

Enter the Vault of Heaven

BY HOWARD JONES

“There are more things in heaven and earth, Horatio, than are dreamt of in your philosophy.”

--From Hamlet (Act One, Scene 5, 166-167)

Burning Man is famously impossible to explain. All interpretations are suspect. This year's Vault of Heaven theme is consistent with our community's attempt to grasp the ungraspable.

The dictionary defines the Vault of Heaven as the “apparent surface of the imaginary sphere on which celestial bodies appear to be projected.” Ancient peoples thought this Vault of Heaven formed a dome, a solid ceiling overhead. But they barely scratch the surface of what our Vault contains.

The unpolluted desert sky reveals the true scale of the stellar universe. Once the sunset starts to fade, the stars appear; first, in denominations of a hundred, then God Bless Carl Sagan as billions and billions of points of light. The familiar Big Dipper is soon drowned out by the sheer number of neighbor stars and then, almost imperceptibly, the smoke-puff that is the Milky Way forms a canopy from one end of the sky to the other. Modern science tells us this is only the begin-



Nature is part of the show on the playa

ning. Beyond this swarm of lambent light, the universe extends for 14 million light-years. This year's theme will probe this depth of outer

space; combining science, fiction and the purest fantasy to bring the vast span of the heavens down to earth.

Early references to the Vault of Heaven concept can be traced to the Babylonian idea of the universe as a domed stadium supported by mountains (an idea that might be considered by BRC management as an antidote to dust). A little more eye-pleasing, the Egyptian version featured the naked figure of the goddess Nut, arching face downward, arms and legs as pillars, hands and feet touching at the four horizons.

Our modern conception of the heavens dates from the discoveries of the American astronomer Edwin Hubble, and his measurements of the expanding universe. Contemporary science tells us that this universe is flying violently apart. Very recent data seems to indicate it takes the shape of an enormous pancake. (Whether this really makes more sense than a vault, the goddess Nut, or a domed stadium is up to you).

On a more pragmatic note, this year the concentric streets of Black Rock City will be named after planets. After the Esplanade, the innermost street will be Mercury, followed by Venus, Earth, Mars, Jupiter, Saturn, Uranus, Neptune and Pluto, with a new kid on the block, the recently discovered planetoid, Sedna. When in doubt, one easy way to remember this planetary order is the phrase: **Most Vicar's Erections May Justifiably Shock, Unless No Parishioners Stare.** If you have your own mnemonic, please feel free to share it with us. We'll print the best ones in this week's Gazette.

Interactivity at the Observatory

BY LESLIE LANDBERG

The platform beneath the Man will soar to new heights this year, with stages featuring interactive theaters below the observatory. Burning Man Executive Director Larry Harvey recently spoke with Black Rock Gazette writer Leslie Landberg, who is also creating a diorama at the observatory, about his vision of interactivity.

Leslie: Larry, you've often talked about “ritual time,” a sacred, shared experience which exists only in the present moment, but outside of one's normal linear life. Last year, you created niches under the Man and invited people to hold spiritual space in them. Burning Man's essential uniqueness has always been realized thorough an unprecedented amount of playful co-creation. This year you are adding interactive theater, taking things to a new level with the creation of the alien worlds: Little diorama stages which are integrated into this year's platform.

Larry: It's nice to know that someone is actually reading my stuff! I am excited about what we're doing this year. It will be kind of a summary of everything I've learned about creating interactive environments, going back to our earlier years in San Francisco when we contrived interactive shows in closed spaces. I'm hoping that it will be of some use to those who do things in urban environments -- we're building an entire structure that is designed around interaction!

Leslie: Cool. So, how does it work?

Larry: The essential secret is that aliens reproduce themselves by absorbing the other. What we're asking people to do is to manage the (stage) space in such a way that we can create spontaneous improvisatory scenarios, and that you really don't need any preparations to do it. If you enter the green room to a stage, you'll see one typed sheet that contains no more than seven rules that govern interactions on your world. But the imperative is that the interactions with the illusionistic environment, or with the other actors that share the space with you, should lead to interactions with the people of your world -- the denizens of Earth who witness you. And the purpose of those interactions is to inspire in others a wish to become you and inhabit your planet.

Leslie: So it's a seduction!

