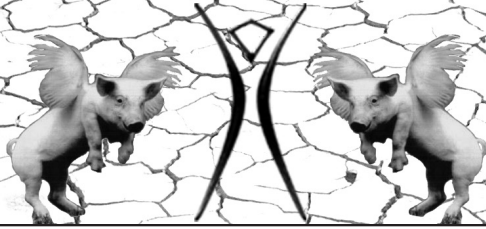


BLACK ROCK BeACON



GATE EDITION

MONDAY

WWW.BLACKROCKBEACON.ORG

5:30 & EVOLUTION

VOLUME V, NUMBER I. AUGUST 31, 2009

Welcome to NoWhere

By Deb Prothero (firefighter)

You've arrived! No, really, you have arrived and now it's time for the test. Undergoing an EVOLUTION to reflect the theme, this test ADAPTs every year.

All the late-night studying of the Survival Guide, the frantic scurrying around Reno's big-box stores with several thousand others to get dust masks or blinkie lights, breaking the piggy bank for one last costume detail and the mad dash up (or down) the 447, and now your jaw drops in amazement as you read aloud to everyone in your vehicle the most profound words ever written. They're carefully painted on signboards between the Gate and the Greeter station.

Those quotes aren't there to educate you. Like "American Idol," it's a trap - there to keep your mind firmly distracted from all the dust kicked up by several hundred cars as you drive in. It's founder Larry Harvey's way to profoundly move your heart and soul before your brain engages enough to realize this is the most hostile place on earth for HOMINIDS to camp. The traffic makes it impossible to turn around to demand a refund!

During your Virgin stop at the Greeter station, you were coaxed out of your vehicle by hyper-enthusiastic, hugging volunteers to ring the bell. If you didn't ring the bell, go back to the Greeters now and start over or you'll flunk the test by default!

In years past, Greeters spanked Virgins. Like many fine Burning Man traditions, this has gone by the wayside - too time consuming. Human BIOLOGY being what it is, everyone loved the spankings, especially the Greeters, and the line was CHAOS! Returning Burners pretended to be Virgins just to get spanked!

The first question on your test: (a) can you take your eyes off the whirling activity long enough to set up camp as a safe haven from the first dust storm? or (b) does your DNA contain the

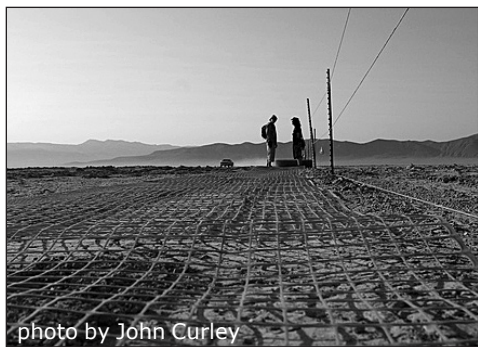


photo by John Curley

hyperactive gene forcing you to unload your bike first to explore the city leaving your dust mask and water bottle buried somewhere in your vehicle? The hyperactive gene will not become EXTINCT in the human GENOME since Black Rock City has two solutions.

Prepared Virgins read up on desert survival and arrive at the Gate with their Playa packs on the seats beside them containing all the necessary gear for immediate wanderings. For the rest: BRC also has a medical facility for treating casualties of dehydration. Someone there will wag a finger at you for failing on self-reliance but you'll be treated with professional care before being sent back to camp for a time-out and to retrieve your Playa pack.

Once camp is set up and you've tasted your first Playa-dusted meal accompanied by bacon - the top-of-the-food-chain Burner's protein of choice - you'll be ready for the second question. What will your contribution be to Black Rock City? Forget schwag, the best offering in this gift economy involves sharing your skills or your personality with those around you. If you're in a theme camp, you've probably INHERITED enough productive play activities to occupy all the time, effort and skills you care to contribute for the whole week.

