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CHANTS FOR CHANGE



The walkout began in front of Tod Hall and ended in front of the Pollock House.

Photo by Dylan Lux / The Jambar

Protest on Johnson's first day

By Molly Burke and Christopher Gillett
The Jambar

Students at Youngstown State University walked out of classes at 10 a.m. on Jan. 22 in protest of President William "Bill" Johnson's first day.

A group of about 50 students gathered outside Tod Hall with posters and a banner that read "Students deserve a say in YSU's future." They marched from Tod Hall to Johnson's university residence, the Pollock House, while chanting, "Shame on you, YSU" and "Hear our voice, we want a choice."

The walkout was planned by a group of students at a community meeting at a branch of the Public Library of Youngstown and Mahoning County on Jan. 8. The group included Rose McClurkin, Aidan Hol-

derfield, Chris Cremers, Jenna Knowles and Grace Persing.

Holderfield, a fifth-year senior theater and psychology major, created the flier for the walkout. He said the purpose of the walkout was to show the university that its students don't want Johnson as president.

"We can stand up and say something and make a difference in saying something, hopefully, whether now or later. My real hope is that Johnson would decide to not be the president here for the good of the university," Holderfield said. "I think that we have a fighting chance ... it's happened before, it can happen

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Pro-Johnson rally welcomes new president

By Molly Burke
The Jambar

About 25 students, faculty, staff and community members gathered for a rally at noon Jan. 22 in front of Tod Hall to show support for YSU President William "Bill" Johnson on his first day.

The pro-Johnson rally followed a student-led walkout protesting Johnson's presidency on the opposite side of Tod Hall.

The rally was organized by Maddy Lutz, a sophomore political science major and vice president for YSU's Turning Point USA chapter. Lutz said the goal of the rally was to show members of the community welcome Johnson on campus amidst pushback against his appointment.

"[Johnson is] here to represent us and support us, so there's no reason we shouldn't stand beside and support him. He's a human being just like we are. I feel bad for the guy. I feel bad that he's being so ostracized," Lutz said. "There are people here who aren't just like, 'get rid of him.'"

Mike Costarell, professor of engineering technology and advisor for Turning Point USA, gave a speech at the rally. Costarell said he got involved because he believes the community hasn't treated Johnson fairly, especially in the Academic Senate.

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STAFF**EDITOR IN CHIEF**[Molly Burke](#)mkburke@student.ysu.edu**MANAGING EDITOR**[Dylan Lux](#)dilux@student.ysu.edu**NEWS EDITOR**[Christopher Gillett](#)cmgillett@student.ysu.edu**SPORTS EDITOR**[John Ostapowicz](#)jfostapowicz@student.ysu.edu**ASSISTANT SPORTS EDITOR**[Cameron Niemi](#)cniemi@student.ysu.edu**SPORTS REPORTERS**[Madeline Hippeard](#)mehippeard@student.ysu.edu[Marissa Masano](#)mamasano@student.ysu.edu**GENERAL REPORTERS**[Sydney Fairbanks](#)sefairbanks@student.ysu.edu[Matthew Sotlar](#)mjsotlar@student.ysu.edu**HEAD COPY EDITOR**[Elizabeth Coss](#)eacoss@student.ysu.edu**ASSISTANT COPY EDITOR**[Hannah Werle](#)hewerle@student.ysu.edu**VOLUNTEER COPY EDITOR**[Maria Schwartz](#)meschwartz01@student.ysu.edu**HEAD DESIGNER**[Madison Fessler](#)mrfessler@student.ysu.edu**COLUMNISTS**[Owen Bertram](#)orbertram@student.ysu.edu[Alison Butz](#)albutz@student.ysu.edu[Matthew Sotlar](#)mjsotlar@student.ysu.edu**WEB MANAGER**[Christopher Gillett](#)cmgillett@student.ysu.edu**ASSISTANT WEB MANAGER**[Mohammad Haram Kafil](#)mkafil@student.ysu.edu**SOCIAL MEDIA CURATORS**[Grace Beerbower](#)gebeerbower@student.ysu.edu[Gavin Blacksher](#)gpblacksher@student.ysu.edu**BUSINESS MANAGER**[Mary Dota](#)mfdota@ysu.edu**Walkout**

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Students, alumni, the faculty union, past presidents, retirees and community members have spoken out against the board of trustees' selection of Johnson through a confidential search process.

Currently, there is no policy for hiring a president that requires community input. McClurkin, who is a senior political science major, said the walkout was a way to demand one.

“One of the most important parts of making a college campus a community is having community buy-in, having the approval and the support of your students who you're going to have to interact with every day on campus [and] the faculty who literally make your college campus run,” McClurkin said. “Having an open process is one of the main ways we get that support.”

Several alumni and community members joined students at the walkout, and cars honked in support as they arrived at the Pollock House. McClurkin said she feels supported by the community despite apathy from students.

“Silence, if anything, is a sign of apathy of our students, and it's because we're tired. We're busy, we have jobs, we have classes,” McClurkin said. “This support from the people driving on the street is a sign that though we're busy, though we're going places, we do know what's going on and they support [us].”

McClurkin said she will continue to gather public input on more demands for

the administration.

Daniel Catello, a YSU alumnus who spoke at the protest, was among many expressing concerns over recent cuts to degrees in the Dana School of Music.

Catello said he believes Johnson lacks proper qualifications and it's unfair Johnson will receive a generous salary while the university cited lack of funds to keep the programs open.

“We are protesting the actions of the past few months of this administration to hire, in secret, a president ... offering them the highest salary that we've seen of a university president at YSU, hiring their congressional staff with no reason — to the tune of close to a million dollars when you total all the salaries, compensation, benefits. At the same time, they

announce cuts to the premiere music program in the [Mahoning] Valley, the Dana School [of Music],” Catello said.

Audrey Jobe, a senior music education major who spoke at the walkout. For Jobe, it was important to show the administration that students won't be silent.

“I'm glad my voice was able to be heard today, but it's really important to show administration and the community that the student body is unified and that we are here to fight the good fight and that we aren't going to just sit silently and let things happen,” Jobe said. “No one's getting extra credit for being out here today. People are out here because they want to be.”



Students marched to the Pollock House with a banner.

Photo by Dylan Lux / The Jambar

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7-DAY WEATHER FORECAST

Thu. Fri. Sat. Sun. Mon. Tue. Wed.

High: 50°F	High: 55°F	High: 45°F	High: 40°F	High: 36°F	High: 40°F	High: 45°F
Low: 46°F	Low: 36°F	Low: 36°F	Low: 28°F	Low: 26°F	Low: 31°F	Low: 31°F
Chance of precip: 84%	Chance of precip: 25%	Chance of precip: 75%	Chance of precip: 80%	Chance of precip: 60%	Chance of precip: 13%	Chance of precip: 21%



Rain



Partly Cloudy



Rain



Precipitation



Snow



Partly Cloudy



A Few Clouds

Information courtesy of accuweather.com

SGA responds to cuts; to meet with Johnson

By Molly Burke
The Jambar

Youngstown State University's Student Government Association will host an open body meeting from 4 to 5 p.m. on Jan. 29 in the Rossi Room of Kilcawley Center with YSU President William "Bill" Johnson.

SGA Executive Vice President Jordan Pintar said the meeting will allow students and faculty to hear more about the president's plans.

"That meeting will be a chance for the public to come and watch. Unfortunately, they won't be able to interact. It'll just be time for our representatives and our senators to interact with him, but I think that it'll be a really good chance for them to kind of get their questions out and see what he has planned for our university," Jordan said.

SGA is working on several initiatives to improve student life on campus. Jordan said she hopes Johnson will support SGA's goals.

"I'm thankful enough that our executive team gets to go to lunch with him on [Jan. 23]. So, right after he starts, we'll have a chance to sit down and talk to him," Jordan said. "I really want to continue to see things like

the expansion of Aunt Flow ... we're even looking at doing things like bringing Narcan on campus. So there's definitely a few things that I want to talk to him about and I think that he'll be able to help us with that role."

During fall semester 2023, SGA passed a resolution of no confidence in the board of trustees's appointment of Johnson through a confidential search process.

Jordan said student government listened to community voices as Johnson's appointment was met with backlash and protests.

