

Redpots lead wood-laden crews

By John Bramblett
 Battalion Reporter

"The burning desire to beat the hell out of t.u." is in the hearts of all who love Texas A&M University. It is especially strong during football season and is symbolized by the Aggie bonfire. But who takes this energy and turns it into the work force that builds this Aggie institution?

Six men, called redpots, harness this energy. A redpot is a red hard hat or helmet used to distinguish these leaders from the rest of the workers.

"There is the head stack, two floating redpots that can go to anybody in the Corps, an L-2 pot and a F-2 pot, and a civilian redpot," head stack Art Free, a senior from Brenham, said.

They, along with the senior

truck and senior head civilian, supervise bonfire's construction, he said. Senior truck is in charge getting the trucks that transports the wood. Senior head civilian oversees work done by civilian students. All eight have hand-picked juniors working under them.

There are two civilian coordinators and three Corps coordinators. Outfits in the Corps are led by their commanding officers and first sergeants. Dorms are led by yellowpots and crew chiefs.

Nobody really knows when the redpots began running bonfire.

"The head yell leader used to be head stack and the yell leaders ran the cutting sight," Free said.

As the University grew, the yell leaders' other responsibilities

followed suit so officers were needed to be in charge. The last yell leader who was also head stack was Les Harvey in 1975, Free said.

Redpots, like most things at Texas A&M, have a tradition-filled history. But there is very little written history on them.

"Everything is passed down by mouth and remembered by each class," Free said.

The redpots are called "dad" by the junior redpots they picked and in turn call them "son." The redpots treat their sons like freshman in the Corps, Free said.

They toss axe handles to pick which redpot has the privilege of riding the outhouse to the top of the stack. Tossing axe handles is similar to grabbing a baseball with an opponent, trying to have the last hand on the bat.

The redpots' pliers are attached to the top of the center pole before it is raised. When the pliers are on top of the center pole, the head stack has to go up the pole to get to the pliers down so they can wire the initial wrap of logs around the center pole.

"It (making the head stack climb the stack) started with the class of '78, and I guess they did it to mess the head stack around," Free said.

The idea of former students lends itself to former redpots, deadpots.

"They are the only people we can turn to if we have a problem. There will be a reunion of redpots the Friday following bonfire ... it'll be a circus," he said.

What motivates someone to spend all their free time on a project for which they get no University recognition only to see it burn up in a fraction of the time it took to build it?

"The football team is out there busting their butt getting ready for t.u., and if I'm over here busting my butt on bonfire I feel I'm doing my part to beat t.u.," Free said.

"Personal satisfaction of knowing you're one of six people chosen to lead the University in the building of this thing," redpot James Birdwell from Deweyville said.

"I just love bonfire," Free added.

Elvis Costello turns cowboy with ear-pleasing album

By Vic Sylvia
 Battalion Reporter

Elvis Costello — *Almost Blue*

Elvis Costello is fat. He's also into country-and-western music now.

I'm not suggesting that there is a correlation between these two observations. However, they are true.

Recently, Elvis Costello appeared on a television special honoring the near-legendary C&W artist George Jones. I was amazed to discover that E. Costello was one of George's friends. In fact, I found it interesting that they even knew of each other.

New Wave and country music are, for the most part, miles apart. However sometimes out of the blue a crossover occurs as in the cases of Nick Lowe and Joe Ely.

Nick, a post-punk artist and producer, married Carlene Carter, a singer from the inner circle of C&W music. Joe Ely, a Texas rockabilly star with country roots, recently toured with the Clash.

So, it appears that music in general is congealing into a unified form that defies categorization.

But what does all this have to do with Elvis Costello's new album, *Almost Blue*?

Costello has temporarily, I assume, abandoned his more familiar punkesque style to adopt a more sedate country sound. Even though diehard new wave enthusiasts may not readily admit it, *Almost Blue* is a very good album.

Elvis Costello can do C&W, and do it very well. His selection of country songs include some famous numbers by such great artists as Merle Haggard, Don Gibson, Charlie Rich, George

Jones and Hank Williams.

It's quite refreshing to hear some of the old songs done with a new vigor with no loss of the emotional impact found in the originals. Costello must really enjoy country music, as is evident in the intense feeling he brings to such tearjerkers as "A Good Year for the Roses" and "Brown to Blue."

He also reveals his inner honky tonk personality in the rousing versions of "Honey Hush" and Hank Williams' famous "Why Don't You Love Me Like You Used To Do?"

Anyone who follows Costello's music should realize that Elvis has been singing songs about rejection and depression for some time now. So his progression into the country music arena is a natural move.

So what if the songs are not as sophisticated as "The Angels Want to Wear My Red Shoes" or "The Imposter," they still get their points across just the same. Even though my favorite Costello album is his first, *My Aim is True*, I can see that Elvis is becoming more sure of himself and wants to be a contender for the gravy train of commercial success.

With a country album he can cover more bases simultaneously increase his popularity. Nice going, Elvis!

Perhaps if you saw the aforementioned George Jones special you'll recall that Costello did a number called "Tonight the Bottle Let Me Down." Well, it is included here and it doesn't sound alien at all.

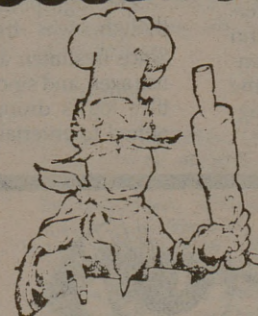
It is as if Elvis Costello had been singing country songs all his life. One thing's for sure, he's been around longer than many of his new wave colleagues and seems to have no intention of fading away any time soon.

However, time has changed Elvis Costello from the frail spastic boy singing "Watching the Detectives" on "Saturday Night Live" to the calm yet paunchy stranger singing duets with George Jones. No matter who he is now, he's still making superlative albums. If you even remotely like E. Costello or country music, you'll be pleasantly pleased by *Almost Blue* because it's an exceptional blend of both worlds.

Vic Sylvia is a graduate student in the Vet School.



Possible Monday holiday: Texas A&M President Frank Vandiver has declared Monday a holiday if we beat t.u. This gives you extra added incentive to cheer on the football team.



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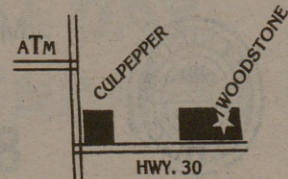
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