



# Ticketing Demand Back to Normal

BY MITCH

Black Rock City ticket sales for 2013 were clearly a success, especially when judged against the world-class cluster of the previous year, funneling a record amount of cash into the Burning Man Organization's unexpectedly anemic treasury.

Paradoxically, the proof that this year went well is that prices on secondary markets are higher than they were in 2012. Completed Internet auction sales in mid-August were running from the face value for most tickets of \$380 (by those few souls who were playing fair) to the mid \$500s, with a single ticket at \$600. Classified ad listings were in the same ballpark, with asking prices having come down by about \$100 relative to the auction sales over the past month.

Prices are a little higher than they ought to be if people are selling at face value, but when you factor in shipping costs, the premium is not outrageous, especially not in the United States. Londoners seem to think it's okay to just change the dollars into pounds. Some joker with a 626 area code listed two tickets for 450 euros (\$600) each in Paris with an explanation that Burning Man is "one of the most famous music festivals in America."

At the same juncture last year, auction prices had fallen below the \$390 top tier, with some below \$300. That indicates a mismatch in supply and demand that has been variously attributed (notably by the Bmorg) to Burners deciding at the last minute that they couldn't attend and scalpers of differing stripes ditching tickets that had earlier in the year commanded four figures (notably by me).

This year, no such mismatch seems to have developed, and the lack of anguished wails on the Internet indicates that everybody who really wanted to be in Black Rock City made it to Black Rock City. [ed: Except those looking for tickets in Gerlach and Empire, and those convinced to turn around by the SOLD OUT sign immediately after turning onto 447.]

The comparison with last year isn't exact because the three main tiers are gone, replaced with a single price of \$380. If you were paying more attention to the patter than the sleight of hand, you might have missed that the Bmorg is gulping down a lot more dough than in the past.

It is possible to calculate ticket revenue more precisely now than before 2011 because the event has sold out. Along with details of low-priced ticket sales being released, the revenue data is now fairly accurate, unlike in past years, when you had to guess at ticket sales based on attendance and when ducats purchased at the Gate were priced at unpublicized penalty rates.

This year's take comes to about \$23.2 million, up 18 percent from \$19.6 million last year, according to Burning Man web postings. The revenue may sound like a lot, but the event costs are growing for reasons that are not entirely under the Bmorg's control.

In fact, a Beacon review of the ticket revenue and the event costs the Bmorg posts on the Internet shows the event hasn't been profitable going back to 2007, at least if you consider ticket revenue the only major source of income. The 2012 shortfall was \$2.5 million, which does not seem like it would have been covered by ice sales, t-shirts, and the odd fee from videographers.

"There were definitely years



Eager burners swarm the Black Rock City box office, seeking entry.

the event operated in the red, some years close to even and others with a small profit," Megan Miller, a Bmorg spokeswoman, said without providing specifics.

Big bites to your ticket dollar came from the money paid to the federal Bureau of Land Management, now \$1.9 million and up more than 20 percent in each of the past three years, and fees to local agencies, which reached \$615,803 last year, a 67 percent increase from 2011.

Despite the government grab,

the cost per ticket of producing the event barely changed last year, coming in at \$394, a \$3 increase. Even though we view the Bmorg numbers with suspicion, it does seem logical that the organization has found ways to be more efficient in producing the event, and the expanding attendance helps spread fixed costs across an ever-widening population.

Last year's budget of \$22.1 million is not a whole lot less than this year's revenue, though with population growth of about

3 percent, 2013 could be in the black. Still, a profit of \$1 million a year would not be enough to allow the six owners of Black Rock City LLC, the corporate entity that owns Burning Man, to cash out with what they — and even you — might consider adequate retirement packages and turn the company over to a not-for-profit organization anytime soon, as is their plan. (Or maybe not; see the SFGate's exasperated coverage of this issue at [tinyurl.com/sfgate-murky](http://tinyurl.com/sfgate-murky).)

## DPW Wants You(r Leftovers)

REDNIKKI

Can't fit those last bits of food or bottles of liquor back in your car before you head home? First aid kit won't fit back in the RV? Did you quit smoking as the Temple burned?

Don't leave that stuff in your camp to get blown to the trash fence. Some passing Burner isn't going to take your stuff away. Instead, donate them to a group who can really use them — the hard-working folks at DPW and the Restoration crew, who will be cleaning up the mess you made for weeks to come. Anything that isn't used this year will be saved for next year or donated to a worthy cause in Gerlach.

