

BLACK ROCK BEACON

rites of passage • coming of age edition • TUES AUG 30, 2011 • VOL VII, NUMBER II

1:30 @ CENTER CAMP • WWW.BLACKROCKBEACON.ORG

Rod Garrett



BY MRS. LUCKY

The Center Camp structure is an inverted airfoil. The open area at the center of the structure, called the ocular, directs the air in such a way that the harder the wind blows the more stable it becomes. To be in there on a windy day, amongst the cushions and the music, is unforgettable for any Burner. We thank Rod Garrett for that experience.

It was Garrett who thought to lay out Black Rock City streets in concentric circles. His goal was to make the city a little different each year but recognizable. "Like a Volkswagen, that's what Garrett would say. Change the lights, change the bumpers but it still looks like a Volkswagen."

The unique design of Center Camp is an example of what's being remembered as Garrett's genius. Garrett, visionary architect of Black Rock City, died Aug. 22 after a long illness. The Center Camp Ring Road was named Rod's Road in his honor.

Beginning in 1997, Garrett designed the structures that supported the Man. Starting with hay bales, the bases became increasingly complex. "I'd have my own primitive ideas," Burning Man co-founder Larry Harvey said of their collaboration, "Rod was able to imagine things entirely in his head, to bring all his attention to bear to a single laser point."

Andrew Johnstone, who describes himself as Garrett's apprentice, said that in 2007 he awoke Garrett with news the Man had been torched early. "We had a bit of trouble with the Man last night," Johnstone recalled saying.

"Oh we did?" Garrett replied. "Well we better go out and take a look." As the two walked in mud through twisted neon, Johnstone says, "he was very matter-of-fact." The Man was rebuilt in 28 hours.

Unflappable, modest, and competent, Garrett was a man of few words. "The highest praise you'd hear from Rob was good job," Harvey says. He suffered fools poorly and was a stickler for details.

Johnstone mentioned Garrett's "almost clairvoyant ability" to picture how people would move within his structures, "He could look at a plan for steps and tell you right where people would become afraid."

In 2011, the Man has changed his stance for the first time in his 25 years. The striding forward, the Rites of Passage, are at least partly about death, Harvey said, and Rod Garrett's illness was one of the influences. Garrett's daughter will place some of her father's ashes in the Man before he burns.

BURNING AT THE CORE

BY GENIE GRATTO

As Burner culture spreads around the world, the world is upping its presence in Black Rock City. This year, for the first time, 22 huge art installations from regional Burner communities will encircle the Man, forming a perimeter 600 feet away.

The projects are the Circle Of Regional Effigies. These have been built by groups from countries like Ireland and Canada, and states including Maine, Louisiana, and California, feature regionally relevant designs that fit in 20-foot-wide by 20-foot-high spaces. They all be burn in a ring of conflagrations on Thursday at 9 p.m.

Calimba, a virgin Burner from Colorado, walked the in-progress CORE installations on Saturday with her friend Dr. Quinn, the Mighty Eskimo Medicine Woman of Portland, Oregon for her sixth Burn. The two said they heard about the project when they arrived on Playa and wanted to check it out. They got the opportunity to ride in the saddle temporarily affixed atop Ouroboros, brought to the Playa by the Austin, Texas, CORE team and depicting a dragon eating its own tail, just an hour before that team was going to take down the saddle and declare the installation ready to go.

Calimba said she was amazed that the Austin crew had been working on the project for 13 years only to burn it to the ground on Thursday.

"It's so awesome when you're here early to see them going up, just to know they're going to burn it," she said. "We're so lucky to be part of someone's journey of letting it go."

Meredith Nicole of Vancouver wanted to assist on an art project during this, her fifth Burn.

"I was wanting to come and support somebody's project," Meredith said. "I'm a carpenter, so I really wanted to put my skills to use."

She contacted Machine with the Placement team to let him know she was available. He suggested she work on Playa Time, her regional CORE project. The art is a 20-foot-tall grandfather clock with a large drum in the base that will allow Burners to run inside it, engaging the clock mechanics and moving the time shown on its face.

Another Canadian CORE project is Rite of Mountain Passage, which originated in Alberta. The piece is a



Dopharchu Doiteaine
Vinnie Rafter, Ireland

giant lotus flower that visitors can sit inside. The effigy itself is a flaming snowflake that sits above the seating area.

"We wanted the art to be interactive, and not just regarded from a distance," said Mike "Half Hour" Hermann, a member of the build team.

