

Black Rock Beacon



RADICAL RITUAL • GROUP RITUALS EDITION • THURSDAY, AUGUST 31, 2017 • VOLUME XIII, NUMBER III • 3:00 & AWE, WITHIN IRON ROSE • WWW.BLACKROCKBEACON.ORG

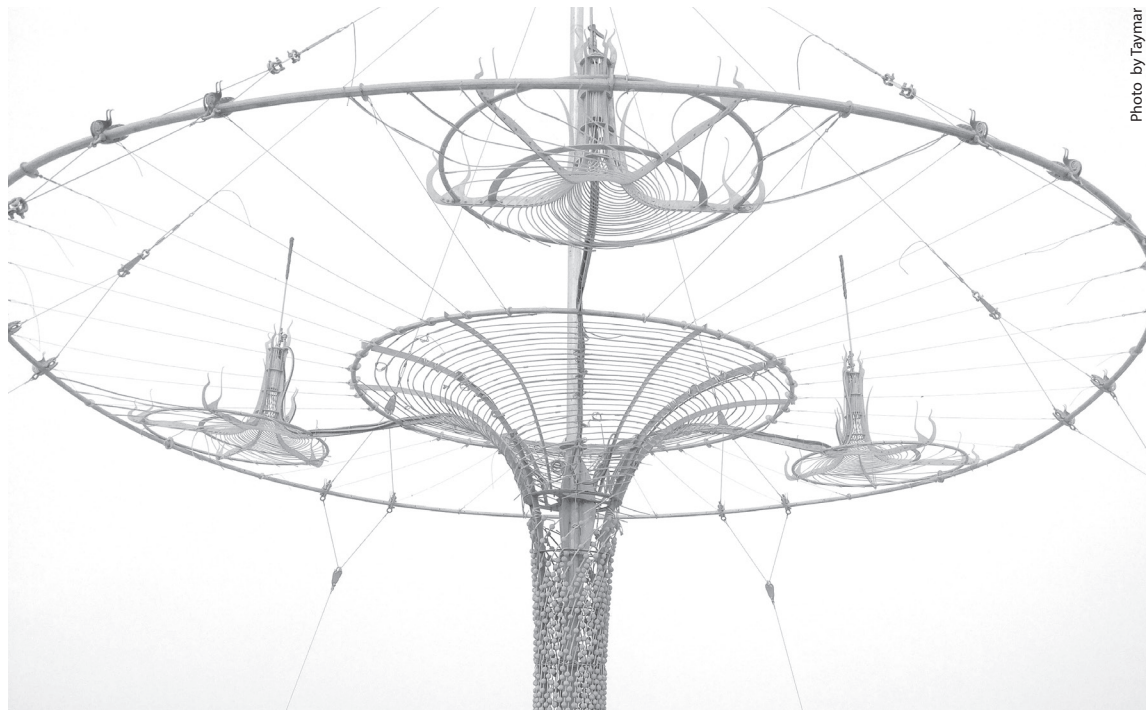


Photo by Taymar

Burn Your Own Man In the Man's Embers

BY MIMSTAH

Burners are invited to Burn their own Mans on Sunday morning upon the hot embers of the burnt Man, and the upcoming Burning Man exhibit at the Smithsonian Institution in Washington will occupy an entire 20,000-square-foot gallery. Bmorg mid-level dogs announced at the annual Black Rock City press conference.

It was founder Larry Harvey's latest and last-minute idea to invite anyone to burn a Man of up to 8 feet tall, Art Safety Manager Dave X announced with some trepidation. "It remains a mystery whether one or 1,000 people will show up with things to burn. But we're good at containing the chaos."

Dave's pyro crew will start receiving structures at 8 a.m. on Sunday and help folks prepare them for Burning. Everything will be ignited by 10 a.m. Larry introduced this DIY Man Burn as "a ritual in which they can trace the footsteps of the people who founded Burning Man."

In other news, Kim Cook, Bmorg director of art and civic engagement, provided details on the upcoming Smithsonian exhibit. The Burning Man organization was invited to showcase its art within the American Art Museum of the Smithsonian, which is dedicated to contemporary crafts and revealing movements that birthed arts and crafts (such as the Shakers).

