KING OF THE ROAD

To Spread The Spirit, This Aggie Has Driven Half A Million Miles (And Counting)
Scott Jarvis ’00 has logged more than 550,000 miles (so far) promoting the Aggie Network.
Scott Jarvis ’00 was coming off something like his third or fourth out-of-state trip of the year when he sat down with Texas Aggie to talk life and Texas A&M. His laugh bounced off the walls of the meeting room closest to his desk—the one used for brainstorming former student programming and planning events on speaker phone. The one where, really, he spends very little time since he’s out of the office and on the road four days out of 10.

He crossed his legs and then uncrossed them. Jarvis isn’t accustomed to being the one answering the questions. A friend to all, his personality lends more toward asking questions that make others feel comfortable, leaning in close, building connections.

He’s the one everyone knows, despite the fact that his conversations give others the highlight.

So, who is Scott Jarvis ’00, 11-year coordinator of Club programs for The Association of Former Students? This conversation is all about him.

“Me? Oh boy,” he laughed.

Jarvis’ granddad, Billy Jarvis, Class of 1925, was the family’s first Aggie. On his first day in Aggieland, Billy arrived too late to get into his dorm, said Scott Jarvis’ dad—and Billy’s son—Jon Jarvis ’68.

With campus asleep, “What he did was find an open window at the YMCA building, crawl inside and spend the night there,” Jon said.

Billy’s Aggie Ring is a protected family treasure. His Corps of Cadets saber was passed down to Jarvis. Jarvis wore his granddad’s spurs, too. They jingled along three generations’ of Aggieland paths: first in 1925 with Billy, second with Jarvis’ uncle and father in 1965 and 1968, and finally in 2000 with Jarvis. Jarvis was even able to wear his father’s senior boots.

It’s not a stretch to say that Billy Jarvis’ decision to attend Texas A&M changed the Jarvis family history. Thanks to Billy’s financial support, every Jarvis grandchild has a Class year. But it’s more than that, Jarvis said. “Since I was a little kid, for the majority of my life, Texas A&M has played a really big role in my life,” he said.

Jarvis’ parents met in a classroom in Aggieland. Johnette Jarvis ’70 came to Texas A&M a couple years after women were first admitted to the university. Being among the first to take advantage, “The guys did not welcome me into their classes,” she said. Sometimes they would move to the opposite side of the room. “But I fell in love with Texas A&M.” Being a woman, she wasn’t accepted in student organizations, but she lived Texas A&M.

Jon Jarvis lived Texas A&M, too. They met in an ag economics class. Johnette found the first empty desk next to the door, and as usual, a few guys moved to the other side of the room. “Jon didn’t attend class for the first three meetings,” Johnette said. “The professor would call the roll—‘Mr. Jarvis’—and no one would answer.” On Monday of the second week, he finally showed up. She turned around to see the guy. “I learned later he had gone home up to the Panhandle to do some hunting,” she laughed.

After the first quiz, Jon caught up with Johnette and offered her a piece of gum. Since most of the time the cadets ignored her, “I thought that was pretty sweet.” She said. “The next thing he asked was, ‘May I borrow your notes?’” She knew his game, but she was willing to hear him out. They started dating the second semester of Jon’s senior year and were married the following October.

Scott Jarvis loves that story. Aggie parents tend to raise their children as Aggies, he said. That was his experience, anyway. A good chunk of his childhood was spent in the back of his parents’ maroon Buick LaSabre or pick-up truck with attached camper. First it was to travel to rodeos where Jon would ride bulls and Johnette would barrel race. Then it was to attend Aggie football games. “I would sit looking out that back window with the A&M sticker and try
Longest drive: “I left College Station and visited Clubs in Albuquerque, Tucson, Phoenix, Las Vegas, Reno, Sacramento, San Francisco, and Fresno, all to end up in Los Angeles. Then I had to get back to College Station in two days for an event here.”


An embarrassing moment on the job? “I put a shirt in the microwave to dry and it caught it on fire and set the hotel alarm off. The hotel had to be evacuated.”

Most common meal at Club events? “Definitely barbecue, which is fortunately my favorite food. I actually have a goal to visit all the Top 50 barbecue joints, as judged by Texas Monthly.”

A notable night? “Sleeping in my car in Birmingham, because I thought it ridiculous to pay for a hotel room when I got in at 3 a.m. I wasn’t going to be there long enough to warrant the use of donor dollars.”