Rites of Mountain Passage is set against an abstract painting created by Evelyn Reed. The crew took 12 photos of Rocky Mountains around Alberta and used those to cut out silhouettes in wood that Reed then painted on to evoke the sense of the mountains.

"As you approach the art, you see the lotus flower, and then you get closer, and you see the mountain range," said Hermann. "Then you get closer and you see a glacier on the mountain range."

The project was primarily built in the yard of Gregory "Knee High" Polmans, a virgin Burner from Alberta. Polmans is an avid stilter who had friends in the Alberta Burner community. He was invited to a meeting about Freezer Burn, the regional event, but said that meeting rapidly turned into an extended conversation about the CORE concept.

"I knew the project needed to flow well to get done in time, and we were having trouble thinking of a location to build it," Polmans said. "I said, 'How about we start this at my house?' " According to Hermann, Polmans' donation of his home, his money, and his construction expertise made him the heart and soul of the project.

The New York regional installation, Tree of Heaven, is designed to carry up to 6,000 wooden leaves, erupting from a map of the New York subway — hey, it ties the city together — and surrounded by benches in the shapes of some of Gotham's bridges.

The project was taking shape on a rainy day in June, at a Burner-friendly event called Figment, where children were decorating the leaves with magic markers and other art supplies. They had come out to Governor's Island, a former Coast Guard base in New York Harbor, for a day of urban art, and some of them were trying to wrap their minds around the idea that after all the work to make this big tree, it was going to get torched.

"Why do you want to burn it?" one child asked.

Kat, co-designer of the project, revved up for an answer, and it seemed like it would be hard to convince the scamp about impermanent art and the persistence of memory. She threw an elegant curve instead: "We like to burn things. Wouldn't it be fun to see it burn?"

New York-area children weren't the only ones who participated at a community level. In Las Vegas, the CORE project received a residency grant to work on the project all summer at a city art park and invited locals to contribute any amount of time, even just an hour, to working on putting Lucky Lady Lucy, a wooden depiction of a Las Vegas showgirl. Over the course of the summer, the project was highlighted during city-art-walk-style

photos by Tanner



Ouroboros
Pat Wheaton, Flipside (Austin)

events. Hundreds of local residents participated in building the project.

"It made it really inclusive," said Doran. "I think it will be hard to do anything other than that now. The Burners are the perfect people for starting the parade. We can bring something back from the Playa, so [community members] can get a taste of that feeling."

Working with such a broad spectrum of participants presented a challenge to Las Vegas CORE project designer, Merritt Pelkey. "The personal expansion, and its giving me the ability to work with multiple personalities across all energies, has been most difficult and most rewarding," Pelkey said.

Now, seeing Lucky Lady Lucy placed at 10 o'clock on the ring around this year's Striding Man, has been gratifying, said Pelkey. "We think she's actually his girlfriend, and he's walking toward his lost love," he said.

"How can you become the hottest showgirl in Nevada?" Doran asked. "Get a huge stage and light yourself on fire."

It took a much smaller crew to bring the Kentucky regional project, a 16-foot bourbon barrel, to the Playa. Approximately 35 people worked outside of and inside Black Rock City on this particular piece, including

people not only from Kentucky, but also from Asheville, North Carolina; Atlanta; New York; and Ohio, said Heather LeBlanc, who managed the fundraising effort to bring the piece to life.

This was LeBlanc's second Burn and her first year working on a large-scale art project. "It's nice to experience something new," she said. "It's been really nice to be part of this since it's the first type of this project to happen at Burning Man."

On Saturday afternoon, the crew experienced a harrowing moment as they attempted to set the top of the barrel in place. Valkyrie, a crew member who was perched precariously on top of a ladder, managed to catch



Carnegeia Gigantea
Michael Garcia, Arizona

the lid as it nearly slid off the forklift helping them get it to its spot, and then guided it into place with the assistance of the rest of the crew. It was a banner moment, and when the lid was in place, a palpable relief settled over the group.

Members of the Kentucky crew will be out on the Playa each evening during the week before the effigies burn, handing out bourbon samples and talking about the art piece.

In addition, there are biking art tours of the entire project available today and tomorrow at 4:30 p.m. Meet at the 6 p.m. point of the CORE ring to be matched up with a docent who will guide you through each of the 22 pieces.

