AUGSBURG UNIVERSITY
Monday, November 9, 2026
Volume. CXXX/ Issue. VII

ECHO

HIGH JOURNALISTIC STANDARDS
CENTERING COMMUNITY
POLITICALLY ACTIVE

NEWS
Midterm Election Results

SPORTS
Auggie Eagles Comeback
WNBA and Women's Sports

A&C
Small Ensembles
Review: "Wildwood"

OPINIONS
Augsburg Renovations
Basic Human Decency

FEATURES
"Love Evolving"
Poem: "Texas, my father"

UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA STUDENT FOUND DEAD NEAR ROSEMOUNT META DATA CENTER

Finn Murdock contributor



Photo of City of Rosemount, Minnesota, water tower, taken by Tony Webster on June 20, 2018, sourced from Wikimedia Commons.

On Sept. 23, 23-year-old Fiqremariam Kidus Dereje Zewde left his home in Rosemount, Minnesota, at 3 p.m. to go play soccer at the Burnsville Soccer Center. Later in the day, Zewde was found deceased in a wooded area near his house by the Rosemount Meta Data Center. Upon the Rosemount police department's initial investigation, no foul play was suspected. Zewde was found outside his car with a head injury consistent with a gunshot wound and a gun was discovered at the scene. However, the identification of the owner of the weapon has not been released and Zewde's family asserts that he did not own a gun. Zewde's time of death was reported as 11:31 p.m., but no other information from the autopsy has been made available at this time.

The nature of the injury led the Rosemount police department to believe it was self-inflicted, despite the fact that Zewde's family does not believe that Zewde would have taken his own life. Hawi Awash, Zewde's aunt, stated that her nephew was on track to graduate from the University of Minnesota's construction management program, and that he had been lining up a job for after graduation. Awash spoke with community radio station Power 104.7 and said, "I find it so challenging that someone who has all of that lined

STAFF

Elliot Hilden
Co-Executive Editor

Klaus Solko
Co-Executive Editor

Karis Nye
Layout Editor

Sam Bartelt
Copy Editor

Jessica Tezoquipa
News Editor

Evelyn Perkins
Sports Editor

Avery Cheeseman
Arts & Culture Editor

Pluto Koehnen
Opinions Editor

Teyah Parent
Features Editor

Kaia Anderson
Online Publishing Coordinator

Dhari RisingSun-Doud
MarComm Coordinator

up would do something to harm himself... he was in the best shape of his life, so all of this makes it just more worrisome."

> ***"I find it so challenging that someone who has all of that lined up would do something to harm himself...he was in the best shape of his life, so all of this makes it just more worrisome."***
>
> *- Hawi Awash*

Awash also voiced concerns about the potential lack of thoroughness in the investigation due to potential issues related to the handling of evidence in the case. One such concern arose after Zewde's car was swiftly returned to the family and not taken in by police officials. Rosemount police claim that their search of the car and premises was completed the night that Zewde's body was found. There are also questions about the lack of indication from Rosemount police that they have secured or reviewed any footage from the area. The presence of the Rosemount Meta Data Center makes the location a high surveillance area, so there is a reasonable assumption that there would be some security camera footage available to help determine what happened.

While the Rosemount police department has not yet concluded their investigation, they have not released any further statements that contradict their initial findings. Zewde's family has created a GoFundMe to raise funds for a more comprehensive examination of the uncertain circumstances surrounding Zewde's untimely passing. An updated description on the GoFundMe page states, "While we still don't have any answers as to what exactly happened to our beloved son, brother, nephew, and friend, we are working with community leaders and experts to encourage an investigation with integrity that honors the life of Kidus."

UPCOMING EVENTS

-Celebrating First Gen Week with AISA & QIPOC

East Commons, Nov. 9 at 4:30 p.m.

-Physician Assistant Panel

Hagfors 150A, Nov. 9 at 5:30 p.m.

-10 Prohibitions of the Tongue by Sheikh Adam Al Maghribi

Sateren Auditorium (Anderson Music Hall), Nov. 10 at 4:00 p.m.

-Job Interviewing Tips and Tricks for First Gen Week

Auggie's Nest, Nov. 10 at 6:00 p.m.

-First Gen Finance with Bank of America

Science Hall 123, Nov. 11 at 12:00 p.m.

