



Jody Webb

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THE LUCK OF THE DEAD

PHOTO COURTESY OF ANNA KOLAR

Youngstown State University Humans versus Zombies players (above) went down to Ohio University to participate in an invitational. This weekend, YSU's Urban Gaming Club will host its own invitational here at YSU.

LIAM BOUQUET

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Youngstown State University's Urban Gaming Club has invited university students from across Ohio, Indiana and Pennsylvania to participate in their first Humans versus Zombies Invitational on April 11 and 12.

Tyler Matthews — who, as invitational chair, is in charge of organizing the event and contacting other universities — said they are hoping for between 75 to 100 players.

"We have confirmed people from Ohio University, Bowling Green, Muskingum [University], Mercyhurst [College], and we are really hoping we are going to see players from Penn State, Pitt; there is at least one guy coming from Ball State," Matthews said. "There may be people coming in from as far as Purdue. Then other schools closer like Wooster and Akron."

Matthews employed social media and email, as well as HvZ pages on other social networking services like Reddit and Imgur, to market the event.

Michael Thomas, president of the Urban Gaming club, said the group decided to plan their own invitational near the beginning of the school year.

"It came from the fact that for years we have gone to other schools to take part in their invitational," Thomas said. "We have talked for a while, 'you know it would be cool if we did an invitational.' This year we decided we would go for it and we would have it in the Spring semester so we would have most of the school year to plan for it."

Interested students can sign up through the YSU

HVZ Spring Invitational Facebook page.

Humans versus Zombies is a moderated game of tag that has been sweeping across college campuses nation-wide. The human faction defends against zombies, whose goals is to tag humans and zombieify them, with Nerf blasters, socks and blow pipes.

An invitational is typically a massive single day event complete with hundreds of players, a story line, special zombies and missions for both humans and zombies to participate in.

"The interesting thing with an invitational is how do you 'kill' a hundred people in 24 hours? So you have to think about how to differently design missions, what the time frame looks like, how hard you want to make it," Matthews said.

Each school attempts to give their invitational its own unique feel with unique story, structure, mechanics and missions — while making the game remain exciting and smooth.

"One of the benefits of being the last invitational of the season is we can kind of adjust based on what we have heard other players saying what they do like and what they don't like, and really try to take the best of all the worlds we have seen and put them all together," Matthews said.

One instance of the group putting their own unique spin on the game is zombies will be given missions, instead of simply being tasked with hampering human progress.

"We have found that a lot of games lack in the fact that humans are given mission objectives, and the zombies' only objective is to kill humans. Sometimes that can be a little slow and boring for the zombies, so we have started creating things like

scavenger hunts for the zombies," Thomas said.

Though some of the rules and missions of the invitational are still being finalized, the club has chosen an Irish theme and will be using members' favorite missions from their week-long to make a "greatest hits" game.

"We had originally planned to do our invitational the week after St. Patrick's Day," Matthews said. "Then we found out that Bowling Green was hosting their own invitational that weekend. So we pushed it back, but we didn't want to change the theme because we thought it was funny."

The story of the invitational pulls from Irish mythology. The main antagonist is The Dagda, a prominent god of the Irish mythological cycle who yielded the power of resurrection in the handle of his enchanted club, and his magic cauldron — the Undry.

"We kind of tweaked the story to say that there was a resistance when people stopped praising Dagda; there was a war and Druids used their magic to banish him to his own cauldron," Matthews said.

Matthews and Thomas said their characters found the cauldron in Youngstown's Goodwill and brought it to a St. Patrick's Day party to serve beer from. When Thomas's character became a bit too intoxicated and threw up into the cauldron, Dagda's disembodied spirit returned.

"From there, the entire premise of the game is Dagda has started summoning zombies to do his work to resurrect him," Matthews said. "So the

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PHOTO COURTESY OF MICHAEL SLAVENS

Michael Slavens (right) and Jacob Schriener-Briggs were elected to the positions of Student Government Association President and Executive Vice President, respectively. The results of the election were announced Monday night after a three-day deliberation by the SGA Elections Committee on the handling of grievances.

