

# THE JAMBAR

THE STUDENT VOICE OF YOUNGSTOWN STATE UNIVERSITY SINCE 1931

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## \$20,000 awarded in scholarships



**BENJAMIN A. GILMAN INTERNATIONAL SCHOLARSHIP**



**NECA - NATIONAL ELECTRICAL CONTRACTORS ASSOCIATION**

**Kacy Standohar**  
NEWS EDITOR

Among Ohio's public universities, Youngstown State University boasts the second largest amount of students who recently received the Benjamin A. Gilman International Scholarship.

Within the state, Ohio University has the largest number of recipients — six — while the University of Cincinnati and Miami University of Ohio each have three recipients.

YSU students Ryan Meditz, Meysha Harville, Haileh Ahmed and Solita Wilson all received the scholarship grant, which will help to finance their study abroad programs.

"[The Gilman Scholarship Program] is extremely competitive," said Annette El-Hayek, assistant director of study abroad and international exchange programs at YSU. "I worked with students to help polish their essays."

Because an interview was not a component of the application process, El-Hayek said she told applicants to spend enough time on the essays in order to get as much of themselves down on paper as possible.

Meditz, a senior who is studying international marketing and Spanish, was awarded \$3,000. He is spending five months in Granada, Spain, and another month traveling through Europe.

Wilson, a senior who is majoring in chemistry, is spending the spring

semester in Winchester, England. She received \$4,000 after applying for the scholarship in October.

"Receiving the scholarship was a total shock," Wilson said. "I see the scholarship as being very prestigious, and being selected for it said a lot to me about myself."

Wilson has been in Winchester for only a few days, but she said her program is going well so far. It's a life-changing experience, she said.

"You will discover who you are and where you want to end up," Wilson said. "You will become more cultured, and this is a very good trait for not only the U.S., but the entire world."

Ahmed was awarded \$4,000 and will be studying at Yeditepe University in Istanbul, Turkey. She said the award has a special meaning to her.

"Without being awarded the scholarship, I wouldn't have been able to travel," Ahmed said. "I am very passionate about studying abroad. It is something I hope to continuously pursue, and being able to pursue now is beyond rewarding and gratifying to me."

Ahmed said she thinks other YSU students should be encouraged to study abroad because it helps broaden their horizons.

"It also helps them grow, [it] helps them later in life for grad school, and they can experience a new culture and land, and, most importantly, they

**Justin Carissimo**  
NEWS REPORTER

The National Electrical Contractors Association awarded its annual scholarship to five Youngstown State University students.

Jason Nutt, Michael Currao, Kalen Wallace, Ethan Parks and David Wright were each awarded a \$1,000 scholarship.

NECA's national and local chapters are dedicated to advancing the electrical construction industry through research and education.

"We're supporters of the university, and we would really like to see students do well," said Tom Travers, the executive director of the Mahoning Valley's NECA chapter and a member of NECA's scholarship committee.

Parks, a YSU sophomore and the vice president of NECA's student chapter, said he appreciates NECA's collaboration with YSU.

"Travers and the rest of the members are a great help," Parks said. "They are all in the engineering field every day. They're able to give us strong critiques and help us develop plans and ideas."

NECA also donated \$10,000 to strengthen forthcoming contributions.

Travers said participation within the chapter was an important factor in the scholarship selection process.

All five students were key members of YSU's NECA Green Energy Challenge team that competed against more

than 30 teams in Las Vegas and won the top prize. YSU's team created a plan to reduce energy consumption in the Youngstown Historical Center of Industry and Labor.

"NECA wants us to compete with much larger schools, such as Penn State, Georgia Tech and San Diego State," Parks said.

Currao, a junior, said he hopes to help his team win first place again in this year's NECA competition.

"We placed turbines on the back side of [the] building to help generate power," he said. "We also changed out lighting to become more energy efficient."

The students were also able to speak with potential future employers at the competition.

The Mahoning Valley's chapter, which was chartered in 1934, is just one of 119 NECA chapters.

"NECA really helps people who don't already work within the industry. The group gives them the ability to see what kind of work they'll be doing and who they'll be doing it with," Parks said.

After graduation, Parks said he hopes to move up in his family's company, Joe Dickey Electric.

Currao said he has similar plans, but wants to attend graduate school before searching for a job.

"After graduation, I'd definitely like to get my master's, then, hopefully, get a position with a large company," he said.

SCHOLARSHIP PAGE 2

## Obama proposes ban on assault weapons, other measures

**Anita Kumar**  
(MCT)

President Barack Obama proposed a broad package Wednesday designed to curb gun violence, including a ban on assault weapons, limits on ammunition magazines to 10 rounds, required background checks on all gun purchases and stiff new penalties for those who buy guns from unlicensed dealers.

He sent proposed legislation to Congress aimed at taking guns out of the hands of those who should not have them, getting "weapons of war" off the street, making schools safer and offering more mental health services.

