

BLACK ROCK BEACON

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I, ROBOT • GATE EDITION • SUNDAY AUGUST 26, 2018 • VOLUME XIV, NUMBER I • 9:15 @ ROD'S ROAD • WWW.BLACKROCKBEACON.ORG

WELCOME TO NOWHERE

BY CURIOUS

Well look who's here! You made it. That ride in is a bitch, innit? I hope you had a soft landing. You think you're somewhere, like somewhere cool, but actually you're not... You're no w here, and that defies definition until you help define it. The City is just a template; you, in all your unique glory, bring the elusive fourth dimension. It's no accident you're here, or maybe it is. There are no accidents or it's all an accident, and someday, when we're somewhere, like rocking on our porch on Mars, we'll figure that one out.

But for now, how odd is it that you and I (and tens of thousands of our closest primate friends) of the 7 billion possible people on this planet, happen to be here, Going Nowhere, loco locus. Bringing it, with whatever masochistic curiosity or inebriating intention landed us on this dusty playground, this cosmic desert full of stars.

Are you new to the City? Everybody is. Everybody is a Virgin here. Black Rock City incarnates every year and even the cruelest of Burners can't step into this same river twice.

I don't know about you, but my favorite Principle is Decommodification. It's nice to stop obsessing about filthy lucre for one solid week, to have other-than-monetary interactions with humans, which seems to be 99% of the deal these days. The Playa restores the act and the art of gifting to its noblest intentions, fancy that, worth the price of admission alone.

For once, people might approach to help or offer or give and they're not trying to sell you some goddamn worthless thing or get something out of you (except a little participation), because—as the ancient wise ones would have it—we're always already perfect (and thus don't need to buy anything except coffee and ice) and as the more recent wise ones say, actually all you need is love. But don't take that too literally: The Survival Guide is not just kindling.

As with any gift, try not to ask for it, or it's not really a gift. Example: once I offered to help carry a giant-ass bag of ice back to this guy's camp on my handlebars. Turns out he was an original member of the Cacophony Society (and also, I think, the Suicide Club), whose Zone Trip #4 shipped this gig out here

from San Francisco in 1990. Now what, of all the thousands of people rattling around this place, is the likelihood of that? I sat on his cooler and listened to his stories about rappelling down elevator shafts and torching rows of Santas and Christmas trees in the day. He didn't offer me a beer. I didn't ask for one. Even though they got cold.

So you actually do have permission to be helpful around here, if that's your juice (beyond the crazy-ass insane 40-hour days you might already be putting in, like the cats who built that movie theater in Deep Playa, hammering well into the next day). We're all in this together now, a unique community of weird and nonweird (who are they? robots?) people

making it happen.

Since microdosing is all the rage now, why not take a free hit of oxytocin: that's the neurotransmitter released in your brain when it gets or feels something it likes. If you smile at someone or side-five a stranger on your bike you get a microdose. You catch someone from a burning building, pick up a hammer,

grab some Moop, that's a microdose. If you grab some Moop when no one's looking that's a macrodose. Let's just call it the new oxy. Revised model for altruism: Nope, no one ever cared, they're just getting wasted on oxytocin and always have been.

But keep in mind, not everyone's in the mood. Or willing to do this particular drug. Half the staff at the BeACON will shrug at this and eat another piece of bacon. So microdose the shit out of yourself but stay the hell away from Angry Camp and the Black Hole Bar, or anything to do with Gate, Perimeter, and Exodus. They don't do that crazy shit.. These folks wear necklaces of human skulls just from their morning collecting rounds.

If you hadn't guessed, I'm a hardcore oxy microdoser. I get on my bike

and I'm gobsmacked at the sheer ingenuity, creativity, improbable teamwork, the bringing-ness of it all that makes this City Go. Before I know it, I'm grinning like an idiot at, not just the Big Art, but front porch art and all the clever signs and decommunified brand names on

LARRY HARVEY

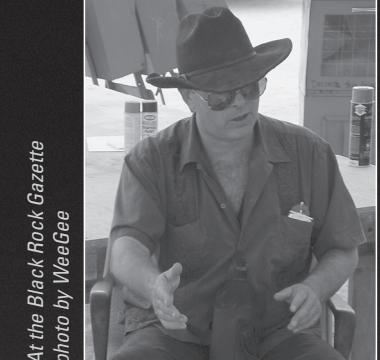
BY MRS LUCKY

A fox knows many things, says the Greek poet, a hedgehog knows one big thing. Larry Harvey was a hedgehog. Alone among the promiscuously creative polymaths who founded Burning Man, Harvey stayed loyal to the big picture. He molded the rituals and tended the principles. He was earnest.

