

THE WORD

MAY 2024
ISSUE 14

A NEWSLETTER FROM THE MESSIAH UNIVERSITY ENGLISH PROGRAM

IN THIS ISSUE...

DEVOTION: BELOVED

by Adam Carter ('25)

p. 2

Read as Adam synthesizes his commitment to research, writing, sports, and justice in this exploration of the material good of shared celebration.

ALUMNI SPOTLIGHTS:

*Bardo, Snyder,
Lamoreux, Desko,
Saylor, Becker* pp.

8-9

REFUND THE POCKET PASSER:

*the Correlation Between
Crime Stopping and NFC East
Champions*

by Adam
Carter ('25)

pp.

4-5

UNDERGRADUATE RESEARCHERS:

*Kehler, Crocenzi,
Saldaña, Mock*

pp.

6-7

...AND MORE!

AN EVENING WITH ROSS GAY p. 11

On March 20th, the Department of Language, Literature, and Writing was pleased to host a reading from award-winning poet and essayist Ross Gay, author of books like *Catalog of Unabashed Gratitude*, *The Book of Delights* and *Inciting Joy*.

English students were given the unique opportunity to speak and workshop one-on-one with Ross Gay, learning from his experience and gaining insight toward their writing. Find more about this night on page 11!



BELOVED

A DEVOTIONAL LOOK INTO 1 JOHN

When it comes to following Jesus it can be difficult to discern the line between relationship and religiosity. We often find ourselves being so caught up in orthodoxy that we forget the importance of orthopraxy. If you've grown up in the American Evangelical culture like I have, this warning is nothing new to you. You've probably heard all the warnings about faith becoming a checklist and the dangers of becoming a "lukewarm" Christian. I spent years of my life worried about these exact things. I worried about doing the right things, and making sure I appeared as Christianly as possible. While I looked like I knew what I was doing, deep down I suffered from imposter syndrome and feelings of inadequacy. Despite what some people would say, the issue had nothing to do with my faith being "lukewarm" or a checklist but had everything to do with failing to realize that I am beloved.

In this verse from 1 John, John opens by addressing his readers with a term of endearment: "Beloved." In this verse "Beloved" is serving two powerful purposes. First, it is an expression of friendship. John is writing to a group of churches that he wishes to encourage and wants them to know that he cares for them.

SCAN TO LISTEN TO THE NEWEST
EPISODE OF ADAM'S PODCAST,
WRITER TALKS: "THE VICKI
SPECIAL"!



Vicki Swope

Second, it is a reminder that they are beloved by God. It is rather easy to forget this idea that we are beloved. We often get so caught up in worries of being lukewarm or inadequate that we fail to rest in God's love. For me this disconnect comes from my desire for perfection. I want to excel at everything, and because of this I'm terrified of having others see me fail. This mentality often leads to me putting up a front and trying to please God in my own power. Though I do believe God desires us to be driven and foster our talents, I think John offers a good reminder of the identity we must carry when pursuing our earthly endeavors. I'm not saying we shouldn't be mindful of our religiosity and be intentional about our orthopraxy. I'm just saying that as you do these things, do it blanketed with the truth that you are beloved by your friends and by God.

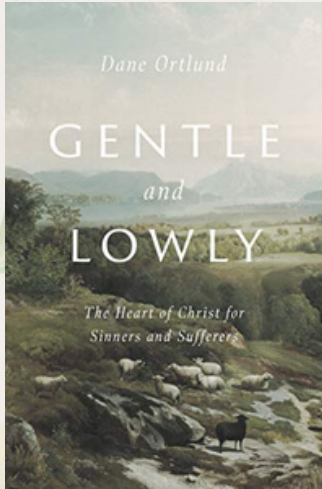
by Adam Carter ('25)

**"BELOVED, LET US LOVE ONE ANOTHER, FOR LOVE IS
FROM GOD, AND WHOEVER LOVES HAS BEEN BORN OF
GOD AND KNOWS GOD."**

1 John 4:7 (ESV)

VOCATION SEMINAR: TEXTS FOR CALLING

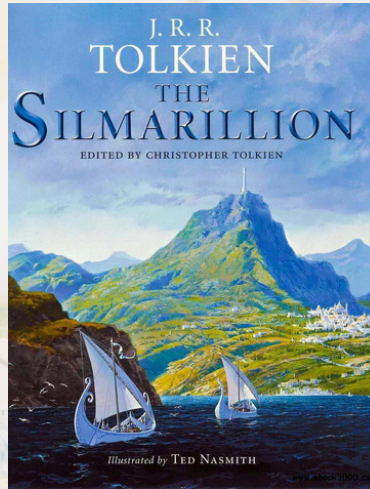
A class designed for junior English majors to explore their calling



