

Adopted roadies on tour

By GIGI SHAMSY
Reporter

Karen Kocurek and Kerrin Kendrick are best friends. And like most best friends they make plans, just for fun, to do things that would never happen — not even in their wildest dreams.

They wanted to someday meet the object of those dreams — Duran Duran. But they never figured they *really* would meet them and they *really* never figured the interlude would be so outrageous.

The Duran Duran concert in Austin on Feb. 10, 1984 would be the beginning of a three-month escape for the two fans. So you're asking, "How?" and "why?"

Well, the evening started easy enough, Kocurek and Kendrick chose nondescript clothes. That, in and of itself, is unusual for Duran Duran fans but especially for ones that want special attention from the stars.

The clothes were to serve as camouflage when they slipped away from their really bad seats and initiated the plan to rappel backstage at the Frank Erwin Center.

"Rappelling from the 15 foot railing above the stage was just one of our ideas," Kocurek said. "We stayed up late the night before the concert throwing out ideas — like flying the band a remote control airplane with a message or constructing backstage passes and posing as reporters."

True to their most creative idea, the two bravely began to mountaineer to a spot only inches away from the band. While moving into position their plans were foiled twice by security guards and concert ushers.

"The whole time, our hearts were beating a hundred miles an hour," Kendrick said. "We were hoping we would land near Duran Duran and they'd say 'Wow! Those girls really want to meet us.'"

Kendrick said she thought the mission was accomplished when she tossed the end of the rope to a band member. But on the other end of the rope was a not-so-impressed usher. Foiled again. Half a dozen flashlight beams hit the pair as they were apprehended by security. Kocurek and Kendrick said they were surprised when the guards allowed them to stay for the rest of the show.

"Soon we got this note from a roadie who saw



what we were doing. It read 'Come meet the band at the Hyatt. Ask for Spy,'" Kocurek said.

"If it hadn't been for Kerrin," Kocurek said, "I wouldn't have gone through with any of it."

The hard work paid off, after hours of waiting in the Hyatt lobby, they got close to the band's room. The popular rock band, often called the Beatles of the '80s, finally acknowledged them.

Kocurek said she sat on the couch beside her favorite, keyboardist Nick Rhodes.

"At first, I experienced a moment of shock because I'm in love with Nick Rhodes," she said. "But after he drew me a cartoon of his cat, Sebastian, I

relaxed and struck up a conversation."

The two women kissed each member of the band and partied with them until 4 a.m. Before they left, the band gave them complimentary floor seats and backstage passes for the upcoming Dallas concert.

"The whole time we were with the group," Kocurek said, "they were happy to be with the fans and happy to meet everyone. They were nice."

Kocurek and Kendrick followed the band to Houston — more complimentary seats and backstage passes.

They said a representative of Capitol Records threw a party and then offered the women his room and room key for that night and the following day.

"Duran Duran thought everyone in Texas would have cowboy hats and would beat them up — but they really loved it here," Kocurek said.

Again, Kocurek and Kendrick followed the group

from Houston to the auditorium at Louisiana the next concert. They drove an hour to the Royal Orleans hotel in New Orleans to continue their Duran Duran celebration.

"After an hour of deciding what to do, we went with the security manager to a bar called Pat O'Brien's for a 23rd birthday celebration for group member Andy Taylor," Kocurek said.

"Soon it was like we were part of their

friends," Kendrick said about their relationship with Duran Duran. It wasn't all over until the two had cheered for Duran Duran at the Oklahoma City concert in April.

Kocurek and Kendrick will have one up on a mere concert t-shirt — they were adopted roadies. ♪