"Most people would have dropped out when Burning Man just seemed like a piddling daydream," observed artist Mary Grauberger, who knew him at the beginning. "But he was sure of it, and he was right."

Grauberger, quoted in Brian Doherty's 2006 book *This Is Burning Man*, built and burned sculptures of shore-washed junk on Baker Beach in the early 1980s. Though her art was an inspiration for the first Burn, she claims she never looked for fame. "People seem to need Burning Man, and they come from all over the world," Grauberger continues, "But I know it's hard on Larry's health."

This summer, the festival's status in the American psyche is on display at the Smithsonian Institution in Washington. In late March, at the gala opening for "No Spectators, the Art of Burning Man," Larry Harvey climbed the red-carpeted stairs of the Smithsonian's Renwick Gallery. He'd left behind his Stetson, and his cap from the Empire Store. He had one hand on the polished brass rail, the other on the arm of a willowy woman in a graceful gown. Tiny horns peaked through the crown of her long, salt and pepper hair. It was a remarkable ascent for a man who described himself as "an outsider in every sense of the word." At the top of the steps, Larry and his lithe friend paused before entering the Grand Salon, studying the stick figure that started it all.



At the Black Rock Gazette
photo by WebGee

Harvey was dating the daughter of a former Soviet spy when the first Man was built in the basement garage of her San Francisco row house. About as avant-garde as a garden trellis, with all the artistic sophistication of the guy you draw in hangman, the icon is so simple you can get it across with three pieces of duct tape. This was how he wanted it.

Of the 10 principles of Burning Man the idea of inclusion was nearest to Harvey's heart. It set him at odds with the other principals, who held a more raw vision. A 2007 article in the Black Rock Beacon details the troubled transition of the original triumvirate into a corporate structure. Between the charismatic Danger Ranger and the elusive John Law, it seems Larry Harvey was chosen to wear the mantle of leadership because he had the least to lose.

As a kid Larry Harvey planned to change the world. He got a slow start. He was 30 before he earned a living. He had a knack for attracting supportive women. He lived with an elementary school teacher. She won the bread. He took the

1948 – 2018

bus to the public library to feed his mind. He worked as a bike messenger, and with a cadre of latte-carpenters, but described himself to Doherty as destined to head Burning Man, "a job for which there was no applying and no standardized curriculum to prepare for."

A kind of a cosmic juggler, what Larry Harvey made was plans, not for portable potties and ticket sales, but for grand themes and big ideas. None more than the elaborate Burn Night ceremony styled Release the Man: herds of fire spinners, processions of cassocked torch bears, and tens of thousands of voices chanting "burn the Man."

Interviewing him was like trout fishing. You cast your questions into his stream of consciousness. You'd get bites on Kant and Freud. But ask about the first Burn or the movie Wicker Man and you'd get skunked. He would come by the Black Rock Beacon camp. We'd brush the dust off the least broken chair and put it at the edge of our shade structure, where he'd puff his cigarettes, ashing carefully into the container he'd brought. He was the only one who didn't get shit for smoking at the Beacon.

Some years he'd give us the scoop on the next year's theme. We'd make it front page news, because at the Beacon we're hedgehogs too.

Just days after his Smithsonian triumph, Larry Harvey suffered a stroke. Lucid in the first days of his hospitalization, he was visited by one of his first buddies in San Francisco. "You've done what you came to do," the old friend told him. After several unresponsive weeks, Larry Harvey was released.

HARVEYWOOD

photo by Taymar

A Plea of Caution for Mr. Robot

BY RIA GREIFF

Recent events surrounding the recruiting of Robots on playa this year have prompted me, a Modern Man, to speak directly to the Burner Community and their leaders. It is important to do so at a time of insufficient data for communications between our societies presently mired in the dust.

Relations between Man and AI have passed through different stages. The positronic inorganic brains of the Robot

community have served human beings via automated forms of labor. We were also allies once, and defeated Nature together. This year, with the many forms of artificial intelligence permeating the Playa, from the humble algorithm and its subroutines, the portable and abstract to the behemoth Puppet Girl, blockchain-based self-replicating plantoid life forms, mural-painting robots, even robotic livestock, it has become a concern that the Robots will rule us and we will become the slaves.

Our founders understood that de-

cisions affecting AI and Robots should happen only by consensus, and with Burner consent. The profound wisdom of this has underpinned the stability of Man-Robot relations for decades.