Obama also signed 23 executive actions that do not need congressional approval. The executive actions include making it easier for federal and state agencies to make data available to the national background check system; launching a national campaign for safe and responsible gun ownership; reviewing safety standards for gun locks and gun safes; and nominating a director for the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives.

In addition, he called for the training more law enforcement officers and imple-

menting tougher enforcement and prosecution of existing laws. A senior administration official said the executive actions "are not a substitute for legislation action." The president wants to hire 1,000 new resource officers and counselors for schools and spend \$10 million to research violence in the media.

Obama's proposal — the most aggressive gun-control plan in generations — comes one month after a mass shooting at an elementary school in Newtown, Conn., left 26 people, including 20 young children, dead.

The new proposals will cost an estimated \$500 million, but White House officials said they do not know how many lives would be saved if they were enacted.

The announcement set off a fierce debate on Capitol Hill, where Republicans and some Democrats oppose changes they fear would chip away at American's Second Amendment right to bear arms. Some bills may not even get a vote in the Republican-run House of Representatives. The Senate is expected to begin debate as soon as next week.

The president was joined at the midday event at the White House complex by Vice President Joe

Biden, children who wrote to him after the shooting, gun control activists and lawmakers.

The proposals came after the administration, led by Biden, spent a month speaking to more than 200 organizations, including gun-control groups, gun owners, religious leaders, law enforcement organizations, the medical community and child advocacy groups.

The United States has more firearms than other nation in the world — 270 million, according to the international Small Arms Survey, an independent research project at the Graduate Institute of International and Development Studies in Geneva.

Background checks to purchase firearms soared in the days after the Newtown shooting after potential buyers became worried about new restrictions.

Late Tuesday, the National

Rifle Association released a video calling Obama an "elitist hypocrite" for not endorsing a proposal to install armed guards in all schools while his own children are protected by armed Secret Service agents at their school.

"Are the president's kids more important than yours?" the narrator asks. "Then why is he skeptical about putting

armed security in our schools when his kids are protected by armed guards at their school? Mr. Obama demands the wealthy pay their fair share of taxes, but he's just another elitist hypocrite when it comes to a fair share of security."

Obama is likely to try to urge Congress to pass legislative by staging a public relations blitz, as he has done in recent months.

"I know that the president believes and has learned over the course of his first term that it is vitally important when trying to move forward on an agenda that is both necessary and enjoys popular support that we engage the public," White House spokesman Jay Carney said. "And that's an approach he's taken for some time now, and

I think, broadly speaking, it's an approach he'll continue to take."



PHOTO COURTESY OF MCT CAMPUS.

## Girl, 12, in critical condition after Ky. shooting that killed 2



At least two people were killed and one person was injured in a shooting at Hazard Community and Technical College on Tuesday. (Joshua Ball/Lexington Herald-Leader/MCT)

**Bill Estep and  
Valarie Honeycutt  
Spears**  
LEXINGTON  
HERALD-LEADER  
(MCT)

A 12-year-old girl was fighting for her life at a Lexington, Ky., hospital Wednesday after a shooting that killed her father and a cousin Tuesday in a parking lot at Hazard Community and Technical College.

Killed were Caitlin Cornett, 20, who was living in Letcher County, and her uncle, Jackie "Doug" Cornett, 53, of the Perry County community of Happy, Hazard Assistant Police Chief Joe Engle said.

Jackie Cornett's daughter, Taylor Cornett, a sixth-grader at R.W. Combs Elementary School in Perry County, was in critical condition at University of Kentucky Chandler Hospital, hospital spokeswoman Julie Phillips said.

Hazard police charged

Dalton Stidham, 21, Caitlin Cornett's former boyfriend, with two counts of murder, one related to domestic violence, and one count of attempted murder. Stidham turned himself in to Kentucky State Police after the shooting.

A police citation said Stidham admitted that he had shot three people.

Stidham told police "I snapped; shot three people, I'm sure," according to the citation completed by Detective Lt. Paul Campbell, who is leading the investigation.

A handgun was found at the scene and matched the description of a gun Stidham said he bought earlier Tuesday, according to the citation.

Caitlin Cornett had broken up with Stidham a few months before the shooting, said Brittany Cornett, Caitlin's sister. She said Caitlin "was a loving mother, a loving sister and daughter, and everything you could possibly want in somebody."

Jackie Cornett was a for-

mer coal miner who was disabled from a mining injury, Brittany Cornett said. He "was kind and caring and loved his family," she said.

Stidham and Caitlin Cornett had chosen the parking lot of the college's First Federal Center building to exchange their 2-year-old son, Jaydein, for visitation, Brittany Cornett said.

Police said Tuesday that the boy was not injured and was in the custody of social services workers. Brittany Cornett said relatives were meeting with social workers Wednesday to discuss Jaydein.

Brittany Cornett said Jackie Cornett and his daughter Taylor had taken Caitlin to the parking lot to meet Stidham.

They were to meet at 8 p.m. Tuesday, but Stidham called and asked that the exchange be made earlier, Brittany Cornett said.

The shooting occurred just before 6 p.m., police said.

