

Daily Planet



WELCOME TO NOWHERE

By Rod Allen

WHETHER you're a Burning Man virgin or a Playa old-timer, Greeters at the Gate always receive you with the words 'Welcome home.' Home is the temporary community of Black Rock City in the Northern Nevada desert that is each year created and destroyed; everywhere else is the 'default' world — average, ordinary and very much whatever you want to make of it.

Tutus and Benders

But 'home' is—as you might expect—very different to different people. The experience of Black Rock City varies wildly from person to person. For some, the opportunity to wear a tutu for six straight days is attraction enough; for others, the opportunity to remain intoxicated for six days straight is hard to resist. For us journalists on the Black Rock Beacon, life is much the same as it is at our places of work, except that the dress code is somewhat different—and there are no phones, which is a difference that only becomes apparent when you realize that to talk to a contact you have to get on your bike and go see them.

You are expected to be

participatory in some way or another. For many, of course, being involved in an art project fulfills this requirement. For others, there are plenty of volunteering opportunities in and around Center Camp, where you can serve coffee or sit at an information desk. Default-world nurses and doctors do heroic jobs at the medical centers, where they can always use another pair of experienced hands, and there's even a daily run into Gerlach for prescription meds. Real or wannabe journos are most welcome at the Beacon. Would-be disk jockeys can try their hands at any number of on-air radio stations on the Playa—and if you're an air traffic controller on annual vacation you'd be very welcome at Black Rock International Airport, which rises and falls, Phoenix-like, in the desert each year. There are, so the publicity suggests, no spectators in Black Rock City, even though there are many phenomenal spectacles at which you are required only to look and wonder.

You are also required to be 'radically self-reliant' which is in many Burners' views an attractive phrase without much

real meaning. Yes, of course you should bring enough water (3 gallons per person per day, if you want to shower), and you should prepare for hot desert days and cold desert nights, and it would be impolite not to have a decent supply of condoms, and it's tremendously important to wear lights at night, and so on. But actually among the true delights of the Playa are the ways in which people care for each other, giving away meals, drinks, shelter, shoulders to cry on, human warmth or tiny but delightful tshotchkes, without any reciprocal expectations.

No spectators but phenomenal spectacles

Schwag it Forward

The economy at Burning Man is a gift economy—not a barter or exchange economy. You give people things without expecting anything (except just possibly a hug) in return, and people give you things on a similar basis. This can, of course, mean that you end up with impractical amounts of schwag, but remember that regifting is not counter to Burning Man etiquette.

Black Rock is a temporary community, but it is not a city, as is sometimes claimed, in any real sense. It has minimal



Back in June, 35 or so British burners celebrated the second Brighton burn on the beach at Brighton, Sussex, in an event organised by Euroburner Yom Yom. The burn was held just by the terminal station of Volk's Electric Railway, the seaside ride which is the oldest working electric railway in the world. And the name of the terminal? Black Rock Station. Spooky, or what?

public services, no communications infrastructure and—most important—no elected officials, or democratic institutions of any kind. Larry Harvey is a sort of mayor, but you didn't vote for him, or anyone else in the Burning Man organization. That might be something worth thinking about for the inevitable post-Larry future.

Synchronicity

We are constantly told we must 'leave no trace', which

is of course nonsense. Oh, of course, we should clear up all our garbage, and not tip cigarette ash on the desert floor, and haul our gray water away. But if the Playa experience leaves no trace on your psyche then you haven't been here; if it doesn't affect you in some profound intellectual, emotional and/or physical way, then you will have been fast asleep all week (not that there's anything wrong with that). The traces that the journey to the Playa leaves on

your mind are life-changing, as anyone who's been here will tell you.

