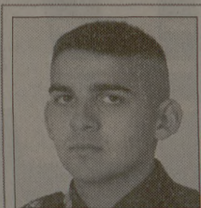


PERSPECTIVES

A dying art form

Practices of chivalry, courtly manners disappear in modern society



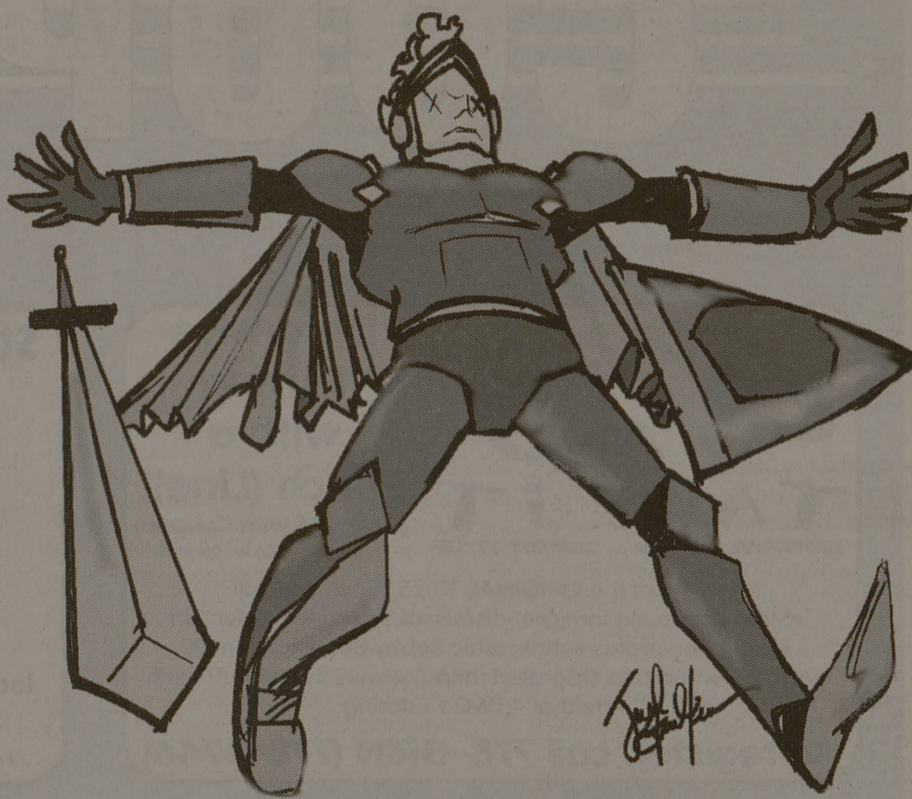
MICKEY SALOMA
columnist

My mom is the greatest mother in the entire world. This is because all of the life she has made me live is because of her. She instilled two principles in me which I find lacking in many people, especially guys: chivalry and politeness. I am not attacking males of this University or anybody's mother. I can no longer deal with the many people who live life selfishly and down-tit rudely. My mom always said politeness will take you a long way. So ever since I can remember, I have attempted to honor my mother by following a code of conduct at all times. Chivalry can be defined as the qualities idealized by knighthood, such as honesty and courtesy. I don't think chivalry is dead; rather it is dormant. Instead of teaching for the addition of multicultural classes in our core curriculum, what all we need is a course to teach us courtesy, politeness and chivalry. I hate seeing people opening doors, walking right through them and having no regard for anybody who may be walking behind them. I don't think we all should act as hostesses and open the door for

everybody behind us. But, the least we can do is hold the door for the person following us into a building. I am also very disappointed when I see "gentlemen" sitting on the bus while a lady stands. It's called being polite. My Mom taught me this. I am not generalizing women as weak beings who cannot stand on a short bus ride, but I am merely an advocate for chivalry. My mom also taught me that all females are ladies, and they should all be treated as such. By following simple rules such as "ladies first," we can at least show them the respect they deserve. I also find it absolutely ridiculous standing in line at a restaurant and having people demanding things from the employees. All people should be treated with respect. There are two phrases in the English language people sometimes forget. Use of these two magical phrases ensure not only courtesy, but that the user of these phrases sounds intelligent and cultured. The two phrases are "please" and "thank you." These are not hard to say. By saying "please," you make a request sound more like a request than an order. Likewise, "thank you" is an expression of gratitude for something somebody has done for you. Also, many of us tend to forget the old adage about respecting our elders. I was horrified the other day when I saw a cyclist almost run over an elderly man on campus. Instead of saying excuse me, the

