



Tracy Deer/Connecticut Post

Caitlin Nordehn, left, and Ben Gamari, both of Boston, have some fun inside their Hula-Hoop Saturday during the Gathering of the Vibes at Seaside Park.



Tracy Deer/Connecticut Post

The band Strangefolk, from Burlington, Vt., plays Saturday during Day 3 of the Gathering of the Vibes in Bridgeport. From left are Jon Trafton, Luke "Patchen" Montgomery and Erik Glockler.

## THIS IS MORE LIKE IT

### Perfect weather cheers everyone at Vibes

By KEN DIXON  
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BRIDGEPORT — As bad as Friday's rain was for the massive tribe of Vibsters, Saturday's sun-splashed Seaside Park was a day at the beach.

The perfect weather finally fit the prevailing mood of the weekend-long Gathering of the Vibes, as an estimated 15,000 people promenaded along the beach, dove into Long Island Sound and listened to music played on multiple stages throughout the day.

The jam-band tunes from the main stages were

set to culminate late Saturday night with the appearance of Ratdog, the group led by Bob Weir,

longtime guitarist of the Grateful Dead.

But after Friday's day-long drenching, the morning sunshine was fine for day dreaming, drying out clothing, visiting with friends and made the festival a little easier on everyone.



Vibes' schedule, photos, video and blogs available online.

► Please see SPIRITS on G2

# Spirits remain high as sun shines down on Vibesters

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"It's not bad to have a day of rain early on a weekend, to get it out of the way," said Gabrielle Fugere, of the Massachusetts-based Wormtown Trading Co., a vendor that was in charge of the children's programming near the food court.

Fugere removed the sides of the tent Saturday morning, expanding the play and art space for kids and their parents.

"We must have had 250 kids in here yesterday and today," said Fugere, who got into the program after she became a mother.

"My husband and I have three kids, so I might as well have 20 and I might as well have a big tent and a big box of toys," she said, as at least a dozen youngsters played with paints nearby.

Don Wood, of Tewksbury, Mass., said he got soaked Friday afternoon putting up his tent, after festival staffers, apparently

overwhelmed by thousands of unanticipated campers, had problems with traffic flow for new arrivals.

"They were clueless and my wife and I were getting perturbed," said Wood.

"We drove around and around and nobody had a clue until finally, after 90 minutes, one girl knew what we had to do."

Wood and other campers complained about signage problems and misdirection when they tried to convert their camping tickets into the ubiquitous green wristbands that are required to move around the festival, which takes up most of the 370-acre peninsula park on Long Island Sound.

Festival organizers said the 10,000 parking tickets sold out, but thousands were using daily tickets to join the throng of mostly young people whose tent communities took up hundreds of acres.

Jonathan Lobdell, director of communications for Terrapin Presents, the festival organizers, said Saturday's



## More on the Gathering of the Vibes

There's more stories, slide shows, video and new blogs from Sean, Tanya and Nick that are updated daily.

weather finally caught up to the Vibes.

"The fields are dried up and everyone's having a great time," he said in a late-afternoon phone interview from backstage.

"I feel like we've been blessed."

Lobdell said the jam-band sound, a reverberation from the decades that the Grateful Dead toured — along, with thousands of adoring followers on nationwide and even international tours — attracts people who are almost always polite and generous to each other.

"It's something about the music and

the type of person who enjoys that music," Lobdell said.

"We feel like we're a community and a family."

Mike Potashnick, of Burlington, Vt., a master of ceremonies along with hippie icon Wavy Gravy, said Saturday that the family attitude is the strength of the operation.

First thing at 11 a.m. Saturday, right before the Ryan Montbleau Band hit the Terrapin Stage, Potashnick asked festivalgoers to turn around and hug the person behind them at that moment.

"The big point of a lot of these shows is to treat people like family," Potashnick said in a backstage phone interview.

"We also want to take away memories and leave only footprints."

"Oh my God. It's so beautiful, I almost forgot about the rain yesterday," said Tess Hill, a college student from just outside New York City, who with her friend, Julia Shaw, was taking a break from the sun in the shaded area near the food court.

The reason for the respite from the sun was evident on Shaw's bright red face.

"We got a little burned walking around all day, so we decided to hang out here for a while," Shaw said.

"It's nice over here. There's a peaceful vibe."

Getting out of the sun worked for most people, but some of the less fortunate ones found themselves in ambulances heading for the hospital.

"Everybody seems to be holding their own," said Scott Tenney, operations supervisor for the American Medical Response team on site.

"We've had a few heat-related incidents and some cardiac issues that can be blamed on the heat, but nothing too devastating.

"Everybody that we took away has been alive."

*Staff writer Sean Spillane contributed to this report.*