

Students return from Egypt

BY MELISSA ABBEY
STAFF WRITER

One had hopes of improving her Arabic and gaining a keen understanding of the Middle East.

The other was already fluent in Spanish and wanted to try something new.

But after just more than a week in Cairo, sophomore Kelsey Jost-Creegan and junior Virginia Sparks were forced to leave because of political protests that turned Egypt — and their plans — upside down.

After only 10 days of her four-month program had passed, Jost-Creegan left Egypt, headed back home to Boston.

Her classes at American University in Cairo had not even begun.

When she returned to Boston, she and her family began to look for alternative plans. Since beginning classes at UNC was no longer an option, Jost-Creegan decided to spend the semester in Paris. She said she already works with a number of refugee aid organizations, and was planning to take French in the next year or two.

"I speak Spanish," she said. "But a lot of refugee work means French."

"Things are definitely not going according to plan, but I'm still pur-

suating the same academics that I was already hoping to pursue, just kind of in a different order."

Sparks came home with the help of the University's study abroad office and the State Department. An Asian studies major with a concentration in Arab cultures, she was intending to study Arabic in Cairo.

With her knowledge of the language, it was easy to add Arabic classes at UNC upon her return.

"Luckily they're actually going to let me take classes this semester to keep me from getting off track for graduation," she said. "My professors know the situation, and they've been really understanding."

As Arab cultures are her area of interest, losing the opportunity to live and learn in Cairo has been disappointing, she said.

"I'm definitely going to go back at some point in my life," she said. "I don't want to go for a summer program. If I go, I want to go for a while. I'm really hoping to go after I graduate, maybe for a year."

However, Sparks said her 11-day immersion had a bigger impact than one might expect.

"Originally my goals were to be some kind of language analyst or interpreter," she said. "After this experience I've become more



DTH/MELISSA ABBEY

Virginia Sparks was studying abroad in Cairo when the protests began in Egypt. She was able to enroll in classes at UNC this semester.

interested in working for the State Department."

Both girls said they were bothered by the sensationalist media coverage of the protests and insist the protesters were peaceable. But the University is still wary of the region's stability in the near future.

Study abroad programs in the Middle East and North Africa may be suspended, said Bob Miles, the associate dean for study abroad and international exchanges.

But the students who were in

Cairo when the protests began said they are thrilled with the progress.

Sparks said what began as a small protest could lead to regional and even global changes.

"I'm pretty freakin' excited," she said. "I'm so happy to see it spreading. I mean, that's how Egypt got started, by watching Tunisia. I feel like maybe this is the first step to world peace."

Contact the University Editor at university@dailytarheel.com.

Director sees a different side of PlayMakers

Manages business side of company

BY CARSON BLACKWELDER
STAFF WRITER

From an early age, Hannah Grannemann knew she wanted to be in the theater.

"I've been involved in the theater since I was 10 years old, and even then I knew I wanted to be an actor," Grannemann said.

She's succeeded — but not in the way she originally planned.

Grannemann currently serves as the managing director at PlayMakers Repertory Company, a job that consists of overseeing all administrative functions of the theater, including marketing, fundraising, finances and general box office activities.

"I often describe my job as being everything but the arts," Grannemann said.

Grannemann graduated from New York University with a degree in theater, and pursued the business side of the stage while completing graduate study at Yale University.

While still at Yale, Grannemann had heard PlayMakers' producing artistic director Joseph Haj speak at a conference and decided to apply to work with him.

"I knew right off the bat that she was the right one for us," said McKay Coble, UNC faculty chairwoman and head of the department of dramatic art. "I just knew she belonged here."

And today, Grannemann, who has held her position for nearly three years, works closely with Haj.

"Hiring Hannah is the smartest thing I've done since I have been here," Haj said. "She is a terrific leadership partner and has done an amazing job for us here at PlayMakers."

"I'm pleased and honored to have her as my right hand."

Grannemann said PlayMakers' relationship with the University and Chapel Hill community also drew her to work here.

