

STRONGER THAN STEEL:

A post - Rust Belt city in transition.

YOU CAN CHANGE
INGSTOWN



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Cover image: Photo illustration by Christina Simmons, integrating “You can change Youngstown” by Matt Shiffler Photography (CC license BY-NC-SA 2.0).

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Foreword

It's hard to find a list of dying American cities without Youngstown, Ohio, on it. Youngstown's narrative has been that of constant struggle stemming from the closure of the steel mills in 1977. The most recent struggles come from the shuttering of General Motors' Lordstown factory and the Youngstown Vindicator, the city of Youngstown's daily newspaper. Youngstown has a dreary reputation, but there's more to this city than the weeds growing in deserted lots.

Although the steel industry will most likely not return to Youngstown, other industries are flourishing. Coalitions have cut back overgrown foliage to beautify the city, non-profit organizations work hard to help and uplift those in need, and new shops, cafes, bars and restaurants are popping up on every corner. Youngstown is forging a new city from the scraps left behind, and it's essential that we acknowledge that part of this city in transition. Stronger Than Steel is a work that acknowledges Youngstown's past while showing what may lie ahead in its future.

Much of the credit for Stronger Than Steel goes to the talented, hardworking Youngstown State University students in Dr. Shelley Blundell's Journalism as Literature class and Advanced Journalism Editing and Design class. This eBook, a first for the YSU Department of Communication, is a collaborative project between these classes, in which students in Journalism as Literature researched and wrote the content and students in Advanced Journalism Editing and Design edited the content and designed the layout for the book itself. Their work is what made this eBook possible.

I would also like to thank Christina Simmons for designing the cover for the book. Her thoughtful interpretation of the subject and attention to detail brought the piece together well. Thank you to Cassie Nespore from the Maag Library Archives and Special Collections for offering to house the eBook in Maag's digital repository.

Last, but certainly not least, thank you the ambitious Dr. Blundell for conceiving and organizing this project. Not every professor would go out of their way to create such a unique project that goes above and beyond the expectations of a class. All of my Honors College contracts pale in comparison to the experiences that coediting this eBook has afforded me. Thank you for choosing me.

In Stronger Than Steel, you will find writings about the resurgence of local business in Youngstown, the impact The Vindicator's closing had on the Mahoning Valley, and the community effort to revitalize the city and clean up the environment. Youngstown has changed, and here are its stories.

- J. Harvard Feldhouse
Senior majoring in Journalism, minoring in Geoscience

Introduction

40+ students of all majors in two undergraduate courses.

One Honors student and one Art/Graphic Design student.

One assistant professor.

One librarian/curator.

100+ hours of reading, researching, reviewing and team work.

Those are just a few of the elements that led to the creation of "Stronger than Steel" - a compilation of literary journalism stories about aspects of Youngstown that are not always acknowledged but that very much influence the city that exists today.

My original idea for this between-course collaboration project began simply but it soon grew into the riveting compilation you're reading now because of the hard work of all of those involved in its creation.

Students in the Journalism as Literature course chose story topics important to them and explored those topics through interviews, research and writing. They included Youngstown's expanding small business community born in the ashes of "Black Monday," the Herculean efforts underway to transform the greater Mahoning Valley into a vibrant and ecologically appealing greenspace and the ripple effects caused by the August 2019 closing of Youngstown's daily newspaper, The Vindicator.

Students in the Advanced Journalism Editing and Design course worked with authors to edit their stories in accordance with journalism conventions but in a way that allowed author voices to emerge clearly and in the literary journalism tradition. They also sourced images to accompany stories and designed the layout for each chapter, using the stories to inspire and guide their design choices and produce vibrant layouts that are as dynamic and unique as the stories themselves.

Honors student Nate Feldhouse worked with me throughout semester to keep the between-course collaboration on track and to oversee the final design/editing process, transforming individual chapters into this compilation. He also recruited Art and Graphic Design student Christina Simmons to design the photo illustration that graces this compilation's cover, adding her own artistic voice to the Creative Commons image "You can Change Youngstown" by Matt Shiffler Photography (licensed under CC BY-NC-SA 2.0). Then, I collaborated with Cassie Nespore, YSU Special Collections and Archives curator and Maag librarian, to make this compilation a living, accessible work in Digital Maag - allowing everyone who worked on it to access it beyond their courses.

A project this large and integrated is tough - but much like the subjects covered within it, I'm sure you'll agree the end product is Stronger than Steel.

#YandProud,
Shelley Blundell, Assistant Professor, Journalism and Communication

Chapter 1: The Vindicator 2.0

EDITING & DESIGN BY PRESTON BYERS, AANIYAH HAKEEM AND LESLIE HUFF

The Youngstown Vindicator, founded in the mid-1800s, established itself as a key part of the development of the quickly growing city and embedding itself as a piece of its history. The honest writings of their reporters and the stories that were never afraid to expose the truth, even if that truth was ugly, made the newspaper stand out from the crowd, giving Youngstown a voice. When they shut their doors in August of 2019, many people were both shocked and saddened by the news. It was grim to predict what this meant for the city's voice, the community, and print journalism in its entirety.

Throughout this chapter, readers will learn about the impact that the closing of The Vindicator had on local journalism students, how a part of The Vindicator still lives on through an edition produced by The Warren Tribune-Chronicle and the concerns regarding what will happen to Youngstown now that its 'watchdog' is gone. It is hoped that by the end of this story, readers will appreciate the importance of local journalism to the Youngstown community and understand the impact that the closing of a city's only daily newspaper can have on a place like Youngstown.

How Local Journalism Students Will Be Affected

BY BRITANY HICKEY

On Aug. 31, 2019, The Vindicator – Youngstown's only daily newspaper – published its final edition in its rich 150-year history.

Many have reported on how the closing of this historic paper has impacted the city of Youngstown or how it aligns with the doomed and dying industry of print journalism, but an underexplored area is the impact that the death of The Vindicator had on local journalism students.

Of particular interest was whether the Anderson Program in Journalism at Youngstown State University, the university that is

just blocks away from the former Vindicator headquarters, would adjust to changes in their program. This includes ways in which the curriculum taught may change, how preparing students for careers in journalism may be impacted or seeing whether there will be an increase or a decrease in enrollment numbers.

To learn more about how The Anderson Program in Journalism could adapt their curriculum to better fit the needs of its students, it was decided that the best place to start would be to talk to students who are currently in the program and who are also currently working in the journalism field.

To begin the research process, Brian Yauger, a senior journalism student at Youngstown State University who also works as a staff writer for the Warren Tribune-Chronicle, was interviewed.

Yauger didn't have any hesitation when answering the question of whether he believed that the journalism program would see any changes in the near future.

"It's [the journalism program] already changed significantly with the merging of student media into one entity, but I think it's going to be even more different in the coming years," Yauger explained.

To clarify, the merging of student media that Yauger references is the



"MSC students in library 2017" by Community Eye Health. Courtesy of the Creative Commons.



"Radio" by Monica Venturella. Courtesy of Creative Commons

decision that was made recently to bring all of YSU's student media outlets – The Jambar, YO Magazine, Jambar TV, Penguin Rundown and Rookery Radio – together under one umbrella known as the Youngstown State University Office of Student Media.

Rachel Gobep – a senior journalism student who is also the editor-in-chief of YSU's student produced newspaper, The Jambar, and a newsroom production assistant at 90.5 WESA in Pittsburgh – agrees with Yauger that there will be a shift in The Anderson Program's curriculum.

"To be a journalist today, a person needs to be able to tell a story on all platforms," Gobep said.

"There is not a market for journalists who strictly write print journalism, which is what the current program is based on."

Gobep stressed that if the program does not change, it will end up hindering the opportunity for success for its students.

Both Yauger and Gobep agreed that in order to be a part of the journalism field, students must be well rounded and have extra skills that their predecessors most likely did not need to learn.

Yauger recommends that if nothing else, a skill to have in

addition to writing is photography or videography. He also suggests that a journalism student needs to be open to working in other aspects of journalism outside of print, specifically broadcast journalism.

"If you want nothing to do with broadcast, I'd recommend you probably find a different major because journalism and telecommunications is becoming closer to being one and the same," Yauger said.

Gobep highly recommends that students take advantage of every opportunity to do as much as they can in the media field during their time at Youngstown State.

"It is better to know more and have multiple experiences under their belt," Gobep said. "Working at student media outlets such as The Jambar, Jambar TV, YO Magazine, Penguin Rundown and Rookery Radio," are all examples of 'experiences' that are offered to YSU students and that give them the opportunity to learn what it is like to work in a newsroom or at a broadcast station.

Gobep suggests that potential journalism students should consider majoring in the "new program called the Journalism Broadcast and Digital Media track," referencing an academic track recently added as a focus within the journalism degree.

Cindy Royal – a professor and director of the Media Innovation Lab at Texas State University – agrees that a change is needed in traditional journalism program curricula.

In her 2018 article, "For Journalism Curriculum to Change, Its Faculty Needs Disruption," Royal writes "if we want graduates to have a chance at contributing...across a range of industries, profound changes to curriculum will be necessary."

Royal also acknowledges that for these needed changes to be made, faculty must be willing to adapt.

Yauger and Gobep both recognize that a change needs to be made to the curriculum that journalism students are learning. Then they were asked about how they perceived the current state of the journalism industry.

Before the interviews, it was predicted that both Yauger and Gobep would be optimistic about the state of the industry because they are both currently working as journalists in different areas of the industry.

That prediction was incorrect.

In fact, both journalists explained in their own words that the closing of The Vindicator caused them to rethink their career choices and that they have become slightly discouraged.

Yauger said he is currently creating a plan for what he would do when newspapers completely die off – and his word choice was very interesting.

Yauger said when newspapers die, not if newspapers die.

Indeed, Yauger is preparing for the worst in a career that he has admired for years.

Yauger was asked to share his reasons for wanting to become a journalist.

"I've always loved writing and

I've always known a good amount about sports, so it seemed like a natural fit," Yauger explained.

Yauger reflected on a time when his parents and grandparents told him at a young age that he would be on the sports television network, ESPN, when he was older.

