



FROM 'GRIT U' TO THE PROS: JEFF WILKINS

Jeff Wilkins, Austintown Fitch High School and Youngstown State University graduate, was a large contributor to "The Greatest Show on Turf." Photo by **Brian Yauger/The Jambar**

NATHANAEL HAWTHORNE

The 1999 St. Louis Rams featured some of the most prolific players in the NFL, and the team played in one of the greatest Super Bowls in NFL history.

There was one component of that team that made that Super Bowl special for Youngstown residents: a Penguin.

Jeff Wilkins, Austintown Fitch High School and Youngstown State University graduate, was a large contributor to "The Greatest Show on Turf."

Wilkins came to YSU in an era where the football program was still growing. A big reason for his decision to come to YSU was current president and former YSU head football coach Jim Tressel.

"It felt like the perfect spot for me. I remember being in high school and thinking, 'I would love to play at Ohio State or some big-time college,'" Wilkins said. "Once I met coach Tressel and my parents met coach Tressel ... It was just natural. From day one I wanted to play for him."

Wilkins attended YSU from 1990-1994. During his time, he

won two national championships, putting him on the road to setting many records that still hold to this day.

Some of those records include most points scored (373), field goals made (66) and points after touchdown made (173).

The football program at that time featured many student-athletes from surrounding high schools. According to Wilkins, this led to a sense of community within Youngstown and the surrounding areas.

"As I got there we just kinda took off," Wilkins said. "Being able to play in front of your hometown community and seeing the crowds going from 2,000 to 5,000 to 10,000 to sold out as we were making those championship runs was great because you knew everyone in the area. ... The people coming to the games were people I grew up with, so it was nice to be able to do that in your hometown."

This sense of community came to a head when the team went on a string of playoff and championship wins. Wilkins said one of his fondest memories from YSU was during one of those championship runs.

In a playoff game against Villanova University at Stambaugh

Stadium, time was running out and the team was losing.

Then-quarterback Ray Isaac threw a pass to wide receiver Herb Williams. Williams, according to Wilkins, made a highlight reel catch, setting Wilkins up to make a field goal to send the team to the second round of the playoffs and then the national championship.

In 2003, Wilkins was inducted into the Youngstown State University Hall of Fame.

"[It] means a lot because being from this area, playing on some great teams and being recognized for some achievements ... That's what you want to do," Wilkins said. "I think it's just a blessing. Now, I sit back and think about it and go to the YSU games and relive all those memories from those days."

After his time in college, he then prepared for the NFL — something he didn't think was going to happen. Until it did happen.

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Youngstown State University students walk to class after crossing Wick Avenue. Photo by **Heather Newsome/The Jambar**

AMANDA JOERNDT

While many projects are underway at Youngstown State University to enhance the growing and modern trends within the Youngstown area, one initiative that may be overshadowed as a result is keeping YSU's street scene at a "pedestrian first" outlook.

Various roads along campus, such as Wick and Lincoln avenues, were renovated in hopes of reducing traffic flow and making drivers aware of the pedestrian flow moving throughout campus.

With a \$22 million infrastructure project underway including the Fifth Avenue corridor, funds were provided through a \$10.8 million grant awarded by the U.S. Department of Transportation's Better Utilizing Investments to Leverage Development, or BUILD, program.

The SMART2 Network — which stands for Strategic & Sustainable, Medical & Manufacturing, Academic & Arts, Residential & Recreational, Technology & Training — will work to enhance the reduction of traffic lanes, create a boulevard and integrate crosswalk locations for safer foot travel on Fifth Avenue.

Youngstown State University's President Jim Tressel advocates for student safety walking to and from classes by inventing "Penguin Crossing" crosswalk signs placed on Wick Avenue this semester.

The "Penguin Crossing" signs allow students to push a button to activate rapid flashing lights, alerting drivers of students crossing the street.

Tressel said incorporating the university mascot into the crosswalk signs was a way to encourage student safety across campus.

"I kind of came up with this crazy idea that, rather than just those stick figures crossing on the signs, how about if it was Penguins crossing because that's what we have to be careful for is those Penguins. ... So it's been fun seeing those start to take shape," Tressel said.

Although the signs were created for student safety measures, being a cautious pedestrian is just as important as being alert behind the wheel.

"Of course the students still have to be careful because you want to be a defensive walker just like a defensive driver," Tressel said. "I think as time goes by, it'll become the norm everywhere on campus rather than just some streets."

According to Tressel, when unfortunate emergency situations arise, safety forces on campus spring into action with the correct

rehearsal and training necessary.

"We're very fortunate with our safety forces and police forces. ... I've seen some now even on bicycles occasionally, and we're very fortunate for not only YSU safety groups, but also the city safety groups," Tressel said. "We help one another when there's something that happens on one of the streets within the campus."

Chuck Shasho, deputy director of the Public Works Department in Youngstown, partnered with YSU to install the crosswalk infrastructure on Wick Avenue and said the parties worked together to pick designated areas where people will most likely cross.

"YSU and the city of Youngstown partnered on this project a few years ago, and part of the project was to install a couple of crosswalks where people normally cross because people tend to just wander across Wick Avenue aimlessly," Shasho said.

He said the push-buttons are solely dependant on whether the pedestrian activates the button to alert drivers of upcoming foot traffic.

"We have the hawk signal at the corner of Rayen Avenue and Hazel Street," Shasho said. "That's a little bit different in the sense that it's actually more like a traffic signal, so it's actually going to flash red."

According to YSU Police Chief Shawn Varso, all of the police officers working for the university are "proactive out on their shift."

"I've instructed my officers that if they see something that's dangerous to pedestrian safety or danger to vehicle travel and that they can act on it, take whatever appropriate measures are needed to rectify the situation," Varso said.

Varso said although vehicle accidents have occurred, no pedestrian-vehicle incidents have been reported in recent years.

"There hasn't really been any serious incidents involving a pedestrian and a motor vehicle," Varso said. "We've had some serious accidents and that over the years, especially around Fifth Avenue crossing by the stadium and McDonald's, but I can't recall anything in recent memory that we've had serious accident wise."

Tressel said his attention for future pedestrian and traffic safety will be centered on Rayen and Fifth avenues.

"I'm hoping as those get added, it'll just become the norm," Tressel said. "If it's still going a little too quick for us and our nervousness about safety, if we do need to add a couple crosswalks or flashers, I think that's something we'll assess as we go."

Taking Precautions to Enhance Pedestrian and Driving Safety

While the university is taking action to establish a foundation for student and drivers safety passing through campus, taking appropriate safety measures from students to reduce potential collisions plays a crucial role.

Danny O'Connell, director of support services at YSU, said utilizing the crosswalks on a daily basis can ensure safety for both parties of the traffic flow.

"When you're in the crosswalk, by law [drivers] must stop and let the pedestrians go," O'Connell said. "Hitting that light simply alerts people in both directions."

According to O'Connell, being an active pedestrian when walking across the street can help resolve and prevent unnecessary accidents.

"As a student, you always have to be aware of your surroundings," he said. "When I see someone crossing the street, looking at their phone with their headphones on, it concerns me."

O'Connell said the Fifth Avenue project is "one of the best things to ever happen at YSU from a campus safety standpoint."

