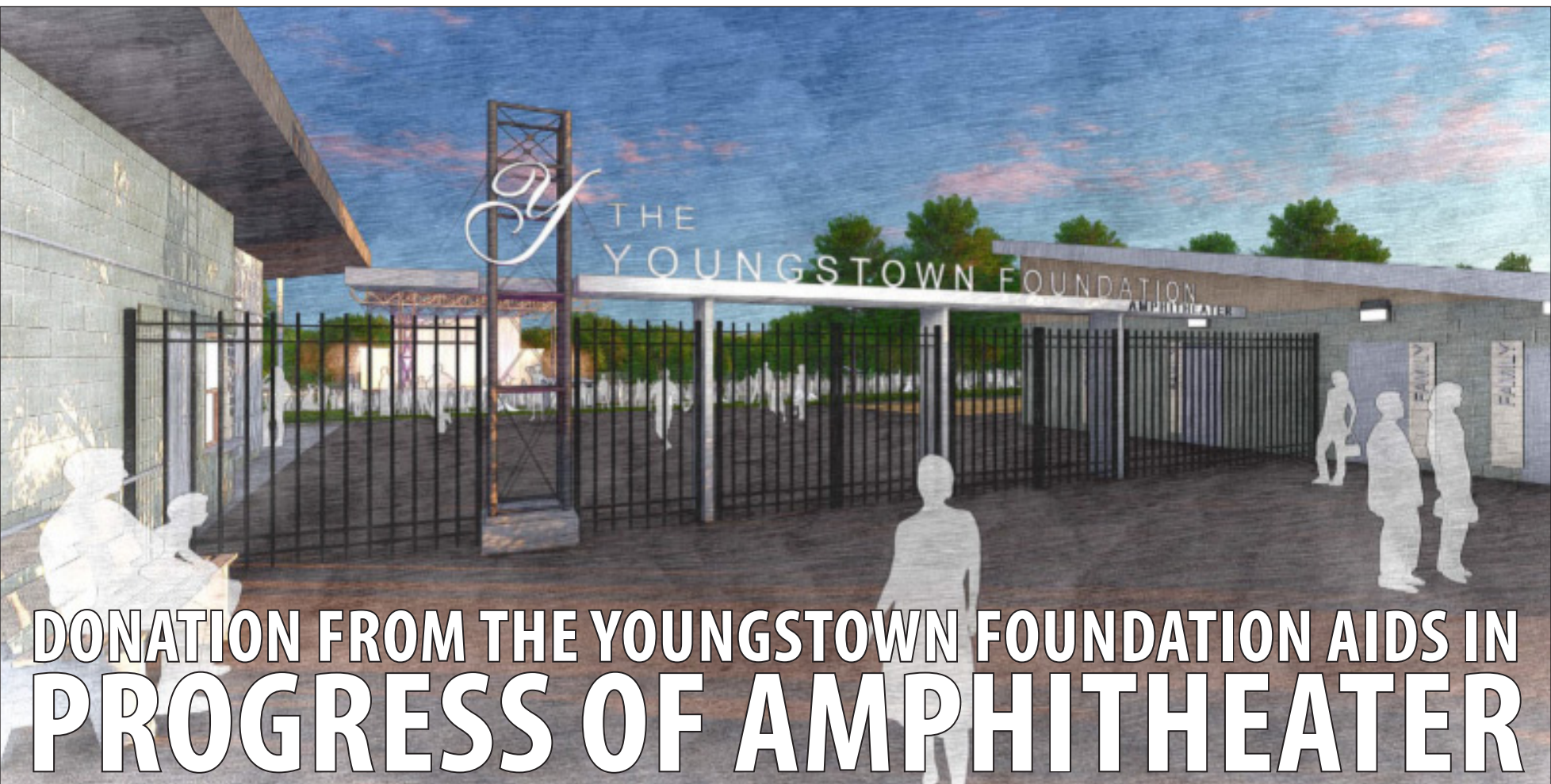


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THE STUDENT VOICE OF YOUNGSTOWN STATE UNIVERSITY SINCE 1931  
THURSDAY 12 • 7 • 2017



# DONATION FROM THE YOUNGSTOWN FOUNDATION AIDS IN PROGRESS OF AMPHITHEATER

Photo courtesy of **ADRIENNE SABO**

## **MORGAN PETRONELLI**

The atmosphere of downtown Youngstown is hushed in the evenings, but that is set to change. The city will be hearing tunes from the new amphitheater sooner than expected.

With the Youngstown Foundation's 100th birthday in 2018 quickly approaching, the foundation has gifted the City of Youngstown \$3 million to aid in the production of the amphitheater, which is set to break ground in spring 2018.

The project is planned to be located in a new riverfront park that will stretch from the Covelli Centre to the Mahoning Avenue bridge.

Along with helping out in the production of the amphitheater, the Youngstown Foundation also has the naming rights to the new event center for the next 20 years,

which will be named the Youngstown Foundation Amphitheater.

In a press release from the Covelli Centre and JAC Management, Jan Strasfeld, executive director of the Youngstown Foundation said, "We are thrilled to play a part in a project that will transform the future landscape of downtown Youngstown and the quality of life for many years to come."

Strasfeld said the Foundation could not think of a better way to start their 100th year than with a donation to the City of Youngstown.

The amphitheater is planned to be set up as a typical outdoor event facility with lawn seating, hard seating located in front of the stage and a VIP section. The facility will also feature multiple concession stands and a cutting-edge stage with a new lighting/sound system.

According to a press release, John McNally, mayor of Youngstown said the City of Youngstown is grateful for the Youngstown Foundation because the venue is becoming a reality.

"Through this generous gift, we'll be able to bring to life this vision of creating an even more vibrant downtown Youngstown in a new outdoor facility that embraces the arts, culture and the community," McNally said.

Eric Ryan, chief executive officer of JAC Management Group, said he is proud to have the Youngstown Foundation as a partner in the amphitheater project and their work has positively affected the community.

"My team has been working on this project for the better part of five years and to see what was once a dream become a reality is truly indescribable," Ryan said.

This project will not only affect people from all over the Youngstown area, but also the residents of downtown. One resident spoke of his thoughts on the addition of the amphitheater

"I'm definitely excited to see an amphitheater come to downtown and I'd love to go some concerts there, it would probably be so much fun," said Dimitri Callow, a student at Youngstown State University and downtown Youngstown resident.

Callow said with all of the development currently going on within the city, he would be interested in seeing the addition of more establishments to eat at after concerts like Buffalo Wild Wings.

The grand opening for the amphitheater is set for spring 2019. For more information on the Youngstown Foundation and their contributions to the community, visit [www.youngstownfoundation.org](http://www.youngstownfoundation.org).



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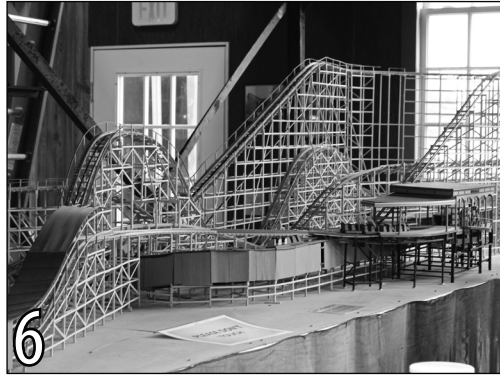


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# FEATURES



## INSIDE THIS ISSUE

### NEWS

- 3 | Rescue Mission
- 4 | Damaged Decks/Graduation Rates
- 5 | Psychic Medium/Late Night Studying
- 6 | Idora Park

### A&E ARTS AND ENTERTAINMENT

- 7 | YSU Smoking Policy/Holiday Traditions
- 8 | Gingerbread Houses
- 9 | Cultural Christmas/Spam Bots in PS4

### OPINION

- 12 | Jambar Editorial/Mario's Movies
- 13 | Jambar Crossword Puzzle

### SPORTS

- 14 | YSU Women's Basketball
- 15 | Pressbox Perspective/
- 16 | YSU Men's

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Photo by MELISSA TUROSIK/THE JAMBAR

# RESCUE MISSION RAISING FUNDS FOR NEW BUILDING

MELISSA TUROSIK

The Rescue Mission of Mahoning Valley has occupied the same building on Martin Luther King Boulevard since the early 1970s as a homeless shelter for those in need.

