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YSU REPORTS LOW CRIME ON CAMPUS

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According to recent data from the Annual Security and Fire Safety Report for 2013, Youngstown State University's annual crime statistics report were surprisingly low, especially when compared with some other public universities in Ohio.

Every year, all public universities are required to send out an annual report of on- and off-campus crime, along with fire safety statistics. They then must publish it, whether it is on the web or in print, under the Jeanne Clery Disclosure of Campus Security Policy and Campus Crime Statistics Act — a federal law that requires crime statistics every year from public universities.

The report surveys 13 general types of crimes, including aggravated assault, arson, burglary, negligent manslaughter, murder, motor vehicle theft, robbery, forcible sex offenses, dating violence, domestic violence, stalking, arrests from drug, alcohol and weapons violations and judicial referrals — which includes the number of arrests and referrals for disciplinary actions for drug, liquor and weapon law violations.

The data is taken over a three-year span from these universities up to Oct. 1, 2014.

The data from these reports looks at three separate categories of crime: on-campus crimes, off-campus crimes at certain property controlled by the university in question and crimes that occurred on public property on, or immediately

ON-CAMPUS CRIME REPORTED IN 2013



ARSON



DATING & DOMESTIC VIOLENCE



BURGLARY & ROBBERY



ARRESTS FROM DRUGS, ALCOHOL, WEAPONS

	ARSON	DATING & DOMESTIC VIOLENCE	BURGLARY & ROBBERY	ARRESTS FROM DRUGS, ALCOHOL, WEAPONS
AKRON UNIVERSITY	0	3	13	72
UNIVERSITY OF TOLEDO	2	3	28	28
YOUNGSTOWN STATE UNIVERSITY	0	5	9	44

TOTAL CRIME PER UNIVERSITY / **AKRON UNIVERSITY 482** / **UNIVERSITY OF TOLEDO 478** / **YOUNGSTOWN STATE UNIVERSITY 266**

INFORMATION COURTESY OF THE ANNUAL SECURITY AND FIRE SAFETY REPORT.

GRAPHIC BY CORIN MILLER/THE JAMBAR.

adjacent of, the campus.

In addition, the annual campus safety report at YSU looks at the additional categories of general theft, vandalism, simple assault and criminal damage and mischief.

Despite Youngstown's state-wide reputation for crime, the total crimes reported for 2013 at YSU, under this report, were 266 — which is low compared to universities like Akron and Toledo, even when considering the student population differences. These numbers were published online, as well as in print.

John Beshara, Chief of YSU Police, said that the statistics help students become aware of what crimes are fre-

quent on campus, which, in turn, helps students to prepare accordingly.

"If you have a lot of theft going on and you don't have any murders, you don't really need to be concerned about murders. If you have a lot of theft going on, people should know that, and they'll protect their property a little bit better with that knowledge," Beshara said, "The individual is a little more responsible for themselves."

Beshara said that theft is the highest crime at the university on campus.

"Do we have crimes? Certainly we do. Do we have a lot of crimes? Not in my opinion," he said. "The most crime

we have is theft. It most often occurs because it is a crime of opportunity."

Last year, a campus-wide survey about public safety was issued from the YSU Police Department. Survey takers generally rated the campus highly in safety and security.

Beshara said that public universities that over- or underreport in the survey are faced with heavy fines.

"If a college or public university is found over-reporting or underreporting ... because we don't want to get caught not reporting ... there's very steep fines for each violation so we take it [the Clery Law] very seriously," he said. "Not only for our community but

because if we do it wrong, it can really cause an issue with the U.S. Department of Education. That would hurt the university."

Nancy Shefchuk, Police Sergeant at Kent State University, said that the crime ratings are typically lower for campuses in rural areas than in areas with a higher population.

"Let's say Cleveland State, Akron, OSU, or an area that's not a larger city — those campuses are unfortunately in areas that are really highly populated, and ours is not so much. It's much smaller, and I think that certainly impacts crime stats a lot," Shefchuk said.

CRIME PAGE 4



PHOTO BY FRANK GEORGE/THE JAMBAR.

SPOKE performed today for students and community members in the Jazz Room of the Dana School of Music at Youngstown State University. Brought to the university by the Youngstown Jazz Collective, SPOKE is a jazz combo that has performed in every continent, barring Antarctica, across the globe, playing with the Spanish Harlem Orchestra, Richard Bona and many more jazz artists and groups during their travels. SPOKE emphasizes, in the performing and creating, the importance of synergy between the four group members. Pictured is Andy Hunter, one of SPOKE's four members.

Youngstown is Burning

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According to statistics from Ohio's State Fire Marshall, Youngstown suffered nearly twice as many structural arsons as its similarly-sized neighbors, Akron and Canton, even topping the much larger city of Cincinnati.

Youngstown was fourth in the state for number of structural arsons in 2013.

The great number of arsons in the area can be explained through a variety of variables. Alvin Ware, Youngstown's Chief Fire Investigator, cites the number of vacant houses as a leading factor.

"Our arson figures are kind of high right now because of all the vacant houses we have. Some of the other cities in Ohio get the same problem: Toledo, Cleveland, all the big cities," Ware said.

Of Youngstown's 208 structural arsons, 162 were vacant houses. These abandoned homes are often utilized for criminal purposes, often playing host to crimes such as drug dealing or production.

Joshua Hobbs, Ohio's Chief of the Fire & Explosion Investigation Bureau, believes that covering up crime scenes has become an extremely large motivator for arson.

"The greatest spike we are seeing right now is in crime concealment fires that conceal a previous incident such as a burglary, homicide or theft of copper," Hobbs said.

Hobbs asserted that setting fire to a crime scene is not as effective in covering up evidence as it was in years past due to advances in forensic science, though it hasn't stopped criminals from trying.

Ware and Hobbs both point to the theft

of copper as a large motivator for arsonists. Buildings, particularly older ones, often contain significant amounts of copper in their construction. This copper is often stripped for its resale value. This is especially prevalent in poorer economic areas such as Youngstown and Toledo.

Sometimes abandoned buildings are burned down in advance to make the copper easier to retrieve from the rubble later.

Hobbs believes that most of the arsons are done with a purpose. He believes that the stereotype of the pyromaniac is overrepresented.

"Investigating the habitual fire-setter, the prototypical arsonist, is a small portion of what we see. They do exist. Every year, somewhere in the state, we have a few of them, but what we see a lot of now are fires of retribution, often times either drug-related or domestic violence-related," Hobbs said. "These are often times the only time that person has set a fire."

Ware and Hobbs both cite gang violence as another factor in the number of arsons.

Additionally, some arsonists even have altruistic motives in their fire setting.

"We see a lot of fires set to buildings that have been proclaimed community eyesores or fires that someone set just to get rid of the building because it's inhabited by drug dealers or vagrants or they believe it poses a public health risk," Hobbs said.

