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I, ROBOT • LUDDITE EDITION • TUESDAY AUGUST 28, 2018 • VOLUME XIV, NUMBER II • 9:15 @ ROD'S ROAD • WWW.BLACKROCKBEACON.ORG

CHOO-CHOOS PLAY CHICKEN

BY THE FRIDGE

The Great Train Wreck: Choo-choo chews Choo-choo at BRC.

"The rumble of the two trains, faint and far off at first, but growing nearer and more distinct with each fleeting second, was like the gathering force of a cyclone. Nearer and nearer they came, the whistles of each blowing repeatedly.... As they approached the fatal meeting place the rumbling increased, the roaring grew louder... a crash, a sound of timbers rent and torn, and then a shower of splinters.... There was just a swift instance of silence, and then as if controlled by a single impulse both boilers exploded simultaneously and the air was filled with flying missiles of iron and steel varying in size from a postage stamp to half of a driving wheel." — The Dallas Morning News. Sept. 16, 1896.

If that sounds like fun, you've come to the right place. The Great Train Wreck is an interactive art installation with two full-size, wooden replicas of steam locomotives facing off at opposite ends of a 200-foot length of track, an homage to the spectacle of staged train collisions from the turn of the 20th century. Each is 46 feet long, 8 feet wide, and 11 feet tall, and will be lit up with programmed LED effects. The team is building in interactive elements, including a steerable lantern, flames, steam and whistles, and creating



Photo by Taylor

an ambient field of train sounds that will emanate from the piece. The crew plans to destroy the locomotives in a staged, simulated crash and explosion on Friday, with mechanical wizardry and pyrotechnics.

The Wreck is unique in multiple ways. The installation was built at three locations. The locomotives are the work of the Collaborative Artisan Reno-Sacramento (CARS) team, which is descended from two former Circle of Regional Effigies (CORE) groups in the two cities, and will be lit up with programmed LED effects. The team is building in interactive elements, including a steerable lantern,

ramoto Foothills Region Burning Man Project near Auburn, California. The ambitious plan for the final burn on Friday includes a VW engine that will pull the locomotives together using a cable tow for the final crash, combining large scale moving elements with a pyrotechnic burn, unusual even for BRC. The goal is a pyrotechnic event that will be remembered for years, on the scale of the Crude Awakening fireball from 2008.

The Great Train Wreck was funded by an honorarium from Burning Man that covered about 20 percent of the \$40,000 budget; a grant from Reno Burners, as well as individual contributions,

covered the rest. The Playa provides, even in advance: The builds benefited from a donation of lumber from a marijuana operation that went legal and replaced its wood grow-house structure with steel; while heavy equipment, skills, and time came from the local community. More than 140 people have worked on this project. The Wreck is the brainchild of, and managed by, Sacramento's Debby Brower (Red Vixen). Key people who made it happen include John Thompson, Jeremy Evans (build leads), Jon Fadhl, Jacque Weimer, Bill Tubman, and Dale Weber. The team acknowledged Lynda Traves, Mark Cappel, Steve Durkee, & Rene Venegas for their support. Pyrotechnics are being managed by David Best's Black Rock Effects team - they have adopted this as their pyro-project for the year - and by Dimitri Timohovich who has overseen the Man Burn and also does fireworks for major public events like the Super Bowl and the Olympics.

We think we have the answer. But first, a history brief on Burner folklore. That plastic orange net out yonder, was the brainchild of veteran burner, Larry. Not that Larry (I love you Larry, you will be missed and thank you); I am referring to the Beacon's own Larry Breed (Ember). In 1996, the tenth Burning Man ever, Ember came up with the idea to erect a fence downwind of Black Rock City to snag errant Moop and the Trash Fence was born!

On Playa, the piece is at 3:45, and 1700' from The Man. From Wednesday to Friday, come watch "Art Speaks: A presentation of the artists' vision for The Great Train Wreck" at Everywhere Pavilion next to the Artery (6:15 and Esplanade) at 2 p.m. And, last but not least, on Friday at 9 p.m.: Total destruction and associated mayhem. 🐾

See page two for related article.

Daft Punk: Didn't They Or Did They?