Larry: It is a seduction! I've suggested to the people who are on those stages that they look for those who lean forward and look as if they wanted you to absorb them whole, or people who hang back but can't take their eyes away from what they see. They'll know them when they see them, and when they do, they're asked to tell them to come back around to door six or seven or eight -- because this is after all an alien motel! And they lead them to a green room and this green room will contain a very condensed initiation into the premises, the back story and basic rules of interaction. People who do improvisatory theater know that it works best when you begin with a few premises. What keeps some people from going on stage is that they're afraid they'll be embarrassed in front of other people, but the intention is to seduce people onto these little worlds and then give them a few notions and a few rules that will give them a little confidence and then, in that social context, allow them to behave spontaneously.

Leslie: Giving them parameters will free them up.

Larry: It's a very basic theatrical premise. In doing that we hope to cycle hundreds of people through these worlds. And it will produce some very potent interactions and probably a few transformations. I mean, transformations that go deeper than the greasepaint or the costumes!

Leslie: That's very much what I'm hoping to achieve with own my diorama, the Theatre of the Heavens, which is a do-it-yourself alien oracle. I've created, with your help, a new kind of theater: a combination of oracular channeling and theatrical improvisation, which is fundamentally inclusive and very spontaneous.

Larry: Sounds great! Most importantly, the one big idea that I'm hoping to suggest to people this year is that you needn't retreat to a space that's at all removed from the world to create art. It's possible to imbed interactive art in the very heart of your hometown.

Leslie: Is this integration possible?

Larry: That's the intention. I hear people attempting to invent, in emulation of Burning Man, benefits and celebrations of various kinds, and one of the laments you hear is, “Well, it's very difficult because of all of these outsiders come in, these straight people, these people who don't “get it.” But my answer is that if you create an environment that's sufficiently interactive, that's sufficiently engaging, and that doesn't allow for any margin of distance on the part of the beholder, then those outsiders, those strangers, those people that don't “get it,” will get it. Once you've engaged people on those grounds, they become participants without even having intended to be. It isn't necessary to retreat from the world and insulate yourself, inviting only those whom you think are members of your community. And it isn't necessary to engage to undertake a pilgrimage to a distant spot.

Leslie: Inclusivity is integral, then, to this experience?

Larry: Absolutely! I have a fantasy that someone will come with their grandmother -- one of these family reunions that are so common now -- and one night they'll find themselves peering into this strange, alien world and they'll see these two outrageously alien creatures engaged in some kind of mutual exercise of some bodily function, only to realize, as they peer deeper into this exotic space, that one of them is, in fact, their own grandmother! It would be a healthy experience for anyone. In fact, I intend to be in one of those worlds -- more than one if I can! Last year I didn't go in any of the niches and then I regretted it. This year I think I will, so maybe I'll encounter you on another planet!

Leslie: Great! Well, I'll be spending a lot of time around my own alien world, of course, and helping people to discover how it works and to play with them there.

Larry: Well, that's where I imagine we'll run into each other. In fact, I like it that you're building it out in depth. I wanted the dioramas to literally suck people in, as aliens are supposed to!

Leslie: Well, mine sucks, but in a good way!

Larry: Yeah, I hope they all suck! I hope they make a powerful sucking sound!

Interactivity abounds in the Vault of Heaven. Go get sucked into the experience at the observatory and all over the City.

Publisher's Note

Some things didn't get coverage in the BRG that may have deserved some. **NO MOOP IN THE POOP! Gift to everyone, because you don't know how much someone has participated! Don't drive when the roads are wet to help with dust abatement! The sound volume policy will be enforced! Some of this is (un)common sense. Other things are covered in the Survival Guide. You are actually accountable for the information contained in that guide, so use it!**

One thing that we believe is integral to the survival of this event is that we build community. If you have been to Burning Man before pass along your knowledge. Rather than tsk tsk-ing a newbie eating pistachios and leaving his nut shells on the playa, say something. Not in a mean way, but in a way that leads to a better neighbor, gifting, and the widening of the circle of the community.

And speaking of nuts, if you are going to wear a shirt, please also wear pants. The whole pantsless look went out with ... well it was never in, actually. Not here, not anywhere. And if you do show up to the BRG sans pants, please do not juice our furniture. Put a towel down for Crissakes!