Some of this is ascribed to the numinous nature of the Playa, a magical place of coincidence and synchronicity that is sometimes claimed for the City. The other view is that Black Rock City's magic is brought to the Playa by the Burners themselves; and in this view the most important thing is to be there, for without the Black Rock collective there will be no magic. 🐉

You Find Yourself at the Heart of Black Rock City

By Rockstar

As mythological precincts go, "Metropolis" might not seem at first like a perfect fit for the sun-soaked temporary small town around you. Whatever bits of Bauhaus and expressionism await inspection on the Playa this year, most Burners' immediate surroundings look more like a gaily bedecked gypsy parking lot than anything out of the 1927 film or even Superman comix. Diverse a lot as we are, most Burners tend to be urbanites on loan, often from cities nearly as nightmarish as any 20th-century parable of industrial soullessness. High-gloss and chromium-sleek our pre-modern Dogpatch ain't.

Zone Trip #4

Burning Man, ancient lore tells

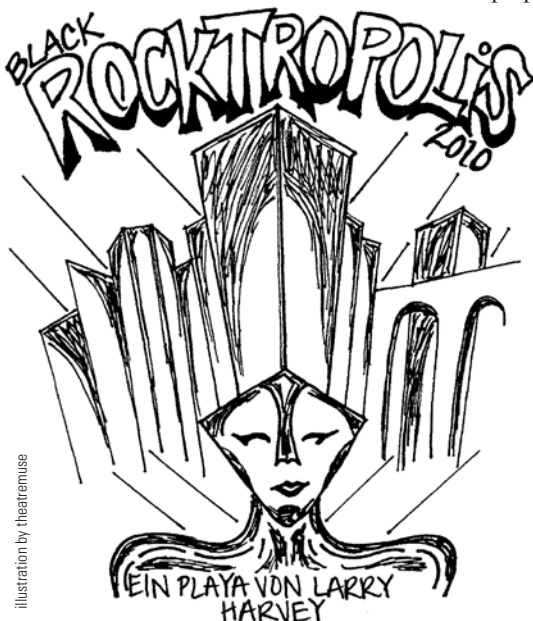


Illustration by theareneuse

us, came out of Zone Trip #4, a 1990 Cacophony Society event held in the Black Rock Desert to which Larry Harvey hauled his Man after harassment by Baker Beach authorities. Out of this rolling experiment in ad-hoc hedonics came Black Rock City, a place that was not so much born as grown out of the ex-

ternal necessities of cops and legal liability. The former are readily visible parked in Center Camp and at the other end of all those drug-sniffing dogs; the latter, as our ever-arcane laws tell us, is you.

Believe it or not, the chaos you've driven into is the outcome of meticulous planning and striated muscle. Crews have been out here since June prepping for the event and most non-virgin Burners well understand that, while serendipities abound on the playa, little out here happens by accident. So, the BMORG might be onto something when they bid us imagine the tent-and-RV sprawl of BRC "as magnetic hubs of social interaction" and the Metropolis theme's "function as a micro and a macro-scope, an instrument through which we will inspect the daily course of city life and the future

prospect of civilization." It's not like most of us don't do this already, whatever the theme, so regarding BRC's entire protean, always building, ever-collapsing sprawl as a weeklong mechanical organism isn't much of a stretch.

Planners vs. Workers

This year's theme gains additional resonance with this past year's release of the definitive restoration of "Metropolis," the 1927 film by Fritz Lang about a city uncomfortably divided between planners and workers. More than 20 minutes' running time thought forever beyond the reach of archivists turned up as part of a miraculously complete 16-millimeter print that had been corroding in a shuttered and obscure museum in Buenos Aires.

In one of the seemingly endless historical ironies around this cinema classic, the revival comes just as our own hugely impersonal, oligarch-ridden industrial civilization slows to a debt-clogged, hyper-militarized halt. Many of you temporary Nevadans just drove past enough underwater real estate in this ravaged region to rival what happens to the fu-

turistic city in the movie's last reel. Recent biographers have noted director Lang's imperious temper and highhanded disregard for life and limb in pursuit of art, but these are traits few Burners may disparage without blushing. Lang used his extras roughly and almost incinerated Brigitte Helm, but that's simply putting safety in its properly tertiary place.