BY RIA GREIFF

For several years now, it has been a Burning question: Did Daft Punk really play at the Trash Fence? Reports on social media have circulated that the French electronic-music duo have appeared at that outer limit of Black Rock City, but the situation is more complex than the usual celebrity sighting: Daft Punk typically performs wearing elaborate motorcycle-style helmets, so even if you think you see them, how would you know that it's not just a couple of impersonators?

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The birth of the Daft Punk at Burning Man joke, started with social-media discussions about set-list recommendations for DJs at theme camps in 2007. Daft Punk's name came up numerous times, most likely because they had just played Coachella and Wireless Music Festival and destroyed the crowds. That impact led to DJ sets on Playa, which then led to some silly Sparkle Pony witnessing some Burner dressed up in a helmet playing Daft Punk, and the lore spread like Temple Fire.

A simple case of popular culture seeping into the Playa.

From 2007 on, camps started to insinuate that they were having big DJ's playing to draw crowds to their camp. In 2008 for example, the "Owner-Operator for Camp Verboten" Omar said in an ePlaya thread that he had noticed in a party dedicated to the music of German electronic group Kraftwerk and Daft Punk, attendees "had showed their preference for Daft Punk. So in 2009, Omar's crew decided to lean in. "We changed the name from Kraftwerk/Daft Punk to Daft Punk/Kraftwerk. An unfortunate choice of words as it turned out with the result being an event that at least 2-3 case studies could be conducted on people believing what they want to believe."

What was unfortunate was that the camp underestimated the draw of Daft Punk and soon there were Rangers trying to break up the crowds. True Story.

And then, Life imitates art, Art imitates life, and the Burning Man citywide speculation about Daft Punk (now) playing (nightly) at the Trash Fence, is now being reported on in the Default World. In 2015, Justin Gunn decides to make it even more absurd by printing VIP "wristbands" for the event. Anyone who is even remotely familiar with the Burning Man Principles would know that this would

Art Haus Duxtaposes Music, Ballet, Robots

BY HERSCHELL STREET

Art Haus. In the middle of... everything!

"A lot of classical music gets stereotyped as stuffy and inaccessible because you have to go to a concert hall to experience it," according to Art Haus Creative Director and Producer Courtney Wise.

On the Playa, classical music is neither stuffy nor inaccessible.

Responding to the "I, Robot" theme, Art Haus presents a We Human future on Wednesday. There, humans mimic robots – except one day a year when they recapture their humanity. A ballet performance will occur beneath the Bjarke Ingels and Jakob Lange giant reflective mirror ball called The Orb – a Robert Dekkers work set to Steve Reich's minimalist 8 Lines (9:20, 2200). Dancers in silver masks. Violins, violas, electric pianos, flutes, and clarinets. A circle of art cars providing balcony seating, and the Carros de Foc giant puppets. Stuffy?

Thursday, beneath the giant chicken legs of Baba Yaga's House (4:45, 1800'), is an all-symphonic Pictures at an Exhibition, the Mussorgsky classic. Each of its movements is paired with other artists. Meet the marching giant centipede Myriapoda Robota, the gyrating belly dancer Anastasia Lattanand, tumbling children, the iSheep, giant puppets Euterpe and

Alberto, contortionist Irina Kazakova, and robot-costumed humans called Metatrons. The Robot Heart sound bus amplifies the music. It begins at sunset and ends in darkness lit by the appropriate twirls of fire spinners. "We wanted to present all that Burning Man has to offer," explained Wise. Performing at Baba Yaga House? Wise calls it kismet that the structure is at Burning Man for Art Haus to play beneath and about – remember one movement of the symphony is The Hut on Hen's Legs (Baba Yaga).

Beneath the five-story FoldHaus RadiaLumia geodesic sphere and its animated skin of origami shells (1:12, 1750'), Art Haus greets Friday's rising sun with "an indeterminate piece" called In C. Composed by Terry Riley, this amalgam of musical phrases of varying length permits every Burner who brings an instrument to join. Musicians follow tempo, repeating the posted phrases as often as they want, whichever they want – there's no conductor, so each player is in charge of their own contribution. Starting in the pre-dawn darkness with LEDs on, "The musicians will feed off each other, and when it feels right, when it feels like they're ready to end it, they'll end it."