A notable person you’ve met? “I met my wife through an Aggie friend, Andrew Hancock ’02, who I only met because of visiting the Northeast Indiana A&M Club.”

Odds & Ends

Jarvis grew up near Gruver, Texas, “right in the middle of all things Texas Tech,” he said. “All my friends gave me a hard time about it.” He didn’t care. Love for A&M is one reason his family is so close. At Thanksgiving, he’d put on his worn Aggie jacket and go out in the 10-degree weather to build a small bonfire in the driveway. “I grew up loving and defending Texas A&M,” he said.

There are memories that he can still feel, touch and see, like waking up to the warmth and yellow of the Saturday sun rising over Aggieland. In high school, Jarvis played football. “I’d get out of the locker room at midnight, jump in the car and wake up the next morning with the iconic image of the big A&M sign,” he said.

Gruver is nine hours from College Station. “Even now, my parents drive back and forth all the time. We really didn’t even think about; it’s just what we did.”

To this day, since Jarvis started at Texas A&M in 1996, he’s missed a total of eight football games, home or away. Aggie football was part of his growing up, and now it’s part of his job and calling. Every year, Jarvis travels tens of thousands of miles to visit and help A&M Clubs with tailgates, organize out-of-town Midnight Yell Practice and make connections with other Aggies. “It’s a lot of really late nights and really long days,” he said. For away-game yell practice, he’s part of the team setting everything up. After yell practice, he’s on the team tearing everything down. After getting back to his hotel at 2 a.m., his head barely hits the pillow because he’s out the door.

to get passing cars to ‘Gig ‘em’ back at me,” Jarvis’ said. He had all the self-described “cheesy” T-shirts: Ol’ Sarge kicking a beat-up Bevo, and all the championship shirts, including one on which he added winning scores in permanent marker.

Top: Jarvis was given this rug as a Christmas present when he was about 5 years old. “I’ve had that rug in every dwelling I’ve ever had, except my fish dorm room. We couldn’t have things on the floor.” It now sits in his kitchen. Left: Photo from Jarvis’ Ring Day.
at 6 a.m. to set everything up for the A&M Club’s tailgate. “It’s exhausting but energizing,” he said.

He keeps a similar schedule even outside of football season, traveling north, south, east and west to support Aggies through their local A&M Clubs. He speaks at Club meetings, supports Club leadership, and provides Clubs with support from The Association. Over 11 years, he’s attended and helped plan more A&M Club golf tournaments, raffles, family days, Musters and meetings—and eaten more barbecue dinners—than The Association’s record-keeping could say.

Nine hours remains his baseline for trips. In one day, just a few weeks ago, he visited the Reveille Club networking breakfast in Houston, spoke to the Bay Area A&M Club luncheon in Pasadena, trucked over to the Capital City A&M Club in Austin with Athletic Director Eric Hyman for dinner, and slept in his own bed that night. “Nine hours feels like a normal drive home,” he said.

He is relentless in his passion to serve Aggies.

Even as a child, Jarvis’ mother said, he needed little rest. He clashed with mandated bedtimes, and preferred to do his homework late at night. “He only needs about three or four hours of sleep,” she said; his sleep habits ran off a few roommates in college.

When Jarvis arrived as a freshman at Texas A&M in 1996, he joined Corps of Cadets Company Spider D, his dad’s outfit. The Corps experience can be tough. On the days where the requirements felt like a burden, he’d escape to his parents’ RV trailer parked out by the Parsons Mounted Cavalry barn—the one they used for game days. Jarvis kept his dad’s senior boots in the camper and would spend that quiet time alone to pull them on, look in the mirror and remind himself of his goal.

It got easier every year. The opportunity to pull on his uniform became “really special, and a time to reflect on my granddad and dad and the ones who had gone before me,” he said.

He spent much of his time off the Quad in student organizations: Student Government, Memorial Student Center Council, Old Army Gentlemen’s Society, Fish Camp, Aggie Fish Club, Texas Aggies Making Changes, Traditions Council, about a dozen other groups. He was a Ross Volunteer and worked toward positions in outfit leadership, serving as the athletics corporal as a sophomore and athletics sergeant as a junior. The fall of his senior year, he was named public relations officer of the entire Corps. It was 1999.

On Nov. 18, 1999, at around 2 a.m., he was hanging out with his friend, the deputy Corps commander, when he heard commotion on the Quad. He opened the window, leaned his head outside and called to a freshman cadet standing outside for the reason for the noise.

