

Welcome To NoWhere

BY TECHNOMAD

Even after two decades, when you mention Burning Man in the default world, you're quite likely to draw a response like "What is that?" Many Burners hesitate to say the name, wary of getting drawn into long explanations and knowing short ones seldom suffice. Others know not where to begin and repeat the standard, "It's a big party in the desert."

Burning Man is more than an event, a place, or a gathering. It's more than a participatory arts festival, or the West's largest venue for large-scale, non-commercial installation art. It continues a tradition of seeking meaning by living in a subculture at society's margin, from Freaks and Slackers, to Hippies and Beatniks, to Bohemians and Radical Reformists.

Two hundred years ago, small communities founded by visionary

thinkers and leaders and held together by belief in non-violence and by social bonds, sought to find new frontiers. Tired of a daily grind under social, political, and religious rules they detested and sometimes resisted, they moved west from the established civilization founded yet 200 years before them in colonial America. They moved a day or two's journey onto free or cheap land they could claim and settle. There they nurtured and refined ideas that brought them together and then drew them closer.

The frontiers of western New York State became a nexus of radical social, spiritual, and even sexual reform, drawing tribes founded by Menno Simons, Jacob Amman, and Joseph Smith, along with others no longer thriving. As the Industrial Revolution grew, its benefits became commonplace. Whether or not these tribes rejected commodification

brought by automation or whether they accepted inappropriate technology created by the growing mainstream, they weaned themselves on the wealth created by innovation and commerce. Today their tribes flourish.

Twenty years ago in San Francisco began another community founded by visionary leaders and held together by beliefs in radical free expression, decommodification, sustainability, and spirituality. Forced to move away from established civilization to the interior frontier of a unsettled desert, this became Burning Man. Twenty years hence, Burning Man may no longer need to inhabit the desert to flourish.

Those who see Burning Man only as a weeklong vacation may be missing the opportunity to influence our future history. In 40 years, Burning Man will likely have evolved, its story codified as a

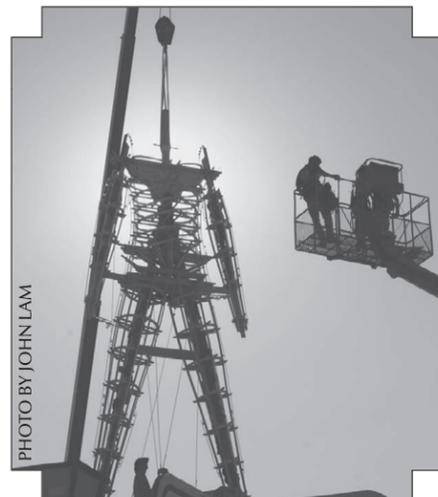


PHOTO BY JOHN LAM

HERE TODAY. GONE TOMORROW.

foundation for its survival, or it will have failed, its ideas and people subsumed into other microcosms.

As a participant and reader, you can help shape this future. During our time here, we can only make the best we can.



LISTINGS

Tuesday

10 a.m. Black Rock Beacon team meeting.

Join us! Be part of the yellowest daily publication on the Playa, and, hey, since it happens at breakfast time, we'll probably have some spare bacon. We're looking for people to write, edit, produce, and distribute the Beacon. Skilled or unskilled, we have a job for you -- and probably a snack too. We're at the 11:30 position in the 9:00 Plaza.

Continuing

Camera's memory card filled up? Take a digital dump at Hot Wheelz Camp (Center Camp, directly behind Playa Info). CalicoDragon can handle most digital formats, with the possible exception of Mini SD Cards. He'll put your info on a CD or DVD and send you on your merry way with a blank memory. Hours:

Tuesday-Thursday 8 a.m. to 9:30 a.m.

Closed Friday

Saturday 8 a.m. to 9:30 a.m.

or by appointment

(set up by Thursday)

Sunday 3 p.m. to 5 p.m.

Monday Noon to 1 p.m.

