

Shufflin' boots, personalized belts move to C & W

Continued from p. 12

It's almost an Aggie tradition. From the cavern-like confines of Sparky's to the wide open spaces of the Lakeview Club, Aggies are two-stepping their way through college. And we betide the Texas A&M graduate who has not once pulled on his boots, strapped on a belt with his name on the back and danced the night away to the tune of "Cotton-Eyed Joe." But what if you've led a sheltered life and can't make any sense of the multitude of couples bobbing and shuffling around the floor? "The only way you can learn is to jump in and do it," said one shuff-flipping dancer.



refuses to sit down. And the "Strap-hanger" dances with her fingers looped through her partner's back belt loop—a device that supports her as she whirls about the room.

Dance historians have expended much effort in investigating the origins of the polka. Some say it was invented by a Bohemian servant girl named Anna, but Polish and Czech historians both claim the dance as their own. "Polka" in Czech means "Polish girl."

The schottische is a folk dance that became popular in Poland during the 1850s. Its motions consist of three steps and a hop, and dancers need a considerable amount of room to move about. The schottische bears resemblance to another Texas folk dance, the Cotton-Eyed Joe.

Here dancers form a line that resembles a wall in a "Red Rover" game. The Cotton-Eyed Joe song is a swift piece of fiddle-music that moves faster with every verse. Most of the dance involves skips, hops and kicks, but toward the end, dancers are struggling to keep their footing. At the same time, the singer is yelling lyrics like a square dance caller—asking one question and getting one reply.

"Watchewsay?" "Buuuulllll shit!!!" roars the crowd.

The whole C&W scene is somewhat baffling to Terry Leone, who came to Dallas from Arthur Murray's Fifth Avenue studio in New York City. The Cotton-Eyed Joe is so popular, he says, that customers ask for lessons in that dance specifically.

"You know what we get a lot of?" he asks. "A lot of ranchers. They drive in from the suburbs. In New York, our customers arrived in chauffeured limousines. Here in Texas, they come in pickup trucks wearing cowboy hats and boots. And you know, they're just as wealthy as the ones in limousines."

Know your cowboy

By GLENNA WHITLEY
Cosmic cowboys, rhinestone cowboys, drugstore cowboys, midnight cowboys and the Dallas Cowboys.

Will the real cowboy please stand up?

If you're in doubt, a kicker can easily be identified by his outfit.

Pearl buttons on Western shirts. Boot-cut jeans over Tony Lama boots, held up by a belt with a name tooled on the back.

And over his close cropped hair he has to have a Resistol hat or a cap advertising tractors or seed.

Another important "accessory" is the "right little Lady." A Cowgirl is just as proud of the kicker image and tradition as her male counterpart. But she is usually not as easily identified as the cowboy.

Women wear the boots and tight jeans, but most don't dip snuff or wear John Deere caps. And though country-western singer Dolly Parton is famous for her teased mane of blonde hair, most cowgirls don't imitate it.

Then there are the names; both of them. Like Jim Bob, Larry Dean, Betty Lou, and Thelma Liz. Or nicknames like Buster, Buddy and Hank.

Other things are optional. Some have silver snuff can lids, or pocket

watches and hat pins. Some sport silver rodeo prize belt buckles.

But even if you have all this paraphernalia, the "drugstore" or "city" cowboy can give himself away because he lacks certain mannerisms peculiar to kickers.

A few examples. When it's raining, the kicker tucks one side of his jeans into his boots. The drugstore cowboy, not knowing any better, lets his jeans drag along the ground tearing the bottoms.

Have you ever seen a kicker with an umbrella? They always use ponchos and a rubber covering over his hat.