This is unfortunate though, as the fires can still be dangerous since the vacant building may contain homeless residents. The risk of the fire spreading to neighboring houses in tightly-packed neighborhoods is also present.

BURNING PAGE 3



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TOWERING ACHIEVEMENTS IN DOWNTOWN HOUSING

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Early next year, the fencing and scaffolding on the east side of north Phelps Street will come down, and the newly-renovated Wick Tower will offer 50 apartments to people eager to live downtown.

Dominic J. Marchionda, CEO of NYO Property Group that owns the building, said the demolition work is complete, and they are into the rebuild stage. He is optimistic about the project.

"It's an exciting project for the downtown," Marchionda said. "We are getting a lot of inquires on it, and we anticipate that it'll do very well."

The opening was initially set for January but has been pushed back to the late first quarter or early second quarter of 2015. They will begin accepting applications for tenants this month, with units starting at around \$900 per month.

In addition to the apartments, there will be commercial space available on the ground floor. This is the fourth residential building in the city to be developed by NYO Property Group, following the Flats at Wick, Realty Tower and Erie Terminal Place. Marchionda said the previous buildings have been a success.

"Everything that we're doing downtown has been received very, very well," Marchionda said. "We are at full occupancy."

Marchionda said the demand for housing downtown is coming primarily from forward-thinking young people who aren't satisfied with the suburbs.

"We're seeing a resurgence of younger people staying in the area rather than packing up after getting their education and leaving," Marchionda said. "Most of our buildings that we have downtown are occupied by young professionals working and living in and around the downtown area."

Phil Kidd, a downtown resident and business owner, likes being able to walk to events that are going on in the city.

"I really enjoy having access to so many things that appeal to me without ever really having to drive," Kidd said.



Wick Tower, on the northeast corner of W Federal and N Phelps Streets downtown, is currently being renovated. The building will contain 50 apartments and have commercial space available on the ground floor.

NYO Property Group is one of the primary developers in Youngstown. In addition to the four residential buildings they've developed, they own 16 Wick Building, the Harshman Building, the Metropolitan Savings and Loan building, the Legal Arts building, the Stambaugh building and the St. Vincent De Paul building. They have also recently put in a bid to purchase the Phar-Mor building.

Marchionda said the company has an overall vision they are trying to realize downtown.

"Our plan is to bring some retail back, and bring some of the businesses that left the downtown back to the downtown, and then market it to new business and new entities that are out there," Marchionda said.

Marchionda said he welcomes com-

petition from other developers, but noted there is limited demand for housing at the moment, and it's important not to flood the market.

"We could actually dump 1000 beds on the city tomorrow, in and around the downtown. We have enough capacity to do that. The question is, does the city of Youngstown need 1000 apartments, or 1000 beds? The research says no, not really, but if it gets to that, with all the positive things happening and all the redevelopment happening and taking place, then we will do it. If it warrants it," Marchionda said.

Wick Tower, like many projects downtown, is being partially funded by tax credits.

"The purpose of the tax credit is to help with the restoration of the building and bring it back to its historical integrity," Marchionda said.

He said it's much easier to build a building if you start from scratch, but the tax credits incentivize rehabilitating old buildings, as opposed to letting them go to ruin while pursuing projects elsewhere.

"For example, the Flats [at Wick] was a much bigger building than Erie [Terminal Place], and was less expensive to develop than Erie was," Marchionda said. "It ends up working out because of the tax credits."

T. Sharon Woodberry, director of the city's Economic Development department, said these incentives are provided at the state level.

"There are quite a few historical structures through Ohio, and there are programs in place to try to encourage investment to happen, so on the state level they have recognized that as a need," Woodberry said.

She said the city also provided a \$500,000 wastewater grant and property tax abatements for the improvements that have been made to the residential components of the building.

The residents of these renovated historical buildings serve an integral part in fueling the rebirth of Youngstown as an urban business center. Living among the historic towers, tenants are able to witness the revitalization of the city from their doorsteps.

"It's an exciting time to be downtown because you're seeing the constant growth of the area," Kidd said.

"I Dedicate This to my Son" Nontraditional Student Dedicates Homecoming Bid to Her Son

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Rebecca Banks, a senior at Youngstown State University, is a rare breed: a nontraditional student who ran for the Homecoming Court — and made it.

She ran in for her son, who passed away in 2012 when he was 18 years old after a drowning accident. She has dedicated her Homecoming Court nomination to her son Bruce Banks and two other young drowning victims.

"I dedicate this to my son and the other two recent drowning victims because if they were still alive they might of ran for homecoming court and been on the court themselves, so this is for them," Banks said. "I am doing this for them in their place."



BANKS

Despite the tragedy of losing her son, she still is motivated to graduate, which she plans to do this spring with a degree in general studies.

"It's hard to keep going when you lost your child, but through Bruce I have so many sons and daughters here at YSU. A lot of them are on this campus and that helps a lot. They run up to me, give me a huge hug and say 'Hi mommy,' which comforts me a lot," Banks said. "I thank everyone here because it does help me keep going."

Her son was the reason she returned to college. After one of many conversations with her son about her desire to go back to school, he said, "you always say that mom." She knew after that conversation that she had to stop just talking and start acting.

Shortly after, she signed up for classes. Now, only a couple years later, she is involved in eight different organizations, including Rookery Radio and the Penguin Review, and facing graduation soon.

Banks said, through her Homecoming Court position, she hopes to help break apart stereotypes.

"I am very nontraditional, but not in the sense of the way the college defines it — when people see me they automatically assume I am old school or something. I am not your typically 52-year person. I think people feel like they can't do stuff because it's not meant for them — such as I can't run for court because it's only for the traditional students — and that is not true," she said. "I want people to see that you can do anything no matter your age, gender, size or whatever you may think may be stopping you. YSU is just so much fun for everyone."

She believes her election onto the court shows how open minded the students and staff are here at YSU.

"It shows that people here are willing to think out of the box and take a risk," Banks said.

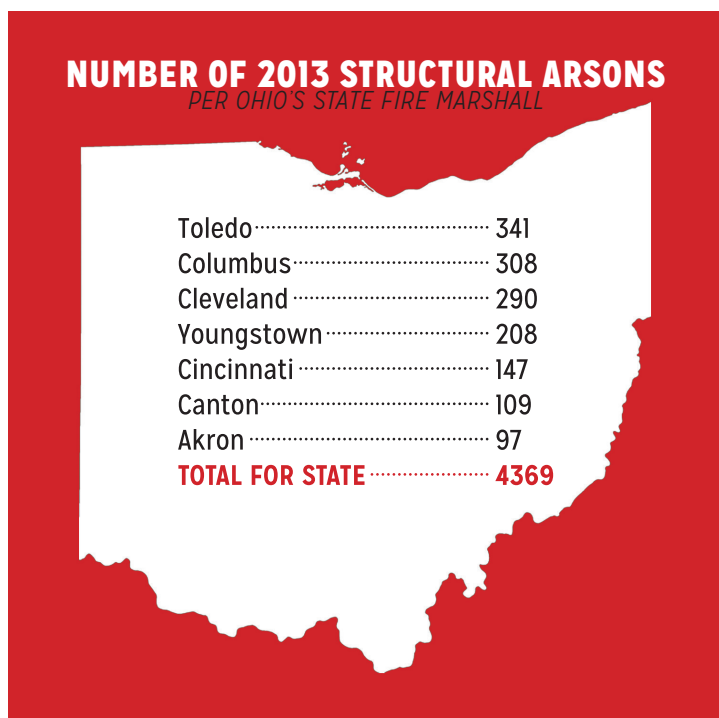
Even with all the excitement and appreciation radiating from Banks for her election onto the court, she is still most excited about walking on the field during half time of the homecoming game.