Hazard Police Chief Minor Allen said Tuesday that

shots were fired into the victims' vehicle; one person was found dead inside and the other was lying in the parking lot. He said the shooting could be "a domestic type situation" unrelated to the school.

Brittany Cornett said Stidham and her sister had lived together for about three years and had separated in October.

Caitlin Cornett had been living at Brittany Cornett's home in Letcher County since the separation, Brittany said. Caitlin went to court in Perry County on Monday to determine a visitation schedule for the child.

She said Caitlin told her that she had recently signed up for classes at the community college.

Caitlin Cornett had gone to court in Perry County in November in an attempt to get an emergency domestic violence order against Stidham, but she was unsuccessful, her sister said.

At least 25 women were murdered by male intimate partners in Kentucky from

Oct. 1, 2011 to Sept. 30, 2012, according to an annual report from the Kentucky Domestic Violence Association. The report, called "Speak My Name," includes only women with whom the group was aware of through domestic-violence programs and news reports.

Lois Valentine, director for a regional domestic violence program based in Perry County, said she was not familiar with Caitlin Cornett's situation. But as a result of Tuesday's shooting, Valentine said, she held a meeting with women staying at the shelter Wednesday morning to emphasize the importance of following safety rules.

"I tried ... to point out to them ... how much danger they could be in and how much danger they could put others in by not taking precautions," Valentine said.

"It just reiterates how serious domestic violence is," she said, "and how we need to be more aware as a community."

### SCHOLARSHIP PAGE 1

would learn a language," Ahmed said.

Lindsay Calvert, assistant director of the Gilman Scholarship Program, said she expects additional applications for the 2012-2013 academic year and anticipates the awarding of more than 2,800 scholarships.

For the 2011-2012 academic year, 8,413 applications were received, and 2,331 awards were granted. The scholarship program is open to undergraduate students across the U.S.

Calvert said the Gilman Scholarship Program has received an increasing number of applications each year, but has also been fortunate to receive more funding from the U.S. Department of State's Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs, the program's sponsor.

"It is a competitive scholarship, but it is also an attainable scholarship, especially for the students that put forth a strong and conscientious effort [and] work with their study abroad adviser," Calvert said.

## A promising time for online learning, higher education

**Kansas City Star**  
(MCT)

Got an itch to learn single variable calculus? Or how about game theory, or introduction to artificial intelligence?

Courses formerly confined to the nooks and crannies of academia are now available to anyone with a computer. For free. Their rapid entry into worldwide learning has huge implications for higher education.

MOOCs — massive open online courses — have the potential to export the teachings of university professors to emerging populations hungry for knowledge. In the United States, they could be a remedy for soaring college costs and crippling debt.

But they also could reinforce inequality in higher education. A well-schooled middle-class student is likely to use a fast-moving online course to greater advantage than a student from a bottom-tier high school who may require tutoring and other support to succeed in college-level courses.

No one knows where MOOCs are going — or if they'll even stick around. They have attracted venture capital but have yet to come up with a logical

profit stream.

Colleges and universities are wise to be watching closely, however, and strategizing about how to take advantage of their potential.

Colleges and universities have for years offered courses online and charged credit hours, often at a reduced rate from similar courses taught on campus.

More recently professors from elite universities like Stanford and MIT have been putting their content on the Web for free, offering people from Prairie Village to Bangladesh the chance to absorb knowledge in the form of short videos and quizzes on their laptops or smart phones. The small percentage of students who complete a course receive a certificate, but not credit.

The courses attracted so much interest that professors and university officials began developing platforms to market and offer courses. The big three so far are Udacity, Coursera and edX.

A Kansas City Star survey of area colleges and universities showed that most are watching developments in the MOOC realm and a few are contemplating a role. Fort Hays State University, an innovative college in western Kan-

sas, is considering allowing students to pay for credit hours after successfully completing an online course taught by a MOOC professor.

MOOCs and distance learning in general are a vital element of higher education moving forward. The idea of college being restricting to a campus is fading fast — a fact that university leaders should take into account as they contemplate ever more ambitious building programs.

But Internet learning brings its own set of challenges. Online colleges and classes have high drop-out rates. Questions are being raised about the quality of some of them and whether students are getting their money's worth. Low-income students, who find the lower costs appealing, may have the most difficulty with the independent study.

At the same time, there are worries that too much regulation and control of online learning will squelch a promising movement.

MOOCs aren't likely to displace traditional higher education. But they have the feel of something substantial. Colleges and universities should look for ways to use them as a force for greater equality and opportunity.

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**NEWS BRIEFS**

*Game of Hope planned for Feb. 2*

The Hope Foundation of the Mahoning Valley will present the Game of Hope Charity Basketball Classic — its ninth annual Game of Hope event — on Feb. 2 in Beeghly Center. The game will benefit the Hope Foundation of the Mahoning Valley, which is a nonprofit organization that raises funds for chronically and terminally ill children. In the first eight years of its existence, the Hope Foundation has raised more than \$75,000 for its cause. One team, Team Johnson, will be headed by U.S. Rep. Bill Johnson, while the other, Team Davis, will be led by Jim Davis, an Austintown Township trustee. For more information about the Game of Hope, visit <http://www.hopemv.org>.

