

# Black Rock Beacon



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1:15 @ CENTER CAMP • BLACKROCKBEACON.ORG

## BURNING MAN CLOSES DOWN LONGEST CLOSURE IN BRC HISTORY

### BY CURIOUS

Mother Nature, ticketless but bent on Radical Self-Expression, sailed into Black Rock City Monday morning, hurling showers of hail and lightning bolts and crackling the City with her megavolt loud-ass sound cloud. In the deluge, Ancient Lake Lahontan raised her Pleistocene head and, once again, became a shallow lake of standing water and then a mud bath like no other, shutting down roads and killing infrastructural power.

At 6:27 a.m. the Burning Man organization, Bmorg, sent out an "All Comm" Level 0 alert to limit driving and, by 6:47 a.m., upgraded it to Level 1 and closing Gate, all BRC roads (except to emergency vehicles), and issuing an order for citizens to shelter in place.

County sheriffs coordinated safe returns from Highway 447 and set up road stops from every major route to redirect the 500-600 cars per hour ingress at this busiest of entry times. Burners were sent to Reno and surrounding communities until Tuesday.

Jim Graham, Bmorg's Senior Advisor for Special Projects within the Communications team, said they blasted tweets and posts on social media, as well as announcements on BMIR via the I-Heart-radio app to alert burners not to drive in. "Some thought it was a joke," he told the Beacon, "until they saw the

Highway Patrol [turning people back]."

The City was remarkably quiet, as everyone battened down hatches, bailed out tents, and stayed the hell out of the lightning. No staff or service vehicles, no art cars, and most important: no sanitation trucks. The portas grew rich as the day wore on.

Black Rock City Airport was shut down as well, and will have to repack its two runways.

By afternoon, cheers went up as the sun finally came out, after a seemingly endless set of thunder and showers rolled through. By early evening many of the City streets were drying into a hard, bumpy cobble. The only open ice station, Arctica in Center Camp, had a line running all the way out the Esplanade.

An unknown number of Burners were stranded in their vehicles on Gate Road, unable to traverse the quagmire for the entire muddy, muddy Monday. "We hung them there or they would have gotten stuck," Graham said. By 5:00 p.m. the BLM headed out with bullhorns inviting burners to pack up their lawn chairs and get ready to move in, after the 12-hour standstill.

Graham said Bmorg's Unified Command Unit with the BLM prepares for such rain events. It had posted sanitation trucks (anticipating impossible travel

on sludgy playa surface) at major porta potty stations and fuel trucks at key power infrastructural posts. Ranger station power was slated first to go online.

By early evening the ban would be partially lifted for service vehicles, staff, and some art cars, provided roads were deemed safe.

As late as Sunday night Bmorg was on the phone with the National Weather Service,

Graham said. The forecast for Monday was a 15% chance of showers, with 0.1 inches possibility of rain. "Not enough for us to get people excited," he said.

The Bureau of Land Management, which often sees rain threats evaporate as soon as they appear in this region, left the call up to Bmorg. With that slightly elevated risk, Bmorg alerted relevant authorities but did not move to a Level alert. Come the wee hours, it was a surprising and calamitous hit.

Teksage, a Black Rock Ranger stationed at the Berlin Ranger Outpost in the 3:00 Plaza, noted "it was a lot of water in little time," but that there were no major reports of damage in the City. "From a Ranger standpoint, [the storm] was a blessing," he said, laughing. "Everyone mellowed out and stayed in place and it gave us room to breathe for a change."

Ben Smith, Public Information

*"Everyone mellowed out and stayed in place and gave us room to breathe for a change."*



Artist sculpts mud tree trunk during City shut down.

Officer with Rampart Medical (5:15 & Esplanade) and the Emergency Services Department, was grateful for BMIR public safety announcements (stay inside, don't stand near metal objects or carry umbrellas with metal points) in spite of the radio station tower getting zapped a couple times by lightning.

Rampart saw only one victim of lightning strike. "He got a jolt and stayed with us for a few hours, but he was treated for mild injury and released," Smith said.

A crew with the Man Watch, sheltering in place in the Souk beneath the Man, which was closed, told the Beacon,

"I don't know if the Man got hit, but it did conduct. My hair stood on end. Trust me, I wasn't looking up."

By 10:00 p.m. Monday night Bmorg reopened Gate, earlier than anticipated, after finalizing road surveys and reinforcing the playa surface at entry with decomposed granite.

The weather outlook for the rest of the week "looks good through the weekend," Bmorg's Graham said. "But there's a possibility of rain by the end of the week."