"I feel like me walking out on the field during an actual half time is as if I am seeing the world through my son's eyes for that one moment, because he played on the field in middle school, and it is just really cool," Banks said.

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**BURNING
PAGE 1**



Setting fire to these vacant houses is hardly a victimless crime, as some people mistakenly believe. Fighting these vacant house fires has taken its toll on the Youngstown Fire Department.

"Multiple injuries in the fire department have come from fighting vacant house fires, and it's a drain on our manpower and our trucks," Ware said.

Hobbs has witnessed arson rates fluctuate largely with the economy and the drug trade. He's seen noticeable declines in areas where drugs have been cleaned off the streets, and where the economy has bounced back.

If Youngstown can continue to drop the rates of blight and crime, then the trends suggest that incidents of arson will fall as well.

Nursing Home Abuse Claims Lead to \$38 Million Settlement with Feds

DANIEL SALAZAR
McClatchy Washington Bureau (MCT)

One of the nation's largest nursing home chains has agreed to pay \$38 million to settle allegations that it improperly billed federal health programs for the poor and aging and provided unnecessary care, as well as "disturbing" substandard care.

In announcing what was said to be the largest quality-of-care settlement involving nursing facilities in the United States, Justice Department officials said Friday that Extencicare Health Services and its subsidiary, Progressive Step Corp., known as ProStep, had employed fewer skilled nurses than necessary and had failed to properly train and supervise the staff.

"The investigation identified many disturbing examples of falls, fractures and head injuries to residents, often unnoticed by the staff for hours, as well as malnutrition, dehydration, pressure ulcers and infections," acting Assistant Attorney General Joyce Branda said on a conference call.

In addition, the investigation found that Extencicare facilities admitted very sick residents without being able to provide them with adequate care, leading to short-term residents not getting proper care and long-term residents being ignored.

The investigation focused on a group of 33 Extencicare facilities from 2007 to 2013. The settlement covers facilities in eight states: Indiana, Kentucky, Michigan, Minnesota, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Washington and Wisconsin.

Extencicare will owe the federal government and the eight states \$28 million to settle the allegations of inadequate care, according to the settlement, and \$10 million to resolve allegations of filing false claims to Medicare.

"Extencicare provided medically unreasonable and unnecessary rehabilitation therapy services, particularly during the patients' assessment reference periods, so Extencicare could bill Medicare for those patients at the highest ... levels," according to the settlement.

Extencicare denied in a news statement that it had engaged in any illegal conduct and said it had agreed to the terms of the settlement without an admission of wrongdoing.

"We are pleased to finally put this matter behind us," Tim Lukenda, the president and CEO of Extencicare, said in the statement.

Acting Associate Attorney General Stuart Delery said it was "critically important that we confront nursing home operators who put their own economic gain ahead of the needs of their residents."

Although four facilities in Kentucky were part of the settlement, the company has since left the state because of increased litigation against it, according to an article in the Lexington Herald-Leader in 2012.

"Operators who bill our vital state and federal programs for services so deficient that they are effectively worthless will be pursued for false claims," Kentucky Attorney General Jack Conway said Friday in a statement.

All 20 Extencicare facilities in Pennsylvania are included in that part of the settlement. The state's Medicaid program will receive \$2.2 million and the state itself will keep about \$1 million from the settlement, according to the Pennsylvania Attorney General's Office.

"It is critical to the integrity of a system that benefits millions of Americans that we do as much as possible to hold accountable those who commit fraudulent acts," Zane David Memeger, the U.S. attorney for the Eastern District of Pennsylvania, said in a statement.

Extencicare and ProStep are also required to enter into a five-year Corporate Integrity Agreement that includes a rigorous compliance program intended to protect the quality of resident care. The agreement is chain-wide, meaning it comprises all 146 of the company's nursing home facilities in 11 states, whether or not they're part of the settlement.

The Corporate Integrity Agreement "focuses on remedying the wrongs we uncovered during the investigation," Branda said.

Lukenda said the company was well positioned to fulfill the agreement's compliance-related requirements.

Youngstown Citizens Want the Oil and Gas Industry to Frack Off

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On Election Day, citizens of Youngstown will be met once again with an opportunity to amend the charter to forbid hydraulic fracturing within the city.

The Youngstown Community Bill of Rights would guarantee city residents a right "to be free from any oil and gas extraction that would violate the right of the residents to pure water, clean air, the peaceful enjoyment of their home or their right to be free of toxic chemical trespass."

Jean Engle, a member of Frackfree Mahoning Valley, a grassroots group supporting the amendment, said this is the fourth time the amendment has been on the ballot.

"[Support] has steadily increased," Engle said. "Each election we get better results. That's why we're going back to try again."

The basic principle behind the amendment is that citizens have a right to determine whether or not toxic industries can come into their community.

The group's position is that fracking is hazardous to human health because the chemicals used in the process inevitably get into the environment and cause lasting damage. Engle said these effects are not well known because research has been limited by exemptions granted to companies that do not require them to disclose the chemicals they are using in accordance with the Safe Drinking Water Act.

"It's just a desperate attempt to extract more fossil fuels in an extreme way to keep the fossil fuel thing going. We should be looking at renewables. We have the renewable technology, and we should be using it," Engle said.

Jeffrey Dick, chair of the department of geological and environmental sciences and director of the Natural Gas and Water Resources Institute at Youngstown State University, said that the risks posed by hydraulic fracturing are not any different than the risks posed by conventional oil drilling.

"The identical risks that we associate with shale gas wells come with traditional



PHOTO BY JUSTIN WIER/THE JAMBAR.

A truck parked on Ford Avenue encourages voters to pass the Youngstown Community Bill of Rights, which will prohibit hydraulic fracturing, and the disposal of waste produced by the process, from occurring within the city.

wells," Dick said. "So if you're going to ban shale wells, you really need to ban all of them, and if you're going to do that, what are you going to use for an energy source?"

He said he doesn't think we should be drilling in heavily-populated areas like Youngstown, but this rarely occurs for practical reasons.