If you're not in a camp, then hustle on over to Playa Info, it's just inside Center Camp from the Esplanade, facing the Cafe, where you can get your

daily Black Rock BeACON and coffee. Aside from helpful information, Playa Info offers vast numbers of volunteer opportunities available in BRC. Alternately, visit an art project on the Playa early in the week and ask the artist what you can do to help. Someone will adopt you and you'll follow in the 24-year LINEAGE of Virgins becoming Burners. The broad grin you'll wear will attest to receiving more in return than you gave as your gift!

Every street has a couple of JURASSIC-era Burners who've been to Burning Man for a dozen years or more. They'll adopt half the Virgins on their street forming KINSHIPS lasting for years. Be sure to meet the old FOSSILS to hear all the stories of years past. You'll find out why last year was better and then you'll swear that next year will be better when you wave goodbye. The next question on the test: did you get the old timers' email addresses to keep the conversation going all year long?

Wandering along the ESPLANADE is the best people-watching activity on Earth. But don't just watch - participate! Stretch outside of your comfort zone to meet someone new, someone completely different from you - the one with either the least or the most tattoos or the fella in a red suit with horns who's vacuuming the Playa with his Dust Devil. You won't ever regret this one simple act of radically inclusive human engagement.

This year, Larry Harvey added three questions to the test. These ones are the take-home assignment. What are we as human beings? Where have we come from? How may we adapt to meet an ever-changing world? Check out the art on the Playa, then visit a few camps in the burbs - the answers are hidden there and in your reflections. Bring your essays back next year for Larry to mark! 🐷

Welcome to NoWhere!

Theme Camp Snafu

By Mitch

It may well have a silver lining, but there's a dark cloud over Black Rock City this year. A mind-boggling 130 theme camps were told "thanks but no thanks" by the Burning Man organization and kindly requested to keep their bad selves outside the Gate until 12:01 on Monday morning, like the rest of the hoi polloi.

An unfortunate confluence of factors meant there was no room at the inn for 19 percent of the 685 camps and villages that asked to be placed on the Playa. By contrast, only 16 applicants were rejected in 2008, a 3 percent fail rate.



Illustration by Theatremuse

Black Rock City is a different place this year: it's smaller. By what the Bmorg describes as popular demand, the city's dimensions, which had been expanded last year, were shrunk back near the 2007 level for this year. That brings the Esplanade closer to the Man, but at the price of making the amount of camping space smaller. The city this year will be 37.5 million square feet, down from 39.3 million in 2008.

You're probably thinking, "big whup, why don't they just devote more space to theme camps?" The answer is they don't want to. The other answer is that maybe you don't want them to. The idea was to keep the ratio of planned areas to unplanned areas unchanged. As Maid Marian, director of business and communications remarked, "Do they really want us to control three quarters of the city?"

Probably not, but that doesn't do anything for the camps that didn't get placed.

The Virgins among you might not see what all the fuss is about. There are, however, two good reasons why camps want to get placed. One is that placement qualifies a camp for early admission. Besides having a lot of fun during the set-up phase - the vibe is totally different when only hard-core Burners are around - large-scale theme camps need time to set up if they're going to offer interactivity like they're supposed to.

The other highly important reason you'd want to be placed is for inclusion in the "What Where When" guide that is handed out to citizens as they enter the Gate. It's not that you can't get events listed without having been placed, but then you might as well be in the "What When" guide because nobody will know where to go. Oh, yes, they can go to Playa Info to find out, but, um, hello, it's Burning Man in the middle of noWhere and most Burners just aren't going to be that organized.

(The Black Rock Beacon is trying to help here, we're planning an "Alternate What Where When" to be published on Tuesday with end-of-the-week events for the unplaced camps).

That's the bad news. The good news is that those 130 theme camps could make Black Rock City a radically different place in 2009. Granted they won't be able to set up right away and they'll be harder to find, but they'll make the city a more lively place, filling in the nooks and crannies where they can lay claims to enough space. Seek them out. 🐷

Howeird's Positively Playa!