Newly commissioned pieces, including a David Best temple, along with former Playa art will take over the newly renovated Renwick gallery.

Rather than relying on Smithsonian docents, volunteer Burners will be recruited to help museum-goers interpret Burning Man.

The Smithsonian exhibit appears to be part of Bmorg's effort to increase its collective impact by exposing people outside Black Rock City to Playa art and culture.

Read Sunday's Beacon for more news of Burning Man in the art world. 🐉

A(nother) Beacon to Light the Playa

BY MIMSTAH

Denver artist Wynn Buzzell is eager to sit back and observe how Burners engage with his piece Light Years Away (11:00/4300). "You know how dark it is out on the Playa. From far away, you're not going to see the structure at night, you're only going to see this vortex of lights spiraling up in a tornado pattern - that and these intermittent plumes of fire - it's gonna be a real beacon from far away."

Concepts for Light Years Away began to percolate at Black Rock City last year, where Buzzell was inspired by

the fire tornadoes rolling off the burns at night and the dust spirals wandering the Playa during the day. Before he left for the Default World, Buzzell was committed to creating a vortex to serve fellow Burners.

The result is Light Years Away, a towering interactive sculpture that pays homage to the vortex and harnesses its power. Twenty feet above the ground and suspended on an aluminum pole is a forty-foot wide disk. This flat plane is called the "stargate" and it represents the boundary between our and parallel universes.

When Burners step on the altar at the base of the sculpture, they activate lights that spiral up the sculpture's central mast and around the stargate in a swirling vortex pattern. This vortex faces the heavens and opens a funnel to our earthly realm.

Envisioned as a communication device, Light Years Away facilitates a ritual in which wishes and prayers are accompanied by a dramatic dance of thousands of lights and fire jets as they are conveyed into the spiritual realm. 🐉

Travelogue: Keeping Cool on the Playa

BY MIMSTAH

After a Playa pedal, I too started complaining about the triple-digit temperatures. I sought relief at Northwest Mist. Inside I tilted my head back in gratitude to the misters. Prominently located this year on the Esplanade (at 3:15), Northwest Mist is sure to become a daily ritual for diurnal Burners.

It was a bullhorn heckler at Treasure

Chest (Esplanade at 3:00) that caught my attention in my next overheating episode. "Are your tits hot?" she asked. Everything was hot so I promptly "participated" (their word) by stripping my shirt and presenting my boobs for a thorough spritzing.

With chest chilled, I ventured further into Black Rock City in search of more respites from the heat to share with our readers:

- A winning thirst quencher is the

lemonade at Fresh Squeezed (5:15 and D). Similarly, the cold sodas at Hack-A-Cola (3:00 Plaza at 6:45) are refreshing.

- Ice cream on 100+ degree days is certainly a cooling treat. We Scream scoops homemade varieties Tuesday-Thursday at 1:00 p.m. (C and 6:45).

- Pickles are a dehydration wonder cure. So be sure to snag a salty one at Ye Old Pickle Joint (Center Camp Plaza at 10:00).

- If an afternoon nap is in order, but your buddy's air-conditioned RV is locked, both Mystopia (7 and G) and Hammock Hangout (F and 4:45) have got you covered. Mystopia's cooled interior and the Hangout's shaded collection of hammocks offer chill siesta possibilities.

Hopefully when you awaken the temperature will be more forgiving. If not, splashing in your cooler water is a last resort option for being cool at Burning Man. 🐉

Meet The Dung Beetle

BY RIA GRIEFF

"Most of my installation work is a stylized interpretation of various animals at a colossal scale," said Brennan Steele, a New Orleans native and current citizen who has worked on many Mardi Gras floats. Have you heard of theriomorphism? He does that, too.

The Dung Bug started as an interactive human gerbil ball. Its design called for wheels allowing it to steer like a giant tricycle, and from there Brennan decided on the dung rolling beetle. Other ideas he had were a squirrel rolling a nut, or a circus elephant rolling a ball. But he settled on the Dung Beetle, with the human being the dung - natch.

Brennan made the design choice to work with metal instead of his usual wood, and created a dung ball out of perforated poly elegance, so those inside could see out, and so it would be durable enough to handle the relentless enthusiasm of Black Rock resident feet. This left a unique opportunity with the beetle body.

