

friday
29 august 2003
issue twenty-one

miss clear

our third ever
**best of
black
rock
city**
issue

Black Rock City's
favorite alternative newspaper

They banned dogs.
Now if only they
would ban kids.

pliss
clear

friday
29 august 2003
issue twenty-one
version 9.4

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Themes suck 'beyond belief'

I've been holding off on this all week, but since this is our last issue for the year (every-one say, "Aww!") I'm just going to say it now: this year's theme **SUCKS** "beyond belief."

Okay, practically every year's theme sucks. But **this** one is especially sucky. It's as if the BMorg tried to **think** of a theme vague enough – but not **too** vague – that practically anything anyone does out here can **somehow** fit in with it.

Got a **weird** abstract blinky sculpture? Now it's the Altar of Weird Abstract Blinky Shit! Have a barter bar? **Now** it's the Church of Booze! Building a theme camp about, uh, whatever? **Now** it's the Temple of Whatever! **See**, no matter what you do, it can fit in with the theme! How about **that**?

I **have** to admit though, I'm pretty impressed with the Man this year. When we got here on Monday evening, the first thing I did – as I do **every** year – was visit him.

It's this little **ritual** of mine. Some years, I don't even **make** it back there until they burn the fucker down. But this year has been different.

Yes, the whole Towering Ziggurat Great Temple of Burning Man thing is **actually** pretty cool. Every year, they manage to **ramp** it up, but this year, they **really** went all out. Perhaps they **realized** that the Man was starting to get **upstaged** by the Temples of Tears/Joy/Honor. It's **simply** amazing that they **build** these immense, **gorgeous** structures, just to burn them down a week later.

I could do without all the **quasi-religious** temple idol **stuff** though. Seeing people hanging out as "living icons" around the base of the Man **feels** like I'm watching **strange** creatures in cages at the zoo. If they do something similar next year, **maybe** they should **play** that up – the Black Rock City Zoo! "Here's a rare blue **body-painted** freak, **usually** only found in California. And here's a Shiva goddess wanna-be, doesn't she look cool? And there's a giant bunny rabbit – I've never **seen** one so big before!"

Stupid street names, yet again

Past readers will know that I'm beating a dead horse here, but can we **please** talk about the street names ... **again**?

How hard is it to name the city's streets in an order that is **instantly** and **easily** understandable to people on drugs? At least they're in alphabetical order this year – but they **skipped** a bunch of letters, which still makes it slightly **confusing**. The streets go from Authority to Creed – skipping a 'B' street entirely. **What**, they couldn't name a street 'Belief'? And as for the outer streets, **entire** sections of the alphabet get passed over, resulting in Reality, Theory, and Vision, **instead** of Hogwash, Issues, and Jadedness.

At **least** the clock dial system got **mercifully** reinstated, **especially** after last year's "points on a compass" debacle. But **still**, the city planners – **okay**, Larry Harvey – had to get all **smarty-pants** on us and give the streets secondary names like Absurd, Dubious, and Ridiculous, all of which are apt **descriptions** of yet another stupid Burning Man theme that is obviously **trying way too hard**.



The Mysterious D

adrian's rant

Some of the art we found was good, **some** of it was great, and some of it was just a **complete** waste of time. But remember, it's the **journey** that **matters**, not the destination. It's that sense of wonderment and **mystery** as you ride your bike or art car (do **not** attempt this on foot) **off** into the inky void, heading toward something that's going to turn out to be either magical or mediocre – you just never know until you get there.

Every year, I'm just **amazed** at the massive amounts of **creativity** that goes on out here. I mean, it's just sickening, this outpouring of **intense craziness**. I just want to give **mad props** to all the artists out here – **thank you!** And who out here **doesn't** want to get mad props?

Giving the Nod

Hell, why do you think I run a photo of myself on this page? It's so if you **see** me out on the playa, you can **stop** me and say hi. Or **just** give the Nod. I love the Nod, and would like to give it to some of Black Rock City's artists, such as David Best, who **created** the Temple of Honor, or Zachary Coffin, who did the big slabs of granite hanging **precariously** out there over the **playa**.

