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Rebecca Mertins Chiodini/*The News*  
Sophomore guard Brian Moore puts up a layup during the Racers' 92-68 loss to Drake.

## Racers struggle ahead of final season stretch

Jakob Milani

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The Racers a 92-68 loss against the Drake Bulldogs on Feb. 7, after a 43-point loss at Indiana State on Feb. 4.

The two losses come after barely squeaking out a win against Belmont Feb. 1 winning 83-82. The Racers' loss to the Sycamores was the worst loss for the Racers since a 93-29 loss against St. Bonaventure in 1960.

As for the loss against Drake, it's the Racers' worst home loss since a 91-65 loss to Houston in 1955. The win also moved Drake up to first place in the Valley.

The win over Belmont had the Racers, as well as three other teams in the MVC, just one game out of first place.

see **MEN'S HOOPS**, page 5



## Police Chief steps down, Captain steps up

Rebecca Mertins Chiodini/*The News*

Retired Police Chief Jeff Gentry and Interim Chief Ryan Orr stand with a group of their officers at his retirement ceremony.

Dionte Berry

Editor-in-Chief

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After serving as a member of the Murray State University Police Department for nearly 23 years, Jeff Gentry has retired from his position as police Chief.

Gentry was appointed as interim police chief in 2020, and in 2021, the interim tag was removed from his title.

"When I became chief, that was a very humbling experience," Gentry said. "Dr. Jackson and the administration had the confidence in me to lead this department."

Over the course of his career, Gentry enjoyed being able to play a role in the campus community and work closely with those on campus.

"Being a university officer, you have a lot of impact on students, faculty and staff," Gentry said. "And for

me, getting to know students from when they come here as a freshman on Great Beginnings to when you get to see them graduate and walk across the stage was a blessing."

**"I want to continue what Chief Gentry has obviously done, keep providing that to the faculty, staff and students and let them know that we're here for them."**

— Ryan Orr,  
Interim Police Chief

In terms of public service, Gentry is walking away with nearly 34 years of service under his belt. Before he worked with MSUPD, he worked with Calloway County Sheriff's Department, Murray Police Department and the Murray Fire Department.

After his time in public safety, Gentry said he thought announcing his retirement would be one of the easiest decisions he would ever make.

"Announcing my retirement was the hardest decision I ever made," Gentry said. "I'm very sad to be leaving, but I also know that...it was the right thing for me to do at that time, even though it's going to be hard saying goodbye since this has been home for me for 23 years."

Gentry's retirement ceremony was held on Wednesday, Feb. 8 in the Alexander Hall Atrium. The ceremony not only highlighted Gentry but also former MSUPD Captain Ryan Orr's promotion to interim police chief.

see **POLICE CHIEF**, page 3

## ADVANCE set to host LGBT+ focused lecture

Jill Smith

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Murray State ADVANCE will welcome Ramon Barthelemy on Feb. 22 to present "Queering STEM: A History of the Queer Rights in the USA and LGBT+ Advocacy in STEM."

Ramon Barthelemy is an assistant professor of physics and astronomy from the University of Utah. His presentation will focus on queer civil rights in the United States, which were won through direct activism and organization of a diverse group of people.

The research presented at this event will highlight the concerning work climate for LGBT+ physicists and even more concerning for people of color and trans people. The ADVANCE website said.

ADVANCE is a grant-funded program designed to promote the recruitment and retention of women in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics at universities, including Murray State.

ADVANCE program coordinator Reigh Kemp said with support from University administration, services can be expanded across campus and beyond women in STEM.

**QUEERING STEM: A HISTORY OF THE QUEER RIGHTS IN THE USA AND LGBT+ ADVOCACY IN STEM**

Queer civil rights in the USA have been hard won from direct activism and organization of a diverse coalition of people, including trans women and men, People of Color, and members of the LGBT+ community more broadly. This talk will explore this history and take an in-depth look at how principles from this history were applied to physics to make significant policy changes. The data presented will uncover a concerning climate for LGBT+ physicists, which can be even more challenging for trans persons and People of Color.

**FEBRUARY 22, 2023**

Seminar open to all faculty, staff, and students 11:30-12:30 (lunch will be provided)  
Conversation with Students 12:30-1:30 (lunch/snacks will be provided)  
Conversation with Faculty 2:30-3:30 (snacks will be provided)

304 OAKLEY NORTH TOWER  
Please RSVP on the ADVANCE website [murraystate.edu/advance](http://murraystate.edu/advance)

MURRAY STATE UNIVERSITY  
**ADVANCE**  
LIVE | LEARN | GROW

Photo courtesy of ADVANCE

The ADVANCE lecture will highlight LGBT+ support in STEM.

Kemp said the event aims to educate the campus community, especially on biases that people in the workforce face.

"Women are not the only people that come across bias, and Ramon has a lot of experience with faculty and staff in STEM and the biases that occurred specifically with the LGBT+ community," Kemp said. "Still, there's historically been a marginalized group in STEM that has received a lot of backlash across history in that field."

It's important the STEM industry promotes diversity, says Robin Zhang, chair of the Department of Earth and Environ-

mental Sciences and acting principal investigator (PI) of ADVANCE.

"STEM fields are projected to have a higher job growth rate and higher salary," Zhang said. "Broadening participation is essential to support the projected job growth and sustain the economic competitiveness of the U.S., and it is imperative to provide many individuals in diverse populations the opportunity to earn a higher wage and become more socially mobile."

Zhang said EES is traditionally a male-dominated field, but she has seen an increase in women majoring in EES programs at the University.

see **ADVANCE**, page 3

## Faculty Senate votes to increase membership

Drayton Charlton-Perrin

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Amendments concerning the expansion of the Faculty Senate and senate officer positions were passed at the Feb. 7 Faculty Senate meeting and await a vote from the rest of the Murray State faculty body.

The first amendment passed will add a sixth at-large senate seat for a faculty member who is an instructor. Faculty members who are instructors will vote to fill this position. If the Senate does not receive a nominee with the proper rank, the Faculty Senate president will appoint an instructor to this position.