John Muckridge, president of The Rescue Mission, said they want to construct a new building for the rescue mission.

“This building was built in 1930; it’s literally falling apart. We have bricks falling off the building and we have drains, showers and our sinks in our bathrooms that are busted inside the walls,” Muckridge said.

Muckridge said they cannot break into the walls due to asbestos.

“We have these pipes wrapped with asbestos, so once you break into the wall to begin all this construction asbestos starts floating through the air,” Muckridge said.

The Rescue Mission is working toward a \$4.25 million project for their new building.

“That will give us a 30,000-square foot facility which is about 3,000 square foot more than what this building

is,” Muckridge said.

Muckridge said they will increase the number of beds in their new facility.

“It will give us a chance to have more beds for women and children who are often on a waiting list,” he said. “Plus, we would increase the storage component too, so we could store clothing for those who are staying with us.”

He said they have \$1.5 million in pledges towards their new building.

He said he is confident they’ll raise the remaining million dollars to go toward the new building.

The new building is set to be built on the Southside of Youngstown near the old Southside High School and will be sitting on the parking lot behind the school and field. The location is on the corner of Erie and East Delason Avenue.

Muckridge said they’re planning to break ground and start construction in spring or summer of 2018.

He said the new building will be significantly different from the old building because the old building wasn’t designed to be a homeless shelter.

“This used to be the African-American Young Men’s Christian Association. There was a swimming pool here and a gymnasium we use now as the men’s dorms,” Muckridge said. “Just the flow of our operations will be more efficient with the building that was designed specifically for what we do, so that will increase.”

He said the new building will also contain more rooms. “We would have a chapel hall, some space for resources like Bibles,” Muckridge said.

Lynn Wyant, director of Development at the Rescue Mission, said they provide a lot for the homeless.

“We provide food, overnight shelter, safety and resources to anyone in need in the community,” Wyant said.

Lisa Armeni, a volunteer, said she has gained a lot from working with them.

“I have learned a lot from working with the homeless. Most people misunderstand them and have stereotypes to them living on the streets, but for some this was not by choice, but by circumstances that led them to being homeless,” Armeni said.

# DAMAGED DECKS AND PARKING MAYHEM

JAMBAR CONTRIBUTOR  
COURTNEY HIBLER

Students at Youngstown State University have a variety of opinions when it comes to parking on campus and the structures they park in.

During the 2016 spring semester at YSU, the M-60 Deck, located on Fifth Ave. and Arlington St., showed signs of major damage.

A large slab of concrete broke off from the deck's ceiling and landed on a student's car, causing the back window to shatter and the trunk to be smashed.

Krista Neff, an early childhood education student at YSU, was the student whose vehicle was damaged.

Neff said the debris caused multiple scratches on the surface of her car and YSU didn't claim responsibility for the accident.

"They said I had to claim it on my personal insurance and they were not responsible," Neff said. "I never even got a call from any YSU representative to even apologize or check in on the situation."

Kristen Richter, a music education student at YSU, said parking decks should be inspected more often.

"If a slab of concrete fell onto someone's car, then it's not hard to imagine what other horrible accidents could happen," Richter said. "It's a really terrifying idea."

The M-60 Deck isn't the only deck that has shown damage. Students parking in the M-30 Deck, located on Wick Ave., have noticed small chunks of the ceiling falling to the ground.

"Someone should do an inspection of the Wick Deck," Zoey Christy, YSU education student, said. "I think that if they just remodeled the decks everything would be just fine."

Richter said the Wick Deck seems safe to her, but M-60 has caused damage to her own vehicle.

"I have hit curbs or scraped walls trying to get around in there and I know other people have too," Richter said. "The layout doesn't seem very functional at all."

Bobbie Reinhart, an early childhood and art education student at YSU, said the M-60 deck needs to be closed and reconstructed.

"I drive a Saturn VUE and I'm always worrying about

having enough room to maneuver throughout the deck," Reinhart said. "It's truly a pain and it needs to be updated."

Other complaints include M-60 having too many sharp turns, inclines and not enough parking spaces.

Alexandra Watkins, a YSU nursing student, said she has never had problems involving the decks, but parking can be an issue.

"It's hard to find parking later in the day," Watkins said. "The Fifth Avenue deck is more convenient for students, but it's very small."

Jacob Turner, a mechanical engineering student at YSU, has a more positive outlook on the parking decks.

"I'm sure these structures were designed by a professional engineer with factored safety loads to ensure the buildings will withstand what's required of them," Turner said.

The damage Neff's car received gave her a different opinion on the overall situation.

"I feel as a student that pays full tuition every semester, the university could have handled this situation better," Neff said.

## YSU CONTINUES TO STRUGGLE WITH BLACK STUDENT GRADUATION RATES

MORGAN PETRONELLI

With Youngstown State University students entering the homestretch of finals week, many are anticipating a break from the stress. Some students will be returning this spring to continue their educations, while others will grace the stage and accept their diploma on Dec. 17.

But for some students, especially minorities, the dream of graduation is far from their reach. Last year YSU graduated its biggest class of students since the '80s, but the university has a nine percent African American student graduation rate according to the 2010 six-year cohort.

Data was collected between similar colleges to YSU that fall under the category of four-year public and private universities in Ohio that have an overall enrollment of 10,000-19,000 students.

Seven universities fall under this category and include: YSU, Case Western Reserve University, Miami University, Cleveland State University, Bowling Green State University, Dayton University and Wright State University.

Of the similar universities examined, YSU has the lowest African-American graduation rate at nine percent and the

overall graduation rate at 33 percent.

The university with the highest African-American graduation rate is Miami University with 72 percent. The highest overall graduation rate belongs to Case Western University with 82 percent.

In terms of gap percentages, which is the difference between the overall graduation rate and that of the selected minority group, Cleveland State ranks number one with a 24 percent gap.

An important factor to note is that out of the universities examined, YSU has the second highest African-American enrollment with 12 percent of the fall 2015 full-time undergraduate enrollment for the entire university. YSU was also the least costly school to attend with \$8,317 in tuition during the 2016-17 school year.

Martin Abraham, provost and vice president of Academic Affairs at YSU, said he is not sure as to why the African-American graduation rates are so low, but said the university is actively trying to improve these numbers.

Recently, YSU launched the "We See Tomorrow Campaign" to raise \$100 million to be used to improve the university in a multitude of ways.

"Some of the funds generated through the campaign will be used to support

initiatives to address the low graduation rates. For example, the Navarro Fellows program puts some underrepresented students in employment opportunities working directly with some of our senior leadership," Abraham said.

Hillary Fuhrman, director of assessment at YSU, said that diversity is a problem they encountered when they surveyed students in 2016.

"First-year students responded at lower levels than our peer institutions on a scale called 'Discussions with Diverse Others' and seniors score lower than our peers on several questions in the scale 'Reflective and Integrative Learning.' That scale focuses on including diverse perspectives in course discussions/assignments," Fuhrman said.

From Greek Life to the Office of Student Diversity, African-American students have expressed their frustrations with administration's effort to increasing the black graduation rates and encouraging minority student success.

Iyonna Taylor-Smith, a YSU student, has researched the university's low African-American graduation/retention rates in the past, and expressed her frustration as a member of the black community with the school's effort to graduate minority

students.

Taylor-Smith revealed her disappointment as a member of the black community with the school's effort to graduate minority students.

"I personally don't think that Youngstown State is putting in enough effort to keep minority students here. Their bigger focus is on sports recruitment and getting international students on campus," Taylor-Smith said.

"For instance, when we [African minorities] go to people who can implement rules or get us to where we need to be, we often find ourselves not responded to, or they downplay the issue. This isn't new and I don't think that it will get better soon unless someone comes in and genuinely cares enough to make a change," Taylor-Smith said.