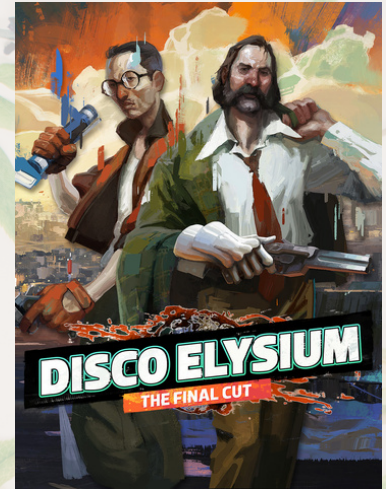
Adam Carter ('25)



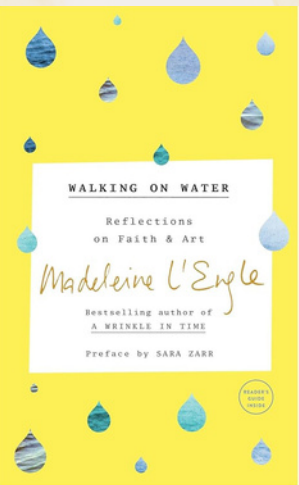
Evelyn Janssen ('25)



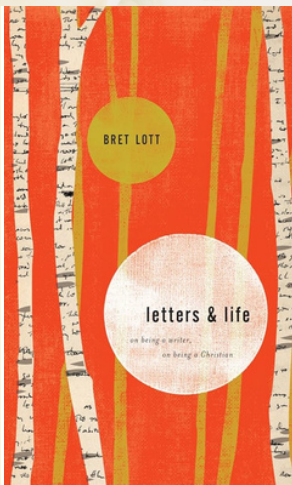
Nik Lego ('24)



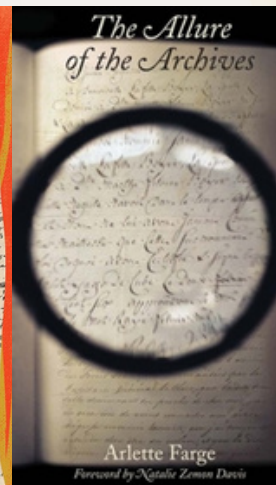
Ethan Reiser ('26)



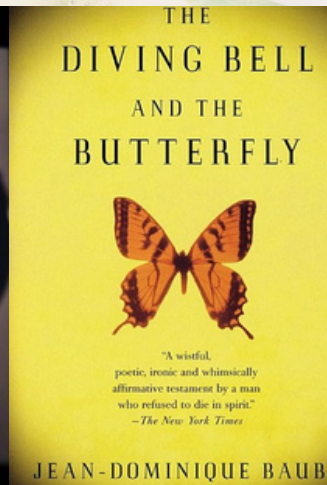
Lauren Mock ('25)



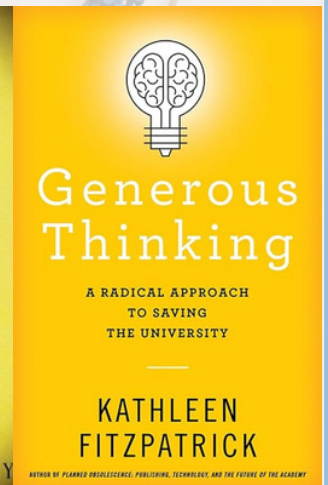
Ana Sakore ('25)