Above all else PARTICIPATE in this wonderful City that rises up out of the dust only to disappear a week later. You own your experience at Burning Man. By showing up and giving of yourself, you can make it better for those around you. We at the BRG have made our move in that direction by creating this paper, and we will continue publishing throughout the week. Meetings at 10am in Center Camp

Participate with us at the BRG, or in your own way, doing the magic stuff that we love. Burn on!

KIDS WELCOME! REALLY!!

BY CATERINA RINDI

Many people's initial reactions to the idea of bringing kids to Burning Man consist of, "Hell no," or, "I think parents who do this to young children are crazy." But the motivations that draw thousands of adults from all over the world to Black Rock City each year can just as easily apply to children and the obstacles are not insurmountable.

Parents want their children to experience the same wonderful and spontaneous friendships and personal growth that they do. They are looking for alternatives to their daily lives -- an opportunity to express themselves through art and interactions in an open community that is particularly accepting of difference and diversity. The organizers describe Burning Man as a challenge to the Black Rock City inhabitants "to rely on themselves to a degree that is not normally encountered in one's day-to-day life." And yet within the grueling desert elements, we are surrounded by friends and connections just a smile away. These are the kinds of positive values that many parents want to pass on to their children.

The tradition of bringing offspring has been there from the very beginning, with Jerry James and Larry Harvey's two young sons creating their own Burning Dog -- the Burning Man's best friend -- in 1986 on the beach in San Francisco. Today, an estimated 300 families attend, with an entire Kidsville Camp devoted to parents and their little ones in the desert. There are support networks online -- the "Burning Kids" Web site, local group picnics and meetings throughout the year. Children may be integrated into large camps or just come with their parents and set up tents like everyone else.

Kidsville, which hosts about a third of the families, even has its own mayor. The activities hosted by parents in the camp run the gamut from face painting and disco dancing to riding on art cars and climbing all over art projects and then making your own -- just like the grown-up fun in the desert. The kids particularly look forward to jumping on the trampolines, seeing old friends, being able to ride their bikes everywhere, and dressing up like princesses and monsters. Many of them plan ahead for their "gifts," or community projects, giving out handmade cards or setting up the ever-popular Gatorade stand. This year, Kidsville promises a puppet theater and The Temple of Mom, complete with crawling space, a tantrum room and milk and cookies for nap time. Older kids have their own activities, such as a seventh-grade dance and "re-create your parents." Who wouldn't want to give that a try?

Some of the "kids" coming to Burning Man are not children anymore. Alex J., who is now 19 years old and a senior at University of California, Berkeley, has gone for a few years. He helps put on performances for his younger siblings and other participants in Kidsville and assists with the potlucks and activities. Alex's favorite part of being at Black Rock City is wandering off on his own and exploring the art projects -- finding himself in the middle of the playa and really focusing on his environment.

He was first convinced to come to Burning Man by his mom, who described how the experience could be mystical and how everything felt different on the playa. Alex agrees that when he's there, he feels like he loses a part of his individuality and his sense of self in exchange for feeling a part of the human mass -- what he calls the "animal collective" of the community. He relishes the sense of adventure and intrigue in the desert but acknowledges that he always needed to have a home base and was grounded knowing that there were people around to help take care of him.

According to Kidsville Mayor Zaphod, there's no doubt that camping in the middle of the desert with no facilities whatsoever can be a daunting proposition for adults, but that is especially so when they are responsible for those they love most. So what kind of special accommodations do parents make for their little ones?

Zaphod's one rule with his daughters is that they can do and see whatever they like, but they have to drink water "when dad says so."

After first coming to the event in the early 1990s, Javan and her husband now want to bring their 3-1/2-year-old and are considering renting an RV to make sure he's comfortable. Javan recognizes that the climate is harsh out there, and that children need more stuff than grown-ups. They also can't always articulate what they need and can't remember to stay hydrated when blowing bubbles is so much more fun.

The organizers of Burning Man make a point to put out specific information for prospective campers in their survival guide, including special considerations for parents bringing kids. The main things to remember are that everything that applies to grown-ups is doubly important for little ones. They need lots of water and sunscreen, comfortable clothes, food and shade, and easy landmarks to find their way home. Kids often need more structured time and familiar activities to help them stay grounded. They also need to be prepared for the many things they're going to see and experience on this "best field trip" ever.