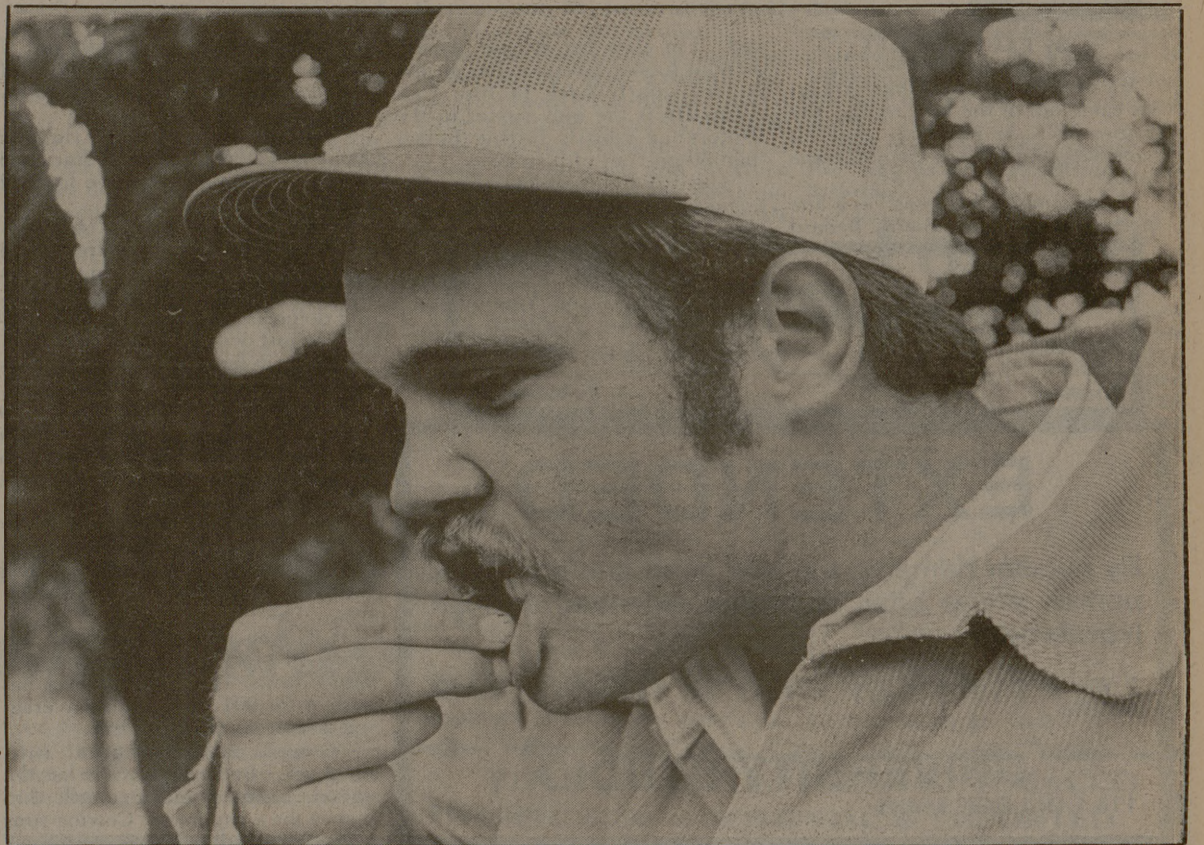
The novice turns green during his first dip of snuff, smokeless tobacco. A peenche between yore cheek and gum gives you real tobacco pleasure.

The beginner spits it out constantly and lets it dribble down his chin, but the old pro can keep it in his mouth for hours and hit a spittoon or cup with deadly accuracy.

A word of caution: Think twice before drinking out of a cowboy's canteen.

That is, if he's drinking coke. A Lone Star long neck is usually his preferred beverage.

He does his drinking where the music is western and "where honky-tonk women love redneck



A peenche between yore cheek and gum gives you real tobacco pleasure.

men." (Red Stegall)

He gets to the honky-tonk in his Cowboy Cadillac or pick-up truck, which is plastered with stickers. "Cowboys make better lovers. If you eat, you're involved in agriculture. Lover, fighter, wild bull rider.

Pass with care, driver chewing tobacco."

Inside the cab, a spittoon is in easy reach on the dash. Curtains and a gun rack decorate the back window.

But if you don't have a pick-up, and you get nauseated at the idea of

dipping snuff, don't worry. Progressive country music has made it easier. You can grow your hair long, wear desert boots, and drown in sangria wine, and still enjoy a few of the things that make kickerhood special.

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by Martha Rosson

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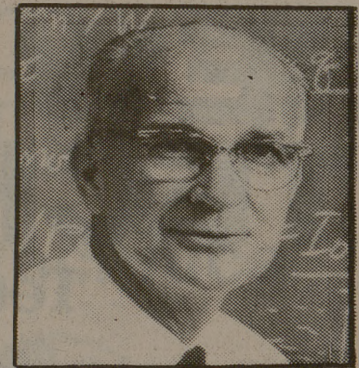
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