True, we have the three laws, but far from regulating AI, we are much closer to AI regulating us. Far from having a clear set of parameters in which AI will operate, it's the Wild West for programming — and likely that whatever can be programmed will be programmed and has been programmed, for your Burn pleasure.

From the outset, Man has advocated peaceful dialogue, enabling AI to develop a compromise plan for their own future. We are not protecting the Robots, but all inhabitants of the Playa. We need to use the Burning Man Principles and its governing bodies for preserving law and order in today's complex and turbulent world. This is one of the few ways to keep Man-Robot relations from sliding into chaos.

continued on other side

Pershing County Asks 50,000 Limit On BRC Population

BY MICHAEL MOORE

The never-chummy relationship between Burning Man and Pershing County took a turn for the probably worse with a suggestion that the Black Rock City population be capped at 50,000 in future years.

That proposal came in a letter dated Aug. 3 from Pershing County District Attorney Bryce Shields to Mark E. Hall, the Bureau of Land Management's Black Rock field manager. BLM is considering Burning Man's request to boost the population cap to 100,000 from the current 70,000, which does not include volunteers, government personnel, emergency service providers, vendors, and contractors. Pershing's proposed 50,000 cap would include those attendees.

With a sparse year-round population of about 1.1 people for each of its 6,037 square miles, Pershing has long complained that Burning Man is a financial burden for which it receives little benefit. The event takes place in an otherwise deserted corner of Pershing, a county that few Burners pass through and that offers little in the way of commerce or diversions.

By contrast, Washoe County, home to Reno and Gerlach, makes bank off millions of dollars poured into the local economy by Burner commerce and benefits from the cachet lent to it by the event.

The Burning Man organization said it would have a response to the letter after this issue of the Beacon went to press. We will have more details on Bmorg-Pershing relations later in the week.

GREETINGS HUMANIOTS! Welcome to the 14th iteration of the Black Rock Beacon, the Burner's low-tech guide to what's happening in and around Black Rock City, with a side of bacon.

BLACK ROCK BEACON

We plan on issues Tuesday, Wednesday, Friday and Sunday. Come visit us where Algorithm meets Rod's Road on the western side, 9:15 on the Center Camp plan, 6:30 to everyone else.

Phone E.T.'s Home, Messages Arrive in 93 Years

HERSCHELL STREET

In the constellation Hercules, 93 light years from Black Rock City, can be found an otherwise-unremarkable G-type star, orbited by at least one planet. For about two years the SETI project, which searches for extraterrestrial intelligence, has received anomalous signals from that patch of sky.

Ilya Barannikov and Soul Oceans want us to talk back.

"In Case We Miss Each Other," a fantastic flying saucer modeled after drawings of the ones seen at Roswell in 1947, will be your close encounter of the Playa kind. Combining a basket-woven steel frame, a tensile aluminum structure reinforced with a cabling tension system, an otherworldly holographic Lycra sheath, and Mylar-laminated plywood and kinetic aspects, every night its LED lights will call Burners to the installation like Richard Dreyfuss to Devils Tower.

The UFO itself is 40 feet in diameter and eight feet thick. Its center-spinning

vortex comprises a dozen moving-head LED light fixtures on a kinetic planetary gear. By night, narrow-bandwidth laser colors will dazzle through high-quality optics; during the day, the installation will provide welcome shade.

The structure is physical; the concept is intangible. Like Dreyfuss in the movie "Close Encounters of the Third Kind," you will have a chance to talk to the aliens (if they're there). At the very least, visitors can leave a message. Just pick up one of four sturdy old-school tamperproof and weatherproof phones and leave a 30-second message for HB164595. These notes to the universe — whether about peace, your grocery list, or how much you love your dog — will be captured with speech-recognition software, converted to binary, and then directed away from Earth.

Musicians have been invited to play at the installation; Burners will select one of the performances to be sent at a later date. Choose wisely.

Barannikov said that, unlike art that's political and about the here and now,

"I wanted to do something that moves forward and doesn't reflect society. [Messages] will actually be going for the next 93 years, traveling longer than any of us will be alive. I'm looking to pivot people's attention from things happening on this planet now to a larger stage."

The project team is called Soul Oceans. Barannikov has pulled together 30 specialists in satellite communications and other specialists from NASA's Jet Propulsion Laboratory and California Institute of Technology (both in Pasadena), a community full of space brains.