Excuses, Excuses

University-wide absence policy

GRAIG GRAZIOSI
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The Youngstown State University Academic Senate has approved the creation of a university-wide excused absence policy, which would allow students to make up classes missed due to university-sponsored events.

"I have been involved in a number of cases where students have been not been given consideration for their participation in an activity related to a university-related function. In each and every instance, the student wished to be accountable for their academic

responsibilities, but were not given reasonable courtesies, such as alternative dates for submission of work, make-up exams, etc.," Chet Cooper, chair of the Academic Senate and faculty athletic representative to the National Collegiate Athletic Association, said.

The policy would allow excusal considerations for university-sponsored events, university athletic commitments, government obligations, documented illness, death in the family and religious holidays.

Despite its approval in the Academic Senate, the policy is currently only an "official recommendation." This is due

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The Canine "Captain"

PHOTO BY ALYSSA PAWLUK/THE JAMBAR

Last June, the Youngstown State University Police Department rescued Captain the police pug. Since his rescue, he has been a mascot for the YSUPD.

ALYSSA PAWLUK
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Captain, a three to four year old Pug, acts as mascot and positive influence to the employees at the Youngstown State University Police Department since his arrival in June of last year.

Danica Burrows, a YSUPD officer, along with the help of Lieutenant Shawn Varso, rescued Captain from the Craver Animal Hospital in early June after they found out that he was going to be euthanized. He has been with the department for almost ten months.

"He hangs out here. He's our mascot. Captain doesn't really have any duties or responsibilities, only to just be cute," Burrows said.

Varso said that Captain has free reign of the employee area in the police department and is often pet by the employees. Burrows added that everyone in the department loves him.

"He's very lovable. Everybody loves him. He's a pretty happy guy and he's content now. I think he was passed around quite a bit according to the veterinarian, but he's finally happy now that he has a home," she said.

Burrows brings Captain in to the police

station almost every day and takes him home with her during the evening.

Employees of the police department are thrilled to have Captain around the office. Megan Shargo, administrative assistant to the police department, said that Captain gives her the chance to relax at work.

"I love having him around. It gives us a chance to get up and play around with him a little bit. It takes your mind off of work for a minute before you go back at it. It's just nice to have him around," Shargo said.

Kevin Grischow, student administrative aide at the police department, added that the dog brings enjoyment to the office.

"It brings us happiness to see this little pug running around the office and the police station. He's definitely a positive influence," Grischow said.

John Beshara, YSU Police Chief, said that the police department is proud to serve the community and all its members, including the canine variety, and he enjoys seeing the dog as well.

"I think it's great that we police officers get to serve the community and part of our community is sorting around those stray dogs that are out there. We take pride in helping everybody," he said.

EXCUSES
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to its intended ability to compel professors' cooperation in providing students with make-up work, should they meet the policy's criteria. Any change in policy which forces professors to any action must be stated in their union contracts, a goal proponents of the policy are hoping to achieve.

"Currently, we're talking to the union to see if they'd be willing to make an amendment. ... This is important because if it's grievable, then students are able to go through the appropriate channels if they feel that a teacher hasn't followed a rule," Michael Slavens, executive vice president of the YSU Student Government Association, said. "The unions seem to be on board. They're going to entertain changing the language in the contract."

While the new policy is moving toward full adoption, there is cautious skepticism from some professors.

"My hope is that faculty would be amenable to reasonable absences; I am, myself," Michael Jerryson of the philosophy and religious studies department said. "However, if a professor spends hours and hours preparing a midterm, and a student asks to make it up, that professor will have to spend

hours and hours making up another one. I think it's ultimately up to the professor to decide whether or not missing a mid-term works for that class. If it doesn't work, it should be explicitly stated at the beginning of the course, rather than forcing professors to give make-up tests that undermine the integrity of those courses."

Before the current policy was adopted, excused absences were determined on a departmental level, with varying processes for justifying an absence between departments.

After examining the attendance policies of Ohio State University, Kent State University, Miami University of Toledo, Penn State University, Slippery Rock University and Ohio University, it can be concluded that all of the universities offer excused absences — at the university level — for students who have obligations dealing with university-sponsored events, athletics, religious holidays or a death in the family.

