

## Mind your manners!

Common courtesy regularly overlooked in everyday life, on and off-campus



JESSICA CRUTCHER

Working at a low-paying customer service job day-in and day-out can get tiring and frustrating, just as juggling work and school while trying to maintain an acceptable GPR.

A bad day is usually not made any better by irate customers screaming because their cheeseburgers took two minutes longer than normal to arrive. The use of basic manners would please many people.

The terms "please" and "thank you" are a part of the English language for a reason. "How are you?" is not a rhetorical question.

If people who deal with hundreds of others daily in the course of their jobs takes the trouble to inquire how a person's day went, the least the other person can do is answer politely.

If someone said "howdy" on campus, would one's first reflex be to answer them or to stare blankly for a moment and then ask, "What'd you say the total was?"

Being courteous goes beyond dining establishments, though. Observe the behavior in any crowded club or bar.

It is no wonder bartenders get grouchy when they are forced to spend their Friday night serving drinks to drunk people who are not even willing to wait their turn in line.

Waitresses have to put up with the same thing, except they get the added perk of receiving obscene propositions from intoxicated customers.

Bouncers also receive undeserved abuse. They have the reputation of being rude and boorish.

But few people would stay nice

when their every spare minute is occupied in separating the two men fighting over the drunk woman stripping on the dance floor at one in the morning.

A basic rule forced upon nearly everyone in preschool is, "Pick up after yourself."

This does not mean people should bus their own tables when dining at expensive restaurants.

However, it does mean consideration of others should always be used.

When eating at a fast food restaurant, people should place their trash in the proper receptacles upon leaving instead of abandoning it on the table or scattering it haphazardly in the parking lot.

A better living environment is easily attainable. Friendliness and courtesy should not be reserved for the parents and guests that arrive during football games and freshman welcome week.

Sometimes all it takes to turn someone's day around is a simple "hello" or "how are you?" It requires no money, relatively little energy, and even takes less time to say than "Hey, I didn't want pickles on this!"

Jessica Crutcher is a sophomore journalism major.



REUBEN DELUNA/THE BATTALION

## Degree plans often misleading

Parents and students are often misled at how it takes to complete a college education. When choosing a free plan to apply with limited odds



ELIZABETH KOHL

nize the time commitment of ordinary classes or labs.

For example, a biochemistry major, according to the Undergraduate Catalog, will take two labs in the first semester of their freshman year and face as many as four in a single semester as they approach upper level. Such a prescription reveals that a major glitch in the system is the allotment of credit hours to science labs.

Students really spend a minimum of three hours a week in these labs and only receive one credit hour. On the other hand, a single three-credit course only lasts two and a half hours a week. Labs contain quizzes, tests and homework just like other courses, and the time commitment should be recognized.

Another obstacle for some lies in simply choosing a major. About 2,500 students are listed as general studies majors for the fall semester. Each one will eventually be required to declare a more permanent field of study. These students must apply to the college that contains their field and then transfer the credits they have already earned, hoping they do not lose too many hours in the process.

Any student who has ever changed majors is aware of the problems it can cause. Due to slight variance in the core curriculum of degree plans, changing fields of study becomes time consuming and expensive. Students find themselves repeating similar courses

such as Math 142 and 151 or English 205 and 210 just to satisfy the core requirements for their majors.

Composed of roughly 48 hours, core curriculum is supposed to be a method of creating well-rounded students. But because of the lack of uniformity in credit hours, these courses can burden students' horizons instead of broadening them.

Aside from causing those changing majors to repeat classes, completing the core curriculum is often the reason many students find themselves in summer school.

Sometimes they have only taken one course in their major field of study by their junior years. Unless the administration realizes that sometimes less is best, the next generation may be too well-rounded. College is becoming just another requirement in the process of getting a job.

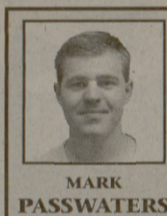
As this trend grows, universities move toward efficiency in education, causing students of every class rank to find themselves lost in the system. It does little good to be so efficient with a system that is so complicated it has negative effects on students' educations.

To make the four-year university a reality instead of a myth, the administration must consider ways to revise credit assignments, make changing majors a smoother process and review the efficiency of core curriculum requirements.

Elizabeth Kohl is a junior accounting major.

## Middle East agreement, Barak promise lasting peace

For half a century, the possibility of a lasting peace between the Palestinians and the Israelis has been slim.



MARK PASSWATERS

For the last few years, a running joke has put those odds as even worse than those of the Indianapolis Colts and the Super Bowl being mentioned in the same sentence.

There are things that are happening in the world today that may change that view, and it does not have anything to do with Peyton Manning becoming a fine NFL quarterback.