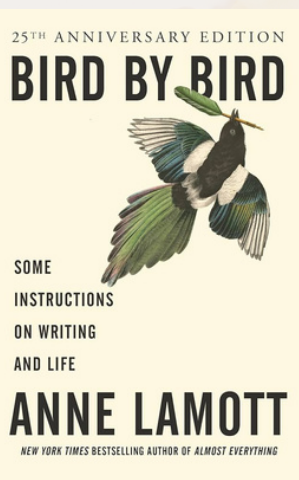
Vicki Swope



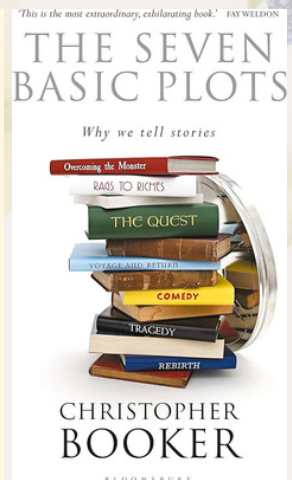
J.T. Crocenzi ('25)



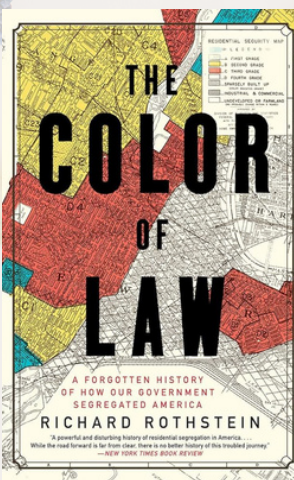
Macy Wright ('25)



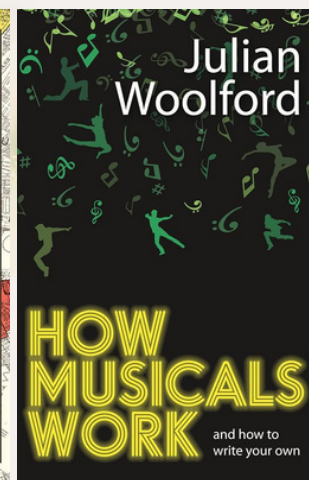
Emma Bane ('25)



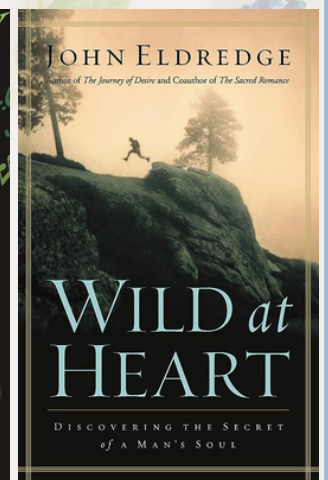
Micah Turner ('24)



Ciera Childs ('25)



Alli Swank ('24)



Bryce Arnold ('25)

REFUND THE POCKET PASSER:

A GLIMPSE AT THE CORRELATION BETWEEN CRIME STOPPING AND NFC EAST CHAMPIONS

It wasn't that long ago that the Detroit Lions were a bad football team. I mean really really bad. In 2019 the Lions finished the season with an abysmal three wins, a brutal 12 losses and one perplexing tie. While the first half of their season wasn't too terrible (suffering multiple last second heartbreakers) the second half of their season was quite laughable. After star quarterback Matthew Stafford suffered a season ending back injury in week 9, the city of Detroit was left helpless as they watched their beloved quarterbackless team lose nine weeks in a row.

Yet the tides have seemed to turn for the Lions organization. After some gutsy trades (The highlight being a quarterback swap with the Rams) and some well researched draft decisions, the Lions have found themselves being considered one of the best teams in professional football. This past season the Lions put up a record of 12 wins and five losses. Leading to a first place finish in the NFC North and granted them an automatic playoff berth. The Lions continued their success into the playoffs where they won a thrilling Wild Card game against their former quarterback Matthew Stafford and the 2022 Super Bowl champion LA Rams They then went on to show defensive prowess as they shut down the 2021 Super Bowl champion Tampa Bay Buccaneers in the divisional playoff. While their season went on to end in the NFC Championship losing to a very strong San Francisco 49ers team, overall the future of the Detroit Lions is quite bright.

Not only was 2019 a bad year for Detroit on the football field but also in public safety.

In a 2018 study done by researchers Hannah Laqueur & Ryan Copus at the UC Berkeley school of Law, investigated the link between successful sports teams and decreased crime rates in Chicago. They did this by "compar(ing) crime reports by the half hour when Chicago's NFL, NBA, or MLB teams are playing to crime reports at the same time, day, and month when the teams are not playing"(Lacquer, Corpus 2).