We contacted Fluffer Nips, who heads the Collexodus team — they sort through all the items Burners leave behind to find items DPW can use. You can make the team's life easier by leaving them only these items. The Collexodus team makes it easy for you by placing donation bins on the Gate Road, right where the Greeter

stations were located on the way in. The Collexodus bins are the ONLY place to leave food or other donations for DPW.

What does DPW want? Think: ready-to-eat, single-serving and shelf-stable — the sort of thing that can survive on the Playa for several more weeks, and can be cooked and eaten without the need for a separate bowl. Bags of jerky, chips, salty nuts and mixes, dried fruit, spray cheese, and ready to eat foods like foil pouch dinner and cup soup. Canned foods like fruit, vegetable, meats, fish, and ravioli are also great.

Pack out your ramen and your perishable foods — there's no home for those at DPW.

DPW also wants liquids! Unopened containers of fruit juice, sodas, energy drinks and drink mixers are always welcomed, as are single-serving bottles of water. But if you really want some fans, drop off unopened containers of beer, whiskey, or other alcoholic beverages, as well as mixers.

Take your jugs of water and your skanky half-drunk unidentifiable bottles of liquor home with you. DPW isn't that desperate.

Oversupplied on toiletries? DPW can always use items like lotion, soap, deodorant, toothpaste, UNUSED toothbrushes, shampoo, conditioner, UNUSED lip balm, sunscreen, and unopened baby wipes.

Looking to lighten your load a little further? DPW can also use duct tape, permanent markers, zip-top bags, garbage bags, goggles, sunglasses, lighters, plasticware, plastic bins, bandages, medical tape, hydrogen peroxide, eye drops and other non-emergency medical supplies. Also, plenty of members of the crew will be glad to provide a home for your unopened packs of cigarettes.

Leave no trace, but gift a thoughtful donation to the DPW crew by depositing it into a Collexodus bin. Collexodus bins are well-signed on the way out as you enter the Gate Road.

### Curious Camp Name of the Day



#### Other camps that might bear investigation:

- Bumblepuss
- Camp Disco Nap
- Camp of Misfit Toys
- Carnival of Bad Decisions
- Deus Ex Detective Agency
- Fluffy Clouds
- Kardashev III
- Mind Candy Village
- Pretty Pickle Camp
- Rainbow & Tetanus Society
- S'mores N Amour
- Scarbutts Cafe
- Shaved Ice Pussy Soup
- Tsunami Bass Experience

Drawn from Time To Burn app



## IT MAY BE SHIT TO YOU,

*but it's bread and butter to him*



Exasperated burner throws her hands up in disgust

Thunder Boxes, and the Gardyloos. We all frequent them, well, save for the rich and famous glitterati with their 53' Prevost Mega-bagos and their silver-plated Dunnekins. But what do we really know about the Poop Holes in our city?

For answers your crack reporter went to the "Head," as it were. That would be Matt Morgan, aka Hazmatt, the Baron of Banhieros in the DPW. He's also the guy who could have written the title of this article. Here's the "poop" on the Plumpsklosetten on the Playa for 2012.

Total Buttholders provided by the 10+ year contractor, United Site Services,

is 1,450. They're found on all radial streets of BRC. Each group is adorned by tall beacon lights to facilitate locating them in the dark. New this year will be two remote-Playa banks of Khazis out past the Temple.

All those Swanies will consume 38,400 rolls of single-ply paper ONLY! They will be serviced a minimum of three times daily by 22 trucks and 80 USS

employees. These good folks will be on this shitty job from August 5 to September 11. USS assigns a minimum of six persons just to replace the Bum Fodder in our Turd Aquariums. Ten 9,000 gallon trucks make a six-hour round trip to the sewage treatment plant each day.

Last year's Burners produced the staggering amount of 535,000 gallons of effluent. And there will be more of it this year with the population growth.

Although it may seem like a crappy thing to do, we've gotta take this shit seriously, at least as far as what goes into the Johnny-houses. Hazmatt reports that the single biggest problem his people have at the on-Playa transfer station is with Baby Wipes. WHICH DON'T BELONG IN THE LITTERBOXES. Ditto TAMPONS. [Ed: Also, a pumper told the Beacon that a line was clogged by a pair of panties, delaying service on Monday.]