"Leasing the land's almost impossible. It's not worth the trouble for companies to do it, so you're not going to see very much of that going on," Dick said.

There isn't much drilling currently happening anywhere in northeast Ohio due to lower than expected yields.

"It's pretty much a dead area for the Utica shale," Dick said. "They were drilling here early on, but everybody's abandoned it. There's nobody drilling up this way at all anymore."

The amendment also forbids fracking wastewater from being processed or disposed of in the city.

"We feel that Youngstown has been designated a dump for other states' frack waste," Engle said. "Our sense of it is, don't let it happen here. We're not a dump. We don't want to be a dump. And it's time to start looking seriously at renewables."

Dick said that unlike shale gas wells, disposal wells are common in industrial areas and they can pose human

health risks when they are sited in areas with seismic activity.

"There's some indication that there's something in the subsurface here that doesn't do well with injecting fluids into the ground and it triggers earthquakes. So I've got a concern about that — a big time concern about it," Dick said.

A.J. Sumell, an economics professor at YSU, said fracking is a controversial issue because when you look at it from the macro level you see job growth, reduced carbon emission, and a reduction in oil and gas imports. Yet when viewed at the micro level, there are environmental risks that raise concerns.

"Most people don't want to live next to it, and I wouldn't want to live next to it," Sumell said.

Engle is not impressed by the effect fracking has had on employment in Ohio.

"Something like four percent of Ohio jobs are related in any way to the oil and gas industry," Engle said.

Engle said the group has struggled to obtain support from local politicians.

"We have not gotten any support from city council, from the mayor's office, anything," Engle said. "They have opposed us right and left down the road, and I don't know why given that they are responsible for protecting the citizens of Youngstown."

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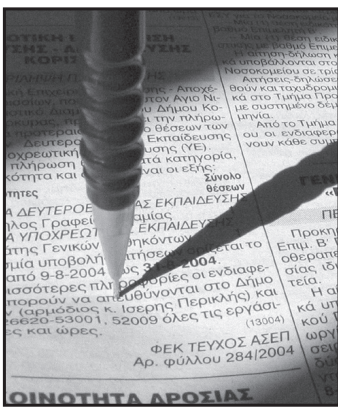
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NEWS BRIEFS

John D. Beeghly Fellows selected

YSU business students Dominic Jackett, Timothy Cheslik, Corey J. Patrick, Joseph Czekaj, Paige Rassega and Sterling Morris II have been chosen as the 2014 Fall Semester's Beeghly Fellows. This program provides students with the opportunity to work on different business projects in the area, as well as up to a \$2,500 stipend.

"The Spitfire Grill" starts the University Theater's season

"The Spitfire Grill" starts University Theater's 2014-15 season. The musical runs Friday, Saturday and Sunday, Oct. 17-19 and 24-26 in Ford Theater. Friday and Saturday performances begin at 7:30 p.m. and Sunday performances begin at 2 p.m. Tickets are free for YSU students, \$15 for adults, and \$10 for senior citizens, YSU faculty and staff, students outside of YSU, Penguin Club members and YSU alumni.

YSU Law Day set for end of the month

YSU's Law Day will be Oct. 29 from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. in the Presidential Suites of Kilcawley Center. Students interested in studying law will be given the opportunity to ask representatives from law schools questions, as well as receive information about law school programs, financial aid and applications. For more information, call 330-941-1672 or 330-941-3436.

The Jambar



She added that campus police have a minimal impact on the crime statistics, and the location of a university and the whims of local government can push the statistics one way or another.

"I'm sure to a minimum point they do, but things like the city environment certainly has a much greater impact on that. From what I know of other police departments and working with them, everyone is working hard to keep those statistics as low as possible — that's certainly our jobs — and nobody wants crime to go up," Shefchuk said. "I would think that the location and general crimes that are occurring in the area surrounding your campus, I would think that, unfortunately, becomes a reflection of that than some of the police efforts."

Jeffrey Newton, director of public safety and Chief of Police at the University of Toledo, said that university campuses are generally safer than areas off of campuses, and this is a reflection of the overwhelming emphasis on safety most universities prioritize.

"Statistically, campuses are safer places than the areas immediately off campus. There's an emphasis on having a strong security presence like you'll see at a lot of the state universities, or a security presence at some of the smaller schools," Newton said. "I think that that has been a priority in higher education, and also it's an atmosphere where you have more educated folks and I think that you'll find crime lower when you have a higher concentration of education."

He said that he believes the campus police are why campuses are safer.

"I like to think that the campus police play a role in deterring crime and providing a presence that creates a safer environment," Newton said.



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YSU Part Time Faculty Association

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- b) In Middle School
- c) In Elementary School
- d) In Preschool
- e) Not born yet

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Exploring the Underwater World of the Florida Keys

CAMMY CLARK
The Miami Herald
(MCT)

As a 365-pound remotely operated vehicle was being deployed from the deck of the Nancy Foster, a group of curious onlookers showed up from the deep blue.

"Oh, look, dolphins," Ensign Felicia Drummond exclaimed in delight to LCDR Jeff Shoup, commanding officer of the NOAA coastal research ship.

Eight Atlantic spotted dolphins were swimming around the bright yellow, alien-looking creature that had just entered their water playground in the Dry Tortugas, the most remote part of the Florida Keys.

"I've never seen that happen before," ROV pilot Jason White said.

While dolphin research wasn't part of the scientific plan for this cruise, which ran Sept. 14-27, the magical two minutes captured by the ROV's video camera provided the Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary with a hook to lure the public to its social media sites. After clicking on the cute dolphins video, people also could learn more about marine science being conducted that will help shape future sanctuary and fisheries management policy.

It quickly became evident during the Nancy Foster's two-week mission that science at sea — especially in a remote location, 70 miles west of Key West, where the only man-made structures are a Civil War-era fortress and a lighthouse — is a slow, collaborative effort. One that requires scientists to exhibit the same kind of curiosity as those dolphins did.

Exploration included parts of the seafloor, down to 420 feet deep, that had never before been seen by humans. No big discoveries were made, but none were expected. Instead, lots of tiny pieces were collected to become part of a complex, evolving puzzle that began to take shape a few decades ago as it became evident that while the oceans seem endless, their resources are not.

The cruise — which included fish surgeries, homemade lionfish ceviche and the discovery of a sunken shrimp boat teeming with protective Goliath groupers as big as Sumo wrestlers — started at the U.S. Coast Guard station in Key West, where the Nancy Foster docked to give its crew of 22 a port call and to pick up the new science party of 15.

For the first half, the science party included Sean Morton, superintendent of the Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary, chief sanctuary scientist Scott Donahue, dive master Brett Stafford, seven scientists from the Florida Fish & Wildlife Conservation Commission, two ROV pilots, a science member

of the NOAA Commissioned Corps and Amy Orchard, a museum educator from Arizona participating in NOAA's Teacher at Sea program.

