Goldie at Home: Roaring Twenties Dance Party

**Activity Overview:** Put on your dancing shoes for this toe-tapping activity! This Goldie at Home activity moves and grooves to the popular (and sometimes banned) dance moves of the early Jazz Age. Even if you have two left feet, these instructions are worth a try.

This activity connects to the upcoming Iowa History 101 Series - Iowans at Work: Prohibition and Temperance. Register in advance to join this June 25 webinar with State Curator Leo Landis at 12 p.m.

**Connection to Iowa History**
As prohibition and temperance (a nationwide constitutional ban and a social movement against the sale and consumption of alcohol) impacted Iowans following World War I, Iowa’s dance halls were heating up with jazz music and the dances that moved to these new rhythms. In the 1920s, towns of all sizes in Iowa began to enact policies and ordinances about these new dances, which were unlike anything they had seen before the war. Ringsted was one of the first towns in Iowa to ban what they called “shimmy and other wiggly dances” in the early 1920s. In some larger cities, including Davenport and Des Moines, a board of local women and police matrons would review dances and decide if they were appropriate.

Iowa newspaper articles about local dance bans:
- “’Spoon Dance’ and ‘Bunny Hug’ Frowned on by Club Women Invited to Form Censor Committee,” Sioux City Journal, May 19, 1926
- “Ordinance Number 66, Dance Halls, An ordinance licensing and regulating public dance halls within the city of Rolfe Iowa and providing certain penalties,” Rolfe Arrow, March 8, 1923

**Instructions**

**How to Dance the Charleston**
- Instructional Video: How to do the Charleston from The Children’s Museum of Indianapolis

The “Charleston” was a song that later inspired the now-famous dance. The song was first made popular in the Broadway production, Runnin’ Wild, which was written by pioneering African-American composer James P. Johnson. This Jazz-Age dance reached peak popularity in 1926, and fell out of fashion as evening dresses became longer following the flapper era. This dance can either be danced alone or with a partner.

1. Begin with the palms of your hands parallel and equal distance to the floor.
2. First, step forward with your left foot.
3. Move your right foot forward, crossing over your left foot and tap it in front of your left.
4. Step backward with your right foot.

*Instructions continued on next page*
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Instructions continued

5. Next, step backward with your left foot, and tap it behind your right.

6. As you move your feet, swing your arms side to side or back and forth.

7. Now you are doing the Charleston!

**Bunny Hug Dance**
The **Bunny Hug** was a cheek-to-cheek dance of the 1920s that required close contact. Its origins trace back to the dance halls of San Francisco, and eventually made its way to Iowa. This is one of the dances that was frowned upon in local newspapers.

**Grizzly Bear Dance**
The **Grizzly Bear** is another cheek-to-cheek dance that was banned in Iowa towns. Similar to the Bunny Hug, the dance began in San Francisco. It was first introduced to a larger audience in the Ziegfeld Follies of 1910 by Fanny Brice.

8. **Questions to Spark Learning**
   - What kind of dances are popular now? How are they different from the dances from the 1920s? How are they similar?
   - How does media and popular culture impact the popularity of dances?
   - Why do you think Iowa communities would ban certain dance moves?
   - Jazz and cheek-to-cheek dances became popular during the prohibition era. Why do you think young people enjoyed these dances instead of older dance moves like the waltz?

9. **Additional Resources**
   Explore additional resources about dances, music, social movements and more from the Roaring Twenties.
   - Summer At-Home Expedition: Prohibition and Temperance
   - Spirited: Prohibition in America Exhibit from the National Endowment for the Humanities
   - Iowa PBS: Iowa’s Prohibition Years, 1920-1933
   - PBS - Jazz: A Film by Ken Burns
   - PBS - Prohibition: A Film by Ken Burns and Lynn Novick
“Spoon Dance” and “Bunny Hug” Frowned on by Club Women Invited to Form Censor Committee

BOOZE BRENTLY READY

The armored car will be prepared for department equipment and put into service. It will be used principally for security at the large sum of money that has been collected and expressed at T. L. Taggart, city department, an.

During several daring crimes the City of Sioux City and vicinity, the purchase of the armored car has a special police building body, with mechanical convenience for use. The body is metal, and so constructed that when is in commission is injured and another section of the windshield is not proof, and of a color given many tests candidates have adopted.

A coat of dark resins, including the armor and high powered rifles, is used to protect the car and will be able to withstand any fire that may be thrown. The hood protects the body of the car.

CLUB WOMEN AND POLICE MATERNS PHOTOGRAPHED AS THEY CENSORED DANCE "HOLDS."

JUST where does proper dancing leave off and improper dancing begin? That is a question that has been perplexing Sioux City police matrons whose duty it is to supervise the antics of young people at public dance halls.

In order to arrive at a decision in this momentous matter, Mrs. Frank Jipp, head police matron, invited 34 Sioux City club women to form a censorship committee and view a demonstration of the various "holds" and steps and give their opinions.

The demonstration was held Monday afternoon at the Roof Garden dance hall with Mr. and Mrs. R. E. Wilbur giving the exhibition.

The club women decreed that henceforth all "spoon dances" and "bunny hugs" are to be barred from Sioux City dance halls.

A "spoon dance," let it be known, is one wherein the dancers move in such proximity that their bodies touch at all points from their knees to their shoulders. The "bunny hug" is somewhat similar, only more so. In this dance the male seizes his partner in a "clinch" skin to that employed by professional wrestlers. And the ensuing movements are not unlike the movements of the aforementioned grappling.

The new fangled Charleston, which, it has been declared, can be executed properly only by knock-kneed persons, also was frowned on by the clubwomen.

RIVERSIDE "A" CLASS PLAY LEEDS

Proper and improper dance poses, as decided by the committee of censors, are shown above. The posture at the left was declared to be "naughty." The posture at the right was declared to be "nice."

Photo by McFadden, Staff Photographer
GOLDIE AT HOME ACTIVITY

Article from Rolfe Arrow, March 8, 1923