The Burner Evolves:

Day One: You haven't slept for three days. You are so dehydrated from packing you stopped peeing yesterday. Your planned arrival at 12:01 last night was a complete clusterfuck. You want to tear your hair out just thinking about being corralled in Lot D for four hours.

If you could only get 15 minutes of shade before that goddamn yellow ball moves again, and could remember where you jammed your stash when you ran the LEO gauntlet in Gerlach, life might be worth living again.

You only came from Santa Cruz. How is it possible to have jetlag? At least you didn't unload all your stuff at the wrong location like Camp Fubar over there. Your Burner magnanimity surfaces and you stroll over, help them re-pack and offer them cold beers.

Karma kicks in. As soon as you return to your bean bag in the shade - you find the missing doobie. Life is getting better.

Two Canadian campmates arrive and simulate a Total Eclipse with the sheer size of their canvas erection. All you can do is mutter, 'Wow,' point in the general direction of your cooler, drool 'enjoy' and lie there in ecstasy listening to the sizzling sound of bacon frying. Life is good.

(For me, Decadent Camping started with a can of smoked oysters on a backpacking trip in Los Padres National Forest in 1984. Now look at us! In reality, radical self-reliance has no limits. How big a price can you put on Survival anyway?

Of course the one year you forget your sleeping bag - so has everyone else.)

Welcome to (the Other) Nowhere

By Anya Skaya

It's a sweltering afternoon. 40C (104F). My beer is boiling. Sitting in the Middle of Nowhere, watching Exodus, covered in dust, sweat, and sunscreen, I can't help but reflect on the past week in the Spanish desert. The event nearly doubled this year, and with 500 tickets sold, this makes me wonder if we have now officially become official. Now Here is a quick and dirty to get your panties in a twist:

In its sixth and largest year, Nowhere is just a fraction of the size of Black Rock City. It is small enough to see everything, meet nearly everyone, while also providing plenty of opportunity for mischief. The site itself allows for the same feeling of wide open space of the Playa without having the art and theme camps spread out. This year we counted over a dozen theme camps - add to this a nearby river, located walking distance from the site, plus rolling hills and an occasional horse and carriage, and you start to get a feel of the place.

"First to Come, Last to Pull Out." This was the welcome slogan for Werkhaus, my Nowhere home away from home and the base for our all-volunteer crew. The population comes from all over the world, and for at least half, English is not the first language. Music and conversation flows in a multitude of languages - this year the Miss Nowhere Pageant was announced in English, Spanish, French, and Italian.

The Middle of Nowhere is located in the center with theme camps and art placed around it in a wider circle. No matter what direction someone exited they were sure to come across something incredible. Grab a Space Hopper (think bouncy ball with handles) and bounce off to gaze into the mystical eyes of Charles Darwin - a multi-framed art installation destined for Burning Man this year, or Costume Camp, or a dino-sized ball pit.



photo by Philip Voelkers

Anneke has been framed.

Like any other civilized establishment, the Nowhere toilets were again all the rage this year. The fashionable 3-walls, 1-hole design was perfect for sunset watching and neighborhood banter. The toilets are designed and built by members of the crew, and then decorated by whoever wanted to make them a bit personal.

Getting to Nowhere, located somewhere in the mountains of Northern Spain, is one of the main attractions - the survival guide arrives in the mail a few weeks prior with Polaroid pictures of each of the hay stacks and dusty turns to take you on the otherwise desolate Spanish highway. For those brave enough to take the back roads, the valley that opens up after the rollercoaster ride down is truly something else. 🐷