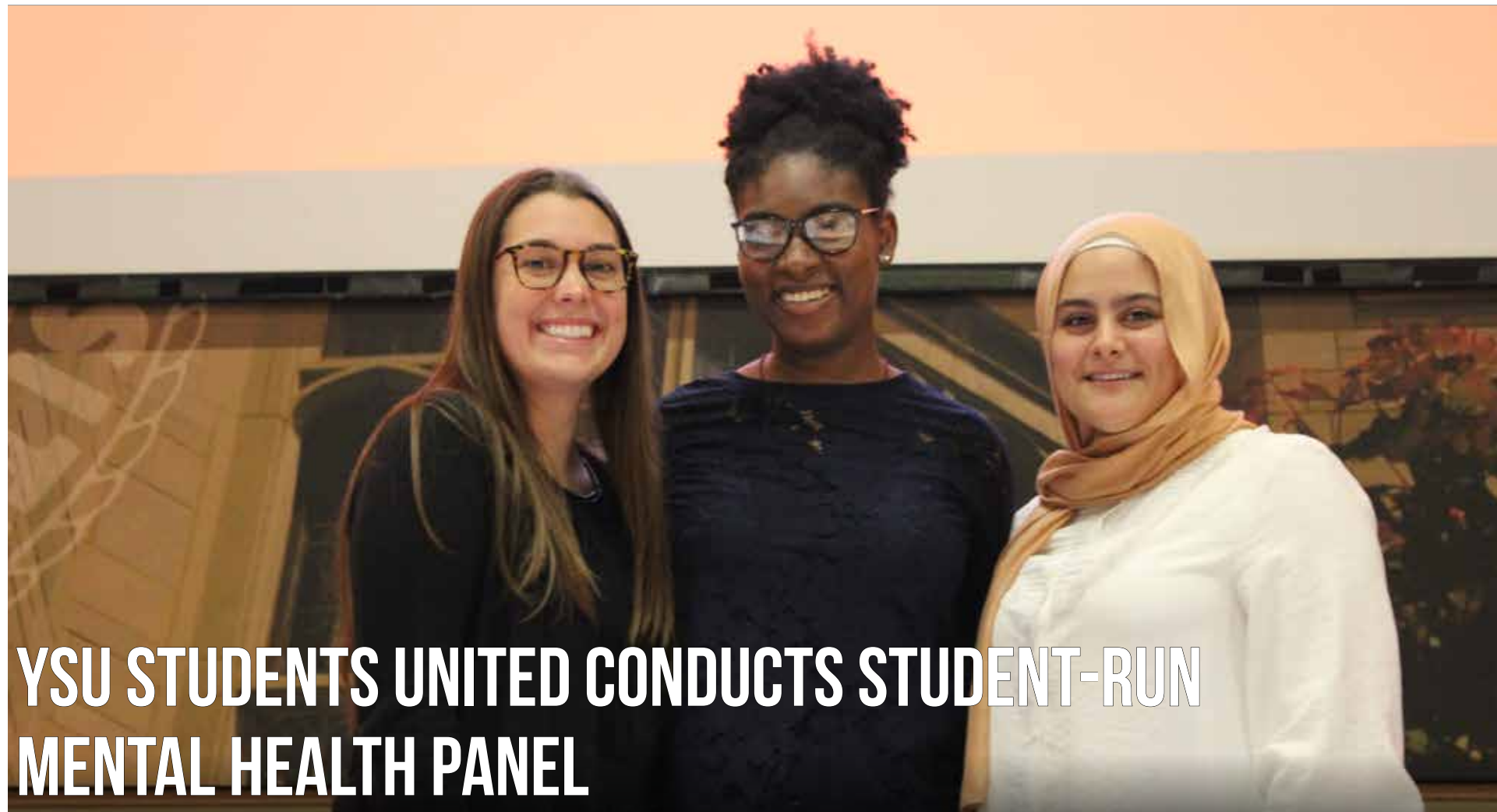
"It'll calm down the traffic on Fifth Avenue, we'll have a boulevard, better crosswalks. Everything about the project enhances the university," he said. "When you take on those types of challenges, you have to work through them."

Kati Hartwig, the social media and digital marketing coordinator at YSU, said being active on YSU's social media platforms informs students about taking accountable safety measures.

"I've encountered a couple situations where students aren't so sure if they should be crossing the street and the driver's not so sure if they should be stopping," Hartwig said. "That's kind of what started us prompting these little public service announcements on social media just to kind of get the word out."

According to Tressel, the university's goal for the next academic year is to promote pedestrian safety through the "Penguin Crossing" crosswalk placements.

"My goal is by the fall of 2020 when Fifth Avenue is done is to really have this place be second nature that it's pedestrian first, drivers go slow, pedestrians be careful and just getting into that being the norm," Tressel said.



YSU STUDENTS UNITED CONDUCTS STUDENT-RUN MENTAL HEALTH PANEL

Marta Hergenrother, Sarah Elisabeth Odidika and Noor Khalayleh pose in front of a YSU Students United banner. Photo by **Abigail Cloutier/The Jambar**

ABIGAIL CLOUTIER

Youngstown State University Students United held its second student-led panel since its establishment last spring semester, focusing on mental health awareness and the variety of resources offered at YSU on Sept. 25 in Kilcawley Center.

The panel commenced with a presentation from Ann Jaronski, director of Student Counseling Services at YSU, about common symptoms of anxiety and depression while listing resources provided on campus.

Jaronski advised students to take advantage of Student Counseling Services on campus and the Community Counseling Clinic in the Beeghly College of Education, along with other local therapy services and crisis hotlines.

Sarah Elisabeth Odidika, a senior biology major, helped organize the panel with her colleagues and said discussing mental health awareness aligns with September symbolizing Suicide Awareness Month.

"This is the beginning of the school year and a lot of students don't think about mental health when school is starting," Odidika said. "We really wanted an open dialogue and free space for students to talk."

Marta Hergenrother, a senior psychology major, said as midterms and finals approach, students may not know how to handle the additional stress.

"A lot of people, like me, feel embarrassed about admitting

they need help," she said. "I think it's just important to have a space where students can talk about things and relate to each other."

According to Hergenrother, she hopes students feel comfortable by having an outlet to turn to on campus for personal assistance.

"I hope that students honestly take away that they can have free help at YSU," she said. "Talk to people. ... Talk to counseling services at YSU, talk to your friends, find someone that you can talk to and do it."

Students participated in the discussion by visiting numbered tables featuring various questions asking them to talk about coping mechanisms, their reliance on others for emotional support and whether they avoid social events due to mental illnesses.

Five student panelists were on stage responding to each question, and members from the audience were elected to verbalize their experiences to the crowd.

Joshua Drohn, a freshman integrated social studies education major, was a student panelist and said the event held a personal connection for him.

"People are usually afraid and think they shouldn't say anything, but when I went up there, I thought I should say something," said Drohn. "People need to know the negative effects that happen if nothing is done [about mental health]."

Odidika said having a student-led panel breaks down the

barrier that a professional lecture can sometimes cause, allowing students to interact with one another.

"I hope that students most importantly made a connection with another student," said Odidika.

"Either shared a similar experience to them, or related to them in any way — it was a way for students to come together."

YSU Students United will host its second panel of the semester, which will focus on poverty awareness, Nov. 13.



Students can take hanging tiles with uplifting, peer-made messages from the new Penguin Positivity boards, courtesy of Student Counseling Services. Photo by **J. Harvard Feldhouse/The Jambar**

FAA INVESTIGATES AIRCRAFT CIRCULATION OVER STAMBAUGH STADIUM

AMANDA JOERNDT

After a small aircraft was spotted circling Stambaugh Stadium during Youngstown State University's football game on Sept. 28, safety and legal concerns are on the rise, leading to an investigation through the Federal Aviation Administration and the YSU Police Department.

The Penguins were playing Robert Morris University on Saturday evening when an unusual aircraft circled the stadium several times at extremely low altitudes, creating an unsettling feeling among the stadium audience.

As the aircraft remained at a concerning altitude, Youngstown Approach, the air traffic control tower located at Youngstown-Warren Regional Airport, immediately contacted the YSU Police Department regarding the aircraft.

The FAA stated the case will remain open for further investigation.

Elizabeth Cory, an FAA public affairs representative, said the FAA considers several factors when leading an investigation.

