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Remembering the day

In a yearlong project, senior Emma Melling, editor-in-chief of The Talon newspaper, produced a podcast called "August 2 Stories," which allowed those who experienced the explosion to tell their stories. Here are a few excerpts from those conversations.



• **Mary Kate Fretheim, admin. asst. to the principal:** "That's when the explosion happened. I remember it went slow motion. It was the loudest thing I'd ever heard, and I remember thinking, 'What is that?' and hearing a couple of people scream. The next thing I knew I was on the floor and it was dark."

• **Curt Bjorlin, building supervisor:** "I was knocked out. The blast and all the debris hit the back side of me. I had a pair of shorts on that day, so from my knees down got all cut up pretty badly. I had over 130 cuts on me, all on my backside. My hearing was definitely been affected. I got a concussion... my eyesight was affected a little bit. The whole backside of my body was bruised."



• **Donna Harris, president:** "[That morning my husband] grabbed me and he said 'We are going to kiss goodbye because this might be the last time I see you.' He never says things like that, and I remember getting in my car and feeling a sense of foreboding."

• **Don DuBois, building maintenance staff member:** "I don't really consider myself a hero, and... even now I can feel the emotions coming up. I don't consider myself a hero, it's just a part of the job."

• **Kristin Overton, college and guidance counselor:** "I thought to myself, 'If I would have gone to the bathroom I would have died.' That was a really hard [thought] for me to let go of, because I kept thinking that it wasn't just me, it was our child, our baby."

• **Sam Terfa, technology support employee:** "I heard glass shattering and I allowed myself to think 'I wonder why glass is shattering.' And then the ceiling just started falling in right on top of the offices. Jon yelled 'Get under the table.' He was like an action hero the whole time. I was just trying to get my brain to jump start."


• **Nancy Cripe, science teacher:** "My only ten minutes of school all summer and I was there during the explosion. It reminded me that life is a gift, and to make everyday count."



Ruth Berg

Ruth Berg was a loving and kind staff member who offered a smiling face to all who entered into the school offices. She loved spending time with friends and family. In her memorial service bulletin, "Ruth's Life List" was printed to show all the things she hoped to focus on or accomplish during her life. Some of the things on the list included: gratitude, positive attitude, health, live in the moment, say what you mean, treat yourself, be spontaneous, be dependable and, lastly, do things for others.

This list serves as a reminder of Berg's caring personality and her genuine love for life, God, herself and others. Berg will forever be remembered for her kindness, care for others and beautiful smile.



August 2 Impacts

August 2, 2017, at 10:22 a.m., was a moment that has forever changed the Minnehaha community and the lives of all of its members, whether or not they were in the building when the explosion happened.

According to a preliminary investigation report released by the National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB), which investigates gas explosions, this explosion was caused while two workers from CenterPoint Energy's contractor, Master Mechanical in Eagan, were installing pipes in the boiler room that would support

moving a gas meter from the inside of the building to the outside. The explosion killed staff members John Carlson and Ruth Berg, and injured nine others.

Following the explosion there was a vigil prayer service held in the South Campus chapel, which more than 700 people attended. The pastor of Bethlehem Covenant Church spoke, along with Mark Stromberg and President Donna Harris.


The Cripe family also brought Dilly Bars in honor of John Carson, who would give Dilly Bars to students.

John Carlson

John Carlson was an avid member of the Minnehaha community since he was three years old. He attended high-school at Minnehaha, graduating in 1953. Later in his life, Carlson worked on the school's custodial staff, always offering a smiling face and a friendly hello.

He was also well known throughout the school for handing out Dilly Bars to students. Carlson's loss is one that is felt deeply within the Minnehaha community alongside his family members and loved ones.

On August 4th, seniors gathered on the soccer field to see the wreckage. That evening, one of Carlson's daughters, Beth Morgan, challenged the student body to live in a way similar to her father: "Love each other, love the Lord, and never take another moment for granted."



By Ellen Boehm and Emma Melling, page editors

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