The newly-adopted policy was first proposed by Cooper, who then encouraged Slavens and SGA President Catie Carney to write up the policy while working with the Academic Standards Committee.



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NEWS BRIEFS**YSU Accounting Students Win Competition**

Youngstown State University accounting students placed first in the Best Practices competition at the Beta Alpha Psi Midwest Region competition in late March. The YSU team consisted of students Steven Wright, Andrew Pizzulo, Mike McKinney and Christopher Trucksis. They attended the Midwest Regional meeting in Indianapolis with faculty advisers Ray Shaffer and Wayne Counts. The team won first with the topic of collaboration. Students from 38 different colleges were at the meeting and 13 colleges presented in the Best Practices competition.

YSU's 62nd Annual Greek Sing

Youngstown State University's annual Greek Life event, Greek Sing, will be April 12 at 6 p.m. in Stambaugh Auditorium. The event is free and open to the public. The 62nd annual competition's theme is "A Year in Music" and will include nine group performances and five open class performances.

Each fraternity and sorority has chosen a year and will perform music release in their chosen year. The fraternities and sororities participating this year include Alpha Phi Delta, Sigma Alpha Epsilon, Sigma Chi, Sigma Tau Gamma, Tau Kappa Epsilon, Zeta Tau Alpha, Alpha Omicron Pi, Alpha Xi Delta and Delta Zeta.

Call Carrie Anderson at 330-941-3575 for more information.

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finding these ancient relics. There are flags; there are spells they have to find on scrolls; there are resurrection stones. They [humans] have to find them and take them away from the zombies."

The invitational will also utilize Irish-themed special zombies to pose an additional threat to the human players, as well as non-player characters to assist and guide humans.

"The Banshee is a remake of the zombie we use in the fall week-long, called the photophobe. It is a light sensitive zombie; it can't be killed. The humans have to figure how it works to defend themselves from it. The Leprechaun is an original idea we've come up with. ... He has the ability to give zombies a shorter respawn time after they complete certain objectives," Matthews said. "Other schools will throw them [specialty zombies] in during emergency situations to even the tides — if they need to kill more humans quickly. We do it to just scare our players. We do it as more of a psychological thing. They are part of the story."

The invitational will end when the zombies win their war of attrition and the humans all die, or if human players meet the win condition.

"We are really hoping that invitational players have a chance to make it to the final stand. We always structure it so that the humans have a chance to win. There is always a possibility of human survivors. So far, it has never happened; we kind of find it funny. It is fun for us to watch them suffer, as administrators," Matthews said.

Jump Starting Education: YSU develops summer programs to assist incoming freshmen**FRANK GEORGE**
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Youngstown State University has developed a new summer program called Jump Start — an initiative for incoming freshmen that could help students bypass developmental courses and save money.

Jump Start offers six-week math and English courses that meet twice a week. The courses are designed for new students who have been placed into developmental classes — classes that do not count toward a student's graduation credits but must be completed in order to move onto introductory English and math classes.

It costs just \$300 to enroll in Jump Start — as opposed to the \$1,100 cost to enroll in a developmental course in the fall.

Sharon Schroeder, assistant director of the YSU Metro Credit Educational Outreach Department, helped develop Jump Start. She said the program will benefit incoming students by saving them both time and money.

"Now their fall financial aid is going toward classes that count toward graduation. ... They also save time. Successfully completing the program allows students to enroll for English 1550 and/or required math for their major in the fall, instead of taking a semester of classes that they need, based on their placement, but don't count in their total hours for graduation," Schroeder said in an email. "It is a win-win for the student."

Betty Licata, dean of the Williamson College of Business Administration, also spearheaded the creation of Jump Start. She indicated that many students placed into developmental classes "really just need a bit of a refresher."

"This program is designed for those who are 'on the bubble.' If they go through the Jump Start program, they should be ready for college-level courses in the fall," Licata said.

While Jump Start benefits participating students, Licata said the program could also positively impact the university.

"Anything we can do to help students begin with college level courses, succeed in college and complete degrees is good for the university," she said.

