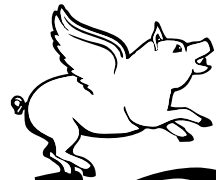
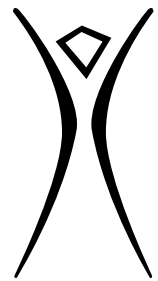


# CRITICAL MASSIVE



BY THE BLACK ROCK BEACON

LUX. VERITAS. LARDUM.

BACON BITS CRITICAL MASSIVE EDITION

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## TOTEM pole sparkles

Several hundred participants wrapped up the annual Critical Massive event with the traditional burn ceremony on Saturday night. For 2009, organizers moved away from a man-shaped figure in favor of a tower of five steel burn barrels stacked on top of each other creating a totem-style structure.

The ritualistic burning began with a fire performance featuring about half a dozen artists spinning with a variety of tools, including: a fireball and chain, hula hoops, poi, a staff, and juggling sticks.

The totem pole was set on fire with a long fuse ignited by a propane fire wand torching a small Roman candle. The steel burn barrels, which had abstract designs and words like "critical" and "massive" cut out from the sides, were stuffed with wood and bits of magnesium. It was slow to burn and smoldered much of the time.

Many people in the audience left the scene before the totem was half way lit. Eventually, the technician wielding the fire wand blasted the tower again to ignite the remaining barrels and setting off a big sparkler at the top.



PHOTO BY ESPRESSOBUZZ

TOTEM BURNS FOREVER.

## Event Producer Calls for More Participation

By Saffron Lee

Bringing his passion for regional events and passing that enthusiasm on to others is the goal of this year's producer of Critical Massive.

Tumbleweed, also known as Andrew Birkliid, is lead producer of the 2009 Seattle regional event put on in a Burning Man style. He first traveled to Black Rock City in 2001 and he's been involved with Critical Massive since 2002.

"I wanted it to be the best it can be and to have volunteers be excited about it," he says of five-day event. This year the event was staged at the Lake Associates Recreation Club near Mount Vernon with about 700 participants.

"Last year there was a center camp but this is the first year The Hub has been a community living room. It's a cool place to hang out," says Tumbleweed, with additional space for holding workshops. There's also a stage nearby, a super-sized chessboard, and free beverages at Coffee Camp.

One of the new processes introduced for this year's event was separating the fire council into distinct groups, safety, performance and burn engineer.

"It's gotten the whole group talking together," he says about the change.

By front loading the process and doing a lot of planning ahead of time, Tumbleweed says the event has gone off almost without a hitch so far.

He says being patient and dealing with a 100 per cent volunteer staff has been the biggest challenge in organizing the event.

It's also been hard to get volunteers to commit to bigger volunteer roles, like team leads for greeters, workshops, and burn engineer.

"It seems like a big job but you can make it into what you want," he says.

He'd like to improve the number of volunteers by tapping into the younger crowd and get them excited about Critical Massive. "It's awesome to attend but you need to develop these things for it to continue."

he says, and they care for each other.

He's attended other regional events also, like Recompression in Vancouver and Decompression in San Francisco.

He says he doesn't believe the event needs to be the same as Burning Man and to be locked into certain traditions.

Instead of a man burning on Saturday



PHOTO BY GABRIEL CAIN

TUMBLEWEED WANTS YOU TO STEP UP!

Tumbleweed first attended Burning Man eight years ago, although he's taken off the last two years.

"The last couple of years, I felt like my Burning Man experience drifted from what I really like, which is the hard-core community warmth," he says. "I focus my vacation and energy on local regional events because I get so much out of them in interaction. I like the family feel of it. You feel like you know everyone here."

Pacific Northwest people have their own vibe that's rugged, outdoorsy and genuine,

night, they chose to burn a totem pole created from burn barrels stacked on top of each other. It has roots in the regional location, he says.

"It's been a community project. All the art has been worked on by different people."