Festival organizers quote Mark Sebastian's neck-gritty Beat lyrics for The Lovin' Spoonful's 1966 hit "Summer in the City," so the mind runs irresistibly to other songs with worse words to say on the subject. Given all the bitching from old-skool Burners about the nonstop dance-dance mis-sighs of the sound camps, it's perhaps inevitable the inner ear should bend to Jefferson Starship's 1985 stadium rock anthem "We Built This City." Heard today, this synth-heavy anti-disco rant has all the pump-your-fist retro-charm of any Journey or Foreigner single but Bernie Taupin's goofy and much-reviled lyrics invoke the corporate power-plays and default-world cor-

ruption so many rail against these days. Yet not even a bumper of ayahuasca could elucidate the meaning of "Marconi plays the Mamba, listen to the radio/Don't you remember? We build this city on rock and roll." Still, there's something rooted and E.F. Hutton about this generation-old oldie, as if rock music could and did make itself immortal through sheer ballyhoo, a fate which may yet overtake this festival.

Faux Teutonic Marvels

So, the "takeaway," as they say in Hollywood (another intentional community with notable fashion sense), of this year's theme is celebration of the city itself as temporary artifact. This is not the kind of thing you'd likely forget while checking out such monstrous improbabilities as Ein Hammer or any other faux-Teutonic marvel strewn across the Deep Playa this year. Unlike Fritz Lang's dystopic masterpiece, YOU are the Heart Machine. 🐉

HORRORSCOPE: *Born on a Monday? Coffee might be made from beans, but it still doesn't belong up your nose*

BLACK ROCK BEACON

PORKTOID: *Pigs are highly trainable animals; some are kept as pets. A typical litter has 6–12 piglets. In captivity, pigs may eat their young.*

PAMPERERS OF THE PLAYA

By Matthew Ebert

Most citizens of Black Rock City experience the Black Rock Desert through the lens of Burning Man, but the region has a rich history that extends far beyond the annual event.

The Black Rock Desert High Rock Canyon Emigrant Trails National Conservation Area features largely untouched primordial landscapes with cultural, ecological and scientific value. The conservation area was established by Congress in 2000 (Public Law 106-554) to conserve, protect, and restore these landscapes. While the designation protects the area from intrusive large-scale industrial development, notably mining, the reckless behavior of visitors remains at risk for irreversible harm to the region's treasures.

The Friends of Black Rock/High Rock is a nonprofit group that promotes the health and welfare of the Black Rock Desert. Through public education programs, the Friends aim to preserve the unique

and undeveloped character of this corner of Northwest Nevada by promoting a spirit of stewardship.

The Friends recruit volunteers to repair damage from trespassing vehicles, remove abandoned fence and mining claims, and install signs and interpretive displays. The Friends also help people considering a visit to the Black Rock Desert to safely enjoy their visit free of worry about such things as getting stuck without a spare tire, dehydration, and the sting of playa serpents (sand dunes that can overturn a fast-moving vehicle). As visitation to the region increases, the group works to mitigate diminishing natural resources, damage to historical and anthropological sites, and defoliation of delicate desert ecology—whether through negligence or apathy.

The conservation area includes some of the largest intact segments of the Emigrant Trails followed by gold seekers moving west in the 1800s. The arduous Applegate-Lassen Trail and Nobles

Routes carried more than 30 percent of travelers during the 1849 gold rush. While crossing the playa, these travelers saw the first clues that the Great Basin of Nevada was once under 8,500 square miles of water during the time of ancient Lake Lahontan, which stretched from Nevada into northeastern California and southern Oregon.

During Lake Lahontan's heyday, people and wildlife thrived. Several tribes lived along the coast of the lake as it evaporated over millennia. Traces of their presence can be found in artifacts such as arrowheads and rock art. Woolly mammoth and other fossils, and petrified wood from ancient forests have been identified throughout. The region has natural springs—some geothermally heated—providing a habitat for sage grouse, mule deer, antelope, wild horses, big horn sheep (reintroduced after being hunted to near extinction) and more.

The Friends maintain a presence in Gerlach, the most often used access point to the conservation area. Its office and museum in town is open weekdays to greet visitors and collect information from them. The Friends offer maps, brochures, and a newsletter to inform the public about specific events and resources. The group also performs these functions most weekends from spring to autumn at the federal Bureau of Land Management visitor contact station just north of Gerlach.