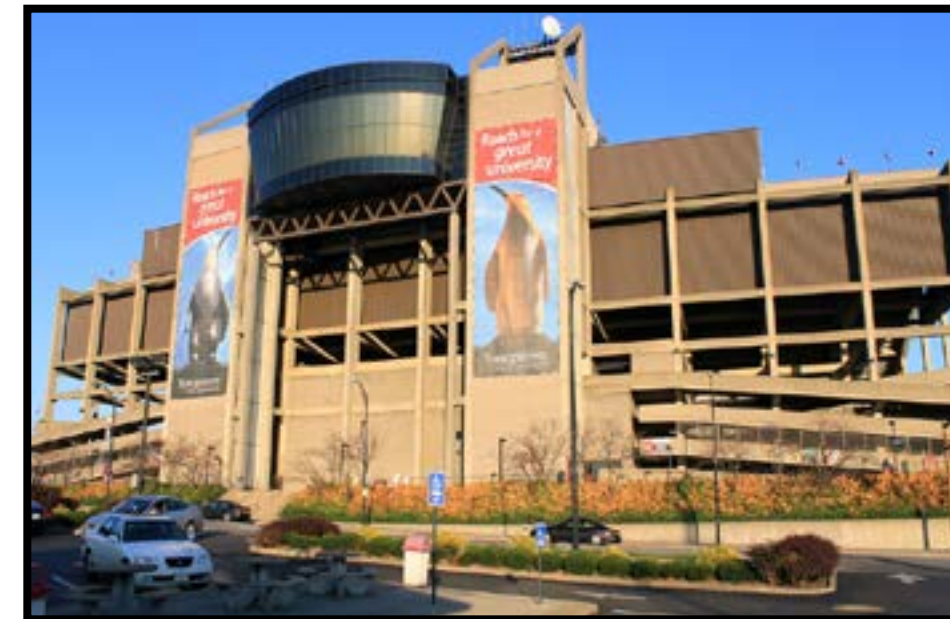
Although that remark ignited a passion for writing and learning about sports, Yauger admitted that for him, there was a major obstacle that would prevent him from ever being on ESPN.

"I hate being on camera and hearing the sound of my own voice basically gives me a panic attack because I get so uncomfortable," Yauger explained.

This is when he decided to combine his passion for sports and writing and follow the path of becoming a journalist.

Yauger again notes his reluctance of broadcast journalism while discussing his 'when newspapers die plan.'

"I want nothing to do with broadcast, so I've considered things like writing for magazines, or really focusing on photography and getting good enough at that where I could just be a photographer," Yauger



"Stambaugh Stadium, Youngstown State University III" by Jack W. Pearce. Source: Creative Commons.

**"Without journalism, politicians, businessmen and so many others will go unchecked."
- Rachel Gobep**

explained.

Given all he has said about it, would Yauger still recommend that prospective students pursue a career in journalism?

It turns out the answer is yes.

Despite his own personal discouragement, Yauger says that he would still recommend journalism because "there's always going to be a need for writers," but he stressed that students cannot expect to rely solely on writing and that they need to have other media skills in addition to writing ability.

"It's [the journalism industry] not all doom and gloom," Yauger said.

"With the rise of online-exclusive news sources, I think you can still make it as a writer - just be prepared to have plans B through Z."

Gobep's reaction was similar Yauger's after she learned about the closing of The Vindicator.

"At first, the closing of The Vindicator absolutely discouraged me as a journalism student."

Part of her discouragement stemmed from the fact that she wanted to begin her journalism career locally: "specifically at The Vindicator," she said.

She continued to explain that she has "a passion for telling Youngstown's stories, and I was worried that I would never have the ability to do that after graduation."

But Gobep used her discouragement to fuel her passion and effort to become the best journalist that she could be.

Throughout her career as a journalism student at YSU, Gobep's sole focus was to become a print journalist. After accepting the fact print journalism is considered to be a dying industry, she decided to become a more well-rounded journalism student by taking opportunities to gain experience "taking photos, shooting and editing video, writing broadcast scripts and anchoring for Jambar TV."

Yauger and Gobep were asked how they thought the closing of The Vindicator impacted them as journalism professionals.

Soon before The Vindicator closed, it had been announced that The Warren Tribune-Chronicle of Warren, Ohio, had purchased The Vindicator's masthead and its subscription list. It was this transaction that sparked curiosity of how the day-to-day life of the Tribune's employees would soon change on Sept. 1, 2019, after The Vindicator closed its doors for good.

Yauger, who as previously

mentioned is a Tribune staff-writer, shared insight from the perspective of an 'on-the-ground' journalist.

"My [day-to-day] job hasn't changed as much as you may think," Yauger explained, adding that the other employees in the sports department where he works weren't overly stressed by the additional workload.

"We've about doubled the amount of teams that [we] cover which is kind of fun," he explained, "I get to see new parts of the area that I've never been before."

However, Yauger explained that there was a slight downfall to his suddenly increased workload.

"Our Friday nights are more stressful because with The Vindicator edition of our paper, our deadline isn't too long after many of the football games end, so I usually have to write the story and send in pictures from my car or a McDonald's and then drive back to

the office," Yauger said.

As the editor-in-chief of The Jambar, Gobep found that the Vindicator's closing affected her job as well.

Gobep explained that The Jambar is "beginning to extend coverage into downtown Youngstown through the use of news content and arts and entertainment events."

However, because the Jambar is the student-run paper of YSU, it cannot go "overboard with coverage of [downtown]" because the newspaper's duty is to cover the university.

In a time where journalism is seen as a dying profession and members of the industry are targeted and attacked on a near daily basis, it seems contradictory to say that society needs journalism more than ever – yet that is the truth, and Gobep agrees.

"We are living in a time where

if journalists and journalism are not supported, we may not have the in-depth, watchdog coverage that we need," she explained. "Without journalism, politicians, businessmen and so many others will go unchecked."

When beginning this investigative report, the end-goal was to learn how the closing of The Vindicator emotionally and mentally impacted local journalism students. Now it is hoped that readers will have gained much more – an insight into how the journalism industry will be shaped by the young professionals who are learning the trade today.

Gobep's final statement in her interview should be used as a reminder to support local journalism before it's too late, as in the case of Youngstown's only daily newspaper, The Vindicator.

"I believe it is more important than ever to support journalism."

Youngstown's Loss of Voice

BY KAITLYN KELLEY



"Newspapers B&W (4)" by NS Newsflash. Source: Creative Commons.

Youngstown is more than just a city, and it's more than just a destination. For many people, Youngstown is a place with a rich history, an abundance of wonderful people and a permanent place to call home.

Unfortunately, a piece of that rich history may be lost forever.

Established in 1869, Youngstown's local daily newspaper, The Vindicator, permanently shut its doors in 2019 due to a lack of funding and a lack of demand... or so it seemed.

In the time it took to report this story, aspects of The Vindicator were suddenly bought and rebooted under the new ownership of Ogden Newspapers, and, according to WFMJ reporters Cotterman and Mitchell, The Vindicator has begun publication of a type again through a separate 'Vindicator' edition of another Mahoning Valley publication, the

Warren Tribune-Chronicle, under its publisher, Charles Jarvis, and its editor, Brenda Linert.

The Vindicator was owned by the Maag family, who are very well known in the area and for whom Youngstown State University's Maag Library is named. Being owned by a local family made the paper seem genuinely connected to Youngstown and gave its residents hope that the reporters they chose to hire would dig deep into Youngstown and report the things that mattered. However, with national owners Ogden Newspapers taking over part of its legacy, there is a concern that Youngstown won't get the coverage it deserves or be represented in the way it had been had through The Vindicator.

Being a mid-sized city, Youngstown does not boast the population of places such as Chicago or even smaller cities such as Pittsburgh. With only around 60,000 residents as of 2016, according

to the United States Census Bureau, the area is just barely large enough to be considered a city, especially with its population in steady decline as the years progressed.

Despite this, especially thanks to the city's university, Youngstown State University, the area is still home to many people, with plenty of local happenings occurring to report on daily. From its infamously high crime rate, with 43 crimes for every 1,000 people according to Youngstown's Neighborhood Scout, to the lesser-known achievements of local businesses, there was never a lack of things for The Vindicator to cover.

The reporters of the paper were known for being fearless and covered the gritty details of issues that other papers would never dare tackle, especially when they first formed. Whether it be the corruption of government officials or the truth behind the Ku Klux Klan; when William



"Working late" by verogabri. Source: Creative Commons.

“Journalism is under siege financially and politically... [and] I’m interested to see what happens to the area after the 2020 election.” - Guy Harrison

F. Maag Jr. started the paper, he began reporting these stories in order to improve Youngstown and tell the truth, no matter the repercussions. According to the 2019 Guardian article “Ohio newspaper that battled injustice for 150 years to shut down: ‘Scary for democracy’” by Adam Gabbat, these ‘repercussions’ included KKK members protesting regularly outside Maag’s house.

Maag’s legacy carried on through four generations of his family, all the way to its most recent general manager, Mark Brown, until its closure in 2019.

Paul Sracic, chair of the Political Science department at YSU, pointed out that historically, Youngstown has an issue with political corruption, and The Vindicator was Youngstown’s “watchdog” to prevent it from getting out of hand.

“While it is true that The Vindicator did not have much of an impact on national and international understandings, they kept an eye out to make sure that Youngstown was being represented accurately and fairly,” Sracic explained.

The Tribune will be able to pick up some of that slack, having picked up many reporters from The Vindicator, but we could still see problems.”

These are important points to consider. After all, The Warren Tribune-

Chronicle serves all of Mahoning County, not just Youngstown. There is a looming sense of the paper having too much to cover and not enough focus on the specifics of a certain area.

Dr. Guy Harrison, a Youngstown ‘transplant’ from Arizona who teaches Telecommunications Studies at YSU and who has a doctorate degree in journalism and mass communication, says he believes that Youngstown could suffer from a loss of voice with the closing of its historic paper.

In response to a question about a bigger media outlet providing the same level of accuracy in coverage as The Vindicator did, Harrison said: “If they [bigger media] want to cover it then they will, but they won’t want to. Journalism is under siege financially and politically... [and] I’m interested to see what happens to the area after the 2020 election.”

It certainly is difficult to talk about the closing of the paper without bringing politics into the picture. Despite its small size and steadily declining population since the closure of several major steel mills in the 1970s, Youngstown always seems to draw in presidential candidates like moths to a flame, where they often offer promises of jobs and a better future for the citizens of a falling city. It has become, says NPR reporter Marilyn Geewax in her 2016 article, a “political backdrop.”

Frequently, Youngstown comes up in several of those ever-so-politely written “Worst Places in America” lists, perhaps because it was the city that began deindustrialization. However, U.S. presidential candidates love using it to score points with the ‘blue collar,’ U.S. working class demographic. During its run, The Vindicator was there to help keep that in check and report on these types of things with a lack of bias and by providing a great deal of information for Youngstown’s residents. But now that it is gone, the fear that politicians will storm the city and say whatever they want with no ‘middleman’ to keep the citizens informed of the facts is more than mildly concerning for many.

Youngstown is a home for many people. Although the city is seeing a deadly decline in its population as the years progress, it is still a landmark and a key piece of Ohio’s history. The Vindicator was a notable and significant part of that history, and sadly, now the paper is history. It will certainly be interesting to see what happens to Youngstown as a result.

