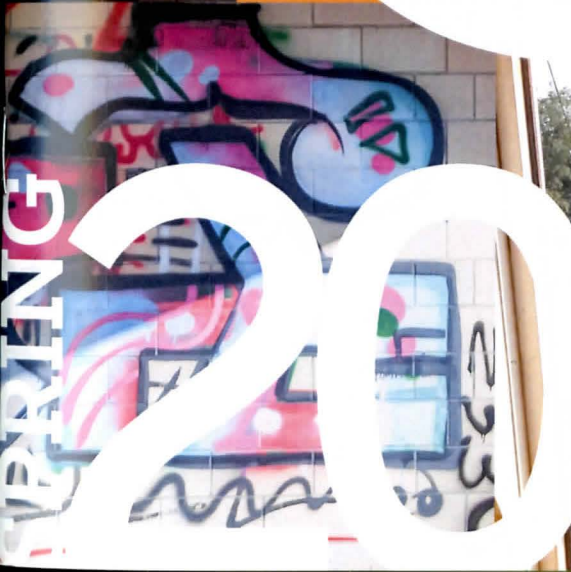




YOUTH
OHIO
TAGGART



BRING
2017

YO MAGAZINE

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The Yo Magazine is published once per year by The Jambar, Youngstown State University's student-run newspaper.

A whole is the sum of its parts, the same way Youngstown is the sum of all who call it home.

So this year The Jambar decided to partner with Youngstown's rebranding project, City Of You, to create a magazine that highlights the city and all it has to offer.

Putting New PROJECTS INPLACE

by JORDAN UNGER



Photos by Gabrielle Fellows

With winter slowly transitioning into spring in the Midwest, buds of life and color accompany the warmth of an approaching summer. This revival of life, however, will take another form in Youngstown, Ohio, as five teams begin work on their Innovative Plan for Leveraging Arts through Community Engagement projects that aim to revitalize the city through creativity.

The National Endowment for the Arts funded the INPLACE initiative with a \$100,000 grant last year, which gives \$20,000 to each team for their projects. The teams consist of local artists, entrepreneurs, Youngstown State University students and other dedicated individuals in the area who are working to shine a new light on Youngstown. Fifteen teams sent in proposals with five being selected to meet the grant most effectively, including the Light the Community, Shipping Container Bus Shelter, Solar Screen, the Wedge at Hazel Hill and Mahoning Avenue Archway.

SHIPPING CONTAINER BUS SHELTER

Anthony Armeni, an art professor at YSU, spends his spare time picking parts and pieces out of fabrication shops and scrap hoppers for his sculptures. This inspired his team's INPLACE project, which will see the repurposing of an old shipping container into a bus shelter in downtown Youngstown.

A fabrication shop owned by Ed Macabobby, another member of the team, brought the idea to life when Armeni visited. "He had a couple of shipping containers that he was looking to do something unique with," Armeni said.

This project will do just that, he said. The approximately 20 foot shipping container bus shelter will be fabricated and painted reddish-orange before being installed on the street, hosting a design that Armeni said has received positive responses from his colleagues.

"It's going to be pretty prominent," Armeni said. "The design is going to set it apart from the architecture and its surroundings."

The location of the bus shelter has not yet been confirmed. Daniel Newman, Youngstown State University student and team member, said the shipping container, regardless of where it is placed, will draw attention to the Youngstown bussing system in a beautiful way. "I think it is important for everyone to think about sharing rides now, and conserving energy," Newman said. Newman graduates from Youngstown State University this semester and said that this project is the perfect way to tie up his years in the art department.

"In a way it sort of comes full circle because before I went to school here, I didn't even sculpt at all," Newman said. "Even fabrication. I never welded until Tony showed me how, so I'm really excited to be working with him on this project."

LIGHT THE COMMUNITY

Imagine a stage in the heart of the city designed to project shadow art onto the city walls. This is the vision of the seventh grade class at Valley Christian School's Lewis School for Gifted Learning.

Angelo LaMarca, art teacher at the Lewis Center, said he asked his students to brainstorm ideas when a few of them shared a similar concept for the project.

"We're basically putting together the platform, the stage, and the structure to perform using shadow art," LaMarca said.

The stage is planned to be on Emily Street, which up until last year received little activity, LaMarca said.

"With the new annex there and the amphitheater coming, that street is going to become a popular [location]," LaMarca said. "They want that street to take on a lot of the traffic that Federal [Street] takes on right now."



At the beginning of morning art classes, the lights go down, the spotlights illuminate and the students perform their shadow art to music, dancing and handmade props in the shape of animals and buildings.

They are practicing for a skit performance which could be one of many at the stage when complete. Each student has taken on a different role in piecing the skit together, from performing to manning the spotlights and music. Sara Reichard, Lewis Center director, said she is beyond proud of LaMarca and the students for receiving the grant.

"The process of what the kids had to go through was exactly what we're going for at the school," Reichard said. "We're trying to push them to do things in more of an adult way... This was real-world use, it was investing time and energy into our downtown area that we love."

The skit will be performed at the INPLACE projects presentation on March 3 at the Covelli Centre.



Innovative Plan for
Leveraging Arts
Through Community
Engagement



SOLAR SCREEN

Youngstown's continued growth in additive manufacturing inspired the INPLACE Solar Screen sculpture, which was designed to keep the city artwork in an innovative state of mind.

The sculpture will consist of 3D printed clay bricks stacked to form a curved vertical wall spanning from east to west to follow the pattern of the sun throughout the day. LED lights and solar sensors will be incorporated into the structure, storing energy to light up the sculpture at night for passerby traffic. YSU art professor Missy McCormick said the structure will change depending on the amount of sunlight that day.

"It will be really exciting to have that piece [and] to watch it," McCormick said. "Drive by it at night, drive by it during the day and see it at different times, different seasons."

Kent State University professors Brian Peters and Daphne Peters are members of the Solar Screen project as well. Brian Peters has been recognized for work in 3D printing and Daphne Peters is experienced in environmental graphic design, key components in the Solar Screen. A location has not been confirmed, but the sculpture will be a fitting addition to Youngstown, McCormick said.

"There's a lot of focus in Youngstown on 3D printing, so even though the designer of this piece isn't from Youngstown, I think that it's going to be nice to have a 3D printed permanent sculpture," McCormick said. "It's going to, in a sense, highlight our focus in town."

McCormick will specialize in ceramics on the project. She said this is the first community project she has been a part of since moving to Youngstown five years ago, something McCormick is very excited about.

"It's a great opportunity to increase the arts in our community and to get our community involved," McCormick said. "It's interesting to work with other creative thinkers outside of the art department."

THE WEDGE AT HAZEL HILL

The Wedge at Hazel Hill is a project that was designed to enhance the idea of nature being an art form. The project reimagines the hill next to the Youngstown Historical Center of Industry and Labor museum in downtown to promote green infrastructure in the area. Gabriella Gessler, member of the team and YSU Student Government Association president, said the wedge will begin at the top of Hazel Street and Wood Street, making its way down to Front Street. "We're doing a curb cut in the road right there to allow water file through more appropriately," Gessler said.

She said the wedge will be accompanied by a rain garden traveling down the hill onto a natural stage at the bottom. The stage will host local performers and community events, as well as YSU meditation and yoga courses. The plan for the Wedge at Hazel Hill is to tell a narrative, Gessler said. "As you come down the hill, there's going to be signs explaining what that green infrastructure looks like with the rain garden and... the purpose of the bioretention," Gessler said. "There's signs going from the steel museum, so it's kind of showing what Youngstown used to be... and how it's evolving into a more green and locally-focused area."

A pop-up greenhouse is in the works at the wedge as well, an idea that YSU student and team member Tyler Miller-Gordon personally wanted to be implemented. "It feeds into that idea of green infrastructure and environmental sustainability, but it could also provide such a great opportunity for research and involvement of the university," Miller-Gordon said. "In doing so, we could hopefully produce [fresh vegetables] that could then come back to the YSU food pantry."