“He said, ‘Sir, Bonfire just fell.’
“It remains one of my most vivid memories,” Jarvis said: The headlights—“Everybody wanted to rush out and help pull logs out,” he said. “But that would have been a very dangerous game of Jenga.” To help protect those trapped inside the stack and to keep the roads open for medical personnel, Jarvis and his friend stood by the Commons and turned every single car around unless they could help with the immediate medical situation.

The phone calls—“After about four hours, we noticed that the traffic had stopped so we went to the guard room to collect eyewitness accounts,” he said. As Corps leadership, they wanted to account for every single cadet. “By about 9 a.m., we knew which cadets

THE ROAD GOES ON FOREVER

The position of coordinator of Club programs for The Association of Former Students—formerly known as field director—has been filled by a string of great Aggies over the years. Scott Jarvis ’00 is the latest, following in the steps of the first field director, Harry Green ’52, and then Tom Nelson ’63, Dennis Parrish ’68, Porter Garner ’79, David Wilkinson ’87 and Sean Miller ’98.

Garner, now The Association’s President and CEO, logged hundreds of thousands of miles while serving as field director. “It was a privilege to spend 12 years working with A&M Clubs around the world as field director,” he said. “Working with A&M Club volunteers, I saw selfless service in action and treasure the memories made and friendships developed during those days.”

He knows the position is a crucial and highly visible role for The Association, and that Jarvis is the right man for the job: “Scott is an energetic and enthusiastic ambassador for The Association and Texas A&M. Having served in the same role, I have a genuine appreciation for all he does and sacrifices for the Aggie Network.”

Garner in the late ’80s with Lyle Lovett ’79 and Robert Earl Keen ’78.
were unaccounted for,” said. They called parents and fielded phone calls until the lines were jammed.

The reporters—“From there I really started dealing with the media,” he said. As the public relations officer, the plan in place was that he was the approved media contact. “I started doing live radio interviews on the phone. I would go out on the Quad and interview for Fox, the San Antonio Express, Houston Chronicle, CNN,” he said.

There were several days where he didn’t sleep and didn’t go to class. His focus was on supporting Texas A&M and Aggies.

He helped plan the memorial in Reed Arena. He organized student transportation to the funerals. He lined up buses, found pilots and planes. It was his cell phone number that was shared on the national news as the way to get transportation.

There were so many calls, they bumped into each other and went straight to voicemail. His phone had to remain plugged in as the amount of calls drained his battery. For a while, he used the university president’s land line and two backup landlines.

Looking back, he can see why the outside world was amazed at Texas A&M’s student leaders and how they handled the Bonfire tragedy. “But, I can look at it in light of what Texas A&M prepared us to do,” he said. He knew how to direct transportation to the funerals after being taught how to organize bus rides for Fish Camp. He knew how to talk to media because of his leadership skills from the Corps and other organizations. And he knew how to tell the world of the Aggie Spirit because he’s lived it since he was a little boy.

“I saw the vision,” he said. “When Bonfire fell, that was the first time the nation’s eyes were on the Aggie family. To be in the middle of that and see the way the Aggie family responded was incredible.”

The night the 12 students who died in Bonfire’s collapse were honored at Silver Taps, he was on the RV firing squad. “We never saw the crowd, but I felt this energy, that night especially,” he said. “It was overwhelming and heavy, like you were all there in one giant embrace. That is the most connected I have ever felt with the Aggie family.”

It’s for these reasons and more—“much much more than I could ever say,” Jarvis said—that he has dedicated much of his life to the betterment of Texas A&M and Texas Aggies.

It took a while to put into words, but there’s a theme, he said. “It’s all about passion and service. It factors into what I want to do and the things I want to be part of,” he said.

His parents are his example, he said, teaching Sunday school at church, being a Boy Scout leader and president of the PTA. When Jarvis was in school, his parents came down for every football game, stood on the Quad and fed every kid who didn’t have a parent in town until the food was gone. They hosted dozens of Aggies in their homes. “They were second parents to my buddies because they are passionate servants,” he said. They were named Parents of the Year in 1999. They were the originators of the very first Endowed Aggie Ring Scholarship.

“I have a really cool legacy because of their passionate service,” he said. “I love Texas A&M. I love serving Aggies, and I’ll never stop.”