"We pull radar tapes, we do interviews, we look at a variety of issues," Cory said. "That's what we do and we don't put a timeline on these investigations. ... They take as long as they need."

According to Chris Tornello, owner of the aircraft, he was not flying the plane and was in Tennessee during the incident.

Tornello said he will not be taking any further action toward the pilot and it will be up to the FAA Cleveland Flight Standards District Office to take any remedial action.

"The flight track of the aircraft was tracked by [the] Youngstown tower. That information will be submitted [to] the Cleveland system," Tornello said. "Cleveland will review the

track and then they will interact with the pilot as necessary."

According to Tornello, there were no flight restrictions over Stambaugh Stadium at the time, and speculation during the event regarded the altitude of the aircraft.

"There was no temporary flight restrictions over YSU at the time the pilot flew by," Tornello said.

He said the pilot of the aircraft at the time was very experienced, but he cannot confirm the name of the pilot at this time.

"It was my airplane rented out to another very experienced pilot," Tornello said. "I just want to make it clear that it was not a student pilot."

According to YSU Police Chief Shawn Varso, this was the first time an aircraft incident has occurred at the university.

"This incident was new for us," Varso said. "I can't recall anyone ever speaking of an aircraft flying that low around the stadium before."

An investigation is in place with the FAA regarding the concerning measures of the aircraft's proximity to the stadium, along with an investigation in the works through the YSU Police Department.

Varso said he followed up with the FAA on Monday to go through the different components of the report.

"We have the owner of the aircraft, we know where the plane landed, we have a general idea of who the pilot is, but we're still verifying that as part of the investigation," he said. "The pilot was flying very low in this case."

Along with the FAA investigation, the YSU Police Department is taking measures to look into potential charges against the incident.

"We are doing a parallel investigation to see if there's anything criminal that occurred and will be confirming with the city prosecutor's office to see if there are charges warranted in this case," Varso said.

According to Varso, the biggest concern during the aircrafts circulation was its proximity to the stadium.

"Our main concern was that they contact the pilot and get him out of the area and the immediate vicinity of the area," Varso said. "He was very close to the light tower and the press box area, and that's where our concern laid with it."

Varso said the university's emergency plan is tailored for any type of emergency situations, even for plane crash circumstances.

"We were in the process of reviewing those with what to do in the event of an emergency situation as that was going on," Varso said. "We were getting ready to implement part of that plan had it gone worse than what had happened."

Ron Cole, public information officer for YSU, said a plane flying at a significantly lower altitude is definitely a concern for the university.

"We're obviously very happy that there wasn't anything beyond that, but what we're committed to doing is aggressively investigating this and doing whatever it is we need to do to ensure it doesn't happen again," Cole said.

Cole said the YSU Police Department is conducting interviews to figure out more extensive details of the incident.

"At that point, make a determination and consultation with the city prosecutor on what to do moving forward in terms of action or criminal charges," Cole said.

EMAIL SCAMS TARGET YSU STUDENTS

**MARIA ELLIOTT
JAMBAR CONTRIBUTOR**

Suspicious emails have been popping up in Youngstown State University students' inboxes this semester, according to Information Technology Services.

Christopher Wentz, the chief information security officer at YSU, said there are three different common types of email scams that target students.

Work-from-home offers, bitcoin ransom scams, where the scammer claims to have sensitive information and leverages it for money, and gift card redemption scams all happen at YSU.

According to Wentz, gift card scams, where the scammer asks a person to buy gift cards and send the redemption codes, appear to be the most prevalent at the moment.

Information security screens all emails sent on the YSU email server, and only about 30% of sent emails are delivered, according to Wentz. The scams that successfully make it through the filtering process are intentionally vague to get people to respond without alerting ITS.

"The scammers typically start off with a message that is very, very vanilla," he said.

He said the scenarios usually bear certain similarities, such as asking a simple question like "Are you available?" or "Are you on campus?" Then, if the receiver responds, the scammer will create a sense of urgency by asking for help in some way.

"Good or bad, humans are preprogrammed to help. That's just the way we're wired," Wentz said.

Wentz said students should be wary of unsolicited requests from parties whom they have not communicated with in the past.

"We will handle those emails all day long," he said.

YSU Police Chief Shawn Varso said "spoofing," which is when the sender uses an email address that appears to belong to someone the receiver knows, is a new scam tactic used in conjunction with the gift card emails.

"By no means should you be going out and buying multiple gift cards. That's pretty much a dead giveaway," Varso said.

He said prevention is the best defense because many of these scams originate overseas and it's difficult to stop transactions once the information has been given away.

"If it sounds too good to be true, then it usually is a scam," Varso said.

Varso also warned that students should be careful about what

kind of identifying information they put online and on social media.

Unlike the newer gift card scams, Varso said fake employment offers have been an ongoing problem and they often show up around graduation time.

Justin Edwards, director of the Office of Career and Academic Advising, said Handshake is the official job and internship posting board at YSU.

"This site helps to promote a higher likelihood of a good employer interaction than open boards found at other online websites," he said.

According to Edwards, all employers are vetted before they are allowed to post on Handshake in order to avoid fraudulent job offers.

He said students looking for legitimate job offers should create a free account at ysu.joinhandshake.com.

Students should also regularly check www.ysu.edu/it-security-services for tips and updates on information security.

Students who receive suspicious emails should forward them to security@ysu.edu.



Youngstown State University and Sichuan Normal University students pose in front of a Confucius statue in China. Photo courtesy of **Shawn Williams/The Jambar**

BRIANNA GLEGHORN

With 10 Youngstown State University students and two YSU faculty members, a group representing the Department of Psychology traveled to China for a 10-day study abroad trip filled with visiting local schools, seeing cultural sites and spending the evenings exploring the city.

A partnership was formed between YSU students and Sichuan Normal University students, giving them the ability to work one-on-one and translate the language while visiting the school.

YSU students were able to have discussions on the cultural differences and similarities they noticed when working with other students.

Ying Joy Tang, assistant professor of psychology, said the trip was a “resounding success” both educationally and socially.

“Everyone had a wonderful time in every aspect of the experience,” Tang said. “Educationally, we learned a lot about education in China. ... We also had a lot of fun; they got to experience a lot of cultural varieties.”

In Tang’s opinion, psychology is about people, and learning in a different country helps widen the mindset of the field.

“The cultural spin is fundamental to psychology students because it really broadens our perspective on human behaviors, which is a necessity to anyone studying psychology in this day and age,” Tang said.

Tang said although this was the department’s first study abroad trip, it won’t be the last.

“We’re also going to consider the broader social context,” Tang said. “So considering families, teachers, family dynamics related to culture and education.”

YSU students who partake in the upcoming study abroad program will be given the opportunity to conduct their own cross-cultural research and collect data while in the field.

Jeffrey Coldren, chair of the psychology department, said he believes the trip was an opportunity for students to look at the education systems in China and the United States.

“It’s really magical when teaching goes beyond the intended purpose and takes on its own life,” Coldren said. “So it was really great to see the interaction, the dialogue and the exchange of ideas between the students at both universities.”

According to Coldren, the trip was “the most fulfilling educational experience” he’s ever been involved in.

“What was really rewarding was the way our students and the students from [Sichuan Normal University] really connected and collaborated to very interesting discussions,” Coldren said.

Thomas Ford, a senior psychology major, said the trip taught him that while the cultures of China and the U.S. are different, there were several similarities.

“One of the important things about going on this trip was getting to realize not only how similar but also how different these cultures can be when they’re not the one you’re used to,” Ford said.

According to Ford, there were times when the students would notice similarities and differences and have discussions about it afterward.

“When we weren’t in a classroom setting, it was really just building these relationships,” Ford said. “There’s a lot of autonomy involved in it and getting a chance to just meet new people and make new friends.”

The second trip for the department is planned for May 2020 with a similar theme, combining education and culture.

