October 15, 2015

To the Editor,

At the beginning of September, I was working in the library on the Saint Paul campus and, in a hurry to meet with my instructor, left the computer work station before removing my flash drive. Returning soon afterwards, I found the flash drive was missing. The security officer at the library was extremely helpful in reviewing the recent video history of that work station, and soon identified the culprit.

While I was working with the security officer, another student came up to report that his iPhone was missing. He was working at a computer and also briefly walked away, only to return to find the phone missing. While the guard was working with him, I asked how many of these reports they get. The guard responded by saying, “At least three a week, sometimes more.”

In looking at the recently released crime statistics, I noticed that thefts was a category that seemed to be missing. From my observations, there appears to be a small epidemic of these thefts at the library alone. My question is this, is anyone tracking these thefts? I am unaware of any place to go that tracks this data.

I suggest that there be a web page that would inform students of thefts and other crimes occurring on campus. It would function as a “crime watcher” forum, or better yet a “crime stopper” page. This would allow us to report these crimes ourselves, so that we could become aware of problem areas. Or, more importantly, we could assist each other by keeping an eye out for suspicious activity. We have a robust criminal justice program on campus; it seems that this would be an ideal project for that sector.

Regarding my flash drive, the culprit reappeared at the library. Although he was confronted and volunteered that he had “at least seven flash drives,” he denied any involvement in the disappearance of mine. In the meantime, the library staff seems to have lost patience in my many inquiries at the lost and found desk — perhaps the perpetrator will read this and return what is left of it.

I hold out no hope that the many, many hours of work that was contained on it will ever be recovered. It was foolish of me to not back up its contents, but at least now I encrypt my flash drive.

With any luck, and some effort, we can reduce the number of our fellow students who have to learn similar painful lessons. Is anyone up this challenge? It would be a great way to further improve our great campus.

Respectfully,

Bob Strong