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# IT WAS COUNTRY WHEN COUNTRY WASN'T COOL

New music fails to live up to 'tear in my beer' tunes



**MICHAEL SCHAUB**  
columnist

I can't put my finger on the exact moment when country music began to irreversibly, incontrovertibly suck.

Maybe it was when George Strait first picked up a guitar and thought of the opening chords for "The Chair." Or maybe when Mr. and Mrs. Rimes first started dating and decided to have a daughter named LeAnn (isn't that something you pick up at Luby's for four bucks?), or perhaps when yuppies everywhere began blasting "Friends in Low Places" — quite possibly the worst song ever written — in their color-coordinated kitchens.

I blame Reagan. When the '80s dawned and it became apparent that Eddie Rabbitt would eventually record "I Thank the Lord for the Nighttime," the Great Communicator should have issued an executive order making it a capital crime for radio disc jockeys to play any song recorded with both a steel guitar and a Casio synthesizer with aqua-colored buttons.

And I'm all for the First Amendment, but if we're going to have exceptions, then "Achy Breaky Heart," which might just be the worst song ever written, should be on the top of the list.

OK, I admit it. I'm basically a hick. I grew up with Marty Robbins and Sons of the Pioneers on the hi-fi. I have a soft spot the size of Bakersfield for real country music in my heart. When I went through my first romantic breakup, I

drove around in a pickup listening to Hank Williams sing "I'm So Lonesome I Could Cry," nodding my head and thinking, "Yeah, Hank, yeah."

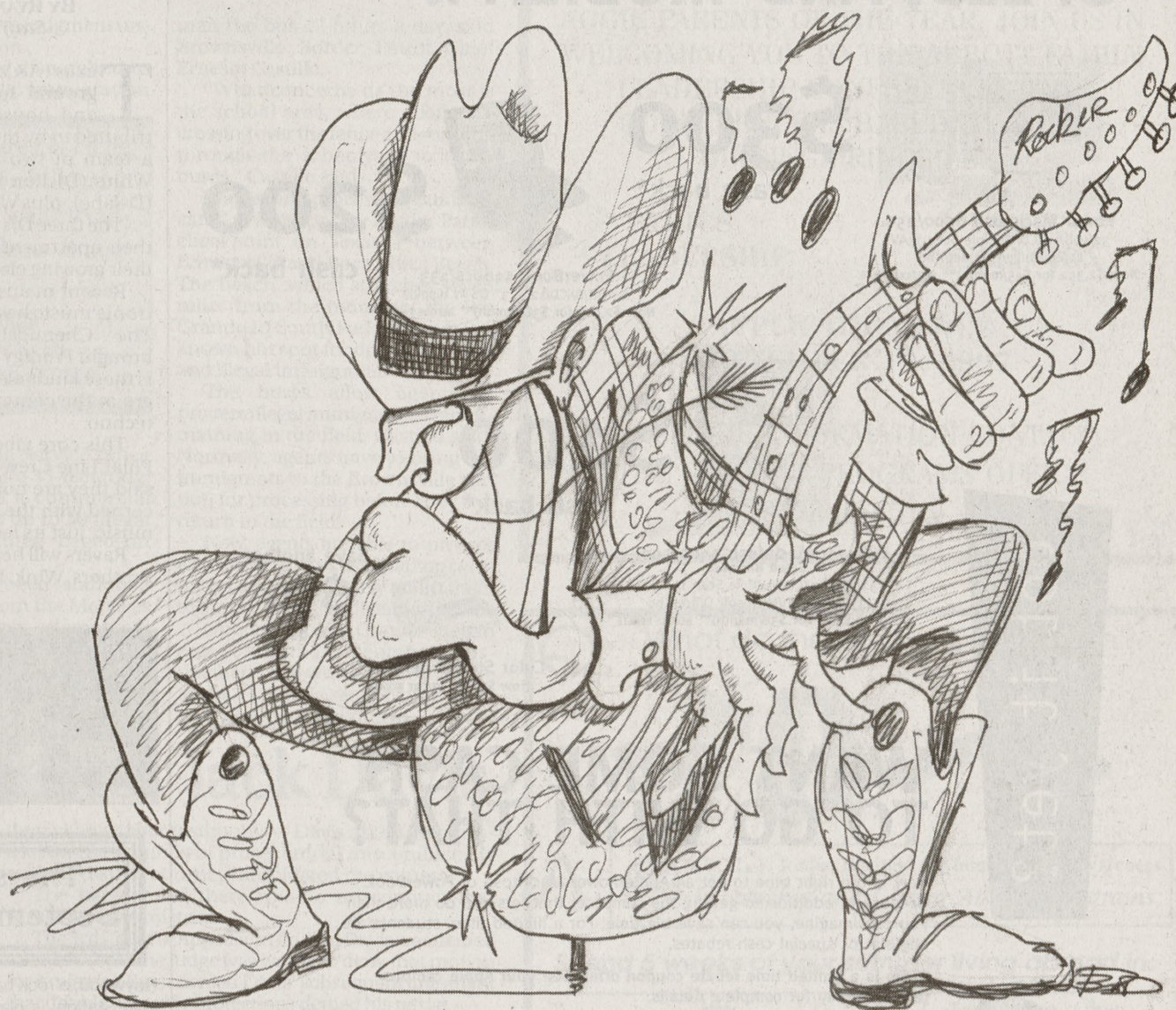
But country music became bastardized with the "me generation." In fact, it bears no resemblance to real country music anymore. Take heed, Colin Raye: you're just Jon Bon Jovi with a pedal steel guitar.

