



## University Investigation

# Campus probe of professor continues

A newspaper in the town where Neil was teaching published a story revealing that Neil earned his degrees from an unaccredited university.

By MICHAEL J. BALALE &  
ELIZABETH TABAK  
The Jambar

Six years before William Bruce Neil was hired at Youngstown State University, questions surfaced about the validity of his masters and doctoral degrees.

On May 25, 1997 a newspaper in the town where Neil was teaching published a story revealing that Neil earned his higher degrees from a university that had no accreditation.

Youngstown State University administrators are continuing their investigation of Neil after it was discovered earlier this week that the professor earned his degrees from La Salle University, a university that has been exposed for issuing unaccredited degrees.

Neil began teaching at YSU in 2003 and the chair of YSU's human ecology department said she hopes Neil continues working here.

"He's truly a valuable member of our department and he's done a good job with his students," Jean Hassell said.

Hassell said YSU does not check or research a person's educational background or the institutions a person has attended.

"It's not something that's usually done," Hassell said. "I've been on many search committees and you don't really check the universities."

Special Assistant to the President Thomas Maraffa said he believes the university should check the educational backgrounds of applicants.

Wednesday afternoon, it was learned that when Neil was chairman of hotel and restaurant management at Luzerne County Community College from 1984 to 1998, an investigation was done into his credentials, according to an article written by Steve Corbett in the Times Leader.

When confronted with the article,

See NEIL, page 2

**::1984::**

William Bruce Neil starts his position as chairman of hotel and restaurant management at Luzerne County Community College.

**::1995::**

Neil earns master's degree from La Salle University in Louisiana.

**::1997::**

On May 25 a newspaper in the town where Neil was teaching published a story revealing that Neil earned his higher degrees from a university that had no accreditation.

**::2004::**

Monday university officials announced an investigation of Neil's credentials. Neil continues to teach his classes



Chuck Rogers / The Jambar

QUESTIONS: Human Ecology professor William Bruce Neil looks over an article published in 1997 which revealed that La Salle University in Louisiana was unaccredited. Neil earned his master's and doctorate degrees from La Salle.

## La Salle indicted for fraud

By ELIZABETH TABAK  
The Jambar

In 1997, a federal court ruled that La Salle University in Louisiana where William Bruce Neil earned his higher degrees was guilty of falsely representing accreditation to students and faculty.

The University President Thomas J. Kirk was sentenced to five years in a state prison and students were informed by the

court about the false credentials.

Neil, the human ecology associate professor who began teaching at Youngstown State University one year ago, maintains that he has not received notification about the court case.

Attorney General Harry McSherry said the case mandated that students that had attended the university receive resti-

See FRAUD page 3

## Construction clogs up area roadways

By COLLEEN HAVENS  
The Jambar

Orange construction signs have begun dotting the highways leading to YSU's campus.

The signs signal the beginning of a two-year construction project that is causing detours and student frustration.

Ohio Department of Transportation spokeswoman Paula Putnam said ODOT is beginning a new \$59.8 million

"This project will connect Girard and Youngstown and will allow people to drive on a super highway instead of having to travel through residential neighborhoods."

— Paula Putnam, ODOT spokeswoman

project called the "711 Connector." Construction is starting on a four-lane, limited access highway from north of U.S. Route 422 to state Route 11 and Interstate 80 with an inter-

change at Gypsy Lane.

"This project will connect Girard and Youngstown and will allow people to drive on a super highway instead of having to travel through residen-

tial neighborhoods," she said.

The State Route 711 bridge is closed in both directions, and Putnam said motorists traveling north and south on Interstate 680 will be rerouted to the State Route 193 exit.

Putnam said ODOT is also doing work on the Blue Bridge on State Route 193, but the bridge will not be closed completely. Instead, there will be a

See ROADWAYS, page 4

## Eckman, Vukovic weigh in on elections

By CHRISTINA POE  
The Jambar

The 2004 Student Government Association election campaigns have commenced on the Youngstown State University campus with flyers and ad campaigns dotting the hallways of buildings across campus.

SGA President Emily Eckman and Vice President Adam Vukovic voiced their



thoughts about the candidates and the issues.

Running for SGA's top spots are the teams of Angela Mavrikis and James "J.T."

Holt; Bob McGovern and Amanda Mielke; Jaymin Patel and Thankful Stauffer; and

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## Sneak Peek

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YSU tennis player wins Horizon  
Player of the Week Award. Page 6



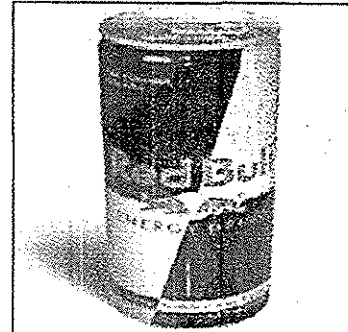
## Inside today's issue:

thejambar.com poll question:

**THE JAMBAR**  
The Collegiate Voice of Youngstown State University

Are you affected by the Route 711/422 construction?  
Vote @ www.thejambar.com

Energy drink may give you more  
than you bargain for. Page 4





**WANT TO BE A WINNER?**

For a chance to win \$100 in clothing from the YSU Bookstore or a YSU hoodie, fill out the following survey and take it to The Jambar, located in the basement of Fedor. All responses must be received by 5 p.m. Friday March 26. Winners will be announced in the Tuesday, March 30 edition of The Jambar.