A move to online

BY RICHIE JULIANO



Pen and paper” by Carol Browne. Source: Creative Commons.

The city of Youngstown recently lost its daily newspaper, The Vindicator, which served Youngstown for the past 150 years. Youngstown’s only daily newspaper announced its closing in June of 2019. A tough, downward financial trend over the last few years required someone with capital to spend to save it - but a buyer was not found. The Vindicator’s General Manager, Mark Brown, said in a 2019 article for Poynter, “I’m not sure whether I did the right thing ... but we never imagined we wouldn’t be able to sell.”

The Vindicator was desperately looking for buyers to keep the newspaper going. Brown is very attached to the Youngstown news outlet, which his family has owned for four generations. Brown and his family are also the owners of one of Youngstown’s

two T.V. news channels - 21 WFMJ.

Although Brown eventually reached an agreement with national news organization Ogden Newspapers to buy some of the paper’s assets, such as its masthead and its subscription list, the newspaper itself closed in August 2019. According to an August 2019 article in The Warren Tribune Chronicle, which is also owned by Ogden Newspapers, it began producing two editions each day September 1. One of these editions focuses on Mahoning County and has the name The Vindicator, and will be sent to Vindicator subscribers for the rest of their subscription terms, with the option to renew subscriptions and receive the Warren Tribune-Chronicle thereafter. Ogden elected not to buy The Vindicator’s building in downtown Youngstown and both papers will be produced

by staff in its Warren offices.

According to WKBN news reporter Stan Boney, the Tribune-Chronicle’s Vindicator edition “will reach 50,000 households in Trumbull and Mahoning counties.” Although this edition will, in part, continue the legacy of The Vindicator throughout the Mahoning and Trumbull Valley areas, many of The Vindicator’s former employees have had to shift to other regions and businesses.

Youngstown State University Professor, Dr. Mary Beth Earnhardt, who was an active reader of The Vindicator, gave a prime example of this by describing the experience of a former student and Vindicator employee who had to relocate after the newspaper’s closing.

“One of my former students moved all the way to D.C., but for the most part, everyone I know

has found a new home.” Earnhardt said.

In a 2019 article for Fit Small Business Publications, Diana Bourgeois explained where journalists would have the most success finding a new job. New York City is the top city for journalists to get a job. Other top cities include Washington D.C., Los Angeles, Chicago, Boston, Philadelphia, Phoenix, San Antonio, Dallas and Houston. These cities could potentially provide opportunities for former Vindicator journalists to find new potisions, if they have not already.

A lot of people still read print journalism, but the rise of online news platform cannot go unacknowledged. In 2018, there were 243.6 million people who used social media in the United States, according to Statista

reporter J. Clement. The rise in online media has promoted subscriptions for online outlets across America.

According to a 2017 article by Tien Tzuo for Techcrunch Publications, “A recent Nielsen Scarborough study found that more than 169 million U.S. adults now read newspapers every month, in print, online or mobile. That’s almost 70 percent of the population.”

Advances in online news technology have allowed news agencies to charge readers for online subscription access to news content. Online news subscribers typically pay a monthly or yearly fee to be granted access to a news website’s content, but some online news sites allow a certain number of complimentary articles each month, or the option to purchase

articles individually. Online news agencies often grab people’s attention by posting parts of their stories on social media, such as Twitter, cutting off the story at its crux and encouraging readers to subscribe to get access to full story content.

Youngstown State University Telecommunications Professor, Dr. Guy Harrison, talked about the switch from print journalism to online media.

“Online media should be a consideration for the future, but I also believe there is still a market for both print and online journalism. I don’t think print journalism will or should go away,” Harrison said.



“CJP_20140616-250” by ASU_Cronkite. Source: reative Commons.

Conclusion

The closing of The Vindicator had a substantial impact on the Youngstown community in a variety of ways. It changed how future journalism professionals enrolled in YSU’s journalism program viewed the industry, it affected the lives of all former employees of the newspaper and it has permanently changed the way news is shared in the city of Youngstown. After reading these stories, we hope readers will have a deeper appreciation and understanding of the importance of local journalism in Youngstown and communities just like it who may soon be facing the loss of their Vindicators.

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Youngstown: From Steel Town to Entrepreneurship City

*Editing and Design by
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*"Stripping Molds from Steel Ingots
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Chapter 2: The Resurgence of Small Businesses in Youngstown

Youngstown was once a bastion of American industriousness, with a booming economy and a seemingly endless supply of well-paying jobs. However, in the late 1970s, the steel industry which drove Youngstown to economic prevalence began to shut down. This left the city decimated and impoverished.

Over the last 15 years, small business development has played a crucial role in the revitalization of Youngstown. In this piece, some of those small businesses that emerged from the ashes of the steel mills are highlighted. These small businesses prove that no situation is beyond the point of recovery because when a city is full of hardworking people, they will find a way to make the city succeed.

Locally Owned Artistic Businesses in Youngstown

BY SHAYNA BRYANT

Small businesses are the fabric of a city. Fancy Boutique is one of the small businesses comprising the 'fabric' of Youngstown.

Small businesses are often the glue holding a small city together. Many people do not realize the impact that small businesses have on small cities. They are what makes the city special, and each adds its own unique touch to the community.

According to a 2018 article in The Business Journal, small businesses are on the rise in Ohio. In Mahoning County specifically, there were 5,455 small businesses reported in October 2018.

Meredith Wood, writing for Business.com in 2018, stated that running a business comes with many challenges and obstacles, but small businesses provide innovation and job growth in small cities.

Kisha Holloway owns and operates Fancy Boutique in Youngstown. According to Melinda Hill Sineriz of Bizfluent, a boutique is "a small fashion store that offers a special selection of clothing and accessories to cater to a specific type of customer."

Holloway has been in business since July 27, 2015. She has always wanted to own her own business and explained she has worked very hard to get to where she is in life today.

"You can do anything if you put your mind to it," Holloway said.

"My biggest challenge is trying to stay up on all the latest fashion trends and run a business by myself."

Holloway was asked what challenges she faces as the owner of a small business in Youngstown.

"It's a challenge every day for me because you learn new things every day," Holloway said.

"As a business owner, I had to learn everything on my own. No one showed me the ropes on anything. So, everything I

know, I researched it and I am still learning and facing challenges with customers and vendors."

On what keeps her business thriving, Holloway said the most important thing is support.

"That's the biggest thing - some people support, and some don't," Holloway said.

Holloway's statement above helps explain how vital the interactions between the community and small businesses are to a small business' success. Without the support of the community, a small business is more likely to fail. Additionally, as explained by J. Mariah Brown in her 2018 SmallBusinessChron article, "How important are small businesses to local economies," without small businesses giving specialized products to consumers, economic growth in the community is unlikely.

Small businesses have an impact on not just their owners, but on the businesses and their customer bases as well. There are future goals that owners set based off their personal goals related to the business' development.

"I plan on hiring employees, so I no longer have to work," Holloway said of her long-term goals. "I want to venture off and start making my own clothes and [become] a fashion stylist."

Derek Miller, writing for The Balance in 2019, reported that small businesses created 1.9 million new jobs in the United States in 2015, and that the 30.2 million small businesses running in 2015 accounted for 99.9 percent of all U.S. businesses. Additionally, in George Nelson's 2016 Business Journal article, "Shop local on Small

"You can do anything if you put your mind to it."

- Kisha Holloway,
Owner of Fancy Boutique

Business Saturday," he explained that events like Small Business Saturday "bring broader attention to the value of patronizing local businesses."

Small Business Saturday is something that is promoted in Youngstown to showcase many of its small businesses. This impacts the city tremendously and gives local owners the chance to show people from Youngstown and surrounding cities what they have to offer.

Because some individuals may not know about certain small businesses in the area, this event also gives businesses an opportunity to potentially expand their customer bases and build relationships with other small business owners that they may not have been able to form before Small Business Saturday events.

Laura Neely is the owner of a small photography business in Youngstown called Image of Life Photography. She has been in business since 2008 and with more than a decade in the field, Neely remains focused on the bigger picture.

"The ultimate goal regarding my business is to one day have a studio with my own office but continue to do on-location photos," Neely said.

Many owners enjoy running their businesses and some have the goal of building something bigger. Neely is one of those owners.

"I would love to expand my business by traveling more to events or families or weddings."

In Dan O'Brien's 2019 article for the Business Journal, "A snapshot of small business in the five counties," he explains that small businesses have a great impact on Youngstown. Specifically, there are many events being created to showcase many different small businesses just to make the area aware of what the city of Youngstown has to offer.

With the support from the city, these small businesses can become very successful and significantly impact Youngstown's local economy for the better.



Drivers get a glimpse of downtown Youngstown while driving under an overpass. "Spring Common Underpass. "Eastbound Into the City"" by Jack W. Pearce. Courtesy of Creative Commons

Emergence of Industrial Businesses in Youngstown Following the Death of Steel Mills

BY WESLEY BEST

After the steel mills crashed in the 1970s, many workers were left without a job or a plan for their futures. This is the story of two men's families who persevered through this troublesome time to leave their marks on the city of Youngstown with their own small businesses.

More than 40 years ago, the city of Youngstown, Ohio, was changed forever. In her 2017 New York Post article, "The day that destroyed the working class," journalist Salena Zito explained that a previously steady and vital industry was devastated when in 1977, U.S Steel announced that they would be closing their Youngstown steel plant. This ushered in a tumultuous era for Youngstown.

Over the next two decades, nearly 100,000 jobs would leave the area and its population would plummet. However, Zito said this drastic and significant event has not destroyed the people in this area.

Despite the initial economic and social ruin left in the wake of the closing of the Youngstown steel mills, economist Kimberly Amadeo explained in her 2019 article for The Balance that the situation could have been much worse.

When unemployment occurs on such a massive scale, the unemployed population is more likely to repurpose and successfully begin an alternative career, a concept explored by D.J Wargo in his 1980 doctoral dissertation at Youngstown State University. Indeed, the economic stability of Youngstown was greatly improved by the emergence of the many small businesses in

Youngstown after the steel crash. According to research Wargo included in his thesis, it took more than 10 years—well into the 1980s—for this trend of small business growth to begin to take hold.

In the 1970s, Dave Margala Sr. made a great living running his family's business, Margala and Sons, Inc., a truck repair and parts distribution shop. In those days, the shop dealt almost exclusively with the steel distribution centers located in Youngstown but when the mills closed, Dave Sr. had to pivot to a new customer base. Specifically, Margala and Sons needed to market themselves to the new, budding industry of commodity shipping in Youngstown.

The modern trucking industry is arguably the most significant in Youngstown. In his 2016 article for The Business Journal, "No shortage of truckdrivers in Ohio," George Nelson said that one in 15 jobs in Ohio are filled by truck drivers.

