

Poughkeepsie Journal

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Marist student, 20, flees Cairo

by Shantal Parris Riley | FEBRUARY 2, 2011

Marist College student Jeffrey Hausner arrived home from Egypt in the wee hours Wednesday, exhausted and sick with a cold after a two-week, whirlwind trip to the country.

"I was planning to study accounting and take Arabic language classes," Hausner said.

Americans, however, have been returning home from Egypt amid intensified political protests and violence this week.

The 20-year-old Nassau County native arrived Jan. 20 at the American University in Cairo for his first semester of study through Marist's study-abroad program.

The protests began a few days later.

"We started watching Al Jazeera," he said. "Then, our text and Internet was shut down."

Hausner said cell-phone service was spotty. The university announced it was delaying classes shortly after he reached his parents by phone. The family contacted Global Rescue, a private security company that arranged for Hausner to be picked up at the gates of the university the next morning.

From there, they drove through several security checkpoints and on to Alexandria, Egypt, where a 737 plane awaited them.

"There were about 50 or 60 of us, mostly Americans," he said.



Anti-government protesters react as Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak makes a televised statement to his nation in Tahrir Square in downtown Cairo on Thursday.

The plane flew to Prague and then Iceland. Hausner got to Dulles International Airport in Washington at 3:30 a.m. Wednesday.

In a Journal interview later in the day, Hausner said he wanted to return to Egypt eventually. Mom Barbara Hausner said she wasn't so sure.

"I know he's disappointed that he couldn't stay," she said. "The timing is unfortunate. But we explained to him that we may have known things he didn't. We were lucky."