

Black Rock Beacon



RADICAL RITUAL • SOLO RITUALS EDITION • SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 2, 2017 • VOLUME XIII, NUMBER IV • 3:00 & AWE, WITHIN IRON ROSE • WWW.BLACKROCKBEACON.ORG



Photo by Taymar

Raised Profile for Lowered Bar

BY CURIOUS

"The Playa is closed!" A swarm of what appeared to be workers in overalls and at least one Star Wars Storm Trooper yelled through megaphones, halting traffic, ingress and egress, across the entire 3:00 portal fronting the Esplanade. Orange safety cones and multiple parallel lengths of hazard tape effected the closure early Thursday evening.

If the Playa was closed, why was there still action on the other side of the hazard tape? "This is Playatrans," a woman on a megaphone announced. "We're digging a manhole to bury the man!"

The hazard tape read, on closer inspection, "CAUTION ICE ON WALKWAY" with icons of a pedestrian slipping.

Another megaphone shouted, "Burning Man is closed but the bar is open."

Hordes of confused cyclists, art cars, and pedestrians slowed to a halt, then found themselves funneled off to a narrow passage alongside the 3:00 road. "Go to the bar," a worker commanded, "You must pass through the bar." Another worker clarified, "it's a particularly low bar."

Rangers stood off to the side, consulting, then shrugged and walked over to The Vortex of Destiny fronting the Portal. The Beacon hazarded an approach to one megaphoned worker and spied, aha, the word "Gigsville" underneath a nuclear hazard symbol emblazoned on her coveralls. The official-looking

comm radio lashed to the chief megaphoner's right shoulder was fake.

Jazz of Iron Rose had a front porch view of the prankster chaos: "The Rangers tried to stop it and were handed these cards." The front side of Gigsville's calling card depicted a sheriff badge with a red null sign over it with the words "Fuck Off Ranger." The back side clarified, "Rangers are not Cops. Keeping me safe from me is not your job. Neither is enforcing the law. This is radical self expression. Stop acting like a hall monitor." And then even finer print below: "THIS CARD entitles the bearer to freely get out of any unnecessary conflict with a belligerent, overzealous, or painfully inexperienced Black Rock Ranger without the usual annoying educational process. Present this card to the offending authority figure and instruct him to read the directions."

After about 30 minutes of the blockage a cheer went up as the Lamplighters passed through on their solemn street lighting procession. "It was only because of the Lamplighters waiting on the Playa side that [Gigsville] took it down," Jazz said. "They did lift the hazard tape to let a couple ambulances through, though."

With all due respect to the Rangers and their invaluable community service: Well-executed, Gigsville. This is what happens when a notorious theme camp is allowed out of its usual placement in mid-city and is situated, instead, on the Esplanade. 🐾

Black Rock City Post Offices Connect Burners & World

BY CURIOUS

It's easy to forget how important mail is. Until after a few days' exile in this dusty outpost you start to feel lovesick for the kids latchkeyed at home, the beloved pet whose nanny cam can't reach you, the partner you hope is writing you torrid love letters, the warrants chasing you ... or crucial packages, like temple offerings from the absent Burner wishing she were here. Mail actually matters in few places on earth anymore except in such satellites of remote civilization as Black Rock City.

A mail carrier of sorts rolls up to your camp and delivers pure, often unexpected, joy: a paw-print postcard, a box of homemade cookies, a care package for your eyes only.

Imagine the horror last year when the mail didn't come. Letters and packages from all over the world -- fervently sent, anxiously awaited -- were inexplicably stamped with a big fat RETURN TO SENDER. The sacred ritual of mail unceremoniously dumped like so many unticketed gate crashers. What happened? Only a few pieces got through to the Playa.

The Beacon stopped by BRC3PO, the post office on the 3:00 portal, for the slowdown. Laughing John is "postmaster" and Marko the "facilities manager," the latter insisting any knowledge he could share would be utterly unreliable.

We learned the three BRC post offices are theme camps with postal flair, unconnected with the U.S. Postal Service. Two of them, BRC3PO and PO9, are delivering mail this year.

If you haven't tried to finger one of their beautiful postcards ostensibly presented for gifting, apply for a passport (in previous times), or mail something and been abused in the name of BRC-style mail service, you may as well have skipped Burning Man. BRC3PO, in fact, has an official complaint form, and if you don't feel the need to ask for one, they haven't done their job.