"I've always wanted to work in a theater that had close ties with the community," she said.

PlayMakers is located on the edge of UNC's campus, and dramatic arts undergraduates often take part in main stage productions — both onstage and behind the scenes.

In addition to her role at PlayMakers, Grannemann is heavily involved in the League of Resident Theatres, an organization of non-profit theaters across the country.

"Hannah is one of our rising



DTH/DUNCAN CULBRETH

Hannah Grannemann has been the managing director at Playmakers Repertory Company for nearly three years.

stars," said Susie Medak, managing director of Berkeley Repertory Theatre and president of the league.

Grannemann currently serves on the executive committee of the organization.

"In fact, PlayMakers has a great history of hiring smart, visionary management leaders," Medak said.

Grannemann has been involved in LORT since she was at Yale, she said.

"She brings intelligence, a deliberative approach to problems, a capacity to clearly articulate issues and a dynamism that makes her a real stand out," Medak said.

But Grannemann is also excited about her 6-month-old son, Elliot.

"I love being a mother," Grannemann said. "Sometimes it's a lot like sprinting in a marathon — balancing my new role as a mother and my job — but I find both so incredibly satisfying."

While PlayMakers' current production of "Angels in America" — a show that Grannemann said has been her favorite production yet — is receiving wide critical acclaim, Grannemann said one of her most important focuses is on students.

"A lot of people want to be involved in theater," Grannemann said.

But Grannemann stressed that involvement in the arts doesn't end at the footlights.

"It is a personal mission of mine to let them know that you can do so without being an actor, and I'm the perfect example of that."

Contact the Arts Editor at arts@dailytarheel.com.

Fire official impersonator still at large

Posed as official to enter buildings

BY JODIE SINGER
STAFF WRITER

The man who introduced himself as a fire inspector to the Chapel Hill Pediatrics and Adolescents staff on Monday wasn't wearing a uniform — the first thing that made Practice Manager Mary Sheppard think something was wrong.

"I was sitting in my office on the phone when some male poked his head into my office," Sheppard said.

The front desk let the man in after he said he needed to inspect the fire extinguishers. Sheppard described him as clean-cut and well dressed.

He wasn't there very long. When Sheppard got off the phone and went to look for him, he was gone.

"I think people should be aware and ask more questions

when they let some strange person walk through their office," Sheppard said.

A man has been using the guise of a fire inspector to gain entry into several local businesses, and he could be linked to crimes in Fayetteville, Chapel Hill Fire Marshal Matt Lawrence said.

At least two Sage Road businesses encountered the man Monday, and at least four businesses in Durham reported similar incidents.

Lawrence said he is fairly confident the same person is connected to all cases.

The unidentified man who entered Chapel Hill Pediatric Dentistry, which reported the incident to police Wednesday, was described as a black male in his late 30s or early 40s and is about 6 feet tall.

How to spot a scammer:

- ▶ A fire inspector will be wearing a uniform. If he isn't wearing a uniform, he's probably not with the fire department.
- ▶ A fire inspector will usually call ahead to make an appointment. If the individual drops in unannounced, he's probably not with the department.
- ▶ If you're suspicious of the visitor, ask the individual for his credentials or identification.

He was wearing khaki pants, a white shirt and a blue vest, Lawrence said.

Similar incidents occurred in Fayetteville in November when a man identified himself as a fire inspector to gain access to businesses and missing items were later reported.

Lawrence said the same man might have been responsible for the

incidents in all three locations.

The department is looking at photos of the suspect from Fayetteville, but there is no concrete evidence linking the crimes, Lawrence said.

Nothing was stolen at any of the Chapel Hill locations that the man entered, but at a Durham business the suspect was spotted looking through an employee's pocketbook.

When confronted, the man fled with the purse, Lawrence said.

Chapel Hill Police Capt. Leo Vereen said a real fire inspector will always provide identification and credentials.

"When our inspectors go in, sometimes, there's that level of trust that a business owner places in a uniformed official," Lawrence said.

"We'll never come unannounced."

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