But wait, there's more! Wednesday-Friday, the Art Haus camp at 4:45 and E offers happy hour chamber music from



Photo by Taylor

Art Haus invites Burners to participate in a musical performance to greet Friday's rising sun at the FoldHaus Radio Lumina geodesic sphere.

1 to 2 p.m. Burners seeking their inner dancer can work with choreographer Robert Dekkers on Tuesday at 1 p.m. Conductor Brad Hogarth's Wednesday 1 p.m. workshop lets Burners experience what it's like to be a conductor by leading an ensemble of musicians.

Art Haus encapsulates the Burning Man experience, collaborating with artists and Burners. You get your classical freak on. 🐾

Tuesday: Making Moves Dance Workshop with Robert Dekkers, 1 p.m. 4:45 & Elektro

Wednesday-Friday: Chamber Music 1-2 p.m. Wednesday's performance includes a Conducting Workshop with Brad Hogarth at Art Haus Camp, 4:45 & Elektro

Wednesday: We, Human. Ballet. 7 p.m. at The Orb

Thursday: Pictures at an Exhibition. Symphony. 7 p.m. at Baba Yaga House
Friday: In C. Sunrise/Music experience. 5:30 a.m. at Radia Luma

continued on other side

Those of us of a certain age grew up expecting that by now we would have Rosie the Robot from 'The Jetsons' in our house. And all we've got is a Roomba. — Juan Enriquez

BLACK ROCK BEACON

People who think they know everything are a great annoyance to those of us who do.

— Isaac Asimov

Ask Not What Black Rock City Can Do For You

BY JIMMY OLSEN

So, you made it. Welcome Home and all that. Want to make it fun and become an integral part of the event? Maybe make wonderful social contacts? If so, check out the V-Spots at Center Camp and the 3:00 and 9:00 Plazas for volunteer opportunities.

I walk the walk: I am volunteering for more than 170 hours this year, before, during, and after the event.

Volunteer for what? you may ask. Well, Greeters get to give a warm "Welcome Home" to the City. Playa Info gives you an excellent opportunity to meet others. Center Camp Cafe is a mini-playa in itself, a really nice place to see art, performance art, and live music all day long.



Volunteering for Temple Guardians provides a somewhat spiritual experience. Guardians stay mostly in the background to enable visitors to have

the experiences they seek without distraction.

Lamplighters have the coolest uniforms on Playa. The 5-7 p.m. shift pro-

vides a fun ritual experience. There is a party every afternoon, and you get a really nice medallion for participation. Just show up before 5 p.m. and you can get lit.

For the coolest job in the city, volunteer for Arctica. Nothing beats handing out ice on a hot afternoon. Volunteering for Earth Guardians allows you to see the Playa in a new and refreshing light. Or protect fellow Burners by volunteering for a fire perimeter.

Volunteering is especially relevant for non-artistic types. Each task seems like a lot of work, but I guarantee you will have a fun and memorable experience. Hope to see you working right beside me this year. You can meet me at the Beacon (when I'm not out working), 9:30 Rod's Road, which is near 6:30 and A.

Camera Lucida Offers Flaming Selfies

BY HERSCHELL STREET

Engineer/photographer Bill Evans' first installation for Burning Man as a lead artist is called Camera Lucida and embraces his affection for photography and light and fire and Burning Man. His Broddingnagian box camera provides souvenirs that are lit.

The installation recalls an artist's tool that became popular at the turn of the 19th century. The camera lucida enabled artists to trace projected light. Evans subscribes to David Hockney's theory that improvements in art accuracy are based on the availability of the camera lucida and similar gadgets.

It also reflects the observations of another Evans influence, Roland Barthes.

"Barthes asked in his book Camera Lucida that you consider as a photographer what is the point of the image you're taking," Evans explained. "By fully understanding what emotions, energy, and facts you want to convey the best images will emerge to capture that thing."

And that thing is Burners and the Playa.

"Just go ahead and think about what point you want to make: moody, serious, naked, clothed," said Evans. Your camera lucida is your own. Then capture it with this eight-foot cubed camera and ten-foot tall flash towers.

