



# Blacktop Gazette

Burning Man News for the Default World

Post Event, 2004

DECOMPRESSION EDITION

Vol. 3 Issue # 5

## Playa Phone Pleases Participants

BY PLAYA BOY

The Black Rock Desert is the last place you would expect to see a working phone booth, which is why one had to be built. Together with Brent Chapman, and relying on the wireless network built by Clif Cox and Ralf Muehlen, using the internet satellite dish of John Gilmore, Brad Templeton built such a booth, and planted it in various places, including on Mercury and on the Esplanade at 4:44 in The Embassy camp.

Building the phone was possible thanks to voice-over-internet technology which today is being used more and more to provide home and office phones. Inside the pedestal of the booth, they installed a battery, a voice-over-internet adapter and a wireless internet bridge. They also added some spiffy joke graphics and hooked it up to a real used pay phone with the coin slot blocked.

Because of the nearby "Talk to God" phone, most people thought, at first, it was another joke phone. The fact that it claimed to offer free calling to anywhere at all in the world made folks more skeptical. This of course, was part of the fun. The art of the phone was that it shouldn't be there, and how people reacted to it when they didn't believe in it.

One of the first calls on the phone was among the most amusing. A woman approached the phone and picked it up. Amused by the dial-tone she got, she dialed her mother in New York, where it was 4am. When she heard her sleepy mother answer the phone she shouted "Waaa!" and forcefully hung it up. She didn't want to

explain to mom that she had woken her because she thought the phone-in-the-middle-of-nowhere was a joke. The next man to use it literally fell over, almost taking the newly moved phone with him.

Reactions like that continued throughout the week, though at times the word got around that it was real, and a line would form of grateful but less surprised burners. It was surprising and wonderful to see the emotion generated by the phone. Though most burners had been out of touch with loved ones for under a week, some cried or yelped with joy to hear them again - almost as if they were experiencing the telephone itself for the very first time.

Some people made important contacts. One camp had a member who had had to be evacuated to hospital in Reno and wanted to get the news. Several calls were made to Florida to check on hurricane victims. One caller learned he was the new uncle of twins.

Since it was battery powered and used radio, the phone moved a couple of times during Black Rock City. Once, for amusement, the crew moved it just 20' down the Esplanade while a woman was talking on it. They came in with a rebar puller and picked up the phone while she held the cord. "It's a mobile phone," explained Templeton.

Since it was Burning Man, there were the expected technical problems. The internet network was at its most troubled in years, so the phone only worked about a third of the time,

mostly at night when fewer folks used the internet. Often, the outside party could not hear the burner very well, so some garbled voice mails were left. But even a one way conversation seemed to make people's days.

The phone also had an incoming number advertised on the ePlaya. A number of people called in, though the phone was in use most of its uptime so not too many connected. Some folks waited by the phone to answer and hear the distant lonely burners who could not make it. Also moving was answering calls on Sunday from those who had left after the Man burned, who were reaching out for a taste of the playa home they had left.

All in all about 3,000 minutes of calls were made to about 1,000 numbers. Places called included Ireland, Israel, Poland, Tokyo, Okinawa, Tanzania, Johannesburg, Sydney, Bogota, Caracas, Cairo and Moscow. Most calls were to California (no surprise) but much of the rest of the USA and Canada was covered. One early call was from two parents wearing horns, waking up their poor daughter in Edmonton.

Some folks, not understanding the calls were a gift, called 800 numbers to use calling cards. Though Brad and the crew asked nothing, others offered lovely gifts in return.

A Voice-Over-Internet protocol company donated the phone time, but VoIP is so cheap that it was not expensive to give the city free calls for a week. The most expensive calls were those made to European cell phones, which charge the



PHOTO Brad Templeton

Real people wear fake fur and stay in touch.

caller for the airtime.

A phone booth is highly familiar technology, but on the Playa it made no sense; which added to the art. There is no plan to provide general phone service at Burning Man, where many feel some disconnection from the default world is part of the experience. Concentrated as it was, it was very rewarding for those who participated.

