

VARIETY



JEFF WHEELER • jeff.wheeler@startribune.com

Stephanie Glaros runs the Humans of Minneapolis blog, which is modeled after Humans of New York, but with a "social justice bent."

Telling Minnesotans' stories, one photo at a time

Photographer puts a local twist on the popular portrait blog Humans of New York.

By MADISON BLOOMQUIST • mbloomquist@startribune.com

Stephanie Glaros may approach you on the street someday. She might want to take your picture and ask you some questions about your life, your hopes and dreams and what made you who you are. You might not be completely sure what's happening, but maybe you'll say yes anyway.

That part still shocks her.

Glaros runs Humans of Minneapolis, a blog inspired by Humans of New York. She interviews and photographs people she meets on the street and uploads their stories for the world to see on Facebook, Tumblr and Instagram. Her goal is to get potentially closed-off Minnesotans to open up and share something about their lives, challenges and dreams.

Easier said than done.

"People are reserved here and they don't want attention, so it can be a bit of a challenge to draw people out," said Glaros, a Minneapolis-based freelance photographer and graphic

design instructor at Minneapolis Community and Technical College. "I look at that as a challenge to get real and get outside of our shells and make a connection. That's what it's about for me. There's something magical about connecting with a complete stranger."

Humans of Minneapolis is not exactly like Humans of New York. Glaros' version tells unique stories like Humans of New York does, but she focuses more on relatable stories that potentially home in on social justice issues. Glaros calls it "emotional storytelling with a social justice bent."

She has a specific process for approaching potential subjects, a technique perfected through trial and error and lots of rejections by people who were busy or distracted. Some folks still say no, but now she knows what to look for.

"I approach people I feel like I'll connect with," Glaros said. "I have to be able to gain

See **HUMANS** on E3 ▶



Fatuma, one of the subjects in the Humans of Minneapolis project, said "We're all interconnected. You don't realize that someone else in another part of the world is seeing the same moon that you're seeing, but you're connected by that."

TUESDAY READ

A Texan Jack the Ripper

NONFICTION:

A reporter probes a murder mystery and the dark beginnings of the state of Texas.

By JACQUI BANASZYNSKI
Special to the Star Tribune

If obsession is as obsession does, then the ghost who terrorized Austin, Texas, a century ago may have met his match. Texas Monthly journalist Skip Hollandsworth spent 15 years chipping away at the story of a shadowy creature who may be counted as the first known serial killer in the United States. "The Midnight Assassin" is a well-deserved new feather in Hollandsworth's well-feathered hat.

The murders that raged through Austin are intriguing in their own right. From December 1884 until Christmas Eve a year later, several unrelated women were butchered, torn apart "so quickly that they didn't have a chance to scream." Most of the victims were black, servants who scratched out an existence on the fringes of an ambitious and racist frontier city and whose deaths, while disturbing, were dismissed as the work of disgruntled lovers or other "bad blacks." The city shuddered with fascination, but then shrugged with detachment — until the final two murders, on Christmas Eve 1885, felled two of Austin's highest society white women.

Questions crackle throughout Hollandsworth's book:

Why and how did the assailant execute such horror and yet leave survivors — children or lovers who shared a bed; housemates; employers or neighbors within easy shouting distance? Why were the victims poor, discardable blacks — until suddenly they weren't? How did the monster get from one side of town to another in impossible time — or were there multiple monsters?

And most intriguing: Why did the murders, after one bloody year, so suddenly stop? Was the devil who haunted Austin honing his grisly craft to become London's notorious Jack the Ripper?

No spoilers here: Hollandsworth declares flat-out that he failed to unmask the monster. But for readers who love the tangle of history, mystery and skilled storytelling — and who possess a strong stomach for the gruesome — joining his quest is a treat. He

See **READ** on E3 ▶

KARE 11's Belinda Jensen's 'Bel' hits bookshelves

By BARRY LYTTON
barry.lytton@startribune.com

It may be a new medium for KARE 11's Belinda Jensen, but it's the same weather-driven message.

Jensen, the chief meteorologist for KARE, mother of two, co-host of Saturday's "Grow With KARE," is now an author, too, after she spent the past 10 months writing six tales of "Bel the Weather Girl" with the aim of bringing relief to scared children.

"It's a busy schedule, but it's

like a lot of moms out there. We wear a lot of hats," she said.

With today's constant news cycle, the constant availability of radar maps and online videos of frightening weather patterns, children are often bombarded by scary weather, she said.

But even with all the imagery available, children are rarely taught the not-so-scary science behind the clouds.

"Kids are seeing these horrific storms, and they don't understand that these don't happen all the time," Jensen

said. "[But] once you explain the science to them, they realize that every dirt cloud is not going to be a tornado."