The survival guide encourages attending Burning Man with an open-minded and tolerant attitude, both for adults and kids, and many parents appreciate this aspect of the event. Javan wants her son to see "the range of creativity and lifestyles that Burning Man demonstrates" and she tries to find every opportunity possible to have ongoing conversations with him. She is not worried about his exposure to nudity, saying it's natural and finding no reason to hide anything. She also takes a very pragmatic view of adult-type recreational activities at Burning Man, giving him straightforward and age-appropriate explanations, and then steering him around activities that he's not ready to understand.

In fact, most Kidsville parents have the same approach. When asked about the proposed rules to have guards posted outside sexually explicit camps, several parents weighed in with resistance.

Zaphod resents having other people tell him what's safe for his children and sees it as a slippery slope towards diluting one of the essential components of Burning Man.

"When the powers that are use their own sense of what is right and what is wrong to set up a moral code that everybody is supposed to adhere to, it is just plain wrong," he said.

He worries that setting up more rules and dictates will homogenize Burning Man and limit the creativity and free expression that make it unique.

Kama agrees, "The issue isn't how we choose to raise our children -- the issue is that once again, people are projecting their values and motivations on me."

Some others agree, recognizing that it is their own responsibility to protect themselves and their children -- physically and emotionally -- from possibly offensive experiences. But they don't want someone else telling them how to do that. Most participants appreciated the attempts to place louder and sexually explicit camps on the edges of Black Rock City, with recommendations for those seeking kid-friendly areas to camp closer to the middle. But orders from outside influences were mostly unwelcome, whether criticizing parents' decisions to bring their children, or condemning the open sexuality of other camps.

Parents admit that their behavior changes somewhat when they bring their kids with them, but that doesn't hinder them from enjoying the event. Zaphod cites wanting to be totally available in case of any emergencies. Other parents will trade supervision responsibilities when they want to stay out all night or wander off on their own for a few hours. But mostly, the changes come in accommodating their children's needs, from providing sufficient shade structures and healthy snacks to just letting them have down time -- all easily applicable to every adult Burning Man attendee.

The parents just spend a little bit more time planning for the adventure, preparing for the upcoming wonderment, the colors and sensations, the friendships and encounters, the dust and fire that keep drawing all of us to Black Rock City.



If you don't like face painting, then you haven't tried.

Mutant Vehicles and You

BY LISA PIMENTAL & ALI HAWKHURST

A small but visible percentage of Black Rock City's population participates by becoming part of the Mutant Vehicle (MV) community. With 30,000 people and 500 MVs, the motorized few are in a position to affect the experiences of many. But there are some things that Black Rock citizens should know in order to enhance their experience when interacting with these amazing mobile works of radical art and participation.

Types of Mutant Vehicles

Essentially, MVs fall into three categories -- highly interactive/community service-based (e.g., BRC Bookmobile, mobile dance clubs); whimsical/stunning (e.g., Fishamok, The Easter Parade); and performance-oriented (e.g., BRC Animal Control). All three share what we at the Department of Mutant Vehicles (DMV) call the "WOW! Factor." This year, the DMV has

worked hard to only license vehicles that offer something exceptional to the community, with a high WOW! Factor quotient.

Interacting with Mutant Vehicles

Not every BRC citizen has the desire, skill, or insanity to devote a lot of non-playa time to preparing a licensable MV. However, this doesn't mean that you can't enjoy this amazing part of our city and culture. Feast your eyes upon the bright yellow Rubber Ducky tooling around the playa at night! Catch a ride on the Living Room! Run from BRC Animal Control! Play nice with MVs and they will play nice with you.

A Very Tiny Bit about the MV Licensing Process

MVs are pre-registered prior to the event. The pre-registration and licensing process has been the center of a dust storm of controversy and confusion. Just like Burning Man, DMV

continues to evolve. A balance (and a very sticky one at that) has to be found between some differing needs/wants: having a city that is safe to walk/bike around in; the ways in which mobile works of radical art/participation add to community experience; the fact that BRC has gotten so big that it can be chal-

lenging to navigate, inspiring more 'convenience vehicles'.

DMV has to make decisions that render us unpopular at times -- especially for the creators of vehicles that do not rise to the level of "mutant" according to our guidelines. It's a tough job, and sometimes we have to make tough calls. It ain't personal, and we're doing what we can to enhance the City, and the experience of its citizens. It seems that for every Burner that takes issue with us, there are more that appreciate what we're trying to do. We do some stuff right, and screw up some stuff. This whole thing is an experiment, remember?