"[SGA President Alexander Papa] and I were at all of the board of trustees meetings. We wanted to make sure that we were there speaking to the board and also at the protest so we could speak to the community as well — getting feedback, getting people's opinions," Jordan said.

The university announced Jan. 7 that it will sunset six degrees this semester, with four of the degrees in the Dana School of Music. A petition to "Save Dana" and an accompanying student protest followed the announcement.

Jordan said SGA is monitoring the cuts and will continue to hear community concerns.

"It was sprung on us very last minute like it was also

sprung on everybody else," Jordan said. "I've reached out to specifically people from [Cliffe College of Creative Arts] and some of our Cliffe reps to kind of get their feedback, see if we can help them out."

The program sunsets were announced after Interim Provost Jennifer Pintar provided data supporting a need for the cuts, citing low enrollment and graduation rates at an Academic Senate meeting in December 2023.

A website titled save-dana.com alleged that Jennifer's data was false, prompting more backlash from the community.

Although Jennifer is Jordan's mother, Jordan said their relationship will not impact the decisions she makes as vice president of SGA.

"I really separate my role as student government and being a student on campus and my relationship at home with my mom," Jordan said. "Even my department could be potentially looked at in the future [for cuts]. So, I do know the feeling that students are concerned over. Obviously, I don't know the feeling of it actually happening yet ... but I've been reaching out to really get those perspectives."

SGA President Alexander Papa was unavailable for comment.

Fear forms around FAFSA

By Matt Sotlar
The Jambar

Students returning to Youngstown State University at the beginning of the spring semester were unable to access the FAFSA form.

FAFSA, the Free Application for Federal Student Aid, is offered by the Office of the Department of Education. The forms must be completed prior to starting classes at a university to determine whether or not students are eligible for federal aid.

Patrick Hoffman, Director of Financial Aid and Scholarships at YSU, said FAFSA underwent major changes in the past few months.

"[The 2024-2025 school year] has brought unprecedented changes with federal student aid, particularly the FAFSA application. Due to the passage of the FAFSA Simplification Act, there have been a number of changes with the FAF-

SA this year," Hoffman said.

These changes included a delay in availability of the FAFSA form. Normally, the forms can be accessed after Oct. 1, however it was delayed until Dec. 31, 2023. Hoffman said these changes brought new challenges of their own.

"After the FAFSA became available on Dec. 31, [2023] there was a period of time that the Department of Education referred to as the 'soft launch period.' During this time frame, primarily from Dec. 31, [2023] to just recently, there was some challenges that the department had experienced with students completing the new, revised, streamlined FAFSA, which resulted in delays," Hoffman said.

The DOE took the form offline during this 'soft launch period,' in order to perform maintenance. 'Soft launch' refers to the preliminary development stages of software, such as the updated FAFSA form.

With these unexpected delays, YSU's

Office of Financial Aid received questions and concerns from students unable to access the FAFSA forms.

"We've had a lot of students calling in, not necessarily complaining, just wondering what they could do. The majority of it was out of our control, and so we would just remind students during the soft launch period to continue to try and access the form, to complete it whenever they were able to," Hoffman said.

The majority of concerns were from students unable to access the FAFSA form altogether. Most of these occurred during a time when the DOE had the form offline.

The Office of Financial Aid began receiving calls in October after the DOE announced that FAFSA would undergo changes.

"We had a number of students that were calling in after Oct. 1, when the FAFSA is usually available. We did send out a communication to students

to make them aware of these changes, which helped with students know about the changes," Hoffman said.

The number of phone calls increased after the start of the new year, but maintenance was completed Jan. 10.

Some of the changes to the FAFSA include the questionnaire portion. Formerly, the form featured over 100 questions for students to complete regarding their finances. This number was reduced to just over 50.

The Office of Financial Aid hosted Financial Aid Awareness Week from Jan. 22 through 26. Hoffman said students could attend to get help with FAFSA.

"If [students] are calling in with problems still, I would certainly encourage them to try again, but, I would also encourage them to attend one of our Financial Aid labs," Hoffman said.

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“I went to the Academic Senate, and I’m an Academic Senator, and it was very harsh and critical and very opinionated. I understand that there’s no process for hiring a president ... so being upset that a process wasn’t followed doesn’t really make sense,” Costarell said. “The angst that was put against [Johnson] — he hasn’t even been here yet — was really harsh.”

The Academic Senate passed two votes of no confidence in December — one against the board of trustees for appointing Johnson in a confidential search process and one against Johnson himself.

The Business Journal published a letter written by Costarell on Jan. 9 where he stated, “not all YSU faculty agree with the campus protests or Academic Senate vote of no confidence.”

Costarell also wrote in his letter that he believes those speaking out against Johnson are in a “vocal minority.” Costarell said he believes the majority are silent in fear of being condemned, but he hopes the rally shows the community that YSU students are able to have differing opinions.

“That majority — I want them to know that YSU will have a diverse set of ideals and not be forced to get into any ideals they don’t want to participate in,” Costarell said.

Austin Browne, senior finance major and president of Turning Point USA, said he believes Johnson will make a good president.

“He has a proven track record working in our government. He’s represented countless constituents. I think YSU is no exception. In reality, YSU is kind of like a congressional district. There’s a lot of people here with dif-

ferent views you have to represent, and I think he brings a lot to the table to be able to do that,” Browne said.

According to Browne, those protesting against Johnson are politically motivated.

“I’ve already heard that there are people on campus trying to establish a watchdog group. What that says to me is they’re not actually looking for Bill Johnson to succeed and YSU to succeed in turn. They’re seeking to find any mistake that he can make so they can use that against him for political gain,” Browne said.

Browne said he believes students who support Johnson or show conservative political views often refrain from expressing their opinions in fear of being discriminated against.

“From personal experience, those that choose to align themselves with the right side of the political spectrum or the conservative side of things tend to be much more quiet because they know the people on the other side — despite what they say — are not always accepting of those beliefs,” Browne said.

When asked about the kinds of discrimination students faced, Browne said students may feel alienated by professors expressing opposite views.

Director of Support Services Danny O’Connell was in atten-

dance at the rally. O’Connell said he looks forward to working with Johnson.

“It’s important that we get ready to work with our new leader,” O’Connell said. “I’ve seen a lot of new leadership changes here and everyone brings in their own way of doing things. So, I’m excited.”

Editor’s note: Christopher Gillett contributed to this report.



Costarell speaks at the rally.

Photo by Molly Burke / The Jambar

News Brief

Student resources moved to DeBartolo Hall

The Dean of Students, Student Counseling Services, and the Penguin Pantry changed locations over winter break. They have been relocated to the third floor of DeBartolo Hall.

Hours and services for the Dean of Students, Student Counseling Services, and the Penguin Pantry remain the same.

The offices were moved because of the impending reconstruction to Kilcawley Center.

Some services the Dean of Students can assist the campus community with are:

- Food/housing insecurity
- Safety concerns
- Discrimination and/or harassment concerns
- Mental health concerns

Promoting inclusivity in athletics

By **Gunnhildur Baldursdottir**
Jambar Contributor

The Youngstown State University Athletic Department is taking steps to secure a safe space for student-athletes with diversity, equity and inclusion initiatives.

In February 2023, a club for YSU student-athletes of color called For The Culture was established to provide a place for students to have conversations about their feelings, current events and topics about different cultures.

For The Culture was started by Jaysen Spencer, director of Athletic Academic Services and a senior minority administrator, and Johnny Ware, coordinator of Student Enrichment and Diversity Programs.

"I knew our student-athletes needed some type of community to be engaged with. Instead of having just specific sports, we opened it up to our student-athletes of color," Spencer said. "Whether you're Asian, Hispanic, Black, or of whatever culture, we want to be inclusive for all our students and programs."

According to the National Collegiate Athletic Association, all Division I schools must conduct a diversity, equity and inclusion review every four years. To complete the review, the NCAA offers a framework that schools can use to support their student-athletes.

Spencer said YSU Athletics is working on accomplishing four main goals within the next two to three years — creating affinity groups for women, LGBTQ students and students of color. Athletics has also established a DEI steering committee to increase intention in hiring processes.

Rebecca Fink is the senior associate athletic director of Compliance Academics and Sports Supervision. Fink said Athletics to promote an inclusive environment for student-athletes and staff members.

Fink said both minority student-athletes and non student-athletes have experienced microaggressions, unintentional barriers, stereotyping and discrimination in their college careers.

