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'THE PLAYA PROVIDES'

BY CURIOUS

First day of the Burn, and a typical one at Rampart: Burners coming in with white-out related eye ouchieness, dehydration, tons of rebar smashups, a hole drilled toward the shin bone, a battery pack toppling onto an upturned face requiring stitches to the upper lip and gum, a man requesting an STD opinion (private room for that), a woman seeking an ultrasound check-in with her fetus. Then a Burner hobbled in wearing a leg brace.

She'd just unpacked all her stuff onto the Playa floor when someone drove right over her crutches and smashed them.

Those crutches were her primary mode of transportation.

"Do you have any extra crutches?" she inquired.

"No," Marty Ornish regretted to inform her. Marty was volunteering as medical clinic greeter in the triage area of Rampart, while her husband, Steve, a physician, volunteered a shift in medic first aid.

"How am I going to get around?" she cried. It was going to be a very long week.

Just then, the door opened and a Burner stepped in, bearing crutches and an extra leg boot. "Do you think anyone might need these?" he asked the clinic. "I came to donate these." Just in case there might be some broken Burner in need.

Not two minutes after she arrived.



Lost Tribe

BY MITCH

In January, TomCat suggested on Facebook that Burners take a weekend campout in a ghost town. The trip and the municipality were virtual: the destination was Tribe.net.

What we found when we arrived was like the Langoliers: a world where the furniture was still in place but none of the people, and everything was spooky and half lit. Yet we were able to find out what had happened to Tribe and what might become of it.

"What kindled the idea was a bit of nostalgia for the friends I made on Tribe 10 years ago," said TomCat, currently of Portland, Oregon. "Friends that I met online and still consider them friends and are remarkably close."

Based in San Francisco, Tribe was a natural fit for free spirits who wanted to exchange information -- and the occasional dirty picture -- in a format based on shared interests. Other social-networking sites, before and after, have tended to be based on individuals. Anybody could start a tribe and invite their friends from inside or outside the site; the interesting Tribes grew, effectively marketing the site to new members.

Hundreds of messages a day passed through

BY DURGY

Midburn, the Israel regional burn in the Negev Desert, occurred on Shavuot and surrounding dates coinciding with May 20 to 24. It drew 6,789 people in 2015 up from 2,876 in its 2014 inaugural year. I attended Midburn 2015 and found Burning Man where people gathered, built, lived and loved, guided by the 10 principles.

The Department of Public Works analog at Midburn is Mapatz, which means "bang" (as in "big bang") in Ivrit (Hebrew). I had the opportunity to volunteer with Mapatz coming off my first full season at BRC DPW in 2014. Much like DPW, Mapatz surveyed roads and camps, set up a parking lot, built fence and shade, created and distributed signage, ran power cables, operated heavy equipment and led Leave No Trace efforts. We napped, danced and had fun.

During build week Mapatz largely camped together in rows of tents under a single shade structure. For the most part, motor vehicles were not allowed in the city during the event. Event attendees (including Mapatz crew) dropped their gear at their camps and parked their cars in the parking lot.

Soon after sunrise each build day, someone would come around saying "boker tov" ("good morning"), tapping on tents and telling stories in Ivrit until we assembled in the Mapatz salon for the morning meeting. I imagined it as a kind / gentle wake up call in the military.

During the build, a high-ranking police official sought and received a temporary "cease and desist" order right before the weekend (which is Friday and Shabbat).

At a Mapatz meeting, Nati and Nir (Midburn board members) explained that entry into the city and all building was suspended until the order

the main Burning Man tribe, and hundreds more through associated groups. Theme camps and Bmorg departments had their own tribes, but it was not just for Burners. Tribes coalesced around topics as diverse as cheese, religion, and neighborhoods in cities around the world. At its peak, it had more than half a million users around the world.

There was also porn. Having attracted investments from Knight Ridder and the Washington Post as well as venture-capital money, Tribe eased out co-founder Marc Pincus from the chief executive position in April 2005, leading to a series of unfortunate events that included the most horrific color scheme in the history of computer screens -- blood red and dead white -- and a clampdown on adult content. A year later, most of the staff was laid off, and a mass disembarkation of users put Pincus back at the helm in August 2006, promising changes. The old look was restored, but not the free-for-all adult content.

Pincus sold the technology underlying Tribe to Cisco in March 2007, presumably retaining the right to use the software. The New York Times said at that time that Tribe was "primarily used by artists who attend the annual Burning Man festival in the Nevada desert."