Gessler said that the wedge will bring the campus and downtown Youngstown communities together since it is on the outskirts of both areas. "In the eyes of students on campus, that's where YSU ends," Gessler said. "It's literally serving as a bridge to kind of close that gap a little bit more and extend the end of campus as much as we can."

MAHONING AVENUE ARCHWAY

Commuters may not see much when driving under the overhead railroad archway leading Mahoning Avenue into downtown. For YSU alumni David Tamulonis and the rest his team, the structure is a sight of promise. The Mahoning Avenue Archway project intends to enhance the archway into aesthetically welcoming entrance to and from downtown Youngstown. Tamulonis

said the idea came from previous ideas of a bike trail down Mahoning Avenue.

"We chose the archway because [the] structure itself is such a strong, striking and resilient structure and we thought that that drew parallels to the citizens of Youngstown staying strong and resilient," Tamulonis said. "So we thought it was an interesting structure to highlight."

First steps for the project involve cleaning up the top of the bridge and insulating the interior to prevent leakage. LED strips will be implemented around both sides of the arch with soft orange lighting inside, Tamulonis said. "It's sort of taking the glow of the steel hearth and the steel mills," Tamulonis said.

YNDC director Ian Benison and Eric Carlson from Dicky Electric are partaking in the Mahoning Avenue Archway as well.

Tamulonis, a Youngstown native, said he has seen Youngstown improve immensely since visiting his grandma as a child. He said projects like this, and all of the INPLACE projects, have helped to make this improvement happen.

"It gives people a sense of pride in the community," Tamulonis said. "I think that these things like placemaking and public art, while they may seem trivial to some people, play an enormous role in civics and creating community engagement."





Youngstown's Young Entrepreneurs

by JENNIFER RODRIGUEZ

Photos by Erica Sanchez

Youngstown is full of young entrepreneurs who are making a difference by creating, producing and succeeding in the Valley.

O.K.B.S.

O.K.B.S., which stands for Official Kutz Barber Shop, opened eight years ago in Youngstown. Brothers Edward and Louis Franklin are co-owners along with Eric Shields.

“O.K.B.S. is a full-service grooming barber shop,” said Edward Franklin. “We are the epitome of what a barber shop should represent. As licensed master barbers, our educational and professional experience provides our clients with the most pristine, valuable and convenient services in the area.”

O.K.B.S. offers a variety of services including hot towel facials, scalp manipulations, close-up shaves and precision hair-cuts. Both Edward and Louis Franklin graduated from Chaney High School. A few months later, they enrolled into barber school.

“Being a barber, you are your own boss and you have the chance to create your own destiny,” said Louis Franklin. “It’s fun, creative and I like feeling satisfied and happy with my work.”

O.K.B.S. is located in the heart of the south side of Youngstown at 60 W Indianola Ave, Youngstown, OH 44507

BIG APPLE

Amir Hasan is only 26 years old and is already running his own business on the east side of Youngstown.

Big Apple is a convenient store and gas station located on Albert street. It is open seven days a week and stays open until roughly 1-2 a.m.

“We sell gas, groceries, lottery, you can pay bills and we also offer Western Union,” said Hasan. He also plans to open a kitchen soon and start selling hot foods.

Hasan was born in California but was raised in Campbell, Ohio. He graduated from Campbell Memorial High School and also attended Youngstown State University for business.

Hasan said although being a young business owner can be stressful and take a toll on one's social life, there are also lots of benefits.

"It gives you an opportunity to give back to the community and help others. I get to work for myself and I can put my own ideas into the business," he said.

SERENITY INK

If you're thinking of getting some new ink any time soon you may want to check into Serenity Ink right on Southern Blvd.

Parker started tattooing in 2010. In 2014, he opened his own tattoo shop on the south side of Youngstown. In 2017 he opened under a new name "Serenity Ink", after his daughter.

"I've been drawing my whole life," he said. "I learned to draw from my dad, but tattooing, that was a lot harder than I expected it to be."

As any new business owner has experienced, Parker had to look for clients when he first started.

"I had a friend that would let me practice on him when I was getting started," he said. "From there I got better and better."

Parker feels it is important to bring and keep local businesses inside the city.

"I wanted to keep my business inside Youngstown. I thought that was important since a lot of businesses move out to other places," he said.

Now, Parker is up to 20 customers a week and is known to many as one of the best tattoo artists in town.

VALLEY DELIVERED GOODS

Despite just opening in December of 2016, Valley Delivered Goods is already serving all of Mahoning, Trumbull and Columbiana counties. Dandrae Rodgers and Kasondra Davis are co-owners of Valley Delivered Goods, a delivery service with lots to offer.

When you visit their website, <http://www.valleydeliveredgoods.com/>, you can choose from a drop down menu which service you would like: groceries, restaurants, errands or lunch.

Services are ordered online. Groceries and errands that are ordered before 11 a.m. get same-day delivery.

Valley Delivered Goods is connected with a number of restaurants in the city, and even if the restaurant you want is not on the list they will still pick up your order for you.

Davis said this type of delivery service is usually offered in bigger cities, but it's the first of its kind for Youngstown.

AGARTS

AGarts stands for Artistic Genius arts, and was created by Campbell native Jayaira Ghrim. At 25 years old she has proven herself a true artist.



Ghrim said AGarts is her brand and is skilled with photography, short films, art and poetry.

Ghrim started painting and drawing at eight years old. She didn't stop there though. Being true to herself, she felt it undeniable to venture off into other directions. She started writing at age 13. Her first book "Painfully Beautiful" was published in 2013 and her second in 2015 is called "Dirty Diamonds."

Ghrim has been responsible for several art shows in the urban community including "The Starving Artist" and "Completely Naked." She is currently working on her third show and plans to keep them coming.

She said she felt it was important to bring this type of art experience into the inner city. "I went from working a 9-5 job to full entrepreneurship," she said. "A lot of people say it's not possible so I'm ready to prove everybody wrong."

YOUNGSTOWN FLEA

April 23, 2016 was a day to remember for Derrick McDowell. It was the very first day the Youngstown Flea, a flea market he created, began.

The Youngstown Flea is located in the parking lot of the Covelli Centre in downtown Youngstown. It takes place once a month between April and October.

McDowell said he wanted to create a place for local businesses and vendors to sell their products.

"I saw a problem for small businesses in Youngstown and decided to fix it," said McDowell.

One of the requirements to be a vendor at the Youngstown Flea is that you have to be a small business, not a part of a corporation.

At the flea market, you can find all kinds of products from hand-made antiques to collectables, furniture and art work. In the first month alone there were 1,500 people in attendance and 38 vendors, and it's been growing since.

McDowell is also the creator of the brand "We Are A Generation" which represents people who are dedicated to enhancing and bettering the community.

"We don't have to be alike, except in the mentality that I want to change the world for the better."

SAJA'S BEAUTY BAR

Saja Abdel-Razeq is the owner of Saja's Beauty Bar on Southern Blvd, which opened in 2015.

Abdel-Razeq graduated in 2008 from Casal Aveda Institute for cosmetology. She specializes in threading eyebrows as well as micro blading semi-permanent tattoos, which she learned in Las Vegas.

"I am certified with tattoo guns but I like using blades because they are more precise," she said.



Abdel-Razeq said she started out working at a stand in the mall and from there, her clientele grew.

“I worked at a few different places before owning my own salon. Wherever I went, my clients came with me,” she said.

Eyebrows are not the only thing she can thread. She is able to thread any part of the face and several places on the body. Saja’s Beauty Bar also has a hairstylist who tends to hair, wigs and eyelashes.

“I’m working on expanding to have everything: barbers, nail artists and more in one salon,” said Abdel-Razeq.

THE SOAP GALLERY

In late 2015, Daniel Rauschenbach followed his dream of owning his own art gallery and opened the Soap Gallery in downtown Youngstown.