The second amendment passed will add three new seats to the Faculty Senate, open up a new officer seat, move the officer election to early April and change officer terms from one year to two. The officers will receive the power to vote for members of the Senate in case of a tie to establish a two-thirds majority.

see **FACULTY SENATE**, page 2

# Curriss Center construction blocks off third floor

**Ava Chuppe**

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The Curriss Center's construction projects, which have occupied space and restricted available restrooms in the building, are scheduled to continue throughout the spring semester and into the summer.

Construction locations on the first floor include the future Esports area, a reconfigured Sodexo office space, relocated post office boxes and single-occupancy restrooms. All of these locations are approaching completion and are expected to reopen by mid to late February, said Director of Facilities Management Jason Youngblood.

A relocated space for the Center for Student Involvement will replace the former post office space on the second floor. The public restrooms on that floor are expected to be available for use by the end of January. The Student Involvement space may open by the middle of February, given the timely delivery and installation of the entrance.

On the third floor, construction is still underway on the main hallway and public restrooms. Polished concrete replaced the former clay tile in the hallway, and workers are still cleaning the area before re-opening. The third floor restrooms are scheduled for completion by the end of February, and the

entirety of the third floor is scheduled for reopening by March 1.

The second floor restrooms will reopen before the first floor restrooms are closed. In addition, Facilities Management staff have performed plumbing work and scheduled electrical shutdowns predominantly outside facility hours.

Some students, like electromechanical engineering technology major Evan Harvilla, said they do not feel the construction has interfered with their normal schedules.

"The construction has not impacted my life in any particular way, but I am overall unhappy with the renovation plans," Harvilla said. "There's a trend with buildings recently to make everything seem clean and sleek and feel more modern, and I feel it pulls the character from old buildings."

Harvilla said the Curriss Center could be expanded without making it feel clinical.

"They could fix the flowers in the rafters and give it more color with new paint, but we lose all that with the new style renovations," Harvilla said. "The campus is old, and old buildings like the library feel charming, but the Curriss Center is going to feel weird."

Youngblood said the project has been divided into stages in an effort to minimize disruptions for students, faculty and staff.

Conversely, English education major Mikaela McChristian says the change has impacted her study routine.



Curriss Center construction started during the Fall 2022 semester.

Rebeca Mertins Chiodini/The News

"Last semester, I would go over and just study in between classes, and this semester, I have about an hour or hour and a half long breaks in between my classes," McChristian said. "Instead of going to the Curriss Center and grabbing a bite to eat...the loud noises just make me not able to focus, so now I've moved to the library."

Over the summer, extensive construction will be scheduled to take

place in the Welcome Center and in public and single-occupant restrooms on the first floor. Other projects will include flooring replacements in the first and second floor hallways and Starbucks, a reconfiguration of the wheelchair ramp leading to the bookstore, replacements of the door and window frames and glass at the bookstore and work in the new student and rocking chair lounges.

# The News takes home second place General Excellence award

**Erinn Finley**

News Editor

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The Murray State News staff won 12 awards at the Kentucky Press Association conference, including a second place for general excellence in the student publications class 1 category at the Kentucky Press Association conference in Lexington, Kentucky for the 2022 school year.

Carol Terracina-Hartman, the faculty adviser for The News, said the KPA convention had a broad range of programming for both faculty advisers and students.

"It's always valuable to interact with not only advisers from sister campuses but also potential future employers of Murray State [Journalism and Mass Communications] students," Terracina-Hartman said.

Terracina-Hartman said she was excited for The News staff and their achievements at the recent convention.

"I am thrilled that The News staffers—when judged against their peers—again come out on top," Terracina-Hartman said. "These awards honor their hard work, commitment to ethical newsgathering and overall excellent journalism production."

Dionte Berry is the editor-in-chief for The News and a senior journalism major. He has worked at The News since fall 2019, performing multiple jobs such as contributing writer, features editor and news editor.

Berry won a Certificate of Merit for Best Editorial Writer, a first place for Best Feature Story as well as Best Extended Coverage story, a second place for Best Editorial Page, a third place for Best Front Page and a shared first place for Best Picture Essay with photographer

Emma Fisher and photography editor Rebeca Mertins Chiodini.

"The awards are significant to us because it is another symbol showing us that The Murray State News is doing something right and that we are putting our best foot forward when it comes to reporting on our community," Berry said.

Emery Wainscott, chief copy editor and a senior journalism major, won second place in the investigative story category. She has been working at The News since spring 2021, starting as a staff writer, then moving on to lifestyle editor and news editor.

"This is my first time winning an award at KPA, so I felt very proud of myself," Wainscott said. "The article that won definitely needed some improvements, but I did my best with what I had and ended up winning an award for it."

Jakob Milani, sports editor and junior journalism major, won first place awards for Best Sports Story and Best Sports Feature Story. He has been working at The News since he was a freshman in fall 2020, beginning as a staff writer.

"Winning these awards means a lot to me," Milani said. "Sports journalism is something I'm very passionate about, and these awards really solidify that this is the field I want to be involved in."

The News has encountered some issues with staffing during the COVID-19 pandemic, so the awards also honor the staff's hard work in producing the weekly print and digital editions.

"The awards also mean a lot because in recent years our staff has been shrinking, and I am very proud of what we are still able to achieve," Berry said.

Each year a different state judges the categories and stories submitted by students. This year the Oklahoma Press Association judged



Carol Terracina Hartman/The News

From left to right: Dionte Berry, Emery Wainscott, Jill Smith and Jakob Milani at the 2023 KPA Convention.

the competition. Wainscott commented on the smaller staff and how proud she is of her colleagues.

"I'm super proud of everyone for the work they do and how we were able to place second in the state despite staffing issues," Wainscott said. "I think our team and our paper stands out, and I'm very glad the Oklahoma Press Association judges recognized that."

Milani says he was excited to bring home second place for General Excellence.

"I know we all work really hard here, so to see it all pay off in that way was really special to me," Milani said.

Berry says he is proud of the staff, but knows The News is capable of even greater work.

"Of course I am happy that we placed, but at the end of the day I'd love it if The News placed first for

general excellence," Berry said. "However, this shows us that there are aspects of our reporting that need to be worked on."