Last weekend, Palestine and Israel, two long-time adversaries signed an agreement to continue the process set out last year in the Wye River Accords.

The resurrection of this agreement, which requires Israel to return land to Palestinian control in return for security guarantees, has to be seen as an incredibly positive step.

Why should an agreement to do something that had already been agreed upon be such a big deal? Because the two sides worked it out on their own.

There was no involvement from the United States or any other party. While Secretary of State Madeleine Albright was at the signing of the documents, the negotiations had been completed before her arrival.

As a result, the U.S. State Department — embarrassed by the reactions of the Kosovar Albanians after NATO's "victory" — is still looking for a new diplomatic coup. What may be deemed as America's minor loss is a great victory for the Israeli Government and the Palestinian Authority.

Such an unprecedented show of cooperation and a mutual desire to get things done could be a symbol that "The Peace of the Brave" truly is attainable.

What has made this possible? Nothing less than the desire of the Israeli public to make peace, which brought about the emergence of Ehud Barak, Israel's current prime minister.

Since the end of the Gulf War and the collapse of the Soviet Union, it has been plainly clear to

Yasser Arafat and most of the Palestinians that they cannot defeat Israel in an armed conflict.

And while terrorists from groups such as Hezbollah and Hamas still show their opposition to peace through violence, such incidents have been on the decline in recent years.

Arafat knows that the only way that he can succeed in his goal of obtaining a Palestinian homeland is to work with the Israelis, not against them.

Arafat's position allows him to make decisions with minimal outside input, unlike his Israeli equivalent.

**"For the first time, it appears that both the Israelis and the Palestinians are ready to go the course."**

After the Palestinian Intefadeh (uprising) in the late '80s, it became clear to some Israelis that using force against the Palestinians to maintain control was not going to work.

Therefore, when Yitzak Rabin was elected prime minister in 1992, he promised to negotiate a settlement with the Palestinians. Rabin was true to his word, and the first steps toward peace were taken in 1994.

At this point, however, the Israeli people were still sharply divided on this course of action, and he was killed by an Orthodox Israeli less than a year later.

The actions of the man elected prime minister after Rabin's death have a great deal to do with the possibilities of success increasing.

Benjamin Netanyahu was elected prime minister on a platform of "Peace with security," and he promptly set about destroying any goodwill that had been vested between the Israelis and Palestinians.

Netanyahu's claims that he was working for peace became about as believable as safety claims from a used Ford Pinto salesman.

Netanyahu would call off negotiations, violate agreements signed by Rabin and even try to

blackmail the United States for concessions while "working for peace."

The final straw came after the Wye Accords, when Netanyahu suspended implementation less than a month after signing it.

The Israeli people, embarrassed by Netanyahu, were far more willing to return to Rabin's idea of "land for peace" than they had been five years before.

Enter Ehud Barak. Barak, the leader of the Labor Party and a renowned war hero, promised to pick up where Rabin left off and work with the Palestinians.

In fact, it was the only real plank in his campaign platform, and he was elected in a landslide.

Barak has the respect of the Israeli people, and the nation is now more willing to follow him than they would have been a few years before.

There is a new desire among Israelis to attain peace at any price, and Barak is a man capable of doing it.

This new agreement is only a first step. There is still the question of what should be done about Jerusalem, and if the Palestinians will actually have a real country.

Both sides recognize that this debate cannot be settled with guns, but at the negotiating table.

But the fact that the two sides are now working directly with one another, chances for a solution are getting better and better.

With something as complicated as Israeli-Palestinian relations, there are many things that have to be set in place for anything to work.

With Barak and Arafat, there are two strong leaders that either command the respect of, or simply command, their people.

There also has to be a great desire among everyone involved to make the effort needed.

For the first time, it appears that both the Israelis and the Palestinians are ready to go the course.

If these two old foes allow the momentum from their newfound ability to agree to snowball, they may be on the verge of one of the greatest victories in human history.

Mark Passwaters is an electrical engineering graduate student.

### MAIL CALL

#### Reagan good resident

In response to Beverly Mireles' pt. 10 column.

I find it hard to believe that someone who was wetting diapers and eating off the floor when Ronald Reagan was elected, knows anything about his presidency. Beverly Mireles proved me right! She needs to check out the facts before she needs to look at the positive trends he created that we enjoy today. She needs to realize that because of Reagan, as an adult, we have never had to worry about the Iron Curtain, inflation, high interest rates, 70 percent tax rates and so on, if you really understand our economy, "deficits."

Obviously, the facts are not something she is interested in. Instead, she slams one of the greatest residents of this century.

Kenneth M. Kimball  
Staff Accountant, TAMU



MIKE LUCKOVICH

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