It will be an opportunity to journey along with the many artists and community members who went bigger than themselves this year and built pieces that raise awareness of the many regional communities while simultaneously bringing those communities together around a central pyre.

"The best thing about this project for me is the restoration of my faith in the community that we have. It ended up being a big canvas that everyone lopped a piece off of," Hermann said. "Now, people are already saying, 'What's the next thing we're going to do?' You can only do so much with one pair of hands."

Question of the day AGAIN: Was it better last year? • Bring answers to the Beacon City Desk, 1:30 @ Center Camp.

BLACK ROCK BEACON

BLACK ROCK CITY ELEVATION
3,904 feet above sea level.

New Chip on the Block

BY ROD ALLEN

Chip Conley is no ordinary burner. He is executive chairman of Joie de Vivre, a \$100 million-plus corporation that operates boutique hotels throughout California. But he's no ordinary executive chairman, either. In a widely publicized tussle a couple of years ago, he defied colleagues, shareholders and employees to publish on his Facebook page pictures of him at the Burn in, well, in at least one shot, a tutu.

He's a passionate Burner who believes that it will eventually be possible to propagate Burning Man values and principles out into the default world — and earlier this year he was made a member of the 17-person board of the new Burning Man non-profit, the Burning Man Project, which has the same objectives as he does — to spread burner values beyond the Playa.

Chip started his business in the same year that Larry Harvey burnt his first Man at the San

Francisco seaside — and his first hotel was called the Phoenix, named for the bird that rises out of the ashes of a fire. He attended his first Burn in 1999; his initial impression of it was that it was a “Disneyland for adults.” But in subsequent visits he became aware of the power of the collective that infuses Burning Man and sup-

Pullquote goes here and here, also here and here like this

ports the transformative nature of the event. The only other place in which he has had a parallel experience is the island of Bali, which he visits at least annually. “I am possessed by Bali”, he said, and then he had an epiphany: the most powerful experience in Bali is their elaborate cremation ceremonies — “it's all about fire there, too.”

Last year, Chip brought 110 of his friends to the Playa to celebrate his 50th birthday. Most of them had never been to Burning Man before; only a handful felt uncomfortable in the radically self-reliant environment.

Burning Man, he said, is about giving people

the freedom to break through the boundaries that they first established around themselves early in their schooldays. Some people find that difficult, as they first have to discover where their boundaries lie. But if that's difficult for some, the task of moving the Burning Man values out into the default world is massively harder. “The problem is that the Playa is run differently from the world of corporate America. The gift economy is not the same as the exchange economy, which operates outside the Playa and aims to generate profits.”

But things are changing in the Default World. People no longer have jobs for life — rather, they have freelance, or portfolio, careers that, Chip said, enable them to live their lives more

closely to at least some of the 10 principles of Burning Man.

How do people learn how to apply the principles in their everyday lives?

It's about boundaries, says Chip: Burning Man introduces you to boundaries you didn't know existed in your life; and it gives you an incentive to break through those boundaries. Those freedoms can extend into life off the Playa.

The board of the non-profit doesn't meet again until

October, so there's no chance of it influencing this year's Burn. But Chip is determined that the directors will work hard in the future to spread Burner values out into the world. “I connect with myself on the Playa; it something everyone can do.”



Banking on Good Karma

BY RED NIKKI

The Exchangibition Bank offers every external trapping of the banking business while simultaneously cleansing your karma. Rather than asking for your soul in exchange for filthy lucre, the Exchangibition Bank instead offers currency in exchange for a commitment by recipients to spend their money consciously the 51 non-Burn weeks of the year.

Daniel Rosenberg, chief executive of Exchangibition Bank, explained, “We are the only bank that values happy customers more than happy board members.” A real city needs a real currency, said Rosenberg, and the bank is here to fill that need.

The bank will open Black Rock City branches as conditions dictate. On Monday, it had one at Center Camp, with a very-official-looking glass booth. Outside the booth, bankers clad in blue, severely tailored jumpsuits and neckties, like Don

Draper gone Star Trek, give one-on-one service to any Burner that drops by.

Though suit-clad bankers are often thought of as tools of evil, these financiers are using their powers to cleanse Burner karma. Burners fill out a form, listing the ways they have earned or used money that go against the greater good, which could be anything from working for the Department of Defense to buying coffee at a big national chain rather than at the locally owned coffeeshop. They then agree to earn and use money in positive rather than negative ways for the next year.