**YSU Interests Survey**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Phone Number: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Are you a student or a faculty member at the University? \_\_\_\_\_

If you are a student, what year are you in? \_\_\_\_\_

- How many times a month do you eat out? \_\_\_\_\_
- How much money do you think you spend - on average - on food each day? \_\_\_\_\_
- What meals do you eat out each day? \_\_\_\_\_
- How many minutes a month do you use on your cell phone? \_\_\_\_\_
- How much money do you spend on CDs/mp3s/music in a month? \_\_\_\_\_
- How much money do you spend a month on clothes? \_\_\_\_\_
- How much money a month do you spend on alcohol/at bars? \_\_\_\_\_
- How many times a month do you go to or rent a movie? \_\_\_\_\_
- How many hours in a month do you watch television? \_\_\_\_\_
- How many hours a month do you listen to the radio? \_\_\_\_\_
- How much money do you spend on school supplies in a month? \_\_\_\_\_
- How many books do you read in a month? \_\_\_\_\_
- How much do you spend on groceries in a month? \_\_\_\_\_
- How many times a month do you use coupons? \_\_\_\_\_
- How many magazines do you subscribe to in a year? \_\_\_\_\_
- How many times a year do you take a vacation/road trip/travel? \_\_\_\_\_
- How many miles a month do you put on your automobile? \_\_\_\_\_
- How many concerts/sporting events do you see in a year? \_\_\_\_\_
- How many times a year do you get your oil changed or have to have work done on your car? \_\_\_\_\_
- Where do you live? \_\_\_\_\_
- How much money do you spend on presents each year? \_\_\_\_\_
- What kinds of gifts do you buy as presents? (Please be specific) \_\_\_\_\_

First Prize: \$100 in clothing from the YSU Bookstore  
 Second Prize: A YSU hooded sweatshirt valued at \$35  
 \*\*Must be a YSU student or employee to be eligible\*\*

**NEIL, continued from page 1**

Neil initially said he "may have been out of town" when it was published. "I've never seen this article in this form," Neil said repeatedly.

Later, when asked if he had seen the article in another form, Neil said he recognized the column.

"Nobody (at LCCC) ever said a word about the story," Neil said. "I think if it had any merit or validity, the administration would have brought it to my attention."

Kenneth Von Alt, editor of the Accredited Institution of Post-secondary Education for the American Council on Education, said having an accredited degree can vary with your career choice.

"It has a bearing if your employer requires a degree from an accredited institution," Von Alt said.

University Guidebook 7010.01 states "the university recognizes only credits and

degrees awarded by regionally accredited post-secondary institutions in the United States or by equivalent foreign institutions."

Neil maintains that La Salle was accredited at the time of his graduation in 1995.

"I got one heck of an education whether they were accredited or not," Neil said. "Just because it is not accredited, doesn't mean it's not a quality institution."

Neil earned a master's of science degree in hotel, restaurant and tourism. His transcript states he had 124 transfer hours and took 10 courses and a six-hour thesis project at La Salle University.

Of those 10 courses, eight were assigned "credit given" — a life-skills credit determined by prior experience in his field.

Von Alt said some universities assign life-skills credits, but "in a limited scope."

Neil earned his doctoral degree in hotel, restaurant and tourism the same day as his master's. For his doctoral, he took 10 courses and completed a doctoral dissertation. Nine of the 10 courses were "credit given."

Neil stepped down from chairman at Luzerne in 1998, but continued teaching classes for one year.

He said he took "early retirement" from chairman to step away from his administrative duties.

"Financially, I couldn't of passed it up," Neil said about his retirement incentives.

Jim Phillips, professor of Hotel and Restaurant Management at Luzerne, said he worked with Neil when he was chairman of the department. Phillips said he is "glad" Neil no longer teaches at LCCC.

"He's not the type of person that I would associate or

deal with," Phillips said. "I'm in a position where I know things I can't prove. I don't care what happens to him."

Dean of Health and Human Services John Yemma said he is not sure who at the university will lead the investigation. In the meantime, Neil is continuing to teach his classes.

"Oh God, I don't know what the outcome is going to be," Yemma said, placing his hand over his head. "It's up to the committee."

Neil said he would complete his master's degree again if the committee requests him to do so.

"The whole thing in question now is my integrity and I would never do anything to jeopardize that," he said.

Call Elizabeth Tabak at (330) 941-1989.

Call Michael J. Balala at (330) 941-3758.

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[www.wcba.ysu.edu](http://www.wcba.ysu.edu)

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**Harry Brandon**

Harry "Skip" Brandon is a founding partner of Smith Brandon International, Inc. He has a far-reaching background in U.S. and international investigative activities and wide experience in working with foreign governments and businesses. He is a former Deputy Assistant Director of the FBI with responsibility for the National Security and Counter Terrorism programs. He served 23 years with the FBI and is a combat veteran.

**Gene Smith**

Gene Smith is a founding partner of Smith Brandon International, Inc. She has extensive experience in economic and political analysis and a wide-ranging background pursuing investigations around the world on behalf of clients, industry, and governments. Smith has a particular expertise and experience in due diligence investigations that incorporate political risk analysis and the review of Foreign Corrupt Practices Act (FCPA) issues.

For more information about both presentations, contact Christine Shelton, Coordinator of External Relations for the Williamson College of Business Administration at 330-941-3068 or email [cgshelton@ysu.edu](mailto:cgshelton@ysu.edu).

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## Today's Editorial

### Students deserve truth about profs

Two leading investigations of professors at Youngstown State University should provide administrators with a clearer look at what needs to be done on campus.

Last week, University Spokesman Ron Cole said Anthropology Professor Gary Fry would no longer be teaching his classes this spring. Cole said the university is conducting an investigation and until a decision is made, Fry will be "reassigned" from his teaching duties.

Monday, officials announced they are investigating allegations that Associate Professor of Human Ecology William Bruce Neil misrepresented his credentials.

Neil is still teaching his classes, however.

These two issues should be lightning bolts striking down Tod Hall and across campus.

This university needs a better system for checking faculty backgrounds and maintaining professional conduct.

It is unclear why Fry is no longer teaching and officials have refused to comment. The Jambar has requested records concerning Fry's removal of teaching, but has not received any confirmation of those records as of Wednesday. New instructors have been assigned to his classes and a new syllabus has been handed out to students, stating that the work they have done from the beginning of this semester will not be counted towards their grade.

