

BLACK ROCK BEACON



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WELCOME TO NOWHERE 🐾

TUESDAY

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Welcome to NowHere

BY ADRIAN ROBERTS

You may have heard that Burning Man isn't as COOL as it used to be.

This isn't entirely FALSE.

If you've been coming here as LONG as I have – 16 years to be exact, longer than almost all the people who actually RUN Burning Man – you've no doubt noticed some changes. And if you're a recent IMMIGRANT to Black Rock City, you've probably already heard all the "old-timer" talk about the "good ol' days" – NO RULES, no roads, and no hoards of people, back when you and a few hundred of your closest friends could come out here to shoot guns, drive around like crazy, and BLOW SHIT UP.

Obviously, things have CHANGED.

You may have HEARD that Burning Man isn't as cool as it used to be.

This isn't ENTIRELY true.

Have you SEEN what's out there on the playa this year? Sure, there may be rules, "The 10 Principles," and other bureaucratic NONSENSE. But the trade-off is out there, right in front of you. It didn't USED to be like this. Back then, there wasn't THIS much art, THIS much creativity, this much STUFF. If we got a "stupid" mud sculpture of Pepé Ozan's



penis and a pretentious "opera" to go with it, we were HAPPY. Now, our standards are a little HIGHER.

Which is why we're still here... and why YOU'RE here too. This annual column may be called "Welcome to NowHere," but there's so MUCH now here, you will NEVER possibly see it all. Don't even TRY. That still shouldn't STOP you from hopping on your bike tonight and going on a Blinky Light Tour. (Just don't be a DARKWAD! Put some lights on and go explore!)

Or ... DON'T explore. Despite what the organizers would have you think, Burning Man ISN'T just about art. It's about PEOPLE. This is the most HYPER-SOCIAL city in the U.S. Trust me, your experience can be just as AWESOME by hanging out drinking with your new neighbors at the Fandango bar, or DANCING with your campmates at Bootie BRC, as it can be by seeing all the ART out in the middle of the playa.

You get OUT of Black Rock City what you put in. So go for broke. We'll see you out on the playa! 🐾

– Adrian Roberts was the editor of *Piss Clear*, Black Rock City's legendary alternative newspaper.

Altered State of Affairs

BY MITCH

Kate Raudenbusch is a Burner's Burner. She gets an art grant every year, shows up with her theme-inspired project as promised every year, and every year her thoughtful opus helps earn her a return engagement.

Her 2007 effort, the lotus-flowery "Guardian of Eden", was recently purchased for the Nevada Museum of Art in Reno. That was the first time, she said, that a Burning Man work has found its way into a museum's permanent collection. While its new home may be a couple of Metro stops short of the Louvre, it says something that her sculpture is the first Burning Man piece showcased in the Default World's portal to Black Rock country.

This year, Raudenbusch's offering is "Altered State", that thing that looks like the U.S. Capitol dome at 10:30 and 1,800 feet from the Man. But there is no Potomac here, and as you approach, the seeming solidity of the work dissolves into a visual cacophony of monsters, humans, and, most importantly, eagles.

The eagle is naturally meant as a symbol of the United States. But while the raptor on the one-dollar bill is predominantly a war bird, it holds a different meaning for American Indians. In Pacific Northwest cultures, Raudenbusch said, the bird

represents an "ascent to the higher self, connection to the divine – a noble and spiritual creature."

"Altered State" is meant to explore the "disconnect" between the two cultures, each part of the American Dream. "What I wanted to do," Raudenbusch said, "is create a birdcage that is a symbol of colonial America's history with Native America."

Inside the dome there is a swing and ladders that can be used to visit the upper part of the 27-foot tall by 18-foot wide structure. (Don't climb the feathers, they're fragile). As visitors ascend, there are insights into the wisdom of Lakota, Squamish and Hopi tribes, whose art inspired the project. At the top, a blizzard of laser-cut feathers is meant to connote freedom despite the gigantic bird cage that encloses them.

