

# Sonshine 2005 Recap

I warned everyone in the Wednesday meeting that Sonshine 2005 would be “all about survival” and indeed it was. At least a dozen of you went to the EMT’s for medical attention. Others should have gone but were too stubborn to do so. We fought through four straight days of 90+ temperatures and a record crowd of over 23,000. The blistering heat and the long days were not enough to break our spirit. I didn’t hear of one incident on the crew where tempers flared out of control and we lost our cool with one another. I could not be more proud of any crew I’ve ever had. We were certainly pushed to the limit by the heat, long days, and huge crowds. Time after time I watched many of you dig down for that something extra needed to go into another tough crowd, another frenzied trench, or another day in the sun baked tent city. I saw no quitters among the 116 that were a part of the Sonshine 2005 Security crew.

We now turn our attention to some of the “stories” that made Sonshine 2005 so special. Many were captured on film so you want to get a picture CD for the visual stories. What follows is a recount of our adventures, much of it completely true, while other stories contain small nuggets of truth and a pinch of wild imagination.

**Jeff Melberg** was busy Friday morning keeping people from putting down tarps too early in front of the stage when he came across a young woman laying down a tarp still dressed in her pajamas. Upon closer inspection, an astonished Mr. Melberg saw that the lacy, frilly top she was wearing was completely see through. Jeff politely told her she needed to go back to her tent site and get some appropriate clothes on. She quickly replied “What’s the matter, haven’t you ever seen boobs before?”

The modest dress code was challenged numerous times due to the unrelenting heat. **Starr Marshall** heard a very clever argument when she asked two girls in skimpy bikinis to throw on a shirt. They told her “It’s OK, we’re NOT Christians!”

**Beth Van Roekel** reported that **Peter Beckel**, evidently practicing for a spot on the X-Games, made his way to the top of a skate park ramp only to realize to his dismay the other side was not a down ramp but a 3 ft drop. Hitting the ground with his front tire first, he narrowly and luckily avoided a nasty facial on the road.

**Jon Ness** picked up a nickname from a group of Iowan campers that dubbed him the “**Loch Jon Ness Monster**”. They told tales to all that would listen of the elusive creature that stalked tent city at night searching for fireworks, food, and alcohol. “You would see him – and then he was gone” they would say. The legend grew to the point that Nessie sightings were everywhere but no one could catch him on film. Next year they plan on having a map of tent city to mark sightings with pins and possibly track his movements or predict where he might turn up next. “Nessie” t-shirts are also being discussed for next year.

A lesson painfully learned by a number of rookies this year. When the Crowd Control guys come back from working a nasty, smelly crowd be prepared for the “sweaty hug”!

Did you hear about the “Baby Whale” sighting on Saturday night? Only a few of us were present for the rare treat, and **Charlie Bowen** had the keen eye that spotted her relaxing after a hard day. With a little encouragement and a lot of luck, another sighting might just happen at the party...

**Matt Cooper** or “Coop” repeatedly denied rumors that in an attempt to get through a crowd quickly during an emergency he “accidentally” pushed a little girl to the ground. He claimed he actually pushed her Dad in the back and it was HE who knocked her down.

The overnight SRT gang was led on a merry chase after a young man that later blew a .179 for the police. Although they described him as “running like a deer” **Japheth Aos** eventually caught and tackled him, dislocating the kids shoulder.

Who says you can’t have fun at the HM Stage? **Brittany Machus** said a few of the crew joined in the Tourniquet pit to “relax a little” I guess. When she left the pit she saw **Charlie Bowen** fly by in what could only be described as a slightly jubilant, skipping manner. Too bad a camera was not on hand to record this rare occurrence of energy.

**Joe Olson** offered up his own violin as a stand-in double for the rare violin used by a member of Casting Crowns and we even offered her a “special violin protection” security crew. She was quite amused by the whole idea.

Waking up at 7:30 am Saturday, leaving his tent in a semi-conscious state, and becoming so disoriented that he forgot what day it was, **Al Bergman** made his way to the EMT tent and told the nurse, “Sit me down or you’ll be picking me up off the ground”. The nurse quickly complied after realizing they did not have enough staff on hand to pick big Al up. They proceeded to give him 2 liters of IV, thus earning him the nickname “Two-liter”.

Meanwhile, back at one of the girls’ hotel rooms, an exhausted **Sandi Stark** had climbed into bed around 4am Thursday and never found out who was in the bed next to her. Only later the next day did she find out her “bed buddy” (term used all weekend by the girls) was **Becca Barsamian**. I can assure you that “bed buddy” was not a term used in the guys rooms!

As a matter of fact, on the first night **Japheth Aos** had climbed into one bed, **Curtis Beaumont** climbed in the other, and **Jon Ness** was due to come back in another hour or so. **Sheila Quiggle** told Curtis that Jon usually took up a whole bed and I added that Jon would most likely climb into bed with whomever he liked best. Curtis rolled off the bed and on to the floor SO FAST....!!

If you close your eyes... can you still remember that first trip inside the 120 degree biffy?

Who can forget trying to watch Switchfoot only with the eyes in the back of our heads...