A website about the phone, with pictures, technological details, and maps of where people called, can be found at <http://www.templetons.com/pq/>

## Real World Greeters

BY LINDA WENG

Whether you've come to Black Rock City for the energy, art, free expression, one thing that makes Black City unique is the experiment in community. What seems to make it work is the ethos of participation.

Take it from JX BELL, a veteran burner from Philadelphia. After four years of burns, he and his friends discussed how to extend the Burning Man experience to the default world off playa. He noticed that his friends voiced strong opinions regarding politics, yet took no action to change their community. "I wanted to bring some of the great Participation and col-

laboration energy from the Burning Man community into our year-round communities." Thus, he founded the Real World Greeters.

The concept of the Real World Greeters is to remember to Participate and yes, that is with a capital "P". The five key elements to remember are as follows:

- 1.) Vote, and get others to vote
- 2.) Volunteer in your communities
- 3.) Learn about complex issues
- 4.) Organize other people
- 5.) Advocate and inform

In order to promote these concepts, JX Bell developed a user-friendly website: [www.particip8.org](http://www.particip8.org). So, for instance, maybe you want to volunteer for a non-profit agency, but you don't know how or where. The site explains clearly how to search and even provides a direct link to sites.

Entering into Black Rock City you are greeted by the Black Rock City Greeters so the Real World Greeters helped greet people back to the default world during Exodus. Thanks to all who came out to help! Participation is crucial in making any community work. JX Bell is a really enthusiastic guy who believes in what he does, so definitely check out his site. It already worked for this reporter when JX helped me to register to vote, even though I was embarrassed to admit I had never been registered. Now I feel great about it!

The words of JX Bell ring true: "Be your best self every day; Participate."



PHOTO: Geoffrey Silverton

Social consciousness and fun, on and off the playa.

## Decompression is Still Burning Man

BY PLAYA QUEST

Around the country this time of year, Decompression festivities abound, helping Burners ease the inevitable shock of re-entry into the default world. When we do, it's important to remember that we're representing Burning Man in our communities.

As you enjoy a slice of Black Rock City in your home town, please remember to:

1. leave no trace in your venue and on the streets surrounding it;
2. be respectful of neighbors, and keep the noise down at night;
3. use discretion when making costume changes in public (not everybody wants to see your naked ass);
4. not park in people's driveways, or otherwise illegally;
5. be courteous to folks around you, cuz they don't know freaks like we know freaks; and
6. graciously make sure your fellow participants are aware of these suggestions.

## The Family that Flays Together, Stays Together

BY CHRIS PENNY

Would you bring your Dad to Burning Man? Would you bring him if he's 84 years old? Would you have him stay with you at a B & D, S & M camp? Madam Morgan did all three when she invited her Dad, Curious, to join her at the Temple of Atonement this year.

Madam Morgan has been to Burning Man four times. After the last one, Curious asked her what she did out there on the playa. "We have an open relationship and he's one of my best friends," said Morgan. "So I talked for about an hour and a half about Burning Man as well as B & D, S & M."

"When she was done I told her that it was one of the most fascinating conversations I'd had in my life," Curious said. "We had a couple more conversations and finally Morgan asked if I would like to come to Burning Man this year. I told her I'd love to."

Curious lives in Branson, MO - home of wholesome family entertainment. That's not exactly what they offer at the Temple of Atonement. "We tantalize flesh to have people experience things they would not normally experience," said Morgan. "Our camp has no heavy masochism, just light play." Curious had yet to get pilloried, as of the filing of this report, but the week was young and full of promise.

Although he is three times the age of the average burner, Curious acclimated well to the playa. "I had a horse ranch in the Antelope Valley for years," he said. "I'm used to the desert, it doesn't faze me." Curious seemed to enjoy his time at BRC. "I love the atmosphere," he said. "I enjoy the way the people feel and give love and emotions. It's been a really elegant experience." When asked if he would return next year, Curious smiled and said, "It depends. I haven't been invited yet."



Backlit and beautiful.

PHOTO: Kositzky



The scorpion car in a full blaze of glory.

