

[the yo* magazine]

ch-ch-ch-ch-changes
spring 2013

Constructing
deconstruction

Mind and body

Heart Youngstown
'girls up' the
city's image

A splash of color

Demolishing history



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The Yo* Magazine is published twice each academic year (once in the fall, once in the spring) by The Jambar, Youngstown State University's student-run newspaper.

The Yo* Magazine was first distributed as part of The Jambar in spring 2007, and it won the Associated College Press' Best in Show award in 2008.

We're always looking for writers, editors, designers and photographers, so contact us if you're interested. The Yo* must go on!

[yo* sections]

ch-ch-ch-ch-changes spring 2013

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who took that cover photo?!

Lindsey Ramdin is a lifestyle photographer in Canfield. She uses her background as a journalist to capture people in the moment and to take photos that tell a story. For more of her work, visit <http://www.lindseyramdin-photography.com>.

editors' letter

Dear Readers:

The world can never be static.

It is in a constant state of change, whether the differences are small and slow like the eroding landscape of the Bahamas (*Education 'rocks'*) or overt and performed with a purpose (*Constructing deconstruction*).

The evolution may even be indiscernible to anyone other than the subject of the process (*Mind and body*), but that process keeps the gears in motion.

In this issue, we delve into the culture of Youngstown and the people committed to its revolution.

Two women want to reinvent the city's image from gray and gritty to fun and feminine (*Heart Youngstown 'girls up' the city's image*). Rocco Sait, a Youngstown native, opened a gallery in November to give the city's residents "a different idea of fun than just getting drunk" (*Greyland brings DIY spirit to downtown*). A Canfield-based artist transforms dingy barroom walls into colorful works of art (*A splash of color*).

The Youngstown Playhouse, long considered an institution in the city, is adding new productions to its repertoire in an attempt to reach a larger — and younger — audience (*Curtain call*). Over two weekends, one of our reporters ventured to a hippie festival and to a gay bar, solely to discover how residents of the Yo' unwind. What our reporter found was that whether you trip balls or tuck them, he's willing to drink with you (*Drugs and drag queens*).

The historic Paramount Theatre has occupied the corner of West Federal and North Hazel streets since 1918. It's been abandoned for decades, and after several fleeting plans to renovate the building, it's scheduled for demolition in May (*Demolishing history*).

Along the lines of the changing cityscape is a story that explores the past lives of the staples of downtown nightlife (*Taking the fork in the road*).

Inside this issue of the Yo* Magazine are other stories that detail changes both everyday and extraordinary. These stories are what make Youngstown stand out amid economic depression.

We wouldn't have it any other way.

Emmalee C. Torisk
Chris Cotelesse

LEARNED HOW TO
DRINK
A GUINNESS
HERE!!

[ch-ch-ch-ch-changes]*

KARA

Photo by Melissa Smith

EDUCATION 'ROCKS'

SAN SALVADOR

JENNA MEDINA



A checklist for San Salvador

Passport? Check.
Sunscreen? Check.
Bug spray? Check.
Geology workbook? Check.
Brunton compass and GPS? Check.
Luggage? Check.
Water provider? Check.
A smile? Check.

These were just some of the necessities required to board a plane to the bright and sunny island of San Salvador, located in the Bahamas. A layover in Atlanta and a night spent in Nassau were the only two stops on the way to our destination of emancipation. Emancipation — independence, liberation, set free. These words accurately captured both my feelings and my classmates'

feelings once our cellphone service finally shut off; we realized that the only people we had for the next eight days were one another.

Class took place every Monday evening at Youngstown State University in preparation for the geology field investigation trip, but it wasn't until that first night in Nassau that we began to get to know everyone, starting with names. The excitement we felt that night prepared us for the tighter bond that resulted the next morning.

It was a bond that kept getting stronger, and it wasn't just between one another but also within ourselves; it was a life-changing experience for all.

With that said, we quickly bloomed into the most vigorously vibrant flower on the island with no hesitation. With a lack of flowers on the island, we blossomed with pride.

A record of San Salvador, Days 1-7
During our valued time on this

**PASSPORT
SUNSCREEN
BUG SPRAY
GEOLOGY WORKBOOK
BRUNTON COMPASS & GPS
LUGGAGE
WATER PROVIDER
A SMILE**

CHECK

naturally embellished island, we partook in numerous exercises from our half-inch thick field investigation notebook, which included aerial and topographic maps of various locations on the island.

One exercise read: "Hike out to the north end of Cut Cay, and take in the natural beauty that surrounds you. Once you come back to your senses, answer the following questions."

How could you not want to answer the following questions?

But, then you reach questions like these: "Use your Brunton compass to make azimuth sightings of three islands visible offshore. Island #1 azimuth _____, Island #2 azimuth _____, Island #3 azimuth _____."

My response? "Damn it. I was lost at 'azimuth.'"



However, I did become aware of the fact that the ocean makes people do crazy things, such as finding the motivation to record various findings.

At individual destinations, we observed how the island has changed since its creation. With the roaring ocean waves eroding the island rock over a great length of time, we were able to detect where the shoreline once existed — far beyond the current shoreline.

Because the island rock is calcium carbonate, also known as limestone, it is eroded by the constant flow of water, blowing gusts of wind and hurricane activity year after year. You may not know that wind is a dynamic component of rock erosion, decomposing the rock due to physical atmospheric conditions.

Another natural process called chemical weathering also contributes to the erosion system. Chemical weathering? Yikes. What the \$#%&?! This is the disintegration of rock from the interaction between water and minerals, which creates a chemical reaction. Eventually, the composition of the rock formation changes, and pieces break off.

During the island's existence, wind has been and still is responsible for carrying loose sediments and blowing them into landforms. The sediments are lithified over time, helping to further create dune rock, which protects the shorelines from the damaging forces of wave action and storm tides produced by tropical storms and hurricanes.

After exploring an island or your

favorite beach, could you even begin to fathom how it was created or what it looked like millions of years ago? We could. Thanks to the geological exploration and research performed on San Salvador, we were able to imagine how the island differed from past to present — and during the time in between.

Going into this illuminating experience as a communication and journalism student, I was more than eager to learn about all of this exciting scientific information, for I was an absolute stranger to geology. Come on, people! This satisfying information stimulates the mind to further research how the Earth we walk upon every single day was created! Now, that's a good first date discussion.

As the photographer for the

trip, I saw aspects of the island in a creatively different perspective: with the vision through my lenses. It was my priority to capture the serenity and innocence of San Salvador. I wanted everyone to have their senses hypnotized by what truly existed on this island of roughly 96 square miles.

The three shades of blue in the ocean — reality. The pink sand made with the help of fish feces — reality. Taking the final exam on a cliff out in the middle of the ocean — reality. Learning more than you could ever imagine through physical, hands-on assignments — reality. Finding an environment that makes you feel liberated, with friends who became family — reality.

But, most importantly, subsisting with only what you had and

appreciating every minute of it — reality.

We all admitted to feeling a bit lighter throughout the trip. Our bodies weren't used to being deprived of food at any given time. We were limited to what we had, and we quickly adjusted. We had to. Three cooked meals — one in the morning, one at noon and one at night, each prepared by the Gerace Research Centre's cafeteria staff. Now, tell me the last time you have had breakfast, lunch and dinner ready for you every day for a week straight? Never? Yeah, me neither. It was an appreciated change

of routine for us gluttonous and spoiled Americans. And we knew returning home to our same daily tasks would be a challenge.

Leaving paradise, we contributed a new characteristic to the island: ourselves. As a group, we brought a type of light that shined brighter than the sun itself. Or maybe it was the calm ocean of blues, the warmth and light from the sun, and San Salvador's natural environment that enabled us to create such a bright and powerful aura around us.

Whatever led us to that realm could never be left in the dark. ✧





SAN
SALVA
DOR



CONSTRUCTING DECONSTRUCTION

LEE MURRAY

Nick Celio is looking forward to demolishing houses in his neighborhood — by hand — this summer.

On a side street that leads off Mahoning Avenue, a commercial corridor on Youngstown's North Side, sits the single-level warehouse that Celio calls home. Behind a red steel door is a repurposed space with brick walls, warped hardwood floors and almost no natural light that he shares with four housemates. Every piece of furniture is old and dusty, relics rescued from the abandoned and crumbling homes that litter the landscape of this post-industrial city.

In the center of the building is a large table. Celio sits down with a glass of water and an iPad and quickly checks his email. Much of his time is spent divided between his warehouse home and his office at the Youngstown Neighborhood Development Corporation, but he's constantly looking for new ways to breathe life into Youngstown's more desolate communities.

"Demolition ... is one of the best ways to revitalize neighborhoods," Celio said. "An abandoned house in a neighborhood brings property values down tremendously."

Parked on the wide sidewalk outside Celio's



DESTRUCTION IS ONE OF THE BEST WAYS TO REVITALIZE NEIGHBORHOODS.

makeshift home is a freshly painted truck with the word "REVITALIZE" emblazoned on the side. Donated by Schwebel Baking Company, the truck is intended to haul around tools and volunteers involved with the Stand Up, Fight Blight program. It's an initiative that brings together the city and nonprofit organizations in an attempt to transform the unsalvageable parts of the city into green space.

Celio had contacted several local businesses for donations and drew money in from RocketHub, a crowd-funding website that pools online funding for community projects.

"I wrote a letter to Schwebel's, and they very generously donated one of their old delivery trucks," Celio said, working away on his iPad. It's a Sunday, but Celio is still busy managing this project and is in a rush to get back to the office. "After that, I started a campaign online, and we raised over \$5,000 to get a new paint job on the truck and equip it with racks for new tools."

Celio said he hopes the Stand Up, Fight Blight program will help the administrators of his already cash-strapped city save money.

"They're working hard to get rid of these homes, too, but there's just not enough funding," Celio said. "If we can take out a house every quarter, that's saving the city money."

Celio has a solid business model to follow: a quarter-century-old program in Detroit known as BlightBusters.

BlightBusters began when Detroit native John George, a former insurance salesman, gathered his neighbors to board up an abandoned house behind his home. George said the empty house had become a haven for drug users.

What started as a weekend neighborhood project grew quickly into a vast program that brings in millions of dollars worth of investment from national businesses and has nursed a thriving arts scene — right in the center of George's formerly dilapidated community.

The main difference between the George's program and Celio's plan is that George bypassed the city altogether in the early years of BlightBusters. He and numerous volunteers took on project after project without any meaningful contact with the city and operated, as George puts it, in a "vacuum."

"If government was the answer, we'd all be sitting on the beach right now," said George, speaking from his Detroit office in a rare free moment between meetings.

Indeed, Celio may face his greatest challenge not with the buildings or the resources, but with red tape.



IF

GOVERNMENT

WAS THE

ANSWER,

WE

SITTING

BEACH

RIGHT NOW

Councilman Mike Ray, the program's biggest advocate at City Hall, said there is no opposition to the program per se. It's just difficult to get everyone on City Council on the same page.

"I'm actively involved with it," Ray said. "We're still gaining credibility. It's still in the development phase. I don't think anyone's opposed to the idea. ... I've heard no opposition. Everyone seems interested in it and, for the most part, are in support [of it]."

Celio is clearly eager to get

started. He is compiling a list of feasible properties that can be demolished by hand, and is keen to find a major project by summer. Even so, he is patient and willing to wait for the green light from the city.

"We are currently ironing out the finer details, working with the city," Celio said.

Celio fired up the truck to head back to the office. Perhaps soon the roar of the diesel engine in this old bread truck will be a claxon call for very real change in the city. *



CHRIS COTELESSE

Rough around the edges. I like to do things my way, because, well, that's the way I want to do them.

I like to work in my underwear. I like to run red lights. I like to improvise projects instead of plan them out.

Waking up before dawn to run and sweat would never make that list, but I already agreed to test my physical fitness with Youngstown State University's ROTC cadets for this article. So, when the alarm went off at 5 a.m. on April 11, I hit the snooze button and jumped back in bed for nine extra minutes of sweet, slobbery unconsciousness.

Nine became 18 and then 36 before I got out of bed — I don't even remember 27.

"For journalism!" I rasped with a

fist limply hanging in the air when I got out of bed and stumbled around piles of dirty clothes to get to the bathroom.

I chose this article and my career path for the opportunities I wouldn't have otherwise. With every story I report, I learn something new. I experience a new perspective.

But I was too tired to care about becoming a well-rounded citizen of the world on that godforsakenly early drive to the Watson and Tressel Training Site.

I smashed two fast food breakfast sandwiches, a bottle of soda and smoked a very satisfying cigarette on the way.

Sgt. 1st Class Rigoberto Torres greeted me at the door and explained the test.

The U.S. Army requires ROTC officers in my age bracket to complete 39 pushups in two minutes, 54 situps in two minutes and run two miles in 17 minutes.

I wasn't sure that I would make it, but I'm stubborn, so I acted like I did all those activities daily and this would be no problem.

We made separate lines in front of five of the cadre, who demonstrated a proper pushup. They wouldn't count lazy form.

There was one line with three superhuman brutes. Watching them would certainly dissolve any confidence, so I got in the line with the most females to avoid being intimidated.

But when the instructor called

out 56 for the woman ahead of me, I was even more intimidated.