Rauschenbach graduated from Struthers High School. After earning a degree in ceramics, he is now pursuing a master’s degree in american studies at Youngstown State University.

Rauschenbach said the Soap Gallery holds four to five events each month. Some of these events are art classes and yoga classes. Every first Friday of the month, there is an art show from 6-9 p.m.

The art show is inviting and open to the public. There is music, food and drinks. Guests are also able to make purchases of the art that is displayed.



Rauschenbach feels the city is filled with great potential and loves being from Youngstown.

“The biggest part of being a young entrepreneur is promoting Youngstown,” he said.

The reason he decided to open an art Gallery here is, “because this is where I am from, and I love it.”

REDHEAD RED BLEND

If you are a wine lover, then you do not want to miss out on the opportunity to sip on some of Youngstown’s own RedHead Red Blend wine. Marisa Sergi is a young woman from Youngstown who decided to start her own wine business right here in the city.

“I am a third-generation winemaker and decided I wanted to [make] my passion for my family tradition into a full blown career,” she said.

Sergi said her product is currently sold in roughly 200 stores in Ohio. She also has plans to take the business nationwide.

“Any store that sells wine has the capability of selling RedHead Red Blend and RedHead Rosè, which is my new line extension,” she said. “If they do not have it in stock, Superior Beverage Group, which is my distribution company, can supply the store if you ask.”

If you want a hint as to what her line of wine tastes like, she said it is a wine made from California Zinfandel and Carménère. It is lightly sweet and spicy, just like a redhead.



COVELLI CENTRE

Putting Youngstown on the Map for Entertainment

by RALEIGH BASINGER

Photo by Bob Jadowski

Youngstown officials hired JAC Management to book shows for the Covelli Center in 2007 to bring in acts like Elton John, Lil Wayne and Carrie Underwood to Youngstown and to once again put the city on the map for live entertainment.

Within the first couple of years, JAC Management was able to turn around a million dollar profit, which is not typical for arenas, especially within that short of a time frame. In addition, the shows and the people who attended them aided the Youngstown revitalization process by bringing spending customers to downtown bars and restaurants.

"I see people from all over that come [here]," Ken Bigley, the vice president of JAC Management and the assistant director of the Covelli Centre, said. "I've had people from Cranberry say ... 'it's easier to see the good talent in your building rather than to drive to Pittsburgh and see it at Console ...'"

Mike McGiffen, coordinator of the center's events and special projects, said that Covelli created something that Youngstown hasn't had in a long time – a place house to see large music

performances, semi-professional hockey games, circuses and other events.

During performances that cater towards adults, bars and restaurants, such as V2 Wine Bar and Trattoria and Roberto's, see a peak in business. For family events, McGiffen said that places like Suzie's Dogs and Drafts and OH WOW! Kids Museum will have an increase in business instead. Some of the biggest grossing days in the restaurant industry in downtown Youngstown correlate with an event that the Centre hosted.

"If you go around and talk to some of these bar and restaurant owners and ask them what their most profitable day was, a lot of them would probably say the day when Carrie Underwood came to the Covelli Centre on Saint Patrick's day," McGiffen said. "It's the influx of people being down here to see Carrie Underwood or to celebrate Saint Patrick's day all on the same day at the same time, which made it such a profitable day for everybody."

Shows like this, while they are profitable for the city, do take a lot of time and energy to organize and execute.

The Centre hosts both national touring acts and local events, which qualifies it as a multi-purpose facility. Depending on the expected attendance of an event, the Covelli crew must prepare the Centre in different ways.

Their full house set up is between 6,000-7,000 people, the half house is between 3,500-4,500 people and the quarter house is around 2,200-2,500.

Occasionally, shows are scheduled back to back, which means the staff has to convert the Centre from one thing to another, sometimes overnight.

“We had major concerts like KISS [then we have to] flip [the Centre] for the next day for hockey or a wrestling tournament,” Bigley said. “We have had a couple runs over the years where there are six to seven shows in a ten day period, so on those you are converting the shows every single night, which could be costly if not orchestrated right.”

Depending on the production the center is setting up for, they need around 15-140 employees working. If the act has a lot of equipment or requirements, it can take up to two days to set up.

Other variables that impact the setup and take down times are the amount of equipment an act has and if another show is scheduled close by. For example, this past November the Covelli Centre had Keith Urban on a Sunday night, then converted the arena for Trans Siberian Orchestra on Tuesday.

When TSO finished, the Centre loaded in the Ringling Brothers, who were then immediately followed by a Joe Bonamassa performance. There were 150 outside workers plus the in-house staff that prepared the place for that week.

From just an idea for an entertainment center to one of Youngstown’s largest attractions, the Covelli Centre has changed from being a speck in the dirt to a spot on the map, bringing the city it occupies along with it.



Photos by Raleigh Basinger





THE
Youngstown
EXPERIENCE

LANTERMAN'S MILL

by Alyssa Pflug

Lanterman's Mill, located in Youngstown's Historical Mill Creek Park, was built in 1845 by German Lanterman and Samuel Kimberly, and was then restored from 1982-85 by the Ward and Florence Beecher Foundations.

Lanterman's Mill represents the true nature of the industries along Mill Creek. Today, the mill still operates the way it did in the 1800s by grinding corn, wheat and buckwheat. Visiting the mill is like a step into Youngstown's past.

My fiancée Larry and I love going to Lanterman's Mill to walk around the trails and take pictures of the waterfall that runs through the mill, especially during the spring and fall. During the fall, the colors of the leaves in the trees around the mill begin to change, making it a popular destination for wedding parties and engagement photo sessions.

Every time I'm there, I discover new trails and new spots to take amazing photographs to add to my portfolio.

Whenever I take friends to Mill Creek Park for a photo outing, we always stop at the mill because it is such a beautiful, peaceful area that holds a ton of memories for myself and others.

I know for me personally one thing I always remember is taking my fiancée, who isn't from the Youngstown area, to the mill when we first started dating. We walked the trail under the bridge, over the river and through the woods.

Recently when my fiancée and I went to the mill, we saw plenty of families gathered taking family pictures. We sat on a bench, watched them and talked about how that could be us in a few short years — taking family Christmas card pictures. It made me think about how sad I'll be to move away from the area and all of its treasures one day.





HANDEL'S ICE CREAM by Amelia Mack

When I moved to Ohio four years ago from Atlanta, I couldn't understand why there were so many successful ice cream shops in such a cold place. People would stand outside Handel's Homemade Ice Cream & Yogurt in the freezing cold eating an ice cream cone, and all I wanted to know was why.

When I asked around, everyone would rave about the heavenly ice cream served at Handel's. I was encouraged to try the buckeye flavor, chocolate chip cookie dough flavor, chocolate cake batter and butter pecan. Everyone had a favorite, and so I tried them all. I fell in love. Years later I find myself standing outside of Handel's Ice Cream with a coat on and a cone of my favorite flavor: cake batter ice cream. Perfection.

Handel's began in 1945 when Alice Handel started serving ice cream out of a gas station in Youngstown, Ohio. Now Handel's serves over 100 flavors of homemade ice cream and yogurt. With all of these options, you are bound to find one that you love. This hometown favorite ice cream shop now has locations in California, Florida, Indiana, Nevada, Pennsylvania, Virginia and, of course, Ohio.

"It's just good stuff," Kevin Jupina, long-time Handel's customer, said. "One thing I do know about Handel's is if you have a flavor idea they'll make you a batch."

All of their ice cream is homemade in store with fresh real ingredients and

plenty of them. As Handel's says, "WE NEVER SKIMP." Customers say that Handel's is their favorite ice cream store because of the creamy and hearty taste. There is something authentic about the texture and flavor that people love.

The recipes for these flavors are exclusive to Handel's and have earned this ice cream store many awards and a place in all of our Mahoning Valley hearts.