-Break Up With Big Tech

Lindell Library, First Floor, Nov. 11 at 12:00 p.m.

-AASA 4th General Gathering: First Generation Celebration

Hagfors 150BC, Nov. 11 at 12:00 p.m.

-MCAT info session

Hagfors 150A, Nov. 11 at 12:00 p.m.

-Book Club fourth meeting

Cedar Room, Nov. 11 at 5:00 p.m.

-Echo General Meeting - You Should 'Nov'er Miss a Meeting

Echo Office (Auggie's Nest), Nov. 12 at 11:50 a.m.

-First Gen Connect

Strommen Center, Christensen 100, Nov. 12 at 11:00 a.m.

-ASAO: Meet the Employers

Hagfors Center 150BC, Nov. 12 at 3:00 p.m.

-Jerk Chicken Alfredo Food Lab

Augsburg University Hagfors Center, Room 108, Nov. 12 at 4:00 p.m.

-Rooted Together: Faculty and Staff Roles in First-Gen Retention and Persistence

Augsburg Room, Christensen Center, Nov. 13 at 12:00 p.m.

-Estimathon

Hagfors 152, Nov. 13 at 3:30 p.m.

-AISA Ribbon Workshop Part 1

Oyate Commons, Nov. 13 at 4:00 p.m.

-AISA Ribbon Workshop Part 2

Oyate Commons, Nov. 14 at 11:00 a.m.

SPORTING EVENTS

-Men's Basketball vs. Marian

Si Melby Hall, Nov. 11 at 7:00 p.m.

Blue Wave Rolls Across America in General Election

Jessica Tezoquipa news editor

On Nov. 3, election night, Americans saw Democrats win both the House and Senate along with races in states that have not seen a Democrat elected in decades. We see the nation overall lean more blue than it did two years ago, with the Republican party (GOP) blaming rising prices, the Epstein Files and the war in Iran for the disappointment.

This midterm election has seen a lot of firsts: Minnesota's governor-elect Amy Klobuchar is the state's first woman elected governor; she was also the first woman elected Hennepin County attorney in 1998 and the first Minnesotan female senator in 2006, according to the Minnesota Reformer. She has promised to audit the state government once she is in office as a result of the mass Social Security fraud in Minnesota, as well as stating she will not raise taxes on Minnesotans. "Spoiler alert: You may not like every single thing I do," stated Klobuchar in her victory speech.

Another first for Minnesota, Penny Flanagan is the nation's first Native American female senator, as she is a part of the White Earth Nation in Minnesota. According to MPR, she has promised to expand Medicare for all, raise the minimum wage from $7.25 to $17 an hour, protect abortions nationwide and to "rip ICE apart."

Not just in Minnesota, places like Texas see James Talarico beat President Trump's nominee for U.S. Senate, being the first democrat to represent Texas since 1988; Kansas has Democrat Adam Hamilton defeating the republican incumbent to be the first Democrat in the Senate since 1932, according to Ballotpedia.org. Representative Chris Pappas from New Hampshire becomes the first openly gay senator in the United States Senate. According to The Guardian, Keisha Lance Bottom, Governor-elect, becomes the first black woman to be Governor in American history, and Abdul El-Sayed from Michigan becomes the first Muslim to be elected to the United States Senate, according to Ballotpedia.org.



Photo of Amy Klobuchar speaking with attendees at the Moving America Forward Forum at the University of Nevada, taken by Gage Skidmore on February 16, 2020, sourced from Wikimedia Commons

Although in previous years we have seen the president's party lose out during midterm elections, republicans still walked away from election night surprised by the results. "To every American disappointed by tonight's results, I mean I'm disappointed too but never discouraged, because we live in the greatest nation in the world. Millions of Americans voted because they love their country," says Mike Johnson, Speaker of the House of Representatives. "They're alarmed by the direction that Democrats are taking, their embrace of this socialist, Marxist platform that is a threat to people everywhere." "But the real reason we lost is obvious to almost everyone." Vice Pres. J.D. Vance details in a post on X (Twitter). "He asked those voters who had abandoned us what would cause them to come back on our team. The top four answers, accounting for nearly all of the responses, were: 1. End the war; 2. Focus on cost of living/inflation 3. Put America First 4. Change our relationship to Israel."

"They're alarmed by the direction that Democrats are taking, their embrace of this socialist, Marxist platform that is a threat to people everywhere."