With this massively important industry now well established in Youngstown, the Margala family takes advantage of the need to provide tractor-trailer maintenance and service.

Both Dave Margala Sr. and his son, Dave Margala Jr., work on these trucks and source the parts for their maintenance.

"Every day, I buy old parts off of truck wrecks and new parts, then we work on company trucks and owner-operator trucks," Dave Jr. said.

This service is important for many reasons. First, tractor-trailer trucks are extremely expensive to replace. According to Steve Altman, a writer for Auto Edu-

cation Journal, the total investment in a tractor-trailer truck can total \$500,000. These trucks are expected to traverse an incredible number of miles – some more than one million, Altman said.

Although the trucking industry is very important to the economy of Youngstown, it also has led to a rise in some of the most pressing societal issues in the United States at present within Youngstown limits, as well as an increase in criminal activity associated with these issues. Specifically, in 2018, WKBN reporter Gerry Ricciuti said that Youngstown is one of the cities with the highest prevalence of sex trafficking in America.

It is easy to see how the growth of the trucking industry and Youngstown's proximity to major highways increases the prevalence of sex trafficking in the city. Additionally, drug trafficking is also on the rise in Youngstown, which CBS News reporter Doug Hastings, in his 2009 article "Drug smugglers aided by U.S. truck program," said is bolstered by the presence of the trucking industry.

This puts into perspective the effects of this industry on Youngstown, both the positive and the negative. Although the city's economy is greatly supported by the trucking industry, the 'criminal culture' that so often works in its shadows also provides a great deal of consternation to Youngstown residents and causes the industry's reputation in Youngstown to suffer.

Although Dave Sr. and the Margala family were able to find sustainable employment

to move into following the crash of the steel industry, not every business owner who had their career affected by the crash was able to change course and maintain a good living. Some of these people had to search for a new calling altogether in a totally unrelated field.

This is what happened to Frank Cimmento after the steel mills closed.

When Frank went to work at U.S Steel in the late 1970s, he didn't know that his career would have a shelf life of only one and a half years. After he lost his job at U.S. Steel, Frank tried to find a job that brought some joy to his life and eventually found one in the Northeast Ohio Federal Prison, which has since been converted to a state prison.

However, after nearly 30 years as a guard and later a parole officer, he was diagnosed with cancer. A diagnosis like that can change one's life.

After Frank's cancer went into remission, he decided he would do what he loved and started his own catering business, Cimmento's Backyard BBQ. Frank's son, Andrew, is now an integral part of the

business.

While dishing out a plate of delicious barbecue pork, Andrew, a large man over 6-foot-tall, spoke about the importance of men like his father in post-1970s 'reborn' Youngstown.

Andrew explained that Cimmento's Backyard BBQ uses only locally raised pork and chicken for their catering and that the business's signature barbecue sauce is "a total secret" known only to his father, Frank.

Despite the many challenges Youngstown has faced since the 1970s, there are many traditions that continue to thrive, such as the culture surrounding local high school football teams, which are a staple of life in the Youngstown area and attract thousands of fans every Friday night.

When a city loses an industry as significant to it as the steel mills were to Youngstown, there will be damage — there is no way to avoid that. But if families like the Margalas and the Cimmentos persevere and continue to stimulate the local economy, the city will always have a chance to rise above its losses.

While speaking with Andrew, the reason why became evident. Andrew, like so many others who chose to remain in Youngstown following the loss of its steel mills, loves his city. And just like so many others who maintain small businesses there today, Andrew is very proud of everything about Youngstown, accepting both the good and the bad in stride.

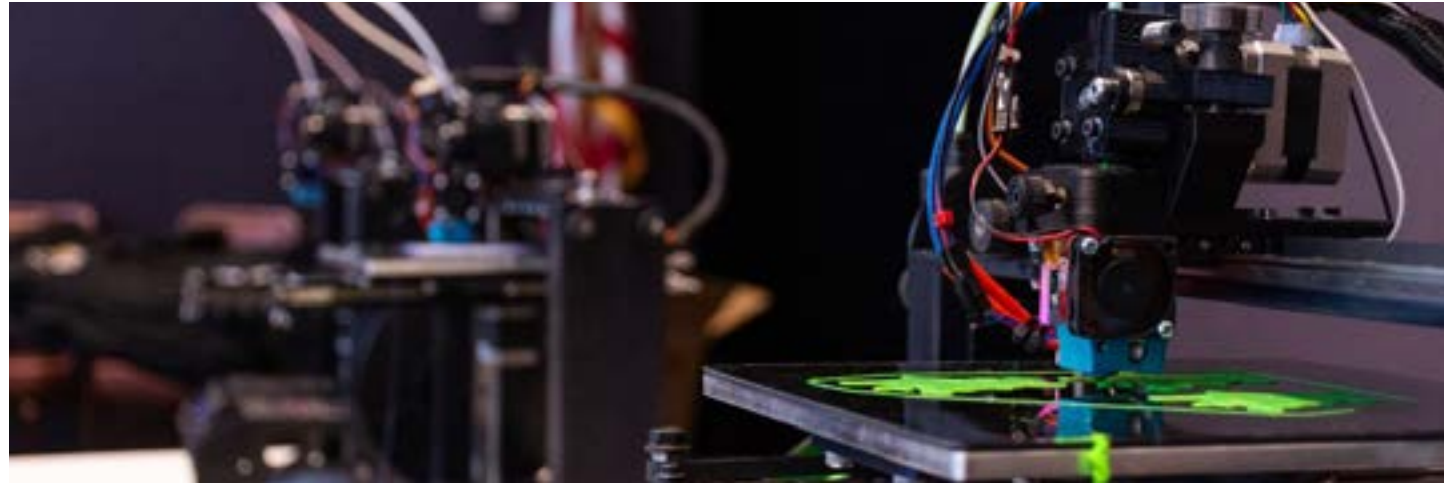
Youngstown is a city which has been through more than most: Economic prosperity, financial hardship, raging murder rates in the 1990s and now, a devastating opioid crisis. Yet despite this strife, the city goes on because of the people who call it home. Families like the Margalas and Cimmentos love this city and will not give up on it. In fact, they actively make attempts to immerse themselves ever deeper into the city.

This is symptomatic of the cult of personality which is found among people from Youngstown. They are tough, hardworking and proud.

As long as there are people who will fight to keep their city relevant, Youngstown will remain so for many years to come.



Youngstown Sheet and Co. closed its Campbell Works doors Sept. 19, 1977. "Youngstown Sheet and Tube" by bobengland. Courtesy of Creative Commons



A 3D printer pictured at Youngstown State University's fifth annual Hackathon. Photo by Tanner Mondok

Youngstown's Tech Industry — Making its Mark on the Map

BY RACHEL CLIFTON

Youngstown is a city that has long been defined by the fall of its once thriving economy with the shuttering of local steel mills in the 1970s. A city that was once bustling with business and economic security fell hard, and the intensity was felt locally and nationally.

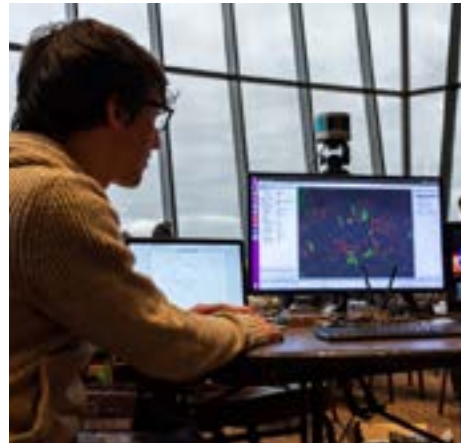
The matter is so prevalent that the National Institute of Standards and Technology created a film called "Rethinking Manufacturing," explaining how Youngstown was affected by the closing of the steel mills.

Documents presented in the film show how the area is "rethinking manufacturing," focusing on additive technologies and other forms of technology to help the area make an economic comeback.

It is without question that Youngstown is going through changes, but many are wondering, "how is the shift to technological industries redefining the community?"

New technology and entrepreneurship may be the key to freeing Youngstown from its reputation as a fallen city, and many

organizations in the community believe technology is the opportunity the city has been waiting for since the steel mills closed.



YSU graduate Nick Borucki participates in the the fifth annual Hackathon in February 2019. Photo by Tanner Mondok

Youngstown State University and the Youngstown Business Incubator have worked together to help bring different businesses to the Youngstown area. YBI focuses on providing resources for tech start-ups businesses, while YSU boasts several entrepreneurship programs and a fellowship opportunity. Together, these organizations combine education, resources and connections

to fund not only individual companies but the Youngstown community, as well.

Meredith Wood, editor-in-chief of Fundera, an online marketplace for small businesses, explains why small businesses are vital to the local communities that house these businesses.

"Small businesses inject jobs and revenue back into local communities while helping to spark innovation, and provide opportunities for women, minorities and immigrants," Wood said.

For Youngstown, the resurgence of small businesses provides the community with a sense of hope that was lost long ago.

The Youngstown Business Incubator

241 W. Federal St. in Youngstown, Ohio, may appear to be just another old office building in the city's downtown area, but the inside of the building tells the story of Youngstown's emerging technological future.

Walking down Federal Street, there is no shortage of bars, corner stores and even a children's museum.

It is also home to many different businesses and organizations, all contributing to Youngstown's economic growth by providing jobs for the city's citizens and generating tax revenue for the city. The YBI provides noteworthy contributions to not only the city's present, but its future as well - promising qualities for what Marcia Pledger, business reporter for the Cleveland Plain Dealer, said in 2015 was the number one-rated business incubator in North America.

When YBI's office is approached from the street, a quick pull on the door reveals the door is locked. An intercom to the right of the door connects the outside world with YBI's secretary, who asks about the visitor's business with the company. Once a visitor is buzzed into the old brick building, the evidence of transformations taking place for many of YBI's affiliated businesses is all around.

Bright colors, neon lights and modern decorations transform the old office building into a cutting-edge and exciting place. Whatever is happening in this building, it feels new and refreshing.

In some ways, YBI has experienced just as much change as Youngstown. Founded in 1995, YBI originally used government money to renovate old and unused buildings for use by local businesses.

In his 2019 article for U.S. News and World Report, "Youngstown's Business Incubator looks to the future," John Ettorre explained that things changed in 2005 when an initiative was passed so that YBI could help technology startups create technology-based businesses. This initiative was the turning point for YBI, narrowing its focus from developing businesses to developing technologically inclined businesses, which became an important distinction for the Youngstown

community.

It seems that Ohio government also saw the promise in this distinction.

Corey Patrick, the director of marketing and communications at YBI, said YBI was further awarded a grant to fund a program that provides support for any Ohio-based organization that has an additive manufacturing technology such as 3D printing.

