Conversation
One should never use an expression such as “Goodbye now” or “Bye Bye” as a parting phrase. These expressions are overworked, and they reflect poor taste. The correct reply is “Goodbye” or “Nice to have seen you.”

Do’s and Don’ts
When asking a girl to the A. and M. campus for a weekend, you should:

Ask dates at least a week in advance; several weeks for a big weekend.

Let your date know what kind of clothes she will need.

Compliment your date, for a girl loves sincere flattery.

To save embarrassment, pay the bill ahead of time if she is going to stay at the MSC, a motel or a boarding house.

Write your date at least once after she has gone home to thank her for coming (even if you didn’t like her).

Grooming
A gentleman keeps his hair cut often enough that a fresh haircut does not make a noticeable change in his appearance. He always appears clean-shaven.

Gentlemanly Conduct
Ordinarily, a man opens the door for a lady and allows her to enter a room first. However, if the door is hard to open, the man enters first and holds the door open for the lady. He also enters a darkened room first to turn on the lights.

Mims’ Manual of Manners
BY DUNAE CRENWELGE ’15
This spring, a pamphlet donated by Malcolm Hall ’62 titled Social Customs: Corps of Cadets made its way to my desk. “Just as you have entered A. and M. to raise your educational level to the high degree demanded of students here,” the pamphlet begins, “you will be expected to develop your knowledge of social customs to an equally high plane.” And then later: “It is the duty of every Aggie to strive for the standards of Soldier, Statesman and Knightly Gentleman.”

Intigued by its dignified tone and advice for just about every imaginable social situation, I emailed former Aggies for information about its origins. One of the more than 150 responses I received was from Weldon “Bo” Lee ’60, a member of a committee of cadets who wrote the pamphlet before its distribution in fall 1959.

I learned that the manual was the brainchild of Percy Mims, the Corps’ 2nd Air Wing Commander in 1960 (and interestingly, the grandchild of William Adam Duncan, director of Texas A&M food services from 1920 to 1937 and the man for whom Duncan Dining Hall is named). Unfortunately, Mims passed away in 2010, but former Corps commander and classmate Bill Heye ’60 recalled his efforts to produce the book during the summer of 1959. “As a Corps leader, Percy was meticulous in manners and dress,” he said. “He was concerned about how cadet behavior reflected on the college, and he knew that we would enter the workplace where etiquette was important.”

By all accounts, the Corps at this time was a rowdy, all-male organization full of “hazing, cussing and raising hell,” as one responder put it. Many cadets were first-generation students from walks of
Lee recalled that students from other Texas colleges often showed disdain toward Aggies.

"The pamphlet was intended as a reference to help our classmates avoid some common social gaffes," he said.

"There was a bit of hubbub when it came out, but I will say that I still do not wear white socks with a suit!"

While the pamphlet was only distributed in fall 1959 and never became official issue, some company leaders may have used it for unit instruction. It was compiled by referencing works like Amy Vanderbilt's Complete Book of Etiquette.

"We did not work much as a face-to-face committee," said Lee. "Two or three of us might meet and loop in another by telephone to decide what topics should go in a section. Then, someone wrote a draft and typed it with carbon copies. Another would deliver the carbons to others for proofreading before someone else would consolidate the final proof. Percy coordinated it all."

It was well-intentioned, but an unknown cadet jokingly dubbed the pamphlet "Mims' Manual of Manners." The name stuck, but didn't faze Mims.

"To write a book on manners in that time and culture was to say, 'give me something else I can joke about,'" Heye said. "But I've always admired Percy and his fortitude in publishing the pamphlet. He looked upon this as part of his contribution to the Corps and the school."

While the all-male environment and remoteness of College Station from the fairer sex may have discouraged serious consideration of the book, it was—most coincidentally—published around the time that Gen. Earl Rudder '32 began initiating Corps reforms. While Rudder is credited with injecting more discipline into the Corps, Mims and others deserve credit for starting cadets on the road to being more sophisticated, even if they didn't recognize it at the time.

View the complete pamphlet online at give.am/CorpsEtiquette.