- Mike Johnson

Augsburg Eagles Lock In and Show Out With New Leadership

Evelyn Perkins sports editor

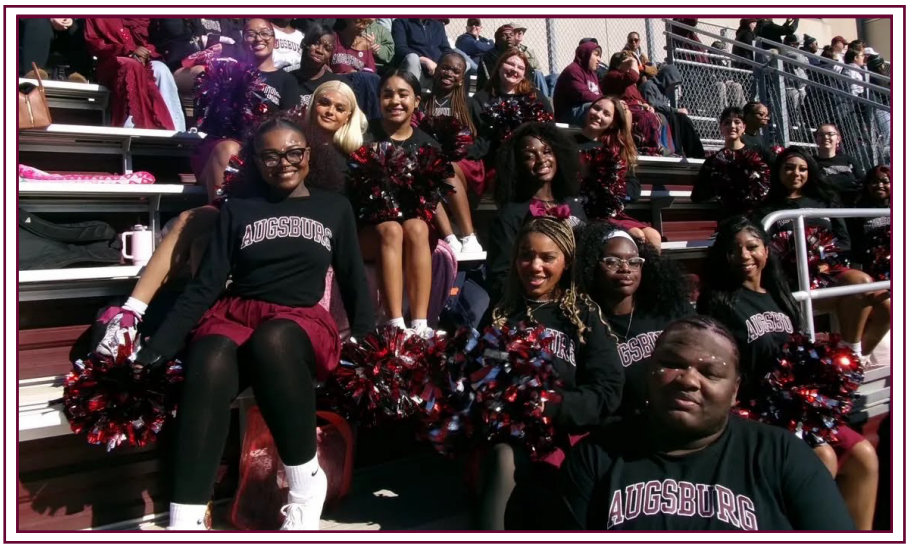


Photo of Dance Team at Augsburg Homecoming game, taken by Elayna Xiong on Oct. 17

From 2009—2015, Augsburg had a competitive cheer and dance team. After 2015, the team disbanded. In spring 2023, Augsburg alum Limakatso Ramokeona '26 and Maya Miller '26 founded the Augsburg Eagles, beginning a new era for Augsburg cheer and dance. The team continued to grow until the 2025-26 school year, when Miller and Ramokeona stepped down from the board. The following season brought significant internal and external challenges, which heavily affected the team's ability to perform at events. This year, the team is back and better than ever under the leadership of President William Hildebran, Vice President Akeelah Fussell, Secretary Alyssa Grayson and Head of Social Media Elayna Xiong.

The Eagles made their season debut at the homecoming football game on Oct. 17. Throughout the game, the Eagles were on the bleachers, energizing the crowd and cheering on the team with various chants. At halftime, the team performed a dance routine. Since their Oct. 17 debut, the dance team has attended several Augsburg athletics contests, bringing support, energy and enthusiasm to Augsburg sports teams.

I spoke with Vice President Fussell and Secretary Grayson to discuss the season so far. When asked about the biggest difference between this year and last, Fussell said, "Community. There's an actual team. Last year, we had issues with attendance and camaraderie, so it felt like people started dropping like flies." Grayson added that she enjoys performing as well. "We're also actually performing this year, not just on the bleachers."

Their practice schedule is rigorous. The Eagles meet three days a week and practice from 6 to 9 p.m. each day. Once a week, they bring in another student, Savayah Woodard, who helps the team work on conditioning. Woodard, who joined the interview, discussed the importance of her role. "I come in once a week and work on exercises, especially ones that help strengthen the core. Usually, we do circuits of five or six exercises each time I come in." Fussell said the added conditioning "makes the team much more serious." When asked about the role of board members, Grayson talked about the extra time they put in. "Board members stay after and talk about how practices are going, how we could be better as a board, what performances we want to do and things like that."

Throughout the conversation, it was clear that all three women felt immense pride in their team. That became even more apparent when asked what they love most about the Eagles. Grayson answered immediately: "We treat it as a sisterhood. We want people to join, feel comfortable and feel accepted for exactly who they are."

> ***"We treat it as a sisterhood. We want people to join, feel comfortable and feel accepted for exactly who they are."***
>
> *- Alyssa Grayson*

During the winter, the Augsburg Eagles can be found at basketball games, in the stands and performing at halftime. Asked what she wanted to tell Augsburg students, Grayson said, "Please join! We want people to join and follow our social media. We love having members!" The team can be found @augsburgeagles on Instagram and @augsburg.eagles on TikTok.