BRIER HILL PIZZA by Elizabeth Lehman

As a commuter to the Youngstown area, I had heard about Brier Hill pizza over the years, but had never tried it. According to Wikipedia, Brier Hill is a neighborhood once known as Youngstown's "Little Italy." It stretches along the western edge of the lower north side and surrounds St. Anthony's Church this is where I found myself on a crisp, sunny November Friday afternoon.

The church has been selling Brier Hill pizza to the area for over 30 years. This particular style of pizza — with sauce, grated cheese and peppers — had supposedly been born out of necessity. The ingredients were all commonly found in people's kitchens and the pizza had become a staple for lower-income families in the area. I was told by a classmate that in order to get one from St. Anthony's, you had to call early in the morning and place an order.

I found the address with an internet search and called at about 9:00 a.m. A lady answered and took my order, telling me I had to pick it up before 12:30 p.m. when they stopped selling the pizzas. I told them I'd be there by 12:15 p.m. I used my navigation app to guide me to the neighborhood which is just a few minutes off campus. As I drove past the houses on the way to the church, I envisioned people hanging out on porches in decades past, all knowing each other's names.

I pulled up to the front of the church, unsure where to go to pick up my pizza. I parked my car and walked up to a door with a sign that said "rectory" and knocked. A moment later, a woman came



out and I asked her where to go to pick up my pizza. She told me to take the driveway around the corner and to pull up to the end of the driveway, and then to take the far door. I was a bit perplexed, but thanked her and drove around the corner.

Back behind the church I pulled into what appeared to be a school parking lot. There was a group of children playing outside, being rounded up by a teacher. I saw a few different doors and wasn't sure where to go, as they seemed to lead into a school.

Confused, I walked up to the farthest door back and peered in through the glass. Inside sat an elderly gentleman in a police uniform. He came to the door and opened it. I timidly told him I was there for the pizza, feeling like it was some sort of code words. He nodded and pointed down a hallway.

Uncertain, I walked down the short corridor into a cafeteria full of children. They appeared to be getting in groups to go outside, perhaps just finishing up with their lunches. I navigated my way through the maze of short people and saw a table with a few smiling ladies seated at it. There were boxes piled in front of them on the tables, and I recognized these as pizza boxes. I figured this must be it.

I walked up to the table. "Hi, I'm here to pick up my pizza." The lady smiled and asked me my name. I told her my name was Elizabeth and she pointed to one of the boxes in front of her and pushed it towards me.

"That'll be seven dollars," she said. I gave her my money and asked, "How long have you guys been selling these here?" "Oh, at least 20 years," she replied.

I took my pizza and drove it home to eat. It was cooled off from having been cooked earlier so I threw it in the oven for about ten minutes to warm it up.

When I took the first bite a few minutes after pulling it out of the oven, it was pretty incredible. The bottom had crisped nicely and the sauce was sweet and the cheese was salty and the taste mixed with the edge of the peppers was simple but delicious at the same time. I could see why the tradition has thrived all these years.

CASSESE'S MVR

by Richard Henneman

"Let's go to the MVR."

This is a phrase heard in many Youngstown households since the restaurant opened in 1927. This time, I was saying it to my girlfriend Ciara who, at the time, never had the pleasure of dining at this Valley staple.

We went on a cold Friday night, the eve of Youngstown State University Football's playoff game against Jacksonville State. The place was filled to capacity and buzzing. We grabbed two of the last seats at the bar while we waited for a table.

She looked around at the pictures of celebrities that visited Cassese's MVR over the years while I talked sports with some guys that have watched them longer than I have been alive. We talked about how Coach Pelini improved the Penguins over the year, who was getting into the college football playoffs and how the Indians managed to lose the World Series. We were all still bitter.

Finally, I heard those magical words: "Rick, party of two?"

We were seated at a cozy booth, and I immediately started going through the menu even though I already knew what I would choose. We started out with hot chips that came with a spicy Cajun sauce. I ordered the spicy bowties with blackened chicken — Bowtie pasta with spicy alfredo sauce, hot peppers and chicken — my go-to for years. Ciara was

impressed with her bowl of wedding soup and MVR chicken salad. I was happy with getting some brownie points for choosing the right place for dinner.

What I love so much about the MVR is that you can have three different atmospheres in the same restaurant. I can sit at the bar and feel like I'm in a sports bar or, during the summer, I can sit outside, watch the regulars play bocce and feel like I'm at a party. Then you can move into the dining room and eat a delicious Italian meal that puts Olive Garden to shame.

"Let's go to the MVR" never sounded so good.



MY DAY AT FOUR SEASONS

by Jennifer Rodriguez

If you live in Youngstown, you've most likely visited the Four Seasons Flea Market on the border of Campbell and Youngstown's eastside. With space for up to 600 vendors, there is not much you won't be able to find on your trip to the flea.

On Sunday, I made my way to the outdoor-indoor flea market. It wasn't my first time going. Being that I lived on the eastside most of my life, the flea market was never far away. My parents used to take us and we loved exploring and visiting different stands.

Despite the recent hit of cold weather, there were still plenty of people shopping at Four Seasons on Sunday. I found myself buying an item before I even reached the door to go in.

A long red shawl for myself and a black one for my mother — did I mention it was only \$12? As I made my way inside, I glanced at the oversized American flag hanging by the door and took pride knowing that shopping at the Four Seasons Flea Market meant giving back to my community and hometown.

Inside was a flood of diversity. All types of cultures and all types of products were represented. Jackii Edwards' stand was the very first one by the door. Edwards sells men's and women's clothing every Wednesday and Sunday. Since March, her and her husband have been selling at the Four Seasons Flea Market.

Making my way around, I passed stands selling jewelry, clothing, knick knacks — then I saw one familiar to me. I always referred to it as "The Puerto Rican Stand." It has been there for over 20 years selling Puerto Rican clothing and items. It always meant a lot to me being that I am of Puerto Rican descent.

A little way down, I came across a stand owned by a man called "Jay." Jay and his girlfriend run the stand that sells a variety of different items, all for one dollar. "We sort of want it to be similar to the Dollar Tree stores; you can come here and already know how much you will pay for everything you are getting," Jay said.

Before leaving it was only right to take a moment to grab a bite from the Coney Island food spot, which had a small sitting area to eat in. The hot dog and gyro fries tasted amazing, and the box television that was playing gave me a vintage-living type of feeling as I enjoyed the atmosphere and the food.





INSIDE WHITE HOUSE FRUIT FARM

by Stephanie Stanavich

I got a chance to explore family-owned White House Fruit Farm in Canfield, which is famous for their delicious donuts and homegrown apples.

I had the opportunity to sit down with the manager and part owner, Debbie Pifer. Pifer has been there her entire life, growing up with her parents on the farm and in the family business.

According to Pifer, White House was established in 1924, but the actual farm has been there since 1815.

Their famous blueberry donuts are made there with their secret family recipe. If you mention White House to anyone who lives in the Youngstown area, they will tell you that the donuts are heaven. I went in the kitchen to see for myself how these wonderful donuts are made.

The kitchen is located right next to where the donuts are displayed for customers to choose from. As soon as I walked in the kitchen I was overwhelmed with the delicious smell of sweets. I noticed that the kitchen had multiple containers with icing that is premade for the variety of donuts that they sell.

I myself had to buy a dozen before leaving and ate two before I even left the store. I picked out my favorites, which are blueberry, maple glazed and cinnamon.

I also had the opportunity to walk through the warehouse, where White House keeps all of their picked apples ranging from sour to sweet. "Our main goal is to sell you homegrown fruits and vegetables, and it is our mission to have folks look for and eat locally grown ...," Pifer said.

Pifer wants customers to know that even though they sell donuts and other goodies, when you get down to it, they are an apple farm.

"That is who we are," Pifer said. "Apple growers are our occupation."

So if you like homegrown fruits and vegetables with some sweets on the side, White House Fruit Farms will satisfy your cravings.



