

TUCSON, TUESDAY, MAY 31, 1983

PAGE THREE

# Dusty US festival no help for a dog

By Jill Schensul  
The Arizona Daily Star

The decree emerged from the smog. "Sex, drugs and US," the sign on the back of the Winnebago proclaimed.

Peace, love and understanding, there ain't no need for you. Go straight back to the '60s. We're too desperate and technology-wise for Woodstock again.

My fire-red rented Escort sped off the parkway toward the biggest rock 'n' roll event since Woodstock. Sun-tan lotion, press kit, AM radio, hot breeze on my face and the promise of meeting the Clash, David Bowie and the meaning of life in America.

"Where's press parking?" I asked for the first time. "Somewhere down there," came a vague reply from an official-looking person. Down there I went. And then up there, over there, somewhere near that yellow-and-white striped tent, no, up that road you just came down, you passed it.

Trailers and tents and roads were flung helter-skelter before me. Dust was rising. The sweat was rolling. My press kit was all over the front seat. People with press credentials strolled past my panting Escort. All right, we'll do this on foot.

Two giant Miller High Life blow-up bottles loomed in the distance. Beyond them, the Russians were talking with the Americans by satellite about peace, love and understanding.

A few hours later, I found my press credentials. I snapped the laminated press onto my belt loop. Nothing changed. I still hadn't the foggiest idea where to begin.

I began walking, purposefully. Aimlessly. Just follow the crowds. The crowds were everywhere. Ominous Led Zeppelin sounds emanated from a big white dome-looking thing. Sounds of destruction and distorted music rang from a technology tent. Somewhere far away, the first band of the day was making noise. Where to begin getting a handle on this sprawling beast, this manifestation of what civilization has become?

Women in tiny, leopard-spotted bikinis strolled by. One woman wore flowers in her hair, but they were plastic. T-shirts advertising MTV and camouflage pants replaced tied-dyed shirts and hippie beads.

Gene's cool gray eyes surveyed the crowd. He was dressed all in black, with short hair and black boots that looked well-worn. "It's funny," said the 21-year-old, who hitchhiked from New York for more than two months to get here. He watched a stray long-hair walk by. "I used to look like that."

The English Beat were driving people crazy with ska sounds. Everyone was dancing and smiling. They were also frying. The sun was beating down relentlessly. Sunglasses were filming over with dust, and the hills, which once showed at least a hint of green, were now just barely outlines in the suffocating smog.

By 5 p.m. I couldn't breathe. Dead spirit. Also deadlines. Much more to see, but it would have to wait while I returned to my hotel room and tried to make some sense of this barrage of images.

Then it was back into the car. C'mon, Sylvia, let's go see the Clash.

The night world sped by. The Clash approached at 80 miles an hour. Our spirits soared.

The traffic crawled. The guys in front of us leered out of the back of their camper. "OZZY RULES!" came a disembodied proclamation in the night. Though I was still thinking about the Clash, it was obviously time to prepare for Heavy Metal Sunday.

"I've got this .45 right here, and I'd love to use it," the man in the passenger seat of the car next to me explained, implying that his friend's car should pull in front of mine. I edged out in front of him.

Sylvia decided she would not accompany me to Heavy Metal Sunday.

We kept up a steady stream of the deeply nonsensical philosophizing that accompanies no sleep. It was no use. The traffic was stopped, but time wasn't. We eventually realized we were not going to see the Clash. In quiet horror, we turned the car around. And stood still in the opposite direction.

Hoots rang in the night. Dust rose in beams from headlights. Bonfires flickered, and shadows moved. A dark, furtive jungle of cars and peo-



The Associated Press

## Financial backer Steve Wozniak says he can dance, he's taken disco lessons

ple and tents and blackness. Apocalypse now.

The alarm went off. The webs of sleep were sliced open by a variety of pains. My back was on fire. My chiropractor was going to have a field day with my neck. My feet felt waterlogged. From her bed across the debris of notes and fliers, Sylvia smiled and turned over on this Heavy Metal Sunday. Very funny.

On the way back to Glen Helen Regional Park, watching the horses trot in their fields and the reddish-gold wheat flicker in the wind, I tried to gather my wits. I couldn't go on being overwhelmed. The newspaper wanted stories. Cogent, with boundaries. Readable.