PHOTO: Weegee

## FIRE PHOTOGRAPHY

BY R JONES

Ever wondered how to take those great night shots of the fire dancers? There is no great secret. First and foremost, Get in close! Getting close allows you to have enough light. Zooming in from afar does not work. Getting close does. Secondly, turn off your in-camera flash. It will destroy the feel of the image, and it likely will be a distraction in the foreground. If possible pick a performer who has a lot of fire, the more fire the more light you'll have. And lastly, hold steady and take a lot of photos. Pick out the winners and toss the rest. If you get one out of twenty-five you're doing well. These thoughts apply equally to digital and film, still or video.



Extended exposure shows trails of fire circling Burning Man fire dancers.

PHOTO: R. Gilmore

## Music To Their Ears

BY TOKYO

My campmates and I came to the playa this year determined to provide some small respite from what some playa denizens have not-so-affectionately dubbed "boot in a dryer", "boonsa boonsa" and "laundry appliance" music. Our concept was to spin britpop, soul and indie records. Music with — check it out — melody! We were spinning and drinking G&T's at "Rule Britannia" in Gigsville.

We thought we'd be hailed as heroes. But upon hitting the playa, we discovered we weren't alone. The relative (emphasis on "relative") scarcity of trance this year seemed almost eerie. Art cars blasted funk, R&B, punk, disco and Bowie. The familiar trance thud, inescapable in years past, was suddenly escapable.

A trend? Maybe. DJ Zack Brown, of camp G-spot, felt some non-trance dance-mavens have subconsciously grown tired of being swamped by the boonsa at Burning Man, and taken matters into their own hands. "A lot of us thought the same thing," says Brown, "If we're tired of the 'squiggle squiggle knock,' we've gotta bring our music."

A trek around Brown's BRC neighborhood bore him out. G-spot spun modern funk. Down the street at the Golden Cafe, a live jam band noodled happily while two gentlemen mixed drinks in a chainsaw-mounted blender. And on the Esplanade, even members of Burning Band — a good-time singalong group that's graced the playa with renditions of "It's a Long Way To Tipperary" and the like for years — cautiously admitted to a change in the air. "You used to never hear R&B music out here," says Burning Band's Randy. "Now you do."

More interestingly, even the big dance outfits at 2 and 10 o'clock — still home to plenty of trance — copped to a switch from pure repeti-

tion towards tunefulness, or at least variety. Chuck, camping with DJ collective Sol System, pointed to the popularity of pop/techno mash-ups — like a trance version of the Beatles' "Tomorrow Never Knows" he caught at Opulent Temple on Wednesday night. He also said he saw "more interaction between DJ's and live instrumentalists. It's all becoming more like music, amazingly."

Meanwhile, Lush still featured 1 to 2-hour blocks of trance, but also chunks of funk, breakbeat and downtempo, in no particular order. "We're specifically trying to break the standard club formula," said DJ Goldilox, "Where you start mellow and get into harder trance as the night goes on... with Burners, as long as it's good music, it'll work."

Changes yes, but small changes. Trance hardly vanished from the playa, and there were always other forms of music blaring from BRC sound systems. What may be different this year is that the other stuff is actually audible. BRC Rangers deployed meters to register sound levels within the city, where dance camps — and most infamously trance camps — boomed thunderously in years past, contrary to placement rules. This time around, if your system pushed more than 300 watts, you probably got a ranger visit. "The policy is still the same," says Ranger Bustin, Thursday's Officer-Of-The-Day. "Shutdown is always a last resort. We first want to facilitate neighbors working out sound issues among themselves. The difference is that now we're more likely to intervene and get that process started."

As of midweek, Rangers had not forcibly shut down a single sound system. "Most folks have been reasonable," says Bustin. "People are a lot less, 'This is my art, wear earplugs.'" Good for us.

## From BOOM to Black Rock City

BY AMANDA LILIKOI

Global festival culture has evolved into an international network of modern tribal gatherings where psychedelic citizens converge to celebrate life, experience complete freedom of being, and create rituals for our times. Some people come to party; others come to do healing spiritual work. But each person has a part to play in the shifting of paradigms. Powerful interpersonal connections form, and entire communities experience quantum leaps of evolution.