Fans Outraged After WNBA Slights Atlanta Dream

Kaia Anderson online publishing coordinator

On Oct. 31, the Women's National Basketball Association (WNBA) held Game 7 of the championship series between the Atlanta Dream and the Golden State Valkyries. The night ended with the Valkyries beating the Dream by five points. It was the Valkyries' second season in the league after joining in the 2025 expansion. The Valkyries entered the playoffs ranked No. 2. This was the organization's first WNBA championship and such success in a new franchise is unprecedented. Valkyries star Gabby Williams was named WNBA Finals MVP after scoring 30 points in Game 7, leading her team to victory.



Photo of men's hockey team at Cedar Fest, taken by Tyler Veen on Sept. 13

However, throughout the Finals series, the Atlanta Dream faced many challenges finding an appropriate venue to play in. During the regular season, the Dream play at Gateway Center Arena at College Park Georgia, which seats only 3,500. To accommodate ticket demand, the Dream moved their Finals games to State Farm Arena, home of the NBA's Atlanta Hawks, which seats 17,000. Game 6 of the WNBA Finals was originally set for 8 p.m. EST on Oct. 29, a prime-time slot. However, due to an NBA Hawks game rescheduled for the same time, the Atlanta-Golden State game was moved to 12:30 p.m. EST.

The Hawks took priority over the Dream because State Farm Arena is the Hawks' home. The only options were to move the Finals to Gateway Center with fewer seats or reschedule the game to midday Thursday to maintain full capacity. Officials chose the latter. Moving the Finals game to accommodate the men's team felt like a slight to the Atlanta Dream and WNBA fans. Interest in the WNBA is strong and growing. About 42,000 people were in the online queue for tickets to Game 3 of the Finals—25,000 more than State Farm Arena's capacity. Demand was high, as was fan morale.

After the announcement, fans voiced outrage on social media. Coach Jackie, a women's sports content creator, made several posts about the situation. Her first video addressed the WNBA and NBA commissioners who decided to move the game. In her video, she said: "Nothing is more embarrassing than this [...] I need you to understand when people say 'no one watches women's sports' [...] Is it because no one watches women's sports, or is it because Game 6 of the WNBA Finals is 12:30 on a Thursday? You make it so hard for these women to be successful. You make it so hard for fans to enjoy the product. You make it so hard for yourself to profit off the good thing you have."

Although moving Game 6 to 12:30 p.m. was not the outcome fans or players wanted, the community rallied to support Atlanta. Sports bars opened early to accommodate fans and State Farm Arena sold out, showing the resilience, love and pride that remain strong in the WNBA.

> ***"You make it so hard for these women to be successful. You make it so hard for fans to enjoy the product. You make it so hard for yourself to profit off the good thing you have."***
>
> *- Coach Jackie*

Small Ensembles Made a Big Impact on Concert Goers

Lennon Krueger contributor



Photo of Nick Flugstad, Finn Murdock, and Liv Perry's performance, taken by Lennon Krueger on Nov. 2

This past Monday, Nov. 2, the Augsburg small ensemble took place, featuring bands of varying size and instrumentation. The opening was a Balkan Folk Music ensemble, consisting of Patrice Downs on violin, Korey Groshel on guitar, Eddie Hollahan on electric bass, Alicia Perez Rivera on piano, Red Sainsbury on vocals, Emma Stanley on flute and the faculty coach Nickolai Kolarov playing the cello. The second group was a duet between Cody Owen on acoustic guitar and Adrian Hobbs singing, with Andrew McCullough as their faculty coach. Third was a duet by Azariah Myart-Young on violin and Nick Berg on piano, coached by faculty member Ann Ainomae. Lastly was a guitar trio, Nick Flugstad, Finn Murdock and Liv Perry, who also sang; this group was coached by Michael Krajewski.

The Balkan combo started the show with a Serbian traditional song, "Ajde Jano," sung by Red. Following was a Bulgarian traditional song, "Pajdushko," which had no singing and lastly they performed "Jovano Jovanke," which is a Macedonian traditional song. Each song was introduced with a short clicking/tapping done by Kolarov to set the tempo and introduce the rhythm, which was important, as he told the audience before the performance, "Tonight we will only play irregular rhythms." Stanley said that the music was hard to get used to playing, "It took us a minute to fit together, but when we did it was really cool." In their last song, "Jovano, Javanke," Hollahan had a solo on bass that was phenomenal, carrying the audience through the bridge into the last phrase of their last song.