Public Notice

Stopped in Schurz? The Beacon wants to talk to Burners who feel they were unfairly stopped or arrested after the event while driving south on U.S. 95.

Subject to space limitations, the Black Rock Beacon lists Black Rock City events that were not contained in the materials handed out at the Gate. Bring submissions to our world headquarters at 11:30 in the 9:00 Plaza. Those requesting listings must provide a piece of real-world identification that shows a current address; drivers license preferred.

BY MITCH

Hope and Fear. At first, they sound like antonyms. But think: despair is the opposite of hope; courage the flip side of fear. There is more to this year's theme than meets the eye.

"One's hopes beget one's fears, and one's fears beget one's hopes," said Larry Harvey, the Burning Man founder and creator of the annual theme. "Both imply an engagement with the future."

This year, it's personal. Harvey allows that he is the child of Depression-era parents, and he sees parallels between the 1930s and the oughts. "If you go back to the 30s, and that's really real to me because my parents were Dustbowlers, the banks closed and made them paupers over night."

Harvey, 58, said he fears that, in America at least, there is a whole generation -- people his age and younger -- that cannot comprehend the Depression. "The worst they have ever seen is stagflation," he said, dismissively. Without understanding the breakdown of the economy in the 1930s, how can people fear a repeat? Yet, he said, "Whole chunks of the middle class are falling into the underclass." If you define the middle class as those who live comfortably by the fruits of their own labor, you don't have to look far to see how many opportunities are being limited by economic disruptions: "The auto industry, airlines -- but they are only the forerunners. We have been governed in a way where the division between the rich and the poor grows. That means the middle class shrinks. When people who thought they deserved respect and aren't getting it, they get really mad."

Harvey is really mad. The bright future that he and other Baby Boomers were promised -- and, that many seem to take as a birthright -- has not arrived. "The American empire is sinking, and we're going to have to face some really, really hard truths that we did not have to when we were so rich. We have lived beyond our means individually, and as a nation to a disastrous degree. What is coming next is a wave of foreclosures on people's houses," he said, an echo of the Depression. "Homeownership used to be a sacred thing. Now we take money out of our homes and spend it on consumer goods. On a national level, who owns our debt? China."

"We believed we were the center of technological innovation. We were the future

Hope & Fear

-- all nations wanted to be just like us. It turns out NOT all nations want to be like us. We're becoming insular and selfish people."

Growing up in the 1950s, Harvey enjoyed a childhood in the American Decade of the American Century that offered him quite a different prospect than the current reality. The future in his mind's eye was the Jetsons; what we got is the Flintstones with iPods. Thus, the leitmotif of this year's theme is the dichotomy of utopia and dystopia. "Utopias," the official Burning Man Journal tells us, "are visions of our highest hopes. They paint a picture of a better world."

On the other hand, "Dystopias are cautionary tales and correspond to the fear



of what the future has in store."

So is Black Rock City utopia or dystopia? For Burners, it must be the former -- or else why come all this way -- but the potties, Exodus and Playa time are all as dystopic as can be.

Harvey's answer, however, is "none of the above." "Burning Man is neither utopia nor dystopia. Whether people know it or not, they lead spiritual lives. To feel connected to things beyond one's self is a spiritual experience. For all the cynicism that's affected in these postmodern times, I have never talked to anybody who didn't hold something dear -- something that must be defended. We are in

a place apart in which the normal rules of society are suspended and where interactions take place in the form of gifts rather than transactions."

Of course, in your basic dystopia, interactions take place in the form of gifts -- they are called bribes and you can deliver them under the table at your local City Hall.

Which might be, as is Black Rock City 2006, built in the Art Deco style. Many structures, private but especially public, were built in America during the heyday of Deco in the 20s and 30s. It was, the Journal says, "the West's last commonly held vision of a utopian future." Arising from an exposition of industrial arts in Paris in 1925, Art Deco was the prevalent movement during the Depression. Many public works projects were started at that time, in part to alleviate unemployment, so it is not surprising that Deco exerts an influence on urban thinkers, especially those who came of age in the postwar, post Depression era.