For Burners, things went along much as they had until the following year, when Tribe became unstable. New hardware was promised, and four users called New Systems Associates took over

MIDBURN SHALOM



Gate was a few hours late to open. There was a several kilometer line of cars on the highway waiting to be sent at intervals down the long and sandy road leading into Midburn. Some people had to wait more than eight hours to get in. Patient waiting to get into a Burn is not so unfamiliar to attendees on the Playa.

On the first day of the event I met Jules and the crew from Papier Dome. They had just finished printing a newspaper and were handing out copies. The masthead, banner and cotype information seemed very familiar. I identified myself as an instigator of the Beacon and there was an instant connection. They had, in fact, read the Beacon and modeled some of the way they did things on the BRB. Since it was a small operation, I figured they would be strapped for content (as the Beacon is at times - please come and volunteer) so I offered to write a piece.

The next day I turned in an article to the Papier Dome about participation - personal accounts and a general call for folks to volunteer at Midburn. Jules seemed happy and told me he would put my article in the paper coming out that noon! They had an ambitious publication schedule of one paper per day. When I returned to the Papier Dome after noon there were some glitches occurring with their equipment. I have been doing on-Playa publications since 2001 and am familiar with equipment glitches (what Beaconer who lived it could forget the catastrophic paper jam of 2006?). Jules looked to me with frustration and desperation in his eyes and asked if it is acceptable to skip a day even if he promised a daily paper. I assured him that Playa happens and the people that matter would understand. Also, his would be the best (albeit the only) paper out there and folks would be fortunate to receive his art and gift when it was ready.

could come before a judge on Sunday, according to my translator. I felt helpless as negotiations went on in the background. I wondered whether participants in the 1990 Baker Beach shutdown felt that same way when they needed to tear down the Man before it was reassembled at Zone Trip #4.

On Sunday, May 17, we were told that a judge ruled that the event was going forward, and organizers and law enforcement would need to work it out - eventually leading to there being no police patrols during the event.

When the official start date arrived, we still had a few tasks to complete before getting an official go-ahead. Mapatz spread out in the city to bury power cables, move vehicles, and complete fence. By the time we got the green light from inspectors, the

management and promised to invest in upgrades. Pincus left to run Zynga, which makes games like FarmVille for other Internet destinations. [Note to Pincus: "greener pastures" is a metaphor.]

New computers were installed, but the system never recovered. Logging in became especially difficult. Many remaining Burners abandoned Tribe.

When we arrived for the campout -- minus TomCat, who, ironically, was unable to log in -- we connected with Carolyn, a flesh-and-blood member of New System Associates, who explained why Tribe went wonky and why it's still there.

"The deal we cut with Mark in 2008 was that we would create a new software platform for Tribe to run on so that we would no longer need to license it from Cisco. Once that was complete, the remaining assets would transfer to us," she told us. Development began but was never completed. In 2010, a combination of a dispute with contract programmers and the loss of advertising from a major server that objected to the site's remaining pornographic content put the rewrite on hold, where it remains, according to Carolyn.

She estimated it would cost about \$100,000 to start again, though money is not the main concern. Rather, it's the decade-old software that's increasingly incompatible with everything else. "Any attempt to upgrade even the operating system breaks the site," she said. "This is the major issue." Campers complained that about unreasonable log-in times. Carolyn said the probable cause

dated from a September 2008 outage was that a server known as "the grapher" was not correctly "rebuilt" and the exact issue with it has not been isolated.

What is needed, she said is a programmer "familiar with large-scale web applications, Java on Linux, SSH, load balancing, etc. First job would be to triage the grapher and see if that gets us to stability, then decide on a more sustainable and maintainable platform going forward."

New Street finds itself constrained by the Tribe ownership structure. Until the software can be rewritten, Pincus holds the physical assets and Cisco the technology, she said. A campout member with some programming background has been in touch, and that way might lay salvation. Others with knowledge are welcome to contact her.

Meanwhile, the site limps along with about 50 \$5-per-month subscribers and advertising to users who do not pay. Many of those are interested in our old friend porn -- let's just say that if you look at the profile photos of new members, a lot of the time you are not seeing faces.

Patient Burners interested in visiting or revisiting Tribe can go to the site and join or log in using their old credentials. Forgotten yours? Contact Carolyn via her Tribe profile at <http://people.tribe.net/carolyna> The campout had its own tribe, and you can view the conversations at <http://tribes.tribe.net/tribecampout2015>.