Something is clear: the students deserve an answer. Students in Fry's classes need to know why he is no longer teaching and why their work will not be graded.

In addition, students in Neil's classes deserve an answer. The University Guidebook states that all faculty members must hold degrees from accredited universities. Neil does not have a degree from an accredited university, and the students deserve their money back.

When students come to this university, they expect education from professionals. The "Dr." in front of Neil's name is supposed to signify that professionalism. If Neil's degree was not earned from a professional learning system, then the students should not have to pay for the education he provided.

It is an outrage that it is not university policy to check the education of applicants for employment. Chair of Human Ecology Jean Hassel said, "We don't really, as a general rule, do anything about checking the university."

Monday, The Jambar conducted a simple Internet search that revealed La Salle University in Louisiana as a non-accredited university shut down by the FBI in 1996.

Committee members should have taken it upon themselves to call his former employer, Luzerne County Community College. If they did, they would have learned that LCCC officials questioned Neil's credentials during his employment.

University officials need to draw strict hiring clauses making it mandatory for search committees to conduct thorough background checks.

YSU, if it wants to be a leader in education, must take the investigation of Neil seriously.

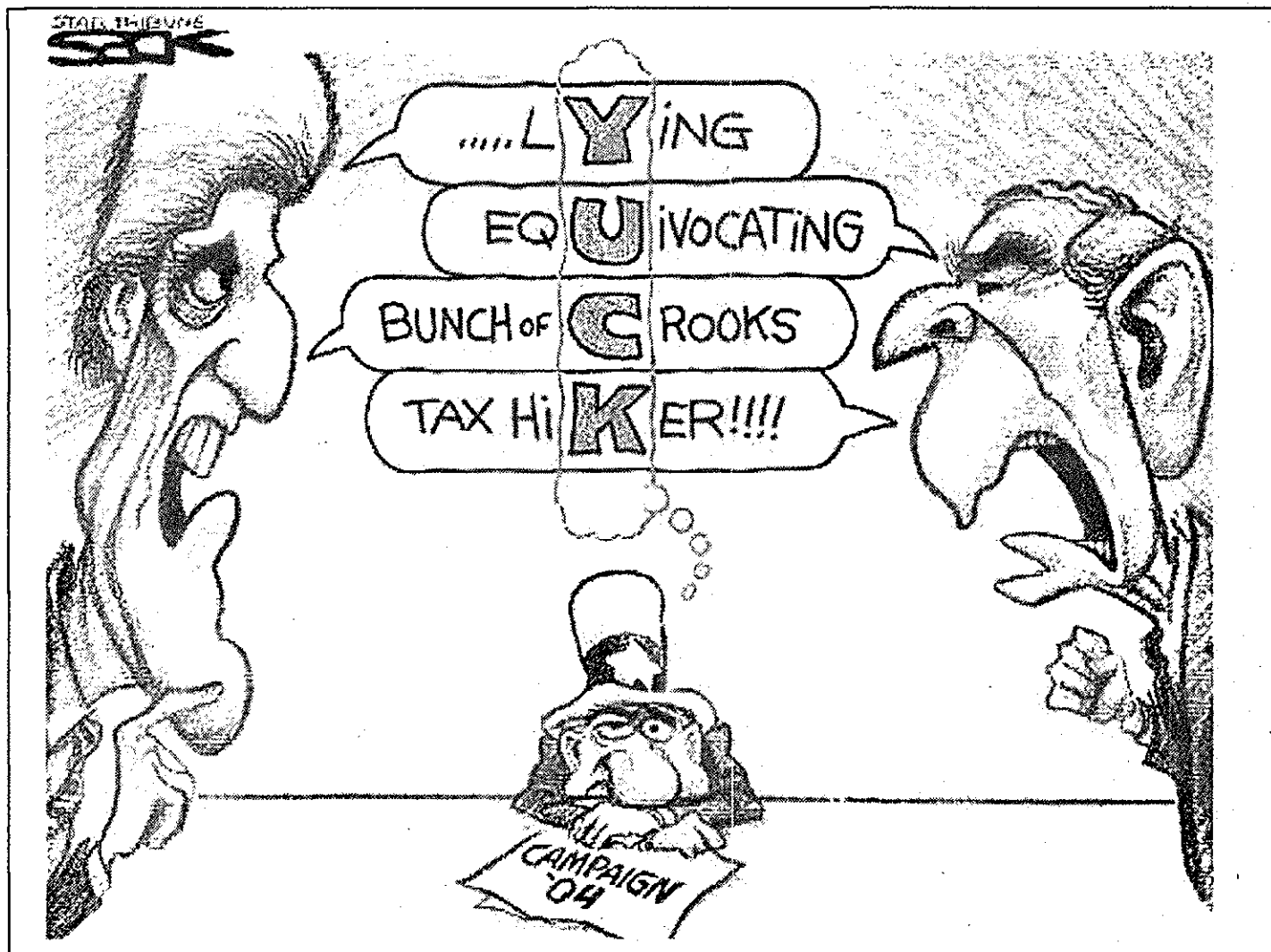
Neil knew his degrees were questioned in the past, yet he failed to inform the YSU search committee at the time of his candidacy for employment.

Luzerne made one mistake — they allowed Neil to continue teaching.

University officials need to do differently and make an example of Neil by not allowing someone with such a questionable past to teach its students.

YSU students want answers, and they deserve action.

## ELECTION FEVER



## Letters to the Editor

### Student opposes downtown improvements

Editor:

Another "pork barrel" project comes to Youngstown: opening up Federal Plaza. I see it as another waste of taxpayer money. The city leadership thinks that businesses will flock down to the newly opened plaza to set up shop. Somehow reality has zipped past their heads like a high-speed jet. The reality is that the new seat of commerce is in Boardman along 224. Our downtown, much like downtowns in other cities our size across the country is dead. DEAD. Nothing will bring it back. It's a fact of life. Pumping millions into a project that will just give us an alternate route to Fifth Avenue is silly. Take Dr. [Thomas] Maraffa's "Human Geography" class if you doubt me.