Raudenbusch said the artwork of Indians of the Pacific Northwest lends itself to laser-cut steel. "I adore their artistry. It's extraordinarily forceful and graphic."

She designed elements of "Altered State" "the old-fashioned way" by drawing them in a sketchbook, scanning the result into a computer, and creating a graphics file that guides a cutting laser.

Born not far from the Capitol itself,



PHOTO BY TECHNOMAD

Raudenbusch grew up overseas, including stints in Paris and what was then Yugoslavia, so she approaches the American Dream with an outsider's sensibilities.

Her day job is photography, and Raudenbusch said she became a 3-D artist as a result of her first trip to Burning Man in 1999. She was driven to participate rather than spectate, and has produced funded sculptures for each of the last five years.

Raudenbusch studied fashion design in college but became disenchanted with the rag trade. "The fashion industry, I have no interest in whatsoever. It's fleeting; it's shallow," she said. "It's really not about self-expression. In the end, fashion is about conformity. Why in the hell would you want to look like everyone else?" 🐾

The Law of the Playa

Bureau of Land Management rangers were busy in the opening hours of Black Rock City this year. There were eight citations written as of 6:00 a.m. on Monday. No arrests were recorded in that time frame. Of the citations four were related to drug paraphernalia, three were vehicular and one had to do with alcohol.

BLM rangers also issued 32 oral warnings. – Technomad

Brainteasers

By Smaze



A thousand mistake frozen water without end and a drop of golden sun before noon for this. What is this?

American Dreaming

BY DURSUY

The American Dream is what you make of it. It is both personal and universal. The personal aspect is that the only true limitation for chasing any dream in America is an individual's ingenuity and pluck. The universality is that for every person who eschews, denigrates or takes for granted the offer of the "dream," there are dozens of others looking up at the stars every night thinking what they will do if and when they get to America.

The origin of the American Dream is familiar. Before there were "United States" people came to the new world looking for religious freedom, arable land, a fresh start, an escape from law enforcement, etc. They found it. After a while, regional pride caused a bunch of trouble-makers – Jefferson, Adams, Franklin, and Madison among them – to dream big, bust out of perceived tyranny and make specific provision for all comers to pursue "unalienable rights" including, but not limited to "life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness." Over the years, many have taken their shot at the American Dream.

Abe Lincoln had an American Dream of a United States without slavery that brought the country through a Civil War where over 620,000 people died and led to the signing of the Emancipation Proclamation. Martin Luther King had a dream described in a speech in front of the Lincoln Memorial which echoed the founding texts of America that people would one day "not be judged by the color of their skin but by the content of their character." The flames of these dreamers were snuffed out by people who did not share their dream. But sometimes people fight and die in the furtherance of their American Dream.

Sometimes a little chicanery and hucksterism aid a person in their quest for their American Dream. P.T. Barnum had an American Dream of making a living by bringing the carnies to the people. Barnum famously pointed people to the "egress" in his Broadway museum, leading the patron outside only to have to pay the 25 cent fee to get back inside. While tossing seashells on the beach one day Candy Cummings dreamed of throwing a curveball – and eventually did. Harry Houdini (born Erich Wei a Hungarian immigrant) used a different kind of misdirection to live out his American Dream.

Henry Ford took the dream to another level of productivity with the popularization of the assembly line, which sometimes leads to stunning success – like the Fairlane – or ignominious failure – like the Edsel. Walt Disney Studios used a similar style to create movie masterpieces like *Fantasia* or *Pinochio* and other less memorable efforts like *Brother Bear* or *Home on the Range*. Sometimes dreams really do, and sometimes they really don't, come true.



PHOTO BY TECHNOMAD

A classic American dreamer was a Chinese immigrant named Duck Chang. In the mid-1970's Mr. Chang came to Annandale, Virginia, with the idea that he would make a kick-ass Peking duck and people would want that. Prior to Mr. Chang opening his restaurant – Duck Chang's – if you wanted Peking duck in this country you had to order 24 hours ahead

of time. That was Chang's hook – anticipate the people's needs and have those ducks on hand, ready to go and make 'em the right way. It worked and that duck rocks! Sadly, Duck Chang passed away in 2005; however, his family now owns a couple of restaurants making outstanding duck for all to enjoy – even on short notice. The generational American Dream plays out every day.

