



# It's Not Green Being Easy

By Deb Prothero (firefighter)

IS IT whimsical or deeply philosophical? That is for you to choose. The Green Man theme for Black Rock City 2007 addresses the relationship between humans and nature. With a hint of pagan tradition, the Green Man calls us to examine how to be in the present and create change for our future on this planet.

In September 2006, a net was cast far and wide for participants to join the Burning Man's Greeningman online discussion group with telephoneconference calls from Bmorg headquarters beginning Dec. 4 held twice a month until early August. About 150 participants from various Burning Man groups, including Earth Guardians, Leave No Trace team, Department of Public Works, BMorg staff, Lamplighters, Alternative Energy Zone folks and interested individuals hashed out the elements of the theme that could have a positive impact on the ecological footprint of the Burning Man event.

Even the annual questionnaires for artists and mutant vehicles were overhauled to ask pertinent green questions: "Which alternative fuel or alternative energy will power your project?"

"At Decompression in October, BMorg revealed that a partnership of Burners Without Borders, which provides disaster relief and other assistance to those in need; Coolingman, which raises climatological concerns with artists; and BRC's Department of Public Works was able to offset completely the burning of the Man 2006 through the purchase of carbon offsets. This carbon-neutral success story jumpstarted the Green Man theme for 2007 with a jolt of excitement."

BRC participants are a demanding lot: they don't want corporate involvement and bristle at the thought of a sell-out. Greeningman groupies regularly hashed out the value of alternative-energy concerns on the Playa after an initial call for expertise in solar and other technologies yielded a handful of companies eager to get in front of the early-uptake Burning Man crowd. But while their knowledge might be necessary to wade through the realities and myths of going green, the restrictions on marketing discouraged those who wouldn't have been a good match.

Art under the Man this year will be powered by solar and wind energy provided by companies, but logos will not be visible. You'll even be able to hear yourself think – the Man's base will be quiet with no generators humming away. The lighting: less neon, more light-emitting diodes.

Interesting ideas from the Greeningman discussion list may or may not be realized: illuminated potties (solar lighting), a green-choices maze, rocket stoves, or even some composting portapotties.



THEATREMUSE

Burning Man is gaining a foothold in mass media, whether desired or not. A July feature in the magazine *Business 2.0* revealed founder Larry Harvey and Mistress of Communications Maid Marian extolling the virtues of the Green Man theme but getting caught up in the Madison Avenue lingo of "branding." With Google, meanwhile, Burning Man is developing an interactive, three-dimensional, participatory virtual event called Burning Man Earth. Which raises the question: Is Google welcome because its top brass are Burners, or is BMorg capitalizing on one of the most popular search engines to disseminate its message? Well, Harvey weighed in on the corporate kerfuffle over at ePlaya with a brilliantly reasoned rebuttal on July 30 soundly "sedating the church ladies online."

Environmental concern is not the only angle on Green Man. Reaching into pagan rituals, be on the lookout for the participants who have experienced Celtic Green Man festivals rampant in Britain.

The Green Man is a widespread but poorly understood English icon (and the name of many a pub). The idea is much older than the name: a Green Man is a head intertwined with vines and leaves, found in British artwork dating from the 11th century, although the sobriquet was coined less than 100 years ago. The idea seems to be the anthropomorphization of nature, a vaguely human head watching you – not necessarily with approval – from within shrubbery. The figure is popular in church carvings, although its probable origin is a pre-Christian Earth diety.

Back to nature and simplicity may be the order of the day as American Burners introduce their worldwide community to their own pantheist prophet, Henry David Thoreau. Will the Man be raised by hand this year just like the old days? It's quite simply possible!

How can you go green? For one thing, take the gift economy on the road back to the default world. Save your excess lumber to donate to Burners Without Borders for contribution to benefit Habitat for Humanity. They plan to be collecting on Sunday and Monday at 3:00, 6:00, and 9:00 on the Esplanade and are looking for large pieces of wood and plywood – no scraps – and also building materials other than liquids.

Meanwhile, after the corporate not-quite-sponsors are gone from the Playa, all the solar power from under the Man will be reassembled to power the Gerlach school and the hospital in Lovelock. They will provide about 200 kilowatts of power for the next 20 years, saving about \$1 million at the school alone.