Even a guy like me — who believes in equality for all regardless of color, sex or creed, who has witnessed that strength and weakness pay no attention to genitals — didn't want to be beaten by a girl.

I steadied myself on my arms and told them that we were doing this for journalists everywhere. We had to show our strength and resolve.

"Go," Stroud said.

The first 20 came easily, and I told myself that we had passed the halfway mark. Then I remembered the woman's 56.

"You know you're being dumb, right?" my X-chromosome



scolded.

I felt a little guilty and very unenlightened, but that was not the time to have that debate.

"Shut up. I'll make it up to you later," I thought. "We'll watch 'The Princess Bride' or something."

I made it to 30 with little difficulty, and the clock indicated that only 45 seconds had passed, so 57 seemed possible.

I pumped out nine more with expertise and felt only slightly badass.

Number 40 wasn't so easy. I could feel my arms telling me to wrap it up soon, because they weren't going to take much more of this abuse.

I begged for 17 more, and

the instructor could sense my fatigue.

"Rest a little. Just knock a couple out at a time," he said.

Rest didn't mean "take a break." It meant "hold yourself up on your arms and catch your breath."

It was just enough rest to feel like I was relaxing on an exotic beach. Every new movement jerked me out of my happy place and back to reality, but I was slowly approaching my goal.

I was at 53 with 20 seconds remaining, and my arms were on fire.

"Don't worry," they said. "We'll get our revenge tomorrow when every reach hurts."

I dropped down for 54, and

four seconds passed before I was able to push myself back up in the resting position. Fifty-five took six.

Every blood vessel in my face felt ready to pop, and I asked my body to cooperate for 10 more seconds.

I eased my chest near the ground, preparing for my final stand.

"Push, damn it, push!" I ordered my muscles, but they had already gone out to lunch. Every last shred of energy I had left kept me from collapsing.

The instructor's face was less than a foot from mine, urging me to lift myself off the ground. To my surprise, his encouragement gave me an extra six inches, but

that was as far as I could get.

Time ran out with me hovering halfway between the ground and the starting position.

My face hit the rubber surface of the running track, and even though I had been bested by a girl — two girls actually, both females in front of me did 56 pushups — I had taken myself to the edge of my physical capabilities, and it felt good.

The situp test and the two-mile run were even more difficult. I failed the situps by six and only managed two miles with several stops to catch my breath.

I felt defeated, but not for long.



I mean, these men and women had been training a year or more to pass this test. I wouldn't feel very comfortable as an American if my pack-a-day-smoking, fast food-grubbing, beer-guzzling self could roll in and perform as well as future military officers.

I was just glad I survived, but then I still had another leg of my existential journey to undertake.

Being physically tough is only part of what it takes to succeed in the military. Soldiers need mental cajones as well.

To observe, I went to a top-secret facility where YSU's ROTC spends a weekend each semester training. It's near Ravenna. The coordinates are [redacted].

The army makes these kids sleep outside in tents for three days with no showers or fast food breakfast sandwiches. Cruel and unusual punishment doesn't apply to the military.

They wouldn't let me participate in that weekend's activities, and I see why. They

were playing war games and performing operations, and I would have just gotten in the way.

Still, it was easy to see the dedication necessary to live up to the army's standards.

I trailed behind one mission. A member of the cadre gave the orders to the team leader who sent the orders down the chain of command.

It was a reconnaissance mission, but things got hairy once they reached the target. Enemy troops were waiting to ambush the American forces. Some confusion ensued, and our boys took some fire.

Mistakes were made at all levels, but luckily for the cadets, Sgt. Mark Patterson, seen in the documentary "Restrepo," was there to train them.

If you haven't seen that movie, you need to. It's a powerful look into one of the most dangerous postings in the world.

This guy has been shot at who knows how many times, lost friends to war and braved the blistering heat of Afghanistan for

months at a time — the kinds of situations in which doing things one's own way could prove dangerous.

And through all of that, he remains a soft-spoken and even-keeled dude.

At the field training exercise, he corrected the cadets' mistakes with humility and gentleness.

As editor-in-chief, I'm kind of in charge of The Jambar. And when one of my reporters missed a deadline or screwed up in some way, especially last semester, it pissed me off.

I have yelled at most of my staff when no one's life was on the line. So, watching this guy really put me in my place. If he can react calmly to mistakes that may jeopardize lives in the future, there's no reason I can't be cool about someone misspelling someone's name.

When speaking about his experience as a leader, he spoke about the various sorts of characters he had to command.

He said there was a cocky guy, a loudmouth and a know-it-all,

among others.

"Getting them to work together was a challenge," Patterson said. "But the test of a true leader is taking what you're given and making something out of it."

That lesson was the hardest to learn, but I think after a year of working with a staff of more than 20, I've got it now.

Being a leader is more than telling people what to do and punishing them for not doing it. You have to take all of their strengths and weaknesses and figure out how best to work with what you've got.

Maybe if I had joined the ROTC when I first came to YSU, I would have learned that lesson much sooner. But I'm just glad I learned it.

So, I didn't become a crew-cut, and I didn't change any of my methods, but the experience gained from writing this article changed my perception of people who follow orders.

I'm smarter than I was before I began, and for that I thank you. *

Heart Youngstown

'girls up' the city's image

EMMALEE C. TORISK

Aspasia Lyras and Lori Shelby debuted the Heart Youngstown blog in early April with the intention of showing off a softer side of their long-time city.

Really, though, they had grown just a tiny bit tired of the "rusted out" image that pervaded existing blogs about Youngstown.

"When I see other blogs about Youngstown, I just don't see anything, I don't know, cute and fun about the city," said Lyras, the event promoter at Cedar's West End. "It's all very political, very masculine. ... I wanted to girl it up."

Starting such a blog had always been in the back of Lyras' mind, but she wasn't quite sure how to execute it. Then, on Small Business Saturday, which falls on the day after Black Friday, Lyras bought a keyboard and some prints from Greyland on West Boardman Street, along with artwork from the Ward Bakery Building on Mahoning Avenue.

Pleased with her local finds, Lyras posted about them on Facebook — and although they hadn't gone shopping together, Shelby, a former intern at the Youngstown Neighborhood Development Corporation, did the same thing. It was seemingly meant to be.

"We happened to go to the bar that same night, and we were so

giddy about everything we had bought and all the different stores we had gone to," Shelby said. "We were like, 'We love Youngstown. We love the music scene. We love the hidden gems. Why isn't there a blog about Youngstown? Why isn't there something positive? Why are we not promoting this city?'"

That very night, Lyras and Shelby began to brainstorm about what would eventually become the Heart Youngstown blog. The

decision to turn those ideas into reality was almost instantaneous, Lyras said.

"We were like, 'Let's just start it,'" she said. "Let's do something where we support local businesses [and] local events. It just kind of from there took off and just started growing and growing and growing."

Although Heart Youngstown has been online for only about a month, Lyras and Shelby have

already posted about the YNDC's Earth Day Yoga Extravaganza event at the Iron Roots Urban Farm, spring fashion finds from Goodwill and a date night at the Youngstown Symphony — plus several other pieces pertaining to the city's art, fashion, music, life and culture.

According to the blog (which is located at <http://heartyoungstown.com>), Lyras and Shelby's motto is simple: "Live, work, play, love and be Youngstown."

"Everyone's always like, 'Ugh. There's nothing to do,'" Shelby said. "We just wanted to make a spotlight of what is going on. We also felt, too, there's a lot of really good personal interest stories, so we wanted to showcase all of our friends that have done wonderful things from being an artist, to a musician, to just being fashionable."

Shelby said Heart Youngstown aims to "showcase anything that's going on that's positive," especially "anything that could use a little help." "We could all use a little help in this



city, she said.

Lyras added that she looks to spotlight “things that don’t get [much] press.”

“Maybe I can help and do write-up about them and get the word out about small businesses or events that maybe don’t have that money to really get themselves out there,” she said. “I love just helping people out, and it feels really good to put someone’s business up and [have] people notice it.”

Ultimately, Lyras said, she’s so committed to Heart Youngstown because she just really loves being in Youngstown, and she loves the people, the culture and the music of the city.

“All my friends moved away after college, and I was kind of like, ‘Why? Why can’t we just stay here and make the best of it?’” Lyras said. “My friends that moved, [most of them] ended up coming back anyway. ... But everyone always moves away and is always like, ‘Oh, it’s just not like Youngstown.’ ... I never thought of leaving.”

Lyras explained, too, that the city’s “definitely expanding,” and she’s all for that growth.

“With all this growth, there’s things happening — a lot of businesses coming in. I just want to make sure that nothing gets brushed off to the side,” she said. “Honestly, I just want people that don’t live here, if they search Youngstown and come across my blog, that they just look at it and are like, ‘This is a really nice place to live.’ That’s how I want it to come across.”

So far, Shelby said, Heart Youngstown is doing “really well.” In its first month online, Heart Youngstown boasted roughly 1,000 hits, she said.

The blog also has six “faithful sponsors” — Wild Kindness Records, Bitter Hearts Tattoo & Piercing, OffBeat Garage Sale, Westside Upholstery, Greyland and Cedar’s West End — and

other advertisers have recently expressed their interest in Heart Youngstown, too.

“I’m really proud of us,” Shelby said. “In less than a month, I’m like, ‘Wow. This has turned into more than I thought it would.’ ... Both of us are really dedicated to whatever this turns into.”

Lyras and Shelby even have their own line of Heart Youngstown

merchandise, which includes women’s T-shirts emblazoned with the blog’s logo. Women’s T-shirts are available for purchase at Greyland, and by summer, they’ll be joined by men’s T-shirts, onesies and record totes.

“We started with girls because we were trying to stay as feminine as possible till we realized that the guys really wanted T-shirts too,”

Shelby said. “I just want Heart Youngstown everywhere.”

Rocco Sait, the owner of Greyland, said Lyras approached him about selling the Heart Youngstown T-shirts in his gallery. His response? “Absolutely.”

“[Heart Youngstown] is like Youngstown from a girl’s perspective,” Sait said. “There’s room for it, so why not?” *

“

With all this growth, there’s things happening — a lot of businesses coming in. I just want to make sure that nothing gets brushed off to the side.

”

♥ **OUNGSTOWN**



Greyland brings DIY spirit to downtown

EMMALEE C. TORISK

Greyland, located on the ground floor of a parking deck at the corner of West Boardman and South Phelps streets, isn't like anything else in downtown Youngstown — or in the entire city, for that matter.

The gallery's atmosphere is warm, inviting. Greyland feels like someone's impeccably decorated house, or like the ideal place to sink into a mid-century modern sofa and pass an afternoon gazing out the building's wide arched windows into the city.

By day, it's where you can spend hours flipping through rows of vinyl records or perusing racks of carefully curated vintage clothing. By night, it's where you can attend a fashion show, or a figure drawing workshop, or a live musical performance.

Greyland just "doesn't feel like the rest of downtown," said Nick Baker, a Youngstown-based hip-hop artist who released his debut full-length album, "Baked," at Greyland in late March. It's more independent. It's more creative. It's a different kind of space

where the owners aren't concerned only with packing people in and having high bar sales.

"It's a real necessary alternative to the conventional venues," Baker said, "because it fosters a lot of things that they don't for whatever reason. It's just an open-minded space."

And it's the creation of 29-year-old Rocco Sait, who's also the songwriter, vocalist and guitarist for local rock band Modern Life. He's the owner of Greyland, and, as such, is



mostly responsible for "bringing stuff in and pricing it and doing the sourcing."

Sait has been buying and selling handpicked vintage wares for the better part of a decade. At first, doing so was a "survival tactic" — a way to dedicate his energy and his thoughts to his music but still make it, financially speaking.

"I knew I couldn't go to work for someone else on someone else's time and still be able to have the creative freedom when I needed it, when I wanted it," Sait said. "I started selling off my music equipment when I was real young and buying more, and I found I

could search for deals and have extra money in the end of it."

Today, Sait remains interested in buying anything music related, particularly vintage amplifiers, which "have their own sound and growl to them" like "a living animal." But he also enjoys hunting for Danish modern furniture and is constantly digging through vinyl records.

Sait said he's gotten good at finding the strange, the unusual or the curious, thanks to years and years of sifting through just the opposite. The more and more you stare at something, Sait said, the more it becomes uninteresting.

So, to Greyland, he brings in only the unique. The feeling or the energy that he gets from these old, typically well-made objects is what has kept him collecting for nearly his entire working life.

"Hours of a human life went into it," Sait said. "It's not just a dollar amount, but there's something really special about it."

Last year, around September, all the pieces for what would eventually become Greyland began to fall into place, Sait said. Things were being bought and sold, and clothing was being collected. The one thing missing was a "place to kind of all come together," he said. That's when Sait discovered the vacant space on West Boardman Street, formerly the Youngstown Letter Shop and, most recently, the Wig Warehouse.

Shortly afterward, Sait began to clear out and clean up the "as-is space" with help from Greyland's three employees: Melanie Buonavolonta, Paul Burgess and Hannah Woodrooffe. Retaining the space's historical integrity (at least as much as possible) was important, they said.