In 1986, the first burning effigy of a man that begat Black Rock City was born of disability payments and grief. The grief was the result of the loss of a parent. The disability was in the form of an injured back. The disability payments were the seed capital donated by those hard-working folks called U.S. taxpayers distributed via a method known as public benefits. In the U.S. of A. people turn lemons into lemonade. So grief and a hurt back turn into time on someone's hands with some cash in their pocket and an idea to do something about it. A unique play on the American Dream was born.

This year that dream has been reborn and the Man stands tall above his obelisk base emblazoned with the flags of the world, waiting for his yearly fire dance.

Whether you are rooting for the son of a Wichita woman and a Kenyan man or the Hanoi Hilton's most famous resident, you know that both have dreamed big dreams. One will fall short. This highlights an elusive aspect of the American Dream – not everyone will reach theirs. But failure to attain a dream today does not mean one can't dust oneself off and pursue the next dream – an even better dream – tomorrow.

Some never realize their American Dream either because the opportunity never presents or because they refuse to grab it. Not this week. Not this Black Rock City. Together let's make this a version of the American Dream to remember. 🐾

(The writer would like to apologize to other North Americans and South Americans for the hi-jacking of "America" by those that hail from the United States of same. You are invited to call yourselves "Americans", but do not be surprised if the use is confusing for a while until continental pride catches on.)



Black Rock City Population: 17,162 as of 12:00 P.M. Monday.

If you have an iPhone, please bring it and yourself over to the Beacon and talk to the day editor to help us sleuth out a story.

We could use a bike rack — preferably burnable — at the Beacon, if you have one to spare.

The Beacon is seeking writers, editors, designers, layout people, and super-dupers. If you'd like to volunteer, please come to our morning meeting at 10:30 a.m. in our world headquarters located in the 9:00 Plaza. Drop by any time with breaking news and items of interest for Black Rock City.



Welcome to the fourth 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.

ΚΟΝΤΡΑΡΤΙΦΩΣ: *The Cupcakes Runneth Over*

BY NORM

Year after year, certainly one of the most delightful visions to be found at Burning Man is the motorized Cupcake. Will, one of the Dr. Megavolt guys best known for the giant Tesla coils, created the first Cupcake, complete with pink frosting. There have been some four-wheeled variants built since, but that first model was a three-wheeled motorized Cupcake that zips along at about 5 miles per hour.

The three-wheeled vehicle was designed for stability, which is a huge plus at 3. while wandering aimless and incoherent, completely lost in a sea of campsites. That advantage may be lost on the Cupcake pilot, for it is essentially an electric scooter with a lot of additional weight carried up high and well outboard of the wheel axis, so they tend to wobble back & forth as they go, adding to their charm.

There currently are five Cupcakes. In addition to the original Pink model, the armada now includes the Muffin, Hostess, Prozac, and S&M (M&M) models.

One of the smaller mutant vehicle/art cars, an electric motor and large automotive sized battery provide the propulsion. The perimeter

of the Cupcake, or the cupcake paper, is a hand-bent, corrugated metal sheet. Duct tape is placed over the sharp edge at the top of the metal Cupcake paper, to make entry somewhat less akin to playing with knives. The Cupcake is relatively slow-moving and safe, at least when compared with what else rolls on the Playa. They provide the polar opposite to the attention-grabbing, Dance Dance Immolation flame-throwing, jet-engine screaming, Mad Max-worshipping scene.

