

# Normandy Farms top RV park in the nation

By Jack Authelet

Normandy Farms Campground has been named the top Recreational Vehicle Park and Campground in America for 2005.

The designation was announced at the recent gathering of the National Association of RV Parks and Campgrounds in Austin, Texas attended by Albert (Dan) and Doris Daniels representing family members involved in the operation. It is the third such designation for Normandy in 20 years. Normandy Farms was the inaugural recipient when the award was first presented in 1985. The local campground also won in 1995.

Members of the Daniels family have occupied the land on West Street since 1759 when a farm had been laid out by Francis Daniels. Serving in the French Army, he was captured by a Colonial privateer and brought to Massachusetts Bay Colony in Boston as a prisoner of war. He spent 35 years working on the farm of William Hewes in Wrentham to pay his indebtedness before being able to purchase land for himself which he named Normandy, after his homeland in France.

From a dairy farm to raising chickens, then sheep, there had been many changes over the years until the late Norman Daniels, father of Dan, started the campground 34 years ago. It has since grown to accommodate massive motorhomes and travel trailers, boasting four swimming pools (two heated, one indoor), a playground, snack bar, rec hall, camp store, pond, nature trails and more.

The eighth and ninth generations of Daniels family members are now involved in operating the campground. "I am frequently asked how so many family members can work so close together harmoniously," said Dan. "Actually, we couldn't do it without them. Each one has their own specialty which contributes to our success."

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Dan Daniels



The three children of the campground founders, the late Norman and Jeannette Daniels, who constitute the eighth generation working the Daniels land today are Dan, his brother Bob and sister Janice.

Dan is joined by his wife Doris as recreation director, daughter Marcia as human resource director, son Marc on maintenance. Daughter Kristine is marketing director and originator of the campground's web site that won top national awards last year. Bob heads the extensive maintenance operation assisted by his son Shaun. Daughter Andrea is in charge of food services. Janice is the office manager for the sprawling complex.

Many of the campers are regulars, and the campground newsletter keeps track of birthdays and anniversaries, announces special events and generally promotes a family atmosphere. Campers at Normandy have helped raise in excess of \$150,000 for the Jimmy Fund over the years.

Writing in support of Normandy Farm's consideration for the award, late state Rep. Mike Coppola noted the number of charitable causes supported by the campground and that the Daniels family frequently opens the facility to groups raising money for various charities. The campground also offers many part-time jobs, and particularly welcomes part-time high school and college students.

Virtually every holiday warrants a celebration at Normandy Farms, which also includes special recreational activities such as movies, pancake breakfasts, Saturday night spectacles, crafts and special programs for children.

It has been 247 years since a young Frenchman began carving a homestead out of the wilderness. Those living on the land today plan a large celebration for 2006 which marks the 35th year of a campground and RV park that has retained its local family ties.