*MLK breakfast features bishop as keynote speaker*

From 8:30 to 10:30 a.m. on Jan. 24, YSU will host the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Diversity Breakfast in the Chestnut Room of Kilcawley Center. Vashti Murphy McKenzie, who is bishop of the African Methodist Episcopal Church, will be the event's keynote speaker. Tickets are \$25, or \$12 for students. They can be purchased at the YSU Information and PC Lab, which is located on the second floor of Kilcawley Center. For information about group and table purchases, contact the YSU Office of Student Diversity Programs. For more information about the breakfast, contact Carla Nalbach at 330-941-2087 or [cdnalb@ysu.edu](mailto:cdnalb@ysu.edu), or William Blake at 330-941-2086 or [wjblake@ysu.edu](mailto:wjblake@ysu.edu).

**POLICE BRIEFS**

*Woman gets stuck in restroom, hurts shoulder*

Around 11:30 p.m. on Monday, YSU Police reported to the first floor women's restroom in Jones Hall after a 55-year-old female YSU employee said she'd gotten stuck inside and had injured her shoulder while trying to get out. The woman told YSU Police that the door to the restroom is often difficult to open, as it seems to get stuck. YSU Police found that the door's latch catches on the door jamb. Despite feeling like she pulled a muscle in her left shoulder, the woman refused an ambulance. In addition, maintenance workers arrived at Jones Hall to fix the door.

*Student reports dizziness on first day of semester*

YSU Police reported to the Student Health Clinic in Kilcawley House around 10 a.m. on Monday after a 27-year-old male student said he was experiencing a high heart rate and dizziness. An ambulance arrived at the clinic, and it transported the student to Northside Medical Center for further evaluation.

*Courtyard Apts. resident accidentally activates alarm*

On Friday around 2:30 p.m., a YSU police officer reported to the University Courtyard Apartments after a panic alarm had gone off in one of the apartments. Upon his arrival, the student resident told the officer that he'd accidentally bumped the wall-mounted panic alarm, causing the alarm to activate. The alarm reset on its own.

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## VALLEY FOSTERS GROWTH OF RARE BREED



Jim Ciccolelli, Justin Mullane, Justin Booker and Alex Vitus perform together as Rare Breed, a new-age reggae band. They recently wrapped up pre-production for their debut EP and are rehearsing for upcoming shows. Photo courtesy of Justin Mullane.

**Marissa McIntyre**  
ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT EDITOR

Just three days into 2013, Boardman's Don't Touch That! Studio served as a temporary home for the Youngstown-born reggae band Rare Breed as its members recorded their long-awaited debut EP.

And, after an entire day spent in the studio, Rare Breed's members were shocked to hear themselves and what they had created.

Larry Serb, studio owner, said he stayed up late with Rare Breed to finish the project.

"For me, musically what separates them is the vocal effects Justin does," Serb said, referring to Justin Mullane, the band's vocalist. "It gets experimental."

Mullane, a student at Youngstown State University, said he met Justin Booker, Rare Breed's drummer, in Florida. The chance meeting allowed Mullane and Booker to bond over their shared hometown of Youngstown —

and to begin jamming together upon their return.

"[Mullane] sort of showed up one day and asked us if we wanted to hear him beatbox," Booker said.

Booker and guitarist Alex Vitus are former YSU students who met at Bliss Hall and began to play music together. But Booker and bassist Jim Ciccolelli's friendship goes back even further: They used to play football together in high school.

Eventually, though, Mullane joined Booker, Vitus and Ciccolelli for open mic nights at Barley's in downtown Youngstown, and they decided to turn their routine into a committed project.

Mullane, clad in a Bob Marley T-shirt, said the band took off pretty quickly.

"We maybe jammed together four or five times before our first gig," he said.

Rare Breed's first real performance was a standout moment for all members, Ciccolelli said.

"I remember being like, 'Dude, we're on stage right now,'" he said.

"We had just anticipated it for a while."

All members agreed that this first performance was one of their best. Vitus said it simply "felt good to get the crowd moving," while Booker said Rare Breed "killed it," despite being "nervous as shit."

Band members said they're anticipating an EP release date of March 30 — the one-year anniversary of Rare Breed's formation.

To Mullane, the band has "the opportunity right now to bust out of what people think of reggae," and Ciccolelli said he's excited to share the band's twist on reggae with everyone.

"We basically take everything and toss it in a blender. That's our sound," he said.

Booker explained that the band prefers not to define itself musically, primarily because of the variety of different flavors that each member brings to the table.

"The way we come up with what we come up with sets us aside," he said. "We all have different styles, and it's cool how it fuses together."

The name Rare Breed seemed perfect for the quartet, as each member listens to and plays different styles of music. Mullane said the name also coincides with a philosophy to which each member subscribes: to be different and stand out from the crowd.