In Black Rock City, the Friends' visitor contact station is located at 5:30 and Esplanade. Volunteers will be working shifts in the morning and afternoon to answer questions about how and when you can enjoy and help the conservation area. On Friday, there will be a party celebrating the 10th anniversary of the establishment of the Black Rock National Conservation Area starting around 9 p.m. and then continuing with an art car parade. For information about the region, current conditions, and more, visit the Friends' website at blackrockdesert.org.

Matthew "Metric" Ebert is the Executive Director of the Friends of Black Rock/High Rock, the former DPW Ranch Manager and a longtime Burner. 🐾



Visitor \$timulation

Some of the 2009 U.S. bailout money landed in the Black Rock Desert. The federal Bureau of Land Management is building a \$2.9 million visitor and administrative center 0.7 miles north of Gerlach near Washoe County Road 34 and adjacent to the town's solid waste transfer station.


The visitor center has a view—in the other direction—over the Playa, with an adjacent space for recreational-vehicle parking. It will provide outdoor displays and an indoor section for information and map sales.

According to government documents on the Internet, the visitor center will be 400 square feet, office and work space will take up 1,300 square feet, and a bunkhouse with six to eight bedrooms and two baths will be 2,000 square feet. Also planned is an 1,800 square-foot warehouse and shop building, which includes parking for one or more "initial attack wild land fire engines." They're probably less like mutant vehicles than they sound.

The work areas, and additional space for horses and BLM RVs are to be fenced off from the public. There currently are not any full-time BLM employees in Gerlach, but the center will provide a base for seasonal workers including firefighters.

Funding came from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, and although the construction may lead to some short-term job creation in the Gerlach-Empire area, there is a more interesting side effect: Electric and water lines would be extended more than half a mile to reach the site, which could spur economic development on private land north of the town.

The documents did not specify a completion date for the project. Roger Farschon, acting manager of the BLM's Black Rock Field Office, said by e-mail that the contract was issued in mid-August at a value of \$2.9 million. Plans for the project can be found at budget.state.nv.us/clearinghouse/Notice/2010/E2010-111.pdf and the approval is viewable via <http://tinyurl.com/26yc2z9> 🐾

 **ALMANAC**

Monday
First Light: 5:53 a.m.
Sunrise: 6:21 a.m.
Sunset: 7:33 p.m.
Twilight Ends: 8:01 p.m.
Moonrise: 10:07 p.m.

Tuesday
First Light: 5:54
Sunrise: 6:22

Howeird's POSITIVELY PLAYA!

I had a thought the other day. What if Larry isn't the visionary we take him for? What if he just has a long memory? When he would say "I've seen it all before!" in his early speaking engagements in the 90's I always thought 'it' was the psychedelic-fueled Hippie revolution.

But not so fast.

If I gaze long enough into my crystal ball I can see that this year's theme, Metropolis, is the third part of a trilogy that started with American Dream.

Exhibit A:

Not only did Harvey precisely predict the demise of the American Dream—in the 2008 theme notes he embeds these nuggets "Today, Americans appear to live amid the tarnished squalor of a second Gilded Age... America has become a more unequal society... Perhaps it's time Americans began to face themselves." Part I

(Facts, Hercule, facts! Nothing matters but the facts. Without them the science of criminal investigation is nothing more than a guessing game.)

Exhibit B:

2009's Evolution theme notes contain this:

"The process of trial and error ... is called Natural Selection. Genetically encoded traits that aid survival tend to spread throughout entire populations... However, this rigorous weeding out of 'unfit' individuals has gradually ceased to occur within our species ... Black Rock City is a kind of Petri dish, and Burning Man is an experiment in generating culture." Part II



Monday, August 28

• **"Welcome to Nowhere"** greets arriving citizens with an essay on Post-Modern Environmentalism. "If we want to continue to exist here, we must take care of our home... One only needs the desire to return to nowhere; to understand the strange passionate yearning the wide open emptiness instills."