"[The space has] been all sorts of other things over the years," Woodrooffe said. "When we got here, there were still lots of wigs everywhere. We basically stripped the space down, painted everything gray, used what we could from the old shop, [like] display cases. You'll even see some wigs are still in here. Then, we just started bringing stuff in."

After a strong push to quickly ready the space, Greyland opened for business in November. Even within its first few weeks of existence, it became apparent that

Greyland was beginning to fill a void in downtown Youngstown, said Burgess, who helps to coordinate the gallery's events.

"We wanted to do things that didn't just have to do with going out and going to a bar and just seeing a show," he said. "To give people something to do, like a different idea of fun than just getting drunk, is always the motivation for me."

Burgess said out-of-town visitors frequently remark to him that no one is out and about, walking around downtown Youngstown. It's not surprising, he said, because there's basically nothing to do and nowhere to go, save for eating and drinking at the city's numerous bars and eateries. Greyland provides another option, though. It's a retail attraction, Burgess said, but also an emerging component of the city's nightlife.

Surviving solely as a retail or gallery space would've been "really hard in the current state of things," Sait said, which is why "everything made sense to kind of bring it all together." There's nowhere better to attempt such a venture than in Youngstown.

"It's extremely rare ... to be in a town where you can afford to do something, where somewhere else

you would never ever be able

to. It's like you can work

a part-time job in

Youngstown, live

in Youngstown

and still have

extra money

that you don't

even know

where it came

from. That

just doesn't

happen in

[other cities],"

Sait said. "You

can go to a big city

and try to do it, but

you'll drown if you're not

backed by some huge amount

of money."

Greyland didn't start out with a whole lot of money — just with a lot of energy and with a willingness to

Greyland

is always looking for vinyl records, vintage clothing, antique furniture or really anything interesting from your grandparents' attics — and will pay for it, too. To contact Greyland, call 330-707-5689 or visit <http://greylandgallery.com>. Greyland is closed Mondays, but is open from 11 a.m. to 6 p.m. on Tuesdays through Thursdays, and from noon to 7 p.m. on Fridays through Sundays.

test out the feasibility of creating a sustainable small business downtown, Woodroofe said.

A great deal has already been said about economic development within the city, and it's often discussed as something that requires massive investments from massive players. If Greyland ends up being self-sustaining, it could demonstrate "that not everything has to happen on that scale."

The primary objective, though, was to bring back to the city's downtown a local retail business that "speaks to the needs of Youngstowners," while also using the resources of the city. There's just so much stuff, especially old stuff, and a great deal of it is worthwhile and worth keeping, Woodroofe said.

In addition, there's a "really nice aesthetic" to Greyland, Baker said, due in part to its employees' appreciation of these old things.

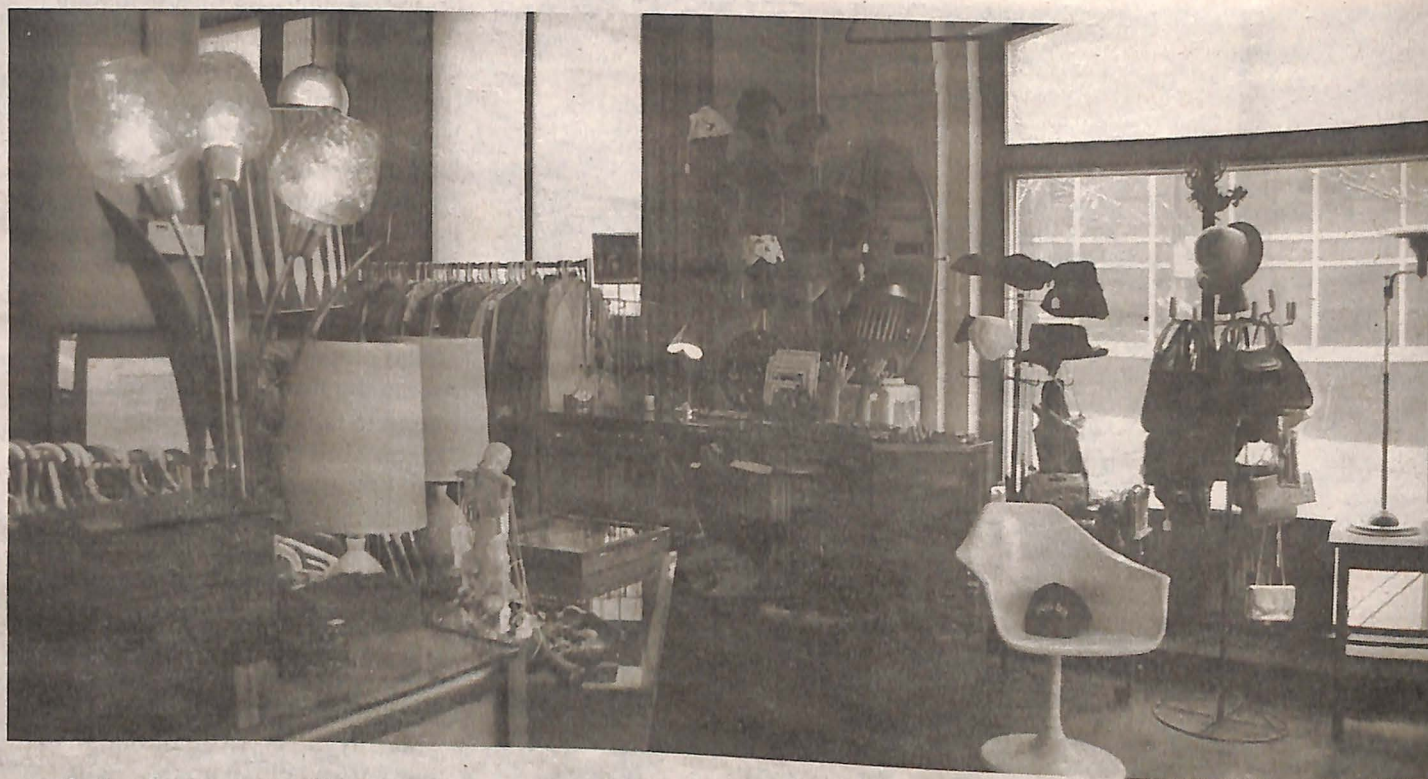
"It's all curated. Rocco goes to auctions and things like that, and people sift through lots of clothes," he said. "They don't just take whatever gets dropped off. It's not like a conventional thrift store. ... It's got more of a boutique sensibility. The stuff that's in there lends to a really cool atmosphere. It's tailored that way."

In all, Greyland aims to become more than a business. The intention is to have the gallery become a "kind of community space," Woodroofe said, and also continue to expand its reach across generations and across the city's various demographics.

"That's really important to us: the idea that a business can be community-oriented and can be engaged in what's going on in the city," Woodroofe said. "It gives me a project to work on with people that I respect. It gives me a place to go downtown, and a place to meet up with people downtown."

And to Baker, Greyland is simply the most interesting performance space not just downtown, but in all of Youngstown.

It's an unconventional venue with a DIY approach, but it's also



one that makes every getting ready for every performance, including his own album release, feel like throwing a party. Most attendees had very positive things to say about Greyland after his March show, he said.

"I would tell

people where [Greyland] was, ... and I feel like nine out of 10 people didn't know where it was or what I was talking about. That night, people were buying things," Baker said. "If you get people to come for events, there's a good chance that if they enjoyed the

experience, whatever it was, they'll return at some point to buy things."

Ultimately, Greyland isn't a "grand, money-making sort of scheme or anything like that," Buonavolonta said. It's here for the community.

"Life's gonna happen to the space. We don't really know," she said. "The community is going to shape it somehow. ... It hopefully will be at a point where it will just sustain itself and grow naturally."

Sait is hopeful that Greyland will remain "down here for a long time and continue to have events — and more and more special events." He'd also like to see people creating or being inspired by what Greyland is contributing to the city, or, more specifically, to downtown Youngstown.

"I don't think there's anywhere else to be than downtown right now. It's part of a scene that should be developed and needs to be kind of sown and watered and taken care of," Sait said. "Where we're at with this city, the current economic development, things are moving forward, and there's plenty of opportunity and room to grow." *

I don't think there's anywhere else to be than downtown right now.

A splash of color

Local artist paints murals, crafts atmospheres

ANDREW DONOFRIO

It's 10 at night, and Jen Krezeczowski is at Vincent's Vine Bar at 9065 Springfield Road in Poland. There's a fresh stock of wine and whiskey, but she's not drinking.

She's creating.

Tin cans and plastic paint tubes crowd the tarp-covered floor at her feet. Her blue jeans are a kaleidoscope of paint splatters — some green, some gold, some white. Her rough-and-ready palette is a white plastic foam to-go box.

Krezeczowski swabs her brush against a smear of green acrylic, then mixes it with a black tint.

With the brush in her right hand, she kneels and gazes quizzically at her canvas: the wooden

side panels of the bar's welcome counter. She's already chalked an outline of a Tuscan landscape. By the stroke of a stiff-bristled brush, Krezeczowski lays the first bit of color on her latest project. With her thumb, she carefully swipes away some excess paint.

"I use my hands a lot, so when I'm working, they're caked in paint," Krezeczowski said. "My [6-year-old] daughter came up to me one day. She had marker all over her hands. She goes, 'Look, mom. I'm an artist like you.' She thinks that to be an artist, you always have to be messy. I told her, 'No, you're going to med school.'"

Krezeczowski, 36, runs Krez'ki Studios in Can-

field and specializes in interior design, murals and decorative painting. She painted her first mural — two NASCAR racers rounding a track — 10 years ago on the wall of a bedroom, and since then, she hasn't slowed her pace. Krezeczowski's artwork adorns the walls of Zenobia Cuisine in Canfield, Nine Lounge Nightclub in downtown Youngstown and the Ice House Inn in Austintown.

"You can't beat this," said Krezeczowski, who prefers to work for pubs, clubs and eateries. She said it gives her the freedom to move from one theme to the next.

"I get to paint girls with tattoos one place, and I get to paint Tuscan landscapes at another. There's just so much variety and an

unlimited amount of directions and ideas you can come up," Krezeczowski said.

Krezeczowski said she wants her work to help bridge the gap between the ho-hum of everyday life and the excitement of the art world. On March 9, she completed a monthlong project for Vincent's Vine Bar, handling the interior decorating and painting several murals. Vincent's, which opened its doors on March 15, targets a 30+ crowd and serves wine, panini and pastas.

Bill St. Vincent, the bar's owner, said his friend Tim Colledge pointed him in Krezeczowski's direction. Colledge, who owns Colledge Construction in Canfield, said he's been vouching for Krezeczowski for the past four years.

"We met when I was building Kelly Pavlik's 13th Round. She did the artwork. That's when I knew her talent," Colledge said. "I started recommending her from there on."

Though Pavlik's bar in Struthers would close its doors less than two years after opening in 2009, Colledge's belief in Krezeczowski has lasted.

"She's done work for me personally and for friends of mine," Colledge said. "She did a poster. It was a memorial for a friend. The family was very happy with it. It meant a lot to them."

St. Vincent said he met with Krezeczowski before the project, discussed a color scheme and the Tuscan motif. After the meeting, he decided to give her free rein over the decor.

"I trusted her to do good work, and I was very pleased with the results," he said.

Mitch Capps, the restaurant's lead chef, and Randy Anzevino, the restaurant's manager, were also at the meeting. Capps said he was



immediately on board after he met the veteran mural maker.

"We knew what we kind of wanted, and she understood it. We let her use her creativity," Capps said. "We gave her our ideas, but all the things she painted was all her. She had a vision for it."

Krezeczowski asks clients to find pictures that fit the theme or atmosphere they want to create. From there, she uses her design knowledge and intuition to imagine the space as a whole.

"I think I've been doing it long enough that I can get a feel for the person and what they want. I don't ever try to push my ideas on anybody. But if I really think something is not going to look good, I'll let them know."

Capps said he was impressed with Krezeczowski's ability to use Adobe Photoshop

to demonstrate what the finished versions of her work would look like. She uses the program's features to paste her intended artwork over actual photos of her clients' establishments.

"We like the fact that she used the modern tools to get us to understand what she wanted to do. She's very well-rounded, which saved us a lot of time."

Krezeczowski doesn't just use Photoshop to show clients what to expect. She also uses it as her reference painting — the model artists use as a guide when they paint freehand. Reference paintings are quite common. In fact, famous PBS artist Bob Ross used an off-camera reference painting for all but one show in his series, "The Joy of Painting."

Anzevino said that reference painting or not, he was amazed by Krezeczowski's skillfulness.

"The freehand hills, grapes and valleys; that's off the charts," Anzevino said. "She knocked it out of the park from the balance to the colors on the wall, to the pictures, the frames, the painting, everything."

Though he can appreciate beautiful creations, Anzevino said he believes art and artists are enigmas.

"My wife is also an artist, and I understand artists only through my wife because they're not understandable people," Anzevino said with a smile. "They have such vision. They see the whole thing down to the nitty-gritty. I don't have a creative bone in my body, but people do, and Jen's one of them."

For Krezeczowski, part of the creative process involves stopping and stepping away from her work from time to time.