Gianna Serra, the client services manager at YBI, works with YBI's portfolio companies to make sure they are on track and getting the most out of the programs and services the incubator has to offer.

"Since we have state guidelines, they limit us to work with companies based in Ohio, and then also technology companies," Serra said.

"They recently expanded that to tech-enabled companies, which allows us to work with more ... [and] we have a few different programs for our technology companies. We offer them support through an entrepreneur-in-residence, which is basically like a business counselor/consultant that helps you really guide 'the ship' of the business, basically.

The entrepreneur in residence ... they might help connect them to

into the company, help to make introductions, to finding those first customers so that a company can say, 'you know, we're already working with this company, this is why you should buy a product,' to helping with

general market research to make sure that there's actually a market for a business idea."

But it's not just advice that YBI has to offer.

"From funding, and... connecting people to funding, not necessarily through ourselves, and customer discovery," Serra said, YBI provides its partners with a diverse array of services.

"In addition, we have a few different resources through... IBM Cloud and Amazon Web services - then we, through YBI, are able to offer discounts to our startups, so they get a lot of software discounted by working with us too," Serra said.

The former Vindicator newspaper building houses Juggerbot 3D, a local company that builds industrial 3D printers that businesses in the community utilize.

According to a 2019 WFMJ news article by reporter Steve Vesey, "YSU Grads want you to 'rethink manufacturing,'" the building's shift



Fitz Frames makes 3D printed glasses in the basement of the Youngstown Business Incubator. Photo courtesy of Matt Lawson

from housing 2D newspaper printers to housing 3D printers is very telling of the shift from manufacturing to technology the Youngstown community is experiencing.



Matt Lawson was an intern at Fitz Frames while he was studying mechanical engineering at YSU. He now works at Fitz Frames full time. Photo courtesy of Matt Lawson

Though helping local startups is central to YBI's mission, they are also able to help Youngstown in another way—bringing outside startups to the area.

Fitz Frames, an emerging manufacturer, creates children's glasses made through 3D printing and, seeing the potential in the Youngstown area, decided to make Youngstown its business 'home.'

In a 2019 Business Journal article by Jeremy Lydic, titled "Fitz Frames Finds YBI a Perfect Fit for its Eyewear," Fitz Frames now operates out of one of YBI's office spaces and utilizes an intern from YSU to advance their 3D printing process and develop their company.

"We do see a lot of small businesses, but I would say in addition to that, YBI works with companies that are outside of Ohio in... California, or... France, and a few from Israel, that want to launch in the U.S.," Serra said.

"[For] the California-based companies a lot of the times, because of their manufacturing or because of the technology here in Northeast Ohio; they want to launch here. And those are generally pretty big companies.

A good example of that is Fitz Frames... They created an app that scans your face and will custom 3D

print kids' glasses. The cool thing with them is that they actually said, 'we tried to launch this company elsewhere and it made sense for us to launch it here in Youngstown.' ... Because of the 3-D printing technology here, and then Classic Optical, which is a large glasses lens supplier [and] is right up on Belmont; it made perfect sense to locate here as opposed to LA where they were based."

YBI is doing a great deal to help Youngstown grow but the thriving incubator doesn't just help its portfolio companies.

YBI aims to help every business it can reach by hosting a program that is run by gener8tor, another business incubator stationed in Michigan.

In 2019, Jeremy Nobile, a finance reporter for Crain's Cleveland Business, wrote about a program called gBETA that provides tech startups with seven weeks of mentorship and coaching. They also get access to over \$1 million worth of technological support for their businesses from companies such as Amazon, PayPal and Microsoft.

Although technology companies are the main focus for YBI, they are also expanding so they can help more women and minority-owned businesses, regardless of whether they are a tech company or not. This is due in large part to additional funding for these endeavors provided to them by the state of Ohio.

"Back in 2016, we realized we were turning a lot of people away in the community that wanted to start an accounting services business or a catering company since it wasn't qualified under tech for state funding," Serra explained.

"So we started a 'Women in Entrepreneurship' program, that any business can go through that's woman-owned, and then in January, 2018, we were awarded another grant from the state of Ohio to be a

minority business assistance center."

Even with the assistance of YBI, it is still possible that a business might not succeed. However, Serra explained that this can have positive outcomes for an emerging business.

"I think a lot of people do fail, but if you fail fast then it's easier to start something successful," Serra said.

YSU/YBI Connection

Joseph Angelo, an adjunct marketing professor at YSU and a self-described 'serial entrepreneur,' is involved with many of the learning opportunities potential entrepreneurs have at YSU. Angelo's office is in the Williamson College of Business Administration, where the college itself is a symbol of the value YSU has placed upon business development. The building is considered by the university to be the most technologically advanced building it has, according to its website.

One of the more recent programs created by YSU is the Monus Entrepreneurship Fellowship. According to a 2016 article in The Business Journal, the Monus Fellowship program assists students with opportunities to develop their knowledge of entrepreneurship by placing appointed fellows with local entrepreneurs to help with their businesses.

Angelo explained how the program functions, as well as YBI's involvement with the program.

"It's a more prestigious opportunity for students - it's not your typical internship," Angelo said.

"We like to place them at entrepreneurial entities in the region, working for the entrepreneurs. There's been a bit of a misconception that it's just YBI. YBI is a key partner ... the majority of our students do get placed at YBI, out of convenience, plus they have a lot of portfolio companies that fit the bill, entrepreneurial and

so on."

Angelo said that it doesn't necessarily matter where the student is placed for the internship, as long as the student is learning in an environment where they can thrive.

"I'm adamant about the student getting real-world entrepreneurial experience. Even if they are at YBI, I want them to spend 95% of their time with the founder and the startup company, not doing YBI's Facebook posts, with the company," he said.

"That being said, because it's more prestigious, because we have more stringent requirements for the fellowship, I want my students to have a little more autonomy than a typical intern."

Because Angelo is also an entrepreneur, he has a realistic view of what it takes to be an entrepreneur, making it clear he is passionate about sharing that view with his students.

"The real-world entrepreneurial experience is there's no such thing as job description - your job description is 'yes," Angelo said.

"Doing anything that needs to be done, and sometimes it's fun, exciting things, but sometimes it's cleaning the bathroom."

Looking Toward the Future

Despite all the work being put in to revive Youngstown and redefine the city, Youngstown still has room to grow and a lot of different opportunities to be seized.

Angelo believes the city still has a long way to go if it is going to be defined by its technology industry.

"I'm a Youngstown native so I love the area, I love the region, I love the people, but this area has so much untapped opportunity ... potential," Angelo said.

"But people are hard workers and smart and fair-minded and all these other things, so I think there's a lot of room for growth in the

region. Technical companies are one dimension, maybe one dimension of that growth, but it's not limited to that.

For something like this to be a tech centric region, we've got to creatively recruit both industry and human capital - people with that skill set to come here and stay here - so we'll see if all that happens."

Even though Youngstown hasn't reached its peak in terms of being recognized as a technological region, it is certainly on track to keep expanding its technological industry and there are a lot of opportunities to be had for anyone in the region with the ambition to go after their dreams.

Angelo offers some advice for success that he believes is important for everybody, not just entrepreneurs.

"If you start applying limits to your activities in terms of success and failure and start perceiving things as failures, you'll get discouraged and you won't persevere," Angelo said.

"When you think of going through a marketing campaign and it didn't blow your mind with the results, instead of thinking of it as failing, think of it as an experiment: 'I'm experimenting with this, and it didn't work. Ok, let's try something different next time.'"

As it would seem, Youngstown is following that advice and persevering.

"I'm a Youngstown native, so I love the area, I love the region, I love the people, but this area has so much untapped opportunity, potential."

- Joseph Angelo, YSU Marketing Professor

Conclusion

Adversity is a condition of human existence. All great people must overcome it to truly realize their potential. When Youngstown was hit with economic disaster in the 1970s, followed by a mass exodus of the city's population, many people wrote the city off. Historical records show that this period saw bleak days for the people of Youngstown who stayed.

However, these strong people did not quit - they persevered and built a new economy centered around small businesses. Small businesses like Cimmento's BBQ, Margala and Sons, Image of Life Photography and Fancey Boutique have helped the city to recover. Youngstown is beginning to thrive with the increasing growth of organizations like the Youngstown Business Incubator, and the city has a bright future on the cutting edge of technology. When 'big industry' failed this city, the burden fell to Youngstown's residents to rebuild their economy – and rebuild they did, branching into many industries and even trailblazing new ones.

The story of Youngstown from the 'steel crash' to the present is a compelling one, and the city is certainly one to watch as it blazes into the future.

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Chapter 3

Beautification and Environmental Cleanup of Youngstown

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Photo: J. Harvard Feldhouse

A county is a reflection
of the communities
it supports, and each
community mirrors the
individuals comprising it.



A pavilion in the Fellows Riverside Garden. Photo: Lindsey Chludzinski

Introduction

The relationship between citizens is bidirectional; the community exists to meet the needs of the people but without the reinvestment of those people, the community cannot subsist.

Defining community is easier said than done. For some it is the people that share a geographic area. For others it is more personal and includes the meaningful connections between one another. Regardless of one's definition, it is hard to ignore the fact that community relies on the individuals within it. A community can only grow if its members dedicate themselves to doing something about it.

Such is the case for Mahoning County. Through the efforts of local organizations such as the Mahoning County Green Team, Green Youngstown, Youngstown CityScape, Friends of the Mahoning River and Mill Creek Metroparks, there has been an increase in community involvement to recognize the Mahoning County area for what it could be. The Mahoning County Green Team and Green Youngstown educate and encourage the community in attempts to foster a

higher participation in recycling, waste reduction and beautification. Non-profit organization Youngstown CityScape focuses on the cleanup and revitalization of downtown Youngstown. Friends of the Mahoning River strives to clean up the Mahoning River while also promoting recreation, restoration and educating the residents of the Mahoning Valley about the importance of the river and why it must be kept clean. Mill Creek MetroParks aims to provide a peaceful environment for outdoor recreation that is easily accessible for people with a wide variety of interests by providing educational resources and well-maintained facilities.

Collectively, these four organizations have begun the long process of creating a culture that cultivates success and collaboration within the community. With their continued efforts and with support from its residents, the Mahoning County area is sure to see good days ahead.

The Services of Mahoning County Green Team and Green Youngstown

*“Project52
Recyclable” by
MDelli . Courtesy
of Creative
Commons*

By: Alyssa Lutker

Edited: Frances Clause

The Mahoning County Green Team and Green Youngstown are both committed to cleaning up and beautifying Youngstown and the greater Mahoning County area. The Green Team, otherwise known as the Mahoning County Solid Waste District, serves the entire county. Green Youngstown was formed from the Green Team to provide a centralized team specifically for the city of Youngstown. Jennifer Jones, former Green Youngstown program coordinator, explained they are partially funded by the fees landfills in Mahoning County pay for collecting trash. Both organizations provide recycling services and sustainability education programs to reach their primary goals: Increasing recycling, reducing waste and encouraging community involvement.

