



CARNIVAL OF MIRRORS • CLOWN CAR EDITION • FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 4, 2015 • VOLUME XI, NUMBER IV • 1:15 @ CENTER CAMP • WWW.BLACKROCKBEACON.ORG

PULLING INFO OUT OF THE HAT

BY ROCKSTAR

Like the orangutan's tea time at the London Zoo, Bmorg's annual Wednesday press conference is one of those doughty traditions that defy cynicism or humorlessness. Indeed, the very idea of staging one of the default world's more useless pageants sounds like a poor fit for Black Rock City, but as the festival's fame grows, so does the demand for this ritual.

Every vagrant rumor about Burning Man – from the Bug Apocalypse to the sheriff's threats of full-spectrum police dominance – is now grist for the world's news media, so key Bmorg personnel Heather White, Dave X, Meghan Rutigliano, and Tony "Coyote" Perez

joined founder Larry Harvey on stage at Everywhere Pavilion to field questions from the working press. Stuart Mangrum moderated, but The Hat was plainly running the show.

Proceedings were dominated by softball questions like "What's Your Favorite Power Tool?" but here and there a few zingers flew. Larry was quick to assert Bmorg's primacy over agencies like the BLM: "What people forget is that WE are the government here," he rumbled at one point before hinting that moving the festival was on the table, though he and other participants stopped well short of specifics. ("It is our ultimate aim to find another venue," Larry said.) Later talk focused largely upon the event's visible

success at colonizing the world's culture, with regionals in Israel, Taiwan and South Africa. The panel dismissed ongoing concerns about plug 'n' play camps, referring without specifics to a three-year plan to level Burning Man's emerging class system.

Proceedings turned less genial when a question touched on the event's overwhelmingly white demographic. Conferees were plainly nervous over the question; a vibe little improved by Larry squaring off with "It's a little much to expect the organization to solve the problem of racial parity," proceeding from there to disjointed mutterings about "liberal critics" and how Bmorg wasn't about to "set up a Marxist state."

"To begin with, this has never been

imagined by us as an utopian society," Larry said. "I'll believe in utopia when I meet my first perfect person. This community is made up of 70,000 imperfect persons."

This venture into Fox Newspeak went into overdrive when the subject of money came up. Larry went out of his way to deny as "hokey" rumors of "any hidden artesianal flows of money" into Bmorg's till, stating flatly that the overwhelming bulk of the event's proceeds came from ticket sales and promising "an abundance of information" on this subject at some future date. Questions raised on this score in the Wednesday edition of the Beacon went largely unanswered.

Despite such niggling questions,



Photo by Carlos Vaquero

Burning Man's organizers were sanguine if not exuberant about the event's future and plainly pleased by opportunities presented by the mainstream media's obsessive interest. Dave X summed up the prevailing optimism by observing "Burning Man is a magic name, like a genie in a bottle." 🐾



THINKERS BURNERS YOU SHOULD KNOW: AYN RAND

BY MRS. LUCKY

Ayn Rand and I stand before Marco Cochrane's sculpture R-Evolution. She admires the metal maiden's triumphal pose. It is Wednesday night and cool on the edge of the deep Playa. She is wrapped in the fur of a disappearing species and wreathed with smoke from the tip of her cigarette holder. A gold dollar sign hangs from a chain around her neck. We both admire the way the sculpture faces the lonely unknown beyond the trash fence. "This figure breathes?" she asks in her rolling Russian accent.

"Um," I say, "I'm not sure."

She shoots me a glance with her weaponized eyes. The author known for her personal certainty and defense of selfishness seems a little uncomfortable here in the gift economy. "It is the work of a singular vision, of an individual."

"Actually no," I say. "I think it was a collaboration, with financial support from the collective, from Bmorg."

She glares at me as a tie-dye swathed woman approaches, offering a plywood pendant of The Man. "From strangers, I don't accept presents," she says. "This is my moral duty." Her chin lifts as if balancing something in imminent danger of toppling.