Milani said he also enjoyed the connections he made at the conference.

"I got to meet plenty of great student journalists who share the same passion that I do," Milani said. Wainscott said the conference lectures they attended were very informative and important to student journalists.

"For example, we attended one about reporting on addiction and how journalists can perpetuate harm and stigma about addiction and how we can change our language and storytelling methods to combat this," Wainscott said.

Overall, Berry said he was proud of The News staff.

"No matter what, even if we would have walked away with zero awards, I am extremely proud of my staff and their dedication to The News," Berry said.

## FACULTY SENATE, from page 1

In order to take effect, all amendments passed must be ratified in secret ballots from all faculty within six weeks of the bill's approval, meaning the new amendments will likely not take effect until March.

The first amendment received 23 approval votes and one to decline. The second amendment received 20 approval votes and three votes to decline.

Senate President David Roach held a vote for an amendment

to the second bill, but there was no support to recognize it.

A few members of the senate considered breaking up the second bill into multiple parts and voting for each on their own merit.

"I would vote for the April election, but I don't like the two-year term for officers," Senator Eran Guse said. "It gives them way too much power."

Roach claimed splitting a bill wasn't an option.

"We have tried doing this in the past," Roach said. "It just doesn't work out."

Although the votes resemble a landslide acceptance for the new bills, there were areas of contention.

Guse was not happy with either bill. He believes adding more senate seats is a bad idea.

"Some people don't actually want to put in the work," Guse said. "They just want to be able to check a box."

As it stands, there are 32 Faculty Senate members.

Others voiced their concern over the possibility of a single department gaining too much control in the senate.

These concerns were shot down by the majority of the senate.

Senator Michelle Panchuk said in order for a single department to gain too much power, members of the department would have to be voted on and vouched for by high-ranking members of the senate, and therefore collusion couldn't take form.

The faculty vote may begin after Sunday, Feb. 12.

The next Faculty Senate meeting will be on March 7.

# Wins, losses and snubs: The News talks about the Grammys



Photo courtesy of Billboard.com

## 'The Grammys, The Grammys have got a problem'

**Dionte Berry**

Editor-in-Chief  
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No matter who wins or loses at the Grammys, watchers are bound to be upset. It's hard not to have a grain of disappointment for Harry Styles winning Album of the Year, beating out Beyoncé's "RENAISSANCE." Despite having the most Grammy wins, she has only won a big three award (Best Album, Best Song and Best Record) once, and that was for Single Ladies in 2010, which won Best Song. "RENAISSANCE" is a Black and queer dance epic. It shines a light on those who have inspired popular culture and continue to do so.

## Grammys snub live recorded musical theater album

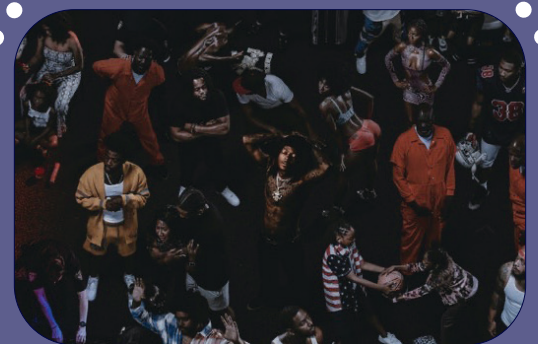
**Rebeca Mertins Chiodini**

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Though most people were really unhappy with his win, I'm not mad that Harry Styles' "Harry's House" won Album of the Year. The real snub of the night for me is "Six: Live on Opening Night" not winning the best musical theater album. I am a bit biased, but come on. For being a live recording, the sound is great, and the lyrics can be clearly heard, unlike most live recordings. The musical is fresh and new and like everything the Grammys usually look for. I don't know how "Into the Woods" won.



Photo courtesy of Broadway.com



'The Forever Story' album cover courtesy of spotify.com

## Rap category continues to disappoint

**Jakob Milani**

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While I think the winners of those in the rap genre were deserved, I think the nominations were the problem. Albums like "The Forever Story" by JID, "Melt My Eyes, See Your Future" by Denzel Curry and some more underground artists like Rome Streetz with his album "KISS THE RING" weren't even nominated, but albums that got subpar at best reviews, like Jack Harlow's "Come Home The Kids Miss You" or DJ Khaled's "GOD DID," were front and center. I think the rap genre just looks worse every year for the Grammys, and this year was just another step backward.

### POLICE CHIEF, page 1

Orr has worked with MSUPD for nearly 20 years. As captain, Orr was second in command to Gentry and is honored to be taking on the interim police chief position.

"I'm excited, obviously a little nervous, because it's a big role to take on a lot of responsibility," Orr said. "It's kind of what I've prepared for over the years, and it's what I've wanted to do. It's kind of the pinnacle of my career to be able to come in here and the department that I've worked for for so long to be able to lead that department."

Before he started working at MSUPD, Orr was a sheriff's deputy for Crittenden County Sheriff's Department.

"Even though I was in a small county, there was only the sheriff, and I was the deputy and that kept us busy all the time," Orr said. "At Murray State, we have a little more time to stop and provide more community-oriented policing and be able to...do classes on safety."

Along with working with MSUPD for nearly two decades, Orr is a

Murray State alum and worked with Gentry during his time as a student when he was part of Racer Patrol.

Now filling Gentry's shoes, Orr wants to continue playing an important role in the campus community and ensure transparency between MSUPD and the campus community.

"I think it's important to be transparent, to develop that trust between the university community and the police department," Orr said. "A lot of people come from areas where they don't trust the police, because they don't have that opportunity to interact, the police aren't transparent or they don't have the opportunity to interact with the police."

After working with Gentry since his start with MSUPD, Orr said he is impressed with the impact Gentry has had on the campus community, and looks forward to doing the same.

"I want to continue what Chief Gentry has obviously done, keep providing that to the faculty, staff and students and let them know that we're here for them," Orr said.

faculty members as well as the experiences they may face.

"We live in a very rural community, and it's not always the safest environment for professors to feel like they're able to come out," Kemp said. "It would be beneficial for students to understand that and the struggles professors go through—the biases they receive from other professors, other people around town and even students in this area."

