



Sally Freeman wears a fashionable quartz crystal and peace earring.

peace



Love



fashion



Bingo Barnes sports his hippy fashion inside the Bug Zapper — the shop features natural fabrics and ethnic designs.



Barnes handcrafts a hematite, silver and skull bead bracelet.

Story by John Mabry
 Photos by Mike C. Mulvey

Today at college campuses all over the nation, including Texas A&M, students are adopting many of the styles they used to laugh at in those old pictures of Mom and Dad. The clothes have continued to make a big comeback following the Brooks Brothers' era of the early-to-mid '80s, when most students wouldn't be caught dead in a pair of worn sandals.

Today, however, you can't walk through campus without seeing fellow students into the "nouveau hippie" look — long hair for both men and women, tie-dyed T-shirts, beaded and silver jewelry, peasant blouses, bandanas and long, colorful skirts.

To explain the trend from a sociological standpoint, Dr. Stjepan Mestrovic, associate professor of sociology, points to a theory called postmodernism.

Part of postmodernism, he says, involves looking back nostalgically to the past out of a distaste for the present.

"The 'hippie' movement, even though I don't think we are going to go back to the values of it (in the '60s), is one more thing in this long, long trend to bring back former styles... People are not happy with the way they are, so they're looking back to the 'good old days,' and it has to come back to fashion."

Wearing a colorful, quilted vest, faded blue jeans, leather sandals, and sporting long hair and a beard, James, a senior parks and recreation major, is the epitome of the '60s Revival look.

The main reason he dresses the way he does, he says, is for comfort, not for fashion.

"I don't know anything about fashion," he says. "I dress as functionally as possible... I like things that are nonrestrictive, that give me freedom of movement and air."

If James is the male version of the nouveau hippie, senior Jill Butler is his female counterpart. With no makeup and her hair worn loose and natural, she dresses in a burlap Guatemalan jacket, sandals and shorts.

She, too, likes the clothes because they're comfortable.

"As far as my hair and makeup goes," she says, "it's a matter of convenience. Also, I think I look my best when I don't have a lot of makeup on. I look really, incredibly fake with a lot of makeup and all that stuff in my hair."

Mestrovic says "People always say that... When people started wearing miniskirts in the '60s they said it was comfortable. How can it be comfortable when you can't even sit down without everything showing?"

James says there is, indeed, a

deeper reason, he has adopted the style. "I like to do some things against the norm because it (the mainstream) is not something I want to be identified with. I wouldn't want to be compared to the general A&M population."

Butler also says that comfort is the only reason she wears her hippie threads. "When I first came to college, I started dressing like this because I saw people on campus that I liked the way they looked," she says. "But, on the other hand, I'll also see girls who are dressed up and I'll think that looks good, too."

College students, says Mestrovic, are more susceptible to these trends because they're in a transitory phase of their life.

"This age group is the most vulnerable in terms of power — they're not children, but they're not having owning bourgeois capitalists yet. They're right in the middle, and they're going to be the most sensitive."

Rebecca Boyles, assistant professor of theater arts, is both a costume designer and a former college student who "survived the '60s."

While today she dresses like she just finished raiding Neiman-Marcus, twenty years ago she was wearing moccasins, floor-length bell-bottoms, a fringed suede vest and beaded dog-collar necklace. Her hair was straight, parted in the middle and had grown past her waist.

Boyles says there is a difference, however, in what was behind the clothes twenty years ago and today.

"It was dressing to make a political statement," she says. "For example, many white people had started to show their concern for racial issues. Today it's not as much of a protest as it is a fashion statement."

Mestrovic sees a difference, well.

"People were questioning for a little while whether modernity was worth it," he says. "And that passed over very quickly. Today we've got the problems, and people are cynical, but the political tone is most conservative, and that's a big difference."

Boyles says, however, that the reason for the new trend may be an environmentalist movement.

"This generation does seem more concerned about our earth... Suddenly, those weird people who lived through the '60s aren't old-fashioned anymore — maybe they're really serious about things like the environment... Suddenly, today's generation is more into natural fibers and the old way of doing things."

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