Climate change has become of increasing concern to Burners, especially as a result of Hurricane Katrina, which devastated New Orleans during Black Rock City 2005. From the pagan past to a simpler and greener future, 2007's Green Man theme could provide Burning Man with a compass direction for the future – both on the Playa and off.

"Let every man make known what kind of government would command his respect, and that will be one step toward obtaining it." Henry David Thoreau, 1856 journal



## Welcome to Wherever You Are

by Rockstar

BY NOW, you've doubtless noticed you're in the middle of a giant Empty. Outside of the Man and a few man-made structures – the rude along with the fantastic – the world in every direction is flat and featureless as blank newsprint, ending in a barely visible Trash Fence, itself little more than a rumor on the skyline. In getting here at all, you've likely endured adventure, with much more to come before it all ends in a blizzard of flame and black ash.

Over the two decades of its existence, Burning Man has grown from a few cultists and social hackers on a California beach to tens of thousands of freaks gathered on one of the least accessible and most inhospitable sites in North America. Every year, the art gets bigger, the parties louder and the fun and anarchy grows exponentially. In squatting in this dry and dusty Gehenna at all, we have chosen to turn our backs on the World Outside for a spell. Call what we're doing Utopian dream, life-

as-art, radical social experiment or a quantum-leap in applied hedonics, this place is what we make of it and each of us is a walking toolkit.

Whether this is your vacation, avocation or manifestation of a twisted dream you had in the Default World really doesn't matter. This place has a way of making rules and creating circumstances independent of your efforts, so roll with them. Welcome to a temporary municipality governed by strange customs and exigent circumstance, built on the sturdy idea that some remnant of an American Dream can be found inside a hallucination in Nevada. This is a place where humans wear tails, cannons fire pants and the cars all look like the hash dreams of Big Daddy Roth. More people equals more show equals more stimulation than ever before, so keep hydrated, leave no trace, illuminate yourself by night and love (at the very least) your neighbor. 🐷

## What Where When, Why?

By Nod Allen and Rod Miller

ANGER IS mounting among theme campers at this year's redesign of the *What Where When* guide handed out to Burners as they enter the Gate.

The publication is the only official guide to the whereabouts of theme camps and the timing of events in Black Rock City.

This year's redesign means that in order to work out where and when their favorite events are taking place, Burners have to cross-reference two distinct sections of the guide – the daily Playa schedule and the event descriptions. If a theme camp doesn't have specific events to advertise then it is not listed at all.

Jax, a member of the 45-strong Euroburners contingent, who are

this year running a Green Man Pub with traditional ales and British pub pastimes, went further. Complaining that the Burning Man organization had assured her that the camp's address would be included in the publication, she said that not only was it left out but also that her listing had been rewritten to falsely allege that the Green Man would be offering karaoke and billiards. Moreover, the Green Man was listed under 'The' rather than 'Green.'

"It's a pile of s\*\*t," she said. "Whoever is responsible for it should be flogged."

At Media Mecca, a Bmorg representative told the Beacon that ideas for improvement were always welcome. 🐷

### Don't Ask, Don't Tell

By the time we finished our bacon, Media Mecca and Playa Info folks had called it a day, so we have no idea what we Black Rock City population is. It's probably less than 50,000, but more than 500.

# Black Rock Beacon

This year's theme is **GREEN**, and we all love the **BLING**. Can you change one letter at a time to get from **GREEN** to **BLING** along with us?

**GREEN**  
----- (Scrooge's hamartia)  
----- (Bunnies like to do it)  
----- (Stuck pigs do it)  
----- (Method for a Margarita)  
----- (Even this kind of squirrel gets a nut sometimes)  
**BLING**  
by Smaze



Welcome to the third year of the **Black Rock Beacon**, **Burning Man's** prime source of news, views, and pork-related trivia. We will be publishing five editions on **Playa** this year, with today's paper followed by issues on **Wednesday, Thursday, Friday and Sunday.**

## Back and Mutaytor Than Ever

by R.J. Thomas

Few default-world organizations are as intertwined with Burning Man as The Mutaytor. Born on the streets of Black Rock City in 1998, the 37-member band-cum-performance troupe considers itself the Burning Man house band, and if that overstates the case, it doesn't do so by much.

A decade after its formation, however, The Mutaytor announced that it would no longer play the Playa, the result of what many of its members felt was shabby treatment by the Burning Man organization. But things happen, and in a twist worthy of an opera – or at least a soap opera – the group is performing again this year.