"It's Ayn Rand," I say to the down-

cast woman in tie-dye. The word gets out and shortly her dark bobbed head disappears within the closed circle of her admirers. From the fringe of the group I can hear her reading excerpts from her novel *Atlas Shrugged*.

futureless sewer of the unpaid-for? Here, we trade achievements, not failures - values, not needs.

What greater wealth is there than to own your life and to spend it on growing?

The road was descending to the bottom of the valley. She saw the roofs of the town straight below, and the small shining spot of the dollar sign in the distance at the other end.

He had seen the earth as a place of enjoyment and had known that the work of achieving one's happiness was the purpose.

The moral precept that man must serve others is evil. You do not love indiscriminately - you only love those who deserve it.

You can not expect the unearned either in love or in money.

I am against all forms of control.

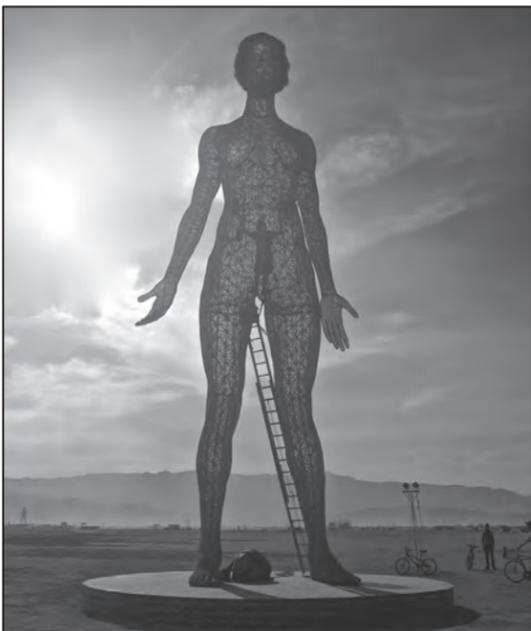


Photo by Carlos Vaquero

Market? I now work for use, not for profit - my use, not the looters' profit. Only those who add to my life, not those who devour it, are my market. I deal with the life-givers, not with the cannibals. That's our market and that's how it works for us.

Down what drain were they poured in the outer world, our days, our lives and our energy? Into what bottomless,

*Ayn Rand was an influential philosopher and novelist who founded Objectivism and wrote the bestsellers *The Fountainhead* and *Atlas Shrugged*. She is also remembered for "naming names" to the House Un-American Activities Committee during the McCarthy-era witchhunts of the 1950s. 🐾*

DON'T DUMP, SAVE THE SHRIMP!

BY REDNIKKI

Heard the rumors about the shrimp eggs in the Playa that hatch during wet winters in the Black Rock Desert? The shrimp exist – and they're the reason that greywater dumping will get you a misdemeanor citation from the BLM.

Two types of shrimp, tadpole

shrimp and fairy shrimp, currently exist as eggs beneath your feet. When the Playa floods in winter, the eggs hatch. The shrimp breed, lay their own eggs, and provide food for migratory birds heading south.

When Burners dump greywater, the water triggers the beginning of the shrimp life cycle. But the Playa will dry out before the shrimp can hatch (a few

days for the tadpole shrimp, over a week for the fairy shrimp). The shrimp die before they can hatch and breed, which means less shrimp and less food for birds in winter.

Dreaming of next year's playa-farmed shrimp cocktail? These near-microscopic shrimp are a great meal for migratory birds, but are far too small for humans. 🐾

ROVING REPORTER

BY CURIOUS

I determined to get it right this time. This was the Burn I'd be smarter, wiser, informed. A planner. I would read the What Where When guide before I got home. I usually crawl in bed with the booklet around March and say, "Holy Shit! Look at all the cool things I missed!"

I decided to use the guide to plan my first day here, and to select camps whose theme or activity was way outside my comfort zone.

When I'd underlined no fewer than 25 items in my booklet itinerary for "Monday one-time events," I noticed an unsettling trend: a lot were in an area I'd studiously avoided every single year - the new-agey, spiritual, soul-healing-arts part of town.

First stop: Anahasana Village. A two-city-block compound of majestic tents that tend to every aspect of the physical, spiritual, and astral experience. Yikes.