**Jason Doehling** struggled to survive the feverish crowd, this time during Skillet, for the second year in a row. Last year he was taken to the EMT tent during Relient k. When asked by the nurse if there was anything she could do for him he calmly told her he could use a foot massage. Quick thinking for someone suffering from heat exhaustion! We think he was aiming for another massage this year too.

**Curtis Beaumont** and **Kelly Lowe** had the utter displeasure of running into a guy wearing a thong barely covered by a long shirt while patrolling overnight. I think they could have at least gotten a picture for the rest of us!

When **Katie Harvey** almost collapsed during Relient k **Korey Siltman** quickly cleared a path for her to make her way back to Main Stage. **Nigel Masters** picked her up, set her on the stretcher and stayed with her on the ride to the EMT tent. When they got to the EMT tent several medical personnel were deciding how best to move her to a bed when an impatient Nigel once again scooped her up and whisked her to a bed. Being Katie's "Knight in Shining Armor", I say from now on we dub thee, "Sir Nigel".

There was talk of a hostile take over when **Jon Ness** was interviewed by Chuck and Jon on KTIS Friday morning and he chose not to argue with them when they referred to him as Head of Security. Stay tuned – you may have a new boss next year.

As glamorous and adorable as any American Idol contestant, **Korey Siltman** belted out the last line of Audio Adrenaline's "Big House", when lead singer Mark held the mic for him. He cut loose, displaying awesome pipes, and seemed to really enjoy the spotlight.

Who can forget the traveling bards that roamed tent city making up songs for people including the security crew? Alas, the songs were sincere and sweet, but painfully bad!

For the first time ever during the Newsboys show all the lights went out on stage as the generator had fried itself. With some quick thinking as many of the crew up front shined their flashlights on members of the band like so many little spotlights. The show was saved because the crew acted so quickly (and had their flashlights as instructed!)

More firsts courtesy of Sonshine 2005 were the roadblocks we arranged and manned from midnight to 3am. Several of the backstage crew took on extra shifts to cover those access points that proved very valuable in keeping out the locals looking for a place to party or those just "cruising through". Several cars blew by checkpoints but the roadblocks were a complete success and applauded by the local police. Thanks to **Lucinda Adams, Keri Geis, Michelle Hopkins, Katie Harvey, and Jessica Hibma** for helping the Overnight SRT crew. They even got in on some of the other night action!

Another important change was the incident cards that aided us in tracking warnings issued to festival goers and kept record of those evicted from Sonshine. Great job by the Crowd Patrol and SRT crews of recording all the cards from a very BUSY Sonshine!

While in hot pursuit of a kid suspected of drinking, *Jon Ness* and *Sandi Stark* took the golf cart on a little detour through the Grand Canyon, burying it so deep that even *Terry Post's* ATV could not pull it out of the rough. Only *Andy Sopher's* truck had the muscle to excavate it. No sense denying it... we have the pictures to prove it.

Relient k, their intense fans, and the stifling heat set the tone Friday for the toughest test we've ever had doing security at Sonshine. Despite a record eighteen crew in the crowd bearing the full extent of thousands of surging fans it didn't take long for kids to fold under the pressure and begin dropping one after another. The trench crew quickly began pulling smoldering bodies over the wall and handing them off to a brave group of girls that would bring them to the medical personnel. Everyone did an amazing job and I couldn't possibly name everyone that had a part in pulling off the feat of taking 193 kids out of the crowd, more than three times the previous RECORD of 62 during a Newsboys show four years ago. I have never seen such teamwork. From crowd control to trench to front stage assistants to those that assisted the medical personnel by clearing the path for the EMT's to get to their tent with the critical, I salute all of you. Another first brought on by the intensity of the Relient k show was the fire department being called in to hose down the crowd!! The water was a welcome relief to the suffering crowd and crew.

After the apparent chaos of Relient k and before Switchfoot, Mike Scanland and Shane Merrill of Sonshine Concerts in Chicago walked with me into the trench to see what could be done to restore order and security. Their first suggestion was to get rid of all the girls standing around up front. I asked what he meant, thinking he was referring to stage crew and others with backstage passes off to the side. He pointed to my six front stage assistant girls, patiently anticipating another war with the crowd. He said, "**The first thing we need to do is clear out all these wives and girlfriends of the security guys in the trench. They can watch the show elsewhere and don't need to be up front with their men**". It was then that I realized he thought my girls up front were only there as a favor to the guys working, and that they were simply girlfriends and wives enjoying a little perk up front. After a quick glance at the sweaty, burly, and not exactly attractive group of guys in the trench, I turned to Mike and smiled, "These guys couldn't get girls that look that good!"