"We have talked about microaggressions. There's not always large things occurring, but sometimes it's the smaller things that people say without thinking about

it," Fink said. "The unintentional barriers exist for some of our students, whether it's students that maybe have differences in learning or maybe things are happening that we don't know about that are unintentionally creating obstacles."

Macy Wang is a junior nursing major on the swimming and diving team. Wang, whose father is from China, said she has experienced discrimination as a YSU athlete.

"I wouldn't say I ever felt like I didn't belong, but there's definitely been some discrimination every now and then. It's kind of sad to say, but I'm just used to it," Wang said. "It's just little jokes, I guess nothing super mean, 'Oh, of course, she's smart.' It's annoying because your friend next to you does not have to deal with that."

Wang said providing education about minority groups on campus can make a change.

Editor's note: Gunnhildur Baldursdottir is an athlete on the YSU swimming and diving team.

Women's basketball head coach John Barnes steps down

By **Madeline Hippeard**
The Jambar

Former head coach for the Youngstown State University women's basketball team John Barnes officially resigned Jan. 19 after 10 years of coaching.

Barnes announced he would take a leave of absence Oct. 2, 2023 to focus on personal matters.

In his absence, John Nicolais served as acting head coach for the Penguins. With Barnes' official departure from the team, Nicolais will serve as interim head coach.

Director of Athletics Ron Strollo was interviewed by YSU Athletics on Jan. 19 where he thanked Barnes for his years of service and support for the program.

"When he took over, our program was still in the rebuilding phase to try and replicate the tremendous success of the 1990s. Under Coach Barnes' leadership, our team reached the postseason five times and won its first regular-season conference championship in more than 20 years. He absolutely left the program in a better place than when he arrived 10 years ago," Strollo said.

Throughout Barnes' career at Youngstown State, he won 170 games and a Horizon League Regular Season Championship in 2021-2022 in which the Penguins went 24-7 overall and 18-4 in conference play.

Barnes was also named the Horizon League Coach of the Year along with

three appearances in the Women's National Invitation Tournament in 2014-2015, 2018-2019 and 2021-2022.

Despite his departure, Barnes is ranked second in program history with most wins, and his 56.7% win percentage ranks third all-time for Youngstown State.

Off the court, Barnes had the opportunity to coach players such as former Penguins Heidi Schlegel and Lilly Ritz who were two-time All-Horizon First Team honorees.

In the classroom, YSU appeared on the Women's Basketball Coaches Association Academic Top 25 Team Honor Roll nine times and cracked the top 10 five separate times.



John Barnes

Photo courtesy of ysu.edu

OUT WITH THE COACH, IN WITH THE CONGRESSMAN

From Tressel to Johnson: A Jambar recap

By Elizabeth Coss
The Jambar

FROM THE BEGINNING: THE TRESSEL EFFECT

In May 2014, Jim Tressel was announced as one of the finalists for president of Youngstown State University. The former head football coach took part in open forums with community members and was also a presidential hopeful at the University of Akron, where he was the acting vice president of Student Success.

Later that month, Tressel was selected as YSU's ninth president. Tressel told The Jambar back in 2014 "mission one is our students," and he began focusing on student retention and fundraising — two focus areas that appealed to the community during the open forums before his selection.

Before his presidency began, Tressel attended Crash Days and met with prospective incoming students. Despite the university being in a shortfall revenue era with contract negotiations for faculty still ongoing, Tressel told The Jambar, "If you handle adversity, you come off much better than you ever were."

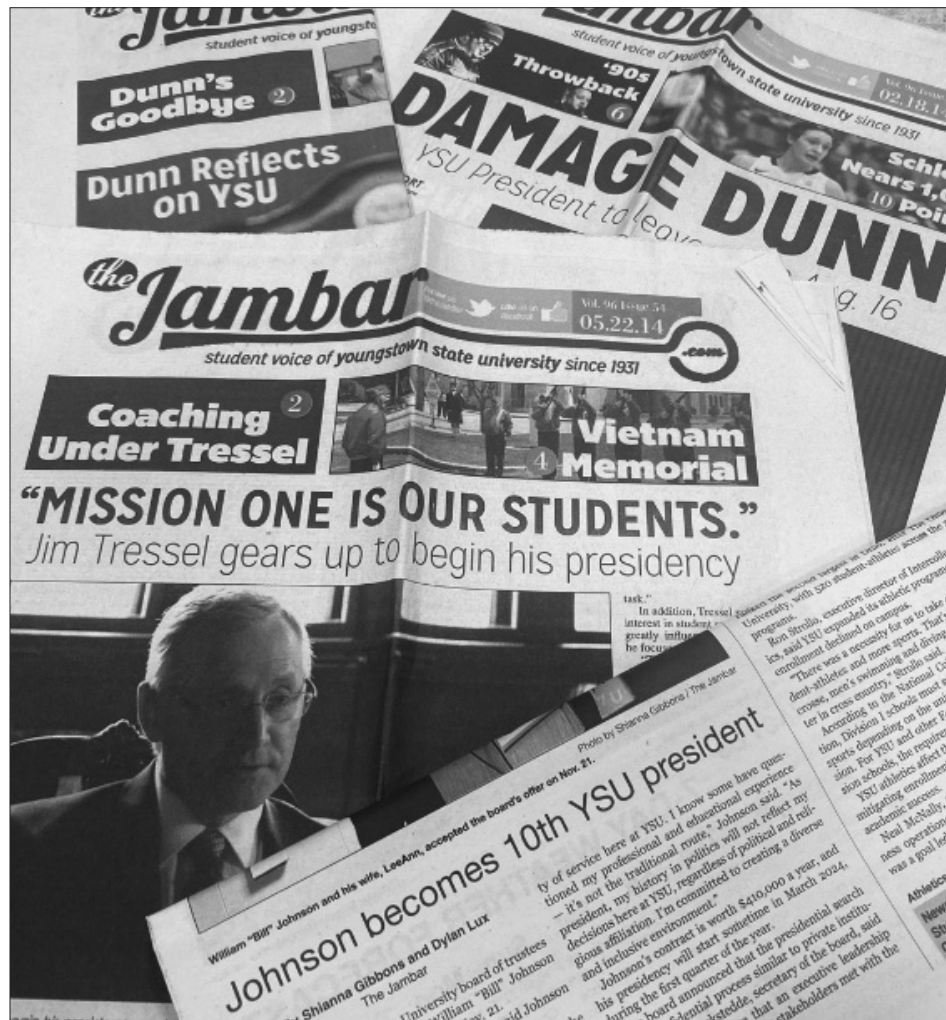


Photo by Elizabeth Coss / The Jambar

Jim Tressel was selected as YSU's ninth president following open forums with the community.

WHY TRESSEL?

Before Tressel was a presidential candidate, and before it was rumored around the halls of YSU that he'd return, the university dealt with a turn-around president, Randy Dunn.

Lasting from July 2013 to March 2014, Dunn accepted a position as Southern Illinois University Carbondale's president in February while serving as acting president of YSU.

SIU covered Dunn's moving expenses and YSU filled his vacancy with an interim president, Provost Ikram Khawaja, until a new president was found.

Despite his departure being referred to as "dramatic," "disappointing" and "abrupt," Dunn wrote a goodbye letter to The Jambar stating, "YSU is rightly proud of all that has been accomplished in its rich history ... and all that will continue to be accomplished."

TRESSEL'S TROUBLES FORGOTTEN IN TIME

For nine years, Tressel led the university through a variety of trials and tribulations, including a deal gone wrong with the Chill-Can plant, program cuts, faculty retrenchments, low enrollment, and a global pandemic that shut down the university in spring 2020.

Tressel also faced criticism from the community for his support of The Men's Rally in the Valley and Fellowship of Christian Athletes.

The Jambar received several Letters to the Editor discussing whether Tressel's participation in these organizations could be interpreted as homophobia, misogyny or other bigoted views.

In 2020, Bruce N. Waller, professor emeritus of philosophy and religious studies, wrote to The Jambar criticizing Tressel's attendance at an FCA Game Time Dinner. He stated, "If YSU is genuinely committed to the values it claims, then Tressel's support of FCA bigotry

against homosexuals should prompt the same outrage ... Jim Tressel must choose which master he will serve: the bigotry of the Fellowship of Christian Athletes or the inclusive ideals of Youngstown State University."