"DO THIS RESEARCH...IF WE DON'T HAVE A SEASON, WATCH HOW MUCH EVIL, WHICH WE CALL CRIME, WATCH HOW MUCH CRIME PICKS UP IF YOU TAKE AWAY OUR GAME...[PEOPLE HAVE] NOTHING ELSE TO DO."

- Ray Lewis

Prior to the NFL lockout season NFL legend Ray Lewis shared concerns of the delayed start saying, "Do this research...If we don't have a season, watch how much evil, which we call crime, watch how much crime picks up if you take away our game... [People have] nothing else to do."

From their research Lacquer and Corpus determined that “during Bears Monday Night Football games (crime) is approximately 15 percent lower than the same time on Monday nights when the Bears are not playing. The Super Bowl generates even more dramatic crime reductions. Crime is about 25 percent lower during Super Bowl game coverage”(3). This same information rang true for Chicago Bulls, Cubs, and White Sox games. Each major sporting event was accompanied by a lowered crime rate.

Similarly during the Philadelphia Eagles 2022 playoff run Philadelphia police reporter zero violent crimes the night after their September 19 and October 16 playoff games. These two instances shouldn't be dismissed as coincidences either as a 2011 Philadelphia police department study reveals that disorderly conduct arrest nearly tripled on days that the Eagles lost.




It's interesting to see even the players' recognition of this reality. When sports happen people watch and because of this do less crime, yet I wonder is it really because people have nothing else to do? Are sports just some form of adult pacifier holding back the evil of the world, or is there something greater going on.

One of the most overlooked qualities of professional sports teams in my opinion is their roles as community organizers. Sports are much more than a distraction or pacifier. Sports are an opportunity to bring people together from all walks of life to join together and support a common goal. Many professional sports teams take advantage of this power through community outreach and establishing charities and fundraisers to benefit the overall community. While yes it's hard to commit crimes while watching sports, and yes you are more inclined to watch when a team is good.

It's also more exciting to join in the work of a winning team vs a losing team. Winning teams not only incite viewership but also partnership in their outreach programs. Citizens are more likely to volunteer when those free tickets they're gonna get let them watch their team win. Likewise those in need are more likely to come to an outreach event when there's an opportunity to meet some of the best players in their respective league. Both of these things lead to heightened citizen morale and create avenues for connections that otherwise would have never been made. While I'm no sociologist or criminologist I don't think we can overlook the aspects of community engagement in these lowered crime rates. Because maybe just maybe, when people have the opportunity to celebrate together humanity wins.

by Adam Carter ('25)

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-  @MESSIAHENGLISH
Follow here to learn more about student researchers (featured on the next pages!)
-  @ WRITER TALKS

UNDERGRADUATE RESEARCHERS:

UNIVERSITY HONORS PROJECTS

Winner of the 2023-2024 Friends of Murray Library Student Research Grant!

"MY LAST MILITARY I.D.": AND OTHER STORIES FROM GROWING UP ARMY

Presented: April 24th, 2024

This collection of literary nonfiction essays tells the story of the author's life as a military kid in conversation with Homer, the virtue tradition, fellow students at Messiah University, and her father, a chaplain in the United States Army.



MICAIAH SALDAÑA

SCRAPS, ORTS, AND FRAGMENTS: READING VIRGINIA WOOLF IN THE TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY

Presented: May 2nd, 2024

In this collection of essays, the author combines Virginia Woolf's fiction, essays, and biography with her own literary and life experiences to demonstrate the significance and relevance of Woolf's work – and by extension, literature as a whole – to twenty-first century readers.



COURTNEY KEHLER

UNDERGRADUATE RESEARCHERS:

OFF-CAMPUS ENDEAVORS



J.T. CROCENZI

Presented: April 8-10, 2024

This project suggests that to fully apprehend Mrs. Dalloway, we should weigh equally the often contradictory points of view of its characters.



RE-FRAMING VIRGINIA WOOLF'S

MRS. DALLOWAY

National Conference for Undergraduate Research



HEAVEN ON EARTH:

EMILY DICKINSON'S SENSE OF HOME IN LOVE AND NATURE

Undergraduate Humanities Research Conference



LYCOMING COLLEGE



LAUREN MOCK

Presented: April 6th, 2024

The author argues that Dickinson grounds herself through her profound intimate relationships with other human beings and her deep connection with nature.