Despite this, administration is still hopeful that these numbers will improve, but not right away.

Abraham said that the university has been working on the matter for the past few years, but the efforts they are making now will not show up in the six-year graduation rate until 2023 for later.

"I know those numbers are beginning to move in the right direction," Abraham said.



# PSYCHIC MEDIUM ON CAMPUS

RACHEL GOBEP

A Youngstown State University psychology major discovered she was a psychic medium about three years ago, but has recently come out of the spiritual closet.

Brooke Mowery, a freshman, said a mediumship is when an individual has the ability to mediate communication between the living and the dead.

She said she wanted a community of people who believed what she believed in and was able to find this at the Church of the Angels in Chesterland, Ohio.

“The word ‘spiritualism’ popped up in my head, but it made it feel like it was a thing. I googled spiritualism and it turns out it is a religion,” Mowery said.

Mowery said she began her journey with becoming a medium four years ago and did her first reading three years ago. She began an 18- to 20-week mediumship class in church at the end of the spring to help strengthen her abilities.

The Church of the Angels is a Spiritualist church and is non-denominational.

Mowery said Spiritualism is a religion based on the belief of communication with spirits.

She said during her first service at the church, a medium did a reading for her.

“I wanted to hear from my grandma, but my grandpa kept coming through. This guy described my grandfather and I was like, ‘I don’t know this guy, he’s a complete stranger. How does he know this?’” she said.

Mowery said being able to give people readings is empowering, uplifting and sad because she learns so much about a person.

“There have been times in readings where I will just bawl my eyes out because of what it is that that person is going through,” she said. “You really have to learn to shut it off, or else you will be constantly overwhelmed.”

Mowery said a lot of times there is a sense of shock after she reads someone, but other times people have gratitude because they are hearing a message. Additionally, she said there are tears and



Photo courtesy of BROOKE MOWERY

laughter during readings.

She said it was at that moment everything felt like it was falling into place.

Mowery said psychology had intrigued her because she likes being personal and connecting with others.

“If I’m going to help people on a spiritual level, I also want to know how to be able to help them on a personal level with how their human mind, thoughts and emotions deals with spirituality,” she said.

Mowery said she knows she wants to be a psychologist because psychologists and counselors heal.

“To me, it was more mindful to be a little bit more rounded with being able to actually help guide them,” she said.

Mowery said she found her spiritualism through the practice of yoga after she had her son.

She said she opens a reading with a prayer of protection because she was taught through her church.

“We are taught to have a sense of values when giving readings and it’s not a type of entertainment or showmanship,” she said.

Mowery said there are sometimes long pauses during a reading because she must pick up the message a spirit is sending. She said a reading lasts 45 minutes to an hour.

She said she then will do spiritual healing, where she will wave her hands over someone, if the reading is in person.

Mowery said she knew she was going to have to deal with critics going into this, but there will always be because some people have been disingenuous with their psychic medium abilities.

Sara Canacci, a YSU graduate, said she knew Mowery from high school, but had no idea that she was a psychic medium.

Canacci said she was hoping that Mowery would help her communicate with her mother who died 17 years ago.

“She told me some things about [my mother] that I knew Brooke didn’t know, and she also communicated with a boyfriend of mine who had passed away,” she said. “It was a very cleansing experience

# THE GROWING DEMAND FOR LATE NIGHT STUDYING

NAMI NAGAOKA

It’s nothing new for college students to work part-time jobs to help pay for tuition and instructional fees. Many of these jobs require students to work during normal business hours. With many of Youngstown State University’s facilities operating during these normal business hours, there is a growing demand among students for places on campus accommodating late night studying.

Robert Hayes, a senior majoring in business administration, said he had difficulties with some of his group projects last semester. He said it was a struggle to coordinate times and places to meet, and to prepare for presentations.

“I wish Maag Library was open for 24 hours,” Hayes said.

Hayes and four of his teammates had to go to Denny’s on Belmont Ave. to complete some projects since they had incompatible time schedules. Although the location is open for 24 hours, he said it is loud and without strong Wi-Fi, making it an ideal space for schoolwork.

Sara O’Kane, a civil engineering major, said she uses the Maag Library almost every day. She sometimes has to stay in the engineering department to use required computer programs that are unavailable in the library.

“We are always afraid of studying in a building where we are going to get kicked out,” O’Kane said.

Last fall, her schedule was cluttered with work and classes from 9 a.m. to 8 p.m. She said she was able to find two hours after work to study at the library

until it closed. With this schedule, she found the hours of business for Maag appealing and fitting to her schedule.

“I think it’s a good idea, but I don’t know how feasible it is for the university right now,” O’Kane said.

According to the survey of over 100 YSU students, about 45 percent of respondents want a 24-hour library. About 33 percent said they would be fine with hours extended to midnight. About 13 percent said they want Maag Library open until 2 a.m. and less than 10 percent did not want the times to change.

Although this is a demand for some students, there are others who are dozing off in the computer lab and quiet floors.

Christopher Drake, an associate professor of psychiatry and behavioral neurosciences at Wayne State University in Detroit, observed that 70.6 percent of students reported less than their prescribed eight hours of sleep per night, and would describe themselves as sleep deprived.

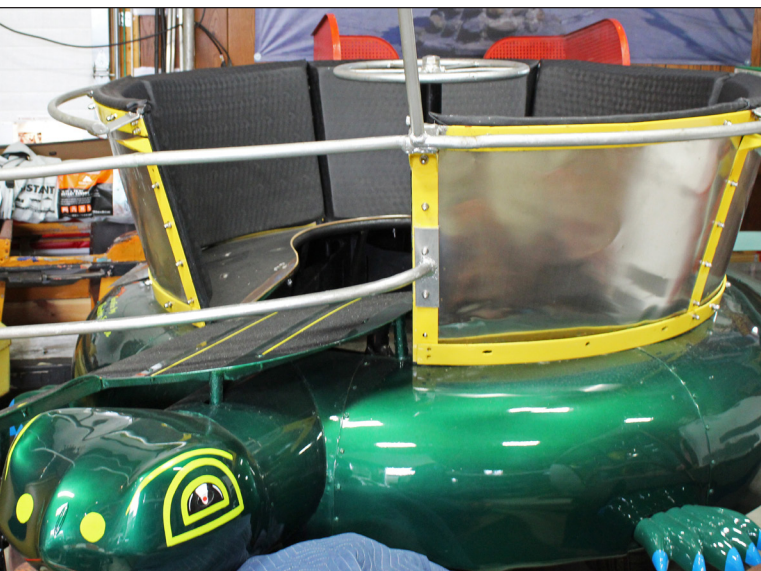
Additionally, a 24-hour library would need some workers during the night shift. Ana Torres, Interim Director of Maag Library, said it would be difficult to coordinate employees to accommodate the schedule.

“We do not have a budget for personnel,” Torres said. “We do care and we do understand, but we can’t do it right now.”

Maag Library has extended hours during finals week from Saturday through Wednesday. The library will be open Saturday from 9 a.m. to 9 p.m., Sunday from 12 p.m. to midnight and Monday through Wednesday from 7:30 a.m. to midnight.



# THE MILLION DOLLAR PLAYGROUND



## DAVID FORD

Idora Park opened to the public in Youngstown on May 30, 1899, becoming a historic part of the community.

The popularity of amusement parks increased dramatically six years before Idora Park's grand opening following the 1893 World's Fair in Chicago.

In response to newfound interest, the Youngstown Park and Falls Street Railway Company decided to build an amusement park on the city's south side. The result was a major success.

Rick Shale, the author of "The History of Idora Park," in an article posted on the Mahoning Valley Historical Society's webpage, detailed a brief history of the park's massive success.

According to Shale, the park's

immediate success called for expansion. In 1902, Idora Park introduced its first roller coaster. As the park became increasingly popular, outsiders took note. Idora Park made its name on the national stage. He said music played a big part in that.

"Music of all types played a significant role in Idora Park's history, and the park's success was due in part to its policy of booking top attractions," Shale said.

