

When 'domestic' is cool you've got a full-grown home

Birthdays don't accurately capture the essence of the aging process. It is in the mundane moments of ordinary living when we actually feel the cold hands of Father Time on our shoulders.

JENNY MAGEE
Assistant
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My college aging process has been realized in a couple of random shopping trips. The flowers, cards and gifts I received on my 19th birthday, did not savagely rip me away from my 18th year. But, the first time I paid for my own groceries, I felt old. For the first time in my life, I had to use my money to buy something that I actually needed to live. My money was supposed to finance my social outings, not to pay for oatmeal and vegetable soup.

A recent back-to-school shopping trip single-handedly whisked me three or four years ahead of my current, tender age of 20. I went to Target with the intention of picking up a few things for the house that I was moving into with three other girls. An innocent idea to build shelves for my room sent me headlong into a whole new realm of life - hardware.

I wanted shelves: a mere couple of pieces of wood stuck to my wall to house my pictures.

What I didn't realize was that this seemingly simple desire involved toggle bolts. But, my father assured me as we made our way into foreign territory, that my wall, because it lacked a 2x4, required toggle bolts to hold shelves.

Those who spend time in the hardware sphere, might affectionately refer to toggle bolts as "Molly bolts." A nickname which probably originated back in the 1800s, when "Molly" wanted to build shelves, but found she lacked 2x4s.

We finally located the toggle bolts, but then things began to snowball. Suddenly my basket was filling with items like light switch covers, door stops and wooden towel racks - and I was paying for it all.

After a couple of days I realized that the Target trip had only been the tip of the iceberg. When I moved out of my dorm at the end of the spring semester last year, I had dreams of home-made meals, bubble baths and privacy in my new home off-campus. Never in my clearest moments of imagination, did I fathom that I was going to become a victim of domesticity.

I am prepared for my birthdays; they happen at the same time every year. But, how was I supposed to prepare myself for the moment in life when I would become totally fascinated by a culinary accessory? My roommate and I visited a friend's new apartment and were actually awed by a spice rack.

Beyond the fact that my new house has sent me down store aisles where I had never dared to venture before, it also became the vehicle for many other lessons in reality as well. From 1980 to 1992, I emptied my dishwasher - one of my daily chores - approximately 4,380 times. But only on extremely rare occasions during those years did I actually start the dishwasher. That always happened after I went to bed and my parents locked up the house. And, never once did I

took our parents weeks to convince us to do as children. Well, most of the time, anyway.

Whenever I would grumble about my chores as a child, my mother would tell me that I should care about how our house looked and should want to keep it nice. I never really felt that way. But, something happens when you invest time and money into the place where you live. When your home and the things in it are no longer provided for you, they take on a whole new significance.

Up until the '60s, the whole concept of domesticity was associated with the enslavement of women to a sphere that was unappreciated and unrewarding. So, being a career-orientated woman, I felt intimidated to find pleasure in fixing up a home. But, I realized that this experience was not about spice racks, cleaning agents or even toggle bolts. It

was about learning to care about the place where I live enough to sacrifice for it. And most of all, it was about learning the give and take of living with others in order to build a home.

I wonder if Hallmark makes card for the first time you do housework and like it.

Jenny Magee is a junior English and journalism major

How was I supposed to prepare myself for the moment in life when I would be fascinated by a culinary accessory? My roommate and I were awed by a friend's new spice rack.

purchase the dishwasher soap.

Alas, my shopping list now includes things like dishwasher soap and countless other cleaning supplies every week. I'm also writing more checks for hot water, gas and electricity than anything else.

My roommates and I pamper our house like it is a newborn child. We voluntarily mow the grass, paint the baseboards, vacuum the rugs, wash the dishes and countless other chores that



Guardian angel curses risky exploits

Girl just wants to have fun — and not get caught by the cops

My experiments as a wild woman are always short-lived and humiliating. My mother is convinced that I have a guardian angel on my shoulder that has a direct line to the police station. Every single time I try to rebel, break out or even STEP on the wild side, a policeman is there, waiting.

ELIZABETH PRESTON
Columnist



My youthful rebellions began innocently in 8th grade. I arrived at school only to realize that I had left my semester-long project, due that day, at home. My mother was unreachable, and I did not feel that I could explain it to my teacher. Cleverly realizing that I had two hours until the class when I had to turn it in, I decided to take the Metro home. A painful mistake.

Hours of incorrect bus routes, a peniless cab ride with a sympathetic cab driver and a 2-mile hike later, we were picked up by the police. Because we were roughly 10 miles from anywhere we needed to be, we were almost thankful at that point. Then they asked us repeatedly if we were "truant." Having NO idea what that word meant, I naively guessed it meant something about drugs. I emphatically told them we weren't, thus making myself a liar and a punk. To this day, I can not skip school without fearing horrible retribution.

Infused with the resilience of youth, a year later I began to feel confident again. When my short-lived boyfriend, Kevin, asked me to sneak out of my house with him, I quickly agreed. What I did not know was that we were taking Kevin's mom's car, while she slept - we were both 15 - and that in the backseat of the car he had 1) a bottle of liquor, 2) firecrackers and 3) a stop sign he had stolen.

Of course, because I was in the car, we were pulled over within 10 minutes of our "little" rebellion. The policemen took us to the station and called my mother. She came to get

me at two in the morning, bringing with her my boyfriend's mother - whom she had not met before that night - because we had her car.

Needless to say, I have since never done anything in the middle of the night without telling my mom. She tries to tell me that I don't need to call her long-distance at midnight to tell her I'll be out late, but the mental block against late nights without her knowledge was permanently set by that experience. I wasn't even tempted to drive a car before I turned 16, I still do not drink alcohol, and every Fourth of July I am extremely happy to watch other people's fireworks displays.