Currently, Tumbleweed camps with his wife, Suzanne Brown, at Pornge, a joint theme camp venture with participants from Seattle, Washington and Vancouver, BC, Canada. Pornge is most well known for hosting the pornge party where the

## COWGIRLS WRANGLE TALENT

By Citizen X

Friday night marked the fourth Hoedown Barbeque hosted at Critical Massive by the Naughty Cowgirls. It also marked the first of what we hope will be a wonderful addition – the Talent Rodeo.

Sam Lamb, Pinky Vargas and Roxie Moxie of the Naughty Cowgirls were inspired to organize the rodeo after attending Recompression, the spring get-psyched-for-the-playa event organized by the Burners of Vancouver, which featured a talent show by members of the community. Realizing the value of an all-inclusive event that would both involve and showcase the talents of all members of the Burner community, they put out a call for performers via various mailing lists, websites and plain old word of mouth. They got a good response with many people signing up on the day of the show itself.

were other burlesque-style performers who have truly earned their pasties. Ms. Randy Rascal had a very tiny box with her on stage, you see, and the only way she could fit into it was by shedding successive layers of clothing until she popped right in! Ms. Misty Montaigne, performing as "Molly Hill", showed us an item she'd bought that very day at Nordstrom's – a naughty glove with a mind of its own, that proceeded to assault her in the nicest way possible!

After 9:30, as promised, the show got a little blue. Kink Floyd sang "Fever", and Sumit sang his original and hilarious composition "I Put My Penis Up on Craigslist". Dani Keller performed "Classified Information", a very personal monologue structured by the linguistic "codes" used in personal ads.



PHOTO BY ESPRESSOBUZZ

RANDY RASCAL

And what a show it was! Emceed by Randy Angstrom (previous owner of the ambulance that is now the Beaconator, the Black Rock Beacon's wonderful new production van) with technical wrangling by the redoubtable Dave Rohr, there were 16 acts, headlined by Roxie Moxie herself performing a powerful naughty-cowgirl burlesque routine to Nirvana's "Rape Me". An instant crowd-pleaser, and the acts got more and more varied from there: a torch song by Kay Morrison; belly dancing by the very flexible Leslie Rosen; "Love is All You Need" by Brent; a reading by Joy of "The Missing Piece", a story by Shel Silverstein; and folk songs by the Love Bugs, Jabrahn, and Dave Rohr.

It was also great to see performances by Burner kids. "Firelight" stood on her head for 102 seconds, a new personal record – when asked for comment, she only said, "I'm OK." The Hoopers, two little girls doing synchronized hoop and tumbling routines, were also popular, especially with their proud front-and-centre papa.

Besides Roxie's initial turn, there

The night was brought to a creamy climax by the ladies of Pornge, who showed us all that can be done for dessert. Ms. LulaBelle, wearing only a piece of plastic cling wrap, was brought on stage and layer after gooey layer of pudding, pound cake, syrup, whipped cream, and fruit were gently laid upon her to make a Holly Trifle. She was then "served" by the men of Pornge to the audience – quite a few people showed they had room for dessert after the barbecue, and everyone left satisfied.

After the show, an elated Sam and Pinky told me that the most challenging part of the show was, as might be expected, grappling with the unknown – uncertain timing and appearance of acts, logistics, and inevitable \*echnical \*uck\*ups – but staying flexible was key, and they are determined to do this again for the next Critical Massive.

I'll admit I am as lazy as the next playa journalist, so I was happy when Sam supplied me with the perfect concluding quote: "The context was to be a community, to share food, talent and love for each other."

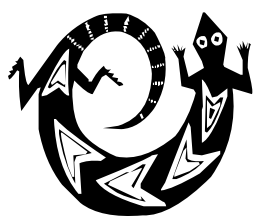
Thank you, Naughty Cowgirls.

dress code is pink and orange as well putting on events like the Johnny Cash breakfast.

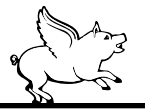
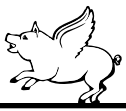
He was recently elected to Ignition Northwest (INW), the limited liability corporation which is legally responsible for Critical Massive as an event. His term starts in September.

"It was a hard decision for me to do this

and to have INW control [the event]. One year, it was lucid and you could bring whatever you want to the table and then soon afterward it was an INW thing," he says. "I realized it was necessary. It's too much responsibility for one person. The more I thought about it, the more excited and enthusiastic I got."