Psytrance, the high-energy psychedelic electronica born in Goa, India, has a strong culture of today's underground music scene. Europe has one of the strongest psytrance communities on the planet. So many open-air festivals are held each summer that it's possible to travel from festival to festival all summer, which this reporter did for three months prior to Black Rock City 2004. I experienced epic gatherings of amazing music, luscious people, mindblowing performance art, sacred geometry decorations, global gypsy marketplaces, and lovely natural settings. But none of it compared to the uniquely surreal splendor of Burning Man, so I endured an insane three-day travel marathon from BOOM! Festival in Portugal to Black Rock City, the city of my rebirth.

BOOM! Festival is like the "Burning Man of Europe," and is a right conscious festival. An estimated 20,000 trancers from around the globe unite every two years on the shores of Lake Idanha in Portugal, between Porto and Lisbon, near the Spanish border. BOOM! was Aug. 26 to 30 in 2004, which made getting to the playa by mid-week quite a mission for any festival freaks determined to both BOOM! and Burn.

The music at BOOM! ranged from full-on psytrance to progressive psytrance, with the occasional breakbeats, and a chill-out zone with ambient and downtempo. At most Euro psyparties there is only one type of music, and trancers are quite baffled by the idea that literally every kind of music is represented on the Playa.

Festivals in Europe are commercial; an entire economy exists within the shop zone. Tickets can be expensive: BOOM! cost 100 euro or \$125, and other festivals range from \$30 to \$70 USD. Food booths at BOOM! sell yummy meals from all over the world, and alcohol and cigarettes aplenty. The vendor village offers otherworldly fashions like leather skirts, uv-glow shirts, pockets-belts, and fairy elfkin attire. I was with a fashion shop all summer, and although no one got rich, we all made enough to travel from festival to festival.

BOOM! has a newspaper called the Daily Dragon, a free cybercafe, payphones, message boards, an info booth that sells phonecards and BOOM! logo items, and an alimentacion (general store) that sells groceries, first aid items, and other festival necessities. Showers and drinking water are freely available to all.

The Liminal Village at BOOM! hosts workshops and presentations, a Visionary Art Gallery, a healing zone, and the Metacin, a cinema of conscious films. BOOM! is by far the largest and best-organized festival in Europe. Check out boomfestival.org to see photos of years past and get info about BOOM! 2006.

Other epic Euro festivals include Omni in Spain; FullMoon Festival, Voov Experience and Antaris Project in Germany, as well as many smaller gatherings in Germany, Belgium, and Holland. Several of these festivals run back-to-back, with only enough time in between for travel. All summer I was on the road and at gatherings nonstop, which was exhilarating, intense, and exhausting.

Although not as large as BOOM!, Omni Festival in Spain was also a powerfully transformational party of perhaps 5,000 people. The first annual Omni was Aug. 19 to 22 this year in the high desert terrain near Zaragoza, between Madrid and Barcelona. Omni was special because of the intimate tribal feeling, elaborate Dali-style decorations, and creative lineup, with Ott playing the best set of the festival. Playa-style dust, strong windstorms, and fierce heat debilitated many, but the dance floor stayed lively day and night, refreshed by an ice cream wagon and a water truck. Visit [www.omnifestival.org](http://www.omnifestival.org).

In Germany a "trance vortex" exists between Hamburg and Berlin, where the relatively low population density allows for huge open-air festivals. Psytrance culture is deeply established, and the Germans party like mad, with full-on hardcore pounding beats, massive bassbins, and elaborately organized infrastructures.

Voov Experience is the "mother of all parties" to the Germans and has been held since 1991. From July 30 to Aug. 1, perhaps 7,000 global Goa-heads got freaky at the edge of an old-growth forest reminiscent of those in enchanted fairy tales. Visit [www.voov-experience.com](http://www.voov-experience.com) for more details.