Recycling in Mahoning County

Michelle Nicks reported in 2019 that there was a 10 percent increase in Mahoning County’s recycling rates between 2017 and 2018. Presently, Jones says there is roughly a 25 percent recycling rate in the city of Youngstown. The Green Team and Green Youngstown offer curbside recycling in their designated areas but if a resident lives somewhere that uses only a centralized dumpster, such as most apartment complexes, they must take their recyclables to one of the many drop-off sites in the county.

Recycling is a business. The recyclables are bundled and sold to manufacturers; thus, it must profit to fund its continuation.

Items that are not recyclable, such as an unopened can of soup or Styrofoam, take up time and money to remove from recycling bins.

Because Mahoning County

is a single stream recycling operation, items considered “tanglers” cost the organizations as well because they wrap around the pulleys and conveyor belts, jamming the system that sorts the recyclable materials mechanically. These items, which are considered non-recyclable, include hoses, cords, holiday lights and flexible film packaging.

When people illegally dump couches, chairs, cabinets, mattresses and other items at drop-off sites, it costs the Green Team and Green Youngstown a great deal of money to take these items to a landfill, which takes away funds for other services. As a result, they have had to consider closing sites that receive the most illegal dumping and put up cameras and staff patrols at the remaining sites, making recycling at drop-off sites less convenient for some people.

In addition to the regular recycling services, the Green Team and Green Youngstown offer drives, collecting items that are not accepted at recycling drop-off sites and that harm landfills.

“One of the ways that we help protect our landfills and our ground water is by keeping things out of landfills that should never be in them,” Jones explained.

Household hazardous wastes, such as cleaning chemicals, paints, oil and other toxins can seep into the ground water and poison it more easily than solid waste. Electronics contain lots of chemicals, such as cadmium and mercury. Many appliances, such as air conditioners and refrigerators, contain freon which, if it is released into the air, can cause respiratory problems. There are drives for the collection of household hazardous wastes, electronics and appliances throughout the year.

Electronics can be extremely expensive

to recycle. Jones explained that one cathode-ray (CR) TV usually costs around \$50-70 to recycle. In 2019, WKBN anchor Nicolette Pizzuto reported that Green Youngstown partnered with manufacturing company Vallourec to fund an electronics drive for the Youngstown community. In addition, citizens recycling these items are usually asked to pay a small fee to help offset the bill.

The Green Team and Green Youngstown also offer tire drives to help reduce the waste and illegal dumping of tires. Piles of tires are often set on fire which releases toxic compounds into the air, ground and nearby water. In addition to tires being a fire hazard, WKBN anchor Brittany Bissell reported in 2018 that they can also be a health hazard because they create a breeding ground for mosquitoes, which are vectors for diseases.

Every fall, the Green Team and Green Youngstown give away brown paper leaf litter bags to help reduce the amount of leaves in landfills. They offer a curbside pickup service to retrieve the full leaf litter bags for composting. It is important to keep leaf litter out of landfills because when it decomposes in a landfill, it releases methane gas that can seep into the ground. According to the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), the methane gas can be the medium that carries other toxins out of the landfill, and if enough gas is generated, it can seep beneath nearby buildings and create a risk for explosions.

Beautification and Litter Clean-Up

Litter clean-up and beautification is also an important goal of Green Youngstown. In 2018, the Ohio Department of Transportation (ODOT) spent \$200,000 on litter cleanup and disposal by state workers for Trumbull and Mahoning County. According to a 2019 article by WFMJ reporter Matt Stone, ODOT said this money represents taxpayer dollars that could be used to fix roads if it weren’t for all the litter in the way. It is difficult for one, or even a few, organizations to clean up and beautify an entire city. Jones emphasized the importance of community involvement and said there has been “a real

resurgence in community involvement” in her 10 years with Green Youngstown. Areas that are beautified are less likely to be littered or experience illegal dumping within their limits. Green Youngstown has been working to plant flowers at highway on and off-ramps in the city because on and off-ramps tend to be targets for the most trash.

Green Youngstown wants everyone in the community to join them in the fight for beautification. For large community groups, Green Youngstown has a no-fee rental trailer, RUBY, containing a wide range of tools and equipment for beautifying large areas, such as parks, vacant lots, abandoned houses, or even a whole neighborhood. The trailer is rented almost every weekend from April through September and has been used at projects such as the cleanup and beautification of Crandall Park.

In addition to the equipment rental, Green Youngstown offers a pickup service for the debris collected at the site. Green Youngstown’s website provides instructions and suggestions for organizing a cleanup. Jones said anyone wanting to borrow yard maintenance tools for their own private property should inquire at the Youngstown Neighborhood Development Corporation. Small groups of individuals looking to do a small cleanup can also borrow rakes, shovels, litter pickers, gloves and garbage bags.

Education

A unanimous opinion from Jones, Flynn, and Jamille Murphy, the educator aide of Green Youngstown, is that educating the public on sustainability and recycling is incredibly important to the organization’s goals of making the county green and litter free.

There is a noticeable focus in the organizations’ education programs with children, both in school and outside of school at libraries and other venues. The programs for children usually involve a book and craft for younger children, and educational activities for the older youths.

Murphy described a program where she dresses as a ladybug and reads the book

The Grouchy Ladybug, which discusses the importance of bugs to the environment. After the book, children make a ladybug magnet for their refrigerator. Flynn spent the month of October in a pumpkin costume reading Pumpkin Jack, a book about a boy who leaves his jack-o-lantern in the garden with its seeds. The children learn about composting and how it is better than putting compostable materials into the garbage.

The green educators teach third-grade students about natural resources and explain where each recyclable item comes from. The older children get to participate in environmental shopping, an activity where they are told to pick one out of two items the green educator has brought that is packaged in a way that would be best for the environment. High school students can create a miniature edible landfill to help them understand how a landfill differs from a dump. The educators show them how landfills try to protect the environment by

doing things like collecting the methane gas that is created for other, positive purposes, such as a program in Lowellville, where buildings are powered by electricity created from methane gas collected at the Poland landfill, Flynn explained.

The Green Team also hosts three contests per year to help foster enthusiasm and learning in children. From October through April, the Green Team educators collect aluminum cans from the schools that sign up for Cash for Cans and take them to a scrap dealer. At the end of June, each school gets a check for their cans that they can use for whatever they want.

At Christmas time, there is an ornament contest where children can submit homemade ornaments made from reusable materials. The ornaments are then used to decorate a tree they have at Fellows Riverside Gardens.

In the spring, they have a poster contest for grades 1-8. Participants design a reduce, reuse, recycle or don't litter poster and a winner is



"Fellows Riverside Gardens - Rotunda" by Jack W. Pearce. Courtesy of Creative Commons



"BigBelly Solar Trash Compactor & Recycling Bin at State/Randolph (NW Corner)" by Zolk. Courtesy of Creative Commons.

picked from each grade. The winners get 3,000 paper placemats printed with their poster on it and then the placemats are given to restaurants to use and help spread the message. All the winners are invited to the Mahoning County Commissioners' meeting and are recognized for their accomplishments.

Flynn said some children will begin to recognize her from the Green Team.

"That makes you feel like they're listening and they're learning something and they're having fun doing it," Flynn said.

Murphy has had children call their office and ask to sign up for recycling bins themselves.

In addition to the programs for children, Jones has been to senior citizen centers, Red Hat societies, and block-watch meetings to promote the Green Team's message, and at the time of publication, Flynn had been scheduled to give a talk updating retired firemen and policemen about the new recycling rules and regulations, such as reduction in accepted plastics.

Often, educational pamphlets are offered to

groups, such as one produced by the Mahoning County Engineers which informs readers of the main pollutants of a watershed, how they affect the ecosystem and solutions for individual action. There are also pamphlets that inform the public as to where recycling drop-off sites are located and what can be recycled. The same pamphlet offers alternative recycling options for items that are not accepted at the drop-off sites, such as Styrofoam.

Keeping Mahoning County Green

The Mahoning Green Team and Green Youngstown work to educate and encourage the community to recycle, clean up and beautify Youngstown and the greater Mahoning county area. Although winter tends to be a quieter time for the Green Team and Green Youngstown, residents can expect to see representatives from both bustling around when spring arrives, working to educate and encourage the community to keep Mahoning County green.

Impact of Youngstown CityScape

By: Logan Misik
Edited: Ian Frantz

Youngstown was once a very successful city in the United States. A booming steel industry that began during the 1900s helped bring prosperity to the area. But this success would eventually begin to fade. As of late, the city has slipped far from its previous stature. After the steel industry fell apart in the 1970s, many people started to leave the area. The city has lost more than half of its population since then, and the inner city has become a mess of poverty and horribly kept communities, as detailed by Youngstown historian Sean Posey in his 2013 article, "America's Fastest Shrinking City." Many have noticed the eye sore of a city that has resulted from these events and have decided to make change, including numerous non-profit organizations that have 'bringing the city of Youngtown back to its former glory' as part of their mission statements.

One of these organizations is Youngstown CityScape.

CityScape was established 14 years ago

in 2005, but its history and influence run back years before that. In 1998, a project known as "Streetscape" was started to help bring the community together to work on landscaping and the overall cleanliness of the city. This project eventually evolved into what is now known as CityScape, according to CityScape's official website. The cause has more support than ever before, with many donors and volunteers. The people at CityScape want to rid the inner city of its run-down appearance. With many dirty, seemingly lifeless streets and an ever-increasing number of vacant and abandoned houses, it is easy to see why Youngstown's population has decreased so much since the 1970s. CityScape plans to change this, and already has to some degree.

While keeping Youngstown clean is CityScape's main goal, they also want to bring people back to the city. In 2015 USA Systems, a Florida-based maintenance services company, published an article explaining why it's crucial for cities to keep

their streets clean. One of the benefits of this, the article states, is that having clean, foliage-lined streets has a significant effect on people and how they view a city. Program Director of CityScape, Adam Lee, said that although they want to show visitors that Youngstown is a great place to be, they first want to please current residents in the area. He explained that a lot of CityScape's projects are undertaken mainly for the residents, like beautifying parks and providing leisure activities such as disc golf and exercise equipment. Having things for people to do in their communities and keeping people active gives them more of an incentive to stay. According to a 2014 article by University of Delaware organization "Delaware Complete Communities Toolbox," studies have also shown there is a link between "the built environment and the physical, social, and economic health of a community," which means these actions also lead to the creation of a much more vibrant community environment.