STUDYING ASIA: THE NEW MINOR STARTS THIS FALL

BRIANNA GLEGHORN

Michael Jerryson first thought of starting an Asian studies minor at Youngstown State University when a visiting professor from Florida spoke on the legacy of China and how he started the minor at his own university in the 1980s.

Realizing YSU was one of the few universities in the country to not have this program, Jerryson, an associate professor in the Department of Philosophy and Religious Studies, decided to create the minor.

Jerryson noticed there were several courses at YSU that focused on Asia in topics such as art, economics, philosophy and more.

According to Jerryson, 60% of the world's population lives in Asia, making the area very important to educate people about.

"We in Youngstown are living in an area that is not very transnational or global," he said. "Even though in Youngstown we don't see it as much, by wearing it, hearing it and seeing it, we realize Asia is incredibly important."

In Jerryson's opinion, every major could benefit from having an Asian studies minor because it gives students a well-rounded education and teaches them about a major power in the world.

"The minor will be excellent to showcase your ability to appeal to people, not just in your bubble but the world in general," he said.

Jerryson will be teaching the first introduction to Asian studies course, which will serve as an entry course to the minor, in the spring semester of 2020.

Along with the introduction course, students in the minor will be required to take one year of an Asian language and four other courses pertaining to Asia. The introduction course will inform students about the variety of courses offered.

Johnathan Farris, an assistant professor of art history, has done research focused on "the artistic and architectural products of cultural exchange between Asia and the West."

"The study of Asia allows you to be exposed to all sorts of different ways of conceiving, particularly the arts," Farris said. "Different approaches to painting and different approaches to literature also are present in the diversity of cultures that make up Eastern South Asia."

In Farris' opinion, while studying Asian studies is important in a business or economic field, it's also important with art.

"Exposure to the stories on which many famous films and even Japanese animated features and things like that have

specific cultural origins," he said.

Rose Rivera, a senior interdisciplinary art major, added the Asian studies minor this semester only to find out she almost has it completed.

"A lot of my artistic interest and overall interests lie in Asia, Asian studies," Rivera said. "So for this to arise worked out very well for me. My courses and interest lined up with it."

Rivera said she feels very strongly about Asian studies and is very excited for more students to get involved with the minor and seek it out.

"It's a whole region, a whole variety of cultures," she said. "That doesn't just amass one particular topic like art or economics. You're learning about people, which, of course, anyone could benefit from."

Before college, Rivera said it was "very seldom" that she was able to learn about Asia. When picking classes in college, she felt drawn to classes that focused on Asia.

"For there to be so many [Asia focused] classes that it can amount to a whole minor is very exciting," Rivera said.

VEHICLE COLLISION BACKS UP WICK AVENUE

A two-vehicle collision occurred on Wick Avenue in front of the Wick parking deck on Wednesday morning, backing up traffic down the roadway during campus rush hour.

According to a Youngstown City police officer, a red Mustang made a left turn onto Wick Avenue from the parking deck, making contact with a white vehicle driving straight ahead.

The white vehicle landed on the curb of the roadway after the collision occurred.

The Youngstown Police Department was on scene to handle the investigation and an ambulance arrived shortly after.

Tow trucks arrived to tow away the red Mustang with damage done to the right front headlight.

The officer said several Youngstown State University students were involved in the collision, with one female student reportedly making a trip to the hospital for a checkup.

According to the officer, no major injuries were reported on scene.



Photos by **Rachel Gobep/The Jambar**



Vera Herbert, writer and supervising producer of “This is Us,” delivers a short talk about the opportunities and challenges in making it in the entertainment industry in the Williamson College of Business Administration auditorium Sept. 27. Photo by **Heather Newsome/The Jambar**

FRANCES CLAUSE

No one expects to be launched into the Hollywood spotlight, but that is exactly what happened to Vera Herbert, an Ursuline High School graduate and writer and supervising producer of “This is Us.”

The American comedy-drama television series is one of the most well-written and critically acclaimed, with 20 Emmy Award nominations and two wins in its first three seasons.

But with opportunities come challenges in making it in the entertainment industry, and Herbert delivered a short talk on this topic in the auditorium of the Williamson College of Business Administration Sept. 27.

“Sometimes I think, ‘Probably in college you could have gone to a few more parties,’ but now I get to go to the Emmys, which is a better party,” she said to the audience.

Herbert’s love for writing began in a college creative writing course she took when she was just 15 years old. Her first published pieces were two short fictional stories in Youngstown

State University’s “Penguin Review.”

“I would come home from school at Ursuline, and I would just go in my basement and write these stories,” she said. “As a teenager, getting to get published and knowing I was able to compete and sort of be on par with what college students were doing was really life-affirming.”

Herbert’s life affirmations continued when she worked as an intern on the first season of “Awkward” while she was a senior in college, but this didn’t come without some intimidation.

“There was a lot of very smart people. Luckily, they were a very warm and loving group of people, who for some of them it was their first time on a show, even though they were a higher level than me,” she said, referencing the team she worked with.

Herbert said the team let her grow with the show, describing how the opportunities allowed her to “put her foot in the door” because of the small staff.

“It was definitely nerve-racking and hard to know when to speak up or when not to speak up,” she said. “Should I pitch

an idea or just stay quiet — but I sort of just learned to feel the room and know, ‘Yes, this is a moment where no one else is talking so I think I can say something.’”

Herbert “felt the room” as the hourlong Q&A session left the audience filled with YSU professors, community members and students of various majors with valuable information.

Joining the discussion were some of Herbert’s former teachers from Ursuline and her husband, Brandon Neslund, who had advice of his own to give to students pursuing their dreams.

“My only advice is just to keep doing whatever it is you’re doing,” Neslund said. “So, if it’s editing or writing or acting or anything else, do it for as many hours as you possibly can.”

Herbert echoed the advice, stressing that even courses outside of writing were valuable and really contributed to her advancements.

“Whatever your major is, making sure you spend the time to become as much of a master at it as you can [is valuable],” she said. “People recognize hard work.”



YSU'S THEATRE DEPARTMENT KICKS OFF SEASON WITH "SPEECH & DEBATE"

L to R: YSU students Halla Henry, Tristan Kile and Matthew Davis star in YSU's production of "Speech & Debate." Photo courtesy of YSU Department of Theatre and Dance

CAILEY BARNHART

The Youngstown State University Department of Theatre and Dance kicked off the 2019-2020 season with "Speech & Debate" in Bliss Hall's Spotlight Theater on Sept. 27.

"Speech and Debate" by Stephen Karam follows three teenage misfits who discover they are linked by a sex scandal rocking their small town. The stakes get higher when one of the teens sets out to expose the truth in this dark musical comedy.

The production was directed by YSU alumnus Connor Bezeredi, who spent time in New York City to pursue a full-time career of acting, singing and art.

He performed in an off-Broadway production among other shows before an injury brought him back to his hometown to stay active in the arts while he heals.

Lexi Cerny, a sophomore musical theatre major, plays both the teacher and the reporter in the production and said she picked up the "acting bug" in high school and carried it over to college.

"My interests have just kept getting bigger and bigger with different areas of acting and the musical aspect of it. I'm interested in stage managing and directing as well," she said.

Cerny says being the assistant stage manager for a show her first year helped her adjust to putting on a college-level production as opposed to a high school one.

"I think if I came in as an actor, I wouldn't have been prepared, but I got the gist of what I needed to do and how much effort, time and work that needs to be put in. That experience definitely helped me prepare for being an actor in a main stage show this semester," she said.

Senior musical theatre major Halla Henry plays Diwata and said the overall theme of this production was rewarding to be a part of.

"These three misfit teenagers don't really come in with any friends, and although there are dark situations involved, they find ways to come and have fun," she said.

Henry said she feels that all three actors playing the teens in the production relate to their characters.