Antaris Project celebrated its 10th anniversary this year from July 16 to 19. When the main stage music finally started on the third night of the festival, most of the 5,000 partygoers at Antaris crowded around the fire performances, pyrotechnics, and laser displays, much like the night of the Burn. Visit [www.antis-project.de](http://www.antis-project.de).

FullMoon Festival is Germany's biggest party, with nearly 10,000 hardcore psytrancers dancing through heavy rainstorms and cold nights near Berlin. From June 28 to July 3, some of the world's top psy DJs channeled sound through eight 30-foot speaker stacks circling the stage. Infected Mushroom, GMS, Spacetrive, Alien Project, Astrix, Skazi, Yahel, Zorba, Talamasca, Silicon Sound, and others provided over 100 hours of continuous beats. Go to [www.fullmoon-festival.com](http://www.fullmoon-festival.com) to get information on past and future events.

My tour through Europe this summer was life changing. Though European festivals are epic and full-on, they are not as interactive or radically expressive as Burning Man. I left Maui with plans to return to Hawaii in three months for more college courses and vacation rental work. Now I am married to a cosmic elf from New Zealand and am moving to Australia to become a yoga teacher and massage therapist. By traveling Europe with Playa awareness and by bringing the Euro festival lifestyle to Burning Man, I am acting as one of many human bridges in the network of global gatherings. Through these festivals, a new consciousness is evolving — one of tribal harmony, earth-based connection, and conscious celebration. Join us.

## PUBLISHER'S NOTE

Another successful year at the Black Rock Gazette finds us between events and staying in touch in the default world. For many, speculation about next year starts before the current Black Rock City is over. The BRG will be back, and we hope to see you in BRC, working with us or on your own fabulous project.

Though the theme for next year has yet to be announced, speculation and rumors swirl through the Burning Man community, as folks try to get a jump on their planning. The most persistent rumors we have heard so far for next year's theme are "The 10 Commandments," "Dwarves and Stooges" and "Whole Numbers between Zero through Nine, Inclusive." Well, the project could not really go wrong with any of these, and possibly there are ideas that have yet to be thought, or that they just ain't telling.

And there is this whole process to Burning Man, from ramp up, to event, to wind down, and over again. The next Blacktop Gazette paper is scheduled to coincide with the Town Hall recruitment event in the spring, and you are invited to submit your tales of the playa to us for potential publication. Write us at [brgazette@burningman.com](mailto:brgazette@burningman.com). We hope this paper finds you well, and we'll see you around town and on the Playa. BURN ON!!

## Sports Wrap-up

BY LORD FOUFFYPANNS

There were so many ways to participate with fellow burners in sport in this year's Vault of Heaven. Sports offered an outside common ground that allowed the community easy ways to meet and participate together. From slow to fast all offered ways to commune with each other.

Starting at mellow, Sprocket from F-U-F-ing F's camp claims the world "Holding down the Sofa" title. Winners got complimentary happy butts, but most BRC folks got that one down, already. Brother Dictator's Silent Football at Camp Image node actually required no contact, passing an imaginary football replete with signals, penances, and "social conditioning".

On the full conditioning tip, Pink Pleasure Palace's Brandy & Jessica's Pink Cherry Cool-Aid Astroglide Oil Wrestling ensured slip sliding tasty friendly hello's. All comers were welcome!

Ngon camp offered a leaping greeting communal trampoline, horseshoes, badminton, & clothing optional volleyball at dusk. Biff said "it brings out their inner kid." Ngon also hosted naked Tug-o-War but campmates refused to say what was rope. Across the street an ongoing street bocce ball bash and next door the ever-popular XXX bowling alley kept the party rolling at Muppet camp. Uncle Satan claimed that they had big balls and that "every shot's a gutter shot." So many ways to commune in BRC!

Out on the Playa, participants "enjoyed" flaming rugby, (gloves required). Regular and even co-ed ultimate glow frisbee was played near the Man with lighted field & 7 person glow stick teams. Camp Klepto's Giant kickball encourage even more costuming for 6 on 6 teams in front of 3:00 plaza.