The presentation will be open to faculty, staff and students from 11:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. A conversation with students will follow from 12:30 to 1:30 p.m. and a conversation with faculty from 2:30 to 3:30 p.m. Snacks and lunch will be provided at the event.

### ADVANCE, from page 1

Currently, the Earth and Environmental Science program has 65 undergraduate students and nine graduate students. Zhang said more than half of the students are women, which encourages more to get involved in the field.

"For eight out of the 20 years while at MSU, I was the only tenured women faculty in the department, and I am still the only woman full professor in EES," Zhang said. "As the chair of the department, I have occasionally heard comments that they were delighted to meet a woman."

Kemp said students should attend this event to learn how to support their peers and



Rebeca Mertins Chiodini/The News

Racer fans honor Jeff Gentry and his wife, Sherida, at the Tuesday, Feb. 7 Racer Basketball game.

# Bull Blowout 2023

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# Our view: Teachers need support, not restraints

With teachers overworked, underpaid and micro-managed, it comes as no surprise many states report struggling with teacher shortages, and Kentucky is one of them.

In Kentucky, there are nearly 10,000 teacher vacancies, said Gov. Andy Beshear. Instead of confronting those vacancies, Kentucky lawmakers held a hearing on Tuesday, Feb. 7 regarding the teacher shortage that grew into an argument about “woke” culture, reported by WLKY.

Beyond the arguing, the Kentucky Commissioner of Education Jason Glass blamed three challenges for the statewide teacher shortage at Tuesday’s hearing: low pay, lack of support and lack of respect for the teacher shortage.

As of now, none of those three variables have been addressed. The only aspect to be addressed so far is making it more accessible to receive teaching certification.

Kentucky school districts are relying more on emergency certifications, which were passed into law July 2022. However, we at *The News* find although the expedited teacher certification route can be helpful toward the crisis, but it will be frivolous if teaching conditions do not change.

Beshear has called on the legislature to pass the Education First Plan, which would increase teacher wages by 5%, provide universal



Wesley Hammer/*The News*

pre-K funding, return teacher pensions, restore textbook funding and professional development, include loan forgiveness and support social and mental health.

It’s not as if the solution for teacher retention hasn’t already been pointed out, written down and detailed by plans; it just depends on whether Kentucky lawmakers care enough to implement plans that would support teachers.

A majority of the legislation proposed within the last two years were not made to boost the ability to educate students but instead treated classes like political playgrounds.

Bills such as Senate Bill 138 would prohibit teachers from talking about

current and controversial topics, which would likely pertain to racism in the U.S. Overall, it would hinder important discussions surrounding the racism that still exists.

SB 138 treats racism and inequality as if it is something that went down the drain once the Civil Rights Act of 1964 was passed.

With politics invading the classroom, teachers can’t teach freely, and it’s unfair for people who have studied education to have their teaching certifications micromanaged by lawmakers who don’t hold the same credentials as them.

In regards to solutions for the teacher shortage, bills like SB 138 should be tossed in the trash. The

teacher shortage should show lawmakers the risks of what happens when classrooms are overcontrolled.

Beshear’s Education First Plan is a great start for accommodating not only teachers but also the needs of students. With inflation, teachers need a pay reflective of the increase in the cost of living. Public school teachers often have to pay for supplies out of their own pockets. If they are expected to provide exemplary education then they shouldn’t have to fork out their own paychecks.

We at *The News* expect lawmakers to use their time wisely and spend it on ways to grow the teaching field rather than police education, and treat classrooms as political tools.

## Letter to the Editor: The value of dissent

The First Amendment is getting a lot of bad press these days, particularly on social media platforms. Universal “free speech” is often deemed equivalent to the First Amendment. Dissent now creates ideological divides rather than additional perspectives, yet that’s not how things were back in 1788.

In the year the U.S. Constitution was ratified, colonial Americans understood the provisions of the First Amendment. They understood those “provisions” were not provided by the government, but rather, the Bill of Rights is a recognition of rights inherently possessed by human beings. Within that recognition is specific language regarding the right to “petition the Government for a redress of grievances”—in other words, dissent.

Dissent in colonial America was known as “seditious libel,” making it a criminal offense to publish or make statements intended to criticize the government.

Traditionally, the press has provided scrutiny beyond the “checks and balances” between the three branches of government; the press serves as a “watchdog,” ready to alert the electorate to government acts, including scandals and abuses of power. With freedom of the press comes responsibility.

Beyond reporting on government acts, the press also provides editorial analysis seen in opinion sections. This important function provides context for the news of the day, identifies how issues affect minority stakeholders and provides perspectives readerships may not have considered. These

functions are most succinctly done with political cartoons.

Good political cartoonists can communicate a complex perspective in a single art panel. They can simultaneously evoke strong emotion and intellectual appeals on important topics

However, we no longer live in 1778. Now, algorithms serve both news and opinion, curated to predicted consumer attitudes, interests and opinions. Content is filtered to the point people live inside information bubbles that insulate them from dissent. Personal attacks, circular arguments and other logical fallacies are the discourse of the day in the guise of snarky memes.

Perhaps press freedom and responsibility should also include readers: the responsibility to step out of these echo chambers and consider ideas beyond those curated for them. There is

a special opportunity to do just that on Tuesday, Feb. 14.

The Department of Journalism and Mass Communications presents the inaugural McGaughey Lecture on Press Freedom and Responsibility. The lecture will celebrate the value of the right to dissent and feature guest speaker Marc Murphy. Murphy will present his award-winning political cartoons, which are regularly published in the *Louisville Courier Journal*, *USA Today* and several other newspapers.

Murphy will speak at 7:30 p.m. in the Lovett Auditorium. The speech is open to the public, who may want to exercise their right to peaceably assemble.

—Kevin Qualls  
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Rebeca Mertins Chiodini/The News

Junior forward DJ Burns puts up a tough layup on his way to 7 points for the Racers against the Drake Bulldogs.

**MEN'S HOOPS, from page 1**

But following the two most recent losses, the Racers sit at an 8-7 conference record, putting them at eighth in the MVC and three games out of first with just five games remaining.