We know what that means. 🐘

### BURNERS YOU SHOULD KNOW

## Bronner Works Magic With Bubbles

### BY CURIOUS

You may have first met David Bronner at the other end of his foam fire hose in 2007 or 2008. Going through a rough time personally, that was when he first brought his foamy gift to the Playa. Bronner, 41, is president of an internationally renowned, family-run soap-making company.

"It was such a grounding experience, building and bringing [the foam machine]. The amount of joy we created. It was like knocking over a fire hydrant. We were just clearing out blocks of people," he said.

After that he hauled in a 1,000 gallon tub, but he still had gray water disposal issues. Now it's a self-contained "sexy-plexy," a see-thru plexiglass trailer that he and his "fomads" take to Pride parades, music festivals, mud-runs, and other events, along with a crazy-ass blinged-out fire truck.

This year, Bronner is kicking it up a notch at Camp FauxMirage (2:30 & E)

with a lecture series that reflects one of his many driving passions: the responsible integration of cannabis and psychedelics as powerful medicines for awakening compassion and as tools for healing personal and societal trauma.

"There's a lot of really heavy cats that are going to drop some wisdom," Bronner told the Beacon. Twenty different speakers will cover a huge range of mind/spirit topics. The first speaker is Rick Doblin of the Multidisciplinary Association for Psychedelic Studies, which is sponsoring clinical trials of Ecstasy as a treatment for chronic post-traumatic stress disorder and seeking FDA approval. MAPS is also hosting the Zendo Project, a sanctuary space at Camp FauxMirage for tripping burners, which will be staffed with medical professionals, therapists and volunteers.

"You can ground out with cool, calm, trained staff who just kind of hold space for you and help navigate through the difficult material for a positive outcome,"



Foamy fun in the Sexy-Plexy

Bronner said.

Bronner, a fifth-generation soap-maker, recently "came out" to his customers about his work supporting psychedelics. "I'm passionate about integrating psychedelics into the culture to help people experience the oneness with each other, take more responsibility for their life, being of service.

That's the grand vision, but (we're also involved with) practical projects."

The company promotes sustainable organic agriculture and takes on industrial agriculture with a cross-country parade of fishy art cars that show how corn, beets, tomatoes, and such are spliced with fish genes. More worrisome, says Bronner, are the GMO-related increasingly toxic pesticides and herbicides "being shoved down our throats."

Bronner doesn't act like a stereotypical CEO. He capped executive salary at five times the lowest paid warehouse worker, and when his company pulled in \$64 million in revenues, he took home only \$200,000.

The company spends half its annual revenues on philanthropy and activism.

"All profits not needed for the business we dedicate to causes we believe in," he said. "I feel like live a pretty sweet life. Oh my god, how much more do you need. At all."

Bronner's activism has caused him to be arrested twice. When President George W. Bush's administration banned industrial hemp, Bronner dug up the front lawn of the Drug Enforcement Agency headquarters in Washington and planted hemp seeds. Bronner needed the hemp seed

oil, a superior lathering emollient, for his soaps.

Then he locked himself in a cage and rolled up to the White House. Inside the cage, he harvested hemp seeds and pressed oil. "I thought it would take them half an hour to saw me out, long enough for my harangue to the media." But it took the police three hours to break him out of one cage so they could send him to another at the local jail, where he spent the next 27 hours. "I'm not allowed in front of the White House anymore," he said.

While working on his biology degree at Harvard, a trip on mushrooms profoundly reordered Bronner's sensibilities.

"I'm in quantum continuum with my environment. There's no difference between myself and the world. I'm having this ego-dissolving experience and I'm high on the world. It's just pouring into me and not different," he said.

He moved to Amsterdam and joined an international artistic community of squatters. He had more shamanic psychedelic experiences and "got blown apart." The intense experiences "radically reorganized my life."

"Cannabis and psychedelics are spiritual sacraments," he said. "This war is a religious war. We need to stand up and fight, we can't be hiding."

By age 25, he had returned to the U.S., become president of his family's company, and found that he could use his soaps as a vehicle for change, just as his grandfather, the company's founder, had before him. 🐘

**GREETINGS BURNERS!** After today's issue, we're aiming to publish again on Saturday, maybe more if the weather cooperates. Wanna help out? Drop by any morning this week for our 10:30 a.m. meetings, where we chew the fat and dole out assignments. We're looking for writers, editors, layout folks with their own computer, photographers, illustrators, schwag-happy delivery people, and people who like makin' bacon. Find us at 1:15 on the Inner Circle of Center Camp. Lux. Veritas. Lardum.