As you've **probably** figured out, this is our annual 'Best of Black Rock City' issue, and it's **our** way of "giving the Nod" to some of the theme camps, bars, art pieces, and performances that we've **really** **dug** out here. The Mysterious D has been blundering around the **playa** all week, compiling a list and taking names. It's **all** very highly-opinioned, but we hope that you'll **agree** with our favorites.

It's been a great week so far, and we hope you've enjoyed *Piss Clear* this year. Have a great Burn everyone, and we'll see you out on the **playa!**



Adrian Roberts

The Blinky Light Tour

Successfully navigating the city's streets at night while **fucked up** on **drugs** is probably a losing **proposition**, so why not just avoid the city **entirely** and **head** out to the playa for a Blinky Light Tour? If you're doing psychedelics – or hell, even if you're **not** – it's **highly** recommended.

Like we do **every** year, a bunch of us went on a Blinky Light Tour **last** night, and we had a **blast**. We **lit** ourselves up with glowsticks and EL wire (it sure is dark when it's a **new** moon, huh?) and **hopped** on our bikes and rode out into the open **playa** – otherwise known as the Wholly Other. After we got **way** the hell out there, we stopped and looked around. **Aaaaaah!** Don't you just love seeing that long row of **twinkling** lights that is Black Rock City? **Prettier** than Vegas, I say.

Then, we all got **quiet** for a moment, zoning out and listening to the distant sounds of the city – the **pounding** thud of the **bass** from Xara, a snippet of movie dialogue from the Starlite Drive-In Theater, the **distant** cries of "Woooo!" from, **uh** ... Thunderdome, probably.

I pointed at a **blinkly** light in the distance, and said, "There!" And **off** we went, pedalling straight toward ... something. You **never** know **what** you're going to find out there. It is, after all, the largest, coolest, open-air art gallery ever!



Blinky shit!

Adrian Roberts

Adrian

Stupid playa names

by MALDEROR



Hello there, 'Wifflebutt,' 'Dust-twit,' and 'Desert Dingleberry,' and **WELCOME** back to the **Crankiest Column on the Playa**.

Today we tackle the pesky matter of 'playa names'. Playa

names are the monikers certain members of our city insist on giving themselves, in a vain attempt to distinguish their desert personas from their otherwise boring day-to-day personas.

This problem is epidemic out here, as people try to choose new names that are reflective of the new feelings of freedom they experience after several days of huffing whippets in the BRC. However, giving yourself a 'playa name' just means that you're behaving differently here than you would at home.

Evidently, people who work as software engineers at eBay feel an overwhelming need to illustrate just how totally different their desert selves are from their 'real' selves. Therefore, they try to create pretentious and/or silly nicknames, usually including the words "Desert" or "Playa." I ask you to not be a 'Desert Choad.' If you feel the need to call yourself 'Desert Dipstick,' 'Playa Player,' or

'Heat-Rash,' then people may be laughing at you. This attempt to make yourself seem more "creative" by naming yourself 'Wisteria,' or 'Lord Wank-Wank the Bold,' or 'Larry Harvey' or whatever ... it just makes you seem kinda goofy. Trust me on this one.

And nobody gets to pick their own nickname, anyway. You can go around trying to convince people you've just met



You just know these people have wacky playa names

that everybody calls you 'Big Lance', but they're unlikely to believe you. This is especially true if you pick a name like 'Massage Master' or 'Great-In-The-Sack'.

You see, 'Desert Dingbat,' a lot of the people out here go by their "real" names. This isn't a slam on your creativity, 'Paradox,' so much as an illustration that many of us aren't living this week in the desert as some sort of fantasy role-playing event. (Furthermore, "playa names" make it difficult for others to remember what your 'real' name is back home in Daly City. "Hello Mom, this is that friend I told you about, her name is, um, 'Vulveeta.'")

This phenomenon is especially prevalent in the BM hierarchy. It's difficult to find any member of the BM "inner circle" that's comfortable using their real name. If you sign up for a Greeter shift, you're pretty much required by law to make up some sort of 'Desert Dipshit' handle for yourself. One wonders if the desire to pretend you're someone you're not is related to the desire to pretend you're doing an important and meaningful job.