"I've learned to find the point at which I'm OK





with a painting because you can keep changing it and never stop and drive yourself crazy. So, I always walk away, and then come back to it. And, if I like it when I come back to it, then I'm done and I'll move on."

Still, she admitted that moving on hasn't always been easy, and it's best to have a second opinion. For the Vine Bar venture, assistant Stephen Eaker served as a fresh pair of eyes. Eaker, 21, of Austintown is a sophomore in Youngstown State University's psychology program. Eaker specializes in abstract art. He helped with the painting, framework and moral support.

"It was a lot of fun," Eaker said. "I haven't had a chance to apply my skills in that sort of setting before."

Though he was new to painting the walls of a bar, Eaker said it was easy to work alongside Krezeczowski.

"She has a really keen eye for the finished process. She already has the different pieces and how they'll fit together worked out in her mind," Eaker said.

Krezeczowski's anticipation of how the final pieces will fit together keeps Colledge recommending her any time he can.

"In the beginning, everyone is a little skeptical, but they catch on to her talent," he said. "It's kind of like building a house. Some people just have a finished version, a vision, of it in their head, and until others can begin to see that vision, they aren't really sure about it."

On April 16, Krezeczowski secured a space at the Valley Marketplace at 6121 South Ave. in Boardman. The Marketplace is a farmers market, comprised mostly of Amish vendors. There, she plans to have a gift shop and spotlight local artists. Her ultimate goal, though, is to bring together people interested in creativity, artists or not.

"I want to try and bridge the gap between the artists that do all of this. They already know about it," she said. "So, I want to try and break out and get this beautiful work to the regular people — 'the normal people,' as we artists call them." ✨



Curtain call

Youngstown Playhouse stays in the limelight for nearly 90 years

TAYLOR PHILLIPS

As audience members file into the auditorium to find their seats, the pit orchestra tunes up, stagehands ready the lights and the curtain opens, revealing a new era for the Youngstown Playhouse.

For almost a century, the Youngstown Playhouse has provided the community with performances that can bring a tear, a laugh or a chill to an audience.

"The Playhouse is almost a 90-year-old arts tradition," said Mary Ruth Lynn, its executive director. "Bringing good quality theater to Youngstown and having this tradition for so long [is] ... just amazing."

The Youngstown Players were established in the late 1920s as a collaborative effort involving several drama groups from around the area. All shared the same passion for drama and for the theater.

In the beginning, the Youngstown Players set their stage in an old 19th century barn on Lincoln Avenue, with an entrance on Arlington Street. The Youngstown Players remained there until the 1940s, when they converted a vacant movie theater into a playhouse for live theater.

In 1959, the Youngstown Playhouse moved again to a new two-theater building at 600 Playhouse Lane, located off of Glenwood Avenue. The Youngstown

Playhouse, which is considered by many to be the oldest continuously operating community theater in the country, has been there ever since.

"The Youngstown Players really formed because these drama circles were so serious about their art," Lynn said. "When they started out, the horse barn they stayed in had no insulation, and they hand-painted their stage and curtains."

In 2008, the Youngstown Playhouse temporarily closed its

doors. The Glenwood Avenue building required repairs, and the funding to pay for these renovations and for utility costs simply ran short.

However, after this brief hiatus (and shift in management), the Youngstown Playhouse began to include newer, perhaps fresher productions, like "Legally Blonde: The Musical," which will open on May 10.

Recent Youngstown Playhouse productions include "Cabaret" and "Avenue Q." Lynn said it's the right time for the Youngstown Playhouse to reach a younger demographic.

"It is the perfect storm," she said. "The right time, the right people, the absolute right season, and we are so proud of how far we have come."

Megan Keleman, a student at Youngstown State University, has performed in the Youngstown Playhouse's pit orchestra for its productions of "Titanic" and "Beauty and the Beast."

"I really like being a part of the show," Keleman said. "[The Youngstown Playhouse] is a really nice community theater to be a part of and get involved with. It's also great how they accept all different age groups to be in

productions."

Keleman said she tries to attend at least one or two Youngstown Playhouse productions each season. The history behind the Youngstown Playhouse makes it a unique staple in the community, she said.

"I love the feel it has. It's always fun to wander around and find old costumes and other neat things," Keleman said, adding that she once found an old piano in the building's basement.

Stagehand James Lybarger said although the Youngstown Playhouse's demographics may be shifting, older crowds still love the musicals and plays that are performed on the Youngstown Playhouse's stage, no matter how modern they may be.

"They have tried gearing toward a younger crowd a few times before, but this time it is successful," Lybarger said. "The blue hairs absolutely love it."

Lybarger said he believes the Youngstown Playhouse will remain a Youngstown tradition for years to come.

"So many people have come through and done productions and been a part of our history," he said. "People will walk in the door all the time telling us they were a part of a production or a pit orchestra, and they reminisce with us about their experiences on our stage." *





Drugs and drag queens

JUSTIN CARISSIMO

With two weeks left of my undergrad experience, I needed to forgo any social activity; I wasn't quite ready to become a recluse. I decided to hang out with unfamiliar social groups — maybe I'd have something interesting to write about.

After being denied by 10 of my closest friends, Kellie was the only one who would commit to a weekend at a hippie festival and a night out at a gay bar.

"So, you're doing drugs now?" was one subtle response I'd receive. Another friend said, "No, thanks. I'm not getting hit on by some butch bitches."

Surprisingly, extreme stereotypes still exist in the 21st century.

Every April 20, residents of Youngstown — or at least the self-proclaimed gypsies — decide to make the 45-minute trek to a small town named Garrettsville. This town of slightly more than 2,000 residents frequently hosts hippie festivals at Nelson Ledges Quarry Park.

Seeking refuge from the tensions of modern American life, gypsies migrate to the Ledges, meeting at one of the highest points in Ohio, close to the watershed dividing the Ohio River from Lake Erie.

Campers paid \$55 to experience a dozen

or so cover bands and dancing vibrant neon skeletons inside floating purple castles, exercising their consciousness in any way possible. And that's what it was. People weren't tripping on mushrooms to escape reality; instead, they made the choice to expand their perceptions. One camper added, "It's just a great place to come and do drugs."

Kellie and I walked along the major foot trails. Passing into campsites once occupied by Native Americans, there was no shortage of Sublime T-shirts, tie-dyed flags and Volkswagen minivans.

The party officially began on April 18, when campers enjoyed 85 degree weather and sweat through cutoffs and shorts, stripping off layers before diving off steep cliffs into the water. Two days later, the warmth cooled to 45 degrees.

Despite being cold as shit when the sun went down, the weather failed to subdue each camper's ambition. Brave souls managed to "polar bear jump" into the chilling waters. Those with experience knew that miniature gnomes built fires beside you, fanning their flames with bellows to make sure you stayed warm.

One female hipster described her infatuation with the quarry: "Here, in northeastern Ohio, we don't have the privilege of digging our toes in the sand with the waves of purity washing our sins away."

We arrived at the Ledges around 3 p.m., and Kellie's car was given the standard search in accordance with the campground's "zero tolerance drug policy."

My only other visit to Garrettsville was as an 18-year old. I can't say I wasn't thoroughly impressed at the time. Each passerby on the gravel paths excitedly whispered "booms," "headies," "strips." Since then, the attitude toward drugs has become fairly strict. "The narcs are out, man; watch out," said several campers, spreading the word.

After we made it through the campsites, we made a sandwich, and our allergies kicked in. I was starving for a slice of "disco pizza."

Walking along the market district of tents, we found musicians, painters, business degree holders, soon-to-be veterinarians, high school teachers, barkeeps, parents, friends and children — all ditching their laptops and smartphones to connect with contrasting individuals they might otherwise ignore.

Residents were covered in hemp; some were dressed in fuzzy animal costumes. A man-kitten began meowing and waving his tail at Kellie. Leaving her to split up probably wasn't the best

idea.

"I don't think we fit in here," Kellie quickly pointed out.

I noticed she was wearing a "Big Lebowski" shirt that she refused to wash. It read, "The Dude Abides." I changed my mind about leaving her; she'd fit in just fine.

We found cigarettes before meeting up with friends from Youngstown. The festival doesn't sell alcohol, and campers use beer as currency.

"All I need is my drum and my beer," said Mikey Glenellen, a Youngstown gypsy. "I like coming here because everything's one. One soul, one love."

I should have never paid \$8 for a pack of cigarettes. Armed with coolers full of Pabst Blue Ribbon, we sat around their campsite with Mikey, his girlfriend, cousin and best friends, discussing how people view the festivals as "sketchy" due to their past drug history.

When Mikey's girlfriend, Angelina, lost her cellphone, a gypsy recovered it, calling every single person in her phone book, except for her mother. The same incident happened last year. One of their friends lost his phone, and someone picked it up from the beach, then turned it in — no questions asked.

Passing around beer, Jameson and marshmallows, everyone agreed that the term "hippie" was basically meaningless.

"Everyone here is a wannabe gypsy. Hippies don't shower. I don't really shower too much during the week, so this might be an excuse not to," Mikey said.

Whether you're hanging out by the fire, enjoying the music or tripping your balls off under a thousand blankets, you're probably going to shower and head back into work come Monday, just like everybody else.

I couldn't decipher how red Kellie's eyes were, as she was rocking giant bug-eyed sunglasses, but it was time to return to civilization. Anthony and a birthday party were waiting, and we were anxious to grub on sushi, gyros and more Jameson.

We left before dark; apparently, this is when some things tend to get a little weird. Glowing hula hoops, giant spinning discs and pulsating jewelry lit up the pitch-black canvas in front of the mother ship. Here, the audience tosses back vibes with energy released through amplifiers, strobes and reflections.

Instead of getting abducted, we spent the night in downtown Youngstown, doing what we always do. The most interesting topic of conversation among friends was the gypsies. We

shared stories while some killer band called The Knowledge Dropout played.

We were worn out, missing our hippie friends.

I quickly saw myself in line for gyros with Kellie and Anthony. Nothing too interesting would happen until the gay bar.

"I haven't hung out with you in months, and you want me to come to a gay bar with you" is just only one of several homophobic reactions I'd receive from my most reliable weekend acquaintances. Other reactions included, "I knew it!" and "You better not dress very nice, for multiple reasons."

One week and several Agave Wheats later, Kellie and I felt all right, and we drove over to Utopia. We recapped the perspective of our heterosexual gypsy friends regarding gays and the establishment: "It's a great place to dance," "You guys will really like it there; it's fun," and "Tell everyone he's gay, and watch him not get hit on; it'll be funny."

After an hour inside the bar, I still stood too close to Kellie. We shared six or seven beers and grape bombs before we spoke to the owner of the bar; he seemed less interested in being interviewed and more fixated on the drag contest that was underway.

Kellie did too.

"I've always wanted to do one of these," she exclaimed.

"Why?" I asked.

"I don't know," she said. "It's just awesome."

I wasn't excited, but I was interested in the setting and location. The bar wasn't located downtown but instead several miles south, and it was a lot cleaner than most spaces. The owner seemed at home, with the queens, bachelorettes, co-workers and his mother offering wristbands at the front entrance.

Partners of the same sex and of the opposite sex hung out. Some were costumed, while some were not. No one felt uncomfortable, and I didn't get hit on once.

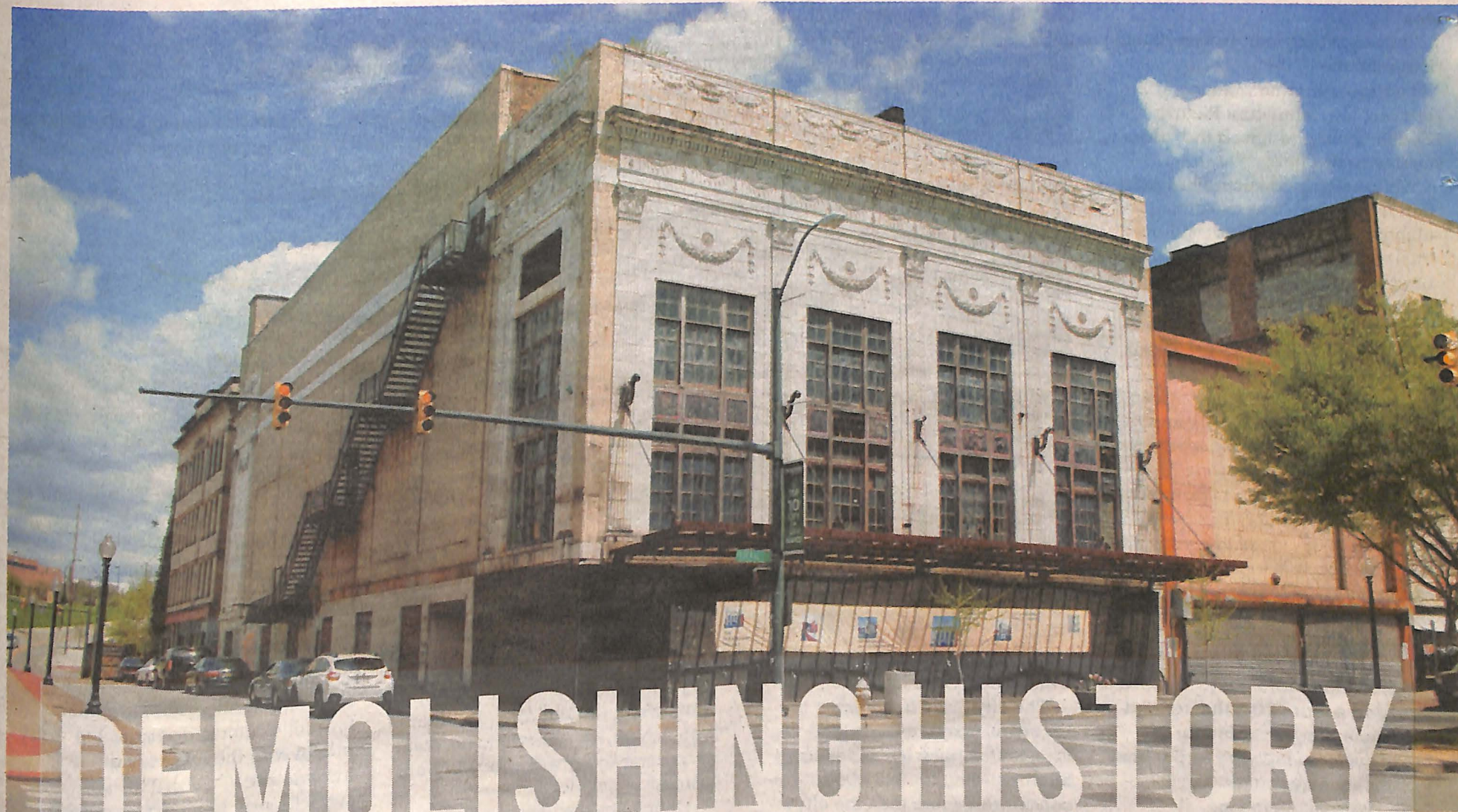
Responses I received included the following: "Man, your ego must be shattered," "I'm sure you yelled, 'Hey, I'm hot too!'" and "C'mon, I worked out today!"

