



Tailgaters spread regal pre-game feast

By JOHN CROWLEY
Of the Emerald

Victory wasn't the only thing Oregon fans were tasting Saturday.

Guacamole, St. Andre cheese, hamburgers, white wine and pate de foie gras were right up there with a 19-14 win over Cal.

"We were going to landscape it," confessed Peter Thompson from a lawn chair in the middle of a gravel sward. The Eugene businessman had gathered with a dentist, a used car salesman and a landscape architect to warm up for the game.

Most of the group are alumni, he said,

including himself.

"They offered me tenure," Thompson said, "but they eventually kicked me out after 12 years of school." His companions laughed heartily. They were stuffing pocket bread with delectable fillings and washing it down with white wine. One woman wasn't talking about a bottle of Diet-Rite Cola stashed under the table.

Not too far away, a pair of colorful suspenders and a pair of Mickey Mouse ears dangled from an extended antenna atop a big Chevy truck.

"They symbolize unity," proclaimed Gary Bridges, the owner of the suspenders, as he flipped hamburgers

over a mammoth grill. "We're all unified here!"

Further down the stretch, alumnus Harvey Winn and company anticipated an Oregon win. A poodle had been borrowed for the occasion. Its name was "Fluffy," and it shivered constantly.

Just down the parking lot, a rented recreational vehicle served as home base for some veterans of the tailgating scene.

Lined up in the back of an adjacent station wagon were 20 or so box lunches — gourmet style — from the Grape and Grain.

"We've been doing this for about 30

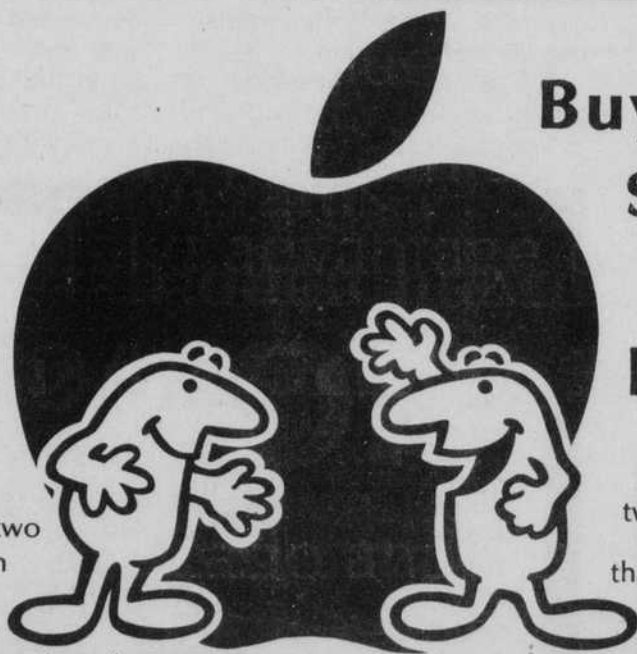
years," said Pat Pitchford of Eugene. "Of course, we didn't always have these nice facilities at Hayward field, before Autzen was built. But we used to gather in a private home or something. It's important!"

Despite overwhelming odds, nearly all of Saturday's tailgaters made it into the stadium itself to reap the fruits of their labor.

But as the cheers rose inside, at least one group remained in the gravel lot, swaying in front of a portable TV.

Most in that group were cheering for Oregon, but one member was holding out for Purdue.

Photo by John Harris



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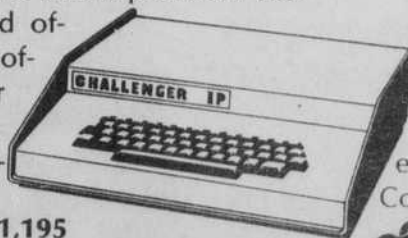
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