Typically Cupcakes can be found in herds, with their pilots wearing hats that match the frosting popped out of the top. One would assume that the temperatures inside can be of issue in the desert, given that you are essentially riding inside a metal trash can with a lid on it. A clever answer to a question never asked, everyone remembers their first Cupcake sighting. I would surmise that if someone created a two-seat Cupcake, they would not spend much Playa time longing for companionship. 🐷



PHOTO BY NORM

Beauty, Talent & Bribes

BY ROD ALLEN

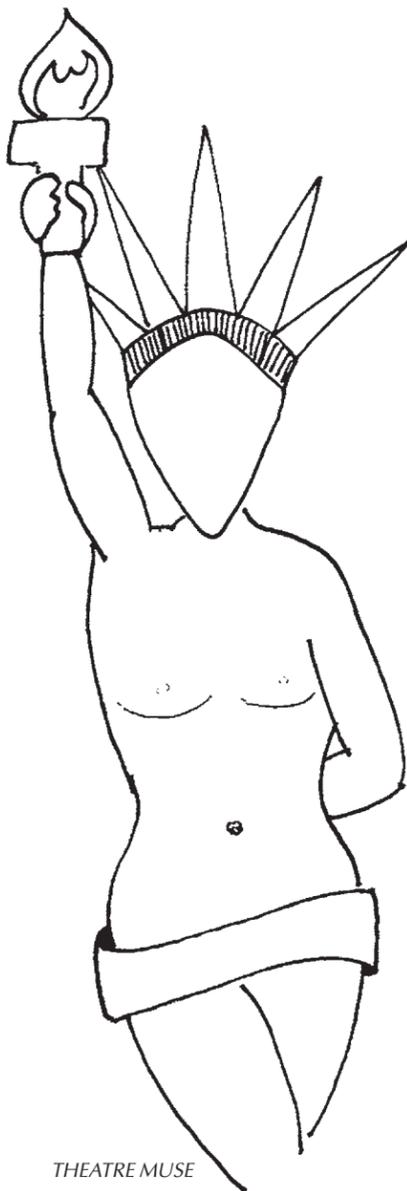
You might think that at a sex-positive, libertarian and generally okay-thinking event like Burning Man there would be no place for a hangover from the 1950s like a beauty pageant.

But you'd be wrong. The Miss Black Rock City beauty pageant has been running at Burning Man for years, and the 2008 event is no exception. If you fancy your chances, turn up (preferably with a sash awarded by your regional burners' group and your swimmies, of course) at the contest on Thursday, but Miss. er Ms, Black Rock City isn't really about feminine pulchritude or gender objectification, according to Santiago, this year's Very Special Intenational Judge of Honor. "The pageant is an excuse for the judge to get bribed," he told the Beacon. "I will accept anything," he added, "including sex, drugs and — well, not rock and roll exactly. Perhaps some CDs?"

"Santi," who lives in Lewisham, southeast London, is the European regional organizer for Burning Man, and he would like to break the world record for the number of bribes received. In exchange, the person for whom the most bribes are achieved will be adjudged to have won, whatever she looks like.

Organiser of the beauty pageant is Suzie Q, who says that bribes or not, participants will have to be interviewed, to sing a song, and to take two minutes to display special skills.

Santi can be found at the Camp of Doom, at 6:30 just behind the Esplanade. 🐷



THEATRE MUSE

Howeird's
Positively Playa

*"Under capitalism man exploits man.
Under communism it is just the opposite."*

The American Dream is a bit like the English Dream I had as a kid back in the U.K. It was money too, but you only worked hard for it in the American version. The status quo seemed so firmly entrenched back there; only a mug would break a sweat trying for it.

The wide open spaces of the American West are true though. Come and camp here when the dust has settled and you can actually see the high-water mark of old Lake Lahontan — possibly "that place where the wave finally broke, and rolled back..." Hunter S Thompson spoke of when he went to look for The Dream in 1971 a few hundred miles south of here.

It is fairly spooky camping in the middle of the deserted crust of this big playa pie when rain clouds hog the horizon. Last October my wayward semi-dingo Scoobs, who never misses a chance to bolt, ran off toward the mountains in the West. After ten minutes they were no closer, so he turned around and headed toward the peaks in the East. They too were inexplicably elusive so he returned to camp and guarded what he had. Sound familiar?