The only problem was that my close friends were back downtown, so we left the bar on the earlier side to meet them. We decided that we'd return to Utopia with a group of friends. On the way, Kellie decided to skip downtown, refusing to help babysit Anthony — that kid you heard about earlier.

He was ready to meet us at Utopia, but I called him with the change of plans. Instead, Anthony waited for us at one of our "normal" hangout spots in downtown Youngstown by himself, and he ended up getting robbed at gunpoint by strangers.

Sometimes people just suck — it doesn't matter what kind of things they like to swallow. I should have never left the gay bar. ✱





DEMOLISHING HISTORY

Paramount Theatre sees its last days

JUSTIN CARISSIMO

People driving to downtown Youngstown to share drinks with friends will notice a majestic structure on the corner of West Federal and North Hazel streets. After last call, a few will break into the Paramount Theatre building before its demolition in May.

"The Haunted Heart Theatre" is scribbled against the building's off-white exterior in black spray-paint. The ominous 95-year-old building doesn't contain ghosts, but it mirrors Youngstown's stark economic decline.

Once a prominent gathering place, the Paramount was one of several upscale theaters in

Youngstown where residents would unwind by way of the silver screen. Now, the building blends in with more than 8,000 unattended buildings in the city, going largely unnoticed. The only signs of life seemingly interested in touring the rotting structure are pigeons, bats and drunks.

Few manage to break inside the building, desperately attempting to experience the history of Youngstown's golden years and posting as many Facebook pictures as they can.

Inside the unstable structure, a row of immovable red doors leads to an auditorium that originally

housed 1,700 patrons. Most of the seating remains intact, with a few dismembered chairs scattered among the wreckage.

The rest of the interior is littered with asbestos, debris and the occasional tequila bottle. Faint signs of life shine through the building's roof, where gaping holes developed from extensive weather-related damage.

Fortunately, homeless people retain zero interest in calling the dilapidated building home, and only one incident has been reported to the city's police department.

The best way to navigate the

wreckage is by snaking your way throughout the caving structure. Improvising routes toward the top of the building will remind you of "127 Hours." Broken ladders, rusted film projectors and dated phonebooks remain untouched.

Most feet will burst through the performance stage, struggling to support a person's body weight.

Looking at the building's drastic decay takes us back — back when the structure was first designed by Detroit architect C. Howard Crane, originally named the Liberty Theatre. Its grand opening was

Feb. 11, 1918.

In just a few years, feature films became one of the most popular forms of entertainment in the U.S. In 1929, the Paramount Pictures Corporation purchased the theater and renamed it. The Paramount Theatre remained successful until the 1960s, when sales plummeted alongside Youngstown's failing business district. By 1976, financial burdens caused the theater to close its doors.

Five companies would make attempts to save the building and preserve its name. Each attempt failed or was abandoned.

Business developers Richard Blackwell and William Andrews purchased the theater in 1983 and aspired to restore the building to its original condition. The closest the developers came to reviving the ailing business was opening a candy shop and eatery on the first floor of the theater.

The following year, the theater hosted "Youngstown Sheet & Tube Co. Steel Mill Movie Day." The event included a tour of the theater and a documentary centered on the fall of the steel industry — the final Paramount screenings.

In 1985, the Ohio One Corporation purchased the property for \$26,800. Twelve years later, Ohio One sold the property to the Manhattan Theatre Proprietorship, before receiving the building right back.

In 2006, Cleveland native Lou Frangos purchased the Paramount for \$79,900. Specialists estimated the project would cost between \$9 million and \$12 million.

Frangos hoped to restore the first floor for music and theatrical events, create a restaurant and bar in the basement, and place two movie theatres in its balcony. The plan to restore the building eventually fell through.

Four years later, the city of Youngstown purchased the building for \$80,000, expecting state funding to fund demolition of the desolate structure. In 2011, the city would

receive \$803,490 from the state of Ohio to complete the job.

The city hired Baumann Enterprises Inc., a Cleveland firm, to demolish the asbestos-filled building for \$721,000 — considerably less than the city's \$1.1 million estimate for the job.

The demolition project was first estimated to last four months. The building's remains must be kept wet and hauled away in specially insulated trucks that handle asbestos-infested materials. The work will proceed on weeknights to avoid disruption to the downtown.

Youngstown Mayor Chuck Sammarone said his relationship with the Paramount goes back 50 years. Sammarone was born and raised in the city, spending his Sunday afternoons with friends at the various theaters downtown.

"I would always go to the Paramount on Sunday around noon. My friends and I would go see a movie, leave before returning to watch another one. Back then, they'd always show movies back

to back," he said. "It's sad to see a large part of history go, but people who owned the building did little with it. Now, it's totally unsafe, and even contractors are afraid to walk inside."

Chuck Shasho, deputy director of the public works department, said the demolition process should last no longer than a month. The process will begin by the end of May or the beginning of June. The city expects the cleanup to be finished before summer's end.

"I hate to see the building torn down, but it needs to be done for safety precautions," Shasho said. "It's the last of the historic theaters, but, at the same time, the neglect over the years has caused it to be demolished for safety reasons."

Shasho stressed that the building is now under the jurisdiction of the contractor, and that the structure is by no means safe to enter.

"I'd like to ask that people are mindful around the construction site. It is not a safe environment. In the meantime, it's a very dangerous place to be."

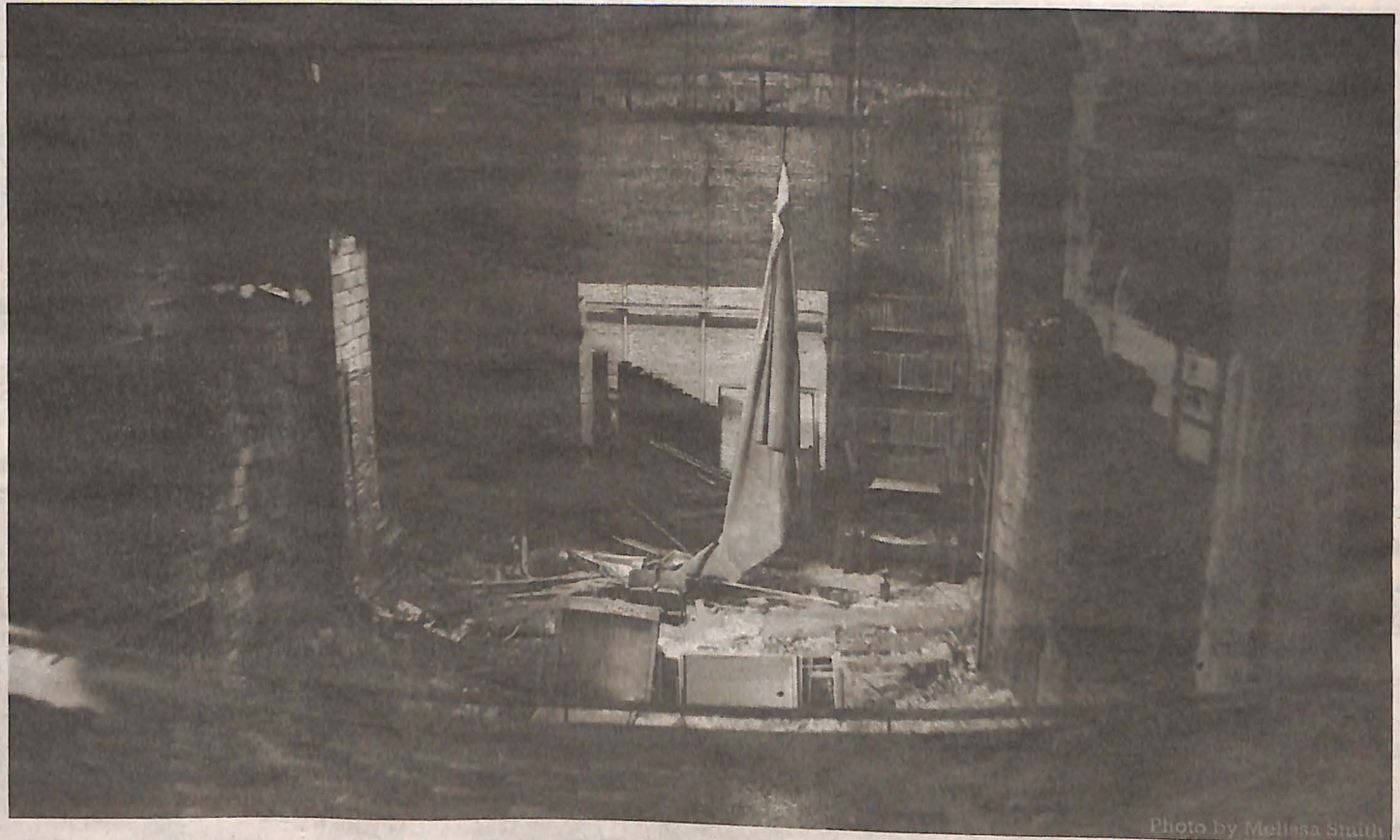


Photo by Melissa Smith

A number of Mahoning Valley residents formed the Paramount Project, which is dedicated to preserving the memory of the historic site. On April 23, the city's Design Review Committee approved the Paramount Project's plans to beautify the space after the demolition process is complete.

The group aspires to create a seating area surrounded by plants, columns and decorative fencing. The project's cost ranges from \$130,000 to \$160,000. Money not spent on demolition may be contributed toward the site's beautification, which includes murals.

When summer break begins and the university closes its doors, students will act as civilians, feel like friends and rush to the dangerous site until the city guards it for destruction. When every remaining piece is sealed, then hauled away, generations of young adults will glance at the mural, before finding their own harrowing building to find a sense of purpose. ✱



'Taking the fork in the road'

The shifting atmosphere of downtown Youngstown

JUSTIN CARISSIMO
JILLIAN SMITH

Three buildings reflect the economic potential in downtown Youngstown. Each owner is either dedicated to preserving the city's culture, or hell-bent on creating his own.

At 27 W. Federal St. is Silver's Vogue Shop. Constructed in 1928, the building began as a dry goods store, selling items people need for everyday use. The location later became a drugstore for the G.C. Murphy Company, essentially acting as a Wal-Mart without the smiley face stickers and mutants in your checkout line.

Silver's Vogue Shop is currently a purveyor of men's fashion. Barry Silver has owned the building since '78, and said he still believes in downtown's revival. While many business owners chose to leave the area, Silver opted to stay. "There's a lot of promise down here. There's more nightlife, more people coming down

from the university. More people coming down because it's a central area," he said.

The shop has sold clothing longer than most of us have been alive. And while attentively fitted mannequins greet regulars from the window fronts, many residents are unaware of what inhabits the rest of the Silver's building.

Perched atop the clothing store sits a hidden art studio, remaining under the radar for most of its years. The man cave looks like something you'd find in a New York loft, but local artist James Pernotto seems comfortable in the city of Youngstown.

Giant metal-gripped sculptures infused with lights and color hang from the ceiling. Pyramids with ancient Chinese symbols cover the floor. Phosphorescent murals, intricate engravings and geometric patterns line the walls. Books on everything from sociology to astrophysics litter

the worktables, and a head-bobbing strain of blues guitar peals through silence.

This is Pernotto's workspace, where he comes to relax and create. It's displayed exclusively with appointments and friends only. Soon, others may share the privilege of experiencing it.