The return to Black Rock City has its genesis in one of the band's darkest moments. On Jan. 30, an episode of the NBC Dateline sting segment "To Catch a Predator," aired. It had been recorded the previous September in Long Beach, California. The show uses adult decoys who pose as minors in on-line chat rooms. The idea is to lure potential pedophiles to what they think are meetings with minors. When suspects arrive, they are greeted by cameras and local police. In this particular episode, Matty Nash, The Mutaytor's founder, got himself and the band some publicity they both could have done without.

It appeared on the show that Matty was arriving to meet a 13-year-old girl he'd been chatting with online. He was arrested by Long Beach Police and, according to his wife, Crunchy, wound



CRUDE AWAKENING, SITE OF MUTAYTOR'S NEXT BIG THING

down at his home after he failed to show up to meet a fictitious minor.

The rest of The Mutaytor found out about the incident when the episode aired. Word traveled by phone. "It was the toughest phone call I've ever had," said Buck Down, composer, along with Atom Smith, of most of the group's music. Roo, one of the visual performers, and Buck's wife, said the emotional state of the group was horrible afterward. "There was a lot of shock," she said struggling for words, "feeling like you'd been deceived." The fallout was fairly quick. Mutaytor lost its booking agent, its manager, and two festival gigs. It didn't look promising. Matty stepped away from the group he founded nine years ago on the streets of Black Rock City, but the effect lingered.

The Mutaytor started nine years ago when Matty set up a drum set at Burning Man. Gradually it changed from one drummer to several with Buck as DJ and a few dancers spinning fire to what it is now, a group of 37 who put on a spectacular show. According to John Avila, former bassist for Oingo Boingo and now with the Mutaytor, most members joined the group the same way he did, by stepping on stage from the audience.

The Mutaytor's last official Burning Man gig was in 2004. According to Buck Down, Black Rock Rangers estimated the crowd that night at 13,000. But what was great for fans was tough on the group. Burning Man gave The Mutaytor one day to set up a massive stage for its show, produced at a cost of nearly \$25,000 – all unsubsidized. It was just too much for the band and it was decided that it would be its last

show at Burning Man. But, according to Down, it was not a popular decision among the group. "It's where we're from," he said, "we take great pride in being the house band for Black Rock City." For the next two years, the group filled the void by playing regional Burning Man events in addition to paying gigs. Members of the group did play here and there on the Playa, but nothing big, nothing official.

Along with Crunchy, Matty had taken care of most of the day-to-day operations of the group. His departure left a void as well as a shadow. In the aftermath of Matty's "To Catch a Predator" appearance, there was talk within the group of packing it in, but it didn't last long. "For five minutes there was a feeling we could lose this," Smith said, "Should we change the project, change the name?" What seemed bleak at first turned to opportunity. Crunchy stayed on and five members of the group stepped up into leadership positions. It had an invigorating effect. "The Mutaytor is a theme camp we do for our whole lives," said K.J., one of the group's visual performers. "I didn't want it end without fighting for it. Shoot, I'm a Burner, I can stand dust storms," and she could stand this. The group decided to reconnect with its fans, rework its show and play Burning Man again.

Burner reaction to Matty's arrest was mixed. A discussion thread entitled "Is this really happening?????" on the Burner-heavy social-networking site Tribe.net began with a woman named Marianne outraged and claiming her husband, threw away "every CD and memorabilia we had from any Mutay-

tor show." Others jumped in, some seemingly unable to separate The Mutaytor from Matty. But there was support for the group as well. Crunchy, arguably the person hurt most by Matty's actions, given that there was no actual victim, understands the reaction and remains philosophical. "I have to believe it happened for a reason," she said.

Supporters came to outnumber the critics, encouraging The Mutaytor's members. "Eventually everyone rallied behind the band," Down said. "They understood that the actions of one person didn't reflect on 37 others." A show at the Knitting Factory in Los Angeles shortly afterward was deemed an artistic success. Down credited the support of Burners at that gig with helping to turn the mood around.

"There's this thing that all Burners seem to have," said Avila, the bass player. "I didn't get it before I went, but I definitely get it now. It's on a spiritual level, an artistic level. The Burning Man spirit is a huge part of Mutaytor."

To get back that spirit, the group posted a message on the official Burning Man bulletin board, E-Playa, looking for large sound camps that might be willing to host it. That's when Dan Das Mann called.