In their 10th year of sporting underachievement, community Camp "Lawn Games" was open 24/7, and offered crucifixion croquet, rubber ducky Egyptian mini golf, horseshoes and bocce. Jennifer implored "Please stop peeing on the mini golf anymore! Newsflash! - Stand up please! Mini golf is not a Porta potty on its side."

The king of community standard was and is Blue from Recycle Camp who created sporting fun to encourage recycling with a "Can-a-pult" to shoot cans into the hungry can hopper. The new multi crusher, "The Blue Duck", consisted of recycled drum tire treads waiting for your cans. Blue's mantra "Rethink, Reduce, Reuse & Recycle" reminded all of us to rethink how we do community before we create it.

Sports helped to bring our community together while keeping us thinking and healthy. It was a great year for playa sports, and we'll see you back working it next year.



Ladies kicking ass in Thunderdome.

PHOTO: R. Gilmore

Volunteering is the best way to instantly participate at Black Rock City.



PHOTO Kositzky



PHOTO Kositzky

The ice men and women cometh.

Rangers suspend their mediating and looking important thing for a photo op.



PHOTO Kositzky



PHOTO Smaze

Event founder Larry Harvey fields a question at an on playa press conference while other staffers look on.

Black Rock Gazette Morning Meeting.



PHOTO Kositzky



PHOTO: Gotalot

Cafe workers serve it up steamy to groggy BRC citizens.

## ASSAULT AND BIKE THEFT AT THE TEMPLE

BY TOM LAPORTE

You might think a crime represents the worst in people, but it can also bring out the best.

Flackmaster, an operations and press relations mainstay of Media Mecca, found that out the hard way. On Saturday of Black Rock City at about 11:00 pm he was assaulted and robbed near the Temple of Stars. He lost his bike to a clown. He's had elbow surgery requiring 13 screws and two metal plates, and will have more surgery in six months. The bicycle is valued at \$50.

As he tells it, he was riding out by the Temple for a little distance from the crowd, "when some belligerent bozo on foot rams me like he is trying to make a goal line stand on the last play of the Super Bowl."

Flackmaster dusted himself off and yelled at the violent clown.

"Bozo boy comes over to clarify my confusion by giving me a big roundhouse to my left eye and kicks me a few times for no extra charge. I fall down in punctuation. He rides off with my bike," Flackmaster recalls.

Flackmaster suspects his repeated calls for help were mistaken for "bad performance art". But he was finally brought back into Center Camp when someone from DPW with a radio came to his rescue.

"I spend a lot of time going over in my head what I could have done differently or some Jackie Chan moves I could have made to knock the other guy out, but mostly I think I have to face the fact that at 35,000 we are a real city. In a real city I wouldn't go some places in the dark by myself no matter how tough and street-



PHOTO: Flackmaster D

This went beyond clowning around.

smart I think I am."

And while the experience may give him pause, it doesn't dim the burner within. "Will I come back? Yes. Will I be more wary? Also, yes. I wish all jerks had some identifying marks so we could stop them at the gate, but until that happens, we just have to keep relying on peer pressure and a 'zero tolerance' stance," he said.

And, as a real "flackmaster",

Flackmaster has also noticed that Burning Man is better understood than he thought. "I think my initial reaction was to be embarrassed

for myself and the event, but I don't think we have to be perfect to survive as a community. It gets really tiring retelling the story, but nobody back home asked 'what do you expect from a bunch of drug-crazed hippies' or anything like that. I think everyone just sees it for what it is... a senseless random act of violence."

After BRC, friends, strangers and other burners quickly jumped to Flackmaster's aid, sending e-mails and posting to lists about the episode and the evil clown. The resulting buzz flushed out a suspect who has reportedly come forward and admitted the attack. The case is still open at this writing, so we offer neither a name nor identifying details.

"This is a great load off my mind and gratifying to know that so many people helped who hardly know me," said Flackmaster.

Despite the incident, Flackmaster has not acquired a morbid fear of clowns in general. "I don't blame all clowns, but I can't lie. My first act of rehabilitation may be to raise my left arm and middle finger in the general direction of the nearest circus."