JOHNSON GETS THE JOB

Beginning Feb. 1, 2023, interim president Helen K. Lafferty filled the gap between Tressel and a new presidential selection. Lafferty, a YSU alumna, participated in numerous events throughout her duration.

YSU's board of trustees then selected William "Bill" Johnson as the 10th president on Nov. 21, 2023, following an 8-1 vote. Johnson was originally thought to begin as late as March 15.

The closed selection process used to hire Johnson has been criticized by the public since November, 2023. Despite calls for action, protests and public concern on social media, the trustees have defended the decision.

On Dec. 31, 2023, Lafferty took an early exit as interim, prompting Neal McNally, vice president of finance and business operations, to fill in as interim president until Jan. 22, Johnson's official start date following his departure from Congress.

Johnson's track record as a politician has drawn vocal criticism from students, faculty, staff, the YSU-OEA faculty union, and community members.

The faculty union announced via press release it was "appalled" that YSU is reportedly planning to hire three of Johnson's congressional staffers amidst faculty retrenchments.

Faculty union President Mark Vopat stated, "The board hired a politician to be president in a closed door search, sprung this divisive choice on the YSU community, caused a public relations nightmare that alienated numerous generous donors, and now they're further bloating the administration ... given all the cuts in the past few years, how can YSU afford this?"

Checking in with SGA

By Molly Burke
The Jambar

Youngstown State University is halfway through the academic year, and Student Government Association is continuing initiatives from fall and bringing in new ideas for spring.

Jordan Pintar, SGA executive vice president, said student government has several spring goals, including bringing Project DAWN to campus, an opioid overdose prevention program started by the Ohio Department of Health.

DAWN stands for Deaths Avoided With Naloxone, known as Narcan. Pintar said Project DAWN would train students on how to provide Narcan to someone in an emergency.

“We would be looking at getting the nasal spray, so anybody could basically use it. It’s a great way to get students to get trained in first aid and response to dire situations and equipping them with life-saving medication,” Jordan said.

Pintar said SGA will also bring solar-powered tables to the lawn in front of the M60 Parking Lot on Lincoln Avenue.

“That is a very sunny spot down there. So, we are looking to potentially bring some solar-powered tables

down to that green spot so that whenever you’re eating ... it’s warm outside and you have a little spot to sit,” Pintar said.

SGA hopes to collaborate with the Crochet Club to have a craft fair later in the semester.

“A little craft fair — kind of along the lines of an [organization] fair — would be a great way to kind of reunite the community [and] bring us all together in a little outdoor or indoor space to sell our crafts,” Pintar said.

Reflecting on fall 2023, Pintar said SGA was successful in cleaning up campus and combating food insecurity.

“We had a lot of campus clean ups, which was great,” Pintar said. “We also had our Swipe Out Hunger Week, which was very successful ... and we were able to stockpile some money that we raised and are able to use this semester for the Penguin Pantry.”

In addition to hosting Swipe Out Hunger Week, SGA sought to combat food insecurity by starting a student-run garden to provide produce for the Penguin Pantry. Pintar said she is excited to finalize the garden and bring in its hydroponic towers this semester.

“Our big executive thing is finalizing the garden ... we’re hoping to really get that moving physically this semester,” Pintar said. “The grant money was being processed over break so that we can actually start to pur-

chase [materials].”

The garden began in the Sandy Simon Greenhouse of Ward Beecher Hall, but Pintar said it will move to the third floor of DeBartolo Hall as part of a larger project to put student resources like the Dean of Students, Counseling Services and the Penguin Pantry in one location.

“Having the Dean of Students over on the third floor — we’re hoping to get the garden in that spot now. So, it’ll actually be with the Penguin Pantry more. What we realized is you actually don’t need light from a greenhouse because the [hydroponic] towers we’re looking at have their own lights,” Pintar said.

According to Pintar, SGA will continue expanding its Aunt Flow initiative, an effort to provide free menstruation products in campus bathrooms. Pintar said expansion was slow in fall, but SGA has added QR codes to dispensers to improve restocking.

“We put stickers on them so that you can scan a QR code, and if they’re out of any products or they’re broken, you just send in a little thing,” Pintar said. “Moving forward, we’re going to be looking at more-sure funding for them. Aunt Flow is something I’d love to have campus wide.”

SGA will hold elections for executive board, representative and academic senator positions in April. Declaration of candidacy forms will be available Feb. 5.



SGA offices are located in Kilcawley Center across from The Cove.



Photos by Molly Burke / The Jambar

TAKING YACHT ROCK TO THE SEA LEVEL

Set sail to rock the boat

By John Ostapowicz
The Jambar

For five days and four nights, two local bands will climb aboard The Rock Boat XXIII from Jan. 30 through Feb. 4.

The 23rd annual floating music festival will feature the Columbus-based band Red Wanting Blue and Pittsburgh natives The Commonheart.

The Norwegian Pearl will depart from the Port of Miami with stops in the Great Stirrup Cay, Bahamas and Costa Maya, Mexico.

The annual event started in 2001 by rock band Sister Hazel in collaboration with the cruise charter company, Sixthman. Through the years, Sixthman has served over 300,000 guests and generated over 150 vacations on land and at sea.

Red Wanting Blue has performed on The Rock Boat for 11 years. The band's guitarist and keyboardist Greg Rahm said he loves the boat's atmosphere and the ability to play for a sold-out crowd every time.

"Doing it once, I would have been really happy, but to continue to be a sought-after act is such an honor," Rahm said. "All of the music that we have to learn for The Rock Boat to make it special and the environment is just awesome."

In addition to local acts, national bands such as Zac Brown Band, Neon Trees, American Authors and Plain White T's have performed on The Rock Boat.

Red Wanting Blue and The Commonheart join a stacked lineup with Sister Hazel, Young The Giant, KT Tunstall, Lit, The Struts, Bowling for Soup and several other bands that will make appearances throughout the cruise.

Although this marks The Commonhearts' first time on The Rock Boat, lead-singer Clinton Clegg participated in Sixthmans' Soulshine at Sea with Michael Franti in November, 2023, which he said prepared

him for the upcoming cruise.

"It was almost like an internship. I got a good feel of the land and an understanding on how [Sixthman] does business, and they made me feel like family," Clegg said. "We not only got to network with other artists from The Rock Boat, I also got to be a part of another awesome cruise."

With several acts gearing up to perform on the cruise, The Rock Boat features a full itinerary with themed days, dining options and bingo.

To decide the line-up for The Rock Boat, Sixthman holds a yearly competition called the Sixthman Soundcheck. Bands can submit their music for a chance to perform on the cruise.

The staff selects the top 10, then the general public votes on its favorite acts. The winner is only decided by the cruise's booked guests.

Jen Wedick, manager of Creative and Brand Strategy at Sixthman, started as a guest on The Rock Boat in 2004 and joined the company in 2010. Wedick said she enjoys the process of finding new bands for guests and expanding her musical horizons.

"[The Soundcheck] has been a really great way to find new bands for us," Wedick said. "There are some bands that catch our attention in the soundcheck process every year that didn't win but they came back."

Alongside The Rock Boat, Sixthman curates several cruises of all genres, such as the Chris Jericho Cruise, Get Ship Faced with Impractical Jokers and Eric Andre, and Rock The Bells Cruise: A Hip-Hop Experience hosted by LL Cool J.

Although The Rock Boat XXIII is sold out, Sixthman is working on The Rock Boat XXIV and has spots available on several other cruises.

Once The Rock Boat docks in Miami, The Commonheart will perform on land July 24 at FloydFest in Floyd, Virginia, while Red Wanting Blue continues its 2024 touring slate at the City Winery in Boston, Massachusetts.



Photos courtesy of Will Byington & Tammy Vega



JAVA NICE DAY

New beans in town

By Sydney Fairbanks
The Jambar

A new Youngstown-based coffee joint, Trek Coffee House, opened shop at 1588 Mahoning Avenue with a grand opening weekend beginning Jan. 13.

Opening events included a ribbon cutting ceremony followed by a workshop on the coffee bean roasting process. At the ceremony, Trek had a variety of hand-crafted coffees, pastries and bagels from Youngstown-based Mamalagel's Bagels for sale.