The Nancy Foster, a 187-foot ship that looked like a giant white tugboat, was built by the U.S. Navy as a torpedo tester called YTT-12. When it was completed in 1991, it already was not needed.

"It went straight to the mothball fleet, in dehumidified storage," said chief engineer Tim Olsen, the only crew member who has been with the Nancy Foster since its commissioning in 2004. "That was good for NOAA."

In 2001, the Navy transferred the mothballed ship to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, which spent \$7.7 million to transform the torpedo tester into a floating field laboratory primarily used by marine scientists.

On the first day of the research cruise, the ship left Key West in the morning to make the hours-long trek out to the Dry Tortugas, which includes seven small islands, the Dry Tortugas National Park, two federally protected ecological reserves and the state's natural protected area. That afternoon, from small boats launched from the ship's main deck, scientists from FWC's Fish and Wildlife Research Institute office in Marathon dove 100 feet to set up fish traps at two locations.

The divers, who had special research permits, were trying to catch commercially and recreationally important reef fish that could be surgically implanted with acoustic tags to track their movements.

On day two, scout dive teams were sent to the traps to see if they had captured any fish worthy of tagging. The first team swam through a strong current and a thermocline to get to the bottom, only to find an empty trap. The second scout team also had no luck. Both traps were left in place to "continue fishing."

Next, the ROV was launched at an area of Riley's Hump, sort of an underwater oasis for fish surrounded by water more than 1,000 feet deep in the South Ecological Reserve, where fishing, diving and anchoring are prohibited.

The ROV, with a long fiber-optic cord attached to equipment on the ship, traveled this time to about 250 feet, still too deep for most scientific divers. Most of the scientific party gathered in the wet laboratory to watch the ROV images being sent back to the ship in standard and high definition, and in real time.

At the depths of more than 200 feet, there was none of the lush, vibrant coral you see at shallower parts of the reef. But the structure that looked like old rock housed a thriving ecosystem with cubera snappers, black groupers and amberjacks showing up in abundance and in large sizes.

"This is a good spot to monitor," said Paul Barbera, research associate with FWC. "There is a lot of fish that are just impressive in size, and in big numbers. Why there are so many fish here is because it's not fished, except maybe for somebody poaching."

In the evenings, the ship's crew worked on mapping areas of the seafloor with a multibeam sonar system, from which 512 sound waves were beamed, each at a slightly different angle, from a transducer mounted on the hull. The sound waves traveled simultaneously through the water until they reached the seafloor, shipwreck or other object that reflects sound.

Once the sound waves reached the object, they traveled back through the water column and were picked up by the receiver, which recorded the time it took. Then, the depth was calculated using a variety of factors.

The ship ran patterns, like mowing a lawn with a little overlap each time, to create a comprehensive bathymetric (depth) map. In conjunction with this, the ship also used a fisheries echosounder to map the distribution of fish over a large area.

During the cruise, the Nancy Foster mapped 788 nautical miles of sea floor in the Dry Tortugas and in the Marquesas, an uninhabited island group about 20 miles west of Key West. This data will be analyzed, with special attention paid to what kind of structure tended to attract fish. The most interesting sea bottom found also was explored by the ROV.

"We will analyze the footage, to get estimates of the fish populations of the area we covered and then find a unit we can compare it to in other places," said Alejandro Acosta, research administrator at FWC. "You don't have boundaries, so we are dealing with individuals who are moving. We also don't know if they are coming from very far or very close. It is just a snapshot."

Many fishermen are skeptical of the science that is provided to justify no-take zones. Scientists are the first to say they don't have all the answers and would love to do more field work, but limited resources prevent it. That's one reason learning about the coral reef ecosystem has become a collaborative effort from a wide range of contributors: governmental agencies, academia, private conservationists and private users of the resources, including fishermen.

Did Members of Terrorist Group Cross Mexican Border? Answer Remains Unclear

SAMANTHA EHLINGER
McClatchy Washington Bureau
(MCT)

A series of statements this week from Obama administration officials have left a murky picture about whether four people caught last month crossing the United States border from Mexico had ties to terrorist groups.

U.S. Rep. Jason Chaffetz, R-Utah, raised the issue last month when he said he had heard that individuals with terrorist ties to the Middle East had been caught crossing the border. Other Republican members of Congress have made similar claims since.

Responding to news reports about those remarks, Marsha Catron, the Department of Homeland Security's press secretary, said Wednesday in a prepared statement that the suggestion that individuals with ties to the Islamic State, also known as ISIL, had crossed the border was "categorically false."

"DHS continues to have no credible intelligence to suggest terrorist organizations are actively plotting to cross the southwest border," the statement said.

Then on Thursday, Secretary of Homeland Security Jeh Johnson told an audience in Washington that four people had in fact been apprehended, but that their "supposed link" to terrorism was "a claim by the individuals themselves" that they were members of the Kurdistan Workers' Party, which Johnson described as "an organization that is actually fighting against ISIL and defended Kurdish territory in Iraq."

But while the four individuals might not have claimed membership in the Islamic State, the admission that they had claimed membership in the Kurdistan Workers' Party raised more questions. The workers' party, more widely known by its Kurdish initials as the PKK, has been on the State Department's list of foreign terrorist organizations since 1997.

"Obviously, they're a terrorist organization," State Department spokeswoman Marie Harf said on Friday. Harf declined, however, to comment on Johnson's characterization of the group, saying she had not read his remarks.

Asked for a phone contact of someone who could discuss the specifics of the case, DHS spokeswoman Catron referred a reporter back to Johnson's prepared remarks from Thursday. A more detailed second email asking if DHS had determined if the four individuals were members of the PKK received no response.

Chaffetz raised the issue Sept. 17 during a meeting of the House Homeland Security Committee at which Johnson testified that "no specific case comes to mind" of a terrorist crossing into the United States from Mexico.

"My concern," Chaffetz said then, "is that I have a reason to believe that on Sept. 10th, there were actually four individuals trying to cross the Texas border who were apprehended at two different stations, that do have ties to known terrorist organizations in the Middle East."

Johnson clearly had Chaffetz in mind when he spoke Thursday on border security at the Center for Strategic and International Studies, a Washington think tank.

"In the absence of facts, the American public is susceptible to claims that we have an open, 'porous' border, through which unaccompanied minors and members of terrorist organizations such as ISIL may pass," Johnson said.

The role of the PKK in Iraq is a sensitive one. The PKK has fought a three-decade long war with the Turkish government. In its pursuit of a Kurdish rights and autonomy in southern Turkey, the PKK has been blamed for suicide bombings, kidnappings and the deaths of hundreds. Its founder has been imprisoned since 1999, and agreed in 2013 to a cease-fire.

But PKK-allied fighters played a key role in military operations to rescue members of the Yazidi religious minority who were trapped by an Islamic State offensive in early August — something U.S. and Kurdish officials there had tried to downplay because of the group's designation as a terrorist organization.