"You are done at the Gate, the next thing you will hit is the nice guys, the Greeters."

BLACK ROCK BEACON

"If they are so nice, why do we want to hit them?"

MID

BY STRYKE

This year, Burning Man regional organizations were invited to populate Black Rock City's own Midway, occupying the area surrounding the Funhouse at the base of the Man. The idea is to satirize the hucksterism of the Default World midways, turning "the gifting into gifting."

Boston Burners, for instance, are offering a black-box salon called Shock-a-Chakra, allowing participants to search for enlightenment in the dark. There they will encounter three aura meters with two sets of corresponding buttons on the left and right. Players will compete with each other in a race to light up colored lights, representing chakra points on the body by manipulating the buttons in the correct order. There will be clues to guide you, but some of the buttons might be tricks. It is meant to be a voyage of personal discovery with satirical stimulation.

Less gentle handling may be



PHOTO | by Mitch

found at the Wisconsin regional's demonic Pinball Machine. It will count your fingers incorrectly, turn your head into a skull, and have a good laugh at your expense. This is the fifth honorarium project for the state group, and it reflects Wisconsin's association with circuses, the kissing cousins of carnivals: Ringling Brothers was created in Baraboo, embarking on its first tour in 1894, and later combining with rival Barnum and Bailey to become the largest American circus. Baraboo, in the middle of the state (and not particularly near anything), is now home

WAY

to the Circus World Museum.

New York is taking a more cerebral approach, with a Fantastic Journey Into the Man's Head. The Big Apple is known for its concentration of psychiatrists, and they will have doctors and nurses on hand, offering a deep inspection of Bernie's brain.

Sometimes, you go to the exhibit, sometimes the exhibit comes to you. The China and Taiwan regional will be "recruiting" workers for its robotic factory floor, FoxCarn. "Stripped of their belongings and taught to recite motivational Chinese slogans, they will enter a gamified space of production that blurs the line between man and machine." A robot hovering overhead will enforce goals of efficiency and shareholder value. Workers will be compensated with tokens that can be used to buy goods at the next-door Betel Store to buy products like iGift and iSwag. It's a lighthearted send-up of what organizers describe as "the world's most valuable brand." 🐻

BRAINTEASERS BY DURGY

O	L	I	Y	S	H	F	I	R	E
O	A	L	D	N	A	R	D	K	E
H	F	L	O	E	R	E	N	E	D
Y	F	U	N	E	D	A	C	R	A
L	I	S	N	B	P	K	C	S	N
L	N	I	I	Y	D	S	Y	A	A
A	G	O	K	I	O	H	L	T	L
B	S	N	E	E	R	O	L	Z	P
D	A	O	R	T	E	W	O	C	S
H	L	K	O	O	K	G	J	H	E

Find the following words in the grid: Arcade, Ballyhoo, Carny, Donniker, Ersatz, Esplanade, Fire, Freak Show, Geek, Hanky Pank, Illusion, Jolly, Kook, Lafling Sal, Rod, Road. The remaining letters spell a popular BRC DPW phrase (5,5!).

If You're Stopped by Authorities

BY RAGE THE BEAR

This information gives some detail about your basic rights. It is not a substitute for legal advice.

When an officer stops you, he or she may search you either if (i) you give consent or (ii) the officer has probable cause that you have committed a crime. Officers are trained to elicit consent with forceful statements like "I need to take a look in there." And consent may be given even when it might sound like a no, like "I'm not sure that's OK." You must give a clear and definitive statement. The easiest is, "I do not consent to any search or seizure."

To obtain probable cause to search you, your property, or camp, an officer must have articulable facts that lead to more than a hunch that you have committed a crime. For example, using

a water pipe in the open is enough for probable cause (don't do this).

When stopped by an officer, you must provide ID or your name as it appears on your ID. Beyond that, you do not need to answer an officer's questions. Period. Either an officer has probable cause to search you or not. By answering questions, your answers may subject yourself to a search.

If you'd like to leave while interacting with an officer, simply ask "Sir/ma'am, am I free to leave?" If the officer says yes, calmly walk away. If the officer says no, you are being detained or are under arrest. If detained, simply repeat the first question until you are free to go and then calmly leave.

If you are under arrest, politely tell the officer you are invoking your right to remain silent, that you'd like to speak with a lawyer, and then shut the hell up!