Pernotto is the executive director of Next Best Art, a nonprofit organization, and is formulating his own attempts to improve the city. Pernotto plans to purchase the Silver's building, transforming it into a contemporary art center.

"Everything's changing downtown, and it's becoming commercial. Before it all becomes commercial, we want to take a space and make it a commons so that it will remain, like the Butler [Institute of American Art]," he said.

A former instructor at Penn State University and at Youngstown State University, Pernotto now teaches drawing at Eastern Gateway Community

College. Art has always been something that comes natural to Pernotto.

One his most widely known pieces, "The Passion," features a depiction of Youngstown's steel-producing skyline, along with an imposed image of the crucifixion of Jesus. The painting reminds him of his adolescence.

"The mills were always running, the sky was always red at night, and it was a different city," he said.

Pernotto said he believes the city mourned over its failed steel industry for too long, while it should have begun "taking the fork in the road," following cities like Pittsburgh to develop a revitalized identity.

Pernotto said he aims to craft a spectacle similar to the Museum of Contemporary Art Cleveland, which originally opened inside a frat house more than 30 years ago. He aspires to occupy the space in the near future so people can talk and exchange ideas.

While Pernotto seemed laid-back and confident about the future of the Silver's building, two owners are making brash attempts to fully utilize their space.

Across the street at 110 W. Federal St., the Lemon Grove has become a cultural oasis where local bands build symbiotic relationships with the cafe. The Lemon Grove also features artwork from local talents like Pernotto.

Purchasing the 110 building in July, Jacob Harver has more 36,000 square feet to play with. Young and Youngstown-based, Harver rushed to begin the snowball effect that would influence the community.

Harver's building originally opened as a Woolworth's, back when candy canes cost only a nickel. Years later, it would become an office supply store before turning into the failed Rosetta Stone

restaurant and bar.

"The focus is not just on physical art, but what Youngstown is as a cultural community; that's what's always been important to me. The whole restaurant and bar theme has always come secondary to the cultural mission," Harver said.

Harver made this clear when he brought in Guy's Barbeque to take over his kitchen. "Guy's at the Grove" comes at a surprise to most, since everything on the Lemon Grove's previous menu featured vegan or organic-based options. Harver said his decision would provide better structure for his business.

Eighteen employees were given the choice to train along the new vein. The majority weren't on board with the shift and sought employment elsewhere. One employee received the news through text messages in class and hasn't returned to the Lemon Grove since.

With the restaurant services out of his hands, Harver is free to bump his efforts toward the arts and entertainment mission. He's working to fill 28,000 square feet in his five-story building.

The basement, emblazoned with neon graffiti, was originally tagged

for a nightclub underneath Rosetta Stone. Harver reimagines the space as an additional concert venue.

The second floor looks like an unorganized garage sale, featuring a 19th century dumbwaiter elevator, with scores of typewriters, artwork, doors, signs and stationery. Harver plans to reutilize the elevator and use the floor as a record store.

The third floor, fourth floor and fifth floor are either creepy or awesome, depending on your tastes. Dim lighting, trap doors and gloomy settings seem straight out of a torture scene. Signatures from the 1900s are engraved on the fourth floor walls. The spaces have been used for music videos and may act as apartments in the future.

While Pernotto and Harver are anxious to save downtown Youngstown's culture, the owner of the space at 21 W. Federal St. is throwing around dollars, just to get everything from Barley's out of that building.

Joey Courtney, "the face of Liquid BLU Nightclub," said the staff wants to start from scratch. To fully utilize the building, they've "spared no expenses" to bring an upscale, Miami-style bar to Youngstown.

The Liquid BLU project began in August. Liquid BLU Nightclub LLC

purchased the entire building for \$260,000 and by December, told the owner of Barley's, Dan Rafidi, to move on.

The longtime rock 'n' roll bar hosted Vex Fest. Rafidi is one of several voices who was concerned for the existence of the festival. The annual event routinely booked 50 local, regional and national artists. The management staff at BLU hinted they are considering reviving the festival that usually drew thousands.

In a stark contrast to the building that hosted grunge-metal noise bands, greasy flannels and dirty condoms, the building is almost completely renovated, and not a trace of Barley's is recognizable.

Liquid BLU Nightclub LLC spent more than \$1.1 million to renovate. A 50-foot bar with pulsating chromatic lights matches the ceilings, walls and DJ booths, creating a cadence effect. Patrons will walk on floors built with white nature stone and notice lights reflecting live jellyfish tanks.

They already boast the classiest space to release bodily fluids. BLU contains marble floors, high-tech sinks and men's room attendants to toss you a mint and tell you to get on the dance floor to get some ass.

The management staff is currently seeking restaurant and bar workers from the area, and will enforce a strict dress code.

Liquid BLU Nightclub is finishing sponsorship deals with Red Bull and is talking with Patron. The club will open its doors at the beginning of summer, and the staff is hoping for a grand opening on June 1.

Whether downtown Youngstown's culture is considered true or manufactured, the inner workings of downtown's businesses prove that those stuck in Youngstown should have a lot to look forward to. *



'Astro[not]' takes flight

TAYLOR PHILLIPS

Doug Helmick, a native of Struthers and an alumnus of the Art Institute of Pittsburgh, has skyrocketed his filmmaking career with "Astro[not]," which he wrote, directed and produced.

Helmick said his love affair with movies began at age 12, when he began to enjoy the mystery, magic and message that they could convey to an audience.

"My friends and I would borrow my mom's video camera, and would make home movies throughout the neighborhood," Helmick said. "We nearly made almost 30."

Once high school began, Helmick's friends' passion for filmmaking began to die out, but his love for it only intensified. He decided to invest in a nicer camera and researched how to produce higher quality videos.

Soon afterward, Helmick's short film "Victor" got accepted into the Young Filmmakers category in the Austin Film Festival. Then, another of his short films, "La Port," took second place at the Scholastic Art Awards, which lead to a \$12,500 scholarship.

"At that point, I knew this was something I could do for the rest of my life," Helmick said. "It made me happy, and in life, that is all that matters."

Helmick said he was inspired by film directors such as David Lynch, Darren Aronofsky and Judd Apatow, as well as Richard Gage, his high school film study teacher and drama club director. Gage's film study class, Helmick said, opened his eyes to the world of cinema.

"He was in my film study class, and he was very inquisitive and a hard worker," Gage said. "His final exam made everyone else feel bad because it was so good."

After graduating from Struthers High School

in 2009, Helmick attended the Art Institute of Pittsburgh, which he recently graduated from with a bachelor's degree in digital film and media production.

For his senior thesis, Helmick chose to make "Astro[not]," which explores the story of a 40-something man named Jonathon Star. Star always wanted to be an astronaut, but never quite made it. Now, trapped in limbo, he's unable to distinguish reality from make-believe.

"I wanted to go out with a bang, but also touch on what got me into filmmaking," Helmick said. "It was that childhood charm, that feeling of true happiness, and I wanted to add that into the film."

Helmick said he was also intrigued by the idea of space, thanks to the band Angels and Airwaves. Their music is synth-heavy, with the sound of sci-fi mixed in, he said, and it was the perfect music to write to.





After writing "Astro[not]," Helmick asked Gage to star in the film. He said it was fun to direct his former high school teacher.

"Honestly, it was the best time I had filming during college," Helmick said. "A lot of work goes into film, even a short film."

Gage added that filming "Astro[not]" was a tremendous amount of work.

"Doug is a perfectionist, so we did scenes multiple times," he said. "We would shoot on weekends and evenings for three months, but it was a great experience."

On March 29, Helmick premiered "Astro[not]" to a crowd of about 300 people at the Lemon Grove in downtown Youngstown.

"I was shocked to see how many people came out and supported the film," Helmick said. "Some of the people there I haven't seen in years. The Lemon Grove and the Valley have been very supportive to me."

Helmick continues to pursue his dreams of filmmaking fame with his independent production company, Chiaro Films, which he

started back in high school. The company's name was derived from the word "chiaroscuro," which means contrasts between light and dark, he said.

Gage said he believes that Helmick has a bright future.

"He's a very passionate and ambitious young man," Gage said. "He's going to do something for sure."

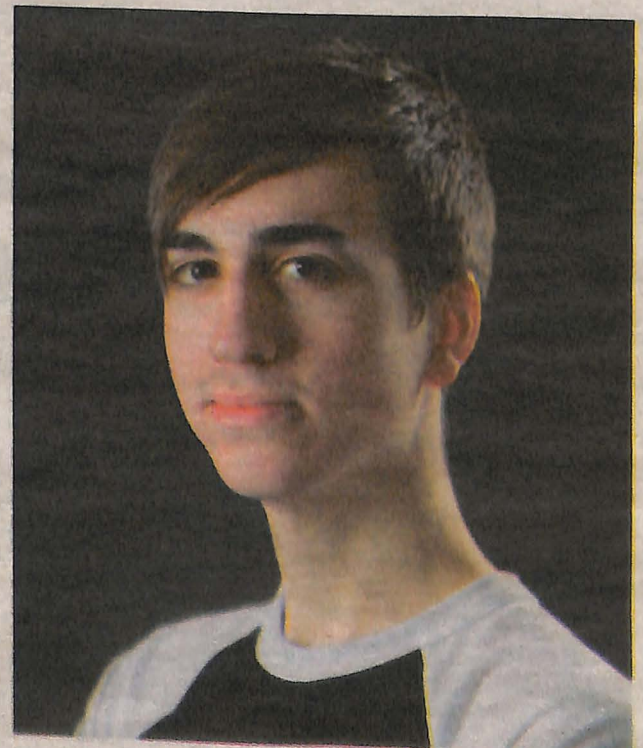
Helmick said directing movies brings him back to his childhood when he had no worries.

"There's a great feeling of gratification when someone watches what I created, and they enjoy it," Helmick said. "When I make a film, as long as my family and friends like it, that's enough for me."

Helmick encourages aspiring filmmakers to never give up and to realize that their work might not please everyone.

"The film world is brutal. I mean, really brutal," Helmick said. "There's going to be a lot of people who don't like your work, but you can't let it get you down. You just got to keep going."

*Additional reporting by Alexis Baryak. **



from MIND, to PRINT, to PICTURE An author's journey

I'd agreed to do until the night before this drive. I started to freak out a little bit because I didn't know what I'd find. I'd never been to a film set before, let alone one based on my own book."

So, he navigated the paved rollercoaster Pennsylvania highways that dress the foothills of the Appalachian Mountains not just to see film characters, but to see shadows of roles born by his imagination.

When he reached Monticello, a film crew assistant took him to the set location.

"I was expecting it to be wildly different," Christopher Barzak said, referring to the film adaptation. "What I was surprised by was how faithful in spirit it was to the book, how the look really is almost eerily similar to what I saw in my mind."

"One for Sorrow" is set in the Rust Belt. With supernatural elements, it's a coming-of-age novel about a 15-year-old boy, Adam. Reviewers have compared its quality to that of "The Catcher in the Rye" by J.D. Salinger and "The Lovely Bones" by Alice Sebold.

ANDREW DONOFRIO

During spring break, Christopher Barzak drove for seven hours. Forget the beach. His destination was a doublewide trailer in Monticello — a village in upstate New York that looks pretty much the same as the rural outskirts of Youngstown.

Somewhat like George Bailey (Google it), Christopher Barzak had been given a very special gift. In his case, it was a chance to see the world he'd created in his award-winning novel, "One for Sorrow," through the eyes of a reader. That reader, Carter Smith, is the director of "Jamie Marks Is Dead," an indie film based on Christopher Barzak's aforementioned novel. In March, Smith invited Christopher Barzak to be on the set during filming.

"I had a lot of work on my plate here at the university," said Christopher Barzak, who is an English professor at Youngstown State University. "I really wasn't able to think too much about what



While on the set of "Jamie Marks Is Dead," Christopher Barzak said there was a reunion scene he was particularly excited to see. It's a scene near the end of his novel. Adam has come home after he'd run away for four months, and he faces his mother who has been through physical and emotional hell since he left.

In the past two years, Christopher Barzak had seen drafts that omitted this scene. But in the last draft, there it was, transplanted to a slightly different place in the film.

"But it was there. Liv Tyler is playing the mother," he said. "I got to see the rough edited version of it. It was so good. It made me cry right there as I was watching on the monitor, and I was saying to myself, 'She's perfect, she's perfect.' I'm really happy to know it's being made by the right people."

Before Christopher Barzak was a bona fide author witnessing his book transformed into a movie, he was Buck. That's the nickname his father, Don, an avid hunter, gave him as a child. He grew up in rural Johnston and learned storytelling from his grandmother, Bernice.

"Everybody called her 'Bee,'" he said. "She would be a big yarn spinner, and I loved her stories, so I tried to emulate her. I'd try to tell her ones to make her laugh, or in my small child's mind, tell her scary stories to see if I could scare her. She enjoyed that."