This reporter showed up at BRC3PO one year in a fit of homesickness, pleading to send a postcard to her husband. The postal clerk at the window agreed if he could write it himself and mail it without my review. Divorce papers did not arrive at the next Burn's



Photo by CURIOUS

post office, but maybe that was the year BRC stopped receiving mail.

Apparently, as the BRC population and its desire for mail expanded, the actual local U.S. post office got inundated with the sheer volume of mail, and last year was a breaking point. From mail-sorting central in Reno, thousands of pieces with any manner of BRC-flavored vague addresses descended on the sleepy hamlet of Gerlach, whose postmistress (paid a certain amount to handle its population of one or two hundred) was expected to suddenly sort and vet every single piece for BRC, a city numbering in the tens of thousands. Stat. And out of a shoe box-sized office. It was too much.

Marko also explained that Center Camp PO felt responsible for ensuring that packages were safely delivered to the addressed person. If that person wasn't in camp, CC PO had to deal with pick-up slips and signing with IDs, and that got difficult. But when Nutmeg Alfredo of PO9 broadcast "we want your mail" in the JRS without consulting the Center Camp PO or Gerlach or planning how to manage even more of a good thing, the mail hit the fan, hence the Return Stamped.

A flood of actual complaints over returned mail last year prompted Bmorg to sit down with Nevada's postmaster general, the Gerlach PO, and the three Playa POs. An expectation was not being met. How to deal with the problem? Stop all incoming default-world mail? The 9:00 and 3:00 PO satellites put on their capes. They wanted to continue accepting and delivering mail from and to the default world.

BRC3PO and PO9 settled for a mailbox: PO Box 149, Gerlach, NV 89412-0149. They are training to be legitimate couriers next year, so that Reno can bundle the mail directly to Box 149 and relieve poor Gerlach of the onslaught. All three Playa POs carefully sort outgoing mail, which lightens the tiny town's postal load.

Historically the first PO in Cen-

ter Camp was a quasi-official arm of Bmorg and accepted and delivered Playa and default-world mail. (It was and is run by Lady K and The General, who were not available for comment.) In 2007 the CC PO downsized, letting go off all its "employees." The very next year the PO satellite at 9:00 popped up to deliver its own form of harassment, and BRC3PO followed suit on the opposite side of the city after 2012. The two satellites continue to work closely together to collect the mail from Gerlach, alternating days to ease the suffering of Gate lines.

Although they are friendly, Laughing John considers his "brother camp" PO9 "degenerate, less organized," and extremely hard on its customers. The Beacon went to find Ender, PO9's "postmaster," for comment, but found only one volunteer, Elina, holding down the fort. A beautiful Russian jewelry salesperson from New York and virgin Burner, she told us the post office is pretty much open 24/7. She let us have all the postcards we wanted.

The Beacon conducted a postal inspection at BRC3PO and observed the following sorting bins: International Letters, Domestic Letters, Postcards to Future Self (for delivery 1/1/18), and Mail for Dead People. They expect to mail 9,000 pieces this year (so far 1,250 to other countries), and limited parcels. BRC3PO also has a DJ and a dance floor, if you open the lid to the giant mailbox.

"I feel there's an invisible ring around BRC3PO," Marko said, "where the gifting economy stops. And the bribery economy begins. We are absolutely corrupt. BRC3PO and BRC09 are totally abridging the gifting economy and are into corruption. We allow the corruption to be delivered individually by each postal clerk. And I must tell you that BRC3PO is much gentler and more fun than PO9. At PO9 you might actually have to do more rigorous and risqu things [to get a postcard or a stamp]."

According to Tim, assistant to Lady K and The General, Center Camp PO no longer brings in outside mail, but continues to send out international and domestic postcards and letters for Burners, 12-4 Monday through Saturday. It also delivers intraplaya mail, celebrating the joy of the hand-written note, and operates a new Urgent Message Bike Courier Service. It deployed Urgent Message to invite BRC3PO and PO9 over for happy hour last Monday.

