

60 FOR 60

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over the years. Mike's job as an IT project manager brought them to Saudi Arabia, to Denmark, to California, to Fargo and Minneapolis and multiple other homes. It was 2006 when they moved to Alexandria. To remember all those moves, Anita arranged for him to help her dad move to a new apartment.

"Thank you Mike," she tells him online.

Day 5: Anita and Mike do adult foster care in their Alexandria home. When they leave town, they line up a skilled caregiver to step in for them. In the morning, Anita tells Mike to get ready. They're going to a Lynyrd Skynyrd concert at the Xcel Energy Center in St. Paul.

Mike is shocked. As a musician who performs locally, he's been playing Skynyrd songs for years but has never been to one of their concerts.

The days click by. Mike gets a DQ treat, homemade soup, the day off to do whatever he wants, a new hairstyle with blonde highlights. "Like I'm in a boy band," he jokes.

Day 13 delivers a whopper: the TV of Mike's dreams, a 70-inch high definition 4K television.

The next day Anita makes Mike a pan of homemade lasagna. This is something of a stunner since Mike does most of the cooking.

Day 15: To thank Mike

for all the times he's created wonderful bath experiences for her, Anita turns the tables, bringing together Epsom salts, candles and beer on ice for his own soaker.

The days that follow are filled with dinners, outings with friends and family, a hike up Inspiration Peak. One day, to commemorate the many times Anita shoveled the walks while Mike was out of town for work, she gave him about a half dozen pairs of gloves, some of which were perfect for – you guessed it – shoveling.

"Some of them are emotional and some of them are funny," she says.

One gift intended to be funny really wasn't: An expensive eye cream. Mike had eye surgery to correct droopy eyelids. Afterward, the last thing he wanted was to dab eye cream on his sore, swollen eyes.

Day 21: A Nut Goodie and a peanut butter cup.

As a kid, Mike would spend his allowance at the nearby corner store, getting himself a 5-cent peanut butter cup. His mom would give him a dime to buy her a 10-cent Nut Goodie, her favorite candy. "The good stuff," she called it. Anita never met Mike's mom, who died when Mike was 19. She didn't meet Mike until he was 26.

Day 25: A white Pyrex cup with a decorative scroll around the top.

Mike's go-to cup for years disappeared during one of their many moves. Anita scoured antique shops and thrift stores



Contributed

Anita Garner searched antique stores and thrift shops to replace Mike's beloved mug, which had been lost in a move. She gave it to him for Day 25 of her 60-day tribute.

around Alexandria and Sauk Centre before finally finding its exact match online.

Day 27: A set of seven books arrives for Mike. They are classics and include stories of Sherlock Holmes, one of his all-time favorite reads.

Day 29: Amazon delivers a Donny Osmond record. Back when Anita and Mike were dating, he and a buddy would teasingly sing "Puppy Love" for her. She was a big Donny Osmond fan.

Day 30: Thanks to Facebook, the world now knows that Mike is not great about removing guitar picks from his pockets. Anita returns 73 that she has collected over the years from the wash.

Day 31: Halloween. Anita and Mike don hot dog vendor costumes she made and head downtown to hand out candy on Broadway. Mike has never

done much volunteering, but discovers he loves it and wants to do more.

A couple weeks later, they show up at the Echo Press, bringing items for the newspaper's Mitten Tree. All items will go to people who need mittens, hats and scarves. An astute employee hurries back to alert the news team.

Anita and Mike are into a fitness program

called CrossFit. On Day 37, a pair of matching Nobull training shoes arrive, one for him and one for her. She snaps a photo of Mike kissing his pair. Nine days later, she arranges an hour-and-a-half personal training session for him with a weight training coach. For nearly the whole time, they worked on techniques that will help Mike lift more weight. That, he says, was one his favorite gifts.

"For an old man like me," he says, "you have to be careful."

The spoiling doesn't stop. Mike spends a weekend in Connecticut with their youngest daughter, Anna, and their grandson. It's a few days of yoga, beer and shopping.

Anita gets Mike's Jeep detailed. She gives him warm winter boots. He gets a 3,000-piece jigsaw puzzle of Amsterdam, where work frequently took them. Anita and their grandson, Jayden, make him mini-pies to honor the ones Mike used to make with his grandmother. Neighbors

bring over a cake. Anita gets his piano professionally tuned, the first time in 25 years. He goes shooting with his sons.

Day 56: Mike receives a Vikings football jersey with Garner and the number 60 on the back. He knows what's ahead, because Anita told him the day before. They're heading to the Vikings-Packers game, where she has gotten them awesome seats at U.S. Bank Stadium.

She's told him because the constant surprises were "getting a little too much," she concedes. Never knowing what the day would hold was proving somewhat stressful for him. In fact, she has spilled the beans on everything else she has planned.

Now they get to see the Vikings defeat the Packers 24-17. It was, they agree, a "fantastic experience."

Day 60: Thursday is Mike's 60th birthday. They'll meet friends for a mutual birthday. And the bar is officially raised for every other spouse in the area.

POWERS

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count one to count two, which is a lesser charge. While in court, he pleaded guilty to the amended charge and also the charge of kidnapping.

Powers, 21, of Mankato, is expected to be sentenced to 104 months (about eight and a half years) in prison.

"I feel so much better now that all three have pleaded guilty," said Sarah Block, Jasmine's mother. "This has dragged on too long. And of course I would like to see all of them spend their whole lives in prison, but it's not up to me."

Powers takes the stand

Powers, who was represented by public defenders Carter Greiner and Holly Danielson, was called to the stand by Judge Timothy Churchwell and questioned by Greiner.

Powers said that he understood the charges, and when he was asked how he pleaded to both charges, his reply to both was, "I plead guilty."

Powers was also asked if he understood he was giving up all rights, including rights to a trial and any appeal rights, and he replied that he understood and that he was indeed guilty of the charges against him.

During questioning, Powers said he found the juvenile girl locked in a closet at the home of Thomas Barker, one of the other men charged in the case. When asked if he had had sexual relations with the minor child, Powers said he had.

Powers was asked about how the men transported the girl from Barker's home in Carlos to a home in Grant County. He explained that Barker told her to get in a duffel bag and that after she did, Powers zipped the bag shut.

One of the other men charged in the case, Joshua Holby, carried the bag, with the girl stuffed inside, outside and put her in the back of a truck. Powers then said he drove to the house in Grant County.

Greiner asked Powers if he had consent from the girl or the girl's parents, to which he replied, "No."

Churchwell said he had sufficient enough information and formally accepted the guilty plea from Powers.

Powers' sentencing hearing was set for Wednesday, Jan. 16, at 1:30 p.m.

The other two men

In July, Thomas Barker, 33, of Carlos, pleaded guilty to kidnapping, criminal sexual conduct in the first degree with a dangerous weapon and criminal sexual conduct in the first degree causing fear of great bodily harm. All are felony-level charges.

Under the terms of an agreement between the prosecution and Barker's attorney, Barker is expected to be sentenced to 25 years in prison. His sentencing hearing is set for Friday, Nov. 30 at 9 a.m.

Joshua Holby, 32, of Carlos, pleaded guilty in September to two counts of kidnapping, which is a felony-level offense. Under the guidelines and because he has no prior criminal record, Holby is expected to be sentenced to 86 months (roughly seven years) in prison. His sentencing hearing is set for Tuesday, Jan. 8, at 1:30 p.m.

Victim impact statements will be read by Block's family at all three sentencing hearings.

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