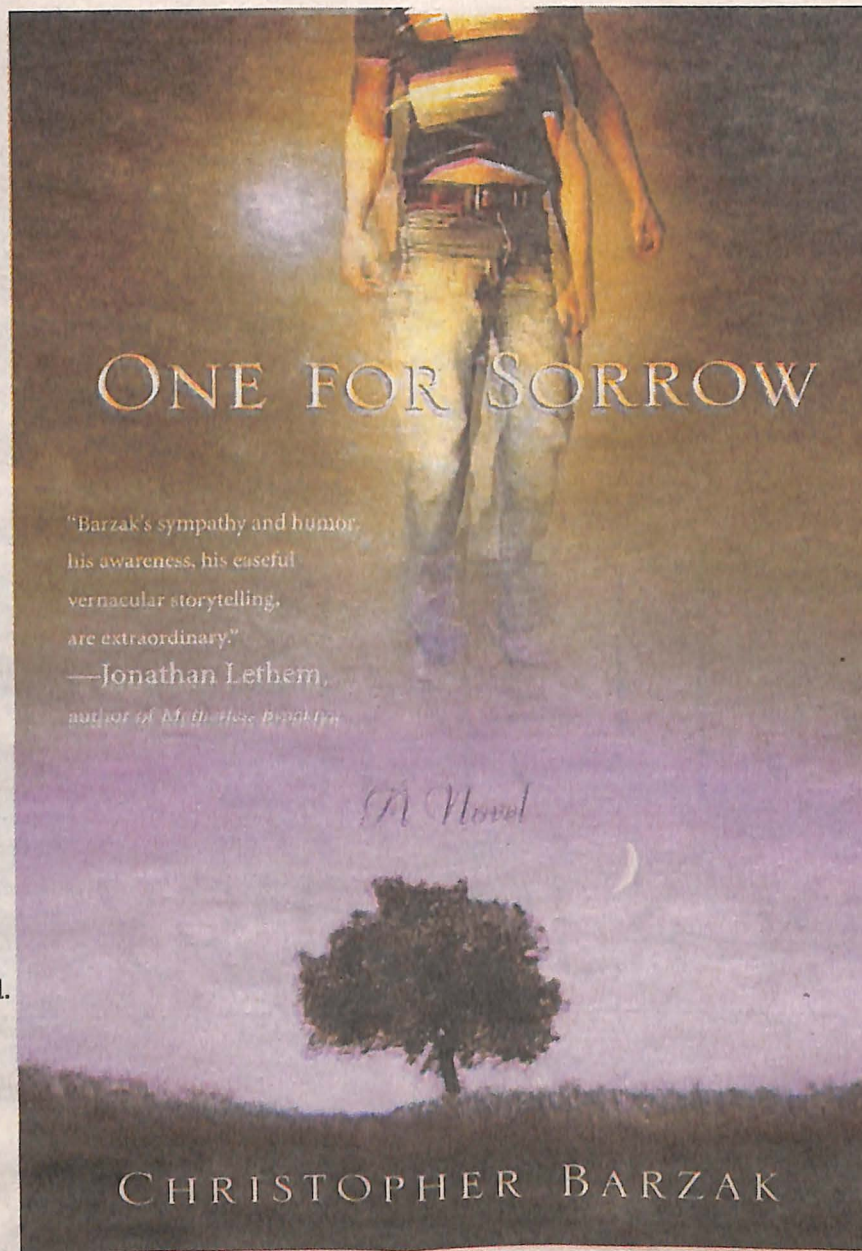
As he improved his storytelling, Christopher Barzak began to tell his older brothers, Donny and Stephen, stories. He wanted to make the stories convincing. He wanted his brothers to believe them.

"In a way, I was learning to be a really good liar," he said and chuckled at the notion. "It's a skill that I think a fiction writer must have. You need to make a believable lie to be good. You need to make people know that this is made up, but get engrossed in it to the point that it feels real to them."

From a very early age, Christopher Barzak's mother, Joyce Barzak, said she began to notice that her son had real creative ability.

"As a little boy, before he even started school, he began using crayons and pencils." Joyce Barzak said, "He'd say, 'Look, Mom. I made a book for you.'"

As he grew, so did his love of books.



"Barzak's sympathy and humor, his awareness, his careful vernacular storytelling, are extraordinary."

—Jonathan Lethem,
author of *Middlesex*

"He just loved to read and to write. I remember when he was in elementary school," his mother said, "I'd have to go up and tell him to go to sleep. He'd have a flashlight on under the covers trying to finish a chapter in one of his books."

Joyce Barzak, who taught fifth-grade math at Maplewood Elementary, said her colleagues would tell her how impressed they were with her son's writing ability. She said the bigger surprise for her was that he became a teacher.

"Chris would always say, 'I'm never going to be a teacher,'" she said.

Of course, Christopher Barzak became a teacher.

Before she retired from Maplewood in 2007, Joyce Barzak had a conversation with a woman who was substitute teaching at the school. They made small talk and asked about each other's

children.

"The woman said her son had an English professor at YSU that's changed his life," Joyce Barzak said. "I told her my youngest teaches at YSU. She asked me for his name, and then I saw her sending out a text," Joyce Barzak said in a tone exuding excitement. "A minute later, she said, 'Oh my God! It's your son.' It made chills go up and down my spine. It was such a wonderful feeling to know this. It was worth more to me than any money anybody could ever make."

Christopher Lettera, Christopher Barzak's friend and former student, had a similar experience in Barzak's classroom. Lettera, who now teaches in YSU's English department, recently published a couple of his own fiction works. He describes his writing style as somewhere between poetry and prose. Lettera said he had not yet declared a major when he took Christopher Barzak's Fiction Writing Workshop in the fall of 2007.

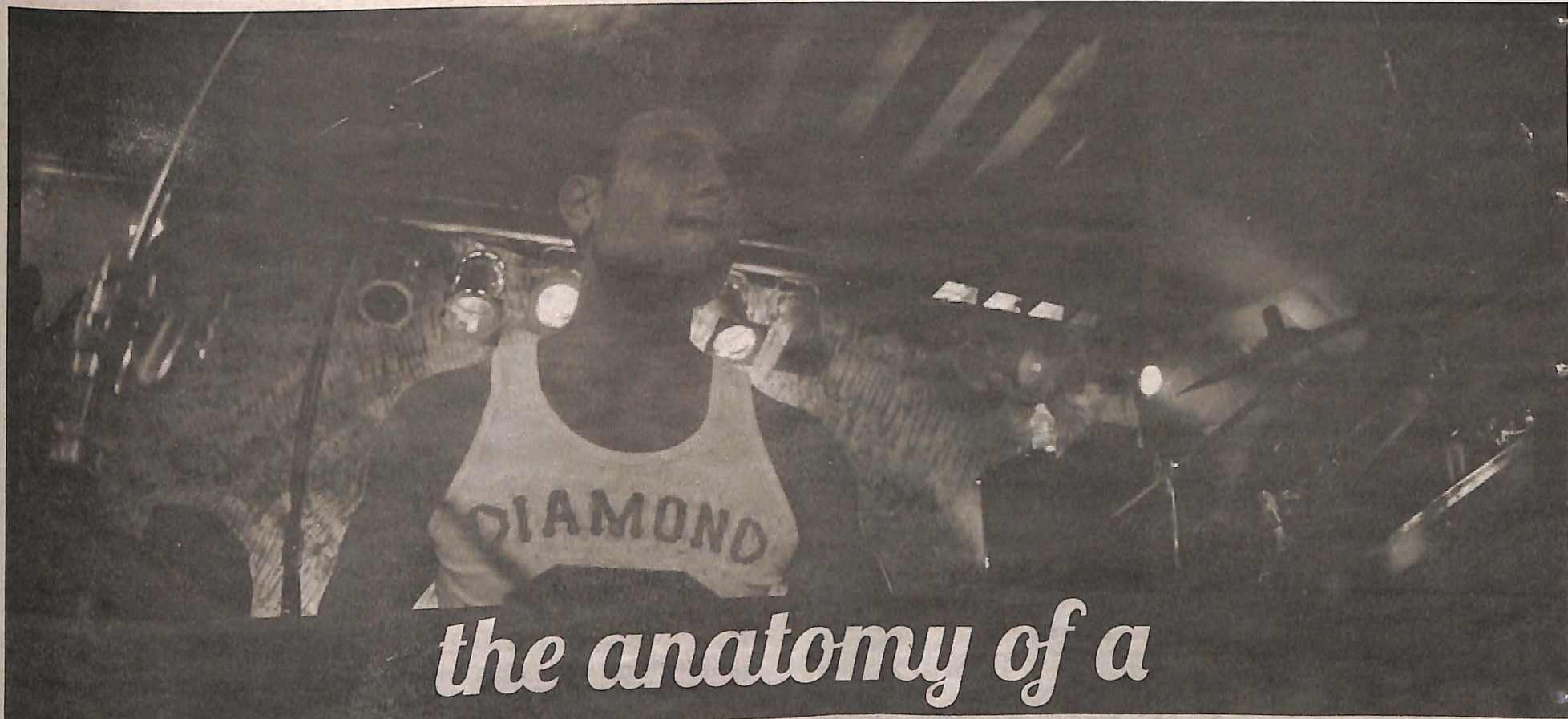
"I think his class was the first time that someone took my writing way more seriously than I did," Lettera said. "That helped me to make an investment into my own work that I hadn't previously considered. He does that for everybody. If your story's up in workshop, it's the most important thing in the universe for that half hour."

Lettera emphasized Christopher Barzak's ability to channel classroom discussions without forcing his style or perspective on students. By creating this open environment, he's been able to re-engage students who may have otherwise left YSU.

Couri Johnson said she's proof of this. Johnson, a graduate assistant, teaches introductory college writing for the university's English department. Johnson said Christopher Barzak's encouraging nature is contagious, and she is grateful for the impact he's had on her life.

"He's the one who kept me from dropping out of college," Johnson said, adding that she began her career at YSU in the art department.

"It seemed like I just didn't fit in there. And then, I took a fiction writing class with Mr. Barzak. He was very open to different opinions, which is something I hadn't encountered in a lot of my other classes," Johnson said. "So, he changed my idea of what academia meant. That it's not all just stiff and not all just narcissism and that there are people out there creating and encouraging other people to create." ✨



the anatomy of a **JAM BAND**

PATRICK DONOVAN

It's funny to guitarist and lead vocalist Jim DeCapua that Jones For Revival didn't form with the intention of becoming a jam band. No band does that, he said, but "jam band" is a term that eventually fit northeast Ohio-based Jones For Revival.

"The thing about the term jam band is that it covers everything — jazz, rock, reggae, blue grass, soul, funk and anything in between," DeCapua said. "Jones For Revival is going to do its best to keep living up to that distinction."

Jones For Revival consists of DeCapua; Andre Ptitchkin on bass; Gino West on drums and percussion; Jay Stephens on organ, keys and vocals; and PJ Rosenburg on synth, percussion and vocals.

Since the band's formation in 2004, it has come to epitomize the rocking

improvisational jam band style and all that it encompasses.

But what is a jam band? What makes it tick? What is it about this ambiguous genre almost beyond defining that captures listeners and draws music lovers out of the woodwork?

"There is a lifestyle and a frame of mind involved," DeCapua said. "We try not to get caught up in the idea of what we are or who we are. This is just who we are and what we do."

The lifestyle DeCapua is referring to involves extended — often sleepless — weekends spent riding on the Jones For Revival tour bus, lengthy nights of revelry and about as much fun as you can squeeze out of a three- to four-hour show.

West is no stranger to the atmosphere that accompanies life on the road, but he pinpointed something that's far more important than the party lifestyle.

"I thought the tour bus just came with the drum kit," West said. "Seriously, though, there is always the cliché rock 'n' roll stuff, but really what matters to us is the musical

going to play next."

This type of freedom on the stage encapsulates everything that jam bands are about, which is what separates the jam band genre from

"WHEN WE GET ON STAGE, EVERYTHING IS DEVELOPING IN THE MOMENT. WE DON'T KNOW WHAT KIND OF VIBE IT'S GOING TO BE UNTIL WE ARE UP THERE PLAYING. IT'S CRAZY."

-Andre Ptitchkin, Jones for Revival

experiences we all want to have."

DeCapua said the band focuses on the original and improvisational aspects of music — and he believes that doing so is a key component of Jones For Revival's success.

"There are times we don't even write set lists for shows," DeCapua said. "We all end up on stage, and we don't even know what song we are

other styles of music, Ptitchkin said.

"What we are doing is spontaneous," he said. "When we get on stage, everything is developing in the moment. We don't know what kind of vibe it's going to be until we are up there playing. It's crazy."

A loosely structured style allows jam bands to connect with the audience in ways that more

organized bands perhaps cannot, West said.

"If I am up there and I see the crowd reacting to a beat in a certain way, it influences what I play and where the song will go," he said. "There is this aspect of feedback when the crowd is responding to the music and the music is responding to the crowd that is just unique."

Ptitchkin said talented musicians are typically attracted to the jam band style of performing because of that uniqueness and the inherent greater possibility for creativity.

"We get on stage as individuals and end up creating something as a group that is so organic [that] talking about it starts to sound a bit idealistic and silly, really," he said. "I

think a lot of bands would be better on the money side of things if that idealism wasn't so pervasive."

Stephens, the veteran member of the group at the age of 42, said that for most jam bands, money is very rarely the primary motivating factor.

"When you are starting out in an original band, you've already pretty much decided not to make any money," he said. "You invest your time and energy just because you love it."