In 1918, John Phillip Sousa performed at Idora, and would become the first of many renowned musicians and groups to perform. Other significant musical acts of the early days included Benny Goodman and Cab Calloway.

As music tastes shifted from big band to rock and roll, the park began to book new groups,

including The Eagles and The Monkees.

Despite the musical influence, it wasn't the only major draw.

In the article, Shale details the role athletics played as well.

During the 1920s, the Cleveland Indians and Pittsburgh Pirates played an exhibition game at the park. Other MLB teams, such as the Brooklyn Dodgers and Boston Red Sox, also participated in exhibition games.

"By 1920, Idora Park had the only fenced-in ball field in Youngstown, and the city's premier semi-pro team, the McElroys, used Idora as their home field," Shale said.

In July 1920, the legendary John McGraw brought his New York Giants to Idora. Though the New York lineup included five future members of baseball's Hall of Fame, the McElroys won

8-2 marking the first time a local team had ever defeated a major league club.

Additionally, Shale said Idora became a frequent stop for the Negro Leagues, as teams including the Homestead Grays and Kansas City Monarchs made occasional stops. Their stops proved to be a hit with Youngstown's African-American population.

Idora became well-known for its family-friendly atmosphere. Admissions were free and every park corner had entertainment options.

During the 1970s, Youngstown's economy weakened, but the park remained popular. However, the fire in 1984 changed everything.

Bill Lewis, photographer for The Vindicator, recalled covering the fire more than 30 years

ago.

"I worked for the Tribune Chronicle at the time, and we got a phone call one day and somebody said Idora Park was on fire," Lewis said. "I took a reporter and we drove down there, and it was one heck of a sight. The roller coaster caught on fire."

Lewis said he attended the park as a "youngster" during the 1950s and 1960s and was devastated by the park's end.

"It was sad to cover the fire and see it happen," Lewis said. "I had many fond memories. I know others did as well."

Despite the 1984 fire, the park remained open. The owners, however, announced 1984 would be its last season. Idora Park would close.



Photos by RACHEL GOBEP/THE JAMBAR



# THE SMOKING POLICY AT YSU

JAMBAR CONTRIBUTOR  
DANIEL GENARO

The smoking policy at Youngstown State University was initiated to limit smoking on campus to improve health conditions and concerns for the whole university, but the enforcement of the policy is not consistent.

According to the smoke and tobacco free environment policy, "All employees and students share in the responsibility for adhering to and enforcing this policy."

Smoking is allowed only in outdoor areas at least 50 feet away from the entrance, overhang, windows, vents, loading dock or other openings to a building or other structure, provided that smoke does not inadvertently enter the building.

Ron Cole, public information officer at YSU, said the policy is not meant to eliminate smoking from the campus altogether. Its purpose is to give smokers an area to use so others at the university are not inconvenienced by wafts of smoke floating through the air.

"While the policy does not completely prohibit smoking on campus, it significantly limits places where smoking is allowed," Cole said. "The policy is in line with state law and we believe it represents a practical, enforceable set of restrictions that help provide a healthier living and learning environment on campus for everyone."

Junior mechanical engineering major, Johnny Dejacimo, smokes on campus and said he has never seen the smoking policy enforced.

"I typically smoke anywhere," Dejacimo said. "They don't enforce it at all, so I've done it in front of the doors and I've done it in front of professors, but they don't care."

Freshman criminal justice major, Cross Scarpaci, said he vapes when he is on campus and sees others smoking as well, with no sign of honoring the smoking policy.

"Not too long ago, I saw a dude walking around with a cigarette in his hand," Scarpaci said. "The smoking policy is obviously not really enforced."

Tiffany Gaydosh, a sophomore biology major, said the university needs to do a better job enforcing the policy.

"Something I hate is when I'm walking behind some-

one and the smoke is trailing in my face," Gaydosh said. "If the policy was enforced, then me or the other students wouldn't have to deal with it."

Gaydosh said the change of weather makes smoking around campus worse as well.

"As it gets cold, the thick smoke lingers more and makes everyone cough, especially when those who smoke do so wherever they want," Gaydosh said.

Kenny Dubaj, a sophomore nursing major, said he does not mind smokers, but the smoke around campus is bothersome.

"I walk out of class and kids are already smoking right outside the door and it all blows in my face," Dubaj said. "I don't mind smokers, but I don't want to go through my whole school day with it blowing in my face and smelling like smoke."

Freshman Ryan Lee, a marketing major at YSU, said he sees many students smoking all around campus but primarily at Maag Library.

"I didn't even know there was a smoking policy," Lee said. "There must never be anyone enforcing it because everyone smokes on campus."

# HOLIDAY TRADITIONS CONNECT YSU

JAMBAR CONTRIBUTOR  
VICTORIA REMLEY

Family is the one thing both Youngstown State University student and faculty traditions include.

Carla Simonini, associate professor of Italian, said her favorite holiday tradition is during the week of Thanksgiving.

"I really, really, really loved my grandmothers, and they both have passed away. I ended up, not on purpose, being the one who prepares the dishes that were their special dishes," Simonini said. "When I take out the recipes, a couple of them are in my grandmother's handwriting, so when I pull it out and look at it I always get very nostalgic," Simonini said.

Stephen Gage, professor of music and director of band and orchestra, said his favorite holiday tradition is being with his extended family near the holidays. This tradition started during his childhood.

"I love being around my family, and people don't have to work during the holidays. There's something really beautiful about the holidays," Gage said.

Annalia Palumbo, part-time faculty in the department of physics and astron-

omy, said her favorite holiday tradition is having dinner on Christmas, Thanksgiving and Easter with her family.

"I am an only child so usually it was just my parents and I. Now they are deceased, so I spend it with some relatives," Palumbo said.

Palumbo's family participates in this tradition because she said the world has done it for years.

"There's no particular reason other than it's done in most societies in Western Europe and the United States," Palumbo said.

Sanzio Luna, a senior electrical engineering student from Italy, said his favorite holiday tradition happens on Christmas.

"My entire family gets together and we all spend Christmas lunch and dinner together," Luna said.

Luna said at the dinner, there is tortellini and soup with chicken and beef. After dinner, they play board games like Tom-bola.

Luna's said his parents started this tradition and his grandparents participate.

"I've always done it since I was a little kid. We usually do it the day after Christmas. That's when we all get together. All my relatives. My aunts, uncles and cous-

ins," Luna said.

Ahmed Awad, a senior electrical and computer engineering major, said his favorite holiday tradition is celebrating Eid. During Ramadan, people fast and afterwards they participate in Eid, a three-day celebration. During Eid, festivals, fairs and performances happen all over the Middle East.

"You'll find Eid in most Arab countries," Awad said.

There are two Eid holidays, Eid al-Fitr and Eid Al-Adha.

Eid Al-Adha is a four-day period. It starts with religious activities and a sacrifice. A slaughtered lamb is given to the poor.

Ramadan happens three weeks before the previous year's celebration. The celebration is based off the lunar calendar. Eid happens the day after Ramadan ends. Ramadan is four days and Eid al-Fitr is three days.

Awad and his family participate in this tradition because it is a popular Arab holiday.

"It's been transcended down throughout the generations. Egypt is mainly a Muslim country so that's where all the traditions and culture comes from," Awad said.

Nae Barnes, a freshman exercise science major, said her favorite holiday tradition is going to her grandmother's house.

"On Christmas Eve, I go to my grandmother's house and help her wrap gifts," Barnes said.

Her grandmother started this tradition, and Barnes and her sister participate to bring them all together.

"My parents are separated so I usually go spend the holidays with my grandmother on my dad's side. It became an every-year thing, so I can spend more time with that family," Barnes said.

Bobby Long, a sophomore combined sciences major, said his favorite holiday tradition happens on Christmas Day.

"Exchanging gifts at Christmas is my favorite tradition," Long said.

His grandparents started this tradition, and his immediate family participates.

Thomas Danley, a freshman engineering major, said his favorite holiday tradition is Christmas Eve.