I'd love nothing more than to see Youngstown succeed, I

lived here my whole life. I drive down Poland Avenue en route to YSU daily. But I'm not a delusional, naive fool. They thought putting the plaza in during the 1970's to compete with the Southern Park Mall was a good idea, that it would spur growth downtown. It did not.

I guess politicians need to find new and creative ways to waste our money. In my opinion this is a fine one. Maybe my mood will change when I don't have to cut down bumpy Commerce St. on my way out of downtown.

Michael V. Jones  
Education  
Junior

## News in brief

The Physics and Astronomy Department is holding a lecture entitled "How to chase a storm — or not" at 8 p.m. on Saturday, March 27.

The lecture, to be held in the Ward Beecher Planetarium, is part of the Blue Planet Lecturer Series. Guest speaker meteorologist Paul Wetzel of WKBN-TV 27 will be covering storm chasing and how to avoid storms.

The program is free and open to the public, and does not require a reservation. For more information, call (330) 941-3616 or check the Web site at www.cc.yzu.edu/physics-astro.

The biology department is presenting their seventh annual Women in Science and Engineering Career Workshop Saturday, March 27.

The day will include panel discussions and hands-on activities for women in grades six through 12 interested in careers in science and technology. There will also be a keynote speech by Peggy P. Flaherty of ITT industries.

Registration deadline is Friday, March 26. For more information, contact Diana Fagan at (330) 941-1554 or dfagan@ysu.edu or Courtenay Willis at (330) 941- 1943 or cnwillis@ysu.edu.

## FRAUD, continued from page 1

tion. Neil said he has not received funds from his tuition at La Salle.

McSherry said the students were notified either personally or through advertisements that they could receive restitution from the over \$10 million seized from La Salle.

"We had a fairly complete list, and sent notification to everyone on that list," McSherry said. "But, it is still possible that some students were left out because (La Salle) only had a good computer system for three or four years before their records were seized."

McSherry added that students were told to tell their employers or future employers about the validity of the university's accreditation.

"It was never an issue about whether or not students got a degree," McSherry said. "It was just that they were not accredited."

Neil did not inform university officials or search committee members of the false accreditation at the time of his hiring.

La Salle University was shutdown by the FBI for issuing falsely accredited degrees in 1996.

At the time of Neil's graduation in 1995, La Salle was accredited by what the indictment describes as a "shell corporation known as the Council on Post-secondary Christian Education."

"World Christian Church, doing business as La Salle University, held itself out to the public as a religious degree-granting correspondence university."

Kirk established the non-profit World Christian Church in 1989, or La Salle University. To give it accreditation, Kirk set up the Council on Post-secondary Christian Education.

"It was part of the scheme to defraud that Thomas J. Kirk

and others set up a correspondence church school for the principle purpose of making money by misleading prospective students about the 'school's' accreditation status," the court case states.

Kirk and others gave the Council on Post-secondary Christian Education a P.O. Box address in Washington, D.C. and used answering services in Washington, D.C. and Louisiana for all student telephone calls. Any inquiry about accreditation was transferred to La Salle.

They charged \$100 certification fee to all students along with a survey to help maintain La Salle's accreditation. If the survey was not completed, the fee increased to \$150. Kirk and others threw out the surveys and kept the students' money.

"They never disclosed the COPCE existed only in name and was in reality nothing more than a mailbox address in

Washington, D.C.," the case states.

McSherry said after La Salle was shut down, a new administration was brought in. However, the university was "operating under restraints that could not misrepresent their accreditation," he said. He said it closed down just a few years later.

McSherry said the university is not what some may classify as a "diploma mill." He said diploma mills often give undergraduate students their degree earlier than four years. At La Salle, however, they kept students around longer.

"They tried to keep you enrolled and continue charging you for credits and their accreditation," he said.

Neil said he is not sure if he will seek restitution from La Salle University.

Call Elizabeth Tabak at (330) 941-1989.

The Jambar editorials reflect the opinions of The Jambar and its Editorial Board members: Editor in Chief Angela Olin, News Editor Beth Tabak, Design Editor B.J. Lisko and Copy Editor Mark Stevens. Those wishing to schedule meetings with the Editorial Board should call the editor in chief.

Letters must be typed and should not exceed 400 words. Each letter must include a name and telephone number for verification purposes. All submissions are subject to editing for spelling and grammar. Submissions must be received by noon Friday for Tuesday's edition and by noon Tuesday for Thursday's edition.

The Jambar will not print letters that libel others or threaten harm. The editor in chief reserves the right to reject letters that do not follow policy. The views and opinions expressed do not necessarily reflect those of The Jambar staff or YSU faculty, staff or administration.

## The Jambar

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# ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT

## Red Bull

### Drink could give you more than just wings

By CHUCK ROGERS  
The Jambar

The energy drink that "gives you wings" might just make them angel's wings if you are not careful.

Red Bull, the pick-me-up-in-a-can drink from Austria, has been linked to the deaths of three people in Sweden, as well as deaths in Australia and Ireland, according to a fact sheet published on the United States Department of Education Higher Education Center's Web site.

The publication, which summarizes the ingredients of beverages including Red Bull, Adrenaline Rush, SoBe and others, lists the potential adverse effects of the products. It warns that the drinks can become dangerous when taken after exercise or mixed with alcohol.

In particular, Red Bull contains high amounts of caffeine, which gives the drink its kick. According to Red Bull's Web site, the beverage is intended for "times of increased mental and physical strain, for example, on long sleep-inducing motorways, during intensive working days, prior to demanding athletic activities or before tests and exams."

# Red Bull



looking for. Young loaded up on the drink before his stint as an actor in a Halloween haunted corn maze last year. "I did it so I'd get



lems. The danger is greater for those with undiagnosed medical conditions like heart murmur or diabetes, she said; "People are playing Russian roulette."