Brennan explains: "When I was a kid I loved Bumblebee from the original Transformer cartoons and told my father I wanted a VW bug for my first car. I thought the body panels of a Volkswagen beetle would bear a great resemblance to the shape of a dung beetle and be ironic to boot. So, I sourced a rusty old pearlescent pink Super Bug two states over in Chickasaw, Alabama. It had a single faded bumper sticker that read 'Magic Happens.' After that, the rest is long nights with the generous help of friends, and an abundance of sparks fired by a passion to create. Enjoy!"

Rolling around like a piece of shit sounds about right to me.

Forever from the trenches - GroundScore 1
Dung Bug Fundraising Link: <https://tinyurl.com/BRBdungfundraiser>

Spinning Metal Tornado, Fire Ancestor Spits Flames and Carries a Tune

BY MUNCHKYN

Earth, air, fire. Those are the basic elements of Fire Ancestor, an interactive kinetic sculpture from a collective known as One Man Down. The 13-foot-tall structure resembles a spiraling DNA double helix, which is no surprise since it is the successor to last year's Fire Helix. But this year the piece sits on a three-foot platform, not only free standing but able to rotate.

Trey Watkins, one of the designers, said "Fire Helix was all right angles and an interpretation of a helix, so for this piece, we didn't want to hang it, we didn't want all the truss work, and we wanted something more organic." Stacked pipes circle a central core and flames shoot from alternating ranks. "Basically the center ones are going to have fire coming out of them," Watkins explained. "It'll be every other one on each side. So there will be fire coming out of every layer. There will be 12 going up, which is every other plate on that side and opposing plates on that side. You'll be able to get two lines of swirls of fire up it."

This is the group's seventh year producing Playa art, and the second year in a row of moving, flaming art. Watkins described One Man Down's inspiration this way: "In '09 we did Sparks, which was kind of an experiment with light and fire inside

a WWII searchlight. In 2012, our off year, we felt like there was not much fire art on the Playa. We're like, where is all the fire? We think back to the Singularity Machine or the Burninator or some of the stuff of the early 2000's, which was just some of the most amazing fire art, and we realized that we couldn't really complain if we weren't contributing."

The collective's contribution to Playa art this year is more than a fiery metal tornado. "We found in Fire Helix that it had an actual rhythm to it. The fire solenoid actuators for the poofers, when we put rhythm sequences into it, sounded musical. So we thought we'd lean into that and make an actual fire instrument."

For four hours a night, Fire Ancestor shoots fire as it twirls on its rotating base at 5:55/1660'. But at quieter times, it interacts with the desert wind and with humans on the Playa. The wind blowing across the open ends of the metal tubes will sound a harmonic; metallophones are mounted in the base and further up, tuned like an Indonesian gamelan orchestra. Passersby are invited to program the helix from stations around the base.

Fire Ancestor is made by Trey Watkins, Mara Greenberg, Alan Becker, Wendy Jackson, Martin Roth, Yuli Levto, Sarah Boehmke, Barbara



Photo by Taymar

Demman, Jason Bowers, Andrew Jonathan Stern, Diana Stern and Marc 'Howie' Howell, Heather Buckley, Greenberg. 🐉

POPULATION COUNT: As of Wednesday, Playa Info had not updated Monday's 49,149.

"The modern habit of doing ceremonial things unceremoniously is no proof of humility; rather it proves the offender's inability to forget himself in the rite, and his readiness to spoil for every one else the proper pleasure of ritual."
-- C.S. Lewis

BLACK ROCK BEACON

If you don't sin, Jesus died for nothing
-- Overheard

This Temple Builds Community After Tragedy

Search a Word

BY DURGY



Photo by Francis Wenderlich

BY THE FRIDGE

There is more than one temple on the Playa this year. The Utah Builders Community (UBC) has brought the Temple of Awareness to Black Rock City.

Conceived by UBC artist and designer Alice Toler, and designed and built by a team led by Bobby Gittins, Lead Artist, and John Ward, UBC Director, the Temple of Awareness was a contender for this year's official temple. Though Bmorg eventually chose another project, they selected the Temple of Awareness as an Honorarium Project, furthering the organization's desire to have a plurality of temples on the Playa this year.