Marko said, "They're open only four hours. We're probably closed for four hours, and that's because we fall asleep. We might close for dinner or maybe an art car goes by and we hop on it. But we close when the last person wants to go to bed." 🐾

Dancing With Diamonds of Fire

BY MUNCHKYN

If you're walking across the Playa one night and see a diamond shape flashing fire, you've reached the Torch Song (7:10/1750). Nine sections of metal railing, each eight feet long, form a double tetrahedron (think of a pyramid with only three sides instead of four), supported from the center. Coiling, dancing flames move along each rail, horizontally and vertically, in response to "songs" composed by Burners: hence "Torch Song."

Matt G, of the Hydrocarbon Collective, said one of the biggest technical challenges was finding a lubricant for moving mechanical parts that could withstand both Playa dust and the 1,000F-plus temperatures of the flames. "What we wound up using is graphite-impregnated brass sleeve bearings. As they wear, they apply their own lubricant; they're going to be good to 2,000 degrees."

A doctorate in physics and a devotion to hot metal, as well as the philosopher Plato's teachings on geometry, informed Matt's design. "My original idea was to build an icosahedron. Thirty edges was far too difficult, so I started thinking about other geometries, and I really liked the double tetrahedron. Tetrahedron is symbolic of fire in the Platonic system, so I could say that one tetrahedron points towards the uni-

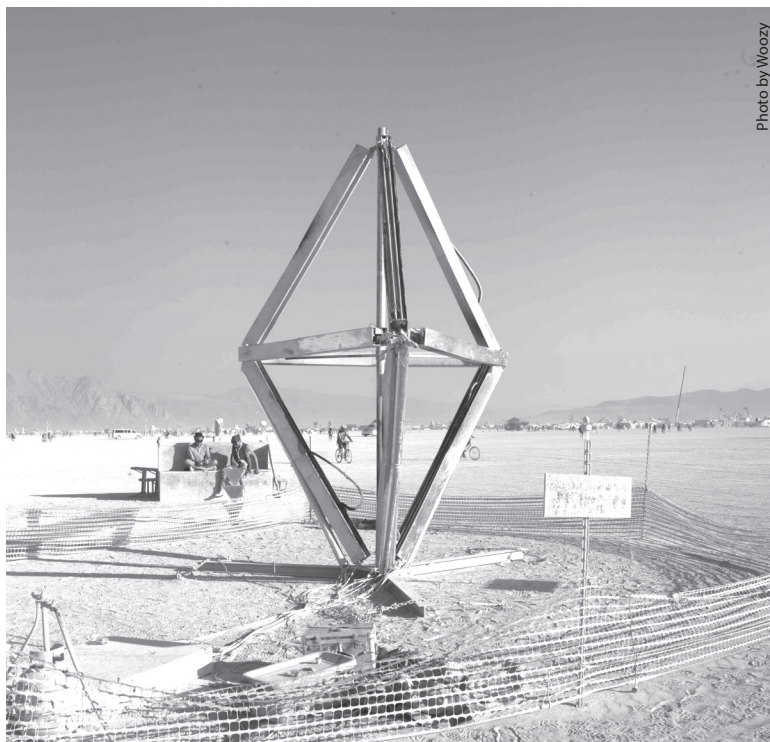


Photo by Woosy

verse and the other one points toward the ground ... The eight edges give us a 15-foot-high structure that has a nice scale to it."

Torch Song will not be just a spectator piece; it's interactive. Matt and his crew

intend the effect to be a synchronized ballet of fire -- one which will respond to music and observer input. Which means that when you see those dancing flames, it might be fun to dance with them. Flame on! 🐾

Lost item? Find it!

Playa Info wants you to know that their Lost & Found is the only official one on Playa. For the last five years, 75% of labeled items are returned to their owner, and 60% if unlabeled. L&F is open 9am-6pm through Labor Day, and has limited services Tuesday morning. New last year is a 24/8 digital photo search, so you can see if your item is there before standing in line. High-value items are not in the public database, and must be described in detail to claim. There is an overnight drop box for found items near the front of Playa Info to use after-hours, or to avoid the line.

Post-Playa, <https://LnFBurningman.org> has the photo database, and volunteers continue to match items with people through the following January. 🐾

POPULATION: 67,567 as of 4p.m. Thursday.

"If theater is ritual, then dance is too...
It's as if the threads connecting us to the
rest of the world were washed clean of
preconceptions and fears.