ALUMNI SPOTLIGHTS: VOCATION SEMINAR PANELS

Throughout spring semester in the English 380 Vocation Seminar course, Dr. Hasler-Brooks welcomed various alumni to share their journey discovering and discerning their vocational calling. During two panel discussions, students were encouraged to explore the various possibilities of their English major, but also challenged to dive deeper into their own journey of discernment and discovery. Thanks to Tina Lamoreaux, Hannah Desko, Olivia Bardo, Sarah (Becker) Logan, Christiana (Martin) Snyder, and Dr. T. Dallas Saylor for sharing their experience and advice.



Dr. Hasler-Brooks



ALUMNI SPOTLIGHTS

PANEL 1: POST-GRAD WORKFORCE



OLIVIA BARDO ('21)

Social/Multimedia Editor at
Global Sisters Report

Freelance writer



**CHRISTIANA (SNYDER)
MARTIN ('20)**

Editor at Ghost Writer LLC

Freelance writer and editor



TINA LAMEOREUX ('21)

Digital Content Assistant at
Ritter Insurance Marketing

Podcast producer

PANEL 2: GRADUATE SCHOOL EXPERIENCES



HANNAH DESKO ('23)

Graduate student at
Youngstown State University

Graduate Assistant



**SARAH (BECKER)
LOGAN ('20)**

Graduate student at
Carnegie Mellon University

Program analyst



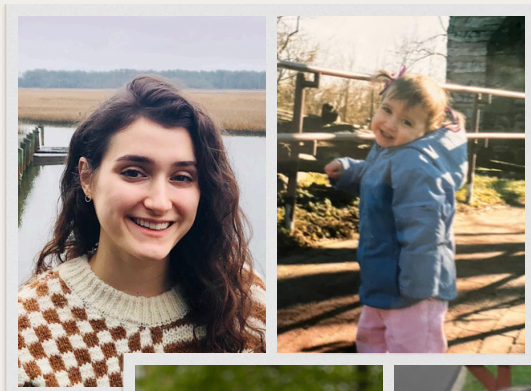
**DR. T. DALLAS SAYLOR
('16)**

PhD from Florida State,
MFA from University of Houston

Poet and teacher

SENIOR SEND OFFS

Honoring a few of our seniors as they look forward to their future by looking back into their pasts!



AUDREY BLUNT

“I’m most excited to start my master’s in Comparative Literature at the University of St. Andrews in the fall. I’ve been studying abroad in France this semester, and I’ve loved the independence and adventure that comes with studying abroad. I can’t wait to keep studying what I love while meeting more people from all over the world coming together over our shared passion for literature!”



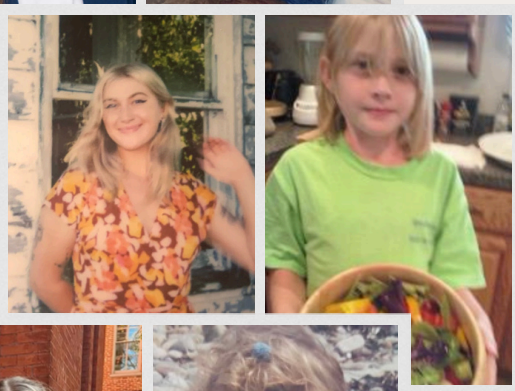
COURTNEY KEHLER

“This summer, I will be doing freelance editing/writing and working as a farmhand/wool mill worker/gardener on a farm that raises sheep and grows specialty flowers. I hope to pursue a full-time career in the publishing industry or academia, and I’m excited to see what God has next for me!”



MICAIAH SALDAÑA

“I’m looking forward to getting married and starting my job as an assistant editor at Classical Academic Press!”



MACKENZIE CHRISTIE

“I am excited to begin work at Baker Event Co. as a communications manager. This role allows me to take all communication and marketing materials in my own hands and run exciting outreach projects. It’s a wedding planning company, so I get to help execute things for the happiest day of people’s lives!”



SERENA MCQUOID

“I’m excited to continue my pursuit of a career in high school English education!”