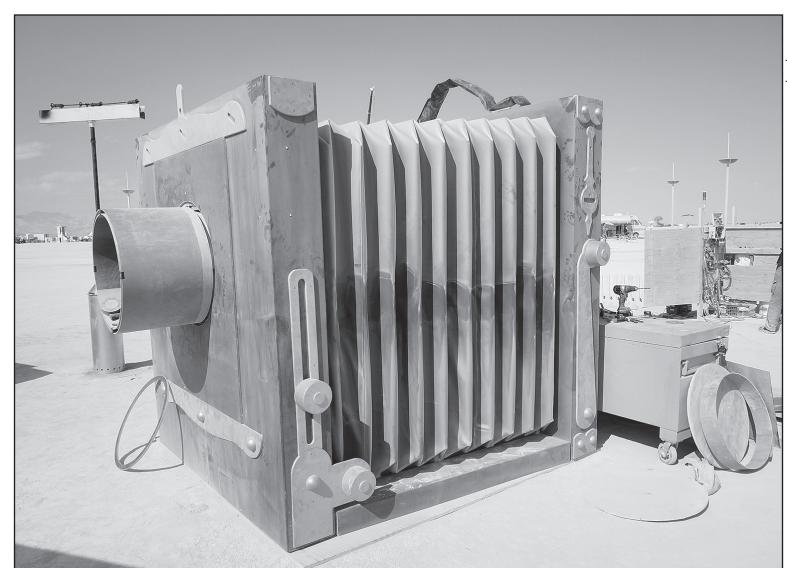
The giant camera's portal is an aperture onto the Playa. During the day it's a really cool pop art piece. From just be-

fore twilight until 2 am for seven nights, "participant Burner photographers" will enter and stand in the installation's enormous bellows. Evans sees the subjects as the film (remember film?). Giant fire poofers hiss propane for the flame effect designed and built by lead fire artist Tom Head. (Chris Wilson is lead designer.)

Step inside, stomp on the pedal, and flames erupt to light your photos for four seconds, maybe more. Shoot as many times as you want as the inferno flickers. The light is optimized for this view. Some might want to turn around to have the fire behind them. Burners do as Burners do. If need be, Evans thinks Burners in queue may serve as photographer for the Burner ahead. Crew members will help to keep photobombers out of the background.

For those less reliant on the kindness of strangers or friends, a selfie switch on the outside of the installation will activate a built-in camera for shooting a burst of photographs. These will be available on www.cameralucidaonfire.com a few weeks after the Burn. The Instagram is #cameralucidaonfire. Evans cautions the shy that the selfie download website is "less private," and while he will take basic steps to reduce simple Google access, he cannot guarantee that somebody else might not download them.

When it's over, not only will the Man have been burned, but, with Camera Lucida, Burners will have a record of their time in front of fire.



into the bus and it was a big celebration. Earlier that same night, a man named Tucker, The Festival Guy, obtains one of those trash fence orange VIP bands for the Daft Punk show. He goes and sees Michael Beegly do his thing and then he decides that he will now do this. And he does. 2016, 2017.

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And yet.

On Wednesday of Burn Week in 2015, Rick Metz, navigator and founder of the Gallant camp was hanging out at his bar, when he was approached by two

men. "They looked at me dead in the eye and said, 'How would you like to make Daft Punk happen?' 'We are Daft Punk.'" Metz took the pair to the FjorgynViking ship, an art car owned by Dennis Alumbaugh which has a great DJ crow's nest. "They had their suits on with coveralls and they had their helmets in a duffle bag," Metz continued, "I went over to Dennis and Nicki Smiles and told them that Daft Punk is here and they want to get up and DJ."

So did Daft Punk play at the Trash Fence? In any case my dear Burners, if you can't tell whether it was the real Daft Punk or not, does it matter?

Related to CHOO-CHOOS PLAY CHICKEN...

The Crash At Crush

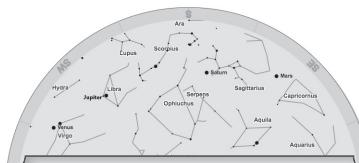
The colorful history of American railroads includes staged train collisions that took place in 1896 in Texas and between 1913 and 1917 at the California State Fair. Tens of thousands of people attended these events. The spectacular 1896 Texas event at Crush, or the Crash at Crush, as it came to be known, has some resonances with our event at BRC. Crush, Texas was a temporary "city" built as the site of the one-day publicity stunt in Texas, complete with water wells, a circus tent, and a special train depot. Publicity for the event attracted over 40,000 people.