Ronald Chordas, associate provost for University Outreach and executive director of the Public Service Institute at YSU, agreed with Licata and said successfully completing Jump Start could encourage students to move forward with their college education.

"If you can help the students succeed during the earlier times, then they're going to stay longer. If they pass the developmental courses — a few of them — in the summer, it motivates them to take more in the fall," Chordas said. "And they are also taking classes that are more applicable to what they are interested in."

The deadline to enroll in Jump Start is April 15. Both the English and math summer Jump Start class have a maximum capacity of 25 students.



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Dance Ensemble: Inspiration and Interpretation

BRITTANY LANDSBERGER
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The Youngstown State University Dance Ensemble will be putting on a dance concert April 10-12 at 7:30 p.m. in Bliss Hall's Ford Theater.

There will be 12 different dances in the concert consisting of modern, hip-hop, ballet and ballroom.

Christine Cobb, a dance professor and adviser of the Dance Ensemble, said that the most popular genre of dance is modern.

"We always have modern. Most college programs are modern-heavy just because students discover that they can do so much more with modern than they can with the other forms," Cobb said.

Students have to be in Dance Ensemble for at least one year before they have the opportunity to choreograph.

"They have to go through myself and to outside adjudicators to talk about their ideas, show some movement phrases, listen to the music, et cetera, and then they are given the go ahead to choreograph," Cobb said.

The choreographers create the dances based off of what moves them, past experiences they have had in life, or what inspires them.

"It just depends on the choreographer's vision and what they're strong at, what their interests are at the time," Cobb said.

The first performance will be "Second Stars and Second Chances," choreographed by Joseph Alvey, a musical theatre major. The inspiration for this modern dance came from Peter Pan and her interpretation of the author's creation.

"I think that his tale is so relate-able and universal. Everyone knows the story of the-boy-that-won't-grow-up. I kind of took his tale and abstracted it. Each of the 'characters' in my dance represent each character [J.M.] Barrie created," Alvey said.

The last performance in the first act is called "Vestiges" and is also a modern piece. The dance is choreographed by Katy Moran, vice president of Dance Ensemble. Moran was inspired by her visit



PHOTO COURTESY OF ANNA RUSCITTI.

Left to right: Lee Beitzel, Rebecca VanVoorhis and Olivia Bartie will perform a ballet dance titled "Jardin de la Fleur" in the upcoming Dance Ensemble recital.

to Gettysburg.

"My inspiration came from the fact that these spirits are forever trapped inside the house. I felt like it was my job to tell the stories of war that they were trying to tell me, and I dedicated my piece to them. I

wanted to depict the hardships of war," Moran said.

Moran and her boyfriend had visited toured a house that was turned into a makeshift union hospital.

"My piece is a three part piece all involving the old house. The first piece is real time civil war fighting that would have taken place outside the house. The second piece is about the girl who lived in the house and killed herself. The third piece is the spirits coming back to life and forever being trapped inside the house for their stories to be told for years," Moran said.

The show will also feature other performances, each with its own unique story to tell. However, despite the choreographer's idea behind each dance, Alvey said that it is up to the members of the audience to decide on what it is they actually see and experience.

"Come prepared to really think," she said. "A lot of these dances are very abstract and are made to make the audience really look at them and think. Everyone will see the dance a different way, but don't expect to know exactly what the choreographer is saying without thinking."

After an intermission, a Latin piece called "My Girls" will be performed. The dance was choreographed by Alexey Kuprienko, a professional Russian ballroom dancer. "Jardin de la Fleur" is a ballet dance choreographed by Rebecca VanVoorhis. The night will conclude with "JTribute," a dance complimenting Justin Timberlake and his music.

There are 26 total choreographers — comprised of both faculty and students — and dancers involved in Dance Ensemble, but participation varies from year to year.

"With the exception of Joseph Alvey who is a musical theater major, the rest of the choreographers are all dance majors or minors," Cobb said.

Any students can audition, but those who audition need to have the right skill set. There is no cut-off number; however, being a part of Dance Ensemble is a commitment.