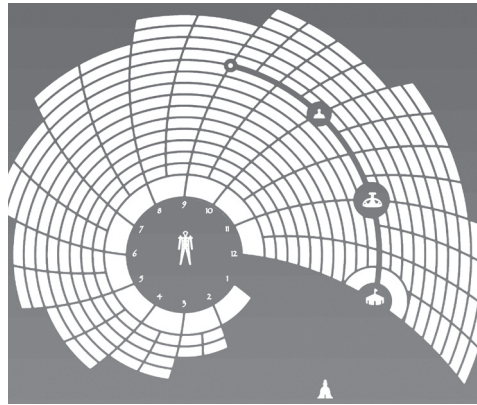
BLACK ROCK BEACON

When you dance, you can enjoy the
luxury of being you."
-- Paulo Coelho

Thinking Outside the Clock: BRC re-imagined

BY MIMSTAH

The "Big Book of Ideas" contains nearly 100 alternative layouts for Black Rock City (BRC) submitted by creatives from around the world. The compilation was the result of an unofficial design competition hosted by the BRC Ministry of Urban Planning who posed the provocative question, "If you could design Black Rock City, what would you build?" As evident from the



Inspired by the principle of radical self-expression, the Rogowski/McPeck team throws off the "shackles of precedent" and proposes a bold re-design. The team chose a nautilus shape with a jagged edge to reflect the non-conformist spirit of Burners and brought the Man into the center of the city to create a more intimate space for the burn. Their city is even more compact than the current layout, but that increased density is complemented by a "wide, beautiful boulevard" that connects Center Camp with three plazas and by an enlarged deep playa. With its curved avenues, the city won't be as intuitive to navigate as the current design (where the avenues neatly align with the Man), but the labyrinth-like layout facilitates exploration and serendipitous encounters.



Friday, Sept. 1, 2007 Urban Exploration

A crane lifted the repaired body of the Man without his head back onto his perch above the green products pavilion following the early-Tuesday arson attack on the icon.

Crude Awakening, a massive sculpture project by Karen Cusolito and Dan Dass Man featured eight 30-foot tall humanoid figures worshipping an oil derrick. The artwork had pyrotechnic displays at night and hosted performance art.

Dragonfly Roundup Dragonfly Lovin'

BY RIA GRIEFF

I consider myself a nature girl, but I did not know - and I bet you your metal cup that you don't either - that when Dragonflies mate, their bodies make hearts. You can find dragonflies in a city named Loveland, where people also have a habit of making hearts, and displaying them publicly.

The Dragonfly Mating Ritual installation is quite complex: the 30+ ft. structure breathes fire, features interactive LED lighting, and has a hand-crank that turns a 40 ft. wide carousel of dancing dragonflies. Located at 8:45/1500', it can withstand 70 mph winds. But all you really need to know about this piece is that you can crank it and climb it.

The piece's creators, the Rocky Mountain High Flyers Guild, has already shared the project with their hometown of Loveland (not to be confused with Lovelock), so it is not a Burning Man exclusive. To be fair, however, they only previously displayed a partially completed version.

This is not the first rodeo for the Flyers. Last year, they constructed a Dragon kite with Leonardo da Vinci wings. The back story to the artwork is more brutal than the worst dust storm you ever got caught in without your shemagh and goggles, but suffice it to say it involved a flying car, an overnight stay in a hospital, a team that dwindled to half, and that in the end, the group had to burn the thing because they could not get it home, nor up in the air.

This year, they are gonna make sweet love at Black Rock City. Giddyup.

Forever from the trenches, GroundScore 1.

The full novella about The Rocky Mountain High Flyers projects:

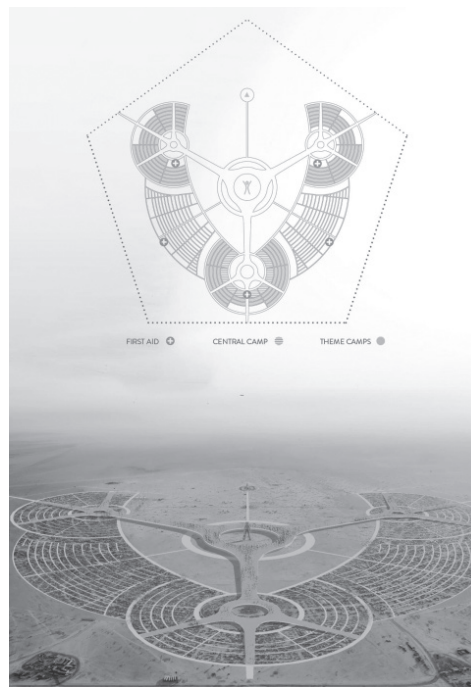
<https://artworkbydvandyne.wordpress.com>

design of BRC the year, the Bmorg was not moved to alter the design they've adhered to since 1997.