So what happened between the time Patsy Cline recorded "I Fall to Pieces" and Alan Jackson got a record contract? In fact, how did Alan Jackson get a record contract? What A&R man first listened to "Chattahoochee" in whatever shopping mall Jackson's untalented ass used to play at and thought, "Now there's a talent we can market relentlessly to people who like to cry in their O'Doul's non-alcoholic beer?"

I lived in a dorm for two years and I had plenty exposure to bad country. I cannot count the times I walked into my room only to listen to the guys across the hall blast David Allan Coe playing "Take This Job and Shove It." Every morning I walk onto the bus while the driver nods her head to "John Deere Green," which is a good contender for the title of "the worst song ever written."

This campus is infested with bad country music. Shadow Canyon recently announced "Outlaw Thursday," which will feature such acts as Chris LeDoux and Highway 6. Chris LeDoux is an outlaw? What the hell are these talent buyers smoking? Chris LeDoux couldn't get a parking ticket if he parked on the MSC grass.

But enough discussion of Nashville corporate crap. These poor guys and gals probably do the best jobs they can with



the songs they don't write. LeAnn Rimes might systematically ruin every song she gets her tiny little hands on, but hell, she could buy and sell me.

And Garth Brooks, who has taken to hanging with his new homeboy, soulless soul mate Billy Joel, is a mighty fine businessman. Who else could turn "The Thunder Rolls" — a song that could be fairly categorized as the worst song ever written — into a money maker?

Bad taste in country music is more than just an irritating idiosyncrasy. It is a serious psychological problem that

needs intensive care. If you have voluntarily listened to Randy Travis more than once in the past month, then throw out your dark blue ass-hugging jeans and spend your next paycheck on some albums by Johnny Cash, Jimmie Dale Gilmore, Buck Owens, Bob Wills, the Byrds and Son Volt.

Maybe I have a motive behind all this. Sure, Johnny Cash is a genius, but perhaps the real reason I admire him so much is because I know he could kick my ass. If I said something unkind about June Carter, Johnny could come saunter-

ing through the door and beat the ever-livin' crap out of me with a Shiner bottle.

I just don't get that vibe from George Strait. If I stood on the lawn of his very expensive San Antonio home, and yelled obscenities about his inability to play guitar better than his dog, he would probably just brew a cup of chamomile tea and write a sappy love song.

On his Casio synthesizer. Yeah, aqua-colored buttons and all.

Michael Schaub is a senior journalism major.