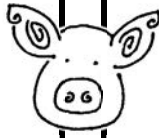


Critical Massive Population: 685 as of 11:30 A.M. Saturday.



## MISSIVE

Look at that, give our neighbors one Bloody Mary and already they are getting naked.



## MISSIVE

The report from Ozzy's birthday party is: "The frosting is sticky."

# INTERACTIVE ART PLAYS BIGGER ROLE AT CM2K9

By Saffron Lee

Ignition Northwest upped the creative ante at this year's Critical Massive by sponsoring a number of large-scale, interactive art pieces as well as a few smaller ones.

Stuart Updegrave, board member for Ignition Northwest (INW) and chair of the art committee, along with art committee members Julie Vithoulkas, Christian Jacobsen led the first ever tour of sponsored art projects at the event. Dawn Bustanoby and Melissa Holzinger also served on the committee.

In total, INW granted \$7500 for large art works and about \$600 for smaller works. Large scale projects were allocated 20 per cent of their overall budget and no more than \$1500. Updegrave says it's a way for INW to encourage more projects that may not be massive.

"Our grants help get these projects to the next level," says Updegrave. "So the Burning Man organization allocated 20 to 30 per cent less for some art grant applications and some projects received no money. The INW grants allowed artists to bring their work here to Critical Massive and then they will appear on playa.

Some of the art projects that received grants this year included:

*Strung Out Man* by John Ames, a.k.a. CelloBoy. Built of decommissioned musical instruments from local Seattle schools, the Man was constructed of a bass and a cello and some violins and violas. It was burnt on Friday night while EQlateral, an electronic string trio of which Ames is a part, performed alongside.

*The Hand* by the Iron Monkeys. A large-scale metal filigreed sculpture of a hand holding a flaming ring. This piece is slated to appear at Burning Man with the addition of a nine-foot tall egg placed on the ring which represents the birth of the universe to play upon this year's theme *Evolution*.

*Spinal Tap* by Christopher Pfeifle. Attached to a platform on top of a bus, this interactive and kinetic articulated spine created from rebar shoots flames out the top. A participant dons a five-point harness that is rigged to the spine which then responds to his or her body movements plunging the two into a n intricate dance. A remote control allows the person to trigger the flamethrower.

*Steve the Robotic Head* with lead artist Peter Brown. A large aluminum-framed structure forms the outline of a robot's head with two projection screens for eyes. The concept is that people are inside the robot's head and they are part of how the robot thinks. A motion sensor attached to the inside of the head triggers a sound track, for instance from Star Wars, when people move beneath it. Participants can also write music or sound samples and contribute them via the group's website, [dbltht.com/ubergeek](http://dbltht.com/ubergeek), to have them played



PHOTO BY ESPRESSOBUZZ

THE MAN CLASSICALLY STRUNG OUT.

in the robot's head. It will be installed at Burning Man this year.

*Temple of the (In)Visible* by James Salay. A sound-based installation, which incorporates visual and performance art, the piece encourages participants to calm down and focus through meditation. Participants enter a dome, sit or stand in front of a cylindrical mural which rotates in the center and put on one of 12 headphone sets. Along with scheduled performances by dancers and electronic drum musicians as well as an open mic.

*Monolitheator* by Ben Lidgus, Matthew Bollen and Marcus Trione. An exact replica of the monolith from *2001: A Space Odyssey* as a golf art car with a scale of 1:4:9. The piece will play the film soundtrack from embedded speakers and floodlights will provide its ominous glow. When people touch the monolith, it will emit a scream just like in the movie scene. The art car is designed to go to the playa this year to fit with the *Evolution* theme.

*Interactive Multimedia* is a working prototype by a group of 20 Vancouver software programmers using an open sound algorithm. This installation has a

large film screen with a camera suspended on an eight-foot long arm stretched in front of it. As people move beneath the camera, it maps their actions and then projects a video representation of their movements onto the screen.

*The Murder* by Dane Johnson and Kathy Justin. Six crow heads cast in translucent resin and illuminated with blue LED lights are installed high in the trees above a foot path overlooking participant passersby.