cyclist blurted out an insult. What happened to the good old days when people called their elders "sir" and "ma'am" and treated these elders with respect? We live in a world where most people are suspicious of politeness and random acts of kindness, which is a sad commentary of our times. Politeness seems so rare that after opening a door for a lady and calling her "ma'am," she asked me if I was polite before I joined the Corps of Cadets. Sure, the Corps strives to instill the characteristics of a soldier, statesman and knightly gentleman to train us to become the future leaders of the state and nation, but that is something for which we all strive. I am not saying the only polite people on campus belong to the Corps; my point is it is sad that people do not try to better themselves by showing respect for their fellow human beings. We all need to conduct ourselves in the way we know is right and in the way our parents taught us. I know I'm not alone in listening to my mom when she taught me this. I know I am a better man because of her. People must realize that many times our parents teach us the greatest lessons in life. We just need to be reminded of them.

Mickey Saloma is a senior journalism major.



TECH TALK

Children born of donated eggs deserve to know truth

Imagine for a minute you are a 13-year-old Jennifer. Recently having entered the roller coaster of adolescence, you have just been diagnosed as needing a blood transfusion. Patiently waiting in the hospital, the doctor enters the room. He apologizes, Jenny, but you will have to wait until we can find another donor. Your mother cannot donate blood for you because she is not your biological mother. Not only is she confused and hurt, but Jenny feels lied to and cheated. Always having longed for her mother's jet-black, cornsilk hair, Jenny often wondered where she got her unruly blonde locks. She had asked her parents once if she was adopted, but they had reassured her with words of videotapes of her birth in the hospital. "I know I'm not adopted!" Jenny shouts at the doctor. "So where did I come from?" Over the last 13 years, Jennifer has been one of thousands of children who have been the victims of dishonesty about their family history. These children are not adopted, but rather they have been the phenomenal hybrid byproduct of sperm from their biological father and eggs donated from an anonymous donor.



KENDALL KELLY
columnist

Since 1989, the number of mothers giving birth to children from donated eggs has multiplied 10 times, allowing for the incredible gift of life to extend to those women biologically incapable of bearing children. With this 15-year-old process of egg donation, post-menopausal and infertile women are able to have children. However, where genetics and reproductive science has taken a leap into the future, morals and ethical responsibility have taken a backward dive. Unlike children who are adopted, mothers giving birth from donor eggs are not obligated by law to inform their children. Presently, the only existing laws regarding donor eggs are for the donors themselves, which simply state they release themselves of any rights or duties to the children. Furthermore, these laws exist only in Texas, Oklahoma and Florida, making circumstances very ambiguous in the majority of the United States. Legislation on a process such as this is at a bare minimum, failing to cover any laws whatsoever regarding the rights of the children. Because parents are not obligated under law to tell children the biological truth, the majority of children conceived from donated eggs never know. A powerful debate exists at present discussing whether or not children have the right to know where they came from. The majority of egg donor recipients do not tell their children the truth.

The New York Times tells of a 42-year-old woman who gave birth to twins via donated eggs. The eggs were donated from a good friend and neighbor. She and her husband have chosen not to tell their children, who are playmates of her donor's children. She argues that "there is nothing to be gained" from telling children the truth, because disclosing such information would only foster confusing and overwhelming feelings. One can see clearly the feelings of discomfort and awkwardness that could be avoided by simply ignoring the truth altogether. Certainly it would be a very difficult fact of life to understand. However, forfeiting the truth does not suffice as an exchange for an uncomplicated life. Being comfortable cannot replace honesty. Some families who do opt to be honest with their children wait until they are old enough to understand more fully. It appears from a logical standpoint that these children might be more at ease and experience less discomfort if they were in fact told the truth early on in life. Carole Lieber Wilkins, a Los Angeles therapist, suggests parents tell their kids as soon as they are born. Wilkins is a mother-by-donation herself and has published a guide entitled "Talking to Children About Their Conception: It's Easier Than You Think" to encourage parents to be straightforward with their children. Couples deciding to bear children through egg donation inherit an enormous responsibility not

only to worry about their children's emotions in dealing with the truth, but their own as well. Parents making the decision to give birth from a donor must face incredible pain and sadness in accepting that they are able to conceive a child who they can genetically call their own. Lynn G., also a Los Angeles therapist says thinking about it is so painful that "sometimes (she) just wants to push it away." Perhaps if donor recipients could view the process as a gift rather than a burden, then thinking about it would be something to be celebrated and not ashamed of. The inability to have one's own genealogy continues to be no doubt a heart-wrenching feeling. But again, avoiding the topic because of associated uncomfortable feelings is not the answer. Instead of trying to avoid honesty in order to deal with the pain, parents should try harder to avoid the pain so that they can face the honesty. Instead of omitting words like "infertility" and "donor" from their vocabulary, parents should work on excluding words like "pain" and "confusing." Children conceived through egg donations have taken part in a genetic phenomenon. Instead of whispering and worrying, families should be celebrating and rejoicing. For who in the world should want to keep a secret the gift of life?