Where do the problems start for the Racers? Following the loss on Tuesday, Head Coach Steve Prohm pointed out one side of the ball that has been holding the team back.

"I'm just disappointed in our defensive identity this week," Prohm said. "We're one of the bottom defensive teams in the league. At home, we've been able to outscore people. That's why it's been hard to win on the road. We've just got a lot of work to do, and it takes time."

As Prohm pointed out, the home and away records in the MVC contrast highly with one another. Murray State is 6-2 at home against conference opponents, with losses to SIU and Drake. On the road, however, the Racers are just 2-5,

picking up wins at Valparaiso and Evansville, two teams that are in the bottom three teams in the Valley.

Despite the Racers' positive record, they allow more points per game than they score. While their 70.8 points per game are enough for sixth in the Valley, above SIU, their 72.2 points given up per game is the third worst, with only Valparaiso and Evansville allowing more.

Prohm also touched on the Racers' competition so far this season and echoed prior thoughts from earlier in the season.

"It's just a tough league," Prohm said. "It's physical, and you gotta be connected. And we aren't connected at the level you need to be to win these tough games right now."

Over most major statistical categories, the Racers sit anywhere from sixth in the conference to 10th in the conference. They are last in total steals in the Valley and 11th in forced turnovers but fifth in free throw percentage.

The Valley is competitive, as shown by the records for each

team this year. But in a race so crowded, a team can't afford to lose back-to-back games, especially by a combined 67 points. Where do the Racers go from here?

Murray State has five games remaining before the conference tournament. While a first round bye isn't completely out of the question, it would require the team to win their last five games and a lot of shifting at the top.

The final five games start with a trip to Bradley, which sits at fourth in the league. After that, the Racers have two home games and two away games, all of which are against teams with the same records as or worse than the Racers.

It's possible Murray State wins out to end the season as, despite their record on the road, they have played a lot of close opponents, with the exception of Indiana State and Drake.

March Madness is less than a month away, and the Valley is still in a scramble. But as spectators have seen from the MVC this season, it is truly anyone's game.

**MISSOURI VALLEY MEN'S BASKETBALL STANDINGS & CONFERENCE RECORD**



Shann Riley/The News

**Baseball steps up to the plate in new conference**

**Simon Elfrink**  
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A warmer week serves as a welcome reminder Murray State baseball's return is right around the corner. Head Coach Dan Skirka and the Racers are just days away from retaking the diamond and are determined to secure a 30-win season for the third year in a row.

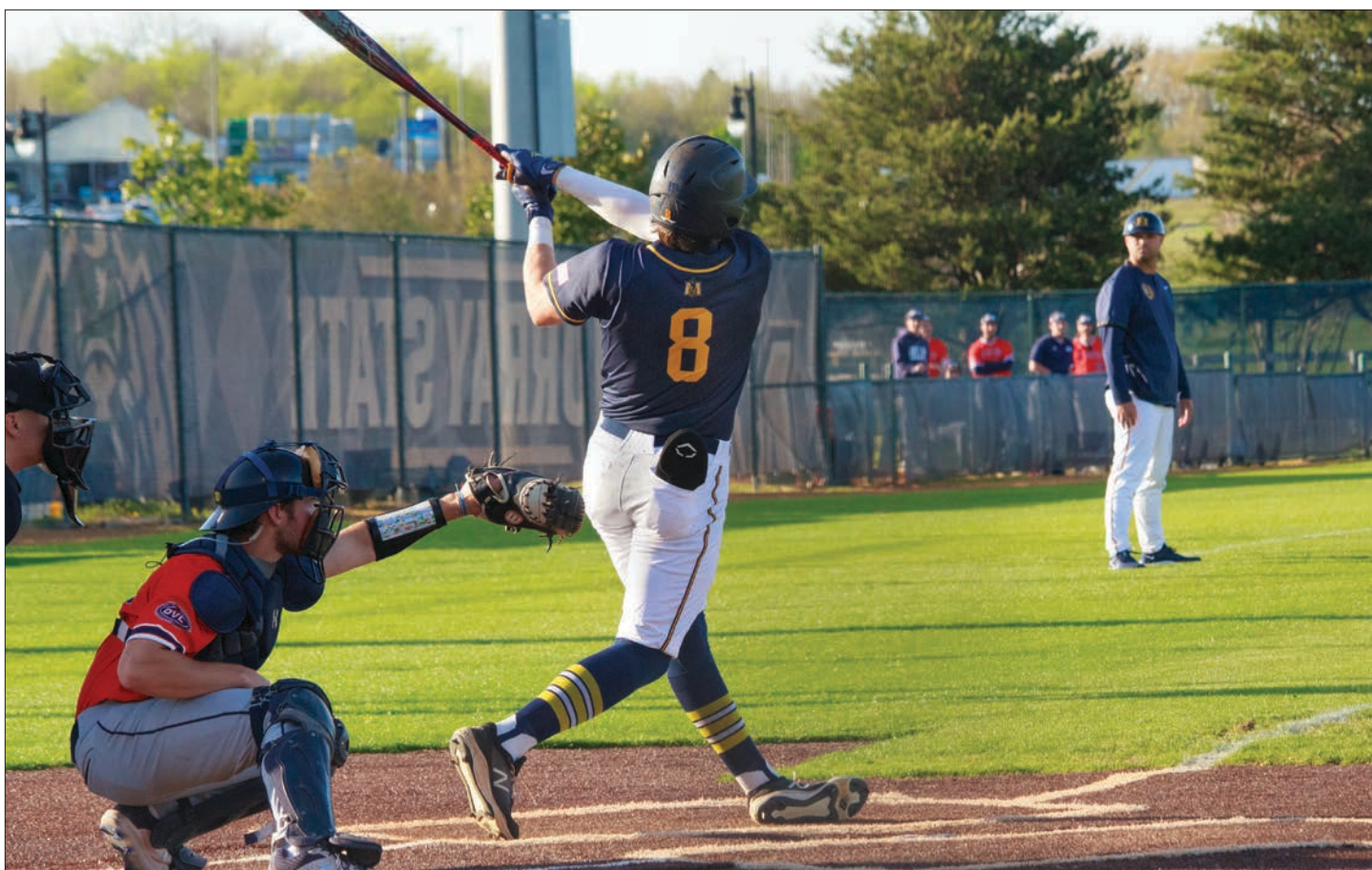
Murray State baseball finished last year's season with exactly 30 wins (30-25), losing 9-2 in the first round of the OVC Tournament against Tennessee Tech University.