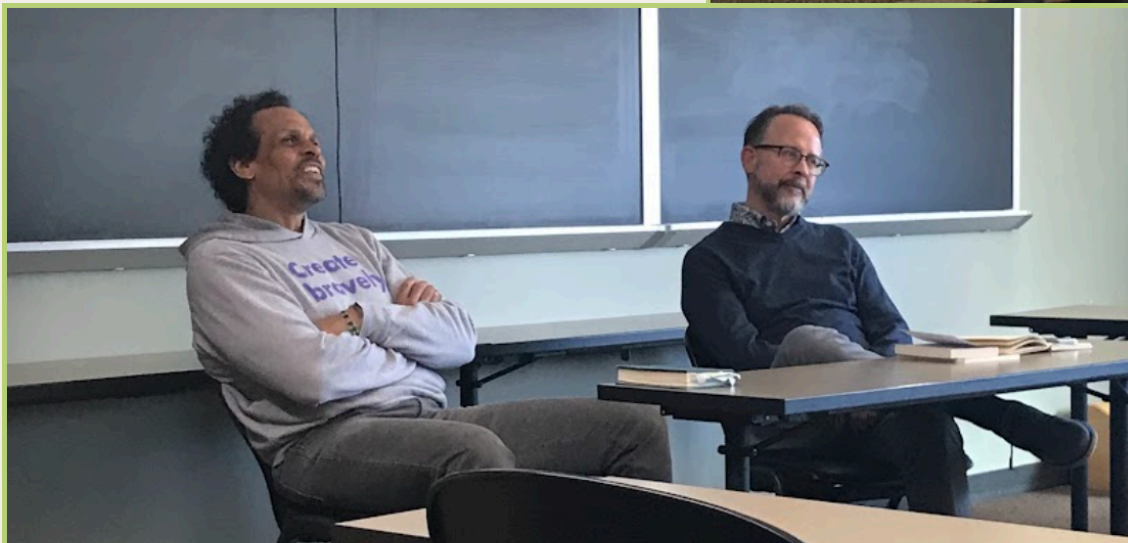
A SPECIAL CONGRATULATIONS TO ALL ADDITIONAL GRADUATING SENIORS:

Micah Turner, Cardamom Hadley, Nathan Hurley, Nik Lego, Christian Maloney, Olivia Martin, Kate Mihalenko, Elizabeth Movinsky, Remy Murray, Alli Swank, and Sydney Zikan.

ROSS GAY

On March 20th at 7pm in Hostetter chapel, Messiah Poets and Writers series had the privilege of welcoming poet and essayist Ross Gay. After meeting with a smaller group of Creative Writing students for a craft conversation and dinner, Gay read selections of poetry and essays to a full house not only of Messiah students and faculty but of excited community members. He shared a journey through poems, ponderings, and delights, as he powerfully and passionately performed his work.

First-year Creative Writing student, Matthew Eason ('27), described Gay's reading as a night of literary fun: "It was enjoyable to hear how an author decides to read and interpret their own work!" For several students Gay's visit was a special display not only of literary craft but of creative mentorship at its highest level. "There have been few experiences in my life," says senior Nathan Hurley ('24), "that so effectively display the power of practicing intentional gratitude than listening to Ross Gay read his beautifully crafted poetry." Evelyn Janssen ('25), a junior Creative Writing student agrees: "Listening to and interacting with Ross Gay felt like being welcomed into a warm, honest, and personal conversation where we could be genuine and explore ideas together." Ross Gay offered a master class in poetry, creativity, generosity, and delight.



*Featured left:
Dr. Matthew
Roth and Ross
Gay during craft
conversations
with students.*

MU ENGLISH MAJOR STARTER PACK

It's never right to stereotype... but we're doing it to ourselves, so it's fine, right?

The collage features several key items:

- Books:** The cover of *Their Eyes Were Watching God* by Zora Neale Hurston (75th Anniversary Edition) and the cover of *The Complete Pelican Shakespeare*.
- Sneakers:** A pair of white Reebok sneakers.
- Coffee:** An iced coffee cup with a straw.
- Logos:** The MU Writing Center logo and the Midtown Scholar Bookstore logo.
- Text:** A paper bag with the text "LOVE YOUR CRAFT" and a quote: "Does Dr. Smith always talk about birds?"
- Decorative Elements:** Scrabble tiles spelling out "TUVWXYZ" and "ABCDEFGHIJKLMNPQRS" around the items.