None of these things could be possible without donations to CityScape, which come from many different places.

The city of Youngstown itself is the main source of funding for CityScape. However, CityScape also receives donations from community members. CityScape does a decent amount of work around Youngstown State University's campus as well, and the university is also a CityScape donor.

Having so many different funding sources can make attaining revitalization goals much easier for CityScape. The number of volunteers they get is also a big help to them.

CityScape runs downtown workdays specifically for volunteers. These workdays last two hours and volunteers work toward a different goal or project every time. Another way CityScape encourages community member involvement in its organization is by having their yearly Youngstown Beautification Awards. These awards give incentives to people in the community to keep

“Studies show that there is a link between the built environment and the physical, social, and economic health of a community.”

- University of Delaware

Photos: Ian Frantz



their own houses and properties clean, as well as encouraging them to help with different community events. CityScape gets business owners involved, too.

Having these awards and CityScape itself creates a much tighter bond in the community and brings everyone together from their own small communities to make their impact affect the entire city. Writing for Futurity in 2014, Tomas Barrett-Cardiff said that having a tight-knit community can greatly improve one's mental health. This shows outsiders that it may be a great idea to move into the area.

One specific instance of a small community making an impact is Wick Neighbors.

Wick Neighbors is a non-profit organization that focuses on the same things as CityScape, but on a smaller scale. This organization has their sights set mostly on the community surrounding Wick Park. It consists of residents of that same area who work together to keep the area around Wick Park as nice as possible. In 2014, CityScape and Wick Neighbors merged to increase the overall impact of their work on Youngstown.

Wick Neighbors employee Diana Plecker said that the organization is a lot more volunteer-oriented and dependent because they do not get large donations like CityScape does,

so the work done by the organizations falls to the people in the community. Wick Neighbors volunteers work a lot on the redevelopment of houses around Wick Park, making it a better area for current residents, as well as for people planning to move to the area.

Organizational partnerships are a great way to help revitalize and renew small towns and cities, according to Rachakona Prabhu,

writing on the topic for Medium in 2018. Since partnerships like the one between Wick Neighbors and CityScape have been happening in Youngstown, a lot of progress has been made and volunteers for each from the community have worked together to accomplish these tasks.

Overall, the community of Youngstown has done a great job in the cleanup of the city. With the inner city being probably the most important due to its higher population and business stature, it has been CityScape's top priority to continue these projects in inner-city areas.

CityScape, which started one of the first 'Youngstown beautification' initiatives, has had a huge influence on the community. In his 2015 article for The New York Times, Scott Sowers said projects like those described above have put Youngstown on a positive path forward.

Soon, Youngstown may be able to return to its historic stature and continue to grow past its previous standards.



Chunk the Squirrel munches on a tree nut in Wick Park. Photo: Ian Frantz



The Wick Park Recreation Building (top) and the Wick Park playground (bottom) are right next to each other in the park. Photos: Ian Frantz



Friends of the Mahoning River

By: Najah Morgan Edited: Angelica Diaz

Friends of the Mahoning River (FMR) is a non-profit organization located in Youngstown, Ohio. The organization was started in 2012 by a group of people who decided it was time to make a change to the quality of the Mahoning river because of all the negative perceptions people had about it. FMR advocates for improving the river through education, recreation and restoration. The organization has a vision for the Mahoning river to support itself through environmental sustainability and enhancements. This organization is extremely important to the community and promotes respect for it among community members. If people don't respect the river, they will never be able to understand the importance of it.

FMR uses the Oak Hill Collaborative organization located at 507 Oak Hill Ave. in Youngstown, Ohio, for their meeting space on the third Monday of every month. The organization is led by an all-volunteer group of board members and they are always looking for volunteers to assist in river projects and



Photo: Najah Morgan

much more. They provide river clean-ups and volunteers are especially needed to help with that. Several events are held throughout the year and information on these events can be found on their website,

<https://friendsofthemahoningriver.org/>.

There are several projects currently underway to help improve the river by cleaning up any garbage and debris. The projects also consist of dam removals, education, recreation, stewardship and volunteer monitoring. The dam removals help restore the natural flow of the river. Educating people about the river and its importance could make a person become more interested in taking the right steps to help restore it, as well as encouraging them to spread the word about restoration, themselves. Recreation on the river gets people involved with going out on the river to see it for themselves. Stewardship involves river cleanups. The volunteer monitoring consists of measuring surface water at different locations of the river for physical-chemical parameters.

"We believe the Mahoning River is worth protecting and we strive to bring it back to pre-industrial standards through projects that educate the public and restore the river's water quality," the FMR website states.

Patricia Dunbar, president and a board member of Friends of the Mahoning River, is also one of its founding members.

"Our group really was started because we wanted to get the community involved with the river," Dunbar said.

"Our mission is that we advocate for the improvement of the Mahoning river through education, recreation and restoration."

Riverfest, which celebrated its eighth anniversary in June 2019, is FMR's biggest annual event, and is one of its most important events for promoting the river. The event is so big and popular that it requires its own committee, 'The Riverfest committee,' to plan

The Mahoning River. Photo: Najah Morgan



and implement. This event is free and open to the public and advocates for cleaning up the river, educating the community on the river and getting people involved with the river by taking them out kayaking and canoeing so they can see the river from a different point of view.

According to the Eastgate Regional Council of Governments website, Mahoning River Restoration, the river was dammed up in a few different places to provide cooling water for the big steel industries that were settled along the Mahoning river. Once those steel industries began going out of business and closing their doors, the river was filled with a lot of pollution which began killing the river's fish population. FMR's primary goal of cleaning and restoring the river could possibly bring more life back into the river.

According to the Ohio EPA, the lower part of the Mahoning river serves Youngstown, Warren and Lordstown. The upper part of the river serves as public drinking water for Newton Falls and Sebring.

"Youngstown and its surrounding communities are predominant in the central portion of the watershed," the Ohio EPA's website states.

Dunbar explained that for many years, people either did not notice the river or took it for granted, in much the same way that the steel mills used it as a waste dump. People do not realize the importance of the river and how much of a critical role it plays in the lives of everyone in Mahoning county as well as the other cities who benefit from the river — and FMR wants to change this.

In his 2018 article for The Review, Harry Paidas said he is surprised when he mentions going for a jog along the Mahoning Valley Trail and people are shocked and don't know what or where that is.

"Until I became a little more curious about this river that I grew up with and only recently re-discovered, I would have never realized the impact it has had on my life," Paidas said.

The Mahoning river is not a wasteland or a place to be taken advantage of - it is a vital source of life for plants and animals, and one of the main sources of water for the Mahoning Valley. Through continually reinforcing its goal to clean the river and perhaps restore life to it, FMR hopes that promoting the river and trying to make people more aware of it will make more Mahoning Valley residents care for and help protect its future.

The Merits of Mill Creek

By: Lindsey Chludzinski
Edited: Sierra Kish

"Fellows Riverside Gardens - Glacier Lake" by Jack W. Pearce. Courtesy of Creative Commons



Mill Creek Park contains some of the Mahoning Valley's rich history. Photo: Lindsey Chludzinski

Nearly 130 years ago, a local lawyer rode away from burgeoning Youngstown to an oasis of forest-covered land. It was there, amid a pocket of natural beauty surrounded by pollution that Volney Rodgers began to envision what would become Ohio's first Metroparks system. Rodgers saw a place where people could temporarily abandon crowded, dirty city life and absorb the sweetness of Ohio's rich natural beauty, and committed himself to preserving it.

After considerable effort, expense, and painstaking planning, Rodgers successfully opened Mill Creek Park to the public. Although the original 400 acres have now grown to nearly 3,000, the primary intent for Mill Creek has remained much the same. The park system continues to provide a peaceful retreat for citizens that enriches the community environmentally, economically and educationally.

Executive Director of Mill Creek Metroparks, Mr. Aaron Young, and President of the Board of Park Commissioners, Mr. Lee Frey, do an excellent job of leading the decision-making and operational activities of Mill Creek.

According to Mill Creek MetroParks Board of Park Commissioners' 2018 Annual Report; Young, Frey and their teams collaborate to further the mission of Mill Creek by focusing on four distinct objectives: to be responsive to community needs, to be environmentally sound, to be adaptable, and to be economically responsible. Together, Mill Creek and the Mahoning Valley form a sort of symbiotic relationship, neither complete without the other.

Young is a self-described "avid outdoorsman" and has served as the executive director of Mill Creek MetroParks since 2015. He came well prepared for the job, with a degree in landscape architecture, experience in environmental planning and a history in both the public and private sectors of parks and recreation. During an interview at the picturesque MetroParks farm in Canfield, his commitment to serving the Mahoning Valley population was more than apparent. He likened the role of the park in the community to a "convenience store for recreation," and explained that "everybody wants something

different, and they also tend to want something different at a different schedule.” Instead of shying away from this challenge, Young explained that Mill Creek approaches this demand as an achievable goal, aiming to “provide high level recreational opportunities at all times.” They accomplish this well with a wide variety of facilities, services and opportunities.

Mill Creek MetroParks consists of miles of biking and hiking trails, historical sites, lakes, a pond, a nature center, an educational center, a nature preserve, rentable facilities, a golf course and numerous recreational areas. Fellows Riverside Gardens is known for its incredible beauty and is often a destination for local weddings and celebrations. The old log cabin serves as an excellent location for get-togethers. As shared on its website, endless potential adventures exist in the expanse of Mill Creek.

On any given day, a wide demographic is served by facilities of Mill Creek MetroParks. The sound of children excitedly spotting turtles and goldfish and the low murmuring of couples circling the lily pond serve as pleasant complements to rustling textbook pages as college students take their studies outdoors, perhaps to escape from artificial dorm lighting. Elsewhere, boaters and fishermen enjoy the peace of Lake Newport and Lake Glacier. Visitors travel back in time when they visit the restored and operating historic landmark, Lanterman’s Mill, dating from the mid-1800s.

In addition to the Mill Creek’s year-round accessible spaces, a vast range of educational courses are available throughout the year.

In 2018 alone, 457 school education programs (both on and off site) were offered and programs such as ballroom dancing classes, Master Gardener certifications,

concerts, festivals and cleanups were held, as well. With the Mahoning Valley’s large and diverse population, the park system’s commitment to providing something for everyone’s needs seems insurmountable. Nevertheless, somehow; those needs are continuously being met.

Accommodating so many people while preserving the natural resources of the park requires difficult decision-making, balance and policy. Fortunately, Frey is well acquainted with that kind of pressure. His experience in city government as a school board member,

councilman and mayor uniquely prepared him for the demands of the park’s board of commissioners. Further, his time as a psychology teacher, coach and athletic director have equipped him with the people skills necessary to execute his job with the community in mind.