But hey — this is Burning Man — the radically self-reliant, radically inclusive, gifting society. Our money is no good here — except for ice, coffee and dumping out our RVs. For a week we can show man's humanity to Man and be the shiny, happy-faced, altruistic freedom-loving citizens the founding fathers wanted us to be.

Amusing that this year's tickets have a Bill of Rights motif. When I first came in '95 it was simply: "Love EVERYone; but don't take shit from ANYone."

It is refreshing to confirm that even in this city of hedonits, it really does feel better to give than to receive. In this spirit — please help yourself to one of those flashing mousetraps lying by the door. I'm pretty beat, pass me the raw ether someone and keep a weather eye peeled for those damned bats. 🐷

LISTINGS

Emeritus professor (and Beacon staffer) Nod Miller is to give the keynote address at what appears to be the first full-scale academic conference to be held on the Playa.

The conference, billed as an interdisciplinary arts conference about "The Art of Freedom @ Burning Man," will take place at 1 p.m. Thursday at Freedomcommunity, Dart and 3:30.

The event was organized by David Higgins of the University of Indiana and includes eight papers in two panel discussions followed by Professor Miller's keynote at 4 p.m. Miller, whose topic will be "American Dream — whose nightmare?" is emeritus professor of innovation studies at the University of East London. — Rod Allen

REMEMBRANCE OF GAZETTES PAST: 1998

BY CITIZEN X

Many of you reading this also once read the Black Rock Gazette, the almost-daily paper sponsored by the Burning Man organization. The first issues appeared in 1992, and the last year of regular production was 2004 (a "gazette-ette" edition was handed out at the gate in 2005). PDF copies of past Gazettes are archived on the Burning Man site, linked off the page associated with the Burn for that year.

Several stalwart members of the Black Rock Beacon are ex-Gazette people, and it's fair to say that if the Gazette had never been, neither might have the Beacon.

Now that the Beacon is in its fourth year, I thought it might be interesting to take a look at Gazettes of ten years past, to see what was uppermost in the minds of Burners (OK, well, perhaps just the Org) in 1998.

There were five editions that year, produced on Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday, and Saturday. Here are selected headlines from Tuesday:

"BRC Department of Public Works Doesn't Care About You" — article on the first formally established DPW camp, with commentary by Will Roger, the first DPW Superintendent.

"Brace for Impact!" — Public Service Announcement (PSA) about dust storms and how to keep your gear secure in one.

"Media to Undergo Rite of Passage" — This year, reporters and photographers were to undergo minor humiliations at Media Mecca before being issued with a pair of eyeball "deely bobbers" and an eyeball media pass, in order to mark them and pay back a little of the intrusiveness and unwanted attention they've forced on Black Rock citizens.

Science column: "On Heat and Aggression" — Incoherent description of a psychology experiment gone horribly wrong where subjects in hot rooms are permitted to shock other monkeys.

Features:

- Radio stuff: list of frequencies of Black Rock City radio stations (14 in all); "911 Network" (identification of frequencies and procedures for emergency calls on CB or ham radio)

- Cartoon: drawing of shirtless Bill Clinton chasing a shapely leg out of the frame, while two Burners in the background remark, "If there's one thing I can't stand, it's these jerks who show up just to chase naked women".

PERPETRATORS OF THE BLACK ROCK BEACON...

Mitchell Martin, Managing Editor. **Mike Durgavich**, Mod Maj. Gen'l Counsel. **Suzanne Zalev**, Day Editor. **John Lam**, News Editor. **Francis Wenderlich**, Operations Manager and Co-Camp Manager. **Deb Prothero**, firefighter. **technomad**, Writer. **Nod Miller**, Emeritus Professor. **Rod Allen**, staff writer. **WeeGee**, Minister of Photography. **Diana Acosta**, Illustrator. **Edge**, Webmaster. **Ali Baba**, Co-Camp Manager. **Angie Zmijewski**, Production Goddess. **Taymar**, Photographer. **Larry Breed**, Chief Copy Preditor. **Susan Williamson**, PrePressure. **LoneStoner**, Copy Editor.

Semi-Legal Mumbo Jumbo

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