"The characters are almost like over-exaggerated versions of ourselves. Diwata is definitely different than me, but I can see a lot of her mannerisms in what I do," she said.

Katherine Garlick is the costume designer for the show as well as the resident costume designer and costume design faculty for YSU's Department of Theatre and Dance.

"Costume design is creating the specific look of the characters in the show. That is everything from the clothes, to shows, to hair and makeup. The demands can vary a lot depending on the show," she said.

"Speech & Debate" is a contemporary show, so tiny details are important," Garlick added. "Everyone knows what people look like right now, and everyone knows what types of people look like, so you really have to get the details right."

"Speech & Debate" will have three more performances: Oct. 4 and 5 at 7:30 p.m. and Oct. 6 at 2 p.m.

The show is being performed in Bliss Hall's Spotlight Theater. YSU students receive free tickets with a valid student ID, and tickets can be purchased at 330-941-3105 or www.ysu.tix.com.

GRINGO'S TACOS: A FRESH TAKE ON DOWNTOWN YOUNGSTOWN

KELCEY NORRIS

A creative and fresh dining experience will hold a spot in the heart of downtown Youngstown, giving Youngstown State University students a new take on authentic Mexican cuisine.

Jorge Carreño, Ken Vigorito and Rodney Freel have plans to open a one-of-a-kind restaurant in addition to the ever-changing downtown scene: Gringo's Tacos.

Diners can experience a variety of tacos, over 30 types of salsa, mole sauce and more when visiting Gringo's Tacos.

Carreño, owner of Margherita's Grille in Girard, plans to work alongside Vigorito and Freel to create new opportunities in the city with their cuisine.

Carreño holds the title of the head chef at the upcoming Mexican eatery and said he plans to add a touch of authenticity in each meal.

"The cuisine that I learned from my mother is completely different than Mexican cuisine we know up here in the North," Carreño said.

After recently celebrating the 12th year anniversary of his restaurant, Carreño said he is looking forward to creating new opportunities.

"I never expected to open my own restaurant when I came to this country," he said.

Carreño said he will be incorporating his professional chef training and experience growing up in the kitchen into the new restaurant.

"What I want to bring from [Margherita's] to Gringo's is the culture of a family," he said. "Everyone is welcome and we'll be waiting to serve you."

Freel said creating the restaurant's name was a team effort among the three business partners.

"We joked around and threw out a few ideas, and in the end we decided Gringo's sounded unique and [was] something you could remember," he said.

According to Freel, downtown Youngstown felt like the best fit for the new location due to its progressive reputation.

"Downtown Youngstown is growing," Freel said. "There are many successful bars and restaurants in the area. ... Being close to the university and traffic makes it a good location for us."

Although Freel works as a firefighter and is in his first encounter in the restaurant industry, he looks forward to sharing Carreño's cuisine with prospective customers.

"I started coming here about seven or eight years ago because I enjoyed the food," Freel said. "We became friends with Jorge and will be using his experience in the operations."

Vigorito said he will be working alongside as the financial business partner and helping establish the architecture of the restaurant.

"I own KV Electric out in Niles; I've been doing that for about 20 years," he said. "I started my own business, so I have a business-minded attitude. I always want to expand."

According to Vigorito, flipping an office building into a functional bar and grill will be a challenge.

"The construction will be our forte, and we'll let Jorge handle all the restaurant business," Vigorito said.

All three partners are adamant that YSU students will find their next favorite restaurant at Gringo's when the doors open in December.

"Our prices will be reasonable ... and it's going to be unique," Vigorito said. "Nobody has that menu downtown right now, so it will be something different."



Business Owners Ken Vigorito, Jorge Carreño and Rodney Freel toast to the beginning of a new opportunity. Photo by **Kelcey Norris/The Jambar**

HUMANS VS. ZOMBIES JOINS THE AREA 51 RAID

BROOKE ZUCCO

Students had a choice to join the Karens, the Kyles, the Naruto Runners or Ohio's Corn Kazoo Division at Youngstown State University for the Humans vs. Zombies Weekvitational Sept. 25 through 28.

Although these are separate teams, there was one main goal for this year's HvZ event: raid Area 51.

The event is run by YSU's Urban Gaming Club. Meredith Pallo, a senior telecommunications major and president of the club, discussed why the theme was Area 51.

"We plan for the event like three months in advance, and that was when the Area 51 meme was started," Pallo said. "So, we decided since the raid was planned for [Sept. 20], we'd just theme the game to fit in with it."

"The idea is that the humans are the soldiers trying to protect Area 51, and the zombies are the millennials trying to get in," she added.

HvZ is a game of tag where players use Nerf guns, referred to as blasters, and socks to fight off zombie hordes. Zombies must

make full hand contact with humans in order to turn them into a zombie.

Teams are identified by how members wear their orange bandanas. Humans wear them on their biceps while zombies wear them on their heads.

Some students have been playing HvZ for as long as they have been at YSU. Michael Wildman, a part-time information technology major, has been playing for eight semesters.

"During my first semester, I died on the first day," Wildman said. "I kept playing even as a zombie because it was fun either way, but I was able to be the third to last survivor the next semester."

Wildman attributes part of his success to playing with spherical darts rather than the traditional ones.

"I use them because they're better for accuracy, but they cost a lot more than the regular darts," Wildman said.

Students concerned about getting hit with darts while walking through campus did not have to worry, as players who did not attend a rules and safety meeting were not able to play.

Players like Nick Rauschenbach see HvZ as a way to combat

semester stress.

"In college, you try to act really serious," he said. "[HvZ] is a good way to blow off steam and not take yourself so seriously for a while."

Rauschenbach is a student from Eastern Gateway Community College planning on transferring to YSU next semester. Despite not being a YSU student yet, he always comes to play HvZ.

This year's event has started something new in the way the game is played. The games are normally a week long, consisting of students from YSU, or an invitational, which is an event that occurs over a weekend and sees students from other universities coming to play.

For the Weekvitational, there was a combination of the two.

The Weekvitational is a new idea for the HvZ community of Northeast Ohio. During the week, the game is played by YSU students, but the weekend games greet students from other universities.

Students interested in joining the next HvZ event can stay updated through the YSU HvZ Weekvitational Facebook page.

RECYCLING, REDUCED

J. HARVARD FELDHOUSE

Youngstown State University students may have noticed the recycling bins on campus have been emptier than usual — that's because YSU had to shorten the list of acceptable recyclables this semester due to changes in the global recycling market.

For the last few years, the YSU Recycling Program could take everything from water bottles, aluminum cans and copy paper to plastic Dunkin' coffee cups, glass jars and magazines. Now, on the cusp of 2020, the new recyclables list resembles that of the year 2000.

"It feels like it's a blast from the past in the materials that we couldn't recycle beforehand that we were eventually able to over the years," Daniel Kuzma, manager of YSU Recycling, said. "And now we're going back to where recycling basically started: with office paper, aluminum cans, steel cans and plastic bottles."

People can still recycle clean plastic jars, water bottles, shampoo bottles, laundry detergent bottles, copy paper, aluminum soda cans, metal food cans, cardboard boxes and paperboard boxes such as cereal boxes.

Banned items include plastic Dunkin' cups, clamshell food containers, Styrofoam, books, magazines, newspapers, glossy paper, all glass products, plastic wrap and any recyclable that has food or liquid still in it.

In early 2018, China, the United States' biggest importer of recyclables, stopped accepting U.S. recyclables because it kept sending them materials contaminated by garbage.

According to Lou Vega, director of the Mahoning County Green Team, China once accepted almost all U.S. recyclables. Now that China's economy has stabilized, Chinese companies have tightened restrictions.

"The simplest explanation to that is we have too much supply and very little demand," Vega said.