Mann and his wife, Karen Cusolito, have been responsible for some of the most amazing art Black Rock City has seen. Their installation they this year promises nothing less. Titled "Crude Awakening," it explores a world in which religion has been replaced with oil worship. The piece will be interactive with an oil derrick surrounded by nine steel figures, each with its own fire effect controlled by participants. There will be music and performance each night.

But Friday night is the big one. "Think of it as a play with two acts," Mann said. "In Act Two, the oil derrick bursts forth in a gusher of flame." The performance and crescendo of Act Two that night will be provided by the Mutaytor.

"At the end of the day," said K.J., "we're all Burners. We live for that sunrise on the Playa."

The Mutaytor is planning to perform three times this year. On Tuesday, the group will offer a stripped down show on Garage Mahal's art car, then move on to a full show at Tsunami Camp, Esplanade and 4:30, on Wednesday. Friday is the big show, at "Crude Awakening" on the open Playa at Habitat and 1:00.



Oh! Dear!

## Playa Chicken

**Rugburn from Ontario asks:** I really want to get in the spirit and "green the Man" this year and I wonder if you have any tips for me.

**The Playa Chicken responds:** Oh for cryin' out loud. Some guy in a hat tosses out the name of a color and all you sniveling weekend hippies feel the sudden need to paste a Prius sticker over your Volvo emblem and drive 23 miles out of your way to buy your putrid Tom's toothpaste. Green the Man? I may be a colorblind fowl, but I humbly invite you to green my feathered ass while I shove your precious carbon credits up yours.

But here's the funny thing: you pathetic bodypainted bipeds have it all wrong. I was at the board meeting when the Rand Corporation gave Hatman his marching orders for 2007, and let me tell you, "greening the Man" has nothing to do with. That's right, this whole green thing is just an elaborate prank designed to move more sweet moolah from you to us. You line up in droves to buy our new Organic Glow Sticks (now made with 13% less child labor!); you pay top dollar for our imported Cruelty-Free Fun Fur; you'll gladly sign over your house if we show you a picture of a sad manatee. If the guilt that you have built up over years of unchecked consumption can be so easily cleansed by paying for the privilege of greening the Man, then let me be the first to sell you a gallon of soy-based green paint and a pack of brushes made from the fur shorn from Ed Asner's nutsack.

In the end you're at peace with yourself but dead broke. Meanwhile, I have all your money along with the satisfaction of knowing you won't be able to afford to come back out here to my precious home ever again. It's a win-win situation, and I didn't even have to peck your eyes out... this time.



MUTAYTOR, BLACK ROCK CITY, 2004

PHOTO BY JON ROSS, COURTESY OF JON ROSS AND BLACK ROCK CITY LLC

up pleading no-contest to charges of "attempted lewd acts with a minor." He received probation, counseling and community service.

Crunchy, while making no excuses for the behavior of her spouse of 13 years, says there is far more to the story than what appeared on air. The show itself has been a lightning rod for criticism and is currently being sued for \$105 million by the sister of a Texas man who shot himself when the show's producers and local police chased him

### Perpetrators of The Black Rock Beacon...

**Mitchell Martin**, managing editor. **Michael Durgavich**, major general counsel and director of foreign intelligence. **Francis Wenderlich**, graphics editor and co-camp manager. **Ali Baba**, co-camp manager and volunteer coordinator. **Angie Zmijewski**, production goddess. **John Lam**, news editor. **Larry Breed**, chef copy editor. **Edge**, webmaster. **Armadillo**, goddess of the underworld and circulation manager. **Howard Jones**, LNT manager and missing shack wrangler. **WeeGee**, minister of photography. **Brian Train** and **Lianne McClarty**, superior dupers. **Saint Everything**.

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### Listings

**Tuesday**  
10 a.m. Black Rock Beacon team meeting. Join us! Make a newspaper in the desert! Eat bacon! We're looking for people to write, edit, illustrate, produce and distribute the Black Rock Beacon. If you think you have what it takes – not being a vegan would be a good start – join us at our home away from home in the 9:00 Plaza at 7:45. We feed our volunteers.

**Wednesday**  
10 a.m. Black Rock Beacon team meeting.  
2 p.m to 5 p.m. Fourth annual Burning Woman Goddess Gathering. At the Iron Rose Camp, 4:30 Plaza at 7:00. Annual reunion of the Burning Woman Tribe.