

# ties — a family affair

## Olsen Park attracts fans

by Nicole Williams  
Battalion reporter

It's another home football game weekend.

And you're sitting in one of those recreational vehicles that invade parking lots all over campus on football weekends.

And it's raining outside, but inside the conversation is steady amid bursts of laughter and the monotonous sound of the announcer's voice on the television. (The Penn State-Alabama game was on.)

Well, this is weekend life in an RV (recreational vehicle), and this is where the action is.

Every home football game weekend, from about 6:30 p.m. Friday until 2 p.m. Sunday, Texas A&M is home for over 100 RVs. In turn, these RVs are home for over 400 Aggie football fans — fans such as George and Ramona Kardell.

The Kardells, from Dallas, have two students here: Dan, a fifth-year senior and Amy, a junior. They say they've been coming to Aggie football games in their RV since Dan was a freshman.

Although their RV sleeps

eight people, the Kardells usually drive down with one other couple who stay at their son's apartment for the weekend.

The Kardell's RV offers accommodations comparable to home, including a restroom and shower, refrigerator/freezer, stove and a microwave.

And because they use a generator for power and have a supply of water, they are able to park in Parking Annex 60 across from the Rudder Complex, instead of parking in the lot next to Olsen Field where most RVs are parked.

Olsen Field offers the RV user hookups for water and electricity, as well as a sanitary dump station. All RVs need to be registered with the Department of Recreation and Parks, after paying a \$10 fee, in order to use these facilities.

Other parking spaces are in the lot behind G. Rollie White Coliseum on Houston Street and the lots south and west of Kyle Field.

Parking in all of these areas is controlled by the Aggie

Club and is regulated according to seniority, amount of donation, preference and space available.

The Kardells say they prefer to park in the Rudder parking lot because they're in the midst of all the commotion that continues all weekend in the Quad and Kyle Field.

When Saturday morning arrives both mothers are present, poised to begin the accustomed ritual of entertaining before and after the game.

And will they still keep coming to Aggie football games after both Dan and Amy have graduated?

"They'll still be here — feeding whoever walks by," Amy says confidently.

Next door to the Kardell's RV is another owned by Walter and Mary Ann Ruff, also from Dallas.

The Ruffs have been attending Aggie football games in their RV since Fall 1974, when their first child was a freshman here.

All of the Ruffs five children have attended, or are attending, Texas A&M. The youngest, Tom, is a freshman in Squadron 12.

The Ruffs prefer to park in the Rudder parking lot for the same reason as the one given by the Kardells: they like the on-the-scene action.

Mrs. Ruff says people from the Class of '46, her husband's class, to the Class of '87 seem to find them.

But the Ruffs wouldn't begrudge an Aggie anything.

"We've even had people ask to come in to change their clothes," Tom Ruff says, "and we didn't even know them."

Overall, the Ruffs say there is no comparison to weekend life in an RV. It seems this feeling is indicative of the many who flock to the University on home game weekends.

However, when the fun and games are finished there is a mass exodus of RVs from the area, hoping to return for another Aggie victory.



photo by Dean Saito

Pre-game activities range from tailgate parties to lounging in an air-conditioned RV. This family enjoys a picnic before the game.