KRAYNAK'S

by Taylor Dressel

Kraynak's is a large store where you can buy just about everything. I remember as a child going here and begging my mom to buy me stuff from the toy section and dreading going over to the other section. In reality, Kraynak's is for everyone.

However, what really attracts people to the store are the famous Christmas Lane and Easter Lane — this is what Kraynak's is known for. Each season, Kraynak's fills these lanes with either Christmas or Easter decorations. The Christmas Lane opens on Sept. 10 and continues throughout the holiday season.

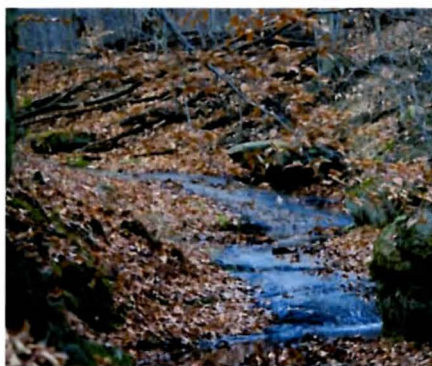
I recently went while the Christmas Lane was up and talked to one of the workers, Jill Peterson. "Kraynak's has been doing the lanes since the '60s. But it was much smaller then," she said.

The Christmas Lane always has a lot of Christmas trees and classic Christmas decorations. There are usually winter woodland animals, elves, Santas and Reindeer. After that section, there is a more religious section with displays of Jesus.

Customers may purchase the trees from Christmas Lane. They are rather expensive, but come fully decorated! My mother bought a woodland animal tree from the Christmas Lane a few years ago. The attraction can get pretty crowded, but Peterson said that there are slower times to come see the lanes.

"It is slower in September when the lane is first put up and stays slow until about Halloween," Peterson said. "Then after Halloween, it gets busy." Peterson also mentioned that the Christmas Lane is more popular than the Easter Lane. The Easter Lane opens Feb. 20 and stays open through the Easter season. "For Easter it's slower at first and then builds up and gets busier," Peterson said.

Going to Kraynak's is a fun thing to do and see with friends, family or a significant other. There are also good places to grab lunch or dinner around the store, so it is something you can make a day of!



NELSON'S LEDGES

by Tyler Rothbauer

Saturday was cold. Quite cold actually, with an interchangeable combination of sleet, snow and rain.

I made my way to the park entrance to discover I was seemingly the only visitor. There was something about being alone in a beautifully dead woodland; the silence was profound. The leaves were soaked through and no crunch could be heard as I meandered in between colossal rocks.

Eventually I stumbled upon a creek trickling to a rock's edge, creating a waterfall. The noise of the falling water echoed throughout the surrounding area. I couldn't help but stare. I found myself fascinated with the extent of the park; finding trails leading to more and more trails. I hiked for roughly an hour, and as dusk approached the experience became even more real.

I encourage a visit. For those who need a break, grab some coffee, a coat and a scarf and take some time and listen. The peacefulness is undeniably surreal, yet almost medicinal.



BALANCING Work, Life & Passion

by GABRIELLE FELLOWS

Photos by Gabrielle Fellows

On the fourth floor of YSU's Bliss Hall, RJ Thompson rolls past students on an orange light-up scooter.

Nobody he passes is fazed.

Apparently, this is normal behavior for the 32 year old graphic design professor, business partner, consultant and the brainchild behind City of You, the newly designated rebranding campaign for Youngstown.

It was difficult to comprehend how someone who kept six scooters and an army of figurines in his office managed to juggle a seemingly endless mountain of work until I shadowed Thompson on a random Tuesday.

His day started around 6:30 in the morning when he got up with his wife Erin and daughter Amelia. After getting her off to her grandparent's house, he made the hour-long trek from his home in Pittsburgh to YSU.

I met up with him around 11 a.m. at 20 Federal Place in downtown Youngstown for an economic city meeting, where he and four other individuals discussed the progress of rebranding the city. At the 12:30 p.m. conclusion, Thompson and City

of You assistant Nick Chretien piled into my car and we headed off to the Phelps Building on YSU's campus to continue doing their work.

At 2 p.m., Thompson had to attend a chair meeting for YSU's design department. This meeting was private, so I spent some time on the fourth floor of Bliss Hall editing stories. At 2:30 p.m., I meet up once again with Thompson, who I found carrying a large box through Bliss Hall.

For the next two hours, I observe RJ as he takes phone calls, consults with businesses and addresses students who come into his office. In between business, Thompson chats about his passion for his work and shows off pictures of Amelia. When 5 p.m. rolls around, Thompson heads off to teach one of his design classes until 8. After that he gets to make the hour trek back to Pittsburgh and his family, spend a little bit of time with Erin and Amelia, then goes to sleep, ready to repeat the process the next morning.

Thompson is an extremely busy man. Between his business ventures, classes, art projects and family, it's surprising he has time to head a rebranding campaign for an entire city.

Although some say it can not be done, Thompson said it must be done for the future generations.

The idea to start City of You came to him while he was sitting in a doctor's office in 2015. Erin was being checked for gestational diabetes while she was pregnant with their daughter.

"I was feeling sentimental about being a new father and had made the connection that Amelia's life is dependent on my wife's health, and maybe call this a stretch," he said, "[but] I felt that the people of Youngstown are the city's life force — their progress in making the city a better place increases the city's overall health — and they progress our community by doing what needs to be done, putting in the work and sustaining it over time."

Thus, the initiative was born. Within the next few months, City of You had a home in the third floor of YSU's Phelps Building. It houses computers, a conference room and a few offices that are normally full of interns and collaborators.

City of You is technically a job, but also a passion for Thompson, who said that he often must sacrifice time with family to get his busy to-do lists completed. Boredom isn't something he wears well.

Being as active as he is, many are surprised to hear that Thompson has Cystic Fibrosis, a genetic disorder that creates extra mucus in the body, making it difficult to breathe and digest food. Around 80 percent of those who have Cystic Fibrosis succumb to the condition. There is currently no cure.

Thompson was diagnosed with CF when he was only four months old. He was starving; his body couldn't absorb the nutrients he was ingesting. He now has to take pancreatic enzymes so that he can properly break down vitamins and minerals.

Having CF is not something Thompson likes, but it isn't something that he necessarily hates, either.

"I once told a panel of medical students, who were interviewing people with various diseases that 'You learn to love your sickness; it makes you who you are,'" he said. "I don't believe that I would be who I am if I did not have CF. I don't like the idea of that version of me."

The condition is rough. Thompson must take a handful of pills with almost every meal he eats. While that is tough, he said he is okay with taking the medicine as long as he is alive to do it. Doctors told Thompson he wouldn't make it to his current age.

"I know my life is finite," Thompson said. "I've always lived with the knowledge that I may very likely die from CF."



I tell everyone that I will live forever, though, so don't think I will be disappearing anytime soon. If I do, I'll live on through my baby and my work — the best examples of who I am."

While Thompson isn't sure where the future will take City of You, he is excited where it will take him. Since the conception of the rebranding project, other boroughs, cities and townships have approached Thompson and asked to work with him. He has also spoken at different conferences about working on the City of You project.

Where every day is a gift and each project is done on borrowed time, Thompson considers every artistic achievement to be another chapter in a book of legacies he can leave behind for his daughter, his family and for the city of Youngstown.



SPEEDING TOWARDS THE FINISH: Youngstown's Rustbelt Racers

by CHRIS MCBRIDE

Photo courtesy of Martino Motorsports

Youngstown has the reputation for being a bit rough-and-tumble — it has to be in order to continue to grow and survive post-manufacturing.

So it's no surprise that, out of the ashes of the steel industry, tough people have risen and challenged not only themselves, but those around them, to be stronger and better than those who came before them.

Enter the rustbelt racers, Ryan Martino and Andy Feil, guys who get knocked down and get back up time after time. The racing industry doesn't necessarily favor Youngstown, but that doesn't matter to them. They wear their hometown on their sleeve and give it all they have for the city they love.