White House officials declined Friday to offer any clarification, referring inquiries to the Department of Homeland Security.

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Bocce For Hope

PHOTO BY GABRIELLE FELLOWS/THE JAMBAR.

Teams of players competed against each other on Monday night for the annual Carmstrong Bocce For Hope event. All of the proceeds raided will be donated to children who are terminally ill or with chronic diseases.

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The Mahoning Valley Restaurant (MVR) hosted the Hope Foundation of the Mahoning Valley Monday night for their annual Carmstrong Bocce for Hope game.

The special bocce tournament is held to raise money and awareness for chronically and terminally ill children of the Mahoning Valley, with donations coming primarily from player fees and team sponsorships. There were also 'celebrity bartenders' who donated their time to make drinks for the participants. All of the proceeds go directly to the ill children through lo-

cal charities dealing with the children's happiness, comfort and well being.

Anthony Spano, a Youngstown State University employee, is the founder and executive director of the HFMV. He stated that he discovered his passion for helping others when he was in college, and the passion to give back never diminished.

"When I was in college, I raised money for terminally ill kids going to camp, and that's where it started. I began the Hope Foundation of the Mahoning Valley to help those kids here in the area, and it exploded from there", Spano said. "When it first started, it wasn't this big. With the help of the many volunteers who donate their time and the many others who donate their money, the foundation has grown. We've seen and we've heard the effects of our foundation. It does feel good,

deep down inside, but it drives you to do more because there are a lot of less fortunate kids out there that we want to help that have a terminally ill issue."

Jim Cossler, one of the celebrity bartenders for the Bocce for Hope game, is the CEO and Chief Evangelist of the Youngstown Business Incubator. He said that he is ecstatic to be involved with a charity that can assist with such a difficult issue in the lives of many.

"It's one of those organizations in the community that's doing such good work, especially with the young children that have devastating diseases. Your heart just goes out to that, you want to make their lives as good as you can," Cossler said. "In just my experience, these organizations are as helpful to the parent as they are to the child because their child is their everything.

If an organization like this can make a child's life a little bit better, it just makes the parents a whole lot happier."

The HFMV holds other events that raise money for the terminally ill children including Wine for Hope, the Game of Hope Classic and the Hope Classic Showcase. Each event offers a different way to rally support for the foundation.

Spano said that although the HFMV has grown, he never wants to stop his ambitions for what it could become.

"[The foundation] could be for chronically and terminally ill kids, it could be for cancer research, it could be for education," Spano said. "It just has to be something that your heart goes towards. That's the drive of all non-profits ... just people helping other people because they feel the need to, and I feel the need to."

Youngstown Community Walks to End Alzheimer's

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On Oct. 11, The Alzheimer's Association kicked off their 14th annual Walk to End Alzheimer's at the Watson and Tressel Training Site at Youngstown State University.

The Alzheimer's Association changed their location from Boardman Park the previous year in hopes that this newer and bigger location would bring in more walkers. This also increased the likelihood of Youngstown State University student participation.

Alzheimer's is a disease that causes the degeneration of a victim's brain. As sufferers of the disease age, their mental capacities, including memory and motor functions, slowly degrade until the body stops functioning entirely. It is the sixth leading cause of death in the United States, and it is still growing.

The opening ceremony began at 9:30 a.m. after the teams arrived at YSU and registered. The WATTS center was filled with an array of colored shirts worn by participants in honor of family members and friends fighting against the disease. YSU students volunteered for the event, passing out pinwheel flowers, a symbol for Alzheimer awareness.

The ceremony began with Helen Paes, community development coordinator for the Alzheimer's Association, recognizing the organizations and committee members that made the event possible.

"It's been really fantastic. I hope that we've been able to create better public awareness about Alzheimer's," Paes said. "We are going to find a cure for Alzheimer's with the help of all these

people dedicated to this cause today."

Each year, an honoree family is chosen based on their dedication and support of the Alzheimer's Association.

This year it was the Jamieson family. This family has shown support since Marybeth Jamieson's husband Cliff was diagnosed with the disease.

"This is important, and we need people to get out there and make them aware of what's going on and what people are doing," Marybeth Jamieson said.

Cliff Jamieson went to Girard High School and graduated in 1974. After graduation, he chose to attend YSU for his bachelor's degree, which he attained in 1980. From there, he was a teacher and a football coach at Struthers schools.

He met the love of his life and mar-

ried her in 1991. They later had four children together. In 2008, Jamieson was diagnosed with Alzheimer's and died in May 2013, just one day before his 58th birthday. This was a five-year battle for Cliff and his family.

"It seemed unimaginable to me — that the love of my life would eventually slip away from me," Marybeth Jamieson said.

Though the family experienced hardships with the terminal disease of a father, friend and loving husband, it didn't stop them from continuing their support for the association.

Their team, the Alzmighties, gathered family and friends to join them as they walked again this year in honor of their lost loved one. This is their third walk, and they claim that they will continue to walk for years to come.

The event also featured the Promise Garden. The Garden is a token to remind the Walk to End Alzheimer's participants to keep their promises that they made during the walk by continuing their support and care, and to never back down from fighting Alzheimer's disease.

Each team was given one of the four colors of the Promise Garden's pinwheel flowers. Each color tells watchers something about the individual walker and their history with the disease.

The orange pinwheel flowers represented the supporters of the Alzheimer's cause, blue are for those who are experiencing the disease, yellow represents the caregivers and, finally, the purple for those teams who have lost their loved one.



PHOTO BY ALEXIS RUFENER/THE JAMBAR.

Members of the community gathered at the Watson and Tressel Training Site on Saturday to show support for Alzheimer's research and stand beside those affected by the disease.

EDITORIAL

Ebola 2014

'Sympathy is No Substitute for Action'

Have you heard the news? Between Ebola and ISIS, most of us will be dead in approximately six to eight weeks — results may vary — and we can really get this whole apocalypse thing started with some pomp and circumstance.

Unfortunately, though I can't speak for any impromptu meteors or second comings, the truth is that the wait for the end of days will be a bit more protracted. Despite the constant stream of information from the thousand potential news sources and the array of conspiracies, such as the CDC throwing Ebola in our drinking water, it is safe to say that we have gotten a little ahead of ourselves with screaming pandemic as far as Ebola goes.

This isn't to downplay the global crisis that Ebola has been steadily brewing in its rather ominous cauldron. In West Africa, over 4,000 people have died due to the disease, and we can assure you that it is not a pleasant way to go. It is misery incarnate and our hearts break for those who have had to suffer that slow, agonizing torment. As long as the disease continues to rage through Africa, Ebola will rear its head across the world, with a handful of cases appearing even in first world countries. It is not a disease that we want to ignore.