# FLYING HIGH OVER BLACK ROCK CITY

BY GREGORY P

A two-seater Cessna 150 rumbles down the runway at the Black Rock International Airport. Headphones strapped to the heads of this reporter and my pilot Jonnica mute the roar of the engine. A voice crackles into our ears.

“Cute Little Cessna,” says the controller, “you are cleared for take-off.”

Jonnica pulls up on the control wheel, and the front end of the plane lifts into the air. We're about to leave the ground and I'm terrified, but as the back wheels follow the front one into the air, an indescribably tingly sense of elation rises that's unmatched until I see our city from the air.

The perimeter fences show a baseball-diamond event-space with perfectly formed (and jam-packed) crescent at the west end of the diamond. From the air, we observe the perfectly laid-out streets, thousands of vehicles and tents, and in the center of it all stands The Man, who looks surprisingly smaller than you'd expect, and is dwarfed by all the other spectacles around him.

The flight is made possible by the crew over at the Black Rock International Airport, who each year manage to create the only known airport-just-for-an-art-festival in North America, if not the world. Though private airplanes have been flying into Black Rock City since 1992, it wasn't until 1998 that an airport and an official landing strip were created under the able guidance of BRI Airport Manager Lissa Shoun.

“Prior to that time,” said Shoun, “planes just landed wherever, which created safety concerns that needed to be addressed.”

At the 2003 event, Black Rock City experienced two plane crashes, the latter of which resulted in the death of the pilot and three critically injured passengers. Since then, safety issues have become a major concern for BRI, resulting in new rules and restrictions for pilots, as well as pilot briefings to advise them as to the unique conditions of flying in and out of BRI. For a pilot used to flying at sea level, the Black Rock Desert imposes special conditions that include higher altitudes, as well as differ-

ing atmospheric conditions due to heat, dust, wind, and dryness, all of which can create variables that could contribute to pilot error.

“As a general rule, the Black Rock Desert is uncontrolled airspace and planes can fly in and land anywhere they like,” said Shoun. “During the event, however, with over 100 planes flying in and out of here, pilots are restricted from landing anywhere but here.”

Many participants might not even be aware of the existence of the airport (located in 2004 off 5 o'clock beyond Sedna), since the idea of “flying into Burning Man” seems as remote a possibility as taking the Concorde to Paris. Indeed, the aircraft on the runway this year ranged from a \$2 million plane flown in by the founder of AskJeeves to the cute lil' Cessna that could. Shoun is quick to point out that many of the pilots who fly into BRI are hobbyists or pro pilots who fly Cessnas or Piper Cubs with a market value below \$100K.

“Owning a plane is a lot like owning a boat,” said Shoun. “It's a luxury, sure, but it's not totally out of reach. I hate the idea that people who fly a plane into Burning Man are just rich people trying to avoid traffic. In fact, most of the pilots who bring their aircraft to Burning Man end up using it in ways that other people use their skills – they share aviation with others while they're here.”

Practical examples of this sharing include giving media people (like me!) a chance to

fly over the city, facilitating the initiation ritual for new members of the Mile High Club, and flying couples who plan to get married on the Playa to nearby Lovelock, Nevada for their marriage licenses.

And what a view! As a fourth-year participant it felt like a dream come true to see the cohesion of our little world down on the ground, not from a picture but actually above it. Truly an amazing experience!



David Best and crew's Temple of the Stars.

PHOTO: Brad Templeton

## HOW TO SEDUCE AN ALIEN

BY LIANIMAL

It's hard enough to figure out how to flirt with someone from a different country, let alone a different universe. Given the deluge of aliens upon Black Rock City, we thought we'd try to answer the question: How do you seduce a life form that has not just different expectations but different body parts?

With my trusted assistant, I went out on the playa and asked some of these life forms what would turn them on, with demonstrations, if necessary. Words fail to express the lessons learned, and I don't guarantee anything you read here will land you in an alien love nest. But if nothing else, it may alert you to the range of possibilities for exploring your prowess on the playa.

