

# News

## Egyptian student speaks out about riots in Egypt

by Riddhi Doshi

For the last few weeks the world's eyes have been on Egypt, while they fight for democracy. A peaceful protest began when Wael Ghonim, the marketing executive of Google, helped create a Facebook page dedicated to Khaled Said. Said had been a victim of fatal beating, allegedly by the police.

This brought attention to the corruption behind the scenes of Egypt's so-called democratic government. Around the same time in Tunisia, Mohamed Bouazizi, a vegetable vender set himself on fire in protest against police who confiscated his vegetable cart. Bouazizi died from the burns adding more tension. Three other men, a 50, 40 and 25 year old set themselves ablaze, as well.

### Jan 25: DAY OF WRATH

Thousands of Egyptian citizens gather in Ismailia, Suez, Cairo and other Nile Delta Cities peacefully protesting against President Mubarak's 30-year rule. They say that in a democratic nation like Egypt no man should hold power for such a long period of time.

"I always knew that he wasn't much of a good leader, considering the overall condition of the country and its people... The large gap in classes makes me understand the roots of these riots and protests." said Sarah Elsheakh, junior. Elsheakh, despite being born and raised in the Lehigh Valley has very close ties with her family in Egypt. She moved to Egypt and spent 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade there.

### Jan 28: CURFEW

Mubarak puts a curfew on all cities. Troops and tanks are ordered to go into the cities. Citizens cheer at this news because the army is seen as neutral, unlike the police force.

About 500 people have been arrested over the course of the last two days. Elsheakh mentioned family members that have been put in jail under Mubarak's "emergency law" which basically authorizes incarceration without any just reason. When asked about the extent of democracy in Egypt Elsheakh said "it is pretty obvious that Mubarak was a dictator."

### Jan 29: REFUSAL

Mubarak refuses to step down. Protesters gather back into Cairo's Tahrir square. Mubarak also picks Omar Suleiman, the intelligence chief, as his vice president. Protestors defy Mubarak's curfew.

### Jan 30: OBAMA'S CALL

President Obama urges Mubarak to step down and calls for democracy in Egypt. The US has had good relations with Egypt and especially Mubarak in the past.

### Jan 31: FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION

Egypt's army says that it will not use force against peaceful protestors. Egypt swears in a new government. Suleiman says Mubarak has asked for a new dialogue with all political forces. A peaceful gathering in Tahiri Square calls for the president to quit. Mubarak unveils his new cabinet,

and for the most part the cabinet members remain unchanged. The army officially declares that it considers the people's demands "legitimate" and says that they will stay peaceful with the protestors. The internet went down.

"Once the internet was on again, I Skyped with my family. Three escaped convicts who had broken into their gated community. This was a scary thought to me especially because my aunt does not live anywhere near the Tahrir square chaos, the protest had become much more widespread." said Elsheakh.

### Feb 1: SURRENDER

Mubarak announces that he will step down from power at the end of his term, in September. The March of a Million Men protested that Mubarak step down immediately.

### Feb 2: THUGS

The army asks protestors to leave the streets. Crowds gather in Tahrir Square to protest Mubarak's timeline to leave. After troops do not even attempt to stop violence between pro and anti-Mubarak groups, protestors start to suspect that the attackers were the police dressed in civilian clothes as thugs hired by Mubarak.

### Feb 3: OPEN FIRE

Gunmen fire on protestors. Mubarak says he wants to leave office, but is afraid it will lead to chaos.

### Feb 4: DEPARTURE DAY

Egyptians gather in Tahrir Square protesting Mubarak's

timeline to step down. They want him to step down immediately.

Vice President Suleiman invites various political groups to help amend the constitution. He promises to institute new reforms on things such as press freedom rights and lowering the police force. He does not promise anything about Mubarak stepping down. Suleiman goes on national television and announces the timetable for a peaceful transfer of power. The protestors are still not convinced and say that they will not leave until Mubarak and his allies are forced out of power.