MARTINO MOTORSPORTS

Ryan Martino, race engineer and driver for Martino Motorsports, has always had pride in being from Youngstown. From his playing days at Youngstown State University as a punter for Penguins football to his time with Martino Motorsports, he makes sure to wear a

reminder of Youngstown everywhere he goes to remember what he's striving for.

Martino wears something Youngstown on all team apparel.

Whenever Martino sits in that driver seat he always memorializes the message he saw every game as a YSU Penguins football player. "What are you going to do now," Martino said.

Whether it be in winning or losing, it was a lesson Martino and his teammates had drilled in their heads with every walk through the tunnel. Those words still hold a powerful amount of meaning for him to this day, even after he's traded in his football pads for a racing suit.

Under the tutelage of former YSU football coach Jim Tressel, there were many lessons to be learned from the respected coach.

"Coach Tressel had a book called 'The Winner's Manual' that he passed out before camp started each fall. It was a book of inspiration, motivation and reflection. Before or after games and practice, if you felt like you were on top

of the highest mountain or if you felt like you were in the deepest of valleys, that book always brought you back to level ground,” Martino said.

Though football and drag racing are drastically different scenes, Martino sees similarities in the two that fuel his racing mentality.

“Football and racing are similar in a lot of ways; both sports have winners and losers and usually come down to a battle of inches at the end,” Martino said.

According to Martino, overcoming adversity is what determines whether or not you are a champion. “It’s all about the next play after a win or lose, the next series after a turnover or loss of downs that determines if you’re a true champion or not,” Martino said.

At the end of the day, Martino believes that “every play counts, and every race counts” and that’s the type of competitor he is once he steps on the track. Martino attributes his YSU days to helping him prepare for the future.

Whether it be his football days at YSU or current days spent on the track, Martino remains a diehard fan of Youngstown. And though his playing days are over, he still keeps an ear to the ground when it comes to YSU.

“We’ve been known to get a look or two in restaurants and hotels when we are on the road for personal appearances or races, listening along because the games get us that fired up to see the Penguins win,” Martino said.

After a successful season for Penguins football, Martino saw something to be proud of in spite of it not ending in a championship season for YSU.

“It made me ‘Y and Proud.’ This year was a statement to the world that the YSU Penguins are back,” Martino said. Martino Motorsports had some success of its own in 2016, but much akin to YSU’s loss in the Football Championship

Subdivision, it was a season that ultimately ended in disappointment. With a shot of clinching a season championship, a series of complications in the last two events put a damper on their quest to bring a championship back to Youngstown. Having dropped from second to fifth in the standings in 2016, it was a low point that Martino vows “won’t happen again this year” as him and his team prepare for 2017.

“We had the season that YSU had this year, the Cleveland Indians [had this year in baseball], the season that the Cleveland Cavaliers had in 2015,” Martino said.

Moving forward, Martino says that 2017 is about winning. Winning not just for him but for Youngstown. “It means everything to me. It means I’m a winner, a hard worker and that I know how to handle adversity,” Martino said. “Youngstown is my home. Youngstown is where I belong.”

Whether it is full time or part time, for money or for fun, Youngstown’s rustbelt racers put their lives on the line to promote what they love. Passion fuels a lot of things, and for them, it’s their cars.



Photo courtesy of Martino Motorsports

ANDY FEIL, STUDENT RACER

Andy Feil, a YSU electrical engineering major, is a student athlete of a different nature. When he isn't hitting the books, he's living life a quarter mile at a time on the sprint car dirt tracks.

On a typical Friday, Feil headed home to New Castle, PA for a race. It was the normal routine, until the unordinary occurred.

During a routine heat race going 85 mph, a wheel malfunction caused Andy to lose all control. His car flipped several times before finally coming to a rest.

"I didn't really even have time to think, I saw the wheel shoot off," Feil said, "that was my last thought."

Doug Feil, Andy's father, recalls initially being calm at the sight of the incident, considering he has watched crashes happen a thousand times.

"Nobody had known he was hurt that bad at the time but when we saw the knucklehead stand up we figured everything was fine," Doug Feil said, "Loading the car up on the truck, I was approached by someone that informed me that Andy had been life-flighted to Pittsburgh, that's when it really hit me how bad it was."

Andy Feil's body was completely numb, -- during the crash, he broke his neck. He had no recollection of what happened, so when he woke up in a hospital bed in Pittsburgh, he was shocked and confused.

"There were doctors running around taking samples, asking questions, like who I am, what happened and then I remember they all disappeared," he said.

Andy used a cell phone provided by a nurse to call his family and fell asleep. When he woke, his mom, dad and girlfriend were at his bedside. The first words out of his mouth were, "How's the car looking?"



Photo courtesy of Andy Feil

While the sight of Andy calmed his family, they were all still concerned about what sort of battle he would be facing in the months to come due to his injuries. He had ligament damage in his neck and a bad concussion. Luckily, the doctors found no signs of nerve damage.

Time and healing in a neck brace would be all Andy needed to make full recovery and get back to the classroom. He attempted to attend classes two weeks after the incident. Unfortunately, two weeks of homework and complications with his healing process caused him to have to make a decision.

"Sitting through class became painful, paying attention with a neck brace meant turning my whole body every time the teacher moved," Andy Feil said. "After a few days [back] I realized I needed to take the semester off."

Andy returned to his studies at YSU the spring semester of 2015. Against the doctors and fathers wishes he returned to the races, finishing out his comeback season with a near first place finish.

Racing is only an option for Andy while attends YSU, where he is currently a junior. Once his education is complete, he will be leaving the race track and taking on a full time job.

"Once I graduate, that's when life begins," Feil said, "That's when it's time to get a real job and racing for me won't be an option anymore."

Before doing so, Andy will be able to get one last taste of sprint car racing come April.

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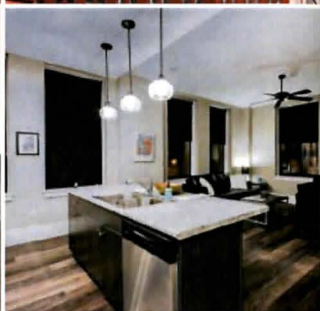
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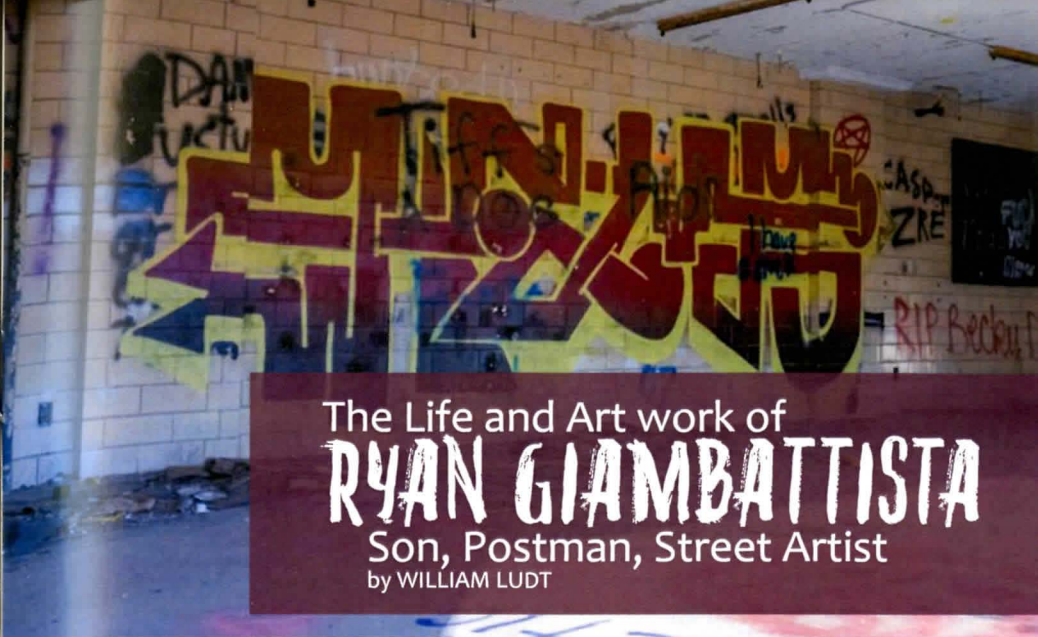
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The Life and Art work of **RYAN GIAMBATTISTA** Son, Postman, Street Artist by WILLIAM LUDT

In the late hours of July 10, 2015, Ryan Giambattista parks his jeep in the lot attached to Stavich Bike Trail, off of Center Street, where the road turns from Campbell to Lowellville. He grabs his backpack and heads up the road to a point where the heavy brush clears. The Struthers skyline to his left, Ryan walks to the railroad tracks that run parallel to the street and bike trail.