Although it went through several phases and absorbed many influences, Deco was overall an artistic expression of hope. The flowing, flowery lines of Art Nouveau were straightened, suggesting man's domination of nature. Deco meant electricity and ocean liners and fast cars, luxury and Jazz Age sophistication.

An element of irony is in the plan for Black Rock City-wide voting for hope or fear via a network of booths linked by wi-fi. Those who remember how well previous attempts to create a BRC intranet worked will recognize this as a triumph of hope over fear. If it works, the Man will either rise triumphantly atop his Pavilion if hope is ahead in the balloting, or descend into a space "decorated with discarded chrome auto parts" in reaction to despair, said Harvey. "Really, all that is left of that great Deco vision of robots and convenience and continuous improvement are discarded auto parts."

While we buy most of Harvey's arguments about the modern world, the Black Rock Beacon is coming down on the side of hope for our city in 2006. At the very least, we hope you like our sophomore effort and that you have an excellent week on the Playa. Our biggest fear is that it will all be over too quickly.

Read more of Larry Harvey's thoughts on modern America at <http://bitethe.com/brb/article10.htm> 🐾

Black Rock City

Population: 16,142 as of
4:00 P.M. Monday.

Tuesday Rise (Hope)

Twilight 05:52
Sun 06:21
Moon 12:07

Set (Fear)

20:04
19:35
22:00

Tuesday, August 29

Sharing your birthday today with William Friedkin, directed The French Connection and The Exorcist among many others. "For me, the greatest thrill in the world, the only thrill, is getting 20 seconds on the screen that really gas you."

Brrrning Man:

It's shaping up to be a cool year in Black Rock City, and we don't mean "cool" as in "groovy." The National Weather Service is forecasting highs of just 73° - 83° Fahrenheit through Thursday, while evening lows are expected to run from 39° - 49°.

Black Rock Beacon

Black Rock Beacon Publication Schedule

Tuesday – Welcome to Nowhere
Wednesday – Hope
Thursday – Fear
Friday – The Future
Sunday – Exodus

International Burners: A Breed Apart

BY TURTLE

I'm in airport customs, just coming out the backside of a long-haul flight where liquid and other bare essentials are banned. In my possession is a spectacular array of items: fairy wings, military overalls, wedding china, electroluminescent wire and a large quantity of British alcohol.

I stood watching, as my baggage goes through check-out, the brows of flight attendants and security men furrow as they ruthlessly inspected my wares. Some eyes glaze over but others gasp and I am coldly asked, "What is your reason for visiting the United States?"

I am fully aware what they are really saying is "What the fuck is all of this shit? You look like you work for the interrogation services at Guantanamo Bay!"

What these people fail to realize is that I am an international Burner.

Three months earlier, armed with only a few flimsy copies of an itinerary and brought together through a haphazard assortment of group emails, a small collective of Brits from all walks of life settled down in a basement in the East End of London to organize a theme camp. Since then, I have only seen some of the people I've met at that meeting. A number

of them I won't meet again until the dust hits my handsome face.

But never mind, trust and blind hope are two of the essential ingredients that make up the international camps. Being a foreign Burner often dictates a set of priorities that are more pragmatic in outlook than those of your domestic variety of Black Rock participant.

Chief among these goals is just being there. This is not as straightforward as you might think when you consider funding, shipping, baggage limitations, travel time and communication. These turn out to be the kind of things that some U.S.-based camps probably arrange by simply throwing last year's stuff into the van and heading out to the Playa.

One result is that for us, getting around to discussing the issues of Burning Man is difficult. The debate about whether the sale of coffee at the event compromises Burning principles is a hazy one. Even more so is the parents' discussion about whether they

should bring their kids because, last year, little Todd was walking along flying his kite around Kidsville, got lost, and stumbled into a suggestively shaped art project, only to catch two bodies on a bed twined in cascading ecstasy with their faces puffed and red.