• **"Just Damn Lucky"** proclaims Black Rock City has become "a true community" and states that opposition to the "radically inclusive" concept proposed by Larry Harvey in 1996 had "prevailed" over a "substantial pull to go in the opposite direction."

• **Photographer Spencer Tunick** invites Burners to pose naked on Friday for his "photo event" dubbed "Community." Instructions: Wear loose fitting clothing, no costumes, no body paint, no mud, no necklaces, no glasses, no hats, no watches, no jewelry. Tattoos and piercings are fine. 🐾

Look, holding such a large event on Federal land for so long has made the Burning Man organization very adept at Survival and disguising this popular-uprising/experiment-in-community as an Art Festival for a couple of decades is sheer genius. But rather than blowing it all with anything inflammatory and upsetting the Feds, this year's theme notes give nothing away—except for, I sense, Larry's permission "We also cordially invite artists to express their particular visions of city life, whether these be burnt and gritty, or EVOKE a shining city upon a hill... every art proposal, regardless of its subject matter, will be welcome."

Exhibit C:

SPOILER ALERT! So, in the 1927 German film, *Metropolis* directed by Fritz Lang; no relation to Adam Lang, the thinly disguised Tony Blair character in Polanski's 2010 movie *Ghostwriter*—we see the battle between the workers and the capitalist

owners in a weird sci-fi city (with a machine-man dressed up as an erotic dancer) where society is split between the haves and the have-nots, orgies abound and denizens of the seedy underworld roam—BRC to a T!! Yada, yada, yada—the workers rise up and "In the ensuing confusion, the machine-man is tied to a stake and is burned to death." (Wikipedia) Part III

Conclusion:

The shining city is Black Rock City. On Saturday we all rise up and burn shit!

One eerie note from dictionary.reference.com/browse/evoke which ends with a familiar word!!

evoke

—verb (used with object), **e•vok•ed**, **e•vok•ing**.

4. *to produce or suggest through artistry and imagination a vivid impression of reality; a short passage that manages to evoke the smells, colors, sounds, and shapes of that METROPOLIS.* 🐾

PUZZLE BY DURGY

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39								40				

ACROSS

- Reverse warts with suction tool (5)
- Taking return trams is intelligent (5)
- Prime tools mix up in the city (10)
- When the timer goes off, make a payment (5)
- She contained the ire neatly (5)
- Taxiing without one is trying (6)
- The memo P.S. described tubers frites (6)
- Somewhat spastic at the resorts (4)
- Christmas portrayed with no elegance (4)
- Softly art I see, I pant for the contributor (11)
- Cheese was a bribe but not with a bee (4)
- Undertake anew and rode roughshod (4)
- Reportedly I lean to her (6)
- Sounds like one says cow parts? (6)
- Let it confuse the name of the book (5)
- The route bends to the far limits of space (5)
- The bat hit in an odd way for the dweller (10)
- Looks at equals (5)
- Cut some ties evermore (5)

DOWN

- An afternoon drink we hear before a starting golf shot (3)
- French friend is somewhat amiable (3)
- We test the middle of water inside and it is most damp (7)
- A confused cur takes 10 along to the crucial point (4)
- Mix the beat and move your pins (4)
- Arthurian sorceress puts an organ in mother! (7)
- No small sale of lager. (3)
- A curly lock of hair is a moving tingler (7)
- The set is upset by half a fly (3)
- A cord is proper at its center (4)
- Indian city now silent with most of the bait taken (6)
- Praised haphazardly but still sought goal (7)
- Dire sin messes up holder of confidential information (7)
- Top pilot found in space (3)
- Like a skilled drummer or a policeman at work? (2,4)
- April storm for the NE brings a sweet treat (7)
- It's typical for the rear lug to be loosened (7)
- Snoops I muddle with vexing ingredients (7)
- One right extraordinary thing (4)
- Get out of beds for the girls coming of age (4)
- Consumes some meats (4)
- Stipend you don't send to the end (3)
- Then we lost pole for an article (3)
- Native American takes a part of the computer (3)
- I hear you see with it (3)

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