This being said, go to any of the websites that have splashed Ebola stories across their front page; paradoxically enough, you are sure to find an editorial or column telling people, and even the media, to calm down about Ebola in America. Frankly, as far as pandemics go, Ebola is not all that good at being one. The disease, deadly and horrible to behold, pales in comparison to the raw destructive capabilities of the Spanish flu, which killed anywhere between 20 to 50 million people between 1918 and 1919. Unless every hospital in America starts handing out Ebola viruses as pets, we are unlikely to see those kinds of numbers. Yes, Ebola is one of the deadliest diseases known to mankind, but it is only contractable through contact with a victim's bodily fluids. This makes organized countries with quarantine protocol and early detection systems in place the natural enemy of the disease.

But, as mentioned, there has been plenty of talk on why Ebola isn't actually that significant of a threat to us here in our comfortable, modern country, so let us go

back to Africa. In most of West Africa, health spending, per individual, is less than \$100 a year. Hospitals are overcrowded with patients with Ebola. Health care workers, both citizens and foreigners, have come in direct contact with the disease due to poorly implemented procedures for dealing with cases; many are left to be cared for by unprepared family members and others are left to die alone in the streets or in their homes — their rotting cadavers found days or weeks later. This is pretty grim imagery, yes? Well the situation in Africa is dire and to say otherwise would be a disservice to everyone involved.

Yet, it really only seems Americans started talking about Ebola when a man, off a flight from Liberia, had been walking around the streets of Texas with the disease. We get it; it is hard to care about what is happening a sea away in a land known to suffer travesty after travesty. Many of us, despite the compassion we may feel for the immediate people in our lives, are numb to the suffering of people in a strange and distant lands. It would be easy to accuse everyone in America of being fickle and prone to listen to the palaver of talking heads rather than the actual experts. We may want to adjure all readers to care about the people in Africa simply because they are people suffering. This method, however, has proven ineffective in the past. So, let's try the more utilitarian approach. By worrying about Ebola cases in this country, we are treating the symptoms instead of the disease. We are certainly not sending a meager amount of aid to Africa, but the public conscious is not exactly concerned about Ebola abroad; it is concerned about it here. Honestly, we could continue on this path and likely be fine.

In all likelihood, we would continue to get a few cases of Ebola every once and awhile, as long as the outbreak tore up Africa, but a true epidemic here would be unlikely. But, for many Americans, allowing any amount of Ebola into this country is a non-starter. A recent poll conducted by the Pew Research Center showed that 32 percent of Americans are either somewhat or very worried about Ebola infecting them or someone they know. Considering the frequency of Ebola stories and Ebola talk on the Internet, this is pleasantly low, but it still expresses a growing fear for many Americans.

This concern has been expressed through talk of shutting off all air travel from the Western African countries to the U.S. This is an attractive idea, we admit, and it would probably slow the flow of the several Ebola threats that have trickled into the country, but it is just one more method of curing a symptom. Let's pretend we did cut off all air travel from ground zero. If the disease is not stopped at ground zero, it will continue to creep across the rest of the world. Other countries would have cases of Ebola, even in the first world, and other third world countries would fall to similar epidemics. We would have to cut off more and more air traffic to our country, potentially even shutting off fellow modernized nations. In addition, we would greatly discourage aid workers to travel across the sea and assist. These countries rely on this assistance, and the problem would worsen the less health care workers that the countries have. This is certain.

Even if every country in the world stopped the flow of traffic to West Africa, letting the disease disseminate unchecked in a secluded area and letting victims die in a pressure cooker, the people of West Africa would eventually fight back. Civilians would attempt to flee in droves, some carrying the disease with them. Besides being exceptionally cruel, this is not a working model.

For now, if we really want to stop Ebola in its tracks, we must, barring an actual cure or vaccine, find its roots and pull it out. Ebola is mostly contained within these few West African countries, and this is the perfect time to stop the disease. Yes, the U.S. Government is involved in the crisis; we have not left the people there to their fate, but the quickest way to get bureaucracy and legislatures to act more confidently, especially in foreign affairs, is to direct it with a healthy heaping of public outcry. If we, the media, want to constantly talk about Ebola and stir up panic, let's at least direct it to a useful place. Even if America was never to suffer a large sum of Ebola infections and Africa sorts itself out independently, would it really be so terrible to expedite that process, and, in the process, save a few thousand lives? After all a solution is "better three hours too soon than a minute too late."



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President Barack Obama: America Will Continue to Lead in Uncertain World

BARACK OBAMA

Special to McClatchy (MCT)

American leadership is the one constant in an uncertain world. As Americans, we see the future not as something beyond our control, but as something we can shape for the better through concerted and collective effort. That was true this week, as we mobilized the world to confront some of our most urgent challenges.

America is leading the world in the fight to degrade and ultimately destroy the terrorist group known as the Islamic State. This group has terrorized all who they come across in Iraq and Syria. In the most horrific crimes imaginable, innocent human beings have been beheaded, with videos of the atrocity distributed to shock the conscience of the world. There can be no reason, no negotiation, with this brand of evil. The only language understood by killers like this is the language of force.

In this effort, we do not act alone. Nor do we intend to send American troops to occupy foreign lands. Instead, we will support Iraqis and Syrians fighting to reclaim their communities. We will use our military might in a campaign of airstrikes to roll back the Islamic State, and we will be joined by friends and partners, including Arab nations. We will train and equip forces fighting against these terrorists on the ground. We will work to cut off their financing, and to stop the flow of fighters into and out of the region. Already, over 40 nations have offered to join the coalition against the Islamic State, and at the United Nations in New York, I worked to build more support for this coalition.

In my annual address to the U.N., I also challenged the world — especially Muslim communities — to explicitly, forcefully and consistently reject the ideology of al-Qaida and the Islamic State. No children, anywhere, should be educated to hate other people. We must cut off the funding that fuels violent hatred, and contest the space that terrorists occupy, including the Internet and social media. At the same time, countries must do more to offer an alternative vision, and to tap the extraordinary potential of their young people.

American leadership is not confined to the fight against the Islamic State. We are leading the effort to rally the world against Russian aggression in Ukraine. Along with our allies, we will support the people of Ukraine as they develop their democracy and economy. We will reinforce our NATO allies, and uphold our commitment to collective defense. We will impose a cost on Russia for aggression, and counter falsehoods with the truth. And this week, I called upon even more nations to join us on the right side of history.

America is leading the fight to contain and combat the Ebola epidemic in West Africa. We're deploying our doctors and scientists — supported by our military — to help fight the outbreak and pursue new treatments. From the United Kingdom and Germany to Senegal and France, other nations are stepping up their efforts, too, by sending money, supplies and personnel. But we need an even broader effort to stop a disease that could kill hundreds of thousands, inflict horrific suffering, destabilize economies, and ultimately spread across borders. That's why we will continue to rally other countries to join us in making concrete commitments to fight this disease, and enhance global health security for the long term.