"A lot of it is really existential," he said. "Some people are just different, and I invite everyone to be a rare breed with us."

Aside from their EP release, the band members have the short-term goal of expanding their horizons beyond Youngstown and the long-term goal of being able to live comfortably through performing. They're also looking forward to their first gig of the year, which is scheduled for Feb. 1 at University Pizzeria on YSU's campus.

All four members of Rare Breed said they do not plan on quitting the band any time soon.

"[I won't quit] as long as we keep getting better," Booker said. "I don't get bored jamming with you guys. I'll jam with you guys forever."

## Grab some leaves

### Comedian returns to perform in Youngstown

**Marissa McIntyre**  
ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT EDITOR

As a college student at Heidelberg University in Tiffin, Ohio, Brian Regan was planning on being an accountant after his college career.

He decided to switch his major to mass communications, and one of the first classes he took was a speech class. This is when Regan said he caught the bug.

"I always tried to make my speeches funny," Regan said. "So, that's when I thought that if I can make my classroom laugh, maybe I can make bigger rooms laugh."

Regan is returning to Ohio on Sunday to perform at Stambaugh Auditorium. Regan has been steadily returning to Youngstown and said he enjoys performing.

"No one in Youngstown has ever been mean to me. So, as long as no one is mean to me, I'll keep coming back," Regan said.

Regan's performance is

about an hour long, and he often comes back for an encore. The first half of his performance will be new material.

"I like to walk on virgin snow and leave footprints," Regan said. "I like to see what reactions the audience will have."

He said if he does an encore, he will often bring out old materials or fan favorites.

"It's still fun to dust off the older stuff. But, if I did it night after night, it would bore me," Regan said.

A crowd favorite skit is where Regan talks about being "stupid in school." He starts it off by bringing up spelling bees in school.

"All right, kids, line up against the wall. It's time for public humiliation," Regan begins the skit. He then says how he always admired the kid who purposely misspelled a word so he could sit down.

"First word, 'cat.' He's like, 'K-A-T. I'm out of here,'" Regan then drops the punch line. "Then, as he walks by he says, 'Haha, I know there's two t's!'"

He said anyone wanting to break into show business should learn to take the good with the bad. When he started out, he had a slew of rough shows.

"[At] the club, when I started, I would go on at the end of the night after the headliner for five or 10 minutes. People would be leaving during my set, so I just made it a part of the show," Regan said. "I got pretty good at self-deprecation that when they moved me up, I thought to myself, 'No one is leaving! What do I do?'"

Regan has performed on "The Tonight Show with Johnny Carson." Regan said that this was a career high for him.

"It was every comedian's dream to be on 'The Tonight Show with Johnny Carson,' and, for a while, there were rumors floating around about his retirement. So, I thought, 'Well, that's one dream that's not coming true,'" Regan said.

Thankfully, he made an appearance on the show a year before Carson's retirement.

The Miami native resides in Las Vegas. Regan performs



Comedian and entertainer Brian Regan performs his own brand of comedy by taking bland subjects and finding the humor in them. Regan will perform at Stambaugh Auditorium on Sunday. Photo courtesy of Brian Regan.

around 100 shows a year, and dedicates the rest of his time to being a father.

He said he is looking forward to performing again in Youngstown.

"I hope people come out for a chuckle. Hopefully, I'll be able to take them from a chuckle to full-on laughter," Regan said.

## Taking aim at mental illness

Adam Lanza, the accused shooter at Sandy Hook Elementary School, didn't undergo a background check to obtain the firearms he used to allegedly murder 20 children and six adults in December.

He didn't obtain a permit, register the gun or endure a waiting period.

That's because he stole them from his mother who bought them legally.

Every day, hundreds of thousands of responsible gun owners properly handle their lethal collectibles, and nobody is wounded. It's a few crazies that grab all the headlines.

Yet, in the wake of the seemingly ever more frequent mass shootings are periodic calls to action and responses from public figures regarding firearm regulations.

For the sake of argument, let's say Lanza had used a standard 15-round magazine instead of the 30-round one he allegedly used at Newtown. And let's keep going and say that the smaller clips resulted in only 13 tragic deaths instead of 26. Would anyone consider this a success?

Regulating guns is only treating the symptoms of a much more dangerous disease.

The government can reduce the size of magazines, place a ban on assault weapons and implement tougher background checks all it wants — and it should — but no real change will come until it takes a comprehensive approach to addressing mental health.

According to the National Institute of Mental Health, less than 60 percent of U.S. adults diagnosed with serious mental illness receive treatment, and only 50 percent of children.

Society wants to overlook them or sweep them under the carpet because treatment costs money. It's only when one of them snaps that anyone addresses the issue. Then, the media and powerful people respond with shock.

Make no mistake: This will happen again and again. People will use whatever objects they have available to maim and murder. But if we give them the necessary treatment, maybe some won't feel the need to.