Traffic was backed up onto the parkway Sunday. Entrepreneurs worked the crowd, waving bootleg T-shirts.

The music blasted across the little lake that separated the music from the technology booths and guest speakers like Ray Bradbury and Dick Gregory. "Bang your head," the musicians urged.

Looking across the lake, the sea of colorful ants crawling up the sides of the dusty bowl seemed ready to do just that. They were everywhere, but most concentrated around areas where things could be bought.

"LSD 4 Sale," the sign said. "Joints for sale." A small flier advertising Dave's Delivery Service lay on the ground, its pretty-colored

pharmaceuticals glowing tantalizingly.

Onstage between sets, people pushed US '83 festival T-shirts and made us think we were hungry, so we could buy overpriced food, and thirsty, so we could buy \$2 Cokes. Maybe pick up a US festival button, scarf, cushion, squirt bottle or program while we're at it.

The crowd was thick. People with long hair were screaming. Skulls stared menacingly from T-shirts.

The grass was trampled brown and strawlike, and mixed with plastics and papers. The stench of beer mingled with the smell of pot and the reek coming from the overused portable bathrooms. A piece of yellow paper flapped in the mud, the waxed mustard on it giving off a sickening glow.

The squeals of guitar wouldn't stop. The hyperbole of music was a perfect accompaniment for the ambience.

Time for a press conference, thank God. The sheriff came, an hour late.

A man was dying, pummeled by a tire iron over a drug deal.

The whirl of activity ground to a halt. My chest felt like someone had sat on it. Questions were flying, microphones waving. The leaves waved gently. My God, someone is dying. And we all were expecting it. We were asking questions to write a story we were all ready to write.

This big damned carousel of technology, of ways we have created to enjoy ourselves. Of sex and drugs and \$1.5 million price tags for music.

I turned around and walked out. I wrote a news story. I also wrote some feature stories. They seemed frivolous.

Now it is the last day of the festival. Last night, once again, Sylvia and I spent three hours trying to get around barricades and find the ends of parking lots.

Today is better. There are fewer people, fewer problems, no violence and fine music.

Maybe the US '83 festival has accomplished something. But as I sit in this office, typing fast so I don't miss David Bowie, a dog is dying under the desk. He was brought in shaking and in convulsions. He was hit by a car, and his owner wasn't anywhere to be found.

One of the head cheeses came in and picked up a jacket that was covering the dog. It was getting dirty, I suppose.

Can't we do something for him? Mark Bleisner of Feyline Productions asked. We have no support system for animals, the honcho said, shrugging and walking away from the problem.

Maybe the US festival did promote good will and an affirmation of life. As long as they didn't interfere with sex, drugs and our own myopic little plans.

# 'Unite US' no black, just white issue

One of many slogans of the US '83 festival is "Unite US in Song." The US they are referring to, it was obvious from the music that was offered over this three-day rock festival, was the white middle-class American US.

Of the 25 bands that appeared onstage, only the English Beat featured black musicians.

Barry Fey, whose Feyline Productions booked all the bands for this year's festival, boasted that it has



Jill Schensul

the most varied lineup of talent ever at a rock 'n' roll concert. Most varied from the white perspective, he means.

It was reported that David Lee Roth, Van Halen's lead singer, said financial backer Steve Wozniak couldn't dance and that's why no black bands were booked. The members of the press chuckled when Wozniak, during a news conference yesterday, said he could dance — he's taken disco lessons. That is not the point. Once again the people in power are perpetuating stereotypes. They are keeping alive misconceptions that are keeping blacks and whites divided.

There were plenty of white bands at the festival that one could dance to, and there are plenty of black bands that aren't doing just dance music. Prince, Stevie Wonder, Marvin Gaye, for instance. It would have been wonderful to have heard Musical Youth or Grandmaster Flash and the Furious Five play in this big, open-air setting. Their music is perfect for it.

"I book for people, not for races," Fey said. A lot of black bands sell more records than, say, Wall of Voodoo or Motley Crue.

If people really are Fey's concern, he might try booking for all of them, instead of the ones he and a bunch of other white guys deem important.