BLACK ROCK BEACON

Hello Again! The Black Rock Beacon is pleased to be back for our fifth year on the Playa, bringing you our unique mix of Bernalism and pork-related trivia. We're tickled pink (pink, get it?) to be able to offer you this Gate edition of our newspaper. Along with our five daily issues, we're gifting you the Alternate WhatWhereWhen guide to events at the 130 theme camps that did not receive official placement from the Burning Man organization. The AWWW will be ready Tuesday if all goes well. We'll be publishing the Beacon again on Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday and Sunday with morning deliveries throughout Black Rock City, distribution boxes at strategic locations, and papers a la porc at our Center Camp HQ, 5:30 and Evolution. *Lux. Veritas. Lardum.*



Larry Speaks: Larry Harvey, founder of the Burning Man movement, is expected to speak in the first of a series of debates on the nature of Burning Man culture to be held during the course of this year's event. The theme of the debates is "Towards Burning Man 3.0," and the task is to obtain as many opinions as possible on the evolution of Burning Man on and off the Playa. Organized by the Beacon's professor emeritus, Nod Miller, the first debate will start at 4 p.m. on Tuesday. All are welcome, and the venue will be close to Beacon Galactic HQ, 5:30 and Evolution in Center Camp. ~Rod Allen

Darwin With a Touch of Drama

By Mitch

If Charles Darwin were alive today, he might have been a Burner. A great intellect and a free spirit, he would have enjoyed Black Rock City, even if the barren Playa hosted little in the way of indigenous wildlife to study.

But if Darwin were alive today, he'd be 200 years old, so we're going to have to celebrate his bicentenary for him.

This year's Burning Man theme is Evolution, subtitled "A Tangled Bank" after a passage in "The Origin of Species." It dealt with the multitude of life forms one could observe at the side of a stream and their struggles to survive and thrive, all pointing to Darwin's theory of natural selection in evolution.

When Burning Man founder Larry Harvey revealed Evolution last summer, he seemed relieved to have offered something noncontentious following a trilogy of themes that rubbed the wrong way: Hope and Fear explored Default World dystopia; followed by the commercially-tinged-yet-Man; and then last year's re-viled American Dream, which had its tongue so deeply in its metaphorical cheek that it annoyed many of those who didn't get it and some of those who did. Harvey predicted the current state of economic turmoil as far back as 2006 and has been insightful and accurate about the less-than-optimal state of global society today. But his themes were difficult and dismal, forcing Black Rock citizens to grapple with heavy issues on their vacations.

Evolution would seem to be a break from that past, but it is not entirely so. Harvey said it was meant to echo the trilogy.

"The American Dream was awfully predictive," he told the Black Rock Beacon. "When I was writing this theme, the economy came down." The American Dream theme "said we lived in a squalid second Gilded Age. I asked myself what would rhyme with the zeitgeist, with the world in here?"

The answer he came up with was that the world in general, and Black Rock City in particular, must change with the times. Even Bernie himself. "In conceiving the Man and his platform and the pavilion, I decided to adapt that to changing conditions," Harvey said.

This year's Man stands on a relatively small base hovering just above a representation of the tangled bank. The bank will be built from irregular wooden triangles woven together with interlocking wooden struts. The Man will stand atop a 15-foot tree, bringing his total height to about 45 feet, barely half last year's level. "This design, unlike the great obelisk, does not require a team of engineers," Harvey said. It's also cheaper, adapting to economic realities—a sub rosa connection to the preceding themes.

You'll find Black Rock City to be smaller too, a cause of more than a little consternation. Attendance is expected to be down from 2008 and the city will shrink back to its 2007 size, limiting the number of spaces for theme camps. Theme camp applications, however, are up, as are their

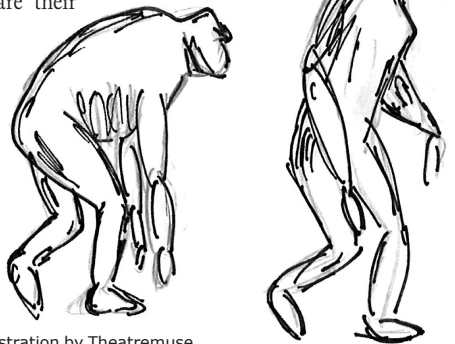


Illustration by Theatremuse

sizes, so 2009 promises to be a year of burnier Burners. Although, since many didn't receive official placement from the Burning Man organization, 130 hot and bothered theme camps will be scrambling around, like the creatures of the tangled bank, looking for a place to set down their roots. It's too ironic to have been planned: the camps will have to adapt, mutate even, to conform to the new reality, and who knows what Darwinian benefits that may bring.