YOUNG CALNDAR

Tuesday

Y-Dance Club, 6:30 p.m.
Ukrainian Orthodox Church/
Pavilion
\$3-8

Margaret J. Pendzick: "Picky Eaters: Behavioral or Sensory?", 7 p.m.
Penn State Shenango, Sharon Hall

Ultimate Karaoke, 10 p.m.
Utopia
\$7 buckets, 35-cent wings

Wednesday

Two-buck Blowout, 5:30 p.m.
Skate Zone
\$2-10

Karaoke at Razy's, 8 p.m.
Razy's Lounge at Quality Inn

Electric Elegance Karaoke, 9:30 p.m.
The Reef

CLARIFICATION

For the article "Claudia Berlinski: A Good Foundation" that was published in Thursday's edition of The Jambar, Berlinski uses a hands-off approach in advising the Student Art Association, not in teaching her classes.



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EDITORIAL

DANGER ZONE

In Europe, dust, picked up from the Sahara, has caused high levels of “smog-like” air pollution to waft over London and other regions.

In Ireland, citizens are abuzz with talk of the return of the “Celtic Tiger,” the famed Irish period of rapid economic growth, with gross domestic product on the rise and increased market mobility. This has also increased their exports and attracted an increasing number of international investors.

Iceland, Norway and the Faroe Islands have negotiated an agreement with the EU concerning the total allowable catch of the much sought-after blue whiting fish. The deal will hopefully prevent over-fishing in the North Atlantic.

You may notice a trend in all of these events. They all, no matter what country they originated in, had some impact, tangible or not, around the world. Surprisingly enough, countries — now more than ever — do not exist in a vacuum. The world is a web of connections. A local politician’s ambitions do not just impact his constituents; drilling does not just change the ecosystem of a single community. This fact is all too often forgotten.

It was determined in 2012 that 7 million people died annually of air pollution across the globe. This made air pollution the single greatest environmental health hazard. Recently, the UN World Health Organization released data directly and indirectly connecting outdoor and indoor air pollution to cardiovascular diseases such as strokes as well as cancer. The most staggering claim to come out of this report is that air pollution causes one in eight deaths worldwide.

The underlying point of the study is that air pollution is not just a threat in China, where some cities have palpable walls of inky fog awaiting their citizens some mornings. Air pollution has coated the earth, in some form or another, and it seems no one is entirely safe from the threats unclean air presents.

Of course, these figures should not be taken at face value. New groups with purportedly no agenda, or an entirely different agenda than WHO, should revisit these ostensible findings. They are certainly not reproach. It can be assumed, however, that the threat of air pollution is growing.

It is hard to remain concerned when the only

threats environmental deterioration pose seem distant or overblown by scientists or politicians wielding esoteric verbiage. We are buffeted everyday by these stories of doom and gloom, and many fall by the wayside. This type of story should not be ignored, though. If given the right publicity, these dry figures can drive change and remind people of their impact.

In Youngstown and far beyond, we all have a tendency to burrow away from news because it is too cynical or fatalistic. It is Goliath and we are far less than David. But this story perfectly displays that there are problems we all impact, miniscule though it may be. Embrace the responsibility these stories both burden us with and bestow on us.

This story also offers up an example of tangible consequences if we don’t each act. We can point to these deaths; we can point to the faces of family and friends who possibly could still be alive if things were just a bit different. This issue has the human element, and the human element can raise armies.

Youngstown and Youngstown State University, remember this because we are in the perfect position. At one time, we contributed to a booming economy but also a healthy tradition of heedless pollution that still plagues us today. Now, as we hopefully move into the tech industry, the university students of today will be the managers of tomorrow, and they will decide the practices and methods of this industry. Remain conscious of the potent impact even innocent business decisions can have.

As aforementioned, we live in a global community. The world only grows smaller, and this is not always a good thing. As our population continues to grow, the once innocent substances we employee become all the more dangerous. People can no longer claim, without question, that “this is my body, house or property, I have the right to do what I want with it” when there is observable data that their choices are contributing to a random fisherman in Iceland’s health issues.

All of our choices create a ripple.

