



Clockwise From Left:

Kevin Kinney of Drivin' n' Cryin' sings as the wind blows his hair across his face.

Willie Nelson, right, raps with Maestro of the rap band Central Texas Posse.

A couple watches Farm Aid VI from a grassy area opposite the stage.

A crowd member motions for people to hit a giant beach ball his way.

Photos by Jeff Haller/DN

## On the road again

### Farm Aid VI mixes stars with cause

By Jill O'Brien  
Senior Reporter

At 6 a.m. Saturday, inoculated by caffeine, chocolate and anticipation, we blazed east. Destination: Ames, Iowa, Farm Aid VI.

We arrived amid the early unorganized moments of Farm Aid. Farmers cornered reporters and reporters cornered stars.

Roger Clinton, the president's brother, flanked by a 400-pound bodyguard, wandered amiably, signing autographs and talking with reporters.

A frowning Neil Young, who brushed aside a ride in a chauffeured golf cart, chose instead to walk through a flurry of farmers and fans.

At noon, Farm Aid kicked off with Willie Nelson's remarks, followed by the Dennis Ailey Wisdom Indian Dancers.

The day-long wind blew dust into eyes and litter under seats while its unseen hand swatted giant beach balls circulating throughout a crowd of nearly 50,000.

I was like one of those beach balls, never staying in one spot.

Inside the press box, the music was inaudible. Press people who wanted to hear the music could sit in the stands.

Unfortunately, from Section 16, visibility was rotten — you couldn't see the stars.

Half a mile away, in a yellow-and-white striped tent, celebrities came and went for press conferences.

In that tent, boyish-faced, gray-haired Arlo Guthrie modestly received praise from a dairy farmer who told reporters how Guthrie had staged an \$8,000 benefit to help save her farm.

Guthrie joked while advocating family farming as opposed to big corporation farming. "I don't want to eat square tomatoes," he said, "just because its easier to package them that way."

When asked what people should do to help the farmers' cause, Native American poet and singer John Trudell had a suggestion.

"Be real," he said. "Be very, very real. Now is not a time to be silent."

Nor was it time to be silent on stage — not for Zaca Creek, a hard-rocking country group consisting of the four Foss brothers. It's a group I'd nominate for best Farm Aid performance — and best lookers.

When the winning band of the Jose Cuervo "Quest for Gold" talent contest was announced, Jagged Edge had its first television debut, playing "Fiddlin' Man."

Guitarist Scott Shelly told me the band had been together less than a year, but had a wide range of musical influence and experience behind them.

"I've played with Dan Fogelberg and Randy Misner," Shelly said.

That might explain why Shelly, with long blond hair and a black trench coat, had that rock star glow, like "fiddlin' man" Oakley Tyger and the other four members.

"It all happened so fast," Tyger said, beaming. "All of a sudden we were up there on stage with Willie Nelson and announced as the winners."

As the day wore on, the music got louder, the sets longer and the names bigger — Tom and Roseanne Arnold, Sawyer Brown, Bruce Hornsby, Ringo Starr and Marty Stuart, to name a few.

When Bryan Adams hit the stage, the lights came on and Farm Aid took on a new concert dimension.

Reluctantly, we left before the last performers, Neil Young and John Mellencamp, played.

Our mission: to drive home while we were still fueled by the excitement of Farm Aid VI.

To make a donation to Farm Aid, you can call 1-800-FARM AID.