We at the Beacon, however, were curious about the dreams and schemes for BRC contained in the Big Book of Ideas. So we cracked the tome and selected a few favorites that we believe could inspire future improvements to the Burning Man environment and experience.

*It's no simple task to design
a city, let alone a utopian,
pop-up metropolis*

We were struck by the proposed scale of the Bianchi/Fracasso/Pelligrin team's design. This much larger and more organically shaped layout could accommodate significantly more Burners should the Bmorg decide it is time to grow the event. The drawback of this more spacious layout is that the suburban pods are likely to dilute the communal aspect and vibrancy of today's dense city. Although unrealistic to construct, the plan's proposed system of elevated wooden walkways is an intriguing urban design element. The most appealing aspect of the walkways is the new perspective they would offer BRC dwellers. At 20 meters high the walkways would offer incredible views and a high traverse over the city. Perhaps one or two overlooks or a fire tower-like structure would be more realistic and offer a similar stunning perspective.



More Fun Than a Barrel of Dragonflies

BY SMASH

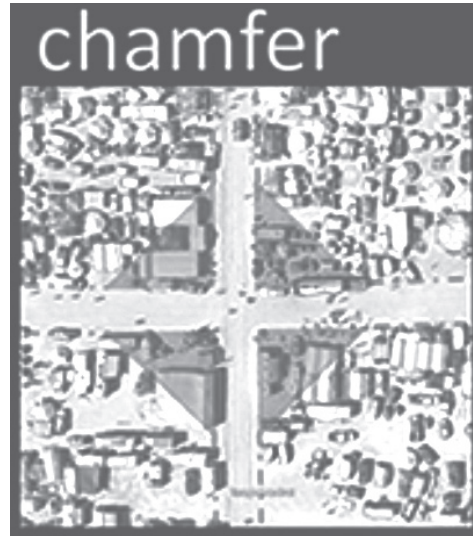
Although it stands on its own as an allegorical tale of freedom, the Iron Monkeys' 2017 Playa project "Flight of Illumination" is actually the final chapter of a four-part series begun in 2012. Such long-term vision is unusual at Burning Man, made possible because of the Monkeys' broad and consistent commitment to Black Rock City.

The series chronicles the journey of a group of acolytes who were first protected by darkness in the "Guardian of Dawn," gained courage and ventured into the world to create the "Agora of Light," were humbled by pride and retreated to the "Well of Darkness," and are now ready to share their light (or wisdom) with the world.

This light is represented in "Flight of Illumination" (3:45/1200') by dragonflies, which the acolytes release from a large jar to soar out onto the Playa. The metal dragonflies vary in size, with the lead the largest and in flames. The artwork is surrounded by remnants of prior Monkey works, some afire, which create a communal gathering



Photo by Tymar



A Kit of Part is one of the least sexy entries in the Big Book of Ideas, but perhaps the most practical. Acknowledging the effectiveness of the original, and beloved, BRC design, Walker's entry focuses on simple streetscape enhancements rather than a full blown re-design. He proposes discrete tweaks to the pattern of streets in order to improve the flow and experience of the City. For instance, he suggests converting some streets into wider avenues in order to accommodate parades of different sorts, allow for more comfortable strolling or pedaling, and to frame vistas of the Man. By introducing parks and carving out street corners, Walker's concept adds new public spaces where Burners could share their gifts (think street corner lemonade stand), showcase their art, and serendipitously interact.

It's no simple task to design a city, let alone a utopian, pop-up metropolis where it is paramount that the infrastructure induces social interaction and nurtures a sense of community among 70,000 people in the middle of the desert. For now, the current design of Black Rock City is functional and wonderful, but as Burning Man grows, evolves, and spawns satellite events, these three concepts and the creatives behind them warrant a deeper study.

space.