First thing to remember we were told by a sweet pink fuzzy thing encountered at 6:30 and Mars, “Erogenous zones may exist in places you would never expect!”

She invited my assistant to try to find them. He rose to the occasion, so to speak, and the next day stumbled back to camp raving about how he had been seen in ways he'd never been seen before, touched in ways he'd never been touched before.

At Mystic Beat Lounge a shiny blue monster-like alien explained to me that each of the myriad fluorescent tendrils covering his body were equal in sensitivity to a single human genital organ.

“If you were to lay down on that couch with me and stroke them,” he said, shuddering with delight at the thought, “that would be my trip to the vaults of heaven.”

We hope that you were on the lookout for the unique sexual possibilities that were out there in the ether, incorporating organs for which we have no equivalent. One tip was to bring along an alien and agile tail to Circus Camp for full effect. Tentacles like to be tickled and feathers want to be fondled.

A final word of wisdom from a translucent blob spotted in the midst of a raging dust storm near Bliss Abyss: “It's all in the energy, baby. Don't matter where you're from or what parts you got. What matters is, does it sizzle?”



PHOTO: Liane G

Oooh those antennae feel good.

## FUN WITH ROPE!

BY CREATIVEHORSEGIRL

Macrame sex, huh? Well, haven't you heard of that before? That's the name I came up with after going to the Rope Bondage Class. As a virgin burner I just wanted to get involved and play around so I checked it out.

I wasn't sure what to expect. Was I to wear my tinted goggles to this event? Images of naked men and women and whatever-else-in-between tied up in rope, licking each other and touching each other, was what I was expecting to see. I brought my goggles anyways.

No one seemed to know the whereabouts of Camp Arachnid. One man I stopped to ask was wearing a suede carwash skirt. He gave me directions and said, “You're a virgin and you're already volunteering for the paper. You rock. Let me whip your ass!” So, he took his leather skirt dreadlocks and whipped my ass.

After my ass-whipping, I got good directions to the bondage session, and off I went. I caught the last 20 minutes. There were no naked people there. Everyone was fully clothed sitting down listening to instructor Lynx's show-and-tell. He basically demonstrated several simple techniques then the latter half of class was devoted to wrapping your partner. There were some interesting, very ornate wraps that looked like human macrame. What's the purpose of doing such a fancy job, I thought? By the time, I finish knitting your body I'm not horny anymore. I'll be like, “Honey, I'm too tired. I'll untie you tomorrow morning. I need to take a Burning Man nap. Besides, I already mummified you!”

Everyone looked normal and was wrapping their partner. I could not participate because I showed up alone. I asked the next guy if he wanted to tie me up. He said okay, but never did. It was embarrassing enough for me to come to this class, then to ask a complete stranger to tie you up and get rejected! I should have brought a partner! Because I missed most of the class instruction, I did not know the proper technique for tying, so I asked the nice, quiet guy in front of me to tie me up. I don't remember what happened, but he didn't tie me up either!

I approached the Lynx's shy assistant for a bit of history. He believed that everyone has a kinky side and this is one type of release. Being in bondage promotes a helpless state such that you are giving yourself to the other person. He said sexual arousal is not necessarily a part of the process. A roper can use rope to tie his submissive to the bed or use rope to articulate a particular sexual position. Some people use rope to tie a person to a spanking

bench or to a St. Andrew's cross.

The assistant mentioned that there is social stigma associated with this practice, as with most fetishes. He noted an elementary schoolteacher who was caught with a picture of being bound. She was almost fired.

As I was interviewing Lynx's assistant, this European young, married guy was taking notes. I asked him if he was writing a story, too. He said that his wife has this fetish of being tied up. “Did you tie her up ever?” I asked. He hadn't and said it didn't “do anything” for him. I asked if he was going to try this rope technique with her. He said that he is going to surprise her and try it when he gets home.

Well the rope bondage looked like a blast, and it was a shame I did not get to take part. Note to self, if you want to practice bondage, bring a partner!

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