Since then, the Racers have moved to a new conference and graduated several key players Skirka and the rest of the coaching staff are no doubt striving to replace, which is no easy task this season.

After losing players like center fielder Jake Slunder, third baseman Bryson Bloomer and middle infielder Jordan Holly, among others in the offseason, Skirka and the rest of the staff will look to players like junior infielder Drew Vogel to manufacture the runs the Racers will need to make a splash in 2023.

After playing just five games in 2021, Vogel turned up the heat his sophomore year, starting in 54 games and hitting a respectable .258. He also smashed seven homers and drove in 36 runs, achieving a .794 OPS in the process.

Sophomore infielder Carson Garner might be one of the most interesting up-and-comers



Rebeca Mertins Chiodini/The News

Sophomore infielder Carson Garner returns as a big piece for the Racers as they head into the 2023 season.

in the Racers' dugout. Garner hit .260 with a .787 OPS and five home runs in his freshman season, appearing in 42 games.

Graduate returner Brennan McCullough is expected to play valuable innings in the outfield, having started in 46 games last season. McCullough's average is nothing to call home about (.256), but his power might be: seven home runs and a .463 slugging percentage helped him pick up 28 RBIs. McCullough was also a danger on the basepaths last season, swiping 18 bags on 21 attempts.

Redshirt junior left-hander Jordyn Naranjo pitched his fair

share of innings out of the bullpen last season, posting a 2-2 record and tallying 20 strikeouts. Naranjo also chalked up two saves to his name and held his opponents to a .224 batting average, the second-lowest on the team.

One of the highly anticipated returners is redshirt junior right-hander Jacob Pennington, who pitched in 53.2 innings last season, posting a 4.86 ERA and striking out 47 batters. Those numbers, along with his 3-1 record on the hill, would be reason enough to mention him, but Pennington has been appearing as a full-time two-way

player for the Racers since 2021.

In 2022, Pennington hit .289 with eight home runs and 24 RBIs. His on-base percentage (.417) was second only to Bloomer among the Racers, accounting for a .905 OPS. To top it all off, Pennington also jumped onto the base-stealing bandwagon, nabbing eight on as many attempts.

With plenty of returning faces and a new conference to challenge the Racers, Murray State marches into the 2023 season head first. The first series of the season starts on Feb. 17 when the Racers travel to take on the University of North Florida for a three-game series against the Ospreys.

# Turley etches name in Racer record book

Record comes amid losing streak

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Murray State senior guard Macey Turley is now the leader in double-digit scoring in Murray State women's basketball history after scoring 10 points in the first quarters against Illinois State.

Despite the historic weekend for Turley, the Racers struggles continued as they dropped both games, extending their losing streak to six.

This losing streak has dropped the Racers down to ninth place in the MVC. Murray State has struggled on the road this season with a 4-7 visiting record. They are also 4-8 against conference opponents this year.

After the recent pair of losses the team has suffered, the Racers are now 11-10 on the season.

## vs. Belmont

The Racers fell to the Belmont Bruins 64-54 on Thursday, Feb. 2. The Bruins currently sit in fourth place in the conference with a 13-10 overall record and a 9-3 record against MVC opponents.

Belmont's junior forward Madison Bartley led the way for the Bruins, scoring 19 points. Bartley had five rebounds, three assists and two blocks.

The Bruins shot for 39.7% from the field (23-58) and scored at will in the interior, with 30 of their 64 points from the paint.

Turley led the Racers in scoring, finishing with 18 points. She had three rebounds and three steals. Junior forward Katelyn Young had 15 points, 15 rebounds, three assists and a steal. Junior



Rebeca Mertins Chiodini/The News

Senior guard Macey Turley breaks the record for most double-digit point games in program history in the Racers' loss to Illinois State on Sunday, Feb. 5.

forward Hannah McKay put up 11 points, nine rebounds and two assists. Redshirt senior forward Alexis Burpo had 7 points, two rebounds and an assist.

Murray State shot 28.8% (19-66) from the field in the matchup against Belmont. The Racers scored 18 points in the paint, 14 second-chance points and 8 points off turnovers.

Because the Racers had beaten the Bruins earlier this season, the season series is now tied 1-1.

## vs. Illinois State

The Racers then traveled to Normal, Illinois to compete against the current No. 1 team in the MVC, the Illinois State Redbirds. Murray State lost the matchup 79-73 after getting into foul trouble early on in the game.

Graduate student guard Paige

Robinson led the Redbirds in scoring with 24 points. She had five rebounds, three assists and two blocks. The Redbirds shot 48.5% in the game (33-68) and scored 48 of their points in the paint.

Turley led the Racers in scoring against Illinois State, scoring 22 points while putting up four rebounds and an assist. Young finished with 13 points, six rebounds and two assists. McKay had 8 points, 10 rebounds and two assists. Junior guard Bria Sanders-Woods finished with 3 points, six assists and two rebounds. Freshman guard Briley Pena had 12 points and an assist off the bench.

The Racers shot 40.9% from the field (27-66) in the loss. Murray State's bench helped the team stay in the mix despite getting into foul trouble as Racer bench players combined for 23 points. Murray State starters combined for 13 fouls

as the team committed 24 total.

This game was the first meeting between the two teams this season. They are not scheduled to play again during the regular season but could find themselves going toe to toe during the MVC Tournament.

Although the Racers are on a six-game losing streak, they will still have an opportunity to make some noise in the conference tournament. All 12 teams within the conference will be in the tournament, so sitting in ninth place is not the end of the world. If the Racers continue their losing streak, however, they will almost be guaranteed to face off against a top seed.

The Racers' road trip is finally over, and they will play a home game for the first time since Jan. 22 this week. Murray State will host the Indiana State Sycamores at 6 p.m. on Friday, Feb. 10.