It’s Law Enforcement Vs. the First Amendment, and Citizens are Losing

Los Angeles Times (MCT)

If you drive down Buckeye Road at the southern edge of Lima, Ohio, you’ll pass an industrial complex where General Dynamics makes armored vehicles for the U.S. military. But if you stop and take a photograph, you just might find yourself detained by military police, have your camera confiscated and your digital photos deleted. Which is exactly what happened to two staffers for the Toledo Blade newspaper on Friday, in an unacceptable violation of the First Amendment and common sense.

According to the Blade, staff writer Tyrel Linkhorn and photographer Jetta Fraser had just covered a news event at another Lima-area factory and decided to take photos of other businesses for future use, a common media practice. Linkhorn, who was driving, pulled into a circular driveway at the Joint Systems Manufacturing Center — also known as the Lima Army Tank Plant — and stopped short of an unmanned security booth. Fraser took her photos, and as they were preparing to leave they were approached by military police. The staffers, who were wearing credentials from their newspaper, identified themselves as journalists. Fraser, who was in the passenger seat, refused a request for her driver’s license because she wasn’t driving; she was subsequently handcuffed

and removed from the car. After more than an hour, the two were allowed to leave — but without Fraser’s cameras. When the equipment was finally retrieved seven hours later, the photos of the tank plant, and of another location, had been deleted.

Several lines were crossed here. Law enforcement officials have the right, even the responsibility, to investigate suspicious activity. But it’s hard to imagine a scenario in which a person with a camera standing in broad daylight taking a photograph of something openly visible to the public — indeed, which is visible to the world through Google Maps — clears the hurdle of suspicious activity. And to delete the work of a photojournalist is indefensible.

Unfortunately, this is not an isolated incident. In the years since 9/11, various police agencies have acted with occasional callous disregard for the First Amendment rights of journalists and photojournalists, as well as citizens documenting public occurrences — particularly police activities.

The Blade has filed a complaint with the FBI, and we urge a quick and detailed investigation followed by a public accounting. But we also urge law enforcement officials at all levels to reacquaint themselves with the First Amendment rights of citizens and journalists, and to issue new policies and training directives as necessary.



ROOKERY NEWS: MWF 10 AM | 11 AM
SPORTS: W 8 AM | 10 AM

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Doyle McManus: Is Obamacare too big to fail?

Doyle McManus
Los Angeles Times (MCT)

When Obamacare’s first open-enrollment period ended last week, the tally was impressive: 7.1 million Americans signed up for insurance on federal and state exchanges by the March 31 deadline, several million more signed up for Medicaid and a whole lot of under-26 Americans got covered by their parents’ plans.

Those numbers represent a significant political victory for Democrats, making it highly unlikely that Republicans will be able to deliver on their promise to repeal the law.

“You’re not going to turn away 7 (million) or 10 million people from insurance coverage,” crowed Sen. Dick Durbin, D-Ill., the No. 2 Democrat in the Senate. “Doesn’t work anymore.”

That doesn’t mean Obamacare is guaranteed to succeed. The program still faces a series of difficult tests — most important, keeping costs under control so insurance premiums don’t soar in coming years.

And the program is certain not to be universally popular with its participants. Just think: Millions of newcomers to health coverage are about to join the rest of us in those frustrating battles with insurers.

But the enrollment numbers do mean that the main argument Republicans hurled against the law — that it was doomed to collapse — is looking weaker than ever.

They also mean that Democrats now have a chance to shift the healthcare debate from whether the law should be repealed to how to improve it. Recent polls have found that between 53 percent and 71 percent of respondents (depending on how the question is worded) favor keeping the law and fixing it.

The White House has already tinkered with the law administratively to soften some of its most unpopular provisions, enraging Republicans, who have accused President Obama

of unconstitutional actions to save his most important domestic achievement. For example, the president has twice delayed implementing the requirement that employers with 50 or more employees offer health insurance.

And it’s not impossible that the law could be modified, with congressional approval, to scrap the mandate on companies with fewer than 100 workers.

But the biggest, most interesting change that some Democrats have proposed is a new, lower tier of health insurance policies for people who think the premiums on the standard Obamacare plans are too high.

The current version of Obamacare offers four levels of insurance — platinum, gold, silver and bronze — with many different prices. The plans are similar in the services they cover but different in the way they charge.