This is who I am. My persona in this wondrous desert city is I who try to be in Real Life. I want to take the experience of Black Rock City and take it home with me for the entire year. To pretend that you're living some sort of alternatively-named existence, and that your name is 'Gerlach Gloryhole,' undermines that goal. I want to introduce myself to my accountant, clergyman, or bailbondsman by the same name that I use on the playa. I don't want a pretend name for a week. I don't need a name that I'll discard when I get home, just as I'll discard all this positivity, warm-feeling, and openness. If I pretend my name is 'Crankpot,' 'Rashy,' or 'Sir Gripesalot,' I'm creating a division between my who I am on the playa, and who I am back home. And the person you are in Black Rock City is probably the person you should be all of the time.

To quote the cleverly named Sunshine and Moonbeam Jones, "you are perfect, you are beautiful, just the way you are." To pretend that you have some sort of desert alter-ego diminishes the idea that you are a citizen of Black Rock City for the entire year. You don't have to claim you're 'Batman' when we can all see that you're 'Bruce Wayne' in a really sexy set of tights. **Be yourself**, and you won't need a dorky playa name.

The author's name has been changed, for the sake of irony - and to prevent those funny folks in the Burning Man inner circle from placing his camp next to the Boombox camp again.

malderor's rant



LIVE ON THE PLAYA

SATURDAY NIGHT BEFORE THE BURN



What happens here, stays here

Black Rock City Convention and Visitors Authority

Seth Rosenblatt



Boobies and bikes!

Critical Tits – but don't look!

by the VACATIONING SAGE COLLINS

Last year, I'm heading across the road to the Man on my way back to Xara and IO and behold, Critical Tits is pedaling right past me. A few years ago, that would've meant about 50 girls to wade through. But these days, it's in the hundreds. At first, I wanted to cut through and get back to camp, since I was low on water – but a few mouth-watering breasts later, I was content to patiently wait for them to cross. I noticed I was the only guy on the sidelines *not* taking photographs!



sage's rant

There was no *bitching* or *whining* from the girls – most of them were all too happy to scream out "I love my *titties!*" as they rode by ... and I *loved* them too. All manners of painted images were on full display, even a Wonder Woman brazier. All was happy and *peaceful*. Then I saw The Middle Finger.

It came from one of the *riders*, one who rode by *gritting* her teeth and *aiming* her middle finger at any male eyes or camera lenses that met her line of sight.

Hundreds of happy, *proud*, bare-breasted women... and one bitter pill. I'm really sick of this whole "These are my *tits* ... but don't look at them" mentality that reverberates *every* damn year. If it's about a state of being natural, tell me *anything* more natural than a man staring at a woman's breasts ... it's at the very heart of our continued existence today! If I wasn't so *jilted* by the sight of her, I might've taken a picture (though to be honest, she wasn't *much* to look at).

But it gets worse! Right after that, I made my way up to a *bar* called "The Lost Boys." Figuring I could at *least* get a tiny bit of water from them. I asked the bartender if he had any to spare.

"No water. We *only* have gin and tonic," he said while fumbling behind the counter.

"Very well, a gin and tonic sounds good." I offered a couple of newspapers as some form of payment, but he didn't even look up to see them.

"We're only here to *support* the riders."

I mumbled something about him being an *ass*, but he didn't catch that either. He also didn't *catch* my warning about refusing a simple request ... especially to a reporter.

daily haiku

Alpha-Bits snacktime
Doze off in
high noon sunshine
Sunburn says, "Eat me"

Butterfly beings
Swarm El Circo
Saturday
Slurping Bassnectar

Temple of Honor
da Vinci eat your heart out
Yeah, burn baby burn

– Orange Peel Moses

Quarter-mile long
Drive-Thru
Confessional line
The Pope would be
proud

Legal smoking age
Man's no longer
breaking laws
They grow up so fast

DPW
Can't shop because
they're working
Give them some free beer

– Summer B.

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"It was better
last year..."

"They just don't get it!"

"Next time, we're
getting an RV..."

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in "Welcome Home"

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Go ahead...
let it hit the
GROUND!

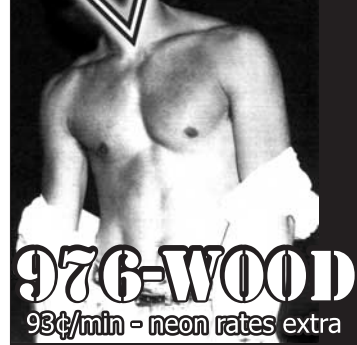
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