I pulled up to Camp Contact on Ersatz & 6:30. Niels, hailing from Frankfurt, Germany, hugged me and waved at the endless offerings on board. I crept over to the Naked Heart tent.

Stone sober, I removed my shoes and ducked in. A woman with a hypnotic, mellifluous voice took us through some meditations. Damned if what she said didn't make a lot of practical sense. How the Playa can be overwhelming. Close your eyes, close off the chaos, find your center. "Your core is like the empty roll of toilet paper. That's crude, yes--but it's like an open funnel of energy that flows through you. Get in touch with this core," she said. "Now open your eyes and find one person, don't listen to your head, but find this person with your gut. Your gut is what is open to synchronicity."

I saw a room full of beautiful neo-hippies, all seven chakras fully charged, with dauntingly naked open gaze, triple-jointed yogis accustomed to sitting and popping up to seek and connect. I defaulted to the stressed room-scan, and then gave up and turned to the human standing next to me.

We sat pretzel style, knee-to-knee. What followed were a series of exercises.

Toss negativities over our shoulder, scoop positivity into us like ladling soup.

"Self-doubt," he said. Toss.

"Judgment," I said. Toss.

He looked vaguely Persian and scholarly, with an appealing, self-flogging crease in his brow. I intuited that he was very hard on himself.

For the positive scoops: love, openness, forgiveness, contentment, acceptance.

Next, eyes closed, we were to rub our hands together and sweep each other's aura, not touching the person, but silhouetting the body, crown of head to toe, with our warmed hands.

Then I sat with my hands open on my knees and he placed his hands lightly over mine. Holy unbridled human intimacy, Batman.

My legs were going numb. My feet tingled. I got up and stumbled out of the tent rather than hook up with another spiritual partner. I was feeling, I admit, a bit blissed out.

Next Stop: Spirit Dream Interpretation Cafe. Oh, geez. The choices. It was the stately, no-fucking-around stainless-steel espresso machine with rich, olfactory-melting coffee beans glinting out from their dome that stopped me in my bike tracks. Their other menu: Spiritual Encounters, Destiny Direction, Healing Touch, Spiritual Cleansing, Life Readings, Dream Interpretation, Inspired Art.

I decided to be open to whatever the person I sat with offered. I was surprised to find, after I drank my chocolate soy-milk latte, that I got tag-teamed with no less than three practitioners. Each had a vision about me, my life, my destiny. After an initial chat I was invited to sit back and relax while they "read" me.

The trio saw a liberty bell; a stranding in white-out with someone arriving to hold my hand through it; two train cars that were very different but coupled, yet could be uncoupled, and heading in the same direction on the track. I dug it. We consulted. They offered blessings and prayers. 🐾

POPULATION: They still won't tell us.

"Madness plants mirrors in the desert.
I find the means frightening."

—Floriano Martins

BLACK ROCK BEACON

"We look into mirrors, but we only see the effects
of our times on us — not our effects on others."

— Pearl Bailey

TRUE REFLECTION OF YOUR SOUL

BY MITCH AND CONSPICUA

When you look into a mirror, you see a reversed reflection of yourself. It is not how others perceive you, and the reversal is more than a matter of semantics. Most people's faces are not perfectly symmetrical, so the image comes with changes, however subtle, from the real-world you.

It is possible to create a mirror that does not reverse, showing you an image of yourself that you do not often see, especially in real time. Looking at your unaltered state can be disturbing, but it provides insights.

"You never see you the way you really are," said John Walter, a.k.a. Exactly, who has been bringing examples of the True Reflection Mirror to the Playa for a decade. With this year's theme being the Carnival of Mirrors, he's getting his first chance to show the concept with Bmorg backing that allowed him to create a fancy midway-style display.

You will not, however, find the project on the Midway. Exactly said he did not want his soul-baring creation to be mixed in with the hucksterism

meant to define the exhibits under the Man. Instead, look on the Inner Playa (6:30, 1800') for a structure with variegated cloth panels held together by a giant version of a familiar children's construction toy. Within, you will find about a dozen mirrors in sizes ranging from one to four square feet, in dimly lit surroundings to show you the real you at your best. Or at least away from direct sunlight.