Getting On

Picking you up might not be high on a Mutant Vehicle operator's list of priorities. Why didn't that MV stop for you when you were clearly waving your arms about jumping up and down, yelling "Stop! Can I have a ride?" Don't take it personally. Maybe:

- They're on a hot date or conducting a "private" tour
- They're out of gas
- They're tired of driving around and are headed back to camp so they can go get drunk
- They're full, and can't take any more folks
- You jumped in front of them, forcing them to stop -- a dangerous and upsetting move, and one that does not get you a lift

Etiquette

Mutant Vehicle drivers have a hard job. Some simple courtesies can go a long way:

- Ask before you board
- Thank the driver
- Keep chatter with the driver to a minimum -- they've got a lot to pay attention to
- Be gracious -- your driver is likely hearing requests from every corner to go in

completely different directions

-- Don't be disgruntled if you get turned down (another one may be along shortly and, after all, you need to be radically self-reliant)

-- Clean up after yourself (take your cup/camelback/condom/whatever with you!)

Safety from the Mutant Vehicle Perspective

Two seasoned Mutant Vehicle artists have offered up some words on safety. First, Tom Kennedy, creator of the Shark shared his experience as a driver:

"If you are operating a vehicle, you don't get to drink and party like everyone else. It is serious business to drive a Mutant Vehicle at Burning Man, and if radical self-responsibility means anything, it really does here. I have found that sometimes I am concentrating so much on vehicle operation and safety that I am not as relaxed and fun as I want to be. But it is this very seriousness that contributes to overall safety."

And Pepper Mouser of the Living Room shared his observations on STOPpers:

"STOPpers are the wild-eyed ones that jump out in front of you, feet planted wide, arms up like a tumble bug, yelling 'STOOOOPPP!!' Do you slam on the brakes and throw 10-15 people tits over teakettles and injure someone for sure, not to mention spill their drink, or do you take the chance that the STOPper's super powers include a working knowledge of Newton's Laws and that he/she will come into compliance before coming into contact?"

Community Responsibility/Looking Out For Each Other

As a passenger, PAY ATTENTION. Have fun, but remember to keep an eye out for yourself, your fellow passengers, and your driver. For the time you're on that vehicle, you're a team. Be especially careful getting on and off MVs and avoid doing so while the vehicle is in motion.

We're trying to be safe out there. If you see a MV cruising faster than 5MPH/acting dangerously, it's your right to say something to them, because you are responsible for your experience at Burning Man.

So let's have fun and keep it safe out there.



A tricked out rolling porch swing makes a nice Mutant Vehicle.

CENSUS 2004 Participate

The Burning Man Project is conducting its third annual Black Rock City census. Have you ever wondered why people attend Burning Man, how many attend regional events, or just how many folks get married here? Volunteers may show up at your camp with questionnaires that will help answer these questions. They will be organized out of a desk at Playa Info by the Countess an anthropologist, a demographer and a participant. Census results will be published on the Burning Man website. This is NOT a market survey. Information that is gathered will never be sold or used for any commercial purpose. They goal is to inform us all of who we are.



Ultimate frisbee is fun in any galaxy.

Interplanetary Sports Space Age or Space Cadet

BY LORD FLUFFYPANNZZ

Good Playa to you sports fans!

After putting on my sporty pants and searching for signs of sensible sports behavior in the default world I turned my attention to the summer Olympics. Though folks competed in the "vault" it was not of the heavenly kind that we have here in Black Rock City. Our super conscious and much decorated fiery desert tribe looks for more.

Undoubtedly there will be the usual and an unnatural slew of aliens apparent at BRC this year, and a plethora of thoroughly extraterrestrial behavior from bargain basement alien imitators. The Black Rock Gazette Sports Beat will follow on-playa interplanetary sports and seek out attractive new ways to benefit all species, and maybe even enhance playa sports this year in the Vault of Heaven.

What can we learn from alien visitors whilst

competing and participating on the playa? Are they enduring, fit and healthy? Will they bring new paradigms for sporting conduct? Are they just slothful, manipulative dingbats that have some crappy magic to thrill naive slack headed humans? Are they really from Venus, or just from Vegas?

We'll find out as we participate at play with our fellow interplanetary beings. Undoubtedly we'll see an amazing display of ambitious space age human sports and perhaps some actual bona fide sporty space cadets at Black Rock City 2004 too.