*Emergence* by Cyra Hobson. The piece represents the human spirit breaking free. A sculptural installation of nine life-size paper maché male and female figures in poses ranging from crouched in the fetal position on the ground to standing tall.

*Color Me Critical* is two giant billboards with black and white photos of key Critical Massive personalities from previous events which participants can colour with markers.

*Happy Birthday Cake* is a Flight to Mars art bus. It received money for minor repairs and to cover gas to drive to Critical Massive. It has appeared on the playa in past years. 🐷

# WORKSHOPPING ADVENTURES BY DAY

By Hare-M

It all began with felt, as it so seldom does. The bags of roving wool before me were prompting me to ponder the more immediate questions of the moment. Was I feeling the tranquil earthiness of green and brown, or the whimsical spontaneity of yellow and purple? It was hard to say at 11 a.m. on Friday morning before I had the chance to feel the vibe of the tribe, and determine my place within it.

A Critical Massive virgin, I had rolled across the border from Vancouver late the previous evening on my last stop on an intensive three-week festival streak. My foggy mind gave the meditative experience of pulling and layering wool into ethereal patterns a strong appeal.

For me, workshops have always been an essential part of the Burning Man experience, whether on the playa or at a regional gathering. They're where stories are shared, friends are made and a community is built based on genuine appreciation for the diverse and eclectic talents that exist among us – which never cease to surprise me.

There's an atmosphere of reciprocity

wouldn't have, perhaps, put my senses on such high-alert had it not been for an ill-fated experience on the playa. During a stint at the Human Carcass Wash, one washer broke our established safe-touching boundary contract.

But when I looked around at this gathering, I knew I was amongst friends. I held off on my turn until nearly the end while appreciating the gift of practicing the skill of sensual massage – using the body to guide my hands, and practicing the smacking, squeezing and stroking techniques that have made the Swedish famous. The return was incredible. And, more importantly for myself, my innate predisposition to trust, in a group or person-to-person setting, was re-affirmed.

Reminded that I shouldn't always give my body preferential treatment over my mind, it was a perfect follow to join up with the latter half of lovely Leslie Rosen's beginners' bellydancing class.

And to decompress, nothing could have possibly enticed both the palate and the brain like an hour with



PHOTO BY ESPRESSOBUZZ

MADAME HEATHER TEACHES TEA.

that allows both participants and facilitators to feed our passions with the energy and creativity of the group. It's also where the unexpected skills acquired can turn into passions for the moment, the day, and, sometimes, beyond.

Curiosity about the skill set is where felting came in. I opted for wools across the colour spectrum and began crafting and molding, then condensing and pressuring the wool, until my square patch took form. A crafting success! Not to mention more impetus to keep learning and experiencing what the Seattle Burner community had up their sleeves.

Onwards and hopwards to "Backrubs and Frontrubs," a participatory sensual massage workshop where another aspect of the workshop experience promised to unfold – the challenging of personal spatial boundaries within a community that breathes the ethos of trust and respect.

The thought of a dozen hands massaging my half-naked body

Madame Heather as she guided us through the 4,000-year-old history of Chinese tea. Tea is always a pleasure, but for Madame Heather it is both an art and a passion. During the Gon'fu tea ceremony, we sampled new tea flavours, some fermented, some roasted, and common teas that we thought we knew, but now took on a whole new presence. All the while, our gracious hostess dispensed practical wisdom to enable our own teatime explorations. Jasmine flowers, we learned, can ruin a whole batch of loose tea as they age.

One day, four workshops, and many experiences, friendships and learnings along the way. Within a few hours, I'd fallen into the vibe of the tribe. I walked away with patches of green, brown, yellow and purple wool, realizing that choosing between the colours wasn't necessary. Why choose, when in a community like this there's a smattering of just about everything. 🐷

## POEM BY COMPASS

The Phoenix will land only after it flies  
It's been handled a few times  
Forgotten gifts brought  
That see through a face  
Of time so distant  
And a future so near  
Unmistakably it glistens  
Brighter each year  
So follow your path  
Where ever it leads  
Never turning back to despair or need  
The journey ends where it hath begun  
Earth, mother land  
Beside a rising sun

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