# Murray State

## ATHLETICS SCHEDULE

Shann Riley/The News

### FEB. 8

Rifle vs. Memphis @ Memphis, TN

9 a.m.

### FEB. 10

Track vs. Music City Challenge @ Nashville, TN

ALL DAY

Tennis vs. Western Kentucky @ Bowling Green, KY

ALL DAY

Softball vs. Texas A&M at Corpus Christi @ Abilene, TX

10 a.m.

Softball vs. University of Texas at El Paso @ Abilene, TX

1 p.m.

Women's Basketball vs. Indiana State @ Murray, KY

6 p.m.

### FEB. 11

Track vs. Music City Challenge @ Nashville, TN

ALL DAY

Tennis vs. Austin Peay @ Hopkinsville, KY

ALL DAY

Softball vs. Texas A&M at Corpus Christi @ Abilene, TX

10 a.m.

Softball vs. Abilene Christian @ Abilene, TX

1 p.m.

Men's Basketball vs. Bradley @ Peoria, IL

1 p.m.

### FEB. 12

Rifle vs. Jacksonville State @ Oxford, MS

9 a.m.

Softball vs. University of Texas at El Paso @ Abilene, TX

10 a.m.

Women's Basketball vs. Evansville @ Murray, KY

2 p.m.

For more information  
visit [GoRacers.com](http://GoRacers.com)

Junior Allison Henry, Rifle

Photo courtesy of Racer Athletics



# Professor named 'College Teacher of the Year'

**MacKenzie Rogers**

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After only six years of teaching, English professor Ray Horton was awarded the 2023 College Teacher of the Year award from the Kentucky Council of Teachers of English/Language Arts.

KCTE recognizes distinguished English and language arts educators on all levels, from kindergarten through graduate school.

Horton, who is also co-coordinator of the undergraduate literature program, said he did not know he had been nominated.

"It was a really, really great feeling," Horton said. "It's really quite an honor. I'm in a department with so many phenomenal teachers just right here. It's nice to have...the work I do in the classroom recognized in that way."

Horton specializes in 20th century American literature, and religion, secularization and contemporary fiction.

Horton said he has a lot of personal interest in literature and religion, as someone whose views and experiences have changed over the years.

"[I want] to kind of make sense of things and to think about positive and negative ways that different religious discourses sort of influenced the culture," Horton said. "What better way to do that? And then studying sort of this...understudied tradition of American writers who have



Photo Courtesy of [murraystate.edu](http://murraystate.edu)  
English and Creative Writing professor Ray Horton was named 'College Teacher of the Year.'

a kind of tense relationship with religion sometimes but are nevertheless really, really fascinated by it."

Horton currently is returning to his doctoral dissertation and preparing to revise it into a book manuscript. The book has been tentatively titled "American Fiction, Secular Faith."

"It's about 20th century and contemporary American novelists who draw on a variety of religious beliefs, experiences, traditions in ways that are often sort of conceived of as very secular or very sort of

nonreligious," Horton said.

Horton currently teaches American Literature 1865 to 1945, general education English and the American Novel course at the graduate level.

He says his favorite class to teach is "the American Novel" because it covers the end of the 18th century to the present, a time period that captures his interest.

"What I love about teaching literature is that I so often get to teach texts that I've written about or thought about very extensively and very deeply,"

Horton said. "As a teacher, just watching my own students' growth and development, seeing students develop more sort of intellectual independence, seeing them come to conclusions that are clearly their own that they've worked really hard to develop makes it worth it, you know?"

Horton is excited about the upcoming fall semester's rotation, as he says he will finally be given the opportunity to teach the Major Authors course, focusing on James Baldwin.

"I've been waiting very patiently, badgering all my colleagues about it mostly, like, 'One of these days, I'm gonna teach my Baldwin course,'" Horton said. "And now it's here."

One of Horton's teaching philosophies is the importance of students discovering their own voices, learning to trust those voices and having a lot of respect for their own intuition.

"I'm really interested in the concept of revision, both in terms of student writing and in terms of our own approach to a text, to the world, to our beliefs, to our values," Horton said. "Trying to teach in a way that prompts students to be open to their own questions and analyze them carefully and really think hard about them and take them seriously as valid and valuable questions that they can keep returning to."

The KCTE spring conference, when the 2023 Teacher of the Year is honored, takes place at Murray State on March 4.

## Showcase event spotlights faculty talent, research

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Senior writer

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Faculty members presented on community health, the U.S. immigration process and Greek and Roman history at the College of Humanities and Fine Arts Faculty Showcase on Feb. 3. Held in the Performing Arts Hall of the Old Fine Arts building, the showcase comprised of a mixture of academic research and creative performance.

Nursing professor Jessica Naber and psychology professor Esther Malm shared their community vitality project inspired by the world's blue zones.

Blue zones, or areas of the world with some of the longest life expectancies, included Ikaria, Greece; Sardinia, Italy; Okinawa, Japan; Nicoya, Costa Rica; and Loma Linda, California. Residents of these locales reach age 100 at a rate 10 times higher than the average American.

Naber and Malm outlined nine commonalities between the world's blue zones, including: plant-based diets, moderate consumption of red wine, religious affiliation and a sense of purpose.

The researchers looked into Kentucky's performance across these categories.

"Unfortunately, we rank way down there in terms of outcomes, except for community," Malm said.

Kentucky ranks 49th in the U.S. in terms of overall well-being and leads the country in cancer deaths. To combat these problems, the researchers developed a website dedicated to promoting community vitality for Calloway County. The site provides tips and resources for movement, rest, nutrition



Photo courtesy of Murray State University History Department on Facebook  
Students from the history and theater departments wear period clothing designed by theater faculty for the Faculty Showcase on Feb. 3.

and connection.

Naber and Malm have proposed several ideas for public investments to improve the well-being of Calloway residents, including but not limited to increased pedestrian paths, bicycle rentals for residents and transportation to and from Land Between the Lakes.

Assistant art professor and Mexico native Cintia Segovia Figueroa gave the second presentation, a performative piece modeled after the interview process for a U.S. immigrant visa. Many portions of the mock interview, such as the civics test, were factual.