"We go to my grandma's and have family dinner," Danley said.

His parents started this tradition to bring them together during the holidays, and his cousins participate.





Photos by JOHN STRAN

# NEXT BEST GINGERBREAD HOUSE COMPETITION

JOHN STRAN

The NEXT Best Art organization held a gingerbread house competition on Dec. 3 at the Tyler Mahoning Valley History Center. Ten houses were entered in the competition, each one being a little different than the other in terms of size and time spent creating the houses.

Bill O'rlly, a board member of NEXT Best Art, said making gingerbread houses can be as easy as one wants it to be.

"One person might be making a small, simple, traditional house and spend an afternoon on [it]," O'rlly said. "Another person might be using an actual building as a reference, and include lights, or mechanical details."

Categories were divided by age with a winner in child, adult and overall group

categories. The group winner emulated a log cabin and was larger than the other competitors.

O'rlly said the competition is a first for the organization and the main goal of the competition was to unite the community.

"It's about creating dialog between people where there may not have been before in an environment, and community where things have been certainly improving, but have been economically difficult for quite a while," O'rlly said.

Leann Rich, the external relations manager at the history center, said hosting the competition brings a nice addition to the Christmas marketplace aspect happening the day of, and though the competition resembles some of their other hosted events, it's their first time hosting a gingerbread house competition.

Executive Director of NEXT Best Art, Courtney Waskin, said she wanted to

hold the competition because she felt Youngstown deserved a reason to gather and celebrate the season. The organization is using the competition as a trial run for next year's event, which they have higher expectations for, and raising the entry fee cost with the intent of providing each baker with a gingerbread house kit.

Money raised will also be donated to struggling children and adults. NEXT Best Art organization became a 501(c)(3) in 2012, but can trace its beginnings as far back as 1980 when their art director, James Pernotto moved back to Youngstown from New York. Today, the organization contains seven board members and plans on expanding.

O'rlly said goals for the non-profit in the future entail promoting arts and entertainment events in the Valley and expanding the arts community.

"Plans include educational program-

ming, as well as development of a local artist in residence program and creation of a collaborative workspace with shared resources for artists, which is something that could have huge economic implications for the area," O'rlly said.

O'rlly believes helping artists and their sales can economically benefit Youngstown as a whole. He said artists and art communities, more often than not, drive and inform economic development and recovery, especially in recovering post-industrial areas like Youngstown.

"We feel that very often, especially here in the Valley; these resources are underutilized, and it's a missed opportunity for the entire city," O'rlly said.

To see NEXT Best Art's next event, check out their Facebook page or visit [www.nextbestart.com](http://www.nextbestart.com)



# THE ITALIAN, RUSSIAN AND SPANISH TRADITIONS OF CHRISTMAS

MARAH J. MORRISON

When it comes to celebrating Christmas, countries other than the United States have their own ways of acknowledging it. Although there are some similarities in celebrating Christmas between the U.S. and other parts of the world, the differences may be eye-opening.

Matthew Saborse, a part-time Italian instructor at Youngstown State University, said during this particular holiday, people get very creative with the decorations in the Naples, Italy region.

Saborse said some popular desserts Italians eat during Christmas include panettone, which is a sweet type of Italian bread, and torrone, a confection made of honey, sugar and egg whites with toasted almonds or other nuts shaped into a cake.

"On Christmas Eve, they have the Feast of the Seven Fishes," Saborse said. "Family and friends all get together."

Carla Simonini, associate professor of Italian at YSU, said there are regional variations when it comes to celebrating Christmas in Italy. She said many of the Italian-Americans in the U.S. are from southern regions of Italy, and a lot of what has come over into our country are Italian-American traditions.

"It used to be that Christmas Day itself was more of re-

ligious holiday," Simonini said. "Things like Santa Claus and Christmas trees are there in Italy right now, but they aren't part of traditional Italian society."

Simonini said back in the day, the most important day when kids got gifts was Epiphany on Jan. 6. She said this was the day the Three Kings arrived and brought gifts to the baby Jesus.

"The legend behind that is that they passed by a woman, or a witch, called La Befana," Simonini said. "She was busy sweeping, and she missed out on her opportunity to bring gifts to the baby Jesus, so she spent the rest of her days traveling around giving gifts to children."

Simonini said La Befana is still a big part of Italian culture during Christmas, and presents would include fruit, candy and other small things. She said in Italy, people put out stockings for La Befana, similar to what people do in the U.S. for Santa Claus.

Alena Kirova, an assistant professor in foreign languages at YSU, from Siberia, Russia. She said when she was born Russia was still the Soviet Union, so her country was atheist and didn't celebrate Christmas very much.

"Russians celebrate Christmas according to the Julian calendar, which means that we celebrate it on the sixth of January," Kirova said. "The most important holiday for all of the Russian people, and even still, is the new year."

Kirova said the extent to which Russians celebrate the new year is the same to the extent on how people in the

U.S. celebrate Christmas. She said people give gifts, and get together with friends and family.

"As for the Christmas itself, religious people go to church on the sixth of January," Kirova said. "It's mostly a spiritual holiday rather than gifts, friends and family."

Assistant Professor of Spanish at YSU Gina Villamizar from Colombia. She said she still goes back home every year to celebrate Christmas with her family and friends.

Villamizar said in the area of Colombia, people start to celebrate Christmas from Dec. 16 to Dec. 24 with La Novena, which is nine days before the birth of baby Jesus. La Novena includes private or public prayers for nine successive days or weeks.

"People get together, neighbors, the whole community that lives near your area, and all of the children," Villamizar said. "That's for the community, but for family, we have a special dinner and a party."

Villamizar said in her family, their parties are loud, and her father dresses up as Santa, and gives presents to all of her family members. She said people also play music, which can sometimes be heard from neighbors as well.

"You hear the music, the laughter and everything," Villamizar said.

Villamizar said Christmas in Colombia is very family oriented, and is her favorite time of year. She said she could not imagine being away from her family during the holidays.

## SPAM BOTS INFEST PLAYSTATION 4 USERS' MESSAGES

NOAH JOHNSON

PlayStation 4 users have been targeted by a slew of automated chat bots, which link users to a cam show website. The infestation began this year, and users on message boards like NeoGAF.com reported they received messages in June.

As the responses grew, videogame news outlets like Destructoid.com even covered the story. Ryan Slavic, a Youngstown State University student living on campus, has had messages from these spam bots.

"I received my first message on Aug. 9 from a bot named valentuna22391\_f, who said they found my username from the profile search on PSN Messenger," Slavic said. "By subsequent messages, you could tell they were a bot."

While some automated chat programs have advanced algorithms to simulate conversation to fool users, the ones using the PlayStation Network are more primitive. It quickly becomes clear they primarily respond to the simple act of receiving a response rather than its content.

For Isaac Hraga, another YSU student, simply receiving a message from an unknown user is suspicious enough. He said

people don't usually message just to talk.

"I usually tend to ignore bots on PSN outright," Hraga said, "... and can spot them based on the general culture on PSN."

Most of these messages begin with some variant of greeting, "hi bb," or simply, "hey." After a user responds, they claim they found the recipient through the profile search before immediately questioning a user's age.

Unless a user explains they are under the age of 18, the bot will respond with their own information, such as the bot girlzy92.

"22/f... whats up?" said girlzy92. "Ahh, i just got done playin cod and i'm gonna start studying cuz i'm still in college right now. i just started back a lil over a month ago and i'm already lookin forward to thanksgiving break lol"

The messages generally follow the same format, though messages from June referenced the summer break instead of Thanksgiving like girlzy92's, which was sent in October. After feigned small talk about playing the latest "Call of Duty" video game, the bot will then get to their intended goal, soliciting users for a free trial on a cam show website.

The link sent by girlzy92 shows up as

shortcamlink.com/amyia, though this is simply a cover for facetimecammers.com, which itself finally redirects to realmemberflings.com. The realmemberflings website exhibits several unusual characteristics.