I talked to Owen about the creation of the groups, where the Balkan group was open and the rest of the groups were about finding a partner and picking your own songs. In Hobbs and Owen's duet, the audience was treated to a calming and soothing, soft wave of music. They performed "Nacht Und Träume" by Franz Schubert. Following this was a song in an opera-like style, "Music For a While" by Henry Purcell and then ended it with a melancholy love song, "Harvest Moon" by Neil Young. These songs all had a very relaxing feel and a great performance from Hobbs and Owen.

Third was Myart-Young and Berg's performance of "Saigetsu/ Blue Moon" by TAMUSIC. This piece really showed a dual focus. Less like an accompaniment, the melody was passed between the two while the other would pass off the harmony. It ebbed and flowed throughout its duration, showing many different emotions and containing returning motives to help the listener have a sense of place in the music, not feeling lost in the extended piece of music through its many parts.

Lastly was Perry, Flugstad and Murdock's ensemble, featuring two originals by Perry: "Jenny" and "Backwards Forwards." Starting with "Backwards Forwards," the audience was immediately thrust into an alt-rock to punk style while Perry sang and the guitars all came to life with her. As the songs went on, Perry's talent really had the opportunity to shine through. Second and ending the concert they played "Jenny," containing a keyboard making chords with the pipe organ setting.

All in all, it was a great concert and you should come out to the next one in the spring!

Review: LAIKA's Ambition Explodes Into Creative Spectacle "Wildwood"

Emerson Pieper staff writer

There is something undeniably magical about a LAIKA film. Every film is carefully considered. Every character carries a little piece of the people who brought them to life and "Wildwood" is perhaps the studio's most ambitious demonstration of that yet. As the longest stop-motion animated film ever made, it is a technical achievement in its own right.

From its opening moments, "Wildwood" established an atmosphere that was something to fall in love with. The visual language was absolutely stunning as it blended immense world-building with visceral storytelling. There is an almost timeless quality to its set, yet an awareness that every moment, every shot and every carefully constructed detail is finite. Nothing in this film feels effortless and that is part of its beauty.

LAIKA has always had a particular talent for making their films feel magical and "Wildwood" continues that tradition on an elevated level. The film's voice acting deserves just as much recognition and love; the performances are phenomenal and carry heavy emotional weight that makes even the quieter moments feel just as alive. There is so much feeling in every word and the cast brings an impressive amount of humanity to a fantastical world.

Unfortunately, I think that the film's greatest strength, its ambition, is also where some of its weaknesses begin to show. The plot moves in sporadic bursts, jumping between developments without always giving audiences enough time to understand the significance of it. I know that this film is based on a novel and certain details may carry more weight for readers familiar with the source material; the cinematic experience should still be able to feel complete on its own. At times, the world-building feels a little like an exposition dump, with major pieces of information delivered simply to move the story toward its final act.



Photo of Pittock Mansion, which inspired the mansion featured in "Wildwood," taken by user ProfReader on May 1, sourced from Wikimedia Commons

The characters themselves suffer somewhat from this uneven pacing. Despite the emotional potential of the story, the central characters do not always receive the same development or narrative weight needed to make their journeys feel as significant as the film seems to intend. The second half of the second act in particular loses some of its momentum, leaving the transition into the final confrontation feeling less impactful than it could have been.

Even the climactic battle itself, despite its amazing scale, left me wanting something more. After spending so much time establishing a world steeped in magic and strange possibilities, I expected the confrontation to be a little more. One line, delivered by Alexandra, captures the intensity that I wish the battle had sustained more consistently: "I will tear apart this forest to take back what it took from me." It is a declaration full of grief, anger and desperation and the battle that happened just did not give off that same emotion.

Still, I do not want my criticisms to overshadow how much I genuinely enjoyed this film. There is an incredible amount of love behind "Wildwood," and that love is visible in every frame. LAIKA has once again demonstrated why its film occupies such a special place in animation. The studio continues to push the boundaries of what stop-motion filmmaking can accomplish and "Wildwood" feels like a testament to the thousands of hours, creative decisions and individual acts of craftsmanship that make something like this possible.