### JAMBAR POLICY

Since being founded by Burke Lyden in 1931, The Jambar has won nine Associated Collegiate Press honors. The Jambar is published twice weekly during the fall and spring semesters and weekly during the first summer session. Mail subscriptions are \$25 per academic year. The first copy of The Jambar is free. Additional copies of The Jambar are \$1 each.

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The editorial board that writes Our Side editorials consists of the editor-in-chief, the managing editor and the senior copy editor. These opinion pieces are written separately from news articles. They draw on the opinions of the entire student staff and do not reflect the opinions of any individual staff member. The Jambar's business manager does not contribute to editorials, and the adviser does not have final approval.

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The Jambar encourages letters to the editor. Submissions are welcome at thejambar@gmail.com or by following the "Submit a Letter" link on thejambar.com. Letters should concern campus issues, must be typed and must not exceed 500 words. Submissions must include the writer's name and telephone number for verification, along with the writer's city of residence for printing. 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 decides that the subject has been sufficiently aired. The editorial board will request a rewrite from the submitting 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.



## How could genetics help us understand mass killers?

Nathaniel Comfort  
HARTFORD COURANT  
(MCT)

Wayne Carver, Connecticut's chief medical examiner, asked geneticists at the University of Connecticut to join the investigation into the Dec. 14 killings at Sandy Hook Elementary School in Newtown. A retired FBI profiler said in response, "I think it's great to consider if there's something here that would help people understand this behavior."

Where's the harm? What could go wrong?

In principle, genetics could pinpoint a biological defect that could explain the rampage of Adam Lanza, who shot students, school staff members, his mother and himself.

"Is there any identifiable disease associated with this behavior?" Carver asked. Of course there is. The first hit on this fishing expedition was Asperger's syndrome, with which Adam Lanza was alleged to have been diagnosed as a child. Consensus quickly emerged that Asperger's does not predispose one toward violent behavior — the autism spectrum was, then, a genetic red herring. But the genetic investigation continues, and the likelihood of finding some correlated disease or syndrome is high. Here are some things they might find:

Other personality disorders. Lanza was "a nerd," quiet, shy, smart and he favored the dark, eerie aesthetic of Goth culture. So many kids fit this profile it is almost inconceivable that they don't have some genetic markers in common.

A relative with a history of vio-

lence. A study published last year using the time-honored method of studying twins claimed to show that criminal behavior can be predicted by genetics. Indeed, family identity was briefly implicated in the Sandy Hook massacre — for a few hours Lanza's brother was thought to be the shooter — but that turned out to be another red herring. A detailed analysis of Lanza's pedigree, however, might produce antisocial ancestors, which could aid in post-hoc prediction.

The "violent-drunk" gene. A form of a serotonin receptor (HTR2B) is associated with violent impulsive behavior, if the bearer is male and has been drinking alcohol. A study published in 2010 triggered wide speculation that this gene was responsible for that burly jerk at the bar who keeps picking fights late in the fourth quarter of the football game.

The "warrior" gene. A particular form of the neurotransmitter monoamine oxidase (MAOA-L) has been linked to a variety of aggressive behaviors and impulsiveness.

A sophisticated genetic explanation, however, would not feature a single "massacre" gene. It would involve a complex profile — a constellation of alleles, or particular forms of a gene, which, acting in combination and in certain environments, give a high risk of violent action.

Genetic science is well past the days of single genes for complex behaviors. The news media, however, are not. One blog asked, "Did Adam Lanza's genes make him a murderer?" The impression persists that, if we boil it down far enough, complex, nuanced, 21st-century genetics can provide our craving for

simple, fundamental explanations as to why the incomprehensible continues to happen.

Although in Lanza's case the only benefit of genetic analysis is the potential for better understanding after the fact, the long-term goals of such a study are prediction and prevention. These of course are also the goals of modern genetic medicine. We already screen for several dozen diseases at birth; psychiatric conditions and syndromes could easily become part of such a program. As antisocial behavior is increasingly medicalized, then, genetic surveillance logically and easily expands from hypertension to psychosis to school shootings.

Should genetic risk factors be identified, steps could theoretically be taken to avert another massacre. These could include lifetime surveillance (perhaps merely informally, by family members, teachers and employers) counseling, medication and, in cases of extreme likelihood, pre-emptive institutionalization. Chilling steps toward genetic prevention, then, needn't involve science-fiction scenarios involving prenatal diagnosis and gene therapy. They could be accomplished by means of existing conditions of law and sentiment.

Dystopian science fiction movies such as "Gattaca" and "Minority Report" sensationalize troubling visions of the biological control of social behavior. Our genetic future will not be so dramatic; nor — more's the pity — will the actors look like Uma Thurman or Tom Cruise. The future creeps up on you mundanely, through innumerable small steps, each a natural, easy and hopefully compassionate consequence of the last.

## Gun violence: A threat to the public's health

Jo Ivey Boufford  
KANSAS CITY STAR  
(MCT)

This week Vice President Joe Biden will present a series of recommendations as part of a national effort to end needless and tragic gun violence. These recommendations were not created in a vacuum; rather, Biden sought to bring diverse voices to the table — those who see a ban on guns as a threat to their right to bear arms and those whose lives have been shattered by gun violence.