Based in Seattle, the Iron Monkeys iron-welding collective has been serving the Burning Man community for eleven years, creating intricate metal installations, running the Burn night fire conclave, and selling Playa Staples. Chief Monkey Tabasco, who is celebrating twenty years on the Playa this year, described the collective's creative process: "We kept talking until suddenly this kind of came out of us. It takes multiple meetings that go up, then down, and nothing is working. And then you have another meeting and halfway through it someone says something. And everyone says 'Oh! Yes!' And that's what happens every time."

Tabasco hopes "Flight of Illumination" finds a post-Playa home where the public can experience the dragonflies soaring into the air. He thinks the art will speak to those not familiar with the earlier pieces or Burning Man itself. "It's a piece that represents whatever someone wants it to represent. And everyone's going to have a different idea of what dragonflies mean. I hope people get a powerful sense of release, travel and motion."

Beacon Makes Dusty Lemonade

BY ROCKSTAR

Nothing holds still -- especially at Burning Man. To the extent Burnerdom notices much of anything apart from explosions, dusty hotties, and blue porto lights, some of you may've seen the Black Rock Beacon missing from from its accustomed spot at Center Camp this year. What follows is explanation and what's known in the news trade as a Mea Fucking Culpa.

So, far from the Beacon being "out," the current occupant of our old spot at CC owes such good fortune first and foremost to I failed to file the requisite paperwork with Placement this year.

Why did my due diligence fall down this year? Maybe it was brain hiccups or smoking too many banana peels or merely a subconscious desire to avoid looking at the same damned Cafe bike rack this year. Experts differ. In any event, even though the taxman will take a late payment, the grey eminences at Bmorg will not accept a tardy placement form. No way and nohow.

As usual, we at the Beacon rolled with the self-delivered punch. Ali Baba, our noble and resourceful President, found us an enviable niche with Camp Iron Rose, who welcomed us with grins and sauerkraut. All of a sudden, we were Real Burners again, far from the power elite and sharing the common experience of busting our asses in the dust. This is a real neighborhood and I think our coverage and perspective benefit by being here. Everyone is helpful and inviting and the party never ever stops. Gigsville is just across the way and the Vortex of Destiny is a visual fantasia that draws wowed patrons from all over the city. The breakfast at Sunrise Diner alone is enough to convince us that this is how the Other Half lives. If this is Out, then the Out is the new In.

So come by our shop at the 3:00 Portal, pick up a paper written on playa and stay informed. Lux Vertias Lardum!

Burners Volunteer

BY JIMMY OLSON

The Burning Man event runs on volunteers: that Burner at the gate who checked your ticket, the greeter who handed you a map, and the person at Center Camp Cafe who stays up all night to serve you a hot cup of coffee. There is opportunity for all to step up and become part of the event. While many people participate by bringing in a great art project, many of us just don't have the resources. That's where the Volunteer Resource Team (VRT) becomes involved.

Jocko, VRT's manager, knows that volunteering builds community. As part of a team, you can make instant connections with people who may share your interests. As you finish your shift with a volunteer team, it inspires you to bring back home to your community a sense of purpose. While some Burners volunteer to collect shwag, you also walk away with a feeling of belonging and a sense of accomplishment.

Meet Dutch and Patches. Dutch is a part of the VRT while Patches is a leading member of the Nowhere regional event in Spain. Dutch says that volunteering makes you feel like a part of the event rather than just a spectator. Patches feels that volunteering gives a better sense of well-being by giving to others without an expectation of anything in return. She also likes the opportunity to immediately connect while improving the experience of Burning Man for all.

Chris, a first time Burner and member of VRT camp, enjoys the Burner ethos so much that he wanted to give back. He insists that volunteer work should be fun. If you are not having fun with your tasks, try another team until it feels right for you.

Peanut Gallery came to Burning Man for the first time this year to join her friends. She works at the V-Spot in Center Camp inviting fellow burners to sign up for volunteer opportunities. Back home in San Francisco, she volunteers with homeless shelters, food centers, and Christmas toy drives. Next year she looks forward to volunteering in Recycle Camp, helping out with art installations, and joining the "coolest" team on playa: Arctica Ice sales.

ALMANAC



Saturday, September 2
International Bacon Day
Sunset: 7:29 p.m. Twilight ends 7:55 p.m.
The moon is in the sky at dusk (86%)
Man burn: Around 8-9p.m.
Moonset: 2:48 a.m.

Sunday, September 3
First light: 5:58 a.m. Sunrise: 6:26 a.m.
Final issue of the Beacon appears.

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