Charles Darwin's father was a well-to-do doctor, and his mother and his wife were members of the wealthy Wedgewood family of porcelain fame. He began studying medicine at the University of Edinburgh in 1825 but found himself more interested in natural history. He transferred to Cambridge, where he spent time riding and shooting instead of studying, but did well in class. A professor suggested that he accompany an expedition to study the South American coastline at his own expense, and Darwin shipped out on the Beagle in December 1831 for a five-year cruise.

Darwin ate and studied tortoises in the Galapagos Islands, wondered about the creation of Australian marsupials, and began formulating his theory of natural selection. He had been sending home his observations, and by the time he returned to Britain, he was a minor celebrity and a professional naturalist.

Darwin's natural selection theory took years to perfect, requiring heady research on barnacles and the like for well over a decade. His "On the Origin of Species by Means of Natural Selection, or the Preservation of Favoured Races in the Struggle for Life" was published in 1859. It proposed that inherited traits that confer an advantage will become common throughout a population, so that species evolve in beneficial ways over generations. The book was immediately popular and the theory widely accepted in Darwin's lifetime.

An interesting footnote is that the Darwin-Wedgewood family has remained prominent to this day, numbering seven generations of overachievers (Darwin was in the third generation). Among the eighth generation is the actor Skandar Amin Casper Keynes, Darwin's great-great-grandson, who portrays Edmund Pevensie in the "Chronicles of Narnia" movies. Social Darwinism in action.

Unfettered capitalism borrows from Darwin, suggesting that the struggle for economic achievement, much like the struggle for life, profits from beneficial mutations. The theory might seem to lie uneasily in the creative confines of Black Rock City, but you could take the view that what is beneficial in the short run may be less so over the long haul. Indeed, Burner culture, which involves expending a lot of time, money and effort to spend a week in the middle of Nowhere, can serve as a valuable counterweight to the immediate gratification of inconsequential cravings adopted by modern society—at least until the bottom fell out of the mortgage market.

You can chew that over as you consider that if bacon didn't taste so good, there wouldn't be so many pigs in the world, statistically hastening the day that one of them is born with a really big brain and an appetite for revenge. 🐷



You Wanna Play With Us?

Welcome Geocachers.

The Black Rock Beacon is sponsoring a Mega Caching Event for Burning Man 2009. We'll create 10 caches around Black Rock City, with clues in each day's paper for two of them. Each cache will contain a specially minted Black Rock Beacon Geocoin honoring one of the 10 Principles of Burning Man as a prize for the first person to find it.

Come visit us at 11:30 each morning to talk caching. You can offer items you would like us to include in the caches and help us work up ideas for daily placement. You might also score some bacon.

Geocaching is a high-tech treasure hunt that uses global positioning system technology to identify hiding places. Anyone is welcome to play, but you'll need to have a GPS device. The coordinates for the caches will be provided in each day's Black Rock Beacon, Black Rock City's best – and possibly only – daily newspaper. 🐷

Brainteasers ?

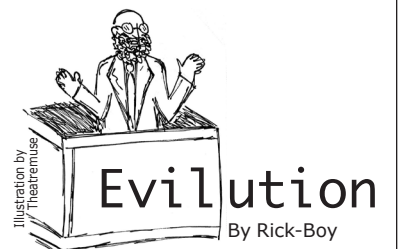
by Smaze

Circle the following words in the grid: Adapt, Biology, Burning Man, Chaos, Crew, DNA, Esplanade, Extinct, Eye, Fossil, Genome, Hominid, Hug, Inherit, Jurassic, Kinship, Lineage, Party. The unused letters spell out a word related to 2009's version of Black Rock City.