The debate around these recommendations will more than likely focus on the constitutionality of proposed gun control laws, the lack of enforcement in existing gun laws, greater scrutiny on background checks, and funding for mental illness treatment.

Absent from this conversation is the way in which gun violence threatens the public's health. We can no longer ignore the annual U.S. toll of firearm deaths, by far the highest in the developed world, as a pressing public health concern.

The current death toll from firearms, 31,000 lives a year, would properly be seen as intolerable if it represented deaths from measles or contamination of the water supply. It exceeds the number of babies who die each year during their first year of life (25,000) or people who

die from AIDS (9,500) or illicit drugs (17,000).

As a society, we address public health threats by identifying the root causes, reducing exposure, and instituting protective measures. Advance identification of individuals who are likely to cause mass killings in schools, shopping malls, or movie houses is nearly impossible. And current laws do little to curb individual shootings, many of which involve household and neighborhood settings. We need to turn to protective measures, just as imposing speed limits and introducing safety belts have markedly reduced automobile deaths.

Moreover, bolstering public policy control measures to protect and enhance the health of the public is nothing new to our society. We require the immunization of children against infectious diseases, we enforce laws that regulate food and drugs, and we work to maintain a safe and clean water supply. We have even imposed a tax on disease-causing consumer products such as cigarettes.

In the same way, we must protect Americans from irresponsible gun use. We can start with a ban on assault rifles, high-capacity magazines, and other facilitators of mass murder. Many responsible gun owners will tell you that weapons like the AR-15 used in the Newtown, Conn., shootings are not appropriate for big-game hunting.

In New York, Gov. Andrew Cuomo and the legislature — unified across party lines — have acted rapidly to restrict sales of assault weapons, limit the size of magazines, and restrict gun license eligibility. They are also increasing access to community mental health services. These are sound measures. Next steps should include directly engaging affected communities in finding solutions to gun violence just as the parents and loved ones of those killed in the Newtown shootings have done in the newly formed Sandy Hook Promise.

Most important, we must give the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention greater ability to fully exercise its duties in both surveillance of the incidence and impact of gun violence to better understand the problem and educate the public on steps for preventing death and injury through the use of firearms.

In the wake of recent tragic shootings, we should ask ourselves what we will do to protect our neighbors and ourselves from this, as from any other, epidemic scourge. When we have made this decision, we will be ready to act to regulate firearms.

The evidence is clear: we must now take action to protect our neighbors and ourselves from this devastating public health crisis. As a nation, we can only improve the health of the public when we get our priorities straight.

TheJambar.com



## YSU swim and dive team ready for second half



YSU diver Casey Hill practices during the fall semester. The Penguins begin the second half of their season on Saturday. Photo by Dustin Livesay/The Jambar.

**Cory Bartek**  
SPORTS REPORTER

The Youngstown State University swimming and diving team is ready to get back to action as the Penguins begin the second half of their season with a meet against Cleveland State University and Wright State University on Saturday.

The Penguins experienced success in the first half of their season, both as a team and individually.

YSU was victorious in three of its four dual meets, picking up wins against Niagara University, Butler University and Saint Francis University.

Head diving coach Nick Gavolas said the first half of the season went fairly well.

"We had a few injuries for the divers, but when they were healthy, they were good," Gavolas said.

The team recently returned from Puerto Rico, where they were on a 10-day training trip. Gavolas said he expects his team to come back from the two-month break improved and ready to go.

"We're getting healthier, and we're looking to make a run toward the conference tourney," Gavolas said.

Gavolas speaks highly of the talent that is on his team and applauds his girls for using their talents to the best of their abilities.

He also admitted that there isn't just one girl that sticks out as having more of an impact than the others, but rather three that have all had success.

"We're pretty well split," Gavolas said. "The three that are healthy, [Casey Hill, Tricia Vallinger and Rebecca Stafford], are all sharing the limelight, which bodes well for conference."

Gavolas also said that he

has high expectations for those three divers for the postseason.

"I'm expecting to put those three girls in the top eight and really hope to see them all get in the top five," Gavolas said. "That's the plan."

Gavolas added that his girls have been training — both in the pool and running — and that soon they will get back to lifting weights.

"We do scoring during practice to let them know where they're at," he said. "When you dive, you're really competing against yourself, not others."

On the swimming side of things, head coach Matt Anderson said he is pleased with how the season started and noted that all of the girls are ahead of their times from last year.

"The biggest difference this year has been their competitiveness," Anderson said. "They don't want to lose."

Looking ahead to the second part of the season, Ander-

son said these next few weeks would be crucial in finding out where the team stands.

Anderson is hoping to at least split this Saturday's meet against CSU and WSU.

"Everything we look for is where we place in our [Horizon League] championship meet," Anderson said.