On his way in to Black Rock City last year, the author and his partner were detained for an unlit license plate obscured by a bike rack. They were kept waiting long after their license and registration had checked out. Rage postulates they were calling for dogs. It came out they were law students. The officer waved them on. Rage took the bar exam in July. 🐻



*Snakebit:
Many camps and projects
are behind schedule
thanks to weekend
dust storms*

DRUMS!

BY MITCH

It ends with you and your goatskin drum. It begins with a medicine show on the Midway and your participation in carnival games.

A group of second-year Burners, who in 2014 brought the Membranes of Marrakesh to the Souk, are back as Dr. Thelonious D. RUM and His Medicinal ThumpThump Curing Excursion. They offer Burners a two-part deal.

"It's a cool combination of aspects that tie in directly with the Carnival of Mirrors Theme," according to Dhani, a member of the group. It begins with a "Midway experience, full of all kinds of amusements. You play our games, you interact with our carnies characters and medicine show, and WIN! You build a drum."

They are a little shy about from where they hail, but Dhani says their leader, Stan, hails from the "upper east bumfuck Adirondack region of Upstate New York," which provides wood for drum shells, an Amish buggy that is the group's Vardo (a horse-drawn wagon used by British Romani as living quarters), and other materials used in the creation of the project.

Medicine shows trace their roots to medieval mountebanks and charlatans. These quacks roamed Europe, selling poison antidotes and other elixirs. The word mountebank derives from Italian and means "mounted on a bench," as the vendors would typically appeal to their audiences from a small stage, sometimes assisted by jesters and accompanied by music.

They came to North America, offering some of the elements of the modern carnival among their ancillary entertainments, including flea circuses and freak shows, meant to draw crowds for the main character, a salesman posing as a doctor or scientist.



What had been was the last one in North America, "Doc' Scott's Last Real Old Time Medicine Show," was active for roughly a century and lasted until 1990. They peddled a liniment that was actually called Snake Oil, and was run for six decades by country singer/songwriter Tommy Scott.

The Medicinal ThumpThump Curing Excursion may lack the commercial element, but it offers an elixir for the soul: your own drum. To make it, according to Dhani, you have to negotiate the amusements in the front of the house, winning all the games in a specified sequence.

The back of the house is a whole other story. To get there, a fortune teller in the Vardo has to sign off on a drum in your future. Not everyone is destined to build one.

"Burners will stay and work for multiple hours, coming and going throughout the day as they work on their drums before they walk away with their finished product. It's laborious yet ever-so-rewarding for everyone involved," Dhani said.

Dhani, who admits to being a "long-time groupie" of Stan's, says the leader is a professional drum builder, who leads workshops around the United States teaching others how to craft their own percussion.

Dr. Thelonious D. RUM and His Medicinal ThumpThump Curing Excursion will be fostering the rhythmic psyche of Black Rock Citizens on the Midway from 10 a.m. to 1 a.m. daily until noon on Friday. The last day to run through the games in order to build a drum is Thursday. 🐻

The Black Rock Beacon
10 Years Ago

Wednesday, August 31, 2005
Narcissism Edition

Howeird did a Gerlach pub crawl in search of anybody who thought a San Diego company's plan to establish a 11,450-megawatt coal-fired power plant about 10 miles northwest of town might be a good idea. Local proponents were few and far between -- in fact, they were Bruno -- and the idea was abandoned the following year.

🐻 For the price of a half-dozen tickets (\$250 at the top tier that year), Lockout Camp was lost. A bunch of good-hearted citizens who helped fellow Burners re-enter their vehicles should they have been so shortsighted as to lose their keys, this formerly Bmorg-sponsored camp disbanded after losing support.

PERPETRATORS OF THE BLACK ROCK BEACON: Ali Baba, president. **Naughty Zed**, treasurer & stunt double. **Mitchell Martin**, president of vice. **Smash**, editor. **rednikki**, editor. **Larry Breed**, tino kaiwhakatika tārua. **Rockstar**, camp manager. **Francis Wenderlich**, artist. **Mrs. Lucky**, deep thinker. **Suzanne Zalev**, editor in absentia. **Taymar & WeeGee**, photographers on hiatus. **Durgy**, doer of stuff. **Lena Kartzov**, design diva & masthead. **Sunami**, wave of repair. **STAFF THIS ISSUE:** Editor, Mitch. **Production Goddess**, Naughty Zed. **Writers**, Mitch, Curious, Mrs. Lucky, Durgy, Rage The Bear. **Photographers**, Mitch. **Illustrator**, Loren Albrecht. Thanks to jeffjonesillustration.com for use of the masthead pig.

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