According to the Higher Education Center's fact sheet, "Reports claim that energy drinks have caused even more severe reactions, such as seizure, heart arrhythmia, and death."

The Web site also points out that, because of the stimulant effect of the combination, it's harder for bartenders to know when to cut drinkers off. Those drinkers may be more inclined to drive when they are impaired.

Although Red Bull is available only by prescription in Norway, France, and Sweden, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration does not control the concoction.

The FDA says it cannot regulate imported drinks or herbal supplements, according to the Higher Education Center's Web site.

According to an article on the Web site [www.medicalnewstoday.com](http://www.medicalnewstoday.com), a Red Bull spokeswoman said, "Red Bull will continue to be sold in 100 countries worldwide. No authority in the world has ever discovered or proven an unhealthy effect from Red Bull."

Call Chuck Rogers at (330) 941-1913.

It kept Kat Phillips alert on a long road trip. "I drove all the way here from Washington state on Red Bull," the freshman said. She kept a cooler of cans in her car and drank some when she needed to perk up.

But staying awake was easy. Phillips said she couldn't get to sleep when she stopped for the night.

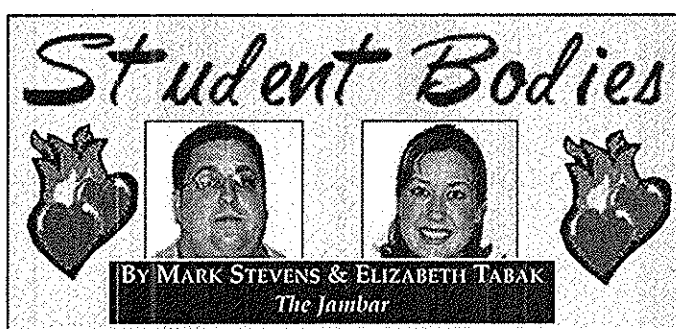
Some students say Red Bull gives them jitters when they drink several cans in a row. That was exactly the effect freshman Nick Young was

hyper," he said, explaining that he wanted to act "crazy" to frighten visitors to the maze.

Sleeplessness and jitters aren't the worst that could happen when people mix energy drinks with alcohol. Professor Zara Shah of the YSU department of human ecology said the adverse effects of that combination often don't show up until it's too late.

"It's dangerous because alcohol is initially a stimulant, then a depressant," she said. "The high sugar and caffeine content [of the energy drink] produces a high." After the high passes, she said, the drinker "drops like a stone."

Shah said the results could be depression, heart palpitations, and blood pressure prob-



BY MARK STEVENS & ELIZABETH TABAK  
The Jambar

His side: How do you pick between dating friends when they fight?

By the way, I know the knee jerk reaction that the still-in-high-school guys will have to that question, and I'd like to take the discussion about three levels deeper than "bros before [rhyming garden tools]"

Because it's not always that easy. Sure, it's easy when your dude breaks it off with his chick and the only connection or perhaps the strongest connection you have to her is, has been and always will be him.

When that happens, she might as well not even exist. You're not going to put your friend in that kind of position and you know damn sure you don't want to be nobody's go-between.

So when they break up, you don't need to consider whose side to take or who's right and wrong.

(And don't even start with "I don't take sides." Everyone always takes a side. It's human nature to assume an opinion of at-fault.)

But what happens when you have two friends of respectably equal standing that have a falling out while dating?

Do you succumb to the "who's your boy?" bulls— that you get from the guy? I mean, what if he's really wrong? Most of the time, especially at this stage in the respective development of the genders, both sides share some responsibility. But you can still usually pick out right and wrong.

Am I a traitor if I say the girl is right? Have I given myself over to the dark side if, even secretly, I acknowledge that it's really the guy who's wrong?

I mean, in the scenario I presented, I would have equal ties to both parties. But is the tie broken by the fact that I share chromosomes with the guy?

I'd suggest not. If "your boy" has a problem with you taking her side or even just talking to her logically about the situation or even so much as still continuing your relationship with her, I'd venture to guess that there's going to be some more situations either in the future or the past where you discover that he's actually the drama "queen."

Truth be told, if a guy expects you to call it his way just because you're both guys, then he's not real intelligent in the first place. This is the type of guy who wouldn't know the difference between a sneeze and a wet fart if he didn't have his own head shoved so far up his a—.

He shouldn't take it as the end of your being friends just because he had a problem with a mutual friend and you think he was wrong. Wrong is wrong. It'll always be wrong.

And just as a side note, is there anything funnier than when someone laughs so hard whatever they're drinking comes out of their nose? I

think not.

Her Side:

Fat Head opened with a question. Here is the answer to that question: you don't.

HAHAHAHAHA — wait, what am I saying?

Maybe you shouldn't take sides. But, sometimes you can't help but take sides, sometimes you inadvertently take sides, sometimes you are completely neutral until one person forces you to take sides because they don't stop talking. It is one of "those" situations.

And, oh, how I hate "those" situations.

Not so much because I feel bad for my friends, even though that is a major reason. More or less it is because it reaffirms my perception that nine-tenths of those lucky enough to have reasonably admirable verbal and mental capacities DO NOT deserve them.

In the few times that I have actually have the unfortunate misfortune to be caught in the middle of this type of situation, I have realized that

both male and female can be equally guilty. Or, equally stupid, depending on your scale of judgment.

Inevitably someone will be an idiot. Someone will want you to cry him or her a river. Maybe, though, and this is only if you are as lucky as I am with my true (note the stress on true) friends, neither party will do that, allowing your own decision making.

Dios mio, my friend. Give me the respect and understanding that if I am old enough to drive my car, buy a 6-pack, hell,

tie my shoes and cross the street without mommy holding my hand, I am old enough to evaluate the situation on my own terms without persuasion from a third party.

WHOOOA — wait a second — there is a bright side to this whole situation. Either that or I have been drinking way too much of Fat Head's special Red Bull and Gatorade mix.