When you see these gray alien guys out on the playa, be nice, but don't send them over to Thunderdome! An elongated cranium spells trouble when you haul out the pugil sticks. And definitely keep some snacks, water, earplugs and a bandana handy.

Game on!

Point/Counterpoint: Playa Bacon

From time to time Black Rock Gazette Staffers have debated the important issues facing playa denizens. Michael Durgavich and Suzanne Zalev recently faced off over bacon.

MD: Bacon is so darn tasty!

SZ: But it's not good for you. A single serving of three medium slices contains 378 calories, 60 percent of your recommended daily fat intake and 72 percent of your recommended daily saturated fat intake. And if it's as good as you say it is (I haven't eaten it in about 12 years, so I'll have to take your word for it), you won't stop at just three medium slices.

MD: Yeah, but it's low in carbs, and high in protein, as suggested in all the latest fad diets. Not to mention the healthy sheen it gives your skin and coat, err... hair.

SZ: Didn't you see what saturated fat did to the guy's liver in "Super Size Me"? The doctor said it practically turned into pate.

MD: But it combines so well with other foods, and makes every other food taste better. Scallops are good. Scallops wrapped in bacon are great. Brussel sprouts, nasty. Brussel sprouts wrapped in bacon, great!

SZ: But pigs are cute little animals. Besides, it's more fun to fly pigs on the playa than to eat them.

MD: Pigs are cute, smart and sweet. All that actually adds to the flava.

SZ: But god doesn't want you to eat pigs - it says so in the Bible. And the Eyes of Gawd are watching over the playa.

MD: Kosher rules in the Bible were written for a simpler people at a simpler time who did not know about the proper handling of pork and shellfish. If God would talk to us directly again, I am confident he would soften his views vis a vis cloven hooved animals.

SZ: Is the phone booth to god back this year? We can call and ask.

MD: And bacon is the perfect playa food. As a cured meat, it's resistant to spoiling. The smell of cooking bacon brings over the neighbors and fosters community.

SZ: If it's that good, there won't be enough to go around. And it's messy to cook on the playa. What are you going to do with the fat? Have you sent in a cleanup plan for disposing of the mess?

MD: Of course we have a Leave No Trace plan for bacon drippings! We're actually going to use the fat for soup stock.

SZ: Bacon can be scary. Some guy in a documentary I saw in high school about LSD had a bad trip because his friend was cooking bacon. And in case you were wondering, no, that's not why I became a vegetarian.

MD: You can't believe everything you see in documentaries! For every bad bacon association you mention, I'd be willing to wager there are 100 made better by the presence of fried pork belly parts. Haven't you heard that bringing home the bacon is a sign of status?

SZ: How far would you go to bring home the bacon? Nobody approves of eating bacon on the playa only if the pig is still alive when it arrives. And I respect Nobody. Besides, Nobody knows how to make chocolate-covered bacon.

MD: You'll have to introduce me to this Nobody person. Sounds like he has his swine in a line.

SZ: The phrase is "ducks in a row." That's a totally different story.

For Tex who believed that a good life was made better with bacon.

REGIONAL BURNING All Year Long



A Glitter Monkey looms at Filpside.



Scott Q practices poi in Reno.



Ranger Beauty at Burning Toast.

Burn Platform Evolution & Outreach

BY COYOTE NOSE

**The back of my minds eye
will always have a burn scar.**

It was branded deep back in good ol' Burning Man '96. Our fair city was just discovering itself and toward the end was behaving much like teenagers with their parents away for the weekend. The theme for that year was all about Hell and brother, we went there. Just about everything burned!

I remember it was well into the fire tornadoes of late Sunday night (that's the night the Man used to burn), when I was to look back on an ash-pan city ablaze with reckless abandon! And more mind blowing, it was on purpose! Like a skyline of flaming towers, the entire horizon split open and shot flames high enough to scorch the heavens.

It was a life changing dance with fire, but

when we pulled ourselves out of the rubble the next day, with God's flashlight shining down on us, thick black billows of burnt-plastic-stench-smoke filled the skies for two days. We looked upon this post-battle scene and vowed to ourselves that the toxic sludge is certainly one aspect that our magic summer city can do without.