Anderson, like Gavolas, said that his group of swimmers has pretty good consistency across the board, but noted that sophomore Ashley Dow, junior Therese Stevens and senior Sam Roberts have all stepped up this season.

Anderson said the layoff from competition dating back to Nov. 18 has both a positive and negative impact.

"They lose some of their competitive edge, but, at the same time, they are hungry to get back at it and get the payoff," Anderson said. "They're feeling confident in what they can do as a group."

## On the road again

**Steve Wilaj**  
SPORTS EDITOR

Although it may seem backward, the Youngstown State University men's basketball team is glad to leave home and hit the road this weekend.

While YSU is 4-2 at home this season, only one of its victories came against a Division I opponent. Meanwhile, the Penguins are 5-3 on the road, with victories against George Washington University, the University of Georgia and Bowling Green State University.

After Thursday's 101-60 loss to the University of Detroit Mercy at Beeghly Center, head coach Jerry Slocum said his team fell victim to "distractions" that surround a home contest.

During Monday's press conference, junior guard Kendrick Perry addressed Slocum's comment.

"There's always a couple of distractions — here and there — at home," Perry said. "Obviously, you want to play well in front of your friends, family and classmates."

So, don't think the Penguins (9-7) will be too upset when they board the bus for games at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee (4-13) on Thursday and the University of Wisconsin-Green Bay (8-9) on Saturday.

"When we're on the road, nothing matters because it's just about us," Perry said.

Perry, averaging a team-best 16 points and 4.4 assists per game, added that the isolation

causes YSU to become a "really focused group."

"After practice, you're not going to class. You're not going to your own room," he said. "You're going to a hotel room where the only people you can really talk to are your coaches and teammates. That helps, but, at the same time, we have to find a way to be more focused at home."

However, for this weekend, the Penguins just want to continue their on-the-road success.

"We've had some really, really good days of practice," Slocum said on Monday. "It has not been a tough thing for us coaches. Our kids have really taken ownership in terms of how we played and want to get back to it."

The YSU women's basketball team is also eager to get back on the court.

Coming off a loss at Valparaiso University on Saturday in their Horizon League opener, the Penguins host Milwaukee on Thursday and Green Bay on Saturday.

"It was disappointing for the players, coaches and whole program," head coach Bob Boldon said of the Valpo loss in which YSU fumbled a 15-point lead. "But you can only dwell on it for so long because you have to play games this week as well."

UWM holds a 4-9 record, while Green Bay is 14-2. But before the Penguins (10-4) can worry about their opponents, senior forward Brandi Brown said YSU has to first work on its own deficiencies.

"We struggled maintaining effort in the Valpo game and in



Kendrick Perry shoots a 3-pointer during a recent Penguins home game. The men play two games on the road this week, while the women play two at home. Photo by Dustin Livesay/The Jambar.

games before that," Brown said. "I think it comes down to everyone individually taking pride in what we do, taking pride in playing defense and wanting and having a desire to win."

Boldon added that if the

intensity doesn't increase, his team "won't win another game all year."

"I'm very honest with you guys, and it's 100 percent true," he said. "If we give that effort, we will lose again."

### SPORTS BRIEFS

**Make reservations for First Pitch Breakfast by Friday**

For tickets to Major League Baseball games, autographed baseballs, custom YSU fine hardwood items and more, look no further than the First Pitch Breakfast, scheduled for Jan. 26. The event will be held at McMenamy's Restaurant and Banquet Center in Niles, and Pittsburgh Pirates manager Clint Hurdle and MLB umpire Wally Bell will be featured speakers at the breakfast. Tickets are \$15 each; they will serve as both a raffle ticket and an entry ticket for the breakfast buffet. For reservations (which must be made by Friday), contact Kevin Smallcomb at 970-978-0504 or kdsmallcomb@ysu.edu.

**Feb. 1 men's basketball game to be televised**

The Horizon League recently announced that the YSU men's basketball game at the University of Detroit Mercy on Feb. 1 will be broadcast nationally on ESPNU. Tipoff will be at 9 a.m. at Calihan Hall in Detroit. The Penguins and the Titans are the HL's top two scoring teams; they have a combined record of 19-11. This will be YSU's second game on ESPNU this season.

### STANDINGS

Green Bay	12-2
Cleveland St.	10-5
Valparaiso	6-8
Wright State	7-8
UIC	5-10
<b>Youngstown St.</b>	<b>10-4</b>
Loyola	5-9
Milwaukee	4-9
Detroit	7-7

### PENGUIN SPOTLIGHT



**Damian Eargle**

Year: Senior  
Height: 6'7"  
Hometown: Youngstown  
Position: Forward

Through 16 games this season, Eargle averages 12.4 points and 6.8 rebounds per game. In YSU's Jan. 5 win at Loyola University Chicago, Eargle led the Penguins with 20 points and six blocks. He followed that performance with 14 points and seven rebounds against the University of Detroit Mercy. With 3.5 blocks per game, Eargle ranks fifth nationally and leads the Horizon League. He also owns the YSU and HL career blocks records with 262.