There also are supposed to be 15 of the one-foot mirrors distributed throughout Black Rock City at antiseptic stations near the potties.

Exactly said you can expect to see your self as "much more vibrant, much more personable, much more alive." The image you see is "not just a reflection, it's you. The mirror has been doing a number on all of us. Nobody ever says 'that's not you'."

While the mirror may reveal the truth, the thing itself is an illusion. It is actually two more-or-less conventional mirrors placed at right angles inside a five-sided box. "Simple physics" bounces the images around to project an unreversed version on what seems to

be a typical flat surface. Push your finger through the apparent plane and there is nothing there -- you keep going until you hit one of the angled mirrors or the place that they meet.

The seam is invisible thanks to the kind of mirrors used; they are reflective on the surface, unlike most mirrors, which have a layer of glass placed over the reflective surface to protect it. Using that kind would make the seam visible because the two reflective surfaces would not touch.

Front-reflecting mirrors used to be more common than they are today, and only about three factories still make them, Exactly said. They cost 10 to 20 times more than their regular counterparts, so it would be costly to try to reproduce the effect yourself. It is also unnecessary, as you can buy non-reversing mirrors online at about \$200 for a one-foot square.

The True Reflection Mirror was born in a roundabout way. Exactly had previously developed what he calls the Hair Part Theory. "The way I parted my hair was affecting my social life," he said. The side that the part is on



Photo by Mitch

tends to reflect the dominant side of a person's brain, the theory goes. A part on the left indicates "a manly man" who tends to be "clueless about the feminine." That is the correct side for heterosexual male popularity, with only about one in 10 men who part their hair on the right having much social success. Those often are "good looking or tall," both masculine traits that overcome the right-brained signals of creativity, intuition, femininity, and mystery, Exactly said.

Believe it or don't, but the idea sensitized Exactly to his reflection. One day in a public rest room, he encountered the nonreversing phenomenon, and a mirror was born. It was not the first time; Exactly reinvented a device that had been patented by a priest in the 1880s and that was known to the Greek Empire.

If you visit the mirrors, Exactly recommends trying to act naturally. "You have to be yourself to see yourself." Also, if you think it makes you look old, concentrate on your eyes. "The eyes are ageless." 🐾

I THINK I CAN I THINK I CAN

BY ALENA

Many of us know how Burning Man can help us find lifelong friends. Yet only some understand these friends aren't always human. They can also be art cars.

Lady Whiskey (also known as Chooch) is a project, a child, and a willful travel companion of the artist and furniture designer Paul Haugland, who built it with his girlfriend Molly Murphy, daughter Chaya, and other friends.

The idea of Lady Whiskey came to Paul while he was traveling in Bolivia and stumbled upon a graveyard of trains. "Huge iron cataclysmic machines," as he called them.

A dream and a free truck in the neighborhood gave a start to the project, and this is the 5th year the Chooch has bathed her steampunk body in playa dust.

"Everything that could go wrong went wrong," Paul describes the process of creating and transporting the Chooch. The car kept breaking every year, before, after and during Burning Man, and the time of Paul and Molly's arrival depended wholly on the mood of the spontaneous Lady. This year, they decided to improve the car and, among other things, changed her body, an old truck, to a newer one.

The Chooch's camp, the Church of Unsubordination, supported these changes financially, even though, according to Molly, they didn't believe they would all be successful. The Chooch proved them wrong, though, and has arrived home.

The Playa isn't the only place Lady Whiskey is useful. It has served as Paul and Molly's moving van, as Chaya's bedroom, and, of course, as their hobby for all their summer evenings and weekends.

On the Playa, the Chooch is more than just a "party on wheels;" it is also a bedroom and a dressing room, and Molly loves to offer passengers the option of taking a nap or choosing something from her costumes to wear.