The memory of that night will always be a glowing ember that keeps the furious release of our spirits simmering on the stove; but we learned that year that we were also going to have to keep a lid on it. As fire sculptor Pepe Ozan once said to me, "After all, we are playing with fire!"

It doesn't care what it burns. Choking on flames, we were starting to.

In 1997, the event moved to the Hualapai playa where Washoe County forbade the open burns so we suggested the usage of cement culverts in specific locations. 1998, the event

moved back to the Black Rock Desert, and having those specific locations consolidated the one time massive scarring, but deep scarring still remained. In 1999, experimentation with elevated platforms started. That year, we witnessed the birth of burn platforms that have been steadily evolving ever since. Hail hail to the burn platforms!

Many of the growing pains of our city were solved, indeed, but a main nagging problem still remained. People were still putting plastic pipes, couches, paint, varnish, fiberglass, and all other kinds of unnatural stacks into the fires, and the black billows of poison still filled the air. People were also piling the platforms to the moon, and burning things were toppling onto the bare playa only to leave as bad a scar as any.

So what to do, what to do?! The answer:
DISSEMINATION OF INFORMATION!

Even if we have to tell them one person at a time, we have to trumpet the message out there

loud and clear on what and what not to burn. Essentially, it's a very simple message: Just burn wood. Period.

No couches, no plastic, no PVC pipe, no chemicals, no nada! Tell your friends! Tell your neighbors! Tell your lovers! And especially, tell the person you see putting that kind of crap into the platforms as you pass! Also, keep the fire contained in the platform to avoid playa scarring.

We do this because it's best for everyone, and also because it returns the favor back to Black Rock City for even providing a spot for you to burn things in the first place. It is a "pack it in, pack it out" philosophy community after all.

So 'nuf said. Have a solid ball in BRC, and see you at the burn! After all, our event has always had the same thing smoldering at its core -- FIRE!

Meet the Whack-N-Stack ShishCUPbob

BY CAMERAGIRL

It's mid-day at the Center Camp Café. You've enjoyed your iced latte, read the morning Gazette, got your toenails painted, checked out some art, listened to a sitar player, had a tarot reading, and are about to head out to the avenues of Black Rock City to do a little socializing and shade hopping on your way back to camp. As you prepare to leave, you diligently patrol your immediate area to make sure you've not forgotten your lip balm and that you are Leaving No Trace. You grab your empty latte cup and head towards the center of the Café... but wait a minute! Something has changed. Didn't there used to be trash cans here?! What are you supposed to do with this cup?

Introducing the Whack-N-Stack ShishCUPbob. This is a new system invented by the Café staff to help you dispose of your Café waste and have fun doing it. These interactive stations will be located throughout the Café (look for the signs!) Each ShishCUPbob station consists of metal spikes over a grate and bucket. Simply pour out any remaining liquids into the

bucket and WHACK your cup over one of the spikes to stack it on top of other cups. The spikes are at different heights to accommodate a variety of people heights and WHACKing styles. When have you had so much fun taking out the trash?

Even more fun than WHACKing your trash is to not make any trash in the first place. This year, for the first time ever in Black Rock City, you are allowed and encouraged to bring your own re-useable mug to the Café for beverages! There will not be facilities to clean your cup at the Café, so make sure your cup is clean before you get there.

Also new this year are the 9 oz beverage containers used for espresso and small beverages made out of 100% sugar cane. They won't sweeten your coffee, but they are incredibly eco-friendly.

Thank you in advance for cleaning up when you leave the Café. Remember that any and all items, non Café trash, or community art projects MUST be removed when you leave. This especially goes for those gosh darn cigarette butts!

Department Notes

Emergency Services – Remember that Fire, EMS, Law Enforcement, and Emergency Services resources need to respond to emergencies in BRC just like every other city. When responding to an emergency they will use their emergency lights and sirens, as appropriate. Please yield right of way by moving to the right and coming to a complete stop, regardless of whether you are on a bike, an art car, or other vehicle.

Sometimes responding units will kick up dust, but only if it is a true emergency. Otherwise the 5MPH speed limit applies to those vehicles.

Don't tailgate emergency vehicles in your art car! Don't play around with emergency vehicles by making siren-like noises on your PA, even if it seems like it would be a really funny thing to do.

