



MICHELLE GIENOW: SPECIAL TO THE SUN

Soaking it in: Charity Harper of Baltimore dances to the band You Am I at Lollapalooza.

Lollapalooza brings the circus to town

■ **Music:** More big-money sideshow than concert series, festival brings frolicsome freaks and just plain rock-and-roll lovers together for a party.

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CHARLES TOWN, W.Va. — The Headless Woman, the Man-Eating Snake and the World's Largest Rat were just a few of the attractions at yesterday's Lollapalooza '96 here.

No, these aren't the names of bands. Lollapalooza, which attracted some 25,000 people, has become as much a carnival as a music festival.

Once the gates opened at noon, spectators were treated to a potpourri of interactive and hyperactive activities. There was a half-pipe where skateboard and bicycle demonstrations were being given by Airwalk, a skateboard accessories manufacturer.

Airwalk also was giving T-shirts to the winners of two contests — for the tame a hoola-hoop contest, and for the truly daring (or insane) a test of who could sit longest in a tub of ice, a challenge even on a 95-degree day.

"You could take the easy way out and hoola-hoop, but I went hard-core," said Emily Bloom, 18, of Westminster, who won two T-shirts by

lasting 15 minutes in the ice. "I have pins and needles in my feet."

Speaking of pins and needles, absent from yesterday's show and sorely missed by many was the body-piercing and tattooing tent. The bus carrying the artists broke down in Syracuse, N.Y., and will be out of commission for several days, officials said.

The raceway, scattered with puddles, mud and hay, was straight out of a circus scene. There were vendors selling hats and visors, sunglasses, handcuffs and many hemp products — although only the legal ones.

Bonnie Brown was there with her sister Jenifer. They own Two Sisters Inc., which sells incense, hats, stickers and temporary tattoos. The came from Maryland's Eastern Shore for their first Lollapalooza.

Also at their first Lollapalooza were Mark and Eric Buschman, 12 and 9, of Eldersburg, who traveled with their father, Hank, to see the bands Rancid and Soundgarden.

"The kids are into the music so we go as a family. They don't like to go to the real circus anymore," said Hank, who has also taken his sons to see the Goo Goo Dolls and Bush.

The youthful crowd was eclectic, ranging from punks with mohawks to skaters with shaved heads and metal fans with long, flowing locks. The color choice of the day was black, worn primarily by Metallica fans of all ages showing [See Music, 8E]



Top shop: Joseph Deacon of York, Pa., put a few cats in hats.

Fun, freaks and good music

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their concert shirts from tours past.

"I don't even know who's playing. I just know Metallica is here," said Harmony Biggans, 17, of Lusby, Md., who came without tickets or enough money to get in but had high hopes of seeing the show.

Even with a ticket, getting through the gate could be difficult. No bottles, cans, coolers, alcohol or lawn chairs were allowed. Lauren Nelms of Manassas, Va., was a bit annoyed with the security.

"My friend could bring in tuna fish and a can opener but not a towel. I don't get it," she said.

Among the acts getting top billing at Lollapalooza were Metallica, Soundgarden, Screaming Trees, the Ramones, Rancid, the Shaolin Monks and the Wu Tang Clan. Second stage acts included You Am I, Beth Hart Band and Ben Folds Five. Among the third stage acts were bands like Lute-fisk and Moonshake.

The choice of heavy metal band Metallica as the headlining act had many up in arms. Critics say Lollapalooza — originally geared toward creating a community for rock misfits — has lost sight of its alternative roots and gone mainstream to cash in. The festival's founder, Perry Farrell, felt the same way and disassociated himself from this year's event.

Carlos Lopez, 25, of Alexandria, Va., who attended the first Lollapalooza in 1991 when Farrell's former band, Jane's Addiction, played, had mixed emotions about this year's lineup. "It's gotten a lot bigger and it's definitely selling out a little bit. ... But it will still be a good show."

When Psychotica began the opening set at 2 p.m., people began gathering around the main stage — and began the crowd surfing and moshing that continued all afternoon. As the day wore on, more and more people became covered with mud — reminiscent of Woodstock '94. By early evening, it looked like a scene from the movie "Patton," with bodies spread all over the field.

Of course, if you weren't up for the music, there was always the freak show, featuring exhibits like the Headless Woman (very creepy), the Man-Eating Snake (very slimy) and the World's Largest Rat at over four feet long (very gross).

The announcer at the Rat Cage said the rat was the "Most awesome sight you will ever see." Judging from the disappointed expressions of those who paid a dollar to look, their opinions were wildly different.

If that didn't thrill you, there was a foursome of daring fire tossers, who claimed to be "4 incredibly stupid people."

All sorts of food and drinks were available, from the standard burgers and hot dogs to vegetarian, Greek and Thai food.

People stayed cool in the Rain Room, which sprayed mist over fans wilted by the searing heat. If the day's activities proved too much, the Chill-Out Tent was available, complete with couches, blanket and black light. Enough to mellow out even the most testosterone-crazed fans. With music, food and freaks from around the globe, how could Lollapalooza ever be called just your run-of-the-mill concert?

This isn't a concert, it's a carnival.