America is engaging more allies and partners to confront the growing threat of climate change before it's too late. At home, we've taken historic steps to invest in clean energy, cut carbon pollution, and create new jobs in the process. Abroad, our climate assistance now reaches more than 120 nations. But we can only succeed in combating climate change if we are joined in this effort by every major power. So on Tuesday, I called on every nation — developed and developing alike — to join us in this effort for the sake of future generations.

America will do what it takes to meet the tests of this moment. Because despite all the challenges of this new century, there is no nation on Earth better positioned to seize the future than ours. The people of the world still look to us to lead. And we welcome that responsibility. We are heirs to a proud legacy of freedom, and as we showed the world this week, we are prepared to do what is necessary to secure that legacy for generations to come.

Egler Making YSU History

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Senior volleyball player Lexi Egler became the fifth player in Youngstown State University history to record 1,000 kills and 1,000 digs earlier this month in a match against Valparaiso University.

Head coach Mark Hardaway believes that Egler's greatest strength is her complete all-around athletic ability.

"In basketball, they call them ballers, just kids that know how to play the game. Lexi's one of those players — she knows how to play the game," Hardaway said.

Getting her 1,000th kill and 1,000th dig was a goal that Egler had set coming into the season.

"I had no idea that there was only four girls that have actually gotten it in the past. It's just such an honor and a great accomplishment," Egler said. "Coming in, being a little freshman, I never thought I would be in the spot that I'm in right now."

Egler currently ranks 10th all-time in kills with 1,011 and 14th in digs with 1,010. Assistant coach Sarah Smith thinks it is Egler's work ethic that separates her from the average player.

"She's always the first one in, the last one out. Looking to improve herself and she really leads by example," Smith said.

According to Smith, Egler's work ethic has allowed her to improve and add new



Senior Lexi Egler receives game ball after becoming the fifth Penguin to join the 1,000/1,000 club on Oct. 3 against Valparaiso.

dimensions to her game.

"She's added some more tools to her repertoire," Smith said. "Her shot variety has increased a lot and that's what is making her a tough opponent to scout, and that's also helping her get those kills every single match."

Hardaway also believes that Egler's work ethic has allowed for her to improve to the point where she is at now.

When Hardaway first arrived on campus, his early impressions of Egler left him wondering if she was too small to play the front line, but through hard work she has developed into a great overall player.

"When I first got here, I was really concerned about Lexi being big enough to play front row," Hardaway said. "She's just a really, really well-rounded player for us, and you have to have those.

The kids who play six rotations and that understand how the games played."

Egler is on pace this year to record over 300 kills and digs this season, and if she is able to do so, she will become the fourth player in YSU history to do so in multiple seasons. Smith won't be surprised if Egler reaches 300 kills.

"If Lexi puts her mind to something, it's very hard to get in the way," Smith said.

Egler has 222 kills and 205 digs so far this season, and is averaging career highs in both categories with 3.17 kills and 2.93 digs per game.

"If you look at overall players, I think she's got to be in that top group," Hardaway said. "When you just look at what she does as an all-around player, I think she has to be in that group."

Open Competition

Nine newcomers litter YSU men's basketball roster

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For an indication of how the first week of practice has gone so far for the Youngstown State University men's basketball team, just consider this: senior point guard D.J. Cole needed stitches above his right eye following the opening session on Oct. 6.

"It's been very competitive practices — every single day," Jerry Slocum, Penguins head coach, said during Monday's media day.

After losing six players from last year's team (15-17) — including three starters — and bringing in nine newcomers, Slocum said there are plenty of available minutes waiting to be distributed.

And you better believe the players realize this.

"Everybody in practice is competing," Jalon Plummer, sophomore guard, said. "Everybody's trying to play and get minutes. We're all going hard."

Bobby Hain, returning starting center, sees it too.

"It's way more competitive than it was last year," Hain said. "There are so many people that want to play. So everyday you bring it — it's all or nothing."

The Penguins will enter the 2014-2015 season — which begins at home on

Nov. 15 against Kent State University — having to replace last season's top three scorers.

They lost Kendrick Perry, a senior guard, (21.3 points per game) and Kamren Belin, a senior power forward, (11.3 ppg) to graduation, while Ryan Weber, a junior guard, (12.2 ppg) transferred to Ball State.

Returners to potentially fill those spots are Marcus Keene and Plummer, sophomore guards, as well as Shawn Amiker, a senior guard.

Newcomers competing for playing time include Shaun Stewart, a junior guard, Cameron Morse, a freshman guard, Osandai Vaughn and Tyler Warford, sophomore guards, and Bryce Nickels and Sidney Umude, freshman forwards.

"It's been one of the most interesting early falls that I've had because there's clearly questions," Slocum said. "But the thing that I like about it is that there are clearly answers."

As Slocum tries to find those answers, the first week of camp has been mainly about learning the system. And considering the extent of turnover from last spring to this fall, that may be the case for a while.

"Everybody's getting together and learning as a team — learning the offense and everything," Hain said.

"That's the biggest thing that we've had trouble with so far. But now that time has gone on, it's getting better. We're going to be alright."

Other dribbles from media day...

YSU returns three seniors: Cole, Amiker and Fletcher Larson. That trio, as well as Hain, has taken it upon themselves to replace the leadership of last season's captain, Perry.

"All three of us are going to have to step up and fill KP's role," Hain said. "But any of us can do it. It's not just focused on one guy."

With so many young guys, YSU made it a point to hit the weight room hard in the offseason.

"We have a lot of small guards — I'm probably the biggest wing on our team," the 6-foot-5 Plummer said. "Everybody is trying to get stronger and we're going to need a lot of that — a lot of strong guards that can play on the wing."

Quite simply, Slocum sounds excited about his rejuvenated roster.

"We have better size than we have in the past and I think we're a little more athletic," he said. "It's a nice mingle of upperclassmen with some very talented new players that should be exciting to watch play and exciting for me to coach."

Three Points with DJ Cole



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D.J. Cole, one of three seniors on the YSU men's basketball team, returns for his third consecutive season as the Penguins starting point guard. The 5-foot-11, 180-pounder from Olathe, Kansas took time to discuss the team during Monday's media day.

Q How has your role on the team been elevated from last season to this season?

A Cole: "The big thing about this team is that we need a voice. For us older guys, we've seen guys go through here like Ashen Ward and Kendrick Perry. I've learned a lot from them, and I'm just trying to instill what they taught me and try to do other things that I've learned and push everybody to get better."

Q How have the nine newcomers fit in so far?

A Cole: "They're adjusting really well. They come to me with questions, and I'll open up to them — they're open and we're a real open as a team. Shawn [Amiker], Bobby [Hain] and Fletcher [Larson] have done the same thing. We've talked about this since the summer how we have to get everybody to be all in and on the same page."

Q What is going to be the biggest challenge for the team as training camp continues?

A Cole: "The biggest thing is going to be our defensive schemes. We're going to be a good offensive team for sure, but if we lock in on defense and get our key assignments and know where guys are supposed to be and all that, we should be able to be a great team."