach Jerry Slocum.

First off, the game is Senior Night for the Penguins, meaning that starters Damien Eargle and Blake Allen will be honored as Youngstown State University's lone seniors.

"[It's] saying farewell this year to two guys who have had just great careers here," Slocum said at Wednesday's press conference. "They're guys that I clearly appreciate and respect."

Second, after losing four of their last six games, the Penguins will try to use the matchup with Central Michigan University to get back on track.

The game against the Chippewas — which is scheduled for Saturday at 7:05 p.m. inside Beeghly Center — precedes YSU's final two Horizon League matchups. The Penguins (15-12) end their regular season at Valparaiso University on Tuesday and at Wright State University on March 2.

"Obviously, you're going into two games next week that are league games that will lead into your playoff games," Slocum said. "We want to go into that with good momentum."

While CMU is only 9-16, it will be no walk in the park for YSU, Slocum said. The Chippewas compete in the Mid-American Conference, where they hold a 2-10 league record.

"They're clearly playing in a really good league and played a lot of good teams of late — Ohio [University], Kent State [University] and [the University of] Akron," Slocum said. "So, we know that they're going to be battle-tested in terms of those games. It should be a great college basketball game."

YSU should receive a boost from the return of Eargle, who missed the previous two games with a broken nose. He had surgery on his nose only three days ago.

"It feels amazing — I wish I could say that," Eargle said. "It still hurts a little bit, but I got the mask, so I'll just play through it."

Eargle has never played with a protective mask before, but doesn't anticipate that it will be a problem.

"As soon as I get used to shooting and running around with it, I should be fine," he said.

Averaging 11.8 points and 6.5 rebounds per game, Eargle plans to start and play heavy minutes. Without the senior forward, freshman Bobby Hain started in his place.



YSU's Ryan Weber attempts a layup during a home game against the University of Illinois at Chicago earlier this season. Photo by Dustin Livesay/The Jambar.

Hain scored six and 14 points as the Penguins won the first game and lost the second game.

"I hate watching, but when you're winning, it makes it a lot better," Eargle said. "I like seeing the freshmen do good and get some time for experience. The second game I could tell they needed me just a little bit, and it kind of hurt."

At 7-7, YSU sits in fifth place in the HL

standings.

And while next week looms large for the conference tournament seedings, Eargle said YSU is first focused on CMU.

"I'm just worried about this game right now. Then, when we play Valpo and Wright State, we'll see," Eargle said. "I don't really know where we're at. I'll leave that up to the coaches."

SPORTS BRIEFS

Mincey, Schmutz families thank YSU at Scholarship Ring Dinner

The Mincey and Schmutz families were recently honored as Penguins of the Year at the 23rd annual Scholarship Ring Dinner, held at Mr. Anthony's in Boardman. Among the evening's speakers were Cynthia Anderson, president of YSU; Sudershan Garg, president of the YSU Board of Trustees; Guenther Hladiuk, president of the Penguin Club; and Eric Wolford, head football coach. Several student-athletes spoke as well. Then, Daryl Mincey, speaking on behalf of his wife and daughter, showed photos that highlighted his family's journey with the football program; he described his pride over being part of the university's athletics family. In addition, C. Reid Schmutz, speaking on behalf of his wife and family, said his family has enjoyed their relationship with YSU and the athletics program.

PENGUIN SPOTLIGHT

Mistreanu and Brendel were named as the Horizon League's tennis athletes of the week for Feb. 11-17. This honor is the first of both players' careers.



Silviu Mistreanu
Year: Sophomore
Hometown: Iasi, Romania
High School: High School Sport Program

Silviu Mistreanu joined the men's tennis team last spring and had a breakout campaign during his freshman year. Mistreanu was a first-team all-HL selection, going 14-5 overall and 6-1 in HL play. He competed in the No. 2 position for the last 15 contests of the season after opening in the No. 3 and 4 positions. Mistreanu's only HL defeat came in a three-set affair against the University of Detroit Mercy; he went 4-2 in the contests. Mistreanu, whose major is undeclared, took top honors in Romania's national high school tennis championship in 2010. He was picked as the HL's tennis player of the week for Feb. 11-17.



Annina Brendel
Year: Freshman
Hometown: Hagenbach, Germany
High School: Europa-Gymnasium Worth

Annina Brendel is the newest member of the YSU women's tennis team. Brendel, whose major is undeclared, won the decisive game that propelled the Penguins to a 4-3 victory over Indiana University-Purdue University Fort Wayne on Sunday. Brendel eked out a 6-4 victory in the third set of the contest to give YSU its fifth straight win in duals competition.

'Let it fly with the Y'

Track teams look to defend WATTS

Cory Bartek
SPORTS REPORTER

The Youngstown State University men's and women's track teams are hopeful that this weekend will be a win-win situation.

Not only are the Penguins hoping to come away victorious from the Horizon League Indoor Championships, but they are also hoping to prove a worthy host. The meet will be held on Saturday and Sunday at the Watson and Tressel Training Site.

"We're going all in," said Brian Gorby, YSU's head track and field coach. "Let it fly with the Y' has been our motto."

Both the men and women hope to improve from their 2012 finish.

The men finished third out of seven teams, while the women took second out of eight teams. The women also claimed first place at last year's HL Outdoor Championships.

Improvements over the last two weeks have been noticeable, and multiple student-athletes have come close to their personal bests, Gorby said.

"Everybody takes it up a notch come championship time," he said.

Gorby said he hopes that the women's team can capitalize on the success of its outdoor season, adding that the men's team is ready to take the next step: winning the tournament.

"The men are setting up to do big things," he said. "Make the unbelievable believable."

Four Penguins hope to repeat as champions: Michael Davis in the 60-meter, Ciara Jarrett in the 200-meter, Katrina Rettburg in



Kendall Homan jumps a hurdle during a home track meet earlier in the season. The Penguins will host the Horizon League Indoor Championships this weekend at the WATTS. Photo by Dustin Livesay/The Jambar.

the high jump and John Seaver in the shot put.

Rettburg, a junior, said she's approaching the meet with a level head.

"I'm kind of nervous, even though I'm sitting at first on paper," Rettburg said.

Last weekend, the Penguins participated in the Zips Invitational at the University of Akron. Three Penguins came away on top: Dorian Davis in the triple jump, Jarrett in the 60-meter and 200-meter, and Kodie Fennell in the 800-meter.

Davis said he's feeling confident as he heads into the weekend.

"[I'm] going in with a game plan, and if I execute, then my goals will be achieved," he said.

Davis placed second in the long jump last year and had to sit out in the triple jump. This weekend, he has different plans.

"I want to be able to compete in both events and improve and place in the top-five in the 60-meter dash," Davis said.

Rettburg also has personal goals.

"I want 5'10" — but I'll take 5'7" or 5'8" [because] I want to break the Horizon League indoor record," she said, referring to the high jump.

Davis and Rettburg also ex-

plained what winning the HL title would mean for both teams.

"We are definitely underdogs. It's like David and Goliath, and we're David," Davis said. "It would be shocking, like when Butler [University] made it to the [basketball] national championship game."

Since joining the HL in 2001, the men have won one indoor championship just one time (2003), while the women have won it three times (2004, 2005 and 2008).

"It would be wonderful to win," Rettburg said. "We would get a gold ring instead of a silver one."