Platinum and gold plans charge high premiums up front, but they offer lower co-payments (the amount a patient pays for a visit to the doctor) and lower deductibles (the amount a patient pays before insurance kicks in). Bronze plans charge lower premiums but exact a higher cost later on, through higher co-payments and deductibles.

But when Obamacare enrollment started last fall, some consumers who previously held only “catastrophic” insurance — plans that cost relatively little but also don’t pay for much until a big deductible is met — complained that all the new policies cost too much up front. In response, Sens. Mark Begich, D-Alaska, and Mark Warner, D-Va., proposed a new tier of “copper” insurance plans with lower premiums, and correspondingly skimpier coverage in terms of higher deductibles and co-payments.

Some health advocates have criticized the proposal, arguing that it would seduce thrifty consumers into low-cost policies that don’t deliver much, and could even deter patients from visiting their doctors because of the higher co-payments they would face.

But Begich, Warner and others argue that a copper plan would expand the choices available to Obamacare buyers, and that, as long as the trade-offs are clear, consumers who want a catastrophic plan ought to have that option. They point to insurance industry studies that suggest that adding a lower-price plan to the mix could drive down costs overall, by increasing the number of willing consumers and competition.

One thing Democrats aren’t proposing: changing the list of medical conditions that are covered by Obamacare policies. Economists note that one way to lower costs would be to offer plans that don’t cover, for example, maternity care or mental health care. “But that would be a minefield,” one congressional aide noted.

So what will Republicans do now?

They’re trapped in a corner of their own making. GOP leaders say their position now is to “repeal and replace” the health-care law. But more than four years after Obamacare became law, they still don’t have a consensus proposal for what that replacement would look like.

There are plenty of conservative ideas out there, of course. Louisiana Gov. Bobby Jindal has proposed a plan that would replace Obamacare with a \$100 billion fund for state insurance plans to cover people with pre-existing conditions. (It would also turn Medicare into a voucher program.) Three Republican senators have proposed a plan that would give low-income taxpayers a tax credit for health insurance costs and guarantee continued coverage for people with preexisting conditions.

But if 10 million people or more have gained health insurance thanks to Obama’s long-derided law, they’re going to want to see a fully fleshed-out replacement before they jump ship. The Republicans haven’t provided one, and that’s a prescription for irrelevance.

“The debate over repealing this law is over,” Obama said last week. Maybe. But the debate over fixing the law has only just begun.



Quietly Making His Mark Tailback Webb competes for more playing time

Youngstown State University's Jody Webb (20) evades a Duquesne University defender during a game in September of 2013.

JOE CATULLO JR.
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This time last season, nothing looked too promising for incoming freshman Jody Webb in regards to playing for the Youngstown State University football team.

Even with the graduation of former tailback Jamaine Cook, the Penguins had backups. Torrian Pace was the starter. Adaris Bellamy rushed for more than 200 yards in the season opener against the University of Dayton. During the early portion of the season, Martin

Ruiz opened some eyes.

Heading into the 2014 campaign, not only will Webb be a force in the backfield, but he also has a chance to start. He's helping improve his game during spring practice along with Ruiz and Demond Hymes.

"It's going really well," Webb said. "I mean, we don't have the most backs, so we're getting a lot of reps, but that's good for us. We get the plays down and just get into a rhythm and hopefully we can get it going."

Everything fell into place last year that put Webb in his current situation. Pace struggled while Bellamy had unspecified issues and injuries

after the first game.

What really stands in Webb's way is Ruiz for the starting job, which will be hard to accomplish. Ruiz was named the Missouri Valley Football Conference's (MVFC) Newcomer and Freshman of the Year in 2013. He was also a second-team All-MVFC selection.

"Honestly, we're just getting in where we fit with everything," Webb said regarding the competition. "They have certain plays where they like this guy to run or this guy to run. We're just all trying to do our job."

Webb played in 10 games and started twice last year. He rushed for 345 yards

on 48 carries, averaged 7.2 yards per carry and scored six times. He also caught four passes for 92 yards and a touchdown.