## PUBLIC NOTICE

BRIEF EXPLANATORY STATEMENTS OF PROPOSED CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENTS

SPECIAL ELECTION NOVEMBER 4, 1997

### PROPOSITION NO. 1 ON THE BALLOT

Senate Joint Resolution 36 proposes a constitutional amendment to allow a person to hold the position of municipal judge in more than one municipality.

The proposed amendment will appear on the ballot as follows:

"The constitutional amendment to allow a person who holds the office of municipal court judge to hold at the same time more than one civil office for which he person receives compensation."

### PROPOSITION NO. 2 ON THE BALLOT

Senate Joint Resolution 43 proposes a constitutional amendment to allow the legislature to limit the maximum annual increase in homestead appraisals for each year since the most recent tax appraisal. The amendment would also permit the legislature to allow the governing body of a school district to elect to apply the law providing for the transfer of the age-65-and-older school property tax freeze to the person's new homestead, if the move to the new residence homestead occurred before the law took effect.

The proposed amendment will appear on the ballot as follows:

"The constitutional amendment to authorize the Legislature to limit increases in the appraised value of residence homesteads for ad valorem taxation and to permit a school district to calculate the school property tax freeze applicable to the residence homestead of an elderly person or the surviving spouse of an elderly person in accordance with the law authorizing the transfer of the school property tax freeze to a different homestead regardless of whether that law was in effect at the time the person established the person's homestead."

### PROPOSITION NO. 3 ON THE BALLOT

Senate Joint Resolution 45 proposes a constitutional amendment to allow the legislature to authorize counties, cities, towns, and other local taxing entities to grant exemptions or other forms of ad valorem tax relief on property on which approved water conservation initiatives have been implemented.

The proposed amendment will appear on the ballot as follows:

"The constitutional amendment to authorize the legislature to permit a taxing unit to grant an exemption or other relief from ad valorem taxes on property on which a water conservation initiative has been implemented."

### PROPOSITION NO. 4 ON THE BALLOT

House Joint Resolution 104 proposes an

amendment to update the Texas Constitution by deleting duplicate numbering in its provisions and removing certain of its obsolete portions.

The proposed amendment will appear on the ballot as follows:

"The constitutional amendment eliminating duplicate numbering in and certain obsolete provisions of the Texas Constitution."

### PROPOSITION NO. 5 ON THE BALLOT

Senate Joint Resolution 19 proposes an amendment to allow the Supreme Court of Texas to hold sessions at any location in this state. Currently, the court is limited to holding sessions only at Austin, the seat of state government.

The proposed amendment will appear on the ballot as follows:

"The constitutional amendment authorizing the supreme court to sit to transact business at any location in this state."

### PROPOSITION NO. 6 ON THE BALLOT

Senate Joint Resolution 39 proposes a constitutional amendment to repeal the current provision which provides that the board of the Texas Growth Fund may not invest money in a business unless the business has disclosed to the board whether it has any direct financial investment in or with South Africa or Namibia.

The proposed amendment will appear on the ballot as follows:

"The constitutional amendment allowing the Texas growth fund to continue to invest in businesses without requiring those businesses to disclose investments in South Africa or Namibia."

### PROPOSITION NO. 7 ON THE BALLOT

Senate Joint Resolution 17 proposes a constitutional amendment to create the Texas Water Development Fund II as a fund separate and distinct from the Texas Water Development Fund. The amendment would authorize the Texas Water Development Board to administer the fund and issue general obligation bonds for purposes of the fund under guidelines set forth in the amendment.

The amendment would also allow the Board to use loan repayments coming into the fund after the end of the fiscal year to make bond debt service payments, and would provide certain conditions for the flow of funds for repayment of Texas agricultural water conservation bonds.

The proposed amendment will appear on the ballot as follows:

"The constitutional amendment relating to the authorization to the Texas Water Development Board to transfer existing bond authorizations for water

### PROPOSITION NO. 8 ON THE BALLOT

House Joint Resolution 31 proposes a constitutional amendment which would authorize home equity lending, in which a loan could be secured by a lien against the borrower's homestead. The amendment would also establish several provisions providing for consumer protection in the home equity lending process.