The appearance of the website will arbitrarily change between refreshes. The site is devoid of any form of documentation or contact information except for one of its three arbitrary permutations. This rare version of the front page does contain a privacy statement, and an email address, support@realmemberflings.com, which doesn't appear to exist.

Concerned users have brought the issue attention on Sony's help forums, and moderators recommend they block and report the bots. Any user can discern a bot by examining its account.

While they claim to be fans of the "Call of Duty" series, none of the bots will have any games shown in their play history or trophies on their account.

Andrae Reed, a professor teaching website development, said some further tips for users concerned about their security online include paying attention to the URL address. He said the site may look legit, but a lot of times the URL is a dead giveaway.

"A few weeks ago, I received an email saying my tech desk problem has been fixed, and to click a link to verify the work order," Reed said. "The URL did not even have ysu.edu anywhere to be found, and I suspected it was a man in the middle attack, where the site takes your login info by looking legit, and once you press submit, it takes you to the real site."

One can set up a free PSN account quickly, and the messaging service does not require premium PS+ membership. These fake accounts could be produced in multitudes with several taking the place of any one that gets banned after being reported.

PSN has had security issues in the past. Users with credit cards on their accounts can become victims when Sony's service is hacked. Reed has his own precautionary measures for such attacks.

"When I use PSN or XBOX Live, I use a prepaid credit card that only pulls money from my bank when I allow it to," said Reed. "I only keep enough money on the prepaid card for a purchase I am going to make."

Reed said the prepaid card route is more work, but it provides an extra layer of security.



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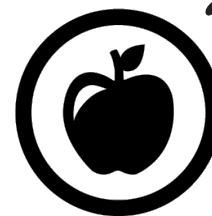
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Photo by RACHEL GOBEP

IDORA PARK  
PAGE 6

### The Idora Park Experience

In 1993, Jim Amey returned home from his military service. For Amey, Idora Park was an important part of his life. It's where he worked, met great people and developed friendships. It was a place where he recalls fond memories.

"The last time I had been to Idora Park was 1976 because I worked there," Amey said. "When I returned, I asked my wife, who is not from the area, to walk through Idora Park with me and I was pretty devastated by the destruction. It was very clear to me then that Idora Park wasn't coming back."

Amey said a lot of the park's buildings and rides still stood. There were several items he wanted to take, but couldn't.

"There were definitely some things I wanted to take, but they weren't mine obviously," Amey said. "I did manage to take a light switch from a game I used to run back when I worked there. I wrote Idora Park on the back of it and kept it for years."

The light switch collected by Amey would become the first of many Idora artifacts.

"Our career started to takeoff, and that's when I felt the need to gather anything I could find from Idora Park," Amey said. "I was really disappointed that no one had done this in the past."

On Labor Day, Sept. 3, 1984, the park officially closed itself to the public. In October, items were auctioned off. This was the end of Idora Park. That's where the Amey's came in.

"Idora Park was such an important part of our community, and it helped grow the community and give people jobs," Amey said. "Right in our neighborhood was an amusement park, and nobody was doing anything to honor the memory of it. By collecting as many items as we could, we were trying to rebuild Idora and bring memories back."

As their collection grew, they moved back to Ohio from the Washington D.C. area, and built a 4,400-square foot building to display their Idora Park artifacts. Their museum, located in Canfield, was named The Idora Park Experience. For Amey, the reviews have been nothing short of incredible.

"We've had some people coming in and crying over seeing everything," Amey said. "People who had not seen each other in over 65 years actually ran into each other there, and they were hugging and crying over memories of Idora Park. It gave me a feeling that we are doing something meaningful for the community."

Amey said the public's response has been incredible.

"When people come and tell us what they think, it really is an amazing feeling," Amey said.

Flashing back to the 1970s, Amey ran several games as an Idora Park employee. Idora Park always meant a lot to him, which is why restoring it has been an incredible journey for him and his wife.

"There's an incredible story behind everything we find," Amey said. "Years ago, the three Baby Wildcat rides, built in 1936, disappeared. Finally, I found them; a guy had them on top of an ice cream shop in West Virginia, and we had to rent a crane to get them down. It's crazy stories like that that make it a lot of fun."

Amey also recalled driving 2,300 miles to and from Florida to grab an Idora Park item. Two weeks after, Amey and his wife were notified of an item in Alabama, and drove to and from there as well. The entire journey for both was some of the most fun they had collecting these artifacts.

For Amey, the experience and journey has all been worth it. The Idora Park Experience allows people to journey into the past to relive some of their greatest memories. Thanks to Amey and his wife, all of this is possible.

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## MARIO'S MOVIES:

## "STAR TREK" VS. "STAR WARS"

MARIO RICCIARDI

In lieu of the holiday season, we approach the special day of the year when families grow closer, friendships become stronger and we receive a gift from an elusive someone. In a few weeks Kathleen Kennedy will be sending out Lucasfilm's annual "Star Wars" movie to theaters around the world.

Not to dampen the mood, but with any far-reaching fandom, there's bound to be a Scrooge. One who bah-humbugs his way through all the celebration. I haughtily reveal to you, I am that person. I have analyzed closely, and refuse to hop on the "Star Wars" hype train after the last two installments and ... with the latest "Star Trek" movies to watch instead.

A quick prelude (or prequel) to my position needs to note I feel the "Star Wars" films are a wonderful vehicle for the imagination, has true lasting power in its story of good versus evil and is a technological achievement in filmmaking. That being said, "Star Wars" is kind of a drag.

Starting with the pacing of the films. For everything

the "Star Wars" universe has to show, the first nine films spend an egregious amount of time standing around talking. With the exception of "The Empire Strikes Back," there's little revolutionary about the story. Sure, "Star Wars" can be engaging thanks to its ever-developing backstory, but is it really good enough to be on lists with "Taxi Driver" and "Apocalypse Now"?

The dialogue is relatively weak, and the character development frequently gets swapped out for empty drama. There are also a lot of blatantly bad decisions which made their ways into the finished films (Jar Jar Binks, Ewoks, the first two hours of "Episode I").

"The Force Awakens" and "Rogue One" had a chance to change the game, but instead, chose to play it safe. Writing female characters in lead roles was new, but the effort was quickly undermined. "The Force Awakens" can easily be described as a reimagining of "A New Hope," and "Rogue One" made the same mistake as "Phantom Menace" with a forgettable opening two hours.

If I'm going to watch a space epic meant to excite, that is both socially and ethically conscious, and takes fresh risks, I'll happily take the rebooted "Star Trek" films. Those movies know how to keep up the pace, explore deeper questions about society, and push filmmaking as

a whole, not just the special effects. Dare I use the words "boldly go?"

The new Trek films leave little room for mediocrity. From the huge special effects pieces to the minute camera movements, little to no effort is wasted without putting something thoughtful and exciting onto film. The casting is spot on with actors who emulate the original characters, but also bring with them a modern spunk. Not to mention the design work in the new "Star Trek" films inspire the same kind of creativity the original "Star Wars" films inspired.

Our modern "Star Trek" has ingenuity and heart – two things the new "Star Wars" films have not been able to conjure up much of due to what I suspect is studio micro-management. I think it is worth noting that J.J. Abrams directed both "Star Trek," "Star Trek: Into Darkness," and "The Force Awakens" and there is still a creative gap.

Even with not having watched the originals series, I thoroughly enjoy the new "Star Trek" movies and rightfully so. I understand the mass appeal of "Star Wars." I would never want to take that from anyone, but from an objective standpoint, I don't think it deserves the trigger praise it gets.

That's just me. For everyone else, have a Merry Dec. 15!

## COLUMN

NATHAN HRITZ

"New year, new me." We all say it, but how many of us really mean it? Since this is the last issue of the semester, I figured I would share my thoughts on the coming year.

The year 2017 has been a whirlwind and then some. With political tensions at an all-time high, I think it's about time to embrace the "new year, new me" mentality.

It's a clean slate, an opportunity to do something new, burn old bridges and build new ones. Set a goal, go to a new place, get outside more, make new friends or even get back in touch with someone you lost touch with. The possibilities are quite literally endless, all you need is willpower.