Kendall Kelly is a junior Spanish major.



MAIL CALL

American spending not fault of capitalism
In response to Michelle Voss's 29 column, it must be said: Blow up and take the blame. It is perhaps such cult children's sins as Mr. Potato Head are being used for the sole purpose of bringing profits to our local Burger King, but the people to blame for it is far from the capitalists. If we as Americans are gullible enough to simply buy french fries because they are endorsed by the people they play that we enjoyed so much as children, then we, as Americans, also deserve to lose a red cent we have. The capitalists are merely a product of this "gullible society" and it is plain that Mr. Potato Head would be making a cameo on our Super Bowl commercials if the capitalist didn't think that he would make want to eat fries from Burger

King. And indeed he does. Capitalists are merely enjoying the fruits of the country we call the United States of America. Using Mr. Potato Head or any other "sacred" character is fair game and should remain that way. If we want Mr. Potato Head off of our commercials and back into our toy boxes, then we need to stop buying the product which he promotes, because as long as we continue to buy them, Burger King and any other capitalist corporation will continue to use them. It's not their fault, though, because in this equation the capitalists seem to be the only reasonable and logical party.

Josh Barnett
Class of '01

The Battalion encourages letters to the editor. Letters must be 300 words or less and include the author's name, class, and phone number. The opinion editor reserves the right to edit letters for length, style, and accuracy. Letters may be submitted in person at 013 Reed McDonald with a valid student ID. Letters may also be mailed to:
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College Station, TX
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E-mail: batt@unix.tamu.edu
For more details on letter policy, please call 845-3313 and direct your question to the opinion editor.

STUDENT LIFE

Food Services scores with Outbound Meals

The semester break brought a handful of changes to Aggieland. The strings of lights adorning campus have been packed away, former parking lots are buried under mounds of dirt and Food Services unveiled the new Outbound Dining program. The program is a good addition to A&M's food services, and those responsible have gone unrecognized.



DAVID JOHNSTON
columnist

For those Aggies still unfamiliar with the new Food Services program, students may use their meal plan to pick up a "meal to go" at either the Commons or Sbis Dining Facilities. Students may choose several different meal options each day, and after only a few minutes they are on their way. Though it seemed not many students were aware of Outbound Meals when they began last Tuesday, the number of users is steadily growing. This new program is a terrific idea. While Texas A&M Food Services is an easy target for student gripes, the department has again demonstrated they care about their clients. Previously, the only option open to Meal Plan students who could not take the time to

eat at a Dining Hall was the Aggie Meal Credit program. Meal credit was a useful alternative. Students traded their dining-hall meal for a few dollars credit toward purchases at the Underground Food Court, Bernie's Pizza or other campus food stops. Outbound Meals benefit students by going a step beyond meal credits. There are very few meals to be purchased for the price of an Aggie Meal Credit, but Outbound gives students an entire meal in exchange for a dining hall visit. Aggies who have tried an Outbound Meal appreciate the program, and it is time to recognize those responsible for this student service. Of course Food Services deserves credit for accepting input and implementing an idea, but the notion was conceived by a student group. At the last meeting of the Student Senate, senators hailed the Outbound program as a Student Senate success, but the senate, while supporting the idea, does not represent the origins of the plan. The Student Senate has passed legislation in support of the Outbound Meal program, helping to draw attention to Food Services' efforts. The idea was launched, however, years earlier by a virtually unknown group of students. The Student Food Services Advisory Board consists of A&M students who help Food Services make decisions that will affect the student body. The advisory board helps choose menu items, determine popular entrees and

recommend occasional changes. A few years ago the advisory board suggested Food Services consider a take-out meal program. That suggestion got the ball rolling and eventually resulted in the current Outbound Meal program. Food Services has changed significantly over the past few years. Private companies are now selling food on campus, Sbis is going through design changes and the department still found time to implement a new program at student recommendation. Aggies often focus on high-profile groups or people. Students look to the student body president or MSC organizations to make a difference, but often lesser known organizations can have a big impact. Similarly, individual students can change campus. Several student organizations began with one student's vision to affect campus. The university setting gives Aggies a unique opportunity to see small acts make a dramatic impact. Students should never hope that "someone" will do something, but rather should be bold and take the initiative. The worst thing that can happen is nothing. Students should keep in mind that while it's often easy to credit those who stand in the spotlight, many times the real responsibility lies behind the scenes.

David Johnston is a senior mathematics major.