In the evening, the shop held a discourse coffee throwdown where baristas competed in designing lattes.

Trek started the day Jan. 14 with yoga, a latte class and a coffee-tasting flight so attendees could try different types of coffee.

Levi Smith, owner of Trek Coffee House, said the shop is meant to bring the Youngstown community together through coffee.

“Our goal has always been, with a coffee shop that we have, to build community. Coffee is something we do and we’re really passionate about, but community is the thing that brings it all together,” Levi said. “There’s no coffee if there’s not people trying to get together, coming up with new ideas, meeting each other, and having friendship and fellowship time to hang out.”

Trek began as a coffee bar called Cozé in 2015. Levi and his sister, Emily Smith, opened the bar at White House Fruit Farm while they attended college.

Emily has since taken over Cozé as a seasonal outpost. Levi said they plan on opening more outposts and shops in the future.

“We’ll continue to work on opening more Trek Outposts and Trek Coffee Houses, but this is the first brick-and-mortar, seven-day-a-week, Trek Coffee House we have open,” Levi said.

Levi originally bought the building next door to expand Trek’s roasting and production operations. Upon discovering the two buildings come as a package, Levi decided to expand the shop.

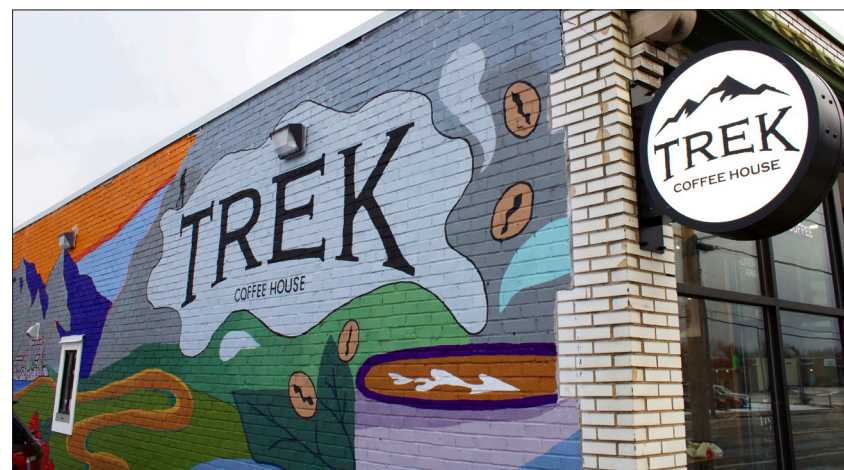
Besides opening up more shops, future plans for Trek include incorporating more food such as soups, salads and wraps. Levi said they are also working on a stage in the back of the shop to host live music events.

“It will be a small venue — 50 seats or less [with] local and regional acts. The hope is to have multiple [shows] a night, markets, all that kind of stuff back there right off campus,” Levi said.

Levi encourages YSU students to visit the shop to study or take a break.

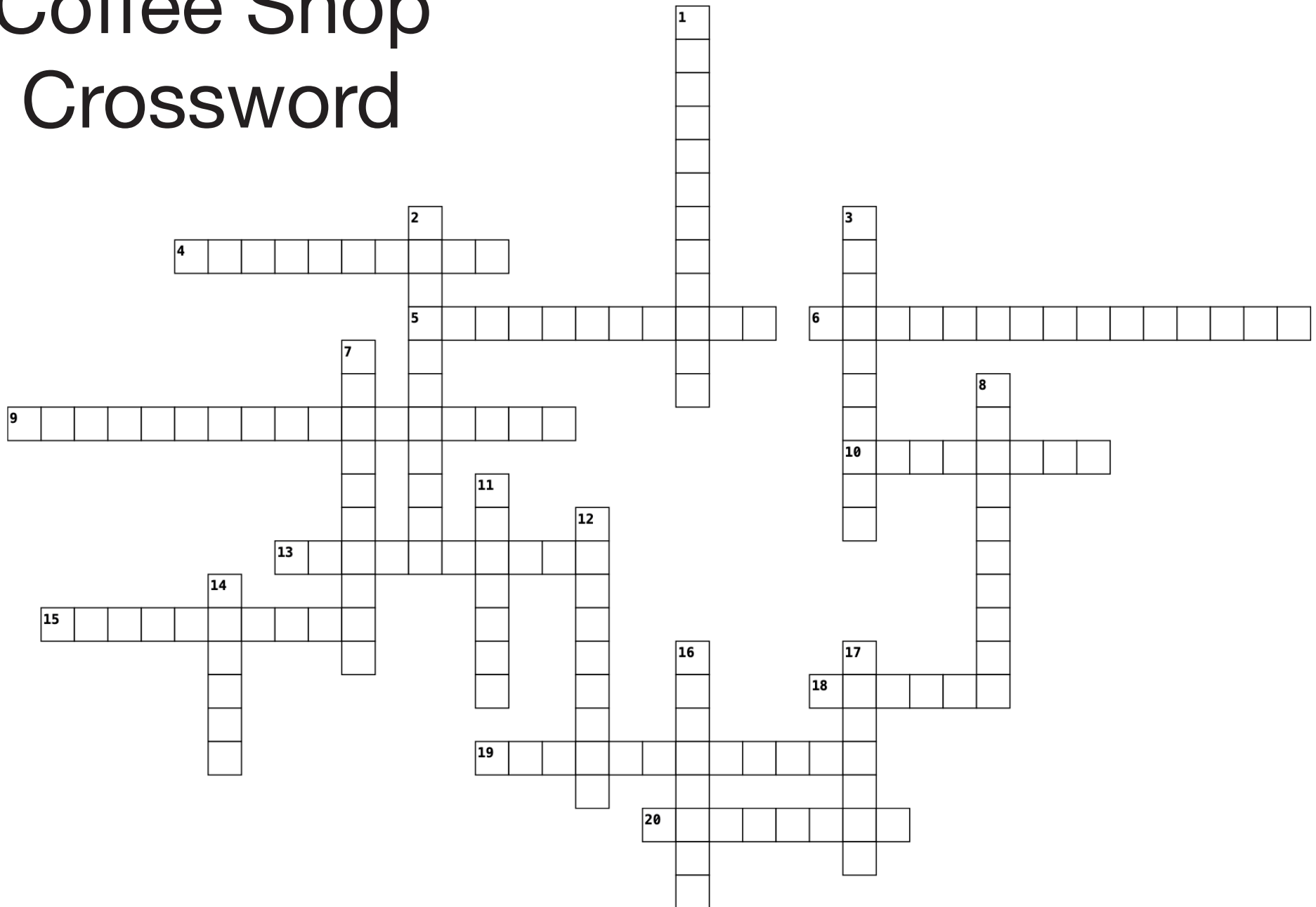
“Our goal is to create a space where the community, students, whomever can come and kind of like disconnect from everything else,” Levi said. “Whatever that might be, we want to create that space and make that available to people.”

Trek is open from 7 a.m. to 3 p.m. Monday through Saturday and 8 a.m. to 2 p.m. on Sunday.



Trek Coffee House owners (top right) announcing to shop guests while baristas (bottom left) make drinks.

Coffee Shop Crossword



Across

- 3.** Popular winter drink made with chocolate and hot milk
- 4.** This local coffee shop has locations in Downtown Youngstown, Boardman and Warren
- 5.** Starbucks has many flavors of this drink topper like salted caramel, pumpkin and cinnamon
- 6.** This brew of coffee is the base for drinks like a latte, macchiato and americanos
- 8.** Coffee shop in Maag Library and

Barnes and Noble

- 9.** Frozen coffee drink
- 12.** This coffee shop just opened a location on Mahoning Ave, The Jambar features it on page nine
- 16.** Time of day when coffee is most commonly drank
- 17.** A favorite coffee drink among college students
- 18.** Coffee shop located on Lincoln Ave across from Cushwa Hall
- 19.** Local coffee shop with a plant as the logo
- 20.** America runs on this coffee shop

Down

- 1.** Canadian coffee chain started by an NHL player and sponsors the NHL
- 2.** Drink made by combining green tea powder with milk and a flavoring
- 7.** These drinks are available at Dunkin and Starbucks and don't feature coffee but have fruit flavors
- 10.** Famous coffee drink for the fall
- 11.** This country has been the number one producer of coffee beans for over 150 years
- 13.** Coffee that is steeped typically overnight to produce a highly caffeinated, cold coffee
- 14.** A cinnamon baked good commonly associated with coffee
- 15.** The base of any coffee drink, these need to be ground in order to be brewed

The Jambar Column

Martin's legacy

Americans celebrated what would have been the 95th birthday of Martin Luther King Jr. on Jan. 15. Although he has been gone for nearly 56 years, I often wonder how his legacy has been upheld.