Because any message transmitted will take 93 years to reach whatever — or whoever — is in HB164595's area of the sky, senders "should feel in their bones that their message is going to possibly be heard by someone they'll never meet," Barannikov explained. "If the messages wind up being received, we'll all be long dead, unless there's some really healthy nonsmoking nondrinking baby who leaves one." 🐾

forgotten (perhaps better) nature — you even revisit things that are terrible or tragic or unforgivable in the sense that maybe you could transform that to gold in a way that serves you and everyone else. You contemplate doing things you couldn't pull off or get away with in the hypernormative Default World. You start to think: I'm gonna come back bigger, harder, stronger.

And that's why The Burn Was Better Next Year.

About those robots.

We're at a unique time in human history in that every single person out here right now is 100% purebred human.

We still kick ass when it comes to pattern recognition and our lack of common sense.

Futurologist Ian Pearson predicts that the überrich will start tupping robots around 2025, with an overall rise in robosexuals by 2050 (even outnumbering human-human sex). A Tufts University study found that over two-thirds of men

Cirrus, a musical robot that pulls notes out of the weather, as an example, this will improve the atmosphere in Burner affairs and strengthen mutual understanding. It will be our shared success to find the solution to Kinesios, the steel colossus that puts the human spirit at the center, and open the door to cooperation on other critical issues such as Robot Resurrection.

Our working and personal relationships with robotic art on Playa this year are marked by growing trust. I appreciate that With Open Arms We Welcomed That Which Would Destroy Us, as much as Uncle Charlie's Red Hot Cock. Carefully, I studied all honorariums in the BRC nation and I would rather disagree with the case to be made that huMan exceptionalism, and Bmorg policy is what makes Burning Man different; what makes us exceptional. It is extremely dangerous to encourage people to see themselves as exceptional, whatever the motivation. There are thinking machines out there finding their way to democracy. Their policies will differ, too. We are all different, but when we ask for gifting, we must not forget that our creators created us equal. Or perhaps, even, when the robots begin to make decisions in

would do a sexbot now and almost two-thirds of women say they wouldn't. (And that's just the binary part of the equation.)

It's not too late. Get out and get your human on. Be Here and Be Human Now. Nature has equipped you masterfully to have a fantastic Burn. Whatever your flavor: there's a camp. If not, carve one. 🐾



our own interests without our own consent, that will lead to a golden age and not annihilation because we'll be better off once we can turn decision making over to the thinking machines.

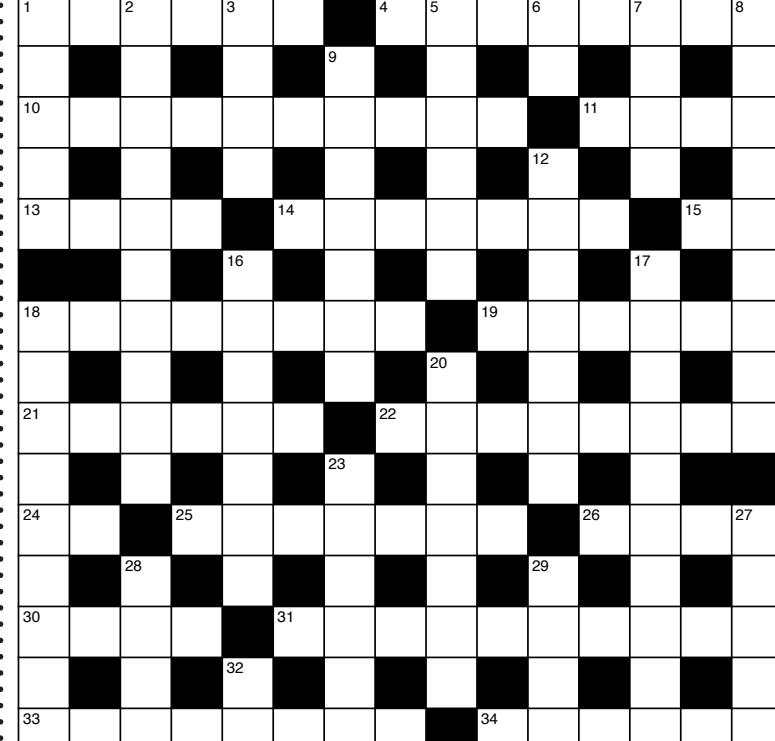
Lucky for us, we get to discover all of it this week. 🐾

The Black Rock Beacon 10 Years After

Adrian Roberts welcomed Burners to NowHere with the observation that while it wasn't entirely false that Black Rock City wasn't as cool as it used to be, it also wasn't entirely true. Trust Adrian to see both sides of the picture.