Frey is a personable, intelligent man with a storyteller’s heart. In answers given to questions about his role with Mill Creek, his answers sometimes bordered

on the philosophical side, failing to hide his passion for serving the community.

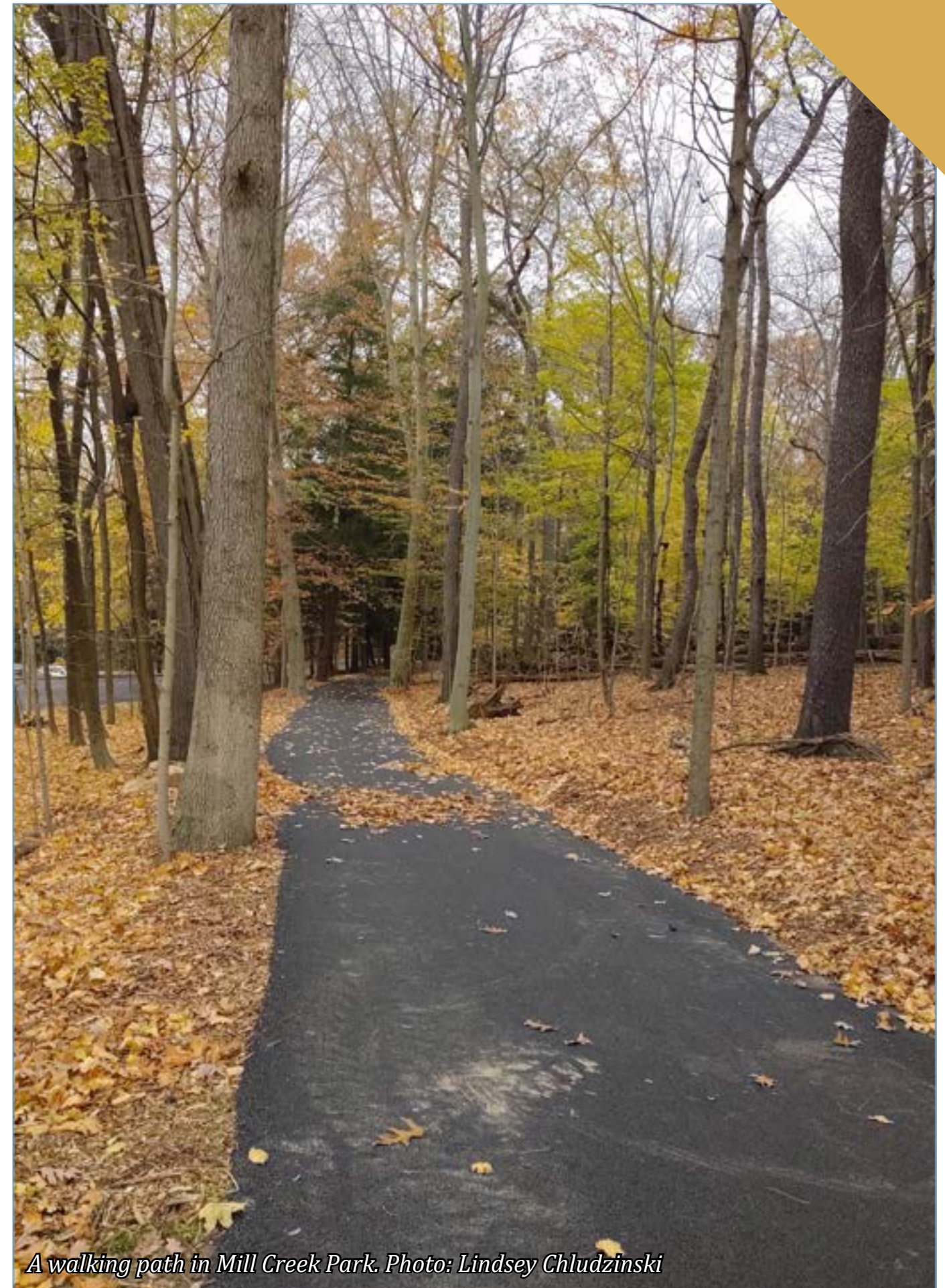
“You have to believe in what you are doing,” Frey said of his work with Mill Creek.

“You can’t just verbalize it; you actually have to believe it. If I didn’t believe I could make a difference, I wouldn’t have tried.”

The job of the board of commissioners is not an easy one. All policy or monetary issues are brought before them and decisions must be made on behalf of all of Mahoning County, a population of nearly 300,000, yet only a few of the most passionate will present their perspective.

“You’re going to have groups of people coming in who are going to try and influence your decision. But you represent all of Mahoning County, because all of Mahoning County pays taxes to the park,” Frey said.

“You can’t just verbalize it; you actually have to believe it. If I didn’t believe I could make a difference, I wouldn’t have tried.”



A walking path in Mill Creek Park. Photo: Lindsey Chludzinski

You have to do your own research, you have to talk to lots of people... you have to say to yourself, 'if I make this decision to support 20 people, how does it affect the other 290,000 people in Mahoning County? Is that a positive or negative effect? How do I think those other 290,000 people in Mahoning County view the decision being made?'"

Time and again, while speaking with both Young and Frey, it was apparent that Mill Creek and those who work for it are committed to responsibly serving the community. Both Young and Frey described fundraising efforts for improvements on Mill Creek's educational centers and emphasized the importance of being fiscally responsible. Taxpayer dollars go to maintenance of present structures and new efforts are made through donations and fundraising. Advice from the community is fielded through surveys before new plans are put into action.

Environmental matters, such as an old and ongoing concern about water quality, are

carefully weighed with the future in mind. In many cases, nature can repair itself when left alone more effectively than with intervention. Other times, man-made solutions may be too slow or expensive to implement or may become obsolete too quickly to be effective.

Although Young and Frey realize they cannot foresee every implication of their decisions, they take time to consider as many possibilities as they can.

Despite the many challenges faced in managing such an extensive park system, Mill Creek Metro Park continues to grow and adapt to the ever-changing population.

"As the community evolves, it's important that its MetroParks Systems evolves alongside it," Young explained.

Recently, this tenet has been expressed through the installation of a disc golf course at the Metro Farm, preparations for improvements on the Ford Nature Center and a master plan to develop the Vickers Nature Preserve.

The benefits of having a good park system embedded in an urban area are well acknowledged. A 2016 study by Larson, Jennings and Cloutier, designed to quantify the effect of 'green space' in urban areas, found that the amount and quality of park coverage is positively correlated with physical wellbeing, community wellbeing and citizens' sense of purpose. Findings from an in-depth study on Cleveland's MetroParks system, conducted by the Trust for Public Land in 2013, found that metro parks can provide many economic benefits, such as increased property values, decreased stormwater management costs and decreased health costs due to decreased pollution. They also attract visitors, businesses and residents and improve overall quality of life in urban areas.

Frey summarizes these positive effects well.

"Mill Creek offers a chance for the community to get together. It's a destination place. People in the community can go for hundreds of different reasons."

Metro parks are designed to benefit the



Photo: Lindsey Chludzinski

community, but the effects of that commitment only come to fruition when community members choose to utilize the resources available to them.

Frey described Mill Creek with terms like "breathtaking" and "really beautiful" and was unable to choose a favorite part of the park, maintaining that although "there is a lot that's special, there's nothing that's special-est [sic]."

Young echoed Frey's sentiment and asserted, "I'm not disappointed anywhere I go."

The incredible beauty that composes Mill Creek today is not unlike what first impressed Rodgers so deeply over a century ago. Yet, the value of this metro park system, economically, educationally and environmentally, did not develop naturally. Rather, it has taken decades of planning, research, decision-making and an unending commitment to Mill Creek's mission of providing a place that best serves the community to bring its full intentions to fruition. Although it is impossible to predict precisely the future face of Mill Creek's facilities, through a continuation of good leadership and passionate community involvement, there is little doubt that the park will always be a breathtaking oasis.



Lantermans Mill. Photo: Lindsey Chludzinski



Photo: Lindsey Chludzinski

Rose growing in the Fellows Riverside Garden. Photo: Lindsey Chludzinski



How Can People Participate in Their Local MetroPark?



Fellows Riverside Gardens is located on McKinley Avenue in Youngstown. Photo: Lindsey Chludzinski

The beauty of Mill Creek would be fruitless if it weren't for the people it serves. Community members can invest in their metro park by volunteering, providing feedback, staying informed, donating to projects and utilizing facilities.

Mill Creek volunteers play a significant role in the park's functioning. In 2018 alone volunteers put in nearly 13,000 hours of service dedicated to the park and its programs.

As Mill Creek grows, it will continue to rely on the needs of the community to guide its direction. When asked how locals could support Mill Creek's progress, Young expressed that Mill Creek needs to hear from people.

"If we are going to be serving the public, we'd like to hear from them."

Specifically, the park system is in the middle of a public input period on

its renovation plan for Vickers Nature Reserve. Comments can be left online or on the Metro Park's Facebook page. Perhaps the best thing that the public can do is to stay informed on what their local park system is doing and enjoy the experiences it offers. Changes and challenges will always occur, but when the community is ready to rally together problems will only be avenues of growth.

"People are passionate about their park system," Young explains, "and I think in the time that I've been there the park has experienced its own challenges, but I don't think that is new. And I don't think it goes away and I don't know that it's necessarily good that it goes away. People need to be active; they need to know what their Metro Parks is doing, and they need to know that the Metro Parks is here in service of them."

Conclusion

Clearly, there has been a resurgence of community involvement in the Mahoning County area. Citizens have taken action to clean up the county by recycling, reducing waste, cleaning up littered areas and beautifying neglected properties.

Although each of these organizations have different methods, their missions are all remarkably similar. Each are committed to creating a beautiful, clean, healthy Mahoning County.

It is the spirit of these efforts, the dedication of citizens to the place they call home, that has fueled the development of an already noticeable improvement in the area. Together, with the continued efforts of these organizations and the combined passion of the individuals of our community, we can make Mahoning County leave a good and lasting impression on all who pass through it.

In this way the alliance between the community and its inhabitants will be continued. A cleaner, more beautiful county will motivate new residents to move in and encourage current residents to take pride in and continue to reinvest in their hometowns. Individual efforts will strengthen their local communities, which in turn will build a stronger, revitalized Mahoning County.

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Acknowledgments

Thank you to everyone who made this book possible, including J. Harvard (Nate) Feldhouse for taking on the monumental task of assembling the final product, and YSU Maag Library Curator and Archivist Cassie Nesor, who ensured this book and future versions of it would be preserved on Digital MAAG into perpetuity.

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Published online in conjunction with Digital MAAG /
Youngstown State University.