There is no debate about it: Martin Luther King Jr. was one of the greatest men to have walked on Earth. He was a powerful orator and a beautiful soul with a heart and mind set on peace. Along with Medgar Evers and Rosa Parks, King worked tirelessly toward integrating a racially divided America in the 1950s and 1960s.

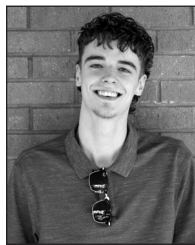
When Thomas Jefferson wrote, "All men are created equal," King echoed these sentiments. He and other fervent civil rights advocates hosted peaceful protests. They sat in white-only areas of segregated diners and marched from Selma to Montgomery, Alabama. Those are just a few of the non-violent actions taken to ensure all men were treated equally.

Virtually everyone knows of King's "I Have a Dream" speech — one of the most iconic speeches in American history. King gave the speech to a crowd of over 250,000 people in front of the Lincoln Memorial on Aug. 28, 1963 during the March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom.

Sadly, like with many of history's great advocates for peace, King was killed. He was shot by white supremacist and fugitive James Earl Ray at the Lorraine Motel on April 4, 1968. He died only an hour later. Ray was arrested two months later and was sentenced to 99 years in prison.

There has been much speculation as to the true nature of King's death. Some suspect the government had King assassinated, and King's wife, Coretta Scott King, stated she did not believe Ray was the shooter.

Scott King, who was also an equal rights activist, experienced various health complications and died in 2006.



Matthew Sotlar

Many other activists were persecuted and killed for their calls for unity. Evers was killed five years earlier in 1963, and Malcolm X in 1965. Bobby Kennedy, a civil rights advocate and Democratic nominee hopeful, was killed two months after King.

Even now, there is division in America. Black or white, Democrat or Republican, male or female — when it comes down to it, everyone has their own opinion and everyone believes their opinion is correct. Is this really what King wanted?

What would King think if he could see us now in 2024? Would he be proud of all of the change he fought for? Would he be upset by the clear division still present in America? Civil rights are still an ongoing issue in America, but it seems like the country has turned a deaf ear to this.

America is constantly concerned with the threat of war from any nation at any given time. This is a concern, albeit a rather unfounded one. The delay in progress when it comes down to civil rights is appalling.

It was only in 2015 when the Supreme Court legalized same-sex marriage. The Emmett Till Antilynching Act — which makes lynching a hate crime — was passed only in 2022. Thinking that this act was not passed until 2022 makes me uneasy. How did America turn a blind eye to so many injustices?

2024 will be a very stressful year. With a highly anticipated, hotly debated election looming over us, America is more divided than ever. Americans seem to have forgotten that under everyone's skin, we all bleed red. What if we tried to preserve King's legacy this year? Wouldn't that truly make America great again?

The Jambar Editorial

Who's going to the Super Bowl?

After a long NFL season — that yet again seemed all too short — four teams are still competing for the Lombardi Trophy in the 2024 Super Bowl.

This season — as always — had elements everyone was expecting, such as the Pittsburgh Steelers finishing with a winning record and the Dallas Cowboys having a tremendous regular season, going 12-5 — then both losing in the first round of the playoffs.

Of course though, there were some breakouts nobody expected.

The future for the Green Bay Packers and the Houston Texans looks promising. A first-year starter and a rookie quarterback, respectively, both led their teams not only to playoff berths, but playoff wins — along with both of them being in the top 10 in multiple passing categories.

There were other season stats worth mentioning, but enough about the regular season. Let's talk conference championships.

Obviously, the teams to beat are the two No. 1 seeds in the playoffs: the Baltimore Ravens and the San Francisco 49ers.

Lamar Jackson, quarterback of the Ravens, will most likely be awarded Most Valuable Player, and the 49ers are the NFL equivalent of the Avengers, with players like George Kittle, Christian McCaffery, Chase Young and Fred Warner — and that's only the beginning.

As for their opponents in the AFC and NFC championship games, the 49ers have been paired against another team with an incredible story, the Detroit Lions.

In 2021, the Lions were 3-13-1 and at the bottom of the NFL standings. This year, the team finished 12-5 and had one

of the best records in the league.

As for Baltimore, the team will go up against the Kansas City Chiefs, who have made the AFC Championship game for the sixth-consecutive year, now with one more key piece — Taylor Swift.

When it comes to these vital games late in the postseason, it comes down to experience. Jackson has never played on a stage where the lights are this bright.

Patrick Mahomes of the Chiefs has been to this stage and beyond multiple times, which is why they can win again. It would be amazing to see Jackson in the Super Bowl, but it's near-impossible to stop the inevitable with the Chiefs.

As for the NFC — rather surprisingly — Jared Goff, the Lions quarterback, has the edge when it comes to the experience, as he has played in a Super Bowl against New England Patriots quarterback Tom Brady in the 2019 Super Bowl. Can the Lions beat the odds and reach their first Super Bowl?

Let's go Goff!

So, the all-awaited Super Bowl is now between the Lions and the Chiefs — the hero versus villain story, Mahomes vs. Goff.

Judging by the NFL script, it seems Mahomes is on track for another ring this year, unfortunately.

Fans will be watching the game Feb. 11 and rooting for Goff and the Lions all the way.

A team who's been to three of the last four Super Bowls, playing against a team who has literally never seen it: the odds are just not in the Lions' favor.

But odds themselves are odd too, aren't they? No matter the spread or the projections, the odds are always 50/50. You either win, or you don't.

Letter to the Editor

Editor,

I feel compelled to write to you as I am filled with anger and frustration after learning about the appointment of the new university president, Rep. Bill Johnson.

My name is Nick Hagglund, a 2003 alumni from the School of Engineering in chemical engineering before I went on to get my Masters of Science from Pitt. In my time, I remember the presidents fondly who served while I was there. Dr. David Sweet, Dr. Leslie Cochran, and after I graduated, Jim Tressel seemed to wholeheartedly believe in education and the pursuit of further knowledge.

My time at YSU was spent learning and pursuing fact-based knowledge, understanding of engineering principles, the environment and the world around me. Now, to see a president in place that hides from facts and denounces them (yes ... Trump lost the election in 2020) is disheartening to say the least. To see that the current administration has a history of criticizing the EPA and saying that they are “destroying business” is ridiculous. I’m not a “tree hugger” as some might think. I am a realistic person who expects industry and emissions to be monitored, limited reasonably, and effective actions to be taken to stop the destruction of our environment, because trust me, if left unchecked, it is disastrous. I spent my time there learning about other cultures, religions and people outside of my 18-year-old perception. That what I might not be a part of isn’t necessarily wrong. Women should be in control of their bodies. Those who are not “straight” should have rights afforded to them that others do.

I saw a bright outlook on life when I graduated from YSU. I don’t see one looking at YSU today. I can say for the first time in my life today, that I am ashamed of my alma mater. I am ashamed of YSU. I will always look back on my great professors, experiences and friends with happiness because the board of trustees and the new president don’t get to rob me of that. However, I will not look at my alma mater in the same light again. I am ashamed of them, and in all honesty, they can have my degree back. Because the pursuit of knowledge, fact, human understanding and truth means nothing to YSU leadership any longer. So, what use is a degree from an institution that doesn’t value those things?