"The largest purchaser of American recycling exports was China, and China

has put out an initiative called 'National Sword.' Part of that initiative is they stopped taking about 24 commodities," Vega added. "Now, since they're not buying [recyclables] in China, the markets in India and in other countries aren't making up for the demand that China had. So, what we have here is just a lot of additional products that we can't offload."

Tom Yanko, owner of Associated Paper Stock, a recycling company YSU collaborates with, said that the U.S. bears a lot of blame for the recycling market decline because it struggles to keep contaminants out of recycling.

According to Waste Management in an April 2018 article, 25% of items put in recycling bins are not recyclable. For example, only one half-finished cup of iced coffee can contaminate the entire bin.

"When [China] opens a shipping container and it stinks to high heaven, they close it up and send it back [to the U.S.]," Yanko said.

Returns from China can cost U.S. companies hundreds of thousands of dollars. As a result, many companies have stopped sending recyclables altogether or have drastically reduced what they send by restricting what municipalities and businesses can sell to them.

"So, a lot of people have been upset because the materials that they generate in large quantities of they can't recycle," Kuzma said. "But I've always suggested waste reduction is the key first step."

These changes in the recycling market could reverse and return to last year's standards, but American recyclers need to further inform themselves about recycling and actively engage in the activity.

"I would just encourage people to refuse, reduce, reuse, repurpose and then recycle when it's available, and recycle what you can," Kuzma said.



Dozens of items that used to be recyclable have been removed from the list of materials Youngstown State University Recycling accepts. Photo by J. Harvard Feldhouse/The Jambar

Youngstown State University

Law Day

October 10, 2019 from 11 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.

Chestnut Room, Kilcawley Center

Representatives from various law schools will be available to answer questions, distribute catalogs, applications and financial aid information. This is a unique opportunity for students who are considering a career in law to gather information about law school programs.

This event is free and open to the public.

*Sponsored by the Department of Politics & International Relations/
Rigelhaupt Pre-Law Center*

WATCH WHERE YOU'RE GOING

Youngstown State University students all have a destination in mind when they arrive on campus.

Whether it be walking to class or parking in a parking deck, students can sometimes be in a rush.

But just because you're in a rush doesn't mean you should forget about the safety of the people around you.

Students stand and wait at the pedestrian crosswalks on Wick Avenue, waiting for cars to stop. But they don't. Cars continue to blow through without even thinking about the pedestrians' safety.

Being two minutes late to class isn't the end of the world, especially if you're putting another person's safety at stake.

Danny O'Connell, director of support services at YSU, said using the crosswalks on a daily basis can ensure safety for both parties of the traffic flow.

"When you're in the crosswalk, by law, [drivers] must stop and let the pedestrians go," O'Connell said. "Hitting that light simply alerts people in both directions."

This means not only should drivers be stopping, but pedestrians

also need to be cautious of their surroundings while walking across the street.

Hit the light, so drivers are alerted and don't recklessly walk in front of a moving vehicle.

When snow, sleet and freezing rain begin to cause travel difficulties in the winter, it is a wise idea to drive cautiously and allow extra time to arrive on campus safely.

Please. Drive with caution. Walk with caution.

THE JAMBAR
— EDITORIAL —



A Youngstown State University student walks to class after crossing Wick Avenue taking necessary safety precautions. Photo by **Heather Newsome/The Jambar**

ELECTRIC SCOOTERS AND JUDGEMENTAL STARES

MAC POMEROY

Last year, I went to Target with my sister to buy some movie snacks. We don't usually shop at Target, but I had a gift card and it was fairly close to the cinema.

We arrived and I got one of the electric carts that Target provides for disabled shoppers. The two of us went off toward the snack aisle and started to grab our chips and drinks. Unfortunately, the peace didn't last long.

Soon after we began, we realized we were being followed. A family of a father, mother and two daughters had been following my sister and I ever since I got the cart.

While they didn't directly confront my sister and I, even my mostly deaf ears could hear the parents lecture their daughters on how overweight people should stop taking the carts.

They said I was lazy and using resources meant for disabled people.

Those people do not know me. I have never met them a day in my life. They don't know my medical diagnosis; they don't know what I have been through.

We have all done it at one time or another — looked at someone

and judged them for using an accessibility service that we didn't think they really needed. However, even if this is a common occurrence, that doesn't make it OK.

Some mistakes aren't so harmless. Yes, maybe you stopped that person on a scooter once by mistake and never again. Even if you apologize, it won't right the damage you have done.

In the case of disabled people, it isn't only you making a mistake. Numerous people make this same mistake toward that person, especially when the person has an invisible disability. Often, you are not the first person to do that to them nor the last.

For you, those words can be shrugged off. You can move on with your day. For the disabled person, those words build up. They form an ocean of negativity and shame that the person may sink in.

So as much as it may seem that something foul is going on, it may be for the best if you don't speak up. Even if the person really does not look like they are disabled, don't say anything. You don't know them. You don't know their body.

And if you happen to be the person who is receiving the unnecessary judgement, just remember the above is true. They don't know you. Whoever is making you feel ashamed has never lived in your body. They don't know what you go through.

Stay strong. Don't let the ignorance of everyday life get the best of you. You deserve to be happy and live just as much as anyone else. Don't let anyone convince you otherwise.

As for me, I still use the carts. I have to. My legs can't walk from Cushwa to DeBartolo without feeling like they are going to collapse, and unfortunately, Dwayne Johnson is not available to carry me around everywhere.

I will still do what I need to live my life. That doesn't mean I will never get these rude comments or actions again, nor does it mean they won't hurt. It just means I have learned that I deserve the peace to live my own life. I won't let someone else disrupt that peace.

I wasn't able to speak up to the parents who followed my sister and I that day. I can only hope their daughters realized their parents' actions were wrong and didn't let the trend continue.

Everyone is on their own path in life. You don't know what someone else's path is. Some may be more obvious than others, but you can never know everything.

Just keep going along your own path, and leave others to theirs.

THE JAMBAR
— IS HIRING —

APPLICATIONS CAN BE FOUND ON THEJAMBAR.COM FOR:

Assistant Social Media Curator

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Photographer

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WE ARE ACCEPTING APPLICATIONS FROM OCTOBER 3-17

CLASSIFIEDS

HOUSING

CHRIS HAS HOUSES!

Nice all-inclusive homes with individual leases for your group of four or more from \$485 each. Call Chris: 330-743-7368.

ALL PARTIES WELCOME

CT Rentals has nice, city-licensed, all-inclusive houses and apartments. Now leasing for tenancy. Our package includes all appliances, plus over 90 channels of cable TV broadband internet with Wi-Fi and ADT Security. All private bedrooms with individual leases and all utilities, maintenance and grounds keeping included from \$485 a month per person. Call Chris: 330-743-7368.

HELP WANTED

ALL-STAR DRIVING SCHOOL - HIRING FULL TIME OR PART TIME

Great opportunity for college students looking for a job to fit around school schedule. Must be 21. Will train no experience necessary. Call or email 330-726-3377, info@allstardriving.net for further info.

JOIN MY TEAM!

Denise from Damsel in Defense is looking for a few college ambassadors that would like to spread DID's mission. Damsel's mission is to equip, empower and educate others on safety and security.

Denise will be at Pressed Coffee on Oct. 14, 2019, from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. Contact Denise at 330-550-6600 or her website: www.mydamselpro.net/PRO27089

OTHER

NEED BIRTH CONTROL, PAP SMEAR, STD TEST? PREGNANT?

Dr. Hill, 1350 Fifth Ave., near YSU campus, all insurances, walk-ins. Mon-Sat - 330-746-7007, askthedoctor@aiwhealth.com, answered confidentially.