Up a way on the left is the lookout tower of Struthers's abandoned P&LE Railroad Station — Ryan's destination. The building is visible above trees that stand before it. He makes his way over the second set of railroad tracks to a steep path leading down to the rail yard.

The path down is lined with cinder that gives and kicks up when stepped on. It forks, each path leading to a separate tunnel, both of which are adorned with spray-painted words and images. Ryan passes through one of them into the open rail yard and enters the tower.

Windows and ceramic tile flooring in the tower have been smashed to pieces. Trash gathered in piles in corners is composed of upholstery, rusted

equipment and the occasional railroad invoice, dated sometime in the '80s.

Knee-high walls, due to open window space, are covered in names, messages and profanities, all scrawled in spray paint. Nearly every wall uninterrupted by open window space bears a mural depicting the word "HELMS."

Ryan climbs the tower stairs. Reaching the sixth flight, he stands in the observation deck — a narrow, two-story structure at the roof level of the tower. He pushes open a bent iron door to the roof of the tower and steps out.

The roof is covered in gravel, grass and weeds. It's open, save for the observation deck's brick outer wall and a length of angled iron that's screwed into to it. Vehicle headlights pass by on Center Street below. From his backpack, Ryan takes out spray paint, a couple 24 ounce cans of Budweiser and a piece of cardboard.

He cracks open a Budweiser and pulls out the cardboard. On one side of it is a word painted in the exaggerated form resembling the murals adorning the preceding floors — the style of a

street artist. That word is HELMS. He sets down his can of beer and picks up a can of pink spray paint. He attaches a nozzle to the paint can, shakes it and begins to paint.

LIFE AND WORK

Helms was a prominent street artist active in Youngstown and its surrounding communities.

Ryan's body was found July 11, 2015 on the southwest side of the P&LE Railroad tower and declared dead the same day. When he was found, pink and black paint was still on his fingers.

Ryan "HELMS" Giambattista was born Feb. 3, 1992 in Youngstown to Terri DiGennaro and Bruce Giambattista. He lived in Boardman, Ohio most of his life, and graduated from Boardman High School in 2010.

On the walls of the DiGennaro's home hangs some of Ryan's artwork: intricate pictures drawn in pencil and marker, a collage composed entirely of cut up Marlboro cigarettes boxes, intricately penned figures.

Rocco DiGennaro takes a framed picture from the basement wall, holds it up and points to a piece of cardboard centered behind the glass.

"Here's what he was working on when he died," he said. "This was in his bag, which is interesting to me."

Surrounding the drafted piece cardboard is a collage of photos of Ryan's work taken at Mill Creek MetroParks.

By the time he was able to drive, Ryan was tagging and studying street art. His earlier "work" was more phallic, but his interests led him to purchasing homemade zines from street artists across the planet. He subscribed to contemporary art magazines like Juxtapoz and Hi-Fructose, which sat in large stacks in his basement workspace.

Terri said he would take bus trips to Pittsburgh, New York or anywhere

with a burgeoning street art scene. Camera in hand, Ryan walked these cities' streets, documenting work he encountered. His computer's hard drive is composed almost entirely of footage and images of street art.

At home, any paper product was fair game for Ryan's pen. Terri said that a stray envelope at their dining room table would always be covered with his drawings in no time. His canvas of choice was often pizza boxes.

From observing and studying the work of other street artists, he developed a style. He eventually settled on the artist name Helms. Ryan's earlier work was him experimenting with words and word structure. Some of his pieces are now covered, but phrases like "YoungHelm" and "Helmets" bleed through the white paint covering them.

Out of high school, Ryan enrolled at Kent State University. He spent a year there taking graphic design courses, but returned home and then enrolled at The Art Institute of Pittsburgh shortly after.

"I think when he went to Pittsburgh it defined [his style]," Terri said. "There was different techniques, colorings and depth -- perspective."

After spending a year and a half at AI of P, he returned home from school for the second time. His parents issued him an ultimatum, giving him a year to find a job and his own place. College turned out to be too much money for Ryan, and Terri said that it didn't quite fit into his agenda, which, at that point, nobody knew exactly what that was.

"These kinds of things, it advanced and gave him more depth, and after that, honestly, was when he really kind of exploded with a lot of his stuff," she said.

Upon returning home from school the second time, Ryan began seeking out screen printing jobs in the area. This led to his integral involvement in the startup of Fly & Rich Printing, a screen printing business on South Avenue in Youngstown.

Ryan honed his screen printing skills in store and in the basement of his mother's home. With homemade screen printing equipment — or, as Rocco put it, a “MacGyvered” light rig and board — Ryan printed designs on T-shirts that he would bring to sell on his trips to New York.

After a stint at Fly & Rich, he took the U.S. Postal Service Test. Scoring highest out of his testing group, the U.S. Post Office in Sharon, Pennsylvania hired Ryan as a postman. He worked late hours, and often stayed after to help out fellow employees, especially during the holiday season.

Once off the clock, though, he headed out to paint. The only indication that Ryan was going out to work on a piece of street art was the sound of spray paint cans rattling in his backpack as he left the house.

“And the thing is too, I always used to say to him: ‘Are you going to get caught? What if you get caught?’” Terri said. “He goes: ‘Well, if I get caught, I’ll just take the hit on it. Whatever.’”

Terri shared an anecdote about Ryan's encounter with frostbite. One evening at dinner she noticed that one of his index fingers was dark purple and swollen. The flesh on his finger was dead.

“He wouldn't tell me how it happened,” she said. “Of course, I knew how it happened.”

Ryan was out working out in the winter when his index finger became frostbitten. The pressure from keeping the nozzle of his spray paint can down and the exposure to the cold stopped the blood from flowing to his finger.

Terri and Ryan visited a surgeon to see if there was any chance of saving his finger. The surgeon told him that they would have to amputate the finger. Ryan immediately said OK. Terri promptly took him to a hand specialist. “If he wasn't scared of losing his finger to it, he wasn't scared of getting caught by anybody,” she said. They soaked his affected finger in warm water and visited the hand specialist

frequently. The frostbitten flesh eventually gave way to new, living flesh. Ryan avoided amputation, only losing a small portion off the tip of his finger.

After that, any time he went out to paint in the winter, he wore gloves and used hand warmers. But the gloves did have an opening for his index finger to push down the nozzle.

“And obviously at this point, losing the finger was probably the easiest part,” she said. “He knew kids that fell off of bridges doing this.”

LASTING WORK

The fleeting quality of graffiti and street art keeps work like Ryan's on outside walls for a shorter time than traditional gallery pieces.

A spot he frequented for work is under the I-680 overpass that cuts through Mill Creek MetroParks, along Price Road, in Youngstown. The wall along the westbound side of the overpass bears a Helms mural that runs from its beginning until the brush beside it becomes too thick to walk through.

The support beams are painted on as well, but currently have visible pieces on their backsides. The work facing the street was painted over, but can still be made out.