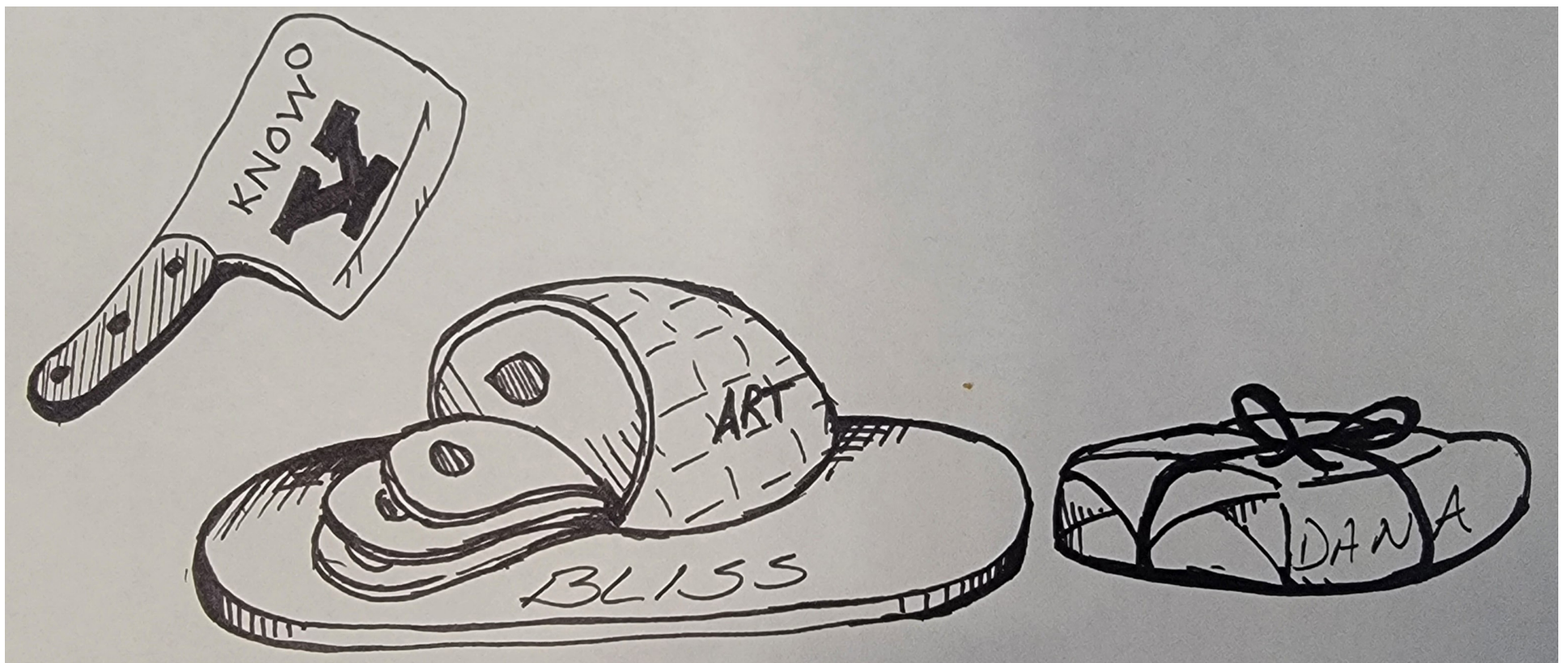
I say this as a proud and successful engineer, husband, father of 4 amazing daughters and empathetic human being.

I am ashamed of YSU’s direction and administration!

With Regret,
Nicholas Hagglund

Class of 2003
BE in Chemical Engineering

Political cartoon submitted by John Hazen



THE JAMBAR POLICY

Since being founded by Burke Lyden in 1931, The Jambar has won nine Associated Press Collegiate Press honors. The Jambar is published weekly in the spring and fall semesters. The Jambar is free for YSU students and faculty.

EDITORIAL POLICY

The editorial board consists of the editor-in-chief, managing editor, news editor, sports editor, arts and entertainment editor and head copy editor. These opinion pieces are written separately from news articles and do not reflect the opinions of any individual staff member. The Jambar's business manager, multimedia journalists and non-writing staff do not contribute to editorials, and the adviser does not have final approval.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR POLICY

The Jambar encourages letters to the editor. Submissions are welcome at thejambar@gmail.com. Letters should concern a campus issue, must be typed and must not exceed 400 words. Submissions must include the writer's name and telephone number for verification, along with the writer's city of residence for publication. The Jambar does not withhold the names of guest commentators. Letters are subject to editing for spelling, grammar and clarity. Letters will not be rejected based on the views expressed in them. The editorial board reserves the right to reject commentaries and letters if they are not relevant to our readers, seek free publicity, fail to defend opinion with facts from reliable sources or if the editorial staff has decided that the subject has been sufficiently aired. The editorial board will request a rewrite from the submitted writer based on these requirements. The Jambar will not print letters that are libelous, threatening, obscene or indecent. The views and opinions expressed in letters and commentaries on the opinion page do not necessarily reflect those of The Jambar staff. Editorials do not necessarily reflect the opinions of the faculty, staff or administration of YSU.

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Track and field reaches new horizons

By Marissa Masano
The Jambar

The Youngstown State University track and field team traveled to the Kent State University Jud Logan Memorial Invitational and The Pennsylvania State University State Nittany Lions Challenge on Jan. 13. The team then hosted the YSU Collegiate Invitational on Jan 19.

At Penn State, graduate student Morgan Cole set a new school record in the mile run as she opened the meet and placed second with a record time of 4:51.75.

Sophomore Malena Cybak took first place in the 800-meter at 2:15.47.

On the men's side, sophomore Jack Vecellio won the pole vault, clearing a best mark of 5.05 meters. Freshman Lukas Lang finished third with 4.75 meters.

In the 3,000-meter, senior Ryan Meadows finished second at 8:17.32, and fifth-year senior Tyler Clark finished third at 8:21.77.

At the Jud Logan Memorial Invitational at the KSU Field House, YSU won in the long jump, 60-meter hurdles and shot put events.

Senior Tye Hunt won the long jump with a leap of 7.68 meters. For the women, freshman Daisha Decree won the long jump with a leap of 5.55 meters.

In the 60-meter hurdles, junior Luke Laubacher finished first in the finals with a time of 7.88 seconds.

On the women's side, senior Madison Murry placed first with a final time of 8.62 seconds, while senior Emily Bee placed second at 8.82 seconds.

Sophomore Ryan Henry won the shot put with a personal-best distance of 17.93 meters. Fifth-year senior Dominic Perry placed second with an effort of 17.87 meters.

The team also hosted the YSU Collegiate Invitational presented by Southwoods Health inside the Watson and Tressel Training Site on Jan. 19.

Winning events on the men's side included pole vault, shot put, high jump, 60-meter dash and 60-meter hurdles.

The women placed first in the triple jump, 60-meter dash, 60-meter hurdles, 200-meter, long jump and pole vault.

Sophomore Blake Sifferlin took first in the men's pole vault, clearing a personal-best 5.31 meters. Sifferlin cleared 5.36 meters on his last attempt to set a both meet and facility record. The sophomore ranks nationally in the top 10.

In the shot put, Perry won the event with a throw of 17.84 meters. Junior Mason Stephens cleared 2.03 me-

ters to win the high jump for the Penguins.

Senior Daimere Stephens-Stewart won the 60-meter dash with a time of 6.80 seconds. The senior narrowly defeated fellow Penguin athlete Hunt, who placed second with a time of 6.84 seconds.

Laubacher was victorious in the 60-meter hurdles, clocking a 7.89 seconds.

Nia Williams-Matthews leaped 12.36 meters on the women's side to win the triple jump. Murry took first in the 60-meter hurdles with 8.64 seconds. Later in the day, the senior clocked in 7.69 seconds to win the 60-meter dash.

Junior Mone Knowles achieved her first win as a Penguin in the 200-meter, clocking in a time of 25.21 seconds. Senior Micah Carey won the long jump, reaching 5.88 meters.

Graduate student Erin Bogard, sophomores Ainsley Hamsher and Melana Schumaker and freshman Kaitlyn Eger shared the win in the pole vault. All four Penguins cleared 3.80 meters.

The team will travel to the UMass-Lowell River Hawk Pre-National Meet, Kent State Doug Raymond Invitational and John Thomas Terrier Classic hosted by Boston University on Jan. 26.

Opportunity knocked, Evans answered

By Dylan Lux
The Jambar

In 2018, a college freshman joined the Youngstown State University women's soccer team as a walk-on midfielder. In 2024, that same athlete received an invitation to the player combine for the Tampa Bay Sun FC, a team in the United Soccer League Super League.

Graduate student Jordan Evans joined YSU from Austintown Fitch High School almost six years ago, and through an extended collegiate career, has caught the attention of a professional soccer club in the United Soccer League.

Evans was invited to the Sun's combine which took place Jan. 6 and 7 in Tampa Bay, Florida.