My next run-ins involved everybody's favorite: the traffic police. One weekend I borrowed my stepfather's truck to bring some furniture up to school. He is the type of guy who gets on me if my gas tank is below a quarter full. When my inspection sticker expired he haggled me about it until I fixed it. Who would have imagined that HIS inspection sticker was five months expired? Of course as soon as I sat down in it, the police were on my tail. With a sinking feeling, I pulled over. Not only was the sticker expired, my license had the incorrect address and I had not put my new proof of insurance in the car. I escaped from that encounter \$200 poorer, though my stepfather felt guilty enough to pay me back for part of it. Thinking I had been punished for every possible infraction, I cockily resumed driving.

In the final blow, two days ago my car was towed from in front of a fire hydrant that I never even saw, for the exorbitant rate of \$148.74. I went back to see if the hydrant was covered in weeds or otherwise obstructed from view, and quite to the contrary it looked almost as obvious as the Empire State Building. Today, I drove my car off the nearest cliff and retrieved my bicycle from the garage. Okay, there is no cliff near here, but if there was one, my car would be there. Until I find one, it's parked: I threw my keys away last night.

So to all of you students who drink, speed, skip and park illegally without repercussions, I envy you. Until my annoying guardian angel leaves me alone, I'll be riding my bike, drinking soda pop and taking notes for all of my friends absent from classes.

Elizabeth Preston is a junior English major

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MAIL CALL

A&M, students must adapt to human faults

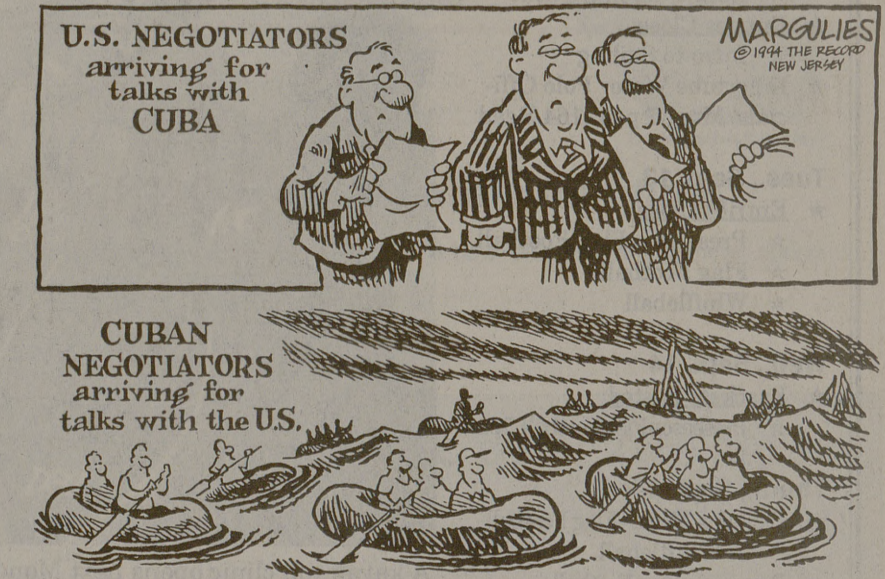
Although A&M has many fine traditions, it is not utopia. Students are not automatically cleansed of their personal shortcomings when they enroll and attend classes at A&M. In

short, being a student at A&M is an introduction to the real world. Although I believe that this campus contains some of the brightest, motivated, intelligent people of the many college students, staff and faculty in the state, they are certainly still human, and, therefore, exhibit human faults.

I do agree that many of the younger generation could use a few lessons in common courtesy, manners and consideration for fellow Aggies. I think students should think before they act... "What are the consequences of ignoring this handicap sign," or more importantly, "How would I feel if someone did this to me?"

With regard to the "Howdy" issue: Yes, I agree that as time goes by, few-

er people participate in this tradition. My older brother, who graduated in 1985, noticed this trend during his senior year. I have been both a member of staff and a part-time undergraduate for several years. Although I may dress and look like any other student, when you work on campus and attend classes here for several years the thrill of saying "Howdy" to every passerby sort of wears off. (I'm sure many graduate students can identify with this.) I may appear to be snubbing people, but this is not the case. I personally don't think with our large (and growing) student body that this quaint historical tradition is realistic. If I said "Howdy" to everyone I passed from 7 a.m. to 8 p.m. daily, I wouldn't have a



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EDITORIAL NAMES FOR SALE

Sale of personal information lists invades privacy

Most people are unaware that personal information like their names and addresses could be worth \$150. But many companies, from highbrow advertisers to scam artists, buy and sell lists of telephone numbers and mailing addresses with no regard for the individuals' privacy.

College students are among the groups which are most vulnerable to the negative impacts of this sale of information. Whether they have little money and are looking for a "free deal" or they have plenty of money to spend, students often become victims of mail or telephone fraud because of the sheer number of attempts to take advantage of them. No one can catch every piece of "fine print."

If more students, or anyone else, were aware of their right to secure personal information from sale to the highest bidder, then they could better protect themselves from such risks. A more disturbing factor of this problem is the fact that many lists

include wide-ranging demographic information. Any individual could find that their gender, age, occupation, buying habits and other statistics, as well as address, are available to whomever pays the price.

A recent ruling by the Texas Public Utilities Commission requires telephone companies to inform customers of their right to restrict the use of this information. Such requirements preserve individual rights and hopefully will help prevent exploitation made through that information. The importance of privacy becomes more obvious every day. No one should automatically lose control of who receives information about them. Unfortunately, the only way to exercise that control over privacy often is through making a specific request that a company not include a person's information on the customer list it sells.

Everyone affected by this practice needs to shut the door on scams by demanding respect for their privacy.

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