For more information about Jones For Revival (including a list of upcoming shows, like the sixth annual JonesFest, which will be held at Nelson Ledges Quarry Park on May 25 and May 26), visit <http://www.jonesforrevival.net>. ✱



Jonesin' for JonesFest

Spring has sprung, the ice has (mostly) melted, and another semester at Youngstown State University is all but over.

Festival season has come once again, and Youngstown's homegrown Jones For Revival will host the sixth annual JonesFest on May 25 and 26 at Nelson Ledges Quarry Park in Garrettsville.

This year's \$30 admission cost includes two nights of camping and music by Jones For Revival, LethalFX, The Bees Trees and more. Other attractions include swimming, kayaking, food vendors, body painting, belly dancers, hand drum and guitar clinics, arts and crafts, and yoga.

Jim DeCapua, guitarist and lead vocalist for Jones For Revival, said he wants to build upon last year's festival weekend and make this year's events even more spectacular.

"We wanted to feature some other bands this year and still give everyone two

nights of Jones," DeCapua said. "This show has become our chance to really bring everything we have to offer to the table."

While members of Jones For Revival said they're excited to spotlight their performances over the weekend, drummer/percussionist Gino West said JonesFest is about way more than just a massive Jones For Revival set.

"The band and everyone involved has really been striving to make the weekend about community. ... We want to get people up and involved and active," West said. "The whole weekend is about getting together for fun. We want to create an atmosphere where people can be themselves and celebrate life and not worry."

Check out Jones For Revival's website, <http://www.jonesforrevival.net>, or Nelson Ledges Quarry Park's website, <http://www.nlqp.com>, for more information.



Hi to anybody reading this. I am Paris Wolf Chrisopoulos, I am a 24-year-old man-child who draws comics in his spare time. "Mysteries of the Universe" is a slice-of-life comic that stems from my experiences and perspectives from high school

— well, at least from what I can remember of it. For the most part, I hope this comic will make you laugh, and maybe there will be something in here you can relate to. Well, at least the stuff about high school and adolescence and feeling isolated and girl

stuff. Not the stuff about floating cat heads and penis rockets. I'm an odd fellow, and I daydream a lot about stupid shit. Let me introduce you to D'Angelo Wickerbaxter, a 14-year-old teenager in suburban nowhere who is trying to fit into the high

school scene. Anyway, I'll shut up now, so you can read the comics. Only if you want to. If not, there's other things to read on the other pages. If you don't wish to read that either, then put The Yo* down and go outside. It's nice out there. *

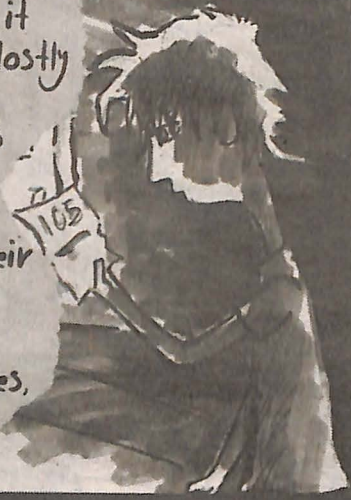
"First day of high school..."



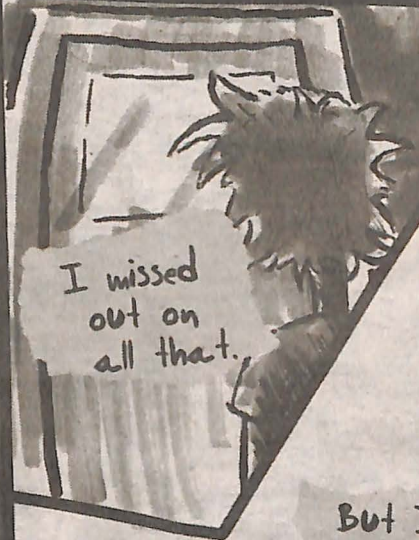
It's the beginning of
a new era. A clean
slate. A chance to
start over and be
a different person.



Middle school was
tough because I
spent most of it
being alone. Mostly
self-inflicted,
but nevertheless
other kids
were making
memories of their
adolescence.
Playing sports,
going to dances,
all that
stupid shit...



I missed
out on
all that.



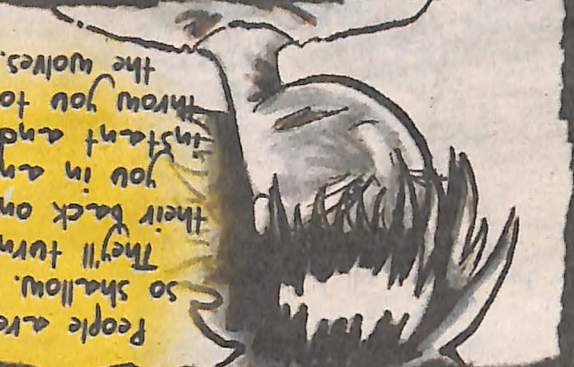
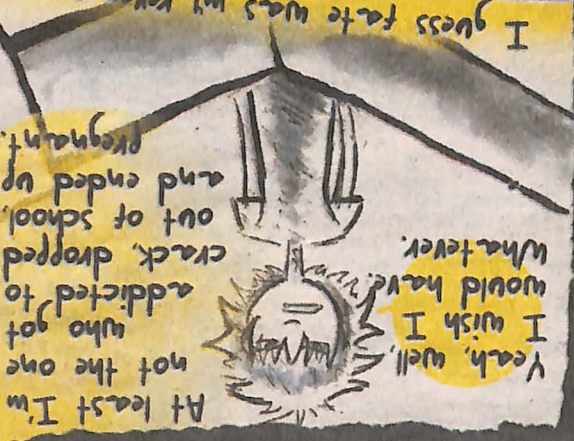
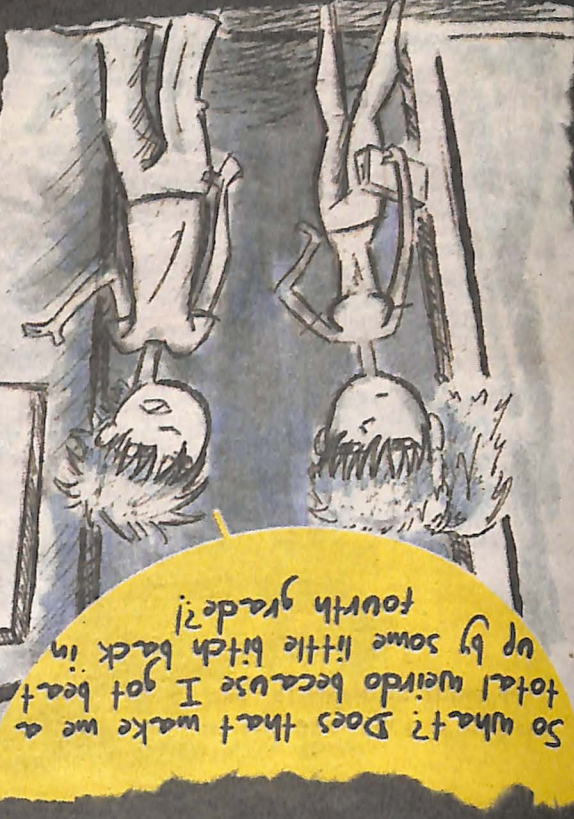
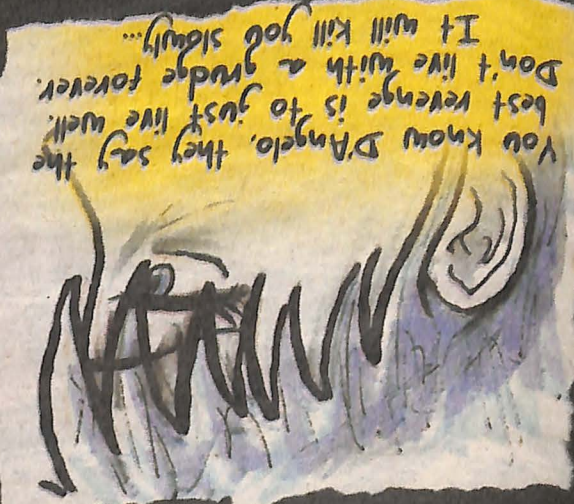
I must be outgoing
and optimistic.



But I have had a entire
summer to clear my head.



"What a bunch of assholes..."



Mysteries of the Universe

"Doodles"

Paris Chrisopoulos

So once you find the square root, you then simplify your equation...

$$\log_2(x+2) + \log_2(x-6) = 4$$

$$(x+2)(x-6) = 6$$

$$x^2 = (x+3)(x+2)$$

$$(x-6)(x+1) = y^2$$

$(x+6)$
 $(x-4)^3$

$\pi \approx 3.14159$
 $(\frac{3}{4} + i\frac{3}{4})$
 $x^2 = C$

$(3\sqrt{3}+3)^2$

You will use what is called the "quadratic formula."

$\log_2 = (x+3)$

$\sqrt{(3\frac{7}{8} + 6\frac{13}{18})^2}$
 $(\frac{a}{10} + \frac{b}{6})^2 = c$
 $x^2 + x^2$

The quadratic formula can be found on page 563 in chapter eight...



And from there blah blah...
Blah, blah, blaahhh....

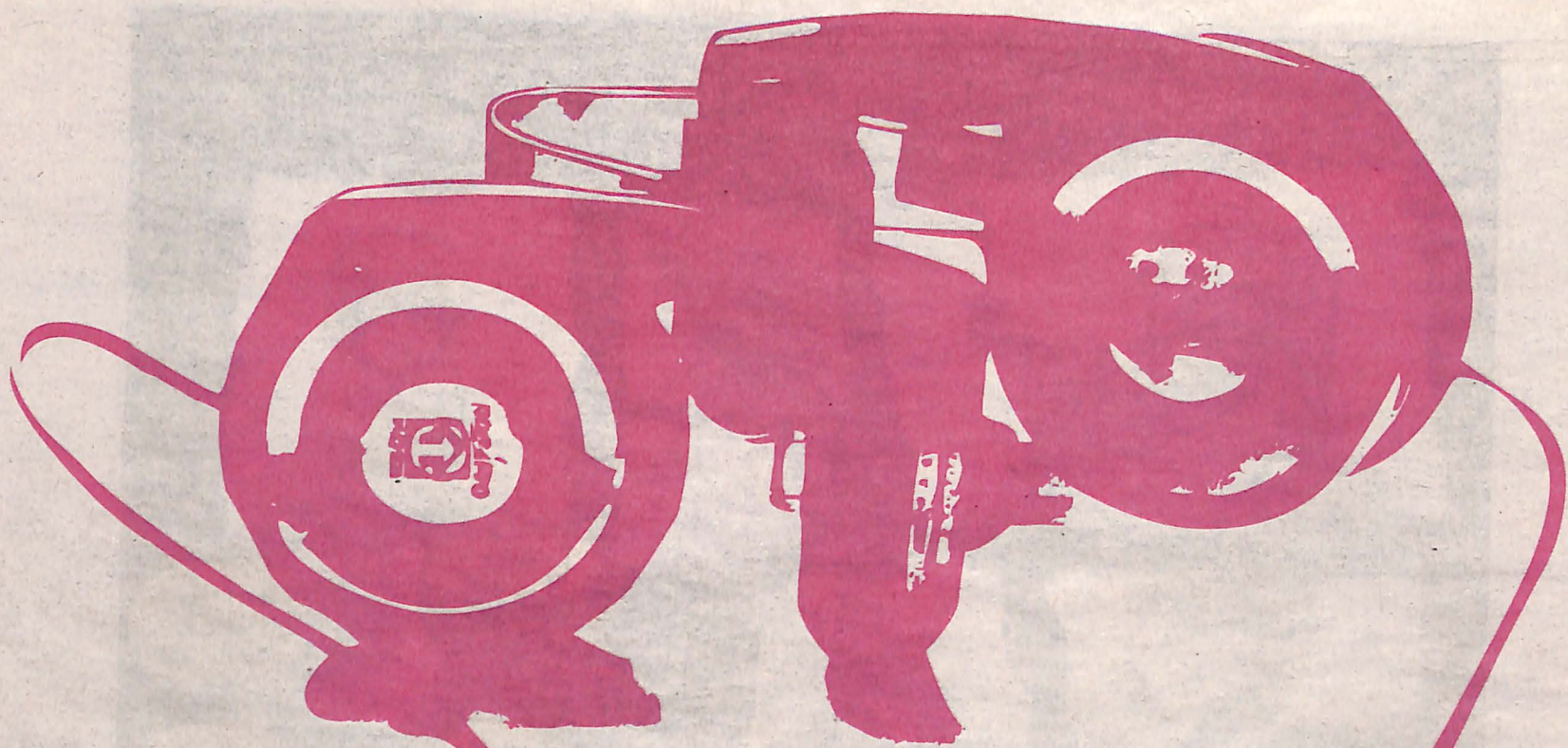
$\sqrt{(x^2+4)^3}$
 $(\frac{ab+bc}{ac+ab})$

To solve for $mx+b$ you will rub me in butter and squeeze my niblets...

$x+b^2$

"I'm never gonna pass this class..."





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