

A&M fans celebrate with tailgate parties

By Sharon Maberry
Staff Writer

Texas A&M football fans often must withstand derision from non-Aggies for peculiar behavior during games. Aggies are ridiculed for acts of lunacy such as standing for entire football games and placing their hands on their knees while chanting in unison with 70,000 other Aggies.

These non-Aggies often wonder what possesses Aggies to behave in such a fashion. Many would respond that the spirit of Aggieland is the reason for their vocal support of the football team.

"We usually have at least 100 people each game. The bigger the game, the bigger the crowd is. We come back out here again for at least an hour after the game. Sometimes the coaches will come out after the game, but not if we don't win."

Don Moskal, Aggie Diehard member said this tailgate party began as a small affair.

"We started out (with just a small group) eating together before games. Then we needed a place in case it rained. That's when we bought the bus."

Moskal's son, Don E. Moskal, is in charge of organizing these parties.

Alcohol is a part of many tail-

gate parties despite a state law and a University regulation prohibiting the consumption of alcohol on the A&M campus.

Bob Wiatt, director of security for the University Police Department, said there are not enough officers to enforce the regulation.

"There's such a great amount of alcohol at these parties," Wiatt said. "It's sort of like bonfire. Unless there is a person disrupting others, with all the other activities (going on at a football game), I don't have the manpower to enforce it. Unless there's a problem or a complaint, there's no opportunity for us to respond. All my officers are committed to traffic control after football games."

Wiatt also said that many people who come to A&M games are not aware of the alcohol policy. "People come from far away and other institutions do permit it. A lot of people may not be aware of rules prevailing here."

The Aggie Club sponsored its first tailgate party before the A&M-Texas Tech game. The Aggie Club, which provides all 240 A&M athletic scholarships through membership donations, held its tailgate party around Wofford Cain Pool, Clark Whiteside, associate director of

the Aggie Club said. Tents were set up around the pool and the food services department provided hot dogs and hamburgers for Aggie Club members, Whiteside said. The approximately 700 guests were entertained by a Dixieland band and a demonstration by the A&M swim team.

"This was our first effort (at a tailgate party)," he said. "Our intent is to continue to sponsor events like this with the eventual goal of having some sort of event before every home game. If the events are fun and visible, we hope that they will generate interest among non-members to join (the Aggie Club)."



However, others might say that a certain amount of merry-making before the game, in the form of tailgate parties, is a definite must to boost one's spirit level.

Tailgate parties, consisting of anything from a foursome eating tuna fish sandwiches from the back of a station wagon to large groups of people grilling hamburgers outside a motor home, may be found all over campus on game day.

One tailgate party that can always be found outside Kyle Field before home games is thrown by the Aggie Diehards, Inc., made up of a group of Aggie alumni.

This party is easy to find if one looks for an old bus with "First Baptist Church, Crandell, Texas" painted on the side.

"The church made an error in not painting the name off the side of it when we bought it," Dean Carlton, Aggie Diehards chairman said. "We're a group of Aggies who've been coming to games together for a long time. I got out (of A&M) in '49, and I've been coming to games ever since."

"Occasionally we have a band. We had a quartet today, a very cheap quartet," Carlton said of the tailgate party before the A&M-Texas Tech game Oct. 1.

Some tailgate parties begin only after the football game. One such party, in the visitors' parking lot by Rudder Tower, is given by Lee and Betty Adams of Sugarland.

Adams graduated from A&M in 1963 and the couple's two daughters are Aggies.

"When the girls were little, we'd come here and bring our lunch," Betty said.

Those family lunches became tailgate parties in 1983 when their oldest daughter started bringing her friends by, Betty said. Since then, the party has grown considerably and regular guests include Parsons' Mounted Cavalry, complete with cannon.

"There are two things that attract college students: food and money," Betty said. "We can't afford to pay them money, so we bring food."

And food abounds at these parties with fried chicken, sandwiches and chips, among other things. The attendance has grown so much that the Adams have combined their parties with another couple.

It's no wonder that students gobble up the food when Betty walks around saying, "If your mother were here, she'd want you to eat."

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