Playa Info in Center Camp at 6:00 has all of your information services needs. Our Oracles answer participant questions, help recover found items, and provide personal video use tags. Use the Directory to leave messages for friends old and new, let folks know where you are camped, or catch up on the latest trivia. You can find theme camps, people, the latest event listings, and much more! Bring a pushpin with your camp name and attach it to the Dynamic Board map of BRC. Post messages about your theme camp on the Bulletin Boards and find fun things to do in Black Rock City. You can also find volunteer opportunities at Playa Info to PARTICIPATE. Burning Man Information Radio (94.5 FM) broadcasts public service announcements and keeps you informed while pumping good tunes to the playa.



GOING DEEPER



Deeper casts take shape.

BY SUZANNE ZALEV

Peter Hudson was afraid to jump off the high diving board when he was 8 or 9 years old. He stood there for what seemed like an hour before turning around and climbing down. This time, he's taking the plunge.

To Hudson, who created the "Sisyphish" swimmers in 2002, "Deeper" is about overcoming fear. The art installation will appear to show a diver taking the plunge from a height of 12 feet — about the height of that high diving board — into a pool and then into the ground. The diver starts in the air, then hits the water — which will splash as the diver hits the pool — and then the ground, which will splash flames, representing the four elements.

"Deeper," a zoetrope, has 24 life casts of a diver, although with the strobe light, a viewer will only see one diver. Magnets will synchronize the strobe light to flash when a diver passes by. Like "Sisyphish," a bicycle will operate "Deeper."

Hudson had "tons of help" with the project. People he didn't know, who had liked "Sisyphish," offered to help. Hudson, a set designer, said Burning Man changed his life because it reminded him of who he used to be, and how you can lose track of the things you wanted to do. The first year he attended, he saw the "HMS Love," a ship that appeared to be sinking into the playa, and thought it would be neat to dive into the playa and swim across.

And that's exactly what he did in 2000, with models of swimmers swimming from the Esplanade to the man. "I always feel like I'm sharing my sense of wonder," he said. He continued the swimming theme in 2002, based on the myth of a man who keeps rolling a boulder up a hill and it keeps rolling back down. The "Sisyphish" swimmers — who will be back on the playa at Lush Camp this year — keep swimming but get nowhere. It's a comment on "our lack of progress," and the creation of technology "far surpassing our comprehension of the human condition."

And, to the artist, "Deeper" is about taking the plunge — literally and metaphorically. "The moment you decide to dive off that high diving board, there's no turning back," Hudson said. "This is about when I finally jumped off the diving board."

Recycle Camp 2004!!!

Only you can reduce waste at Burning Man!

There are no trash cans or recycling bins or curbside services in Black Rock City. Burning Man is a "Pack it in, Pack it out" event and our goal as a city is to "Leave No Trace". The one exception to this rule is a very dedicated theme camp full of volunteers that are insanely devoted to Recycling.

Recycle Camp is back in full effect in Black Rock City this year. Please remember, and remind your campmates and neighbors alike, to separate everything. Our main objective is to educate participants in waste management practices, sustainability and of course recycling. We will gladly accept your clean aluminum cans. We do not accept any other recyclables and we will not take your trash or compost. All of these things must be taken back with you and dealt with properly.

We collect aluminum cans, crush them and bag them up, all with your help of course. We donate all the cans to the Gerlach School where students and parents take them to the local recycling center. The proceeds go into the student activities fund and help to pay for classroom supplies and the annual prom among other things. We have a brand new State of the "Art" Crushing Machine, dubbed the Blue Duck, making its debut at Burning Man 2004. Come check it out and ride the bikes that power it. Be part of the solution everyday.

We are located in Center Camp again this year at 6 o'clock and The Center Circle, across from the Café. We will be open for collecting and crushing aluminum cans from 10am to 5pm Monday through Sunday during the event. Please try to bring us your cans starting early in the week so we don't get slammed at the end of the week and so you don't end up running into burned out volunteers that have become grumpy. Please join us in making Black Rock City the cleanest and most eco-conscious city in the world. We need help everyday, so if you are a recycling nut like we are and you're looking for a great way to participate, stop by anytime and we'll get you involved.

Oh and Remember, "Never let it hit the ground!"

Viva la Camp Recycle!!!

Recycle Camp – Accepts your aluminum cans Monday through Sunday from 10am to 5pm. Come join in the fun at the hardest working camp on the playa. Ride the bikes, be the solution... Reduce, Re-use, Re-think and Recycle.

No garbage please.

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