After years of classroom visits, weather broadcasts and the maternal support it takes to keep her own children — and dog — from running for cover at the break of thunder, she decided to write a half-dozen science-infused children's books about weather phenomena.

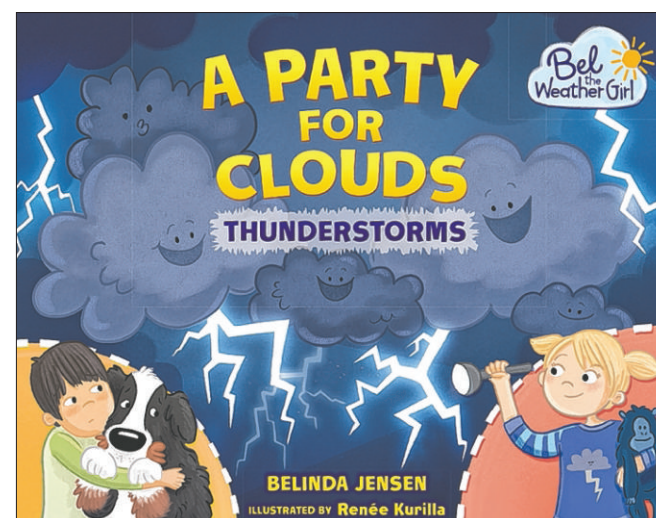
"I do have an 8-year-old," Jensen said. "She was quite afraid of the weather. I wrote

from experience when it comes to these storms."

In the books Bel, a bright, wiry 8-year-old with weather on her mind, explains rare tornadoes, blizzards, hail and hurricanes, and also everyday clouds and thunderstorms, with the help of her cousin Dylan and her pup Stormy.

While the books are fiction, Bel and Stormy are lifted right from Jensen's life, and her Edina home. Stormy is much like her six-year-old Bernese Mountain Dog, Keana, she

See **BELINDA** on E8 ▶



Millbrook Press, a division of Lerner Publishing Group
Belinda Jensen has written six "Bel the Weather Girl" books.

Telling Minnesotans' stories, one photo at a time

◀ **HUMANS** from El their trust."

On a sunny day, Glaros ran through her mental checklist as she scanned sidewalks at the University of Minnesota, camera slung around her neck. Her bright blue eyes fixed on a young woman in a Minnesota sweatshirt and black hijab. Could she get the woman to trust her? Would she let her take her photo? Did she seem rushed or distracted? Could she make eye contact with her? She decided it was go time.

Tucking her short, curly blond hair behind her ear, Glaros walked up to the woman and smiled at her.

"Hi, my name is Stephanie," she said. "I have a blog called Humans of Minneapolis, where I stop people on the street, ask them a few questions and take their pictures. Do you have a few minutes to talk?"

When university student Fawzia Omar agreed, Glaros asked what she was proudest of, her favorite starter question. She followed up with a few background questions. Omar said she is majoring in global studies to learn more about human rights and justice and eventually aid her home country, Somalia.

Then Glaros took her picture: "Stand right there," she requested. "I want you just as I found you, smoothie cup in hand and everything."

The picture taken, she handed Omar a business card, thanked her and sent her on her way.

"I try to always leave on a positive note and create a situation when the person isn't second-guessing what happened," Glaros said. "I want it to be positive for them."

Fascinated by photography

Glaros found her calling as a photographer at an early age. She grew up in Arden Hills, where her father was a dedicated hobbyist photographer who built a darkroom in their house. She posed for his photos as a child, and when she

got her own camera in fifth grade, she realized that she had a natural eye for photography. She took the only two photography classes her high school offered.

"They were the only classes I ever cared about in high school," she said, smiling. "I was more interested in following the Grateful Dead than school, to be honest."

She graduated from the University of Montana with a major in women's studies, which spurred her passion for social justice.

Photographing people happened by fate mixed with a passion for breaking down social barriers. She walked by the same strip clubs and saw the same women coming and going from work every day.

"It called into question some of my own assumptions, biases and stereotypes, and I felt very challenged by that," she said. "I was seeing normal girls dressed in street clothes transforming themselves into something else. I had this burning desire to photograph these girls, but I was intimidated."

Then she started noticing the people on her walk to work. Although the faces became familiar, they never spoke. The social barriers between them made her uncomfortable.

She knew what she had to do: She could use her camera as a way to break through the barriers.

She began asking strippers and people on her route if she could take their pictures. Then she brought the photos to a monthly photo salon organized by her mentor, Wing Young Huie.

"I'll never forget," Glaros said. "Wing leaned over and pointed at the picture and said, 'Yes. This is what you should be doing.' It was exactly what I wanted to do, but I was so scared to do it."