The bright side is that it helps you realize who your true friends are (again with stress on the true). Your true friends will not ask why or whether you have chosen to maintain a bond with their ex. No, instead, they will learn to accept it and move on like the good little boy or girl they are.

Moving on, hmmm. A concept we have pounded to death throughout the past two semesters. Yet, it provides us with a meaningful lesson. Dwelling is bad. Dwelling on why someone chose to be friends with your ex as well as you — or instead of you — is worse.

Mark Stevens and Elizabeth Tabak would absolutely love to hear from you at [studentbod@yahoo.com](mailto:studentbod@yahoo.com).

Call Mark Stevens at (330) 941-1811.  
Call Elizabeth Tabak at (330) 941-1989.

#### ROADWAYS, continued from page 1

half-width closure that only allows one lane of traffic in both directions. However, she said ODOT would like it if traffic went around the bridge while work was being done.

The Stephens Street ramp is also closed as part of the project. Putnam said the ramp should reopen in October 2004, and scheduled completion for all work on the project should be finished by fall 2006.

Other construction includes I-80 from the east-bound Belmont Avenue exit where it has been reduced to one lane of traffic in each direction and continuing over the Liberty Street Bridge.

The construction is causing frustrations for some commuting students.

Freshman Ruth Merwin is from Niles. Her normal route to campus includes driving along U.S. Route 422 through Girard and Youngstown. Merwin said her entire commute is through the construction,

and she doesn't look forward to driving through it for the next two years.

"Once I hit Girard, it is one lane the rest of the way to school," Merwin said. "Some days it is not too bad, but when there is a lot of traffic it can take me twice as long to get to class."

"I am sick of seeing orange cones and signs everywhere," Merwin said.

Senior Kelli Downs also said it takes her longer to drive to school because of the road construction.

She takes Belmont Avenue and there are days it takes extra time to get to school. No matter which way she goes, Downs said it takes longer than normal.

"Even if I tried to take a different way to school, there would still be some kind of construction," Downs said. "It's like you can't get away from it."

Marketing senior Amanda Ross said she isn't bothered by the construction. She said she could not remember a time when there

hasn't been construction in at least one place on her way to school.

"I live in Warren and there is always some kind of construction going on," she said. "I guess I am just used to it by now."

Freshman Rachel Beale said she has to go through the construction everyday because she lives an hour away from campus.

"The construction is all the time," Beale said. "There is never a good day to travel."

Freshman Alyssa Goist said she tries to avoid construction by going down side roads as much as she can.

"It gets annoying because it seems they are always doing something," she said.

Maysoon Abdelrasul contributed to this story.

Call Colleen Havens at (330) 941-1913.

#### ELECTIONS, continued from page 1

Jason Robinson and Paul Crabtree.

Eckman said the diversity of the four pairings adds a fresh twist to this year's race.

"They all have their own uniqueness, which makes this election different from previous years," Eckman said.

Vukovic agreed and said he was impressed with all of the candidates' platforms.

Vukovic also recommended students explore how each set of candidates contributed to the YSU community before they entered the election.

"A good representative would be one who would strive to serve the student body well regardless of their position," Vukovic said.

In regards to the issues, Eckman said she did not notice any deviation from previous years, saying routine topics such as student parking resurfaced on the candidates' platforms.

Vukovic echoed Eckman and said most of the issues have been carried

over from current SGA themes.

Yet, Vukovic said the reappearance of such issues like tuition is a reflection of the major interests of a student body consisting mostly of commuters.

"Students at YSU are most concerned with keeping their costs down because the majority just go to class and pay their bills," Vukovic said.

He said those candidates who create the most effective plan for working with administration to keep costs low will have the best chance of winning over voters.

Despite acknowledging each candidate's insights into students' needs, Eckman expressed concern about their respective knowledge about past SGA objectives and achievements.

"The candidates don't know much about the issues we've dealt with," Eckman said. "It's kind of unsettling that they aren't aware of the things we've accomplished." Vukovic contrasted

Eckman's view and said he was impressed with all of the candidates' platforms.

Vukovic specifically singled out Robinson and Crabtree, who have never before participated in SGA.

He said they have a solid, extensive platform and could turn out a surprising finish despite being the "underdogs" of the election.

Vukovic also said SGA alumnus McGovern and Mielke are sitting on a strong platform and anticipate success for them in the race.

He said he looked forward to hearing them speak at the debates on the issues and anticipates that their speeches will "enlighten" students more about the strongest candidates.

Eckman said she also looked forward to the debates.

"It will be interesting to see how they'll handle the issues and incorporate them to fit the student body."

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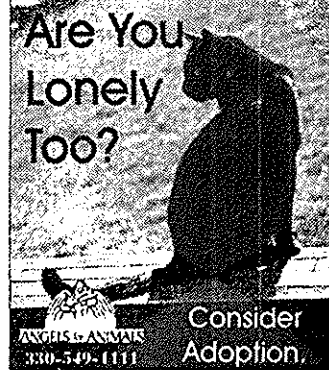
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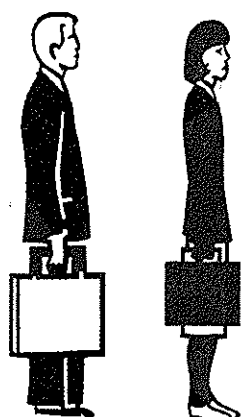
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# SPORTS & RECREATION