First and foremost, I aim to minimize my social media use to near-nothing. The way I see it, social media is just a black hole that eats up too much of the little time I have here on this earth to make my mark.

I'd much rather be out hunting, fishing or frankly anything that has the po-

tential to make my time worth spending. I would also like to venture out to Montana. I do not know what I'm looking for, but I have a feeling I'll find it out there.

If you were to sit down and ask me one-on-one about what I think it would really take to accomplish any new year's resolution, my answer would simply be gumption. The human condition is an odd one, but one thing I know to be true is when somebody really puts forth effort, miraculous things can happen.

It wasn't long ago Edmund P. Hillary was looking up at Mt. Everest, probably shaking in his boots at the challenge ahead. However, because he showed gumption, a substantial amount of courage, and maybe a little lunacy, he will forever go down in the history books as the first man to reach the summit of Mt. Everest – in 1953, no less.

What I'm getting at is if someone has the guts to climb Mt. Everest, I can suck it up enough to suffer through the small talk, and make a few more friends, ditch social media and even head west to Big Sky Country. That stands true to anybody and their goals. Get to getting.

A JAMBAR EDITORIAL  
TRUMP'S TRAVEL BAN

As of Monday, the Supreme Court has decided to allow President Trump's travel ban on residents from six different countries.

Residents from Chad, Iran, Libya, Somalia, Syria and Yemen will no longer be allowed to travel to the United States. This is not the final ruling, but it will be in effect while challenges against it continue.

It may be the case that many people feel this could be safer for Americans and that this policy is placed to protect the American people. But, is that really the case?

Apart from the mass shootings by American citizens, like the recent Vegas shooting, and all the recent sexual assault allegations

racing through Hollywood, it would be naive to think that banning citizens from these countries would take away threats to our citizens.

Furthermore, banning these countries implies that their residents are not to be trusted and it places a stigma on these people.

Every race, ethnicity, country, religion and background has good people and bad people. To determine one group of people is worse than another is unethical and insensitive, and there is a word for that.

The Trump administration created this ban in an effort to protect our country, however it is hard to come to terms with this.

It is no secret that President Trump has shown

judgment toward Muslims. The president even recently retweeted an anti-Muslim video. According to CNN, White House Press Secretary Sarah Sanders defended the retweet stating, "Whether it is a real video, the threat is real."

The Pew Research Center determined there are roughly 3.3 million Muslims living in the United States as of 2015. For our country's leader to make such a statement is offensive and targets a large population of our citizens.

In order for our country to become united we must learn to accept all cultures. America has always been known as a melting pot and should take pride on its diversity.







Sarah Cash (23) goes up and under Greta Burry (14) to get the bucket in the first half against the University of Akron on Dec. 5.

Photo by DAVE DERMER/YSUS SPORTS INFORMATION

## YSU WOMEN LOOKING TO BREAK LOSING STREAK

MARC WEEMS

The Youngstown State University women's basketball team (2-6) is currently on a four-game losing streak and searching for some answers.

"I really like our team's attitude. We've had a lot of energy and I thought we have lifted our spirits with our sense of urgency," YSU Head Coach John Barnes said. "I thought we've played some really tough teams on the road and we were so close to beating them both."

Inconsistencies have been quite the plague toward this team. Against American University on Dec. 2, YSU lost in overtime after coming back from down nine points in the fourth quarter. Last week, Barnes talked about playing a full 40 minutes and it seems the team still hasn't.

One thing that YSU has gotten better at since last week has been rebounding. YSU outrebounded American 36-29 including 15 offensive rebounds to American's four.

"We rebounded really well. We had a bunch of offensive rebounds so we are definitely making progress," Barnes said. "We had to spend a lot of energy to get back

to a tied game. Their [American] big players made big shots when needed and some of ours didn't fall."

Against Akron, bad defense led to the Penguins demise. Despite shooting 44.4 percent from the field, the Zips shot 59.3 percent while out rebounding YSU 15-11.

"We just need to come out and do what we know," YSU forward Sarah Cash said. "We know what we are doing wrong, it's just a matter of actually executing in the game. Which I think we are all capable of doing."

For the game, Akron outrebounded the Penguins 39-24 which has been an ongoing issue.

"We take plays off occasionally and that kills us at the end of games. We will take a play off in the first quarter and don't think that it affects the outcome. In the end, when it's a close game, it definitely affects how the game ends."

Past the bad losses lately, YSU must find a way to overcome its early season issues.

"I think she is feeling more confident in her knee," Barnes said about Cash's more recent performances. "She's obviously more comfortable out there. We are doing better job of getting her the ball in position where she

can be successful."

Cash scored 25 points against American while shooting 11-12 from the field. She then scored 12 points against Akron. She is averaging 5.5 rebounds in those last two games.

Cash is coming off a bad knee injury that sidelined for most of last season. She is the biggest key to YSU's success.

"She keeps everything pretty tight to the vest. Of the thousand times I've asked her how she's doing, 997 times she gives me an okay, good or alright. That's it. I don't get a whole lot out of her. I'm just glad she is getting more comfortable," Barnes said.

Barnes said that the staff is trying to test Cash's limits on the court with more and more minutes as time goes on.

YSU now goes on to face St. Francis (PA) University on Dec. 9 before the start of a six-game home stand.

"I think since they are so close, Kent, Akron, and Robert Morris so those are always rivalry games. We recruit against them so it will always be a rivalry against those sort of teams," Barnes said.



## PRESS BOX PERSPECTIVE: COLLEGE FOOTBALL PLAYOFF

**SETH RIVELLO**

The final four teams in the College Football Playoffs are locked in. The No. 1 ranked Clemson Tigers will face the No. 4 Alabama Crimson Tide in the Allstate Sugar Bowl, and the No. 2 Oklahoma Sooners will face the No. 3 Georgia Bulldogs in the Rose Bowl.

There were deep talks about which team should have been in the final fourth spot until the committee made up their minds and took the Crimson Tide.

It was a tossup between Alabama and the Ohio State Buckeyes, and a slight whisper about the University of Southern California. Ohio State's 11-2 record must have turned off the playoff committee. It dropped the Buckeyes to fifth even with a conference championship win. USC also with an 11-2 record plus a conference championship was dropped to the eighth spot and will take on Ohio State in the Goodyear Cotton bowl.

The Allstate Sugar Bowl can go a couple different ways. It will either be a defensive showdown, or Alabama will completely blow Clemson out of the water.

Kelly Bryant isn't the same as Deshaun Watson and that's clear. Bryant isn't a great passer but he can take off and run. Clemson will have to get rolling on the ground with Travis Etienne and Tavien Feaster if it hopes to get anything started. The Tigers don't lack defensive talent either, as it has one of the top defenses in the NCAA. It has beef on the defensive line that will disrupt Alabama's backfield. Clemson's two powerful defensive ends Clelin Ferrell and Austin Bryant have combined for 16 sacks and 31.5 tackles for loss.

Alabama, just like Clemson, isn't that exciting when it comes to passing the ball. Jalen Hurts has only thrown 15 touchdowns this season but provided another

eight on the ground. Bama's backfield is impressive with Damien Harris and Bo Scarborough, two different types of running back. Harris who is averaging eight yards per carry is elusive and shifty while Scarborough will seek out contact and run a defender over.

Alabama has a variety of defenders that can ruin your night or pick you off. In total, Bama has 48 sacks, 15 interceptions, and 78.5 tackles for loss. It's a very clear defensive matchup, not saying either team won't score. In this kind of game, I'd pick Nick Saban and Alabama to win.

The Oklahoma and Georgia matchup focuses more on the offensive side of the ball. That doesn't mean that Georgia's linebacker Roquan Smith isn't a stud, or Oklahoma's Ogbornia Okoronkwo, his eight sacks and 17 tackles for loss, aren't impressive.

Baker Mayfield and Oklahoma's offense is just too hard to stop. Mayfield is a Heisman trophy finalist with his very impressive 46 total touchdowns and his 4,340 passing yards, these stats aren't even final.