These things seriously fuck up machinery which has to be dismantled and repaired by hand. So PLEASE people, remember the very simplest rule concerning the use of our Forakers:

**IF IT DIDN'T COME OUT OF YOUR BODY, DON'T PUT IT IN THE POTTY!** 🐷

### ALMANAC

Tuesday • August 27

Sunset • 7:38 P.M.  
Twilight ends • 8:07 P.M.  
Moonrise • 11:32 P.M.

Wednesday • August 28

The moon, which will reach its last-quarter phase at 2:36 A.M., will be in the sky at dawn.

First light • 5:52 A.M.  
Sunrise • 6:20 A.M.

Courtesy [www.SunriseSunset.com](http://www.SunriseSunset.com)

### FINKMANN

Everyone uses them. It's the answer you give when non-Burners ask what you get for a \$380.00 Burning Man ticket. It's where we meet and greet the neighbors in the morning, the great commonality, the big leveler. Yep, it's the Portos. The Shitters. The Long-Drops, Dunnys, Crappers, Dooblevey Says, the

## CARGO CALL CONTEST

In line with the name of today's edition (Conjuration), the Beacon is putting out a call for cargo. Yesterday afternoon, we found ourselves in a spirited discussion about Devo, and we have a prize for the producer of the best bit of Devophemera to make its way to our camp by sundown. 🐷

### CYPHER BY DURGY

ULCOC KI MD CGCBUOKB XKOC KD LYFMD DMUYOC UCDVKDZ US

AYOKXW - IS ULMU MFSdz ULCIC LYFMD BOCMUYOCI ULCOC KI

BSDUKDYMGGW ISFC NKOUL SX DCR LCOSKIF. ULC AKUW KI ULMU

RC FYIU RSDVCO MU KU, MI RC ILSYGV MU XKDVKDZ M ACMOG

KD OYNNKIL. - HSLD JCMUI

## HOW I LOST MY BLINDERS



Hugs are offered outside of the Lost Penguin Café.

### CURIOUS

I remember my first time.

I ventured up the 4:00 road, bracing myself: Default life often feels like a gauntlet of carneys, leering, hands outstretched, jeering, chanting, desiring not me but my money, my time, my resources, my energy in exchange for their junk, their business cards, their listservs. Carneys aren't assholes, they're just trying to make a living like everyone else.

A lifetime of people showing you the love only because they want something from you, right on up to the carney in the bankers' sky bar selling high-risk securities and pulling six-figure boners.

Horse blinders on, shields up, I stepped out into the circus of the Esplanade. It's just what I was used to, the old defense.

And there he was, calling out for my attention.

A man, not a carney, as beautiful as any art installation in the deep playa. "Hugs or chocolate?" he asked.

I am a product of greed. I took both. He asked for nothing in return. My blinders melted off. Call me Decommodified.

Free now to smile at a stranger. Free to walk the City with my own bag of tricks, gifts to share. 🐷

# Burners We Once Knew: Les Blank, filmmaker

### BY MRS. LUCKY

Les Blank didn't dance, sing, or talk much. He shot film. He was finishing his Ph.D. at the University of Southern California on Easter Sunday in 1967 when he grabbed his 8 mm wind-up Bell and Howell and headed to Elysian Park for the Love-In.

The folks in that 20 minute film look like burners. Men cavort in loincloths. Hennaed bellies gyrate. Little girls offer oranges from a basket. God Respects Us When We Work, But Loves Us When We Dance captures the dawn of flower power. In one scene two people just stare at each other as a crowd looks on. Les

Blank could make staring seem interesting.

"He had a knack for the iconographic," says Les' son Harrod, also a documentarian. Les first came to Burning Man in 1995 pitching in on his son's project. "He was the cameraman and I was the director. But he shot so much footage I couldn't afford it. So I had him shoot b-roll instead."

He did so for 15 years, often heading to Center Camp, where he watched for moments of ordinary human experience, people sleeping, making out, dancing. He'd turn his lens on them and "something beautiful, meaningful, poetic, would happen," says Har-

rod. He'd shoot 10 to 20 spools per Burn; that's 30 minutes to one hour of film. "He had to be really focused," says Harrod, who has yet to view the footage Les shot in his final five years at Black Rock.

Les liked food, especially garlic and scallops, asparagus, strong cheese, good bread. Wine was served in stemware. Dinner was by candlelight with the whole camp around the table. If shooting went late, sometimes you ate at 2 a.m.

He died of cancer this spring at home, in Berkeley Hills. He was 77.

*This year Mrs. Lucky is writing from off the playa. She herself plans to be back next year.* 🐷



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