## YSU Tennis

### Junior's sport is lifelong quest

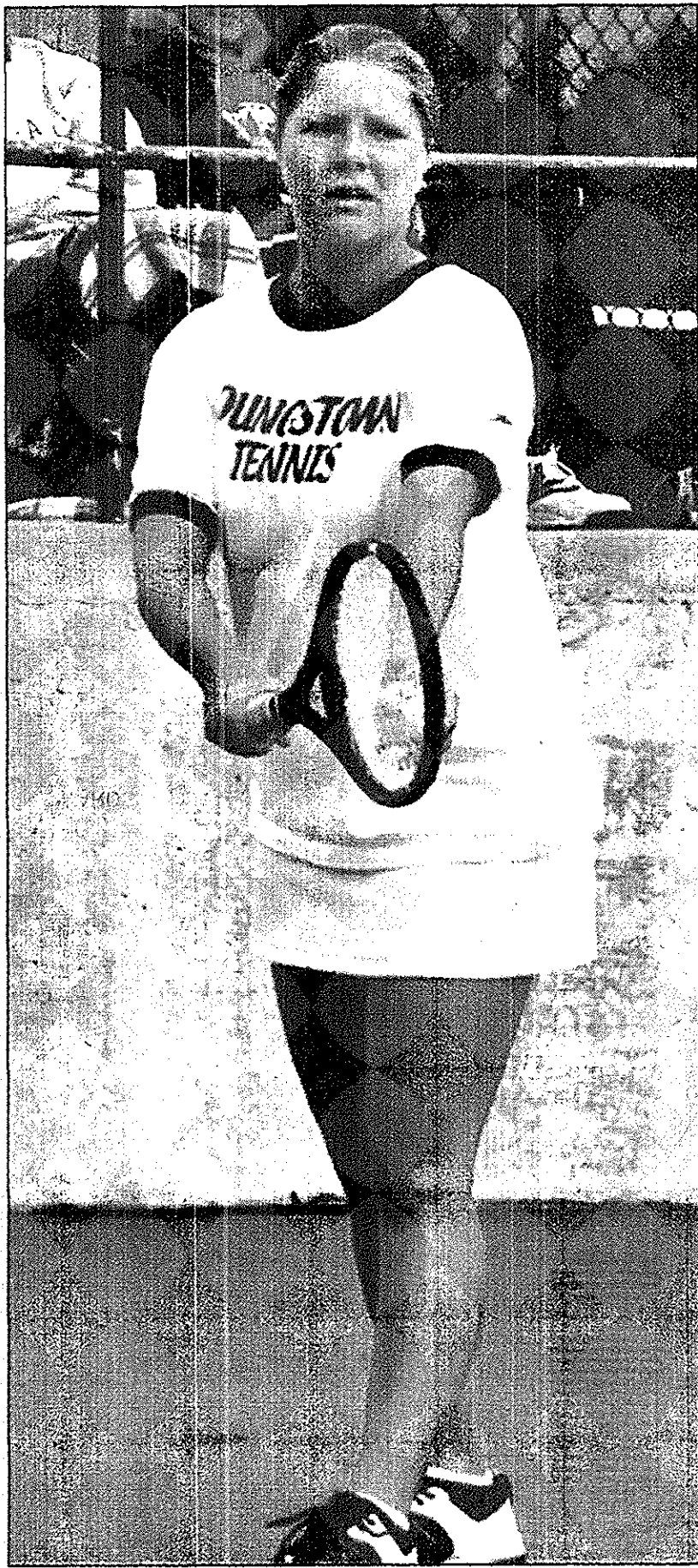


Photo courtesy of Ron Garchar

AWARDS: YSU junior Karen Najbert was recently named Horizon League Tennis Player of the Week.

By JOSHUA BOGGS  
The Jambor

For Youngstown State University junior Karen Najbert, the road to success in college tennis has been full of twists, turns and transitions.

Najbert has spent most of her life surrounded by the game of tennis. She grew up with siblings who loved the sport and her parents took to the courts as well. Now, she too swings the tennis racket for YSU.

"I started playing when I was six years old," Najbert said. "My brothers, sisters and parents played and my brother and sisters even went on to play at universities."

Najbert's said her siblings and parents always pushed her to do her best in tennis.

"I looked up to them and thought I wanted to do the same thing," she said. "They were always supportive and wanted me to play well."

Though most transitions from high school to college require changes in training, schedules and relationships, Najbert faced many transitions that most college athletes never do.

Najbert first attended Collin County Community College and played for the team there, but then later transferred to another school, Cameron University in Oklahoma, and again participated in tennis at that school.

Najbert just recently transferred to YSU in the fall and although the transitions to the first two schools were difficult for her, she said that coming to play for YSU was much smoother.

A big difference, Najbert said, is head tennis coach Michele Grimm, and her teammates.

"The transition is a lot better and I think it is because of the coach," Najbert said. "The team here is also there for each other and pushes each other. [Grimm] has a good style of coaching and she wants to help out in every way possible."

"You need that communication between a coach and a player," Najbert said. "I like the way she ran practice and the way she pushes us. She knows what's going on in school and on the court."

On the court, Najbert has helped to lead her team to a record of 7-4 this spring and 14-6 overall for the season.

According to Najbert, a big part of the success this season for the YSU women's tennis team has come from the squad's ability to work together.

"Everyone is different, but as a team everyone wants the same thing so we are going to make it work," she said. "As individual as tennis is, we definitely come across as a team."

Najbert also credits a lot of her success to both her doubles partner, freshman Gina Peretti, and her own individual will to work hard.

"I just feel that [Peretti] has helped me and she really contributes to my success," Najbert said. "We really mold as a team."

"As an individual, I am a hard worker and I enjoy playing," she added. "I want to do it for myself because it is a sense of accomplishment."

For her recent accomplishments, Najbert was recognized by the Horizon League and was named Tennis Player of the Week for the period during spring break.

Najbert admits that although she was surprised to be named for the award, she will use the recognition to motivate her for the rest of the season.

"I was very surprised that I got the Horizon League Tennis Player of the Week," Najbert said. "I have this motivation now to see if I can be undefeated for the rest of the year."

Laughing, Najbert also said that she plans on keeping her feet planted at YSU for next year.

"Definitely, I'll be here," Najbert said.

Call Joshua Boggs at (330) 941-1989.

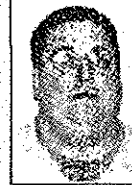
"I have this motivation now to see if I can be undefeated for the rest of the year."