Augsburg Needs to Focus Their Funds on Functional Facilities

Micah George contributor

Augsburg University has recently hosted a gala fundraising event, making a ton of money. I think there are a bunch of things that we could use that money for around campus to make the campus better.

For starters, we should try and renovate the Science Hall. We should upgrade the classrooms, replace all the air conditioners and buy better desks and chairs as well.

Another thing we should do is to give Campus Cupboard its own space. Right now, the Campus Cupboard is located in the Anderson Residence Hall's basement right next to dumpsters. And it would be generous if we give them their own building to provide their service. Not to mention, it is a very cramped space with no room to move around if there are more than five students inside. Giving Campus Cupboard its own space will not only provide more room for the students and staff, but it will also be good for the campus as well.

Another good use would be to fix up the residence halls. For Urness and Mortensen Halls, we should use the money to fix or replace the elevators, because some students who are dorming in those buildings report that the elevators keep malfunctioning. For Anderson Hall, it could stand to be renovated as well. Potentially new elevators, upgrade the study area and even fix up some of the dorms and apartments like adding better desks in each room. As for Luther Hall, it mostly just would need the lounge and laundry to be renovated. We should add in more laundry machines so students wouldn't have to wait for a long time to do their laundry. As for the lounge, we should replace the old desk and chairs in there with new ones.

Another good thing we could do is upgrade the Christensen Center. Or at least the lower level. Basically, putting in new chairs and computers in the Auggie's nest. Also, fix up a small hallway that connects the Christensen Center to the Old Main building.

Speaking of Old Main, another good use of funding would be to renovate it. The Old Main building is the oldest building on the whole campus, having been built in 1901. So it is undeniable that it could use fixing and renovations. The elevator breaks down often and sometimes gets stuck on the first floor of the building. More water fountains should be installed on the first and second floors, as that there is only one on the basement level. Lastly, we should get new desks for some of the classrooms, as some are old.

One last thing we should do and the most important is to get some new equipment for the gym and Music Hall. Recently it was noticed that some of the instruments in the music room are old, as is some of the sports equipment. We should replace the old ones with new ones for the students and sports teams. So, it is believed that all these renovations will definitely help our campus become a better place for students overall.

"The Old Main building is the oldest building on the whole campus, having been built in 1901. So it is undeniable that it could use fixing and renovations. The elevator breaks down often and sometimes gets stuck on the first floor of the building."

- Micah George

GOT A BURNING QUESTION? ASK THE EDITORS!

Basic Human Decency Isn't Hard, Stop Being Rude

Pluto Koehnen opinions editor

In fourth grade, my teacher cleverly introduced manners and respect as a game. He would challenge our class to create a chain of "thanks" when a paper was distributed, rewarded the student who could pick up the most scraps and enforced a circle of compliments into our mornings. I attribute my now habitual manners to said games. However, college has pushed me to realize that respect and decency are not as common as I once believed.

I try to take all actions with a grain of salt. Depression, work, stress and upbringings all contribute to a person's hygiene and awareness. However, when a person or group of people continuously disrespect others, their space and themselves I lose empathy. And as of recently, I've found myself in spaces and positions where people don't seem to be reflecting on how their actions affect others.

For example: interacting with customer service workers. As someone who has not only been a customer, but also an employee, it shocks me how many people jump straight into their orders without a simple "hello." I'm a manager at Caribou Coffee– I understand that all shifts come with good and bad customers– but more often than not, the customers who spoil my mood are the ones that treat me like a kiosk. I don't expect them to tip or ask about my day, but a small smile and "thank you" makes or breaks the interaction. This applies to any service worker. At Augsburg, I see students ordering without a "please" or "thank you," especially at Einsteins. I've seen students take advantage of the workers' kindness by stealing drinks, chips or other students' orders. It's nothing but careless.

"At Augsburg, I see students ordering without a "please" or "thank you," especially at Einsteins. I've seen students take advantage of the workers' kindness by stealing drinks, chips or other students' orders. It's nothing but careless."

- Pluto Koehnen

The lack of respect to shared spaces also shocks me. Such as the Student Lounge in Christensen Center. The chairs are broken or spilled on, trash lays on the tables and dishes from the Dining Commons seem to be commonplace. It would be one thing if these behaviors were seen in a dorm or a personal space. However, the Student Lounge is one of the more popular rooms at Augsburg University–as it offers pool, furniture and a television– and therefore, in my opinion, should be cared for tenfold.

