

HEBRON, WEST BANK



BERNAT ARMANGUE | THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Caught in the crossfire

Palestinian children run to take cover during clashes between Palestinian and Israeli soldiers in the West Bank city of Hebron on Thursday. Palestinians in Hebron continued to protest Thursday over the Israeli decision to recognize a disputed West Bank shrine as one of its national heritage sites. Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas warned earlier this week that the region could plunge into a “religious war” over the decision.

LEGON, GHANA

Gender gap in Ghana blatant

Living as a female in the United States, I often take for granted how equally I am treated. Sure, there is the occasional sexist remark or rude gesture, but in general men treat me like an equal.

THERESE KENNELLY

is a sophomore studying English and African studies.

However, at the University of Ghana in Legon, men feel it’s their duty to hoot and holler at women merely for walking around campus.

I hear cat calls, whistles and rude comments shouted at me from the streets and the balconies of dorms. At first, I was very put off by it, but now I am starting to ignore it completely.

It is unfortunate that women and men exist in separate spheres here. Yes, women can do whatever they want in Ghana, but they will be doing it alone.

Most female students on campus are fairly wealthy, while the men come from a range of economic classes. This disparity means only a small fraction of the female population have access to education.

Male and female students here don’t hang out — ever. You either date someone or you are a friend in that you say “hi” to them when you see them. I often hang out with my male Ghanaian friends at their dorms and they’re very nice to me, but when I ask why I’m the only woman around them, they respond that Ghanaian girls just don’t hang out with guys.

The men also tell me they don’t understand Ghanaian women and are frustrated because the women don’t want to relate to men outside a full-fledged relationship. Though men and women seem to have great bonds with their own sex, they don’t hang out with the opposite sex like college students in the United States.

Women and men here also do not show affection in public. Holding hands, kissing or, god forbid, making out is strictly against the moral code. Kissing is

also not shown in Ghanaian films, so many people are unfamiliar with how to show such affection.

Instead, affection is saved for the bedroom. Also, many women date a man their age in addition to a sugar daddy, an older man, while men date one girl in public and many more on the side. Once people are married, the woman must always be faithful to her husband, but it is OK for the man to cheat as long as he is discreet.

Overall, men and women not only operate under different spheres but also under different moral standards.

It is sad that genders seem to have poor relations here. Men and women, in general, seem to be uncomfortable around each other.

As someone who has always had mostly male friends, it has taken me a while to explain to Ghanaian men that women and men can and should be friends with one another. I hope the future of male and female relations will be brighter, but for now the future looks pretty bleak to me.

WASHINGTON, D.C.

Obama tries to maintain middle-class connection

President Barack Obama grew up experiencing the hardships of poverty and divorced parents. He is no stranger to the struggles of a middle-class family, whether during economic downturn or emotional turmoil.

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is a sophomore studying policy analysis.

In 1988, he entered Harvard Law School and became a Harvard Law Review editor. He served as a professor at the University of Chicago Law School for 12 years, becoming engaged in community service and civil rights law.

His background is rooted in middle-class America. So why do “everyday Americans” claim to see him as detached from their concerns, as an elitist?

President Obama’s transformation from teacher to senator to president is perhaps symbolic, representing the transformation those involved in America’s political process undergo.

Far from losing the public’s trust or respect, President Obama

is trying to hold on to his connection with the average American — the understanding that he has been there and shares in the hardships of the people.

At times it appears he is required to empathize rather than sympathize with America’s plight due to the recent recession, which adversely affected millions of families across the nation.

As Obama became a part of our nation’s political system, perceptions about him changed. By many, he is seen as an “insider” working for or with the system rather than an “everyday American” striving to instigate reform.

To combat this, President Obama has visited factories, small towns and schools, taking on tough questions in an effort to prove that he is trying to change Washington for the better rather than become a part it in its current state.

The problem lies in perception, however, when the president, arriving by helicopter or an armored car escort, goes to a small town to talk about his connection with the middle class.

Surrounded by police, secret service agents and other security personnel, unable to walk freely among the people or around the town, Obama does not exactly present a friendly image of an “everyday American.”

People forget that as the leader of the most powerful nation on Earth, the president cannot be both an extraordinary individual and a “common man.”

With the recent passage of the president’s budget to Congress, the atmosphere in Washington is heated as members of both the House and Senate, Republicans and Democrats, try to balance their interests against the president’s goals.

This is the crucial moment for his agenda, because it will be ineffective without funding. This is also the moment when Obama is most connected with the concerns of his constituents — the middle class — because his agenda is centered on revitalizing and increasing the size of the middle class, the “everyday Americans.”

MADRID



ALEX FARRIS | IDS

Smoking siesta

Students enjoy a smoke and beer between classes at the Universidad Complutense on Thursday in Madrid. Though the university’s official policy prohibits smoking inside the campus’ buildings, the pressures of Spanish culture often leave the rule unenforced. Spaniards can be seen smoking in restaurants, at home, at bars, on the streets and nearly everywhere else, despite community and national legislation against it.

NEW ORLEANS

Ex-officer pleads guilty in Katrina killing probe

BY MARY FOSTER AND MIKE KUNZELMAN

The Associated Press

In Hurricane Katrina’s chaotic aftermath, police shot six people — killing two — as they crossed a bridge. For years the case was a shocking symbol of the confusion and violence that swept through the flooded city. On Wednesday, it became a mark of shame for the police department.

Michael Lohman, a retired lieutenant who supervised the department’s probe of the shootings, pled guilty to organizing a cover-up to conceal that police gunned down

unarmed civilians.

Lohman pled guilty to conspiracy to obstruct justice. Prosecutors said Lohman and other officers conspired to fabricate witness statements, falsify reports of the incident and plant a gun to make it appear the killings were justified.

The shootings happened Sept. 4, 2005, six days after the storm flooded 80 percent of the city, and were the best-known of several violent incidents that raised questions about police conduct immediately after Katrina.

Survivors have said the officers fired at unarmed people who were crossing to get food at a grocery

store. The officers claimed they opened fire only after being shot at. Ronald Madison, 40, and James Brissette, 19, were killed and four others wounded.

Lohman’s plea marked the first conviction in the case. Seven officers were charged with murder or attempted murder but a state judge threw out all charges. Federal authorities stepped in to investigate. Federal prosecutor said Lohman is cooperating with investigators.

Lohman, 42, is free on \$50,000 bond and faces a maximum sentence of five years in prison and a \$250,000 fine.

The department’s reputation

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