

(c. 254, 345)

## Guitar fest is electric

By KELLY PAIGE

Are you ready to rock?

Premier Guitar Festivals kicked off its weekend guitar bash yesterday with guitar exhibits, performances and workshops for all ages and abilities, and the guitars will keep on strumming today at Boston's Bayside Expo Center.

Organizer Peter Sprague, co-owner of TrueFire Studios, said he chose to debut the event in the Hub because "Boston has more guitar players per capita than any city in the country." The event is expected to draw about 7,500 guitar enthusiasts throughout the weekend.

Players ranging from young novices to famous rockers were jamming at the exhibits and workshops yesterday. Aerosmith bassist Tom Hamilton took a break from his busy

tour schedule and visited the festival knowing "there's something here (he) needs to buy."

"I'm like everybody else here. It's like a dream about Christmas," said Hamilton, after putting his talent to work trying out some of the merchandise. "I kind of wish I didn't bring my credit card. We might need to extend the tour."

Johnny A, who toured with Aerosmith in the '70s, said he was looking forward to performing at last night's All-Star Guitar Night, featuring international stars and local favorites including J. Geils and Ernie and the Automatics.

At the Taylor Guitars exhibit, Brian Swerdfeger showed off the company's new first-ever solid body electric guitar. "This is the most professional festival I've been to, and we do 16 festivals a year," Swerdfeger said.



STAFF PHOTOS BY ANGELA ROWLINGS

**STRUM FUN:** Brian Cass of New York, above, checks out the merchandise at the Premier Guitar Festival at the Bayside Expo Center yesterday. Another attendee, Kenzie Morris, 6, of Sharon, below, participates in a 'Little Kids Rock' workshop.