"To make an art car is to help create what Burning Man is," Molly said. It is precious to her to see people getting engaged on the Chooch, or calling a ride on it their best experience of the Burn. Paul noted, "Burning Man gives me permission to create whatever I want and consider it art even if I wouldn't otherwise."

A couple of years ago, Molly and Paul themselves met during a ride on an art car called Blue Morpheus.

"The ride on that car changed my life," she said. "I want to offer it to someone else." 🐾

Step Right Up to The Midway

BY MICHAEL MOORE

Before the Man burns Saturday night, step right up to the Midway, where you can challenge your friend to a game of butt darts, mold and paint your own papier-mache mask, or help your fellow Burners make a 50-foot steel skeleton come to life.

Based at the foot of the Man, the Midway offers a gallery of carnival and circus games, shops, stages, art, and distractions for visitors to Black Rock City's centerpiece. Burners get to the Man's feet by finding their way through a maze around which any wrong turn they might be greeted by Laughing Sal, the animatronic clown, or any number of whimsical art pieces.

During a recent visit, in one corner of the maze Burner Banderella entertained lost visitors at a circus organ with a 10-minute set of classics that inspired impressive dance moves in passersby.

"There's several organs on the Playa, which I like because that's right up my alley," said Banderella, who has been playing piano and organ for more than 30 years. "It's a lot of fun."

Standing atop the second-story platform that surrounds the Man's feet, Burner Twyla showed off a stuffed toy skunk she won at the Midway's ring toss under Wednesday afternoon's challenging windy, dusty conditions. This is Twyla's first Burn, and she said it already "feels like home," even as home is not always fun and games.

"You can sometimes feel disoriented and lost at home, but at the same time it's always naturally comfortable here," Twyla said.



The Black Rock Beacon 10 Years Ago

Friday, September 2, 2005: Schizophrenia Edition

The Dicky Box was an art project in which Dicky climbed into a transparent cube and spent most of the week on display while Black Rock City happened around him. One intrepid Burner slid into the box behind Dicky's back, compromising the experiment, but agreed to go on after she gave him a big hug and beat it. 🐾

The Midway is also a satire of the iconic American carnival park, where greedy peddlers try to rip off everyone they contact. At Camp Thump Thump, Burners can win their chance to make their own hand drum by succeeding at a series of carnival games, including "Whack a Burner" and a test of your pitching skills as a "Snake Oil" salesman. As of Wednesday, about 50 winners (out of 225 spots available throughout the Burn) had gained a chance to make and take home their own drum, according to campers.

Volunteers at the Funhouse leading up to the Man ask visitors not to tag the structure. Even though signs prohibiting graffiti are posted on the walls, the plywood maze and platform are covered with written marks and messages.

"Unless you created it, it's not yours to write on. The Temple is for writing," volunteer Chanel wanted to remind visitors to the Man. "There are lots of things for people to do here that's not tagging." 🐾

ALMANAC



Friday • September 2

First light • 5:58 A.M.
Sunrise • 6:26 A.M.
Sunset • 7:26 P.M.
Twilight ends • 7:54 P.M.
Moon rise • 11:39 P.M.

Saturday • September 3



International Bacon Day!

Moon reaches last quarter at 2:55 a.m.
First light • 5:59 A.M.
Sunrise • 6:27 A.M.
Sunset • 7:25 P.M.
Twilight ends • 7:53 P.M.
Man Burn • 9:00 P.M.
Moon rise • 12:29 A.M. (SUNDAY)

Sunday • September 4

First light • 6:00 A.M.
Sunrise • 6:28 A.M.

courtesy of SunriseSunset.com



Photo by Carlos Vaquero

PERPETRATORS OF THE BLACK ROCK BEACON: Aii 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 Kartsov, masthead. Sunami, wave of repair. Rhino, General of Logistics. STAFF THIS ISSUE: Editor, Smash. Production Goddess, Naughty Zed. Proofreader, Just Marcia. Writers, Mitch. Curious, Mrs. Lucky, Rockstar, Michael Moore, Alena, Rednikki. Photographers, Carlos Vaquero, Mitch. Thanks to jeffjonesillustration.com for use of the masthead pig.

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