I've seen similar issues in shared bathrooms– Urness specifically– in which residents expect the Janitors or Community Advisors to clean for them. However, Community Advisors are students with their own work loads, and Janitors are only expected every now and then. If someone creates a mess, it should be normalized that they clean up after themselves. Simply cleaning up after oneself should be common practice, especially as college students who are adults.

Despite my concerns, I do see benevolence in my day-to-day life. One of my favorite aspects of the Augsburg community is how open students and staff are. Small smiles and waves on the way to class, invitations to events and small-talk in the Nabo line can flip my attitude immediately. The time I've spent on other, larger campuses–like the University Of Minnesota and Arizona State University– felt isolating and cliquey. People I had met before kept their heads down, strangers would bump into each other and not even glance. My friends from said campuses agree, describing fellow peers as passive aggressive, standoffish and laconic.

I'm not one to be "holier-than-thou" but I truly don't think greeting someone and appreciating their work is above basic human decency. In today's world, we need more kindness and compassion. Actions don't need to be monumental, a small smile or helping hand does go a long way.

A Love for Art Brings Community Together to Support "Love Evolving"

Klaus Solko co-executive editor



Photo of option 4 for "Tell Me a Story," taken by Bill Cameron

The Karen L. Charles Threads Dance Project is celebrating its 15th anniversary this year. They have thrown many events throughout the year to celebrate this milestone anniversary, such as a gala in April and a community dance party in August. Now, this Nov. 13–15, they will be throwing their last celebration event, the Threads 15th Anniversary Shows, otherwise titled "Love Evolving."

According to the Threads website, since the project was founded in 2011, its goal has been to elevate love through the narratives told in their dances and a dedication to "further progress towards a more loving, just and equitable society."

The show "Love Evolving" is a collection of stories that Karen Charles found most personal to her experience as a Black woman in America and also universal stories about loss, joy and identity.

The show will also be debuting a new piece, "Tell Me A Story." The piece was created through an artist collaboration project. Community members were invited to write a short story or poem inspired by four out-of-context photos provided by the dance studio. All submissions were then judged by a panel and two were selected.

Both selected pieces were written by Augsburg alumni/students— Dylan Larson and myself, Klaus Solko, respectively. Larson graduated from Augsburg in 2026 with a major in English; she is a writer and musician who, in August, released "The New Postage Stamp Collection" extended play (EP).

I, Klaus Solko, am one of the current Executive Editors of the Augsburg Echo. I am a major in Clinical Psychology and Sociology.

I found out about the "Tell Me A Story" project through A-Mail while I was working over the summer. I thought it sounded like an interesting opportunity but didn't have any thought that I could win.

The piece I wrote, titled "Star Flowers," was a piece inspired by the photo shown above but also what was going on for me at the time. At the end of the 2025-2026 school year, I realized that the career path I had been working towards was not for me anymore. This realization, combined with some other things, really freaked me out, and I was really struggling with accepting my own change and growth.

"Star Flowers" is about the same thing. It is about grappling with the world around you changing and a loss of what you used to follow. It is also about acceptance and the duality of scary and beautiful that growth is. Using poetic verse to describe how starflowers came to be from sunflowers.

Getting to collaborate with Threads has been a truly amazing experience. Their entire team is so kind. Getting to watch my work come alive through their dancers was so beautiful, and I can't wait to see the show this weekend.

The show is taking place at the Luminary Arts Center, with shows on the 13th and 14th starting at 7 p.m., and a show on the 15th starting at 2 p.m. The show on the 13th will be ASL interpreted. Tickets for students are 22 dollars.

However, the show on the 14th is their FlexPay performance, with tickets being 5 dollars minimum. The show on the 14th will also host a post-show discussion.

Poem: “Texas, my father”

Rory Winton contributor

My hot, southern state would rather I not come home to it anymore, but I dream anyway.

Of the bluebonnet patch in the parking lot of my old church,

of the sweat that dripped down my nose in the summers,

of my grandmother’s dying farm, overwhelmed by katydids.

I delight in the snow of Northern winters,

and still curse the sharp ice under my boots.

My state would not have tripped my feet and broken my trust how the ice does now.