For many foreign Burners, the biggest difficulties are time and money. The cost for an international trip can easily run \$2,000 to \$3,000. Luckily, eBay often proves instrumental in averting a cash flow crisis, and there is never any shortage of help on hand from U.S. based Burners who just never stop giving.

So if you look in five years, the effects of the festival on international Burners will become clearer. Don't be surprised if all of a sudden we all have green cards and have jumped ship to live in

Reno. Once there, America will again have an immigration problem, albeit of a slightly fluffier and pinker kind. 

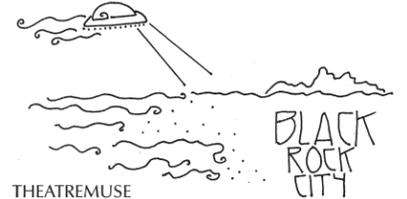


Fear & Hope

BY RICK-BOY

Vitale was excited, bored, attracted and disgusted, all at the same time. What would it be like to interact with such primitives? A society from before the Uniform Species Act? Totally biological creatures, untamed masses of blood vessels, nerve endings and parasitic bacteria?

He glanced at the porthole. The inscrutable gray lightlessness of hypertimespace matched his mood. He was going back to Burning Man 2006, back to some say when it all began; hopefully, just before it all ended. Before California fell into the sea and the Pacific Ocean rushed in burying most of the southwest including Las Vegas and rushed up the desert to Reno and kept going to New Gerlach and the Black Rock Desert. The event that had buried the West Coast had been a shifting of tectonic plates on a scale never envisioned by any geologist



THEATREMUSE

and yet it happened. In a matter of minutes, California was gone and the Playa upon which Burning Man was held had been raised up to meet the new sea level; one plate slipping under another, a great fissure opening and the mountains falling into the void. It was the cataclysm to end all cataclysms, and it wiped out much of the old Far West. Worse, it fooled a bunch of ridiculous binary computers into thinking America had been attacked by its Russian allies, and once they let the germs out and the counter-counter measures kicked in, well, there wasn't too much left of Humanity 1.0 that you couldn't spoon into what they quaintly called a "test tube."

Except, of course, for those isolated on the Playa. Nobody thought to counterattack them, nobody knew they were still there. The people of Burning Man must have wondered if their desert party had invoked some god of destruction. "Can you imagine?" thought Vitale to himself. To burn an effigy of a man one evening and feel the ground rumble and swell beneath your feet the next?

"Captain Vitale, we will be arriving soon," said the antrocephlopod. God she's gorgeous thought Vitale, I'll fly on her ship any day.

"We can't get too close without attracting suspicion," she continued. "We'll need to drop you at their perimeter fence. You'll have to walk from there. Stick to the time coordinates, this warp in the continuum won't last for long - good luck."

"Understood, thanks," he replied.

The ship touched down in a swirl of dust. Vitale emerged with helmet and dust mask on. Thank goodness, they warned me about the dust, he thought.

No sooner had he left the ship than it was gone, just a dot in the sky.

He saw a double-barreled plume of dust coming at him.

A gray green jeep heading for his location and was closing quickly. He knew he didn't have time to hid or run. He waited.

The Jeep pulled along side and a seated creature swathed in rags stared at him through goggles. "Welcome Home! Do you have a ticket?"

Continued on Wednesday.

Howeird's Positively Playa

I am sure lots of people have their garage or house burn to the ground three weeks before Burning Man, but is it a DISASTER or an OPPORTUNITY?

Eleven years of Burning usually provides irreplaceable camping accoutrements, bric-a-brac and other essentials. Many, many playa toys that are now 'family.' A three quarter scale stuffed tiger; a piece of cable and a pulley from the debris of the 1996 Man.; sequinned dresses - all too small since the hormone treatments. Priceless? Yes, although they cost next to nothing at Goodwill.