The proposed amendment will appear on the ballot as follows:

"The amendment to the Texas Constitution expanding the types of liens for home equity loans that a lender, with the homeowner's consent, may place against a homestead."

### PROPOSITION NO. 9 ON THE BALLOT

House Joint Resolution 96 proposes a constitutional amendment that would authorize the legislature to authorize a property tax of five cents for each \$100 valuation in rural fire prevention districts which are located in Harris County. The constitution currently authorizes a property tax of three cents for each \$100 valuation in rural fire prevention districts regardless of what county they are in.

The proposed amendment will appear on the ballot as follows:

"The constitutional amendment to authorize the legislature to authorize an ad valorem tax rate in rural fire prevention districts located in Harris County of five cents on each \$100 of taxable value of property."

supply, water quality, flood control, or state participation from one category of use to another category to maximize the use of existing funds and relating to more efficient operation of the bond programs."

### PROPOSITION NO. 10 ON THE BALLOT

Senate Joint Resolution 33 proposes a constitutional amendment to permanently dedicate monies from the Texas Crime Victims' Compensation Fund (and its auxiliary fund) so that they are used only for assisting victims of crime and not for any other purpose. If an episode of mass violence occurred, however, money from the funds could be used to assist victims of the mass violence if all other sources of authorized emergency assistance were depleted first.

The proposed amendment will appear on the ballot as follows:

"The constitutional amendment designating the purposes for which money in the compensation to victims of crime fund and the compensation to victims of crime auxiliary fund may be used."

### PROPOSITION NO. 11 ON THE BALLOT

House Joint Resolution 59 proposes a constitutional amendment to prohibit the Legislature from authorizing additional state debt payable from the general revenue fund if the resulting annual debt service (the amount needed each year to make payments) would exceed five percent of the annual general revenue avail-

able over the last three fiscal years, excluding revenues constitutionally dedicated for purposes other than payment of state debt.

The term "additional state debt" does not include bonds that, although backed by the full faith and credit of the state, are reasonably expected to be paid from revenue sources other than the general revenue fund.

The proposed amendment will appear on the ballot as follows:

"The constitutional amendment limiting the amount of state debt payable from the general revenue fund."

### PROPOSITION NO. 12 ON THE BALLOT

House Joint Resolution 55 proposes a constitutional amendment to provide that if the Texas Supreme Court does not act on a motion for a rehearing within 180 days of the motion's filing, the motion is denied.

The proposed amendment will appear on the ballot as follows:

"The constitutional amendment to establish a deadline for supreme court action on a motion for rehearing."

### PROPOSITION NO. 13 ON THE BALLOT

House Joint Resolution 8 proposes a constitutional amendment to establish the Texas Tomorrow trust fund dedicated exclusively to the prepayment of tuition and fees for higher education. The amendment would guarantee that if there is not enough money during any fiscal year to pay the appropriate tuition and required fees, the needed money will be appropriated out of the first available money coming into the state treasury each fiscal year.

The proposed amendment will appear on the ballot as follows:

"The constitutional amendment to encourage persons to plan and save for young Texans' college education, to extend the full faith and credit of the state to protect the Texas tomorrow fund of the prepaid higher education tuition program, and to establish the Texas tomorrow fund as a constitutionally protected trust fund."

### PROPOSITION NO. 14 ON THE BALLOT

House Joint Resolution 83 proposes a constitutional amendment to allow the legislature to set the official qualifications for constables.

The proposed amendment will appear on the ballot as follows:

"The constitutional amendment to allow the legislature to prescribe the qualifications of constables."

Estos son los informes explicatorios sobre las enmiendas propuestas a la constitución que aparecerán en la boleta el 4 de noviembre de 1997. Si usted no ha recibido una copia de los informes en español, podrá obtener una gratis por llama al 1/800/252/8683 o por escribir al Secretario de Estado, P.O. Box 12060, Austin, Texas 78711.

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Published by Secretary of State Tony Garza

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