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

Playa in your shorts?
Welcome to Black Rock City
This is Burning Man

–By She Who Has Yet To Be Named



Jules McCready is on trial for enslavement, organ selling, and possibly murder. Get more of the backstory at www.blackrockbeacon.org. Now we join his trial, in a time and place not too distant from here and now.

"Dr. McCready, perhaps you'd like to explain how carving up people for organ transplants is not carving people up for organ transplants?" asked Prosecutor Hobbins with a sneer.

"In order for me to do that Mr. Hobbins I need a piece of information from you, if you don't mind?" said McCready meekly.

"Certainly, Doctor," he said sarcastically, "but this is highly unusual."

"Well, Mr. Prosecutor, I am charged with enslaving humans and selling organs, which I consider highly unusual. So indulge me?"

"Certainly."

"How is a human is made?"

"Made? We aren't. We are born."

"Yes, yes quite so, not made. How is it that a human comes to be born?"

"Are you playing games? An egg grows in a mother's womb."

"A fertilized egg."

"Fertilized by a man's sperm?"

"Yes," said Prosecutor Hobbins.

"So, if there was no egg, no sperm, and no fertilization there would be no human?" asked McCready.

"Well, there's always cloning. But that's been outlawed, as it pertains to humans. Say, did you clone those people out at your ranch?"

McCready laughed. "No, I didn't clone anybody – that's against the law. True, you can clone parts but I didn't do that either. And I haven't fertilized any human eggs, except for the two that turned into my children, and I assure you, sir, my wife and I did that by the most natural means."

There was a titter of laughter in the courtroom.

Tomorrow: Keeping up with the Joneses.

Almanac

By Igneouss

Burning Man will be blessed with lots of moonlight this year. The full Harvest Moon will light our own lunar landscape on Friday, and a bright moon will be up pretty much all night, every night this year. While the moonlight should make the Playa easy to navigate you'll still need a light for your bike.

The Sun will rise around 6:30 a.m. each day, setting at about 7:30. Moonrise will start the week nearly an hour before sunset, becoming roughly half an hour later each day. By Saturday, the Moon will set after the Sun rises. Keep in mind



	Sunrise	Sunset	Moonrise	Moonset	
Monday 8/31	6:27am	7:31pm	5:33pm	3:32am (Tue)	
Tuesday 9/1	6:28am	7:30pm	6:03pm	4:33am (Wed)	

Aries (Mar 21-Apr 19): Disillusionment is toughest on a Monday. Everyone knows that. Stay in the shade and hydrate today.

Horoscope

by Citizen X



Taurus (Apr 20-May 20): Remember, every silver lining has a cloud. Your lucky polygon is RHOMBUS.

PERPETRATORS OF THE BLACK ROCK BEACON...

Mitchell Martin, managing editor. **Mike Durgavich**, Mod. Maj. General Counsel. **Angie Zmijewski**, production goddess. **Ali Baba**, co-camp manager and copy editor. **Brian Train**, remote editor. **Dave the Intern**, laurel burnisher. **Deb Prothero**, firefighter. **Edge**, eminence grise. **Larry Breed**, chief wordsmyth. **Francis Wenderlich**, masthead creator and co-camp manager. **Howard Jones** and **Rod Allen**, British accents. **Saint**, saint. **Susan Williamson**, pre-pressure. **Suzanne Zalev**, baby wrangler. **Taymar**, webmaster and photographer. **WeeGee**, minister of photography. **John Lam**, news editor. **Saffron Lee**, associate editor. **Diana Acosta**, illustrator. Writers: **Anna Skaya**, **Nick Byrnes**, **Rick Kinnaird**, **OMYG Mark**.

SEMI-LEGAL MUMBO JUMBO

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