Head north on Price Road and it turns into Tod Avenue. At the intersection of North West Avenue and Tod, turn left. To the right of the street is an out-of-commission bridge. Beneath the bridge is a series of murals by Ryan. Nearly every space beneath the arches bears a Helms tag of some kind.

“I think it is just a certain mentality that you have to have when you have this kind of creativity,” Terri said. “You know, you just — I don't know. Those kinds of things didn't faze him. He didn't worry about what happened. It never fazed him.”

Ryan's artistic work done inside his home earned him participation in art shows, including one at the Greyland Gallery in

Downtown Youngstown. Terri said that his pencil and marker work was meticulous.

Hunched over his work, he made precise markings on the page — small lines or dots. Dot after dot would eventually give birth to an image — exaggerated figures with street culture influences: anthropomorphic, mid-step, holding a pistol.

His pieces would often sit for some time before Ryan would add to it again and change over periods of weeks. Despite requests, he never sold any of his artwork.

“He didn’t want people to say, oh that is really cool,” she said. “No. He didn’t care about that. He didn’t need the acknowledgment. He didn’t need for everybody to see it. Because obviously when he put it places, they never really did.”

According to artist Jason Van Hoose, Helms was often the subject of conversation among local artists, skateboarders and street culture enthusiasts.

“Right now, he’s probably the last street artist that worked in Youngstown,” Van Hoose said.

He said he became familiar with Helms’ work after seeing one of Ryan’s murals in his neighborhood.

“Helm[s] was really good at what he did, and he did it in the shadows,” Van Hoose said. “I rarely saw any of his pieces that were damaging to property.”

When it came to street art, Ryan worked alone. The extent of his artistic collaboration was with friends on pieces outside of street art.

On occasion, Ryan would show his family members street art he had been working on. “He didn’t really talk about it,” Rocco said.

Police reports indicate that the fall was likely accidental. The wall Ryan was working on led to the edge of the

roof, his piece nearly reaching the edge as well. The aforementioned angled iron is attached to the wall as well.

Detectives Jeff Lewis and Emma Brenoel, of the Struthers Police Department, worked on Ryan’s case. Lewis said he thinks that a piece of angled iron on the roof of the P&LE railroad tower likely contributed to Ryan’s fall.

“It’s a shame,” Lewis said. “He had a lot going for him.”

MEMORIALIZED

Ryan was buried July 17, 2015. In memory of his efforts as a fellow employee and friend to his co-workers, the Sharon post office planted a tree.

Louis Zona, director of the Butler Institute of American Art, and Ryan’s family worked to have a piece of art by prominent, contemporary street artist Shepard Fairey donated to the museum. The piece now hangs on the second floor of the Butler next to a message memorializing Ryan.

Ryan’s work lives on. It’s on the backs of bridge supports and sprayed into brick; it’s on the walls of abandoned buildings; it’s on a train car traveling across the U.S.

It’s in places that take a little exploring to find. And it’s in the many, many pieces of art that were given to his family after his passing. “Michaels is going to go under, because their paint sales are down,” Terri said. Long Live Helms!





Coffee Shop Owner Brings new Brews to the YO

by SAMANTHA PHILLIPS

Photos by Samantha Phillips

In Youngstown, finding success as an entrepreneur takes long days and sleepless nights, working hard to turn passion into something bigger. For Josh Langenheim, owner of Stone Fruit Coffee Co., that meant taking a leap of faith to turn his love of brewing coffee into a sustainable business.

What began as a hobby that consisted of brewing coffee in Langenheim's garage turned into a business that produces unique coffee creations and sells coffee related goods and equipment.

"It's a hobby that has just gone wildly out of control," Langenheim said.

WHAT IS STONE FRUIT?

Stone Fruit was established in 2013. There are shops in Boardman and Youngstown, and a Columbiana shop is in the works.

Langenheim, who graduated from Boardman High School and is a YSU alumnus, brought his business to Youngstown State University's campus in 2016. He saw an opportunity in the city he was born and raised in, and wanted to provide opportunities for others in the city.

"Youngstown is on the rise; it's coming back," he said. "We are the ones who aren't afraid to say we can make the Valley better, make positive changes. This is why we did it here, this is my home. These are my stomping grounds."

Stone Fruit created an atmosphere that is cozy and welcoming to patrons, who can

choose to sit at the bar, directly in front of the espresso machines.

Employees engage in friendly banter with the customers, and unlike other coffee shops, they can customize the roast and blend to the customer's liking. Brandy Bates, a Stone Fruit customer, said she enjoys coming to get coffee and talk to the staff.

"I drink a cup of coffee in the morning, that's for purpose," she said. "It gets me moving. When I come here, I drink coffee for pleasure."

At the Boardman location, customers can sit in the back room, where bags of fresh coffee beans are stored along with state-of-the-art coffee roasters. All the bean roasting, grinding and brewing is done at the Boardman location, but Langenheim works with a broker to import coffee beans from all over the world.

"There's a lot of different ways you can manipulate the roasting process. We only deal with organic, fair trade lots," he said. "We deal with basically coffee from anywhere it can be grown, anywhere in the bean belt."

Customers can pick from 30 varieties of coffee, or they can select something off the menu such as "Frankenstein", which is a blend of six different roasts.

"We are particular about the quality," Langenheim said. "This is the culmination of a lot of great minds who came together to create something that's different."

The Youngstown location has roasts such as “Steel City Brew” and “Idora Perk,” named to pay homage to the city.

BECOMING YOUR OWN BOSS

Langenheim worked as a correctional officer at a prison and an operations director at a marketing company before becoming an entrepreneur. When the company went out of business, Langenheim decided to try his hand at running his own company.

“I had a passion for coffee and I was relatively good at marketing,” he said. “So I thought, why don’t we try to mix the two? Let’s try to market coffee. We started very small and very humble.”

With just \$5,000, he began working to make his idea a reality. The first Stone Fruit shop was housed in a small building in Canfield, with a single coffee brewing machine. As business grew, Langenheim began reinvesting his profits into machines that work at a higher capacity.

It didn’t happen instantly, however. Initially, he said, he was lucky to get five customers a day. It was a labor of love and took a great deal of patience.

“Over time, it grew and got bigger and bigger,” he said. “This wasn’t an overnight concept. It took about three years of redeveloping, reinvesting, listening, taking advice and changing. This is the culmination of many years of work, many different ideas and concepts.”

Before he took the plunge, Langenheim said his loved ones didn’t think it was a good idea and encouraged him to go the safe route of finding a new job.

“If I didn’t do it I would always regret it. Thank God we did it. With no risks, there’s no reward,” he said.

Langenheim said he always wanted to be his own boss and schemed to have his own shop “before being an entrepreneur was cool.” He said working long days at his shop are more enjoyable than working long days at one of his old jobs.

That doesn’t mean it’s an easy task, though. “The misconception about entrepreneurship is that it’s fun and glamorous,” he said. “This isn’t easy and a lot of days it’s not fun, you have to dig deep, a lot of times it doesn’t make sense to anyone but you... That attitude is what propels you to the next level.”

A COLLECTIVE EFFORT

Langenheim said that even though he is a large part of Stone Fruit, it’s the “brain child” of him and his employees. He said his baristas contribute their innovative ideas and concepts to make the shop even better.

While the employees are talented at making brews, some of them have other career goals in mind. To help them and satisfy his own business’ needs, he hires his employees to do work in their desired career fields. For example, he has a barista who designs Stone Fruit t-shirts that are sold at the shop, and another who is an artist and creates elaborate, gorgeous art on the chalkboard walls.

The coffee shop owner doesn’t stop at store locations when he thinks about how the business can expand. He said he hopes to someday own a farm full of coffee bean fields so he can control the quality and treatment of the workers.

Langenheim encourages people to pursue their entrepreneurial dreams and trust in their ideas.

“You have to stay humble, stay hungry and keep grinding. You are not going to be an overnight success,” he said. “Don’t be afraid to fail.”





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