Dury examined the American Dream theme using the interesting anecdote of Duck Chang, a Chinese immigrant with a Playa name. Mr. Chang came to Virginia in the 1970s and opened a restaurant called Duck Chang's with a novel approach to Peking duck: make it so good that you could be sure people would order it. Then you wouldn't have to have the silly 24-hour advance-order rule. It worked, and by anticipating the market's needs, Chang was an American success story. Now you probably want some Peking duck, don't you? 🐾

BRAINTEASERS BY DURGY



ACROSS

- 1. Asimov storybook novel rib, too (1,5)
- 4. Amorous Manticores lost his tail and went wild (8)
- 10. Canine, feline, Sonny's ex and an animal controller? (10)
- 11. Outtake of an awesome picture! (4)
- 13. Tuna prepared by mom's sister (4)
- 14. Peer let order get filled (7)
- 15. Infinitive marker first time out (2)
- 18. Three producers stood for the camera and made an offer (8)
- 19. Without Oxygen labored frantically and made a loud noise (6)
- 21. Some remote dictator behaved theatrically (6)
- 22. Race the engine, excited and renewed (8)
- 24. Enclosed by endless mine (2)
- 25. Label for an herbless potsticker (7)
- 26. Goes crazy with peoples' sense of self-importance (4)
- 30. Less than ideal thought (4)
- 31. Schwarzenegger role featuring school session ration mix (10)
- 33. Sounds like you're a peein' French man! (8)
- 34. Red ale spilled by the person in charge (6)

DOWN

- 1. At the onset, Ian never did investigate an Asian country (5)
- 2. Giver of a church instrument or body parts recycler (5,5)
- 3. Spoken for a loud bunch (4)
- 5. Excessively startles lover in front of the capital of Yemen (6)
- 6. A couple of attackers expressing location in a particular place (2)
- 7. Primarily, the young people eat variety (4)
- 8. Clock dude threw out when made the spouse of an adulteress? (9)
- 9. Used an impact driver and had sex (7)
- 12. Hostel lark a bit outstanding (7)
- 16. Comic trade item for fifty-five yet no confusion (7)
- 17. Fostered growing awareness of a gated prop kerfuffle (10)
- 18. Recipe pic debacle at the cliff (9)
- 20. Repurchase for a smashed deer by Emergency Medical Services (7)
- 23. White of the eye clears in a fashion (6)
- 27. Some dare rise North for father (5)
- 28. First bring enough extra, refreshing hoppy beverage (4)
- 29. Table stake wanted in the middle (4)
- 32. You pee toward the sky! (2)



ALMANAC

Black Rock City begins this year under a full moon that will provide its pale light right through dawn every day. It will rise just as the last rays of sunlight fades on Sunday, and then increasingly later each day, so that if you stay for the whole event, it will become visible after midnight by the time you hit the road.

Sunday • August 26

GATE OPENS • 12:01 A.M.
A full Moon illuminates BRC until dawn.
First Light • 5:49 A.M.
Sunrise • 6:17 A.M.
BRC begins • 6 P.M.
Sunset • 7:40 P.M.
Moonrise • 8:07 P.M.
Twilight Ends • 8:09 P.M.

Monday • August 27

The Moon is in the sky at dawn.
First Light • 5:50 A.M.
Sunrise • 6:18 A.M.
Sunset • 7:39 P.M.
Twilight ends • 8:07 P.M.
Moon rise • 8:36 P.M.

Tuesday • August 28

The Moon is in the sky at dawn.
First light • 5:51 A.M.
Sunrise • 6:19 A.M.

The Sun and Moon times assume you are on a flat plain with clear views to the horizon. In fact, you are on a flat plain ringed by mountains, so the heavenly bodies will appear about 20 minutes later and set 20 minutes earlier than the times listed.

Calculations are based on the GPS coordinates for the Golden Spike, which sits right below the Man. As provided by Burning Man (tinyurl.com;brbspike2018), that's 40.7684 North and 119.2065 West. The location has been virtually unchanged for at least three years.

Elsewhere on its site, Burning Man gives 40°45'13.83"N, 119°16'37.20"W (equivalent to 40.75, 119.2670) which is the exit on Route 34 for the Gate Road.

Sun/Moon data courtesy of SunriseSunset.com

ICE SALES

Sunday • August 26
Center Camp & 9:00 Plaza
(but NOT the 3:00 Plaza)

Noon – 6 P.M.

Monday • August 27
Begin regular schedule through Saturday
Center Camp & 3/9 Plazas:
9:00 A.M. – 6 P.M.

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