Did I forget to mention a minor practical joke played on a Mr. *Jon Ness*? Almost slipped my mind it was so insignificant. It all started with *Nigel Masters*, that's right **NIGEL**, asking me what sort of joke we should play on Jon this year. I was just hanging out in the Civic Center visiting with the crew as we always do Saturday night when Sonshine has ended for the backstage crew. I "might" have mentioned something about gathering some of the confiscated empty bottles and cans of alcohol, scattering them around the campsite of one of the security crew, getting several of the crew to hide in the tent, and calling Jon to respond to this "problem campsite". For those listening it was like a bomb had exploded in their scheming little minds. Within minutes 15-20 people had been made aware of the plan and more were about to get involved. *Aaron Bobier* volunteered his humble tent for the prank and many others were enlisted to keep Jon busy while all was readied. The bottles and cans were laid out, my video camera was brought in to record everything from inside the tent, and two police officers were asked to help pull it

off. They were only too happy to oblige. I don't even know who all ended up in the tent, but I know **Nigel, Nerissa Wilker, Sam Jerome, and Aaron Bobier** were inside. Jon knows who you were. They proceeded to carry on as loudly as possible, giggling like schoolgirls and generally sounding completely hammered. I'm more than slightly concerned that members of my crew are able to be such convincing drunks. **Lizzy Alexandr** was asked to set it all in motion by radioing Jon that he'd seen a tent site with lots of alcohol and kids that had been drinking all day. When Jon arrived they hushed each other loudly, telling Jon to go away. Not taking no for an answer, Jon sternly told them to come out immediately. They laughed and refused. Jon tried unzipping the tent but they held on to the zippers. When at last he finally got the tent open the group inside lunged out of the tent while every crew member standing around "helping" Jon with his big alcohol bust rolled around on the grass laughing. We disrupted the area for quite some time but the campers were all too eager to watch us pull off the mother of all pranks. As Jon says in the must see video "My name is Loch Jon Ness and I got totally PUNK'D". It was the perfect end to an awesome Sonshine. That, and the sparkler circle at 5am backstage with the overnight crew as the sun was about to rise Sunday morning.

In case we get any more ideas for practical jokes, **Greg Nordin** did have one of the police officers tell him that if we EVER pulled a stunt like that on him he'd have us all arrested.

Many of you know I receive lots of strange e-mails and reports from parents following Sonshine describing bizarre things they "heard" had happened. The worst I ever heard came after Sonshine 2004 when an understandably distraught parent said she heard several of the security crew had spent the better part of Sunday morning following Sonshine using five gallon pails to collect all the used condoms strewn all about tent city. I would love to know how that rumor got started. Yes, that is a TRUE story!

A short three months ago thirty-nine of you cleared the final hurdle towards becoming members of the Sonshine Security crew. Little did we know this would be the most difficult Sonshine we've ever had, with challenges so unique and demanding for the entire crew. For many of you, working Sonshine was NOTHING like you expected it to be. I trust your experience was beyond any expectations you had. From the e-mails I've received from many of you it was. Welcome to a most dysfunctional family. We really do care about each other. I was impressed by all of the rookies I had a chance to see in action, which does not include much of the HM Stage. You threw yourselves in at every shift, sometimes lending a hand when more help was needed. I saw great efforts from rookies **Heather Ivance, Britta Aadland, Melissa Pickar, Rebekah Henrikson, Stephanie Schroeder, Nerissa Wilker, Gina Snider, Tiffany McCartney and Karla Woelber. Tim McConnell, Josh Radke, Mike Darmante, Damien Erps, and Eric Henrickson** were backstage crew guys that added invaluable bodies to the trench and crowd assisting SRT during the tough bands in the evenings. And I cannot forget four very special girls, **Brittany Machus, Katie Harvey, Jessica Hibma and Sandi Stark** that "volunteered" to work some of the toughest crowds alongside SRT guys three times their size. You proved that women are tough enough to stand out there and take a beating just like the guys. I commend you.

Thanks to the Supervisors. I push some of you hard all year long preparing for this one week. **Greg Nordin** puts up with all my Web site change requests, ordering radios and scheduling for interviews, **Sheila Quiggle** created awesome laminates, **Joe Olson** designed stylin' t-shirts, **Jon Ness** worked on scheduling and guidelines, **Randy Quiggle** worked on schedules, and **Andrea White** assisted with some data entry. Don't know why I keep the rest of them around.... (**Chuck, Charlie**...you know I love you)

Thank you **Jason and Kelly Lowe** for providing the trailer used as security headquarters and for charging and storing radios. Thank you **Andy Sopher** for getting it to Willmar.

Thank you **Louis Christensen** for praying every day for me. There are days when I can truly feel it and there isn't a day that goes by that I don't truly need it. There are times when the pressure gets to me and I am more than a little overwhelmed. Your e-mails and the e-mails of others offering encouragement and words of kindness uplift me more than you know.

For the whole crew, I hope working Sonshine was all that we said it would be and more. I got the same steady, consistent job from the veterans I've come to expect no matter what was thrown your way. I can't name you all. It would fill pages. Simply know that I notice. I see all of the hard work and dedication you invest in this great festival. As Supervisors we know that we are only as good as the crew we have working alongside us. You make us look good. We only hope we treat you with the respect, admiration, and gratitude you so deserve. Thank you. It was my pleasure to work with each of you at Sonshine 2005. I know many of you feel the same emptiness I do after we have left Sonshine Sunday afternoon and realize we have to wait a whole year to return. I hope to see you throughout the year and eventually again next year at Sonshine 2006.

Your (Beloved) Commander in Chief,

**Jeff Quiggle**