"He can do a little bit of both because he understands our passing game and the concepts of it," Eric Gallon, YSU running backs coach, said. "He can get out on his routes, he can catch really well and he's fast, which makes him very effective in the running game as well."

Webb has the routes down pat. What he's focusing on the most so far is blocking, mainly in the passing game. It also doesn't help with a four-man quarterback race.

Gallon said he talked with

Webb last year about his poor pass blocking. He added that learning the technique and wanting to do better is half the battle. Webb put on approximately 15 pounds in the offseason that should help.

"You know, I'm not the biggest guy, so I'm just trying to get my eyes right and my placement right so that I don't get anybody killed in the backfield," Webb said.

Another factor Webb's slowly improving on is being a leader. With guys like Pace and former quarterback Kurt Hess gone, the search for leaders is a little complicated at the moment.

"He's a quiet leader," Gallon said. "He doesn't really talk much. He'll say something here and there, maybe with some of the guys, but other than that, along with Demond and Martin, they're not that type of person yet. The team is still trying to find that guy who's going to be that vocal."

"Jody can be outspoken at times, but it could be done a little more often because he's the type of kid who knows what he's doing on the field, and he produces."

No matter how the backfield shapes up before the season opener at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign on Aug. 30, no matter if Webb is the starter or not, he could still be a huge force to be wrecking with. In the search of a new quarterback, he may have no choice.

"We're trying to work with all of them [quarterbacks] because we don't know who's going to win the job," Webb said. "We try to get them all in a rhythm in our offense. Our mindset is to just really make sure whoever is in, we're going to sync with them, and they're going to sync with the offense so that we don't have any mental errors. That's really it right now."

Hungry for a New Season

Ruiz hopeful for no sophomore slump

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After earning Missouri Valley Football Conference Freshman of the Year and MVFC Newcomer of the Year, sophomore running back Martin Ruiz looks to stay hungry and build on the year he had.

"I have a lot of stuff that I want to improve on," Ruiz said. "I want to get to the playoffs and keep eating."

Ruiz is trying to build on a record-breaking campaign after totaling 1,094 yards, rushing with 15 touchdowns — which are both Youngstown State University freshman records. He also did a number in the receiving game, catching 20 passes for 256 yards and a couple of touchdowns.

Ruiz must be hungry for the new season because head coach Eric Wolford wants him to stay starving.

"He is a good football player; he has got to stay hungry," Wolford said. "I always get on him to not get into one of these sophomore slumps."

Even though Ruiz seems like the obvious choice to start at running back next season, Wolford said he wants him to stay competitive and to not get comfortable as the starter.

"He is very gifted and very talented, but he is getting pushed by Jody Webb and Demond Hymes," Wolford said. "If he feels like he is grandfathered in, then I will never keep an edge to him."

With the running back group being a pretty productive position last season, running back coach Eric Gallon feels there is still more that can be done to improve.

"There are a lot of yards that we left on the field last year, and there are holes that we didn't see," Gallon said. "Coming into the spring, the expectations are high and there are no exceptions to the rule. They have to put in the effort and have the energy to go 100 miles per hour."

Even with bar set high, Gallon sees plenty of improvements from Webb and Ruiz.

"I think those guys will add some value to this



Youngstown State University's Martin Ruiz (29) braces for impact with Arjen Colquhoun (36) of Michigan State University during the 2013 season.

team," Gallon said. "They will bring leadership. They are quiet leaders not really vocal, but I am trying to work on that with them."

With former YSU quarterback Kurt Hess out of the picture, somebody needs to step up and replace his production while bringing some leadership.

Ruiz feels he can do just that.

"I have to show more leadership, keep everyone going," Ruiz said. "I have to make sure to keep the line going and make sure everyone is making the right calls."

Even with a new quarterback coming into the

system, Gallon feels his running backs will have to step up regardless.

"If we had Kurt Hess again, they would have to step up," Gallon said. "You can't lay down and say what we did last year was good. What we want to this year is be even better."

Gallon said he demands his running backs improve every day, eliminate mistakes and give the greatest effort on every play.

With the spring game getting closer later this April, the running back group will look to get in sync and work together as a unit.