On the plus side, no need to look for shit. Need it? Pick it up in Reno. Keep receipt. End of story. Also, anything you ever borrowed from anyone and did not return simply 'evaporates' and cannot ever be mentioned again. Even the hardbacks with inscriptions on the frontispieces. To Bubba - with gratitude for the great ideas - love Tim.

I am taking it in my stride. Thanks for asking. A stringent regimen of hallucinogens settles the mind I find. Still can't believe the serendipity of finding 'Everything you need for Burning Man - \$100' on Craigslist exactly forty eight hours later. Bike, tent, sleeping bag, Camelback etc. And that the beautiful guy providing my lifeboat is a Pauite who went to school in Nixon and lived on the Pyramid Lake Res on the edge of the Black Rock. He was taught that all his deceased relatives use the Playa as the happy hunting ground but kindly added that they do not mind our yearly visits. Fuckin A.

"Why 'Reggae Fest Rips The Pants Off Burning Man."

BY FREE RANGING CUB REPORTER, HOWEIRD, JUST NOW IN FROM CALIFORNIA'S SECOND LARGEST 'PARTY' - REGGAE ON THE RIVER, IN HUMBOLDT COUNTY, CALIFORNIA.

August, 7, 2006.

1. No Cops
2. Freely allowed public barter and sale of every drug known to man.
3. Free Samples.
4. On site ATM
5. ONE LOVE.

Did Larry send spies to Reggae this year? A Black Rock Ranger pickup truck was spotted pulled over by the Sherrif's K-9 patrol just north of Willits on Highway 101 yesterday as the 15,000 or so festival fans streamed south.

If he did they night have noted some

disturbing trends, in addition to the \$165 ticket price, they charge \$300 for an RV site (with no hookups), around \$150 to camp (up to 8 people & 2 cars) and additional cars are charged \$60. All this for only THREE nights!

Like BM. Dogs, weapons and fireworks are banned from Reggae On The River, but internal security treat attendees ethically and even returned the quarter pound of cocaine found on a guy who had a couple knives confiscated Saturday.

On the downside, ROTR's percentage of clean portapotties seems much lower than the Playa and their recycle/trash bin system capacity is way too low and encouraged unsightly mounds of bagged trash in many places. 

"All animals are equal, but some are more equal than others"

G. Orwell, *Animal Farm*

"No question now, what had happened to the faces of the pigs. The creatures outside looked from pig to man, and from man to pig, and from pig to man again; but already it was impossible to say which was which."

G. Orwell, *Animal Farm*

Brainteasers

By Smaze



Complete this sequence:
2,1,3,15,14,9,19,7,15,15,_

Answer on Wednesday.

Perpetrators of The Black Rock Beacon...

Mitchell Martin, managing editor. **Michael Durgavich**, major general counsel and director of intelligence. **Francis Wenderlich**, graphics editor and co-camp manager. **Ali Baba**, co-camp manager. **Angie Zmijewski** and **Goddess Lena**, production dieties. **John Lam**, news editor. **Larry Breed**, chef copy editor. **Edge**, webmaster. **Armadillo**, goddess of the underworld and circulation manager. **Saffron Lee**, web editor. **Sunburn Sarah**, volunteer coordinator. **Howard Jones**, LNT manager and shack wrangler. **WeeGee**, minister of photography.

Editors: Ali Baba, Emmy Love, Suzanne Zalev. **Writers:** Michael Durgavich, Howard Jones, Rick Kinnaird, John Lam, Anthony Peterson, Deb Prothero, Cross the Sidhe, Matthew Turtle. **Photographers:** Richard Gilmore, Anthony Peterson, Kevin Powell. **Illustrations:** Diana Acosta. **Distribution:** Biff, the Paper Boy.

Semi-Legal Mumbo Jumbo

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