On the Bulldogs side, freshman quarterback Jake Fromm has taken over the offense very well. Fromm has thrown 21 touchdowns but the offense really relies on its stout run game.

Running back Nick Chubb is in his final season, possibly his last game as a Bulldog. He looks to add to his already impressive numbers, 1,175 on the ground and 13 touchdowns. Behind Chubb is Sony Michel, who is a nice change of pace back but a knee injury could keep him out which would be huge, more pressure applied to Chubb and the freshman Fromm.

I can't see this Bulldogs team taking out Oklahoma, I don't think anyone can take out Oklahoma.

**MARC WEEMS**

You get up early and go to bed late. You do that every day for four years or even longer, and find yourself at the end of your days as a student.

Student-athletes at the college level go through quite the grueling lifestyle. During the offseason, it's all about training and learning. Athletes at Youngstown State University go through no less than any other school.

"It's so tough each and every day," YSU running back Joe Alessi said. "For myself, I went to high school really close to here. I don't have a large separation like some people do from where they live. That helps, but it's an everyday grind."

Alessi said each player is different in every sport but since it was football season, life was hectic.

For other athletes that don't play football, it may seem easy to play.

"I think it's tougher scheduling-wise to play a sport like volleyball or even like baseball," YSU volleyball player Sarah Varcolla said. "When you have multiple games in a week or even on a day sometimes, that wears you out."

Varcolla also said that she always takes her schoolwork with her because she doesn't need to fall any further behind than playing will already.

The comparison for different sports becomes about time. Time is of the essence for any student. The argument for nonathletes is that they go through just as much with having multiple jobs to juggle along with being a full-time student.

"Learning while worrying about the sport you play is tough," Alessi said. "I imagine it is tough for students to have jobs and learn but we do too. Some argue that we shouldn't complain because we play a sport. I think that's hard to argue."

Alessi said that being a student is tough no matter what, but being an athlete is tougher than most believe.

Beyond the regular school schedule, athletes endure a grueling practice and game schedule.

"During baseball season, it's a crazy grind," YSU first baseman Andrew Kendrick said. "It's insane how much we are away from campus during that time of year."

The baseball team starts the year at the end of February and the beginning of March, which means it plays nearly 25 road games before ever playing at home.

With schedules like that, no one should expect athletes to be great students, but that's where the misconception always starts. All students have an expectation to succeed and putting the need to succeed on the field or court.

"This can be tough, but I know just like many others that we do it because we want to," YSU guard Cameron Morse said. "I love playing ball but it is tough when you got class every day, going

# STRUGGLING AS A STUDENT-ATHLETE

to practice and then having games. Road trips are even worse, but I understand what I got into."

Morse said as a senior, he has found a way to balance those things more than ever, but he wouldn't think freshmen could do the same.

With basketball season right around the corner, the grind will be tougher than ever with a new coach and new expectations.

"I know as a student, I relish the opportunity to be able to enjoy my games and practices while getting good grades. I know how goofy that sounds, but I really do enjoy that slow, steady grind," Morse said.

Beyond the classroom, student-athletes are asked to be community leaders as well, which is another thing nonathletes may not be asked to do. Most of these athletes are in the public eye at all times.

"It's hard to have to focus on one thing at a time when so much is going on at all times," YSU guard Francisco Santiago said. "It is amazing how well all athletes can handle all the things thrown at us. I know other people do even more than I do and I commend them on their effort. It's wild."

Now more than ever, student-athletes have otherworldly expectations from the outside world and sometimes that gets to the athletes.

"It can be really hard to keep the pressure under wraps when you play a sport the way so many of us do. Football especially has so many things to try and accomplish because of the stature of the program. Blocking that out can be tough and we expect that," Alessi said.

Alessi believes that even though the outside perception of being an athlete is all these free things and wonderful ways, they are like everyone else.

It's come to a point where student-athletes even feel a bit of disrespect toward what they all do so well. They said it seems impossible these days, especially at a smaller school like YSU to get the credit athletes deserve.

"I feel like other athletes in sports that don't get TV time get any recognition for what they do. It stinks because they deserve it just as much as anyone else," Viktoria Orosz said. "As swimmers, we don't get much time to be seen. It sucks but also it makes sense. I just wish more people would understand how much work we do as well."

For sports such as swimming and diving and bowling, those sports get nearly no vision to the sport, which may put them at a disadvantage in the classroom and in their sports.

For the athletes, the idea of being a student is more important than the sport.

"We all know that most of us won't get to another level. Even if we do go somewhere bigger, you want to have your degree. That means succeeding in the classroom at all times no matter if it's the offseason or not," Kendrick said.





Jeremiah Ferguson (5) drives past Jon Williams (1) to get to the basket on Nov. 29.

Photo courtesy of YSU SPORTS INFORMATION

## THE PENGUINS AIM TO MAKE DUE WITHOUT POINT GUARD SITUATION

CHRIS MCBRIDE

Five straight losses by the Youngstown State University Men's Basketball team show signs of a team underperforming. Following a three-game skid in the Sanford Pentagon Showcase road trip, the Penguins dropped two more games since against Robert Morris and DePaul.

Despite the Penguins having three players score in double figures in a close game, Robert Morris University was able to pull away late to win 81-74. The high scorers for YSU were Devin Haygood leading with 15 off the bench with Garrett Covington (12) and Braun Hartfield (12).

"I thought it was another disappointing loss," YSU Head Coach Jerod Calhoun said. "We certainly had our chances. We shot 17 more shots than Robert Morris but we turned the ball over 19 times and we lost the game."

The game was hard-fought throughout with eight ties and lead changes in the first half. Calhoun's up-tempo offense was

on display as the Penguins stayed pace to tie the game at 34-34 into the second half.

The storyline of the second half was dominated by the Colonials' Matty McConnell who scored 18 points and held YSU guard Cameron Morse to 1-of-9 shooting.

The teams traded leads in the final minutes but YSU ultimately would fall late.

YSU Senior guard Francisco Santiago went out with an injury late in the game. After that game, YSU traveled to play DePaul University.

Traveling to Wintrust Arena, the Penguins dropped its fifth straight against DePaul losing 89-73.

The Blue Demons are a team that relies heavily on its starters with its starting lineup accounting for 80.5 percent of its offense. This is a contrast towards the philosophy the Penguins' Calhoun preaches with his reliance on depth.

For DePaul, its system seemed to be clicking with five players scoring in double figures and four starters adding to the total.

Sophomore Braun Hartfield continues

to be a bright spot for the struggling Penguins scoring 23 points, his third career 20-point game. He also contributed to a season-high 11 three-pointers for YSU adding five of his own. Calhoun gave him praise for his confidence level, saying he could be a cornerstone for the team.

It wasn't enough to stop the hot shooting. DePaul shot 57.6 percent from the field to the Penguins' 43.3 percent.

Point guard woes continue. A lack of a point guard has plagued the Penguins with the Santiago injury furthering the hurt.

"There are offensive deficiencies with having a point guard out. You know those are things you have to overcome with your defense," Calhoun said.

As the saying goes, next man up. The next man for YSU looks to be Jeremiah Ferguson who looks to fill out the role of the facilitator on offense.

"As a team it's been tough; obviously he's one of our leaders," Ferguson said. "Stepping into that role, I'm really looking forward to it."

Calhoun gave an update of Santiago's injury status, announcing his return is questionable. It was revealed Santiago has been playing through a torn ACL all season.

Santiago ranks eighth in school history with 306 career assists, the ninth Youngstown State player to achieve 300 assists.

"What he's done has been really remarkable, it shows his level of toughness," Calhoun said. "I also think it shows how important Youngstown State is to him in his college career. He really wanted to go out with those seniors. He really wanted to go out a winner. It's difficult to see him doing what he's doing."

Heading into this weekend, the Penguins will continue a six-game road trip against the Butler University Bulldogs.

"The Butler way has always included a lot of things, the number one thing is winning," Calhoun said. "It'll definitely be an exciting atmosphere."

YSU will face off against Butler this Saturday Dec. 9 with tipoff at noon.