The graduate student said she enjoyed the experience in Tampa Bay and was happy to get back to action on the field.

"It was such a great experience and I had a lot of fun ... it felt nice to be back in

a competitive environment after this fall season," Evans stated. "I loved meeting with the staff and other players and being able to showcase my skills ... also the Florida sunshine was a plus."

Evans said conversations about continuing her career began midseason with her coaches.

"Starting [to think] about playing professionally came about in the middle of the season talking with my coaches. Then, right when the season wrapped up is when we started taking off on the conversations," Evans said.

Head coach for the women's soccer team Brian Shrum sent a highlight video of Evans via email to the Tampa Bay Sun FC, and she received word that she would be invited.

"[Shrum] was the one to initially send an email with a highlight video of me, and we got the word back that I would be invited," Evans said. "I've just been continuing practicing and getting really

excited for [the combine]."

Shrum said he has confidence in Evans and is happy she was given the opportunity.

"She was the commander on defense [last season] and one of the greatest teammates to ever wear the YSU jersey," Shrum said. "I know Jordan can play at the next level somewhere, and I am so excited she has been given a chance."

Evans has played in 77 games throughout her Youngstown State career and started 39. She has collected three goals since 2018 and two in 2023 alone.

Also in 2023, the midfielder started 13 games and helped lead the Penguins to their second straight season at .500 winning percentage with a 7-7-3 overall record.

The USL Super League will be a league owned and operated by the USL. The league plans to be a Division I professional women's soccer league in the United States with teams throughout both the

U.S. and Canada.

One of the teams featured in the Super League is the Tampa Bay Sun FC, one of 12 new teams planning to take the pitch for the first time in August 2024 as Tampa Bay's first women's professional sports team.

The club will play in an upgraded and expanded stadium along the waterfront of the Hillsborough River.

Evans is one of many athletes Tampa Bay is recruiting for its inaugural season. In an interview for Tampa Bay FC, head coach of the club Denise Schilte-Brown said she wants to field a team that can compete in the new league.

"We want Tampa Bay to have an immediate impact on this league and we look forward to fielding a strong team to represent Tampa Bay," Schilte-Brown said.

Evans will return to Youngstown State for her seventh season of play in the fall of 2024.



The women's basketball team will end its three-game home stretch Jan. 27.

Photos by Dylan Lux / The Jambar

Penguins begin three-game homestand

By Madeline Hippeard
The Jambar

The Youngstown State University women's basketball team started its three-game homestand Jan. 18 with a victory over Purdue University Fort Wayne.

Throughout the game, Youngstown State and Fort Wayne exchanged the lead 14 times until the final 12 minutes.

The 'Guins started out the fourth quarter with a 41-37 lead over the Mastodons.

The Penguins built their lead, reaching 57-46 with 1:46 left on the clock, but Purdue Fort Wayne fought its way back to 60-55.

Despite full court pressure from PFW, junior guard Haley Thierry pushed past the defenders and extended the 'Guins lead to 62-55 with a layup. Thierry scored again 15 seconds later, bringing Youngstown State's lead to 64-55.

Fifth-year guard Shay-Lee Kirby scored a layup for the Penguins in the final seconds of the game, bringing the final score to 66-57.

Interim head coach John Nicolais credited the Penguin's victory against Fort Wayne to the team's strong defense.

"We've been gritty for 10 years plus. That's kind of our identity, and that's something we haven't shied away from, we've always embraced that," Nicolais said. "We would certainly like to score more points— don't get me wrong there — but I think that's kind of the identity of this place."

Earlier in the week, the Youngstown State lost to both the University of Wisconsin-Green Bay and the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, which Thierry credited as the team's motivation against Fort Wayne.

"Coming off of a three-game losing streak, we really wanted to win this game so we could build off of it and use it as momentum. We've been working really hard in practice trying to set our players up so we can get open and moving the ball, and I feel like we did that really really well today. So, building off of that, I feel like that will help us in the long run," Thierry said.

The 'Guins started their Wisconsin road trip with an 85-47 loss against Green Bay.

In the first minute of the game, senior forward Paige Shy scored her 150th career 3-pointer, which gave the Penguins their first basket of the night.

Throughout the second half of the matchup, Youngstown State was unable to recover from the large point deficit, resulting in a loss.

Youngstown State and Milwaukee traded leads for the majority of the first quarter of the game. However, by the end of the second quarter, Milwaukee overtook the Penguins, 50-37.

The 'Guins were down, 53-39, heading into the fourth quarter, but the Penguins fought back to 60-58 with 2:20 remaining in the game. However, they were unable to keep their momentum up and were defeated, 66-58.

The Penguins played Northern Kentucky University on Jan. 24. For results, visit ysusports.com.

The women's basketball team will be back in action to round out its three-game stretch against Robert Morris University on Jan. 27.

Tip off is set for 1:30 p.m. and the game will be broadcasted on ESPN+.

Men's basketball splits road games

By Cameron Niemi
The Jambar

The Youngstown State University men's basketball team continued Horizon League play at home for two straight games and then hit the road for two more matchups.

YSU hosted first place Purdue University Fort Wayne on Jan. 10 and won by a final of 93-85 as the team picked up its second consecutive win and fourth win in the conference.

Youngstown State had three fifth-year players who scored over 20 points for the first time since 2001. Brett Thompson led the way with 24 points and seven assists. Ziggy Reid had 23 points with two blocks, and Brandon Rush scored 20 and grabbed six rebounds.

The Penguins were selected to host an ESPN2 game inside the Beeghly Center to kickoff Martin Luther King Jr. Day weekend Jan. 12.

YSU secured an 81-71 victory on national TV over conference foe Wright State University, who came into the game averaging 86.1 points per game.

Wright State held the lead for the majority of the first half and went into halftime up 34-32 on the Penguins.

In the second half, the Raiders extended their lead to nine points with under 10 minutes to play. Youngstown State then went on a 20-2 run and didn't look back as the team took a 10-point lead with three minutes to play.

Reid and Thompson led the team as they each scored 20 points and combined for 15 rebounds. Fifth-year DJ Burns scored his 1000th career point as he added 12 points and 6 rebounds. Freshman Gabe Dynes had seven rebounds and a team-high six blocks.

The Penguins won their fifth conference game of the season and moved to 10-1 at home.

Head coach Jerrod Calhoun spoke about the impact fans had inside the Beeghly Center for the team's third straight win.

"Tonight was a home court advantage. It was spectacular. Hopefully, the people na-

tionwide see what our program's about," Calhoun said. "These people care about hoops, they care about football and all our sports. It's a sports town. It's a good place to coach and a fun place to be."

The team traveled to Michigan for two games. Rush talked about the upcoming games and what the team needs to do to continue the momentum of the three-game win streak.

"Just stay positive, going into practice every single day with the same mindset," Rush said. "Going into practice every single day competing is how we keep that momentum going."

YSU played Oakland University on Jan. 17. The Golden Grizzlies defeated the Penguins for the second time this season by a final of 70-67.

The 'Guins held a 31-28 point lead at the half. Both teams traded baskets throughout the second half despite the Grizzlies retaking the lead. With under three minutes to play, Youngstown cut its deficit to one, but Oakland refused to be stopped on offense as it snapped YSU's win streak.

With a quick turnaround Jan. 20, the Penguins bounced back with a 105-64 victory over the winless University of Detroit Mercy. This marked Youngstown State's largest margin of victory over a Horizon League opponent.

YSU had five players score double figures and every player on the team scored at least three points. Reid led the team with 22 points as he shot 3-of-3 beyond the arc, and junior EJ Farmer had 18 points. The team shot 63.3% from the field and 53.8% from three.

The team improved to 14-6 on the season and 6-3 in the Horizon League, which has the Penguins tied for third place.

ESPN announced Jan. 18 that the Penguins will be featured on ESPNU at 9 p.m. on Feb. 1 at Wright State.

YSU will hit the road at 7 p.m. on Jan. 25 to play Indiana-University Purdue University Indianapolis. To watch the game, visit ESPN+ or listen on 570 WKBN.



Men's basketball players and fans cheer. INSET: Brett Thompson (top) celebrates after a made basket and Brandon Rush (bottom) exits tunnel as his name is called in the starting lineup.

Photos by Dylan Lux / The Jambar