Youngstown State University psychology students attend a guided art class to learn the Chinese ink paint method at Chengdu University of Chengdu, Sichuan, China, where they painted their own Panda. Photo courtesy of **Shawn Williams/The Jambar**



McDonough Museum of Art
YSU's Center for Contemporary Art

OPEN PROJECTOR NIGHT

Wednesday | November 13 | 5:30pm

McDonough Auditorium



CALL FOR ENTRIES

Share your video and film work at this open mic style event!

All skill levels are welcome. Video and film clips must be 10 minutes in length or less and can be a finished piece or a work in progress.

Entries are first come, first served until we reach a 60-minute program.

This event is free and open to the public.

Even if you are not a filmmaker please come to experience the awesomeness of this versatile medium.

Youngstown State University does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity and/or expression, disability, age, religion or veteran/military status in its programs or activities.

Acceptable file formats are MP4, MOV or a link to a host site (YouTube, Vimeo, Google Drive, Dropbox). All submissions will be pre-screened for offensive content.

Deadline for submissions is November 1st at 5pm. We cannot guarantee that your work will be shown. Email submissions to: caberlinski@ysu.edu



John J McDonough Museum of Art
525 Wick Ave. | Youngstown | Ohio 44502

DEPARTMENT
YOUNGSTOWN STATE UNIVERSITY



The fans fill Stambaugh Stadium before the game against Robert Morris University. Photo by Brent Bigelow/The Jambar

CHRISTINA SAINOVICH JAMBAR CONTRIBUTOR

Sports injuries can happen anytime. When athletes get hurt, they turn to one person: their athletic trainer.

At Youngstown State University, each sports team has an athletic trainer that attends every practice, every game and more. The baseball team suffered numerous injuries in the 2019 season, and the baseball athletic trainer was key in the rehabilitation process for the players.

Caitlin Kilcoyne, a graduate assistant athletic trainer, is in her second season with the Penguins. She helps the players with all of their treatments as well as rehabs.

"I usually get into the Stambaugh AT [athletic trainer] room at about 9 o'clock in the morning," Kilcoyne said. "I'll do treatments there, write rehabs in the morning, then usually head out to Eastwood Field around 12:30 or so. Then any post-practice treatment, getting the guys ice, scraping, cupping, anything that they need to do after that."

In the summer of 2018, senior Zack Minney was playing summer

ball and tore his UCL. He had surgery, and then Kilcoyne helped him begin the rehab process.

"I was able to see from his surgery all the way on through his return to play, which hasn't happened yet because we haven't had any games yet," Kilcoyne said.

Minney said that he spends two to three hours with Kilcoyne each day, rehabbing and getting treatment.

"She helps me because I am currently in a program where I have bullpen two times a week, and then all the other days in between I'll just have a light toss, and so she'll just be out moderating me, making sure I'm not going too hard, making sure my motion is all correct, everything like that," Minney said.

The men's basketball team was fortunate to deal with few injuries throughout its season, but its athletic trainer Todd Burkey is busy as ever.

"My main job is the prevention and care of athletic injuries," Burkey said. "I'll come in and do prepractice treatment. I'll run the lifting program for men's basketball, then cover practice. We're at every practice, we're at every game."

Burkey said that his job is more than just dealing with injuries.

He values the relationships that he has built with the student-athletes.

"The interaction that you can have with them," Burkey said. "The time you take with them, the mentoring that you can do for them, the medical care that you can provide for them, and then seeing the outcomes. Without a question, it's the relationships that you build with the athletes, with the coaches. ... So that's without question the best part of the job."

Sophomore Justin Bofenkamp pulled his hamstring over the summer and was grateful for the help he received from Burkey.

"He kind of spread out the recovery process and really gave me time to restrengthen it and gave me time to get back over 100 perfect," Bofenkamp said.

Burkey also spends time before, during and after practices with all of the players on his team.

"Burkey, you know he's pretty influential to our team," Bofenkamp said. "At first, he's going to tape you before practice," he said. "He's checking on you all throughout practice. ... And then after practice he's going to work on you."

WILKINS

Continued from Page 1

"You dream about it as a kid, but [I] never really thought it was going to happen until that senior year when you get told, 'You're having tryouts at the end of this [season]. You better get ready,'" Wilkins said.

Wilkins went undrafted in the 1994 draft, a common occurrence for kickers moving from college to the professional level.

There was another name on the undrafted list in 1994 that would also play a big role in "The Greatest Show on Turf": future Hall of Fame quarterback Kurt Warner.

According to Wilkins, the future Hall of Famer's start with the team was an opportunity Warner made the most of.

Despite the Rams' early season personnel problems, the team had an impressive season altogether.

They went 13-3 and went on to win the Super Bowl that year. In that championship game, Wilkins drilled three field goals, which were the only points scored by either team in the first half of the game.

He would go on to finish with 11 points for the game.

"Leading into it, it was amazing," Wilkins said. "We start making

this run and then you start thinking playoffs, then we start winning the playoffs. Next thing you know, it's [the] Super Bowl. ... We went straight from the NFC Championship to the Super Bowl and how fast it goes. Then all of a sudden, it goes from 30 or 40 cameras after a game to hundreds of cameras. ... It was just a crazy experience."

The craziness of the time leading up to the Super Bowl quickly fades away once the first series is done.

"After the first series, it's just a game," Wilkins said. "After you run out and you see the camera flashes like crazy, probably more than ever, the game starts, you settle down. Then, it's just a game and you go out there and doing what you've done throughout the whole year when it's over. At that point, it was more like a relief. We did it."

Two years later, the Rams found themselves in the Super Bowl once more.

The team ended up losing that game on a field goal by kicker Adam Vinatieri as time expired. In that game, Wilkins converted on a 50-yard field goal — the third longest field goal in Super Bowl history.

Now 11 years removed from his retirement, Wilkins can finally sit back and be proud of what he and his team were able to accomplish.

"It's more when you retire and you can sit back and think, 'Wow, you know, was I really in two Super Bowls?'" Wilkins said. "And now it's when you sit that back, you really appreciate it and things you're able to accomplish as a team."