With Huie's encouragement, she began a "Girls Next Door" project, which became her first lengthy foray into photographing people. She launched another project,



LATISHA: "You definitely feel a sense of comfort at Twin Cities Pride. Being a woman of color, being lesbian, being plus size, there's a lot of things that people have an opportunity to judge me about on a daily basis. So when you come here, you can throw on a cutoff T-shirt and basketball shorts, and walk around and feel like no one is judging you." **BRITTANY:** "You always have to wonder, 'Oh, do I look big in this?' or 'How do I look in this?' And you know at Pride there's gonna be a whole bunch of guys that are gonna be like 'You're so beautiful!' And everyone's gonna tell you that you're beautiful all day."

Minneapolis Strangers, soon afterward.

There are ripple effects to her posts. After she photographed a homeless woman named Cindy in early January, thousands of people commented and shared the post on Facebook. Glaros set up a GoFundMe campaign for Cindy that raised more than \$3,500.

Stephanie Wipf, another one of Glaros' subjects, talked to her about having Type 1 diabetes and received a message from a friend of a friend whose daughter had the same disease. The woman wanted the toddler to meet someone else with diabetes so she would know she wasn't alone. Wipf met them at a dance studio and they danced, adorned in tiaras and dance clothes, checked their sugar levels and each left with a new friend facing the same life challenge.

"She's really good at finding people with good stories," Glaros' husband, Corey

Finding Humans of Minneapolis online

Tumblr: humansofminneapolis.tumblr.com/
Facebook: facebook.com/humansofmpls/
Instagram: instagram.com/humansofminneapolis/ or follow "humansofminneapolis"

McNally, said. "She just knows."

Glaros recently announced that she is releasing a Humans of Minneapolis book before Christmas. It will feature a selection of her favorite posts and some that have not yet been published. As for the blog, she said she will continue doing it as long as it makes sense to do so.

Until then, she'll keep getting to the heart of Minneapolis one photograph at a time.

Madison Bloomquist is a University of Minnesota student on assignment for the Star Tribune.



"Any words of advice for people who are depressed about the weather today?"

MARION: Don't be depressed. What are you gonna do about it? Go out and enjoy it and freeze to death."

Blog photos provided

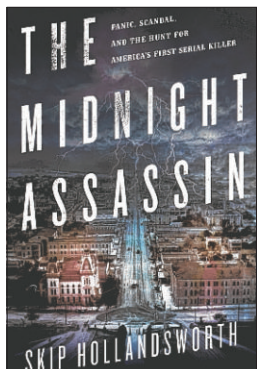
A Texan Jack the Ripper

◀ **READ** from El hunts down obscure public records, news accounts, shirttail relatives, the rare letter and photograph. The annotations cataloging his search are a delicious detective story unto themselves.

He delves into the limits of emerging forensic science. And his rendering of time and place is sublime; as much as the assassin remains opaque, the city of Austin is etched in high relief, and becomes the key character of the book. The next time you pop down for some music and margaritas, consider the history walking beneath your feet: political careers made and destroyed, race as a barometer of worth, money as the cruel master that trumped all.

And then add "The Midnight Assassin" to the rolls of unsolved monster-mysteries that hold us forever in their grip.

Jacqui Banaszynski is a Pulitzer Prize-winning reporter who teaches at the University of Missouri School of Journalism and coaches writers worldwide.



The Midnight Assassin

By: Skip Hollandsworth.
Publisher: Henry Holt, 321 pages, \$30.

COMING SUNDAY: A review of "The Dark Lady's Mask," by Mary Sharratt.

If you're turning 65, you'll want to say,

YES!

to just \$74 a month for our most popular Medicare plan.*

Medica Prime Solution® Basic (Cost) plan gives you way-more-than-basic value, for just \$74 a month. You get the medical coverage you need, plus the benefits you really want, like low or no copays for most services and a free fitness center membership. Part D options are also available. That's why Basic is basically our most popular plan.



Call 1-855-297-9222 to talk to a Medicare specialist and ask for a no-obligation information kit.

8:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. Central Time, seven days a week. (Access to representatives may be limited at times.) **TTY: 711.**

MEDICA®

*Based on 2016 Medica Medicare plan sales Oct. 15 – Dec. 7, 2015.

©2016 Medica. Medica® and Medica Prime Solution® are registered service marks of Medica Health Plans. This information is not a complete description of benefits. Contact the plan for more information. Limitations, copayments, and restrictions may apply. Benefits, premiums and/or co-payments/co-insurance may change on January 1 of each year. You must continue to pay your Medicare Part B premium.

Medica is a Cost plan with a Medicare contract. Enrollment in Medica depends on contract renewal.

Y0088_4348 CMS Accepted

EARNING MEMBERS' TRUST FOR 40 YEARS