God, I dream.

Of sinking into the sweaty leather seats of my uncle’s Jeep,

whipping around the bends of unpaved roads, gravel flying into the windshield.

I didn’t ever fear he would be rejected, sent off-road.

An owl once escorted me out of my father’s graveyard.

I had only been there twice,

and I don’t remember where he is.

Somewhere deep in the dead yellow grass.

It was waiting for us in the middle of the road.

A foreboding, beautiful thing.

Sitting, perched on the stones like she knew I was coming.

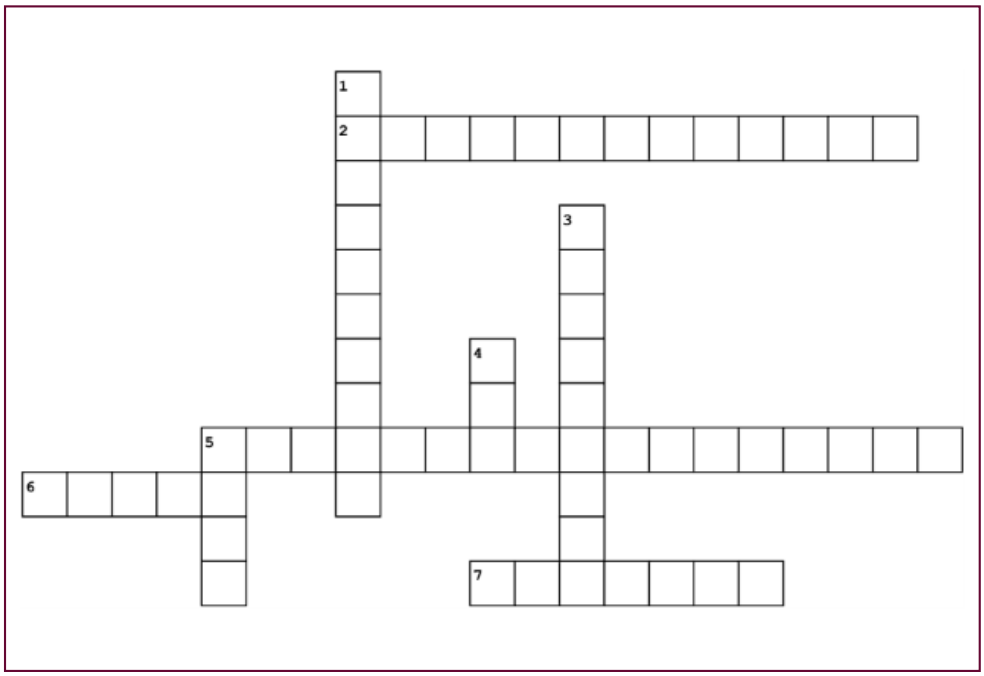
It was forgiving me, for not taking the time to think

of getting eaten alive by mosquitoes in June, twenty bites on each leg.

Of the stench of the sulfur powder on my ankles to ward away the chigger bugs.

Of dead yellow grass, growing in the seams of the sidewalks, everywhere I go.

Presidents Crossword



Across

2. His face is on the $20 bill, full name
5. The Teddy Bear is named after him, full name
6. First black president, last name
7. Tall top hat, big beard, last name

Down

1. First president's last name
3. Died penniless, his face is on the $2 bill, last name
4. The longest presidency, known for the New Deal and Fireside Chats, initials
5. Allegedly got stuck in the tub, last name

Last Week's Answers:

1. Elm Street
2. Exorcist
3. Saw
4. Friday The 13th
5. The Shinning
6. The Sixth Sense
7. Scream
8. The Ring

ATTENTION ALL CROSSWORD LOVERS!

Do you want to win a Polaroid Camera just for solving the crossword puzzles you know and love? Then you would love our Crossword Contest!

To enter, email echo@augsburg.edu with your completed crossword! Each completed crossword puzzle is worth one entry. All entries are due before the distribution of the next issue. The more you solve, the better your chance to win!

GET PAID FOR WRITING!

Contributors & Artist Spotlights: $15 / article

Opinions expressed in The Echo are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect those of staff, adminstration, faculty or the remainder of student body. Submissions can be sent to echo@augsburg.edu, which should be between 450-600 words and accompanied by writer's name and information.

All submissions are property of The Echo and subject to revision.