— KAREN NAJBERT  
YSU tennis player



## Fat Head Says

By MARK STEVENS  
The Jambor



Honestly, I tried: I have a hard time building any sympathy for Ty Law. I mean, go on dude. Get as much money as you can. It's your right, but it could end badly.

I don't have statistics on this or anything, but someone really ought to check into the performance and health after athletes go public with complaints of money. I bet there's a trend somewhere. All I know is that most of the athletes that deserve the money get it and those that whine about it get hurt or burned one way or another.

Ask J.D. Drew. Call up Ken Griffey, Jr. and find out what he thinks of my theory.

Downside of early entry into the NBA draft: Was it just me or was their a collective sense of zero excitement over the announcement of the 2004 NCAA Division I Basketball All-Americans?

Jameer Nelson? Second round in next year's draft, maybe. Emeka Okafor? Dominant in college, but Yao and Shaq await.

Josh Childress? Only going back to school because he knows that the scouts know that he knows that he's not exactly exciting them. Ryan Gomes? Yup. Lawrence Roberts? Whooo!

There is maybe 11 or 12 total years of NBA production between them and most of it will come from Okafor.

Bracket Busted: Who would've thought that after the opening weekend of the tournament I'd only be alive in one of my brackets — and alive with the Xavier Musketeers at that.

Oh well, everyone's bracket went poof, so I'll just sit back and root for a UAB, Wake Forest, Xavier and either Vanderbilt or Alabama Final Four. By the way, just in case there is anyone who cares, if 'Bama reaches the finals, they'll have won as many games in the tournament as their football team won all of 2003.

The Final Four won't turn out like that, but it sure would be fun.

And in the end, the best thing about the bracket and the tournament is that I don't have to hear about it in six months how so and so got ripped off by the voters. You win and you're the champion. You lose and you lose. Bottom line.

And I'm not necessarily saying that a playoff system is the answer for the problems plaguing college football, but I'm about done with the BCS. I'm done.

Long way down since she was "RACHEL!!!": I just opened a link to a news article that started off by saying "Thank goodness Whitney Houston is back in rehab."

Yes, divine it is. I only hope her and Bobby rebound so we can get more music videos of them together.

It takes a lot, but it has happened: I've lost my appetite. Julianne Moore opposite Pierce Brosnan in a romantic comedy? I might just puke on myself.

Imagine the amount of Botox in that room. I thought Julianne Moore died after "Boogie Nights."

A quick way to make five bucks: And get your mind out of the gutter. If anyone has taped the first couple episodes of MTV's "Pimp my Ride" I'd appreciate you mailing a copy to Fedor Hall: C/O Fat Head.

Call Mark Stevens at (330) 941-1811.

## Football squad adds coaches, makes adjustments

By JOSHUA BOGGS  
The Jambor

With spring training just around the corner, the Youngstown State University football team is adjusting to new coaching additions, retirements and time changes.

The Penguins will again play through the regular season without a bye week and will play Slippery Rock on its annual Thursday night opener this year.

One change that has been made this season is the opening kickoff time for the Saturday home contests at Stambaugh Stadium.

Instead of games beginning at 7 p.m., Penguin kickoff will now be pushed up to 6 p.m.

Along with earlier kick off times, two new additions to the YSU football coaching staff have also been made this season.

Dana Chambers and Mike Kolakowshi were named co-defensive coordinators earlier this month.

Chambers was the defensive line coach at Southwest Missouri State and then took over as coordinator at Upper Iowa prior to last season. Chambers was also a member of the Eastern Illinois coaching staff in the 1980s and then spent 10 seasons with Western Michigan.

He said that although he has enjoyed the players he has met in the weight room, he knows that some are still questioning the new coaching additions and changes.

"Both of us have ideas for defense," Chambers said. "We want to be consistent on playing hard and playing without making mistakes."

Kolakowshi, who will serve on Chambers' side, is credited with over 24 years of collegiate coaching experience, which includes being the former head coach at Division II California (Pa.) for five years. He also spent last season on the Cincinnati coaching staff.

Although Kolakowshi will officially be the secondary coach, he said that one of his main focuses this season is building on the winning football tradition at YSU.

"The tradition here is tremendous and we want to build on the tradition set here," Kolakowshi said. "We are going to play hard and be fundamentally sound."

Both Chambers and Kolakowshi are the first coaches in many years to not have any affiliations with former head YSU football coach Jim Tressell and both admit that the scheme of the YSU defense will be altered some.

"A little bit," Kolakowshi said. "The terminology will be different because of me and Dana's input."

With the new coaching additions, head football coach Jon Heacock said that the players as well as the coaches will get to know one another better in time, but that he is ultimately happy to have both men on his staff.

"We've got to get used to each other as well as getting ready to coach our players," Heacock said. "I'm blessed to have Mike and Dana with



Jambor file photo

CH-CH-CH-CHANGES: YSU head football coach Jon Heacock addressed coaching changes and said that he's looking forward to upcoming spring practices for the 2004 season.

us."

In the off-season, coach Heacock met with some of his senior players and discussed what with them what they should try to contribute to the team.

"It's a great opportunity for them to start knowing what their roles are as leaders," Heacock said.

Heacock also said that he would have to work with and around some injuries on his offensive line.

"We are still going to be young and obviously beat up in the offensive line," Heacock said. "We are going to have to work ourselves through it."

While two new coaches have been added to Heacock's staff, another coach has retired.

Long-time assistant coach Ken Conatser, who joined the YSU coaching staff in 1986, announced his retirement recently.

"He is hanging up his whistle," Heacock said. "It was a tough thing for me and now we have to figure out which direction to go, but we're not sure yet."

Heacock said that another coach would be added and said that he is considering coaching adjustments.

The YSU football team will begin spring football practice on Friday, April 2 at 3:30 p.m.

Call Joshua Boggs at (330) 941-1989.