

STATE

LOCAL

Triangle Public Speakers Anonymous

Emery Lai, Staff Writer

Like many other people, Meredith alum Elizabeth Thorndyke never feels more terrified than when she has to speak publicly. Glossophobia, or the fear of public speaking, is actually quite common. Reactions vary amongst people who have this fear, but the overall feeling is that of being panicked and trapped when one has to speak in public. Everyone must overcome obstacles like public speaking in order to succeed in life; for some people, public speaking might mean giving a toast at a best friend's wedding or hosting a game night with friends from work. Thorndyke wished to be able to do the same and has since started her own group, Triangle Public Speakers Anonymous, to help herself and all those with a fear of public speaking.

For the past 15 years, Thorndyke has lived in constant fear of being called on unexpectedly during meetings or having to present a speech and not being able to stop thinking about said speech until it is finished. Occasionally when asked to provide training at work, Thorndyke must either perform the task or allow her fear to hurt her performance. "Part of the motivation [to start Triangle Public Speakers Anonymous] is due to [not wanting to have] this [fear] hold back my career," she says. "But mostly, I don't want to have to avoid these situations anymore. I want to be able to relax in meetings and stop declining opportunities at work."

Sick of such a hindrance in her life, Thorndyke began to look up ways that would help her overcome her fear. She came across different types of medicines, therapists that just

told her to "practice," and groups that required her to give a particular number of speeches. Not seeing any specific therapies that she felt were right for her, she decided to create a group herself. Thorndyke's group's goal is that it will help its members feel welcome and comfortable as they all experience their anxiety together. The hope is that over time, the comfort and positive experiences will build and create confidence. Thorndyke notes, however, that members will never be required to speak, as that will cause more negative feelings rather than positive ones.

The group meetings will consist of several activities. "We may do planned presentations, spontaneous question and answer sessions, round table discussions, debates, reading aloud from a book, or giving toasts," Thorndyke says. "I will poll our group for suggestions as to what makes them the most uncomfortable and try to give everyone an opportunity to practice." She plans to focus mainly on the professional, social, and academic environments because there are so many social settings in which one must speak publicly.

In summary, Thorndyke states, "I've created a group that caters to those who want to overcome their fears by facing them in a supportive and compassionate environment...And by choosing to lead the group, I'm forcing myself to face my own."

If anyone is suffering from a fear of speaking publically and is interested in joining Triangle Public Speakers Anonymous, please visit <http://www.meetup.com/Triangle-Public-Speakers-Anonymous>. The group is private, and only members are able to see other members. More information can be found on the website.

Protests In Egypt

Jee-In Hur, Staff Writer



image via guardian.co.uk

Hundreds of thousands of Egyptian filled Tahrir Square on Tuesday, February 1 in the largest demonstration against the nearly 30-year rule of President Hosni Mubarak. The march began on 25 January by the April 6 Youth Movement organizers—an Egyptian Facebook group using social media to organize the strike. At first Egyptian police response has been brutal, and as of 29 January, at least 105 protesters deaths and 1500 injuries had been reported. Police force has since been replaced by military troops. Internet media has served major role in publicity in the protest capturing worldwide attention, but as the level of publicity increased the Egyptian government cut off internet access across the country. As reported in a February 1st New York Times article by Anthony Sadi and David Kirkpatrick that "No one would have imagined a week before that this would happen in Egypt." And now protests are quickly spreading across the region to Jordan, Yemen, and Syria.

The Egyptian protests started a week after the Tunisian uprising, and many protesters are carrying Tunisian flags as a symbol of their influence. The current protest also appear to have been influenced by the 2010-2011 Arab revolutions in the North African and Western Asian countries of Tunisia, Egypt, Yemen, Algeria, and Jor-

dan, with minor incidents occurring in Mauritania, Saudi Arabia, Oman, Sudan, Syria, Libya, and Morocco. These series of revolutions began in Tunisia when a Tunisian protester committed suicide to protest police corruption and ill-treatment on December 18, 2010. The Tunisian demonstrations and riots spread to topics over unemployment, food inflation, corruption, freedom of speech, and poor living conditions. Finally the protest overthrew President Zine El Abidine Ben Ali on January 14, 2011 who fled to Saudi Arabia and currently in exile there.

The Egyptian protestors are calling for the end of the Hosni Mubarak regime and a new government representing the interest of the people. They argue that the suppressive state's offenses include: police brutality, lack of free elections and free speech and vast corruption. Additionally the protesters seek more effective and immediate economic reform as a solution for high unemployment, food price inflation and low minimum wage. In response, President Mubarak has offered reforms but not his personal resignation. According to a February 1st article by David Kirkpatrick, President Obama urged Mubarak not run again which is not a 'blunt' demand for step down, but a firm 'counsel' for fair and democratic transition of politics in Egypt.

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