This is by far the biggest project undertaken by UBC to date. The interior of the radially symmetric Temple is a series of concentric circles receding upwards to 40 feet above the ground creating a parabolic cone. The outside complements the interior with a set of wings in rings that reach up to the sky.

The Temple is spacious in a welcoming, human way - inspiring awe and reflection, without being either cold or imposing. Lisa Marie Schull, a veteran temple builder who now lives in Utah

as part of the SLC Burner Community and is consigliere for the Temple of Awareness, said that a goal for the project was to create a refuge on the Playa, a "sweet, organic space for people to find in quieter times at Black Rock City.

A striking feature of the Temple is an acoustic chandelier, which started out as a project to build the largest set of wind chimes in the world. David Powell, responsible for design and engineering for the Temple, told the Beacon that a more modest version of the chimes form this suspended centerpiece which will respond to the winds of the Playa. The chandelier will be detached and saved before the Temple burns and may become an art installation in its own right back in Salt Lake City.

The inspiration for this Temple and an earlier version, the Temple of Awakening, was a tragedy that marred Element 11, Utah's regional burn, in 2014. A young participant immolated himself by running into the fire at the event's Effigy Burn as over 1,200 participants watched in horror. The Burner community in Utah is small and close knit and this death had a huge impact.

The consensus was that the community had to awaken to the need to be more aware of each other and to the issues and needs of its members. The need for a response to the trauma they experienced found an expression in the

conception, design and building of the Temples to remind them, and all of us, of the need for people to have empathy for one another, to know both the good and the bad that is present in our communities, and perhaps help prevent similar tragedies in the future.

That spirit of empathy and shared awareness imbued the entire process of building the Temple, according to Schull. Because of the small size of the team and the enormity of the project, the whole group was often involved at the build site. Schull noted that unlike other builds she had been a part of, this group had a coherence and a real sense of caring and closeness, sharing meals and being focused on taking care of one another as they worked on the project.

Powell noted the creators had taken a page out of David Best's philosophy of building temples, making sure that each person in the team started each build day present and in a mindful manner, and conscious of the work they were doing. He believes that this consciousness has seeped into the spirit of the Temple. Schull said that just like the burning of the Temple of Awakening at Element 11 last year, she expects that the burning of the Temple of Awareness will be an exceptionally beautiful burn.

The Temple of Awareness is located at 1:00/1900', and will burn at 10pm on Friday. 🐾

Motel Rooms Double As Bruno's Overcomes Damage From Fire

BY JESS

Just in time for Black Rock City 2017, repairs and restoration have been completed on Bruno's Motel, the only sizable lodging establishment anywhere near the Playa.

Half the rooms in the 40-unit motel were out of commission since October, when a dryer in one of the two buildings started a fire.

Fortunately, there was no one in the building at the time. Unfortunately, according to Pat Irwin, former Gerlach fire services community coordinator, while the fire was contained in the laundry room and Washoe firefighters promptly responded to the scene, the conflagration caused a water heater to burst, which flooded the motel and made all 20 rooms of the building uninhabitable.

It has taken almost a year to get the damaged building back up to code and open for business.

Sources inside the company said a delay in insurance money coming through held up construction, but once that got worked out, the process went quickly.

The building has now passed health, fire and building inspections and is open for business. Rooms are available to rent, but due to increased traffic and events taking place in the Black Rock Desert this time of year, they are already booked through the end of September. The motel is part of Bruno's Country Club, located at 445 Main Street. The complex also includes a bar and restaurant that have been remodeled.

The businesses were founded by Bruno Selmi, who recently passed away. Early in 2016, Willie Courtney, Bruno's grandson, took over the family business which had previously been put on the market. It is no longer for sale. 🐾

Gerlach Roundup

Miner Pokes Playa for Lithium

BY T.O.H.

Between Gerlach and the three-mile access point on the southern end of the Playa, a company is exploring for lithium. Last year, Nevada Energy Metals Inc. made claims for the element in the Black Rock Desert, conducted an initial round of tests, then added additional claims, bringing the total number to 200.