### Feb 10: CONFUSION

Mubarak gives a speech to the people, and though it seems like he is stepping down at the end he says that he is only delegating some of his power to Suleiman. The angry crowds refuse to leave Tahrir Square.

### Feb 11: RESTORED FREEDOM

The army vows to implement any change of power. Hours later Suleiman announces that Mubarak has given up his powers and "charged the high council of the armed forces to administer the affairs of the country."

"I felt proud to be Egyptian, I knew country will be changing for the better. One thing that really touched my heart about this revolution was that there was no rich and poor, Christian or Muslim; there were only Egyptians. All Egyptians worked together to achieve a common goal: to improve not only their lives now, but the lives of generations to come," said Elsheakh.

## Gas line explodes in Allentown

by Veronica Trask

On Wednesday February 9, 2011 an explosion on North 13<sup>th</sup> street in Allentown left five people dead and destroyed surrounding homes.

People around the Allentown area, including many students from Parkland High School, could either feel or hear the explosion, which many had described as a thunderous boom, but louder.

The explosion happened in the late night on Wednesday, but the fires lasted until the early morning while firefighters struggled to isolate the gas line which was feeding the fire. A total of eight homes were destroyed, and the fires and flying debris affected 47 homes and businesses.

A spokesman for UGI utilities, a local gas company, announced that the routine pipeline check did not come up with any signs of a leak and that there was no history of any leakage from the gas line, although the gas line was 83 years old.

The Allentown Fire Department also released that the cause of the explosion may still be under investigation since there were no calls about an odor or problems before the explosion.

This explosion is the third deadly gas explosion in the United States in the past few months. Last month, a gas explosion in Philadelphia left one

man dead and five residents critically injured; another explosion in San Bruno, California, left eight people dead.

UGI used foam to seal the Allentown gas main in order to block any fuel from feeding the fire. The Allentown



Photo Courtesy of The Morning Call  
Firefighters inspect the scene of the gas explosion in Allentown on N. 13th Street.

fire chief said it took crews time to try to cut through the ice and concrete surrounding the pipeline.

Two hundred endangered Allentown residents were evacuated to the Agri-Plex as well as St. Luke's Hospital to be treated for minor injuries. Two Allentown schools were closed on Thursday for the students' and staff's safety.

"This is a real tragedy," Mayor Ed Pawlowski told the Morning Call in an interview. "Our thoughts and prayers are with the families."

## Snow days spill over into vacation

by Ryan McGowan

This winter, students awakened a total of seven times to hear the news that school has been cancelled due to snow and ice storms. Since this number has surpassed the allotted two snow days by five days, students went to school during the Presidents' Day break, and will be going during the spring break, and possibly into the summer vacation.

"I really like winter, and I really enjoy the snow days, but I do not like that we will be missing vacation days due to the winter weather," said sophomore John Pellosie.

This is a common complaint heard throughout the school.

Students enjoy having snow days because of the break from school and the fun they can have in the snow, but most would rather have vacation days instead of snow days.

Students are also upset because they feel some of the school days should not have been cancelled.

"The first snow day shouldn't have happened. We had about an inch, and that should have been a two hour delay," said sophomore Mike Unger.

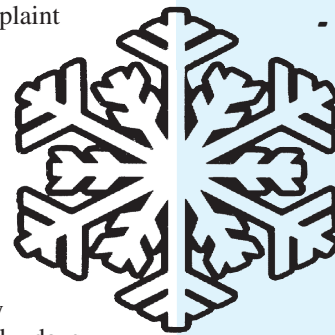
Many students wonder just how much of our summer vacation we can miss due to snow days.

Legally, schools in Pennsylvania must complete 180 days of school before July 1. The February Board meeting has created an alternate calendar.

## Make Up Day Calendar

### Snow days thus far...

- January 7th
- January 12th
- January 18th
- January 21st
- January 27th
- February 1st
- February 2nd



Make up days to come...

- March 11th
- April 21st
- June 16th
- June 17th
- The rest of the days will be made up after June 20th