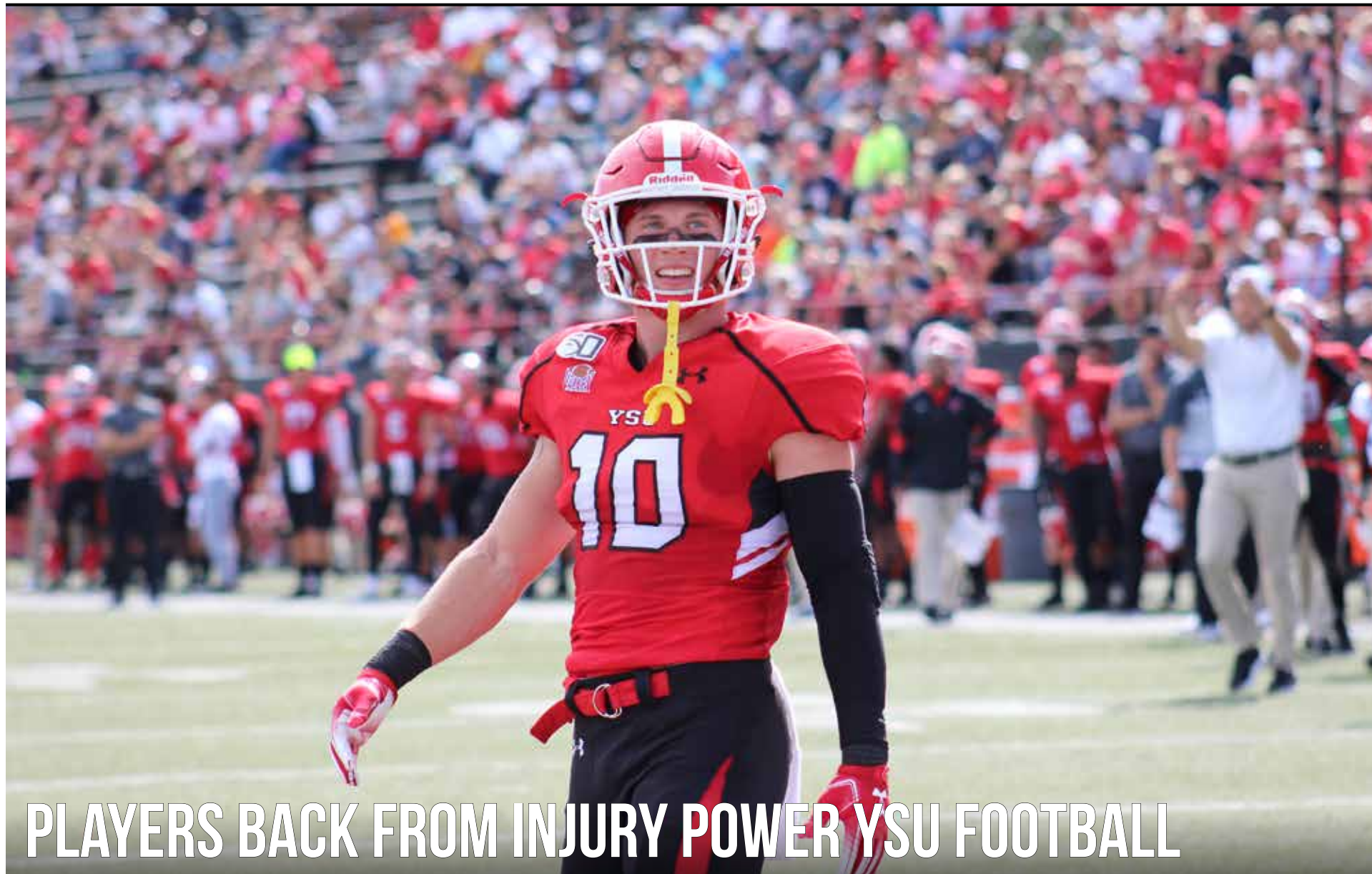
Wilkins retired in 2008, but not before setting the record with the most points in Rams organization history at 1,223. He finished with 1,416 points in his career.

Upon retirement, Wilkins returned home to the Valley. The driving motive behind this decision was one of the reasons he chose YSU: family. A conversation between Wilkins and his wife was the deciding factor.

Currently, Wilkins is an avid golfer and YSU football enthusiast. As someone who knows what it takes to make it to the professional level, he has advice for YSU student-athletes who want to make that jump to the next level.

"Never give up. It's a matter of trying to work harder than anyone else, and with a little bit of luck involved, hopefully you can get that workout opportunity. When you do, you have to take advantage of it and perform."

From YSU to the pinnacle of success in the NFL, Jeff Wilkins exemplifies what it means to be a Penguin.



PLAYERS BACK FROM INJURY POWER YSU FOOTBALL

Kyle Hegedus looks at the video board after a play is reviewed. Photo by Brent Bigelow/The Jambar

CHRISTINA SAINOVICH JAMBAR CONTRIBUTOR

Last season, the Youngstown State University football team was plagued with injuries. The team ended the season with a 4-7 record.

This season, the Penguins have come back with a chip on their shoulder. Boasting a current 3-0 record, the comeback players have made their presence known on the field.

Redshirt senior Kyle Hegedus was one of the key players who suffered a season-ending injury before the 2018 campaign. Hegedus tore his ACL for the second time during fall camp before the first game of the season.

Hegedus said while he doesn't think last season's injuries led to the 4-7 record, the comebacks are pushing the team toward a winning season.

"I don't think a couple pieces missing hurt because our motto is next man up, but you know we are key players, and I think it helps us being back," said Hegedus, "You know we have that leadership now, myself, Justus [Reed], Kierre [Hawkins]. It does

more than just help on the field but off the field as well."

Kierre Hawkins, junior tight end, also tore his ACL last season. Hawkins said he wanted to avoid surgery after his fall camp injury, so he worked with the trainers and was able to play in two games at the beginning of the season. He then fully tore his ACL, which ended his season.

Hawkins said injuries did play a major part in last season's struggles.

"It definitely affected the team and all the missing pieces last year. Justus [Reed], Kyle [Hegedus], Malachi [Newell], there were so many people that left last year. From injury, from season-ending injury, it was just terrible. You can tell from watching the games last year that a big piece was missing," he said.

Hawkins also said players returning from injury have taken on a huge leadership role for this season's team.

"I mean, we're 3-0 right now. We are still working to get better, but you can see the strides we took from last year to this year. It's a totally different vibe. On the team, all our leaders are back: me, Kyle [Hegedus], Justus [Reed]. Most of the people who were hurt last year are our captains now. You can see the

big difference of what happened from last year to this year," Hawkins said.

Senior defensive end Justus Reed suffered a season-ending injury during workouts last summer.

Reed's return to the field has been impactful early this season. He has taken on a leadership role while anchoring the Penguins defense.

Defensive coordinator Donald D'Alesio is in his second year running the defense. He said there having guys like Justus [Reed] and Kyle [Hegedus] is big for the team.

"Just having them back, not even their talent on the field, but to have the depth behind them. Where if they get tired, a guy that started for us last year now is a backup, giving him a break. It's huge. We know it's a long year. Guys are going to get nicked up. Guys are going to get tired at some point, so we have to have a lot of depth," he said.



PENGUINS HEAD INDOORS TO OPEN CONFERENCE PLAY

Miles Joiner (left) and Matt Jones celebrate with running back Joe Alessi. Photo by **Brent Bigelow/The Jambar**

BRIAN YAUGER

After another huge win over Robert Morris University, Youngstown State University heads into Horizon League play with a 4-0 record and ranked 17th in the nation.

"I like the way we have prepared," Penguins coach Bo Pelini said. "I can count maybe one or two times where I felt like we didn't come out with energy and didn't practice well. We've got to continue to improve. We're pretty realistic with our guys, and they don't get too excited."

That tempered excitement has been an asset for the team thus far, making it easier to show the players what needs to be worked on.

"Believe me, everybody enjoys winning football games, but we're pretty black and white when we watch the film, showing them the areas that we need to improve in," Pelini said. "They just keep working to turn over every stone to try and get better, each and every guy."

One thing they should be excited about is that this is the first time since 2006 that the Penguins have won each of their four games by 20 or more points.

The Penguins open up their conference schedule against their toughest opponent yet: the University of Northern Iowa. The Panthers are 2-2 and are ranked 13th in the Football Championship Subdivision.

UNI plays in a dome, which provides unique challenges, but it's just another game according to Pelini. They may make some slight changes to their practice routine, but the Penguins are still working to improve every time they step on the field.

"Maybe some guys will be wearing different shoes, or you go out there and get used to the lighting, that kind of thing," Pelini said. "The field is the same size. We practice indoors some, so there's not much of a difference. ... It's a different environment and you have to get used to it."

Despite the struggles, YSU had success against UNI last season with a convincing 31-10 victory over the Panthers in

November. Playing in Iowa is a different story, however. The last time the Penguins came out with a victory at the UNI-Dome was in 1999, when they won 29-20.

But to senior offensive lineman Jacob Zinni, that doesn't matter. These are the 2019 Penguins playing, not the 1999 team.

"I've heard it," Zinni said regarding the rough streak. "But, at the end of the day, this is the 2019 team. I don't really pay much attention to that or give that anything because we were all two or three years old if not even born yet in '99."

A reason for the Penguins' success this season has been the offensive line. YSU has allowed a conference best of only two sacks and still has a top rushing attack in the country. One of the anchors, center Matt Jones, is roughed up but looks to be able to play, according to Pelini.

"He's doing a lot better," Pelini said. "His ankle wasn't blown up. We'll see how the week goes, but I would say he's probable."

Kickoff against UNI is set for 5 p.m. on Saturday.