Burners then hand in their contracts at the Exchangibition teller booth. In return each receives a business card, a handshake, and a beautifully illustrated zero bank note. While Default World banking experiences are almost invariably soul-crushing, especially in these recessionary times, the Exchangibition Bank offers a soul-cleansing banking experience.



Burning in Africa

“Spirit”, by Mike Hayward, at left, and the San Clan in the distance

BY TRAVIS LYLE

About 9,000 miles southeast of Nevada there's an area of desert in South Africa called the Tankwa Karoo. It's flat, it's hot, and the bare ground is composed of hard ancient rock. This is where AfrikaBurn, a Burning Man regional event, has been held since 2007.

If you've ever been to a Burn, you'd recognize the spontaneous and incorrigible creativity that explodes at the end of each April as the community of heads, hippies, ravers, graybeards, performers, artists and other normal people come together. It's a carnival of flamboyant costumes and bright colors amid a fantasy world of structures and vehicles, where across the playa many strains of music can be heard, from string quartets to funk bands, massed drummers to lonely ballads, punk to rock, techno to trance, breaks to beats. Everywhere you go, theme camps offer so many new and interesting diversions and activities that you're hard pressed to see and do as much as you'd like. There's always something kicking off somewhere but if you want to go the distance, you've gotta get some sleep or you won't survive the heat of the day!

Attracting close to 4,000 participants this year, AfrikaBurn is still relatively small, compared with the big mama that spawned it, but it's shaping up to be a wild child and is growing rapidly. Of course, growth brings challenges, and in plotting



photo caption here

the way forward, the AfrikaBurn community was fortunate to recently have hosted Black Rock City Manager Harley K. Dubois and Burning Man Regional and Special Events representative Steven Ra\$pa, whose insight and wisdom were warmly received.

Each year at AfrikaBurn there are a greater number of theme camps, the Department of Mutant Vehicles sees more and more mobile creations take shape, the Department of Public Works builds, maintains, and sets up more city infrastructure, and the art becomes increasingly stupefying. Then there are the burns: the big one is of a multi-headed man structure, and there are anything between 20 and 30 other scheduled burns. AfrikaBurn also has its own newspaper — The No Spectator, organized by the word jockeys of Camp AmaDeadly.

The Black Rock Gazette 10 Years Ago

Wednesday, August 29

Vice President for Life Durgy went “In Search of the Poopacabra,” the beastie that made the potties proper. An official information campaign seemed to have limited the wrong kind of crap going into the crappers.

“It Ain't a Real Community if We Leave the Kids at Home” looked at children at Burning Man and the then-new Kidsville. Best kiddie quote ever came from 11-year-old Tiffany: “When we're in Spokane, we're kinda like freaks. But here, we're actually kind of normal.”

ALMANAC

TUESDAY

FIRST LIGHT: 5:53 A.M.
SUNRISE: 6:21 A.M.
SUNSET: 7:35 P.M.
TWILIGHT ENDS: 8:03 P.M.
MOONRISE: 8:11 P.M.

WEDNESDAY

FIRST LIGHT: 5:54 A.M.
SUNRISE: 6:22

THE MOON RISES AFTER
THE SUN ON TUESDAY

BRAINTEASERS

by Durgy

DROP A LETTER in each of the words in the first column to spell a synonym of the word in brackets. Reading the dropped letters down spells another word and the answer to the puzzle.

- Rebar _____ [behind]
- Beat _____ [wager]
- Excited _____ [left]
- Toaster _____ [tester]
- Snack _____ [fire]

Unlock iBurn

The guys at Burning Man Earth have an iPhone app that they would like you to be able to use.

You would like to be able to use it too because it is pretty cool: they took all the events in the What Where When guide and cross referenced them with the city map. So you can look up events by what they are or where they are or where they are, and it uses global positioning technology to figure out where you are in relation to it.

If you are one of the 5,000-plus people who downloaded the app, called iBurn2011 you need a password to unlock it. That would be the word “effigy,” all lower-case.

NEVADA BURNERS

The second annual Nevada Burners photo shoot takes place at 4 p.m. sharp on Thursday on the 6 o'clock side of the Man. All Nevada Burners (no foreigners) are invited for a group portrait, followed by a party, amazing feats, family feud wrestling, spirituals and spirits.

Last year, according to Perceval, 800 Silver State Burners participated. This year, organizers are expecting more than 1,000. The photo will be available for download at tinyurl.com/NevadaBurnersPhotoShoot.

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