There is rising interest in lithium in Nevada, in part because of a Tesla battery factory being built in Sparks. How much of the metal might be in the state is unknown. Most lithium currently comes from South America.

In early 2017, Nevada began soliciting investors for its claims. This is fairly standard in the mining industry; placer claims, if the samples are viable, get investors. Many operations never move beyond the "get investors" phase.

While the claims may be near the Playa, they cannot be in it. New mining claims are prohib-

ited in the Black Rock Desert-High Rock Canyon Emigrant Trails National Conservation Area.

Any mining that might occur is not imminent. The placer claims, which allow for exploitation of minerals in loose materials such as sand and gravel, are the first step in a lengthy process. It includes environmental assessments, impact statements, and other documents to be filed and reviewed by the federal Bureau of Land Management.

What would this project mean to the Black Rock area? It would produce additional revenue, though few jobs. Environmental issues and questions abound. How would the required evaporative brine extraction affect water levels in the Black Rock Desert? How much water would need to be used? The views of the Playa from Gerlach would be affected. Also, the area of the placer claims is adjacent to the Nobles Trail, a National Historic Trail that emigrants used in the early 1850s. 🐾



Photo by Francis Wenderlich

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Find the following words in the grid: AWE, BREATH, CEREMONY, DANCE, EULOGY, FIRE, GENUFLECT, HALLOWED, INSPIRIT, JULU, KUNDALINI, LUSTRATE. The unused letters spell a Black Rock City principle.



Thursday, Aug. 30, 2007 Urban Exploration

Technomad reported on a Burner from Monterey, California, who two days earlier missed the turnout at Wadsworth and continued on to Lovelock. There he obtained a map showing some backroad routes to Black Rock City.

The hapless motorist drove close enough to see the city lights, but he found himself on the wrong side of the tracks — the Union Pacific tracks. He tried to drive across them, but got stuck instead. Ticket in hand, he walked toward BRC, where he was intercepted by Perimeter staff. Once he explained himself, they called for help, and a BLM ranger drove him back toward his vehicle.

As they considered how they might free the conveyance, they noticed lights. The illumination grew brighter. Then the pair watched as a train barreling along at roughly 70 miles per hour hit the vehicle, demolishing it. One of the wheels was found 3/4 mile from the point of impact. 🐾

ALMANAC



Saturn is named after the ancient Roman deity Saturnus, the god of agriculture. Looking south, it is a bright object to the left of red-hued Antares (the "heart" of Scorpio). It will appear an hour after sunset.

On Friday, a 2.7-mile-wide asteroid, screaming by at 30,266 miles per hour, will make a close pass to Earth. It will come within 4.4 million miles of the Playa, making its closest approach to us at 5:06 a.m. By then it will have set behind the western mountains, but if you're out at midnight and have access to binoculars or a small telescope, it should be visible high in the southwestern sky, above and a little to the south of the Moon. You'd need at least a 5-inch telescope to see it moving. The 8.5 magnitude will move through westward through the constellation Delphinus over the next few days.

Thursday • August 31

Sunset: 7:31 p.m. Twilight ends 7:59 p.m.
The moon is in the sky at dusk (70%)

Moonset: 1:09 a.m.

Friday, September 1

First light: 5:56 a.m. Sunrise: 6:24 a.m.
Sunset: 7:30 p.m. Twilight ends 7:58 p.m.
The moon is in the sky at dusk (78%)

Moonset: 1:56 a.m.

Saturday, September 2

International Bacon Day
First light: 5:57 a.m. Sunrise: 6:25 a.m.
Next issue of the Beacon appears.

Group Rituals

Group rituals naturally evolve in a place like Black Rock City.

One veteran Burner couple likes to go out with their campmates the first night after the gate. "Ideally, we all leave together on foot with a particular camp or destination in mind." They call it the "Playa Shuffle" because "people tend to get distracted or veer off in another direction as we shuffle along, stopping at other camps, and meet-

ing new people along the way?"

Another group of more than 20 people have been doing an art walk on foot for roughly 15 years. Their ritual is more cohesive. "We convene midday at one of our camps and spend a leisurely day (As a pack! We manage to stay together! Mostly) exploring and participating in art together and sharing and talking about what we're experiencing." 🐾