Creative writing major Jullian Morman, a member of the audience, volunteered to participate in the interview. He said he tried to put himself in the shoes of a real

person going through the process.

"When I was up there, I felt very awkward," Morman said. "I felt kind of talked down to in the sense that I felt really insecure and inferior."

Though Morman passed the civics test, he said he doubted himself on certain questions despite having lived in the U.S.

"I imagine people who haven't lived here would easily get a lot of those wrong," Morman said.

During the speaking test portion of the demonstration, Segovia Figueroa encouraged Morman to use an unconventional accent while reading English sentences. By speaking outside his comfort zone, Morman said he learned about the struggle of nonnative English speakers applying for a visa.

"That felt really awkward and

made me second guess myself,"

Morman said. "I have a number of friends who have immigrated here or who are trying to, and it made me think about what they have to go through."

The final presentation, a collaboration between history and theater faculty, involved an array of Greek and Roman artifacts loaned to the University. Some of the artifacts, ranging from jewelry and coins to weapons and medical tools, were over 2,000 years old.

Student models showcased the artifacts and dressed in historically accurate Greek, Roman and Byzantine clothing designed by theater faculty.

Anyone interested can view the faculty created community vitality website at [sites.google.com/murraystate.edu/community-vitality](http://sites.google.com/murraystate.edu/community-vitality).

# Model UN team readies for national competition

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After five years, the Murray State Model United Nations team is returning to New York City to represent the Republic of Croatia in the National Model U.N. conference.

The National Model U.N. conference is an annual competition in which students from colleges around the world come together to represent different U.N. member countries.

This year's national conference will be divided into two separate conferences. The first conference is held April 2-6 and the second April 10-14. Murray State has participated in the national conference twice before in 2016 and 2018.

The students at the conference are tasked with giving speeches, writing resolutions and working with other member countries to address complex problems such as access to affordable, modern energy and the illicit supply of weapons.

Murray State Model U.N. faculty adviser Brittany Wood explained the New York conference offers Murray State students a different perspective on the U.N. and its work.

"The NYC conference provides several unique opportunities to students such as hosting the conference closing ceremonies in the actual U.N. General Assembly Hall at the U.N. Headquarters, as well as the occasion to meet with the Permanent Mission of the Republic of Croatia to the United States," Wood said.

After spending the last few months researching the politics, history, culture, economy and geography of Croatia in preparation for the conference, students were given the opportunity to virtually meet with Croatia's Deputy Permanent Representative Hrvoje Ćurić Hrvatinčić.

In addition to their research, students also have spent time preparing for the conference by practicing their public speaking and resolution writing skills, as well as learning the U.N.'s rules on parliamentary procedure.

Model U.N. Vice President Audrey Stallings said she feels prepared for the upcoming conference.

"I think that NMUN is going to be a great experience, and I am super excited," Stallings said. "I am filling up my resources binder with tons of different papers on nuclear power,



The Model United Nations team returns to the National Model U.N. in New York City in April 2023 for the first time since 2018.

Photo courtesy of @murraystatemun on Instagram

plant management and Croatia-specific documents on their nuclear power program."

In addition to attending the national conference, the Model U.N. team has been busy preparing to host their own conference for high school students in western Kentucky.

"In the spring of 2022, I was awarded the Faculty Innovation Grant to support organizing a High School Model United Nations conference on campus in Spring 2023," Wood said. "[Model U.N.] students are taking an active leadership role, serving as committee chairs and secretarial positions to recruit, market and organize the event."

In addition to supporting high school students, Wood says assisting with the high school conference also will benefit the Model U.N. team's performance at the national conference.

"The skills they are acquiring in hosting their own conference are sure to support the MUN students as they simultaneously prepare for their own next conference," Wood said. "Local high

school students participating in the MSU HSMUN conference will have the benefit of being mentored by MSU students, advancing their understanding of global issues and learning how to be civically engaged."

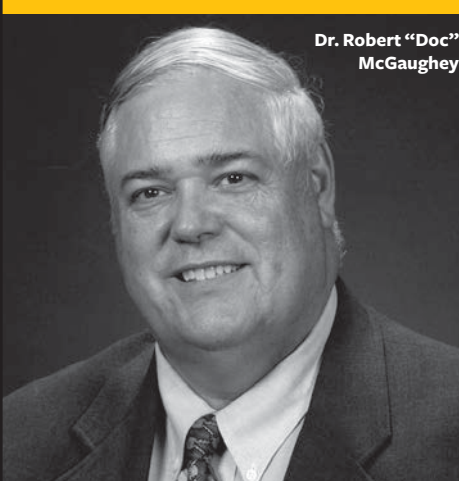
Senior psychology major and club secretary Vara Ramayanam says joining Model U.N. was one of the best decisions of her collegiate career.

"By joining MUN, I am more aware of international relations between

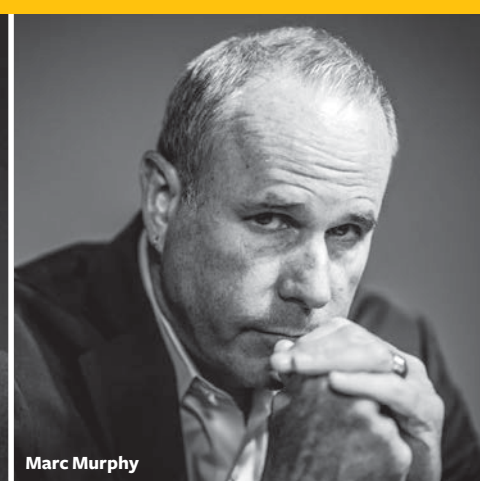
countries and politics," Ramayanam said. "To anyone who wants to join MUN, I would like to tell them that this is going to be one of the best decisions they are going to make."

Model U.N. is open to students across all majors, and if students are interested in participating in Model U.N., Wood recommends students enroll in POL 301 and 302 next academic year, a three-credit course sequence that prepares students for the next conference.

## The McGaughey Lecture on Press Freedom and Responsibility



Dr. Robert "Doc" McGaughey



Marc Murphy

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