The plans succeeded in creating a dramatic spectacle but also went horribly wrong, causing boiler explosions that killed and injured spectators with flying shrapnel. For the Great Train Wreck's Red, this account brings to mind memories of the post-Man Burn crowd breaking through the line and picking up embers.

After the spectacular collision and an explosion of the locomotives' boilers, "all that remained of the two engines and 12 cars was a smoking mass of fractured metal and kindling wood, except one car on the rear of each train, which had been left untouched," according to the Dallas Morning News report. "The engines had both been completely telescoped... There was nothing about the cars big enough to save except pieces of wood, which were eagerly seized upon and carried home as souvenirs."

LARRY HARVEY TEMPLE BURN

Join the Burner community for a solemn, respectful burn of Larry's Temple, located near the Temple of Galaxia, Friday evening at 9 p.m.



ALMANAC

The gods are strutting their stuff this year. Black Rock City will be treated to a veritable calvade, not of stars, but planets. If you have kids along, this would be an awesome time for an astronomy lesson.

The show kicks off just tonight before the Sun sets, around 7:30 p.m. when the lovely Venus makes a brief appearance in the southwestern sky. You'll have to be quick to catch her, she'll be close to the horizon and retiring early for the evening. The love goddess will be by far the brightest object in the western sky once the Sun is gone.

If you miss her, don't fret. Following are Jupiter, Saturn and Mars. Around 8 p.m., you should be able to see them, respectively to the southwest, south, and southeast. Jupiter and Saturn will appear as two bright lights; the former will be inside the star triangle that is Libra, quite close to the westernmost star, while his dad will appear on top of a bunch of fairly bright members of the constellations Scorpio and Sagittarius. Mars will be the only really noticeable object in the southeast, recognizable by its reddish hue.

The Moon will rise about an hour later, chasing the planets through the heavens until Mars sets around 3 a.m. That leaves Luna high in the southern sky until dawn, when Mercury gets into the act, a tiny dot that's a little dimmer than the stars in the Big Dipper to the north. You may catch it almost exactly due east just after 6 a.m. and right before the Sun scrubs clean the inverted bowl.

Data courtesy Dominic Ford's inthesky.org

Tuesday • August 28

Sunset 7:37 p.m.
Twilight ends 8:05 p.m.
Moonrise 9:04 p.m.

Wednesday • August 29

The Moon is in the sky at dawn.
First light: 5:52 a.m.
Sunrise: 6:20 a.m.

Sun/Moon data courtesy of SunriseSunset.com

HELP WANTED

In a dark time for newspapers, one publication holds forth the promise of light, truth, and bacon. Yes, that's us, the Black Rock Beacon. Help us keep tabs on Playa and consume really insane quantities of pork-belly products. If you write, edit, draw, do computer layout (InDesign), take photos, like schwag, or want to deliver our rag around town, come visit us. We have a daily meeting at 10 a.m., where we chew the fat. You'll find us on the outer ring of Center Camp, 9:15 Rod's Road, near the intersection of Algorithm and 6:30.



August 27, 2008

Technomad reported on "snarly weather and snarled traffic" at the start of the event, in a place where "whiteouts and grayouts blew earthly tents sky high into another dimension." (Coincidentally, the same thing happened this year.) An atmospheric cold front led to a Gate closure from about 4 p.m. to 8 p.m. and limited air arrivals. A veteran Burner advised a Virgin: "Be one with the dust."

Daft Punk continued

NEVER happen at Burning Man. At least not in the open. Duh.

Michael Beegly, who drives the Black Bird Bus art car stepped in to be one of two Daft Punk impersonators for Justin's prank. He described his experience: "At least a 100 people on the bus and a thousand and we played for two hours and it was one of the most glorious moments I have ever had at Burning Man. People were grabbing at us and trying to pull off the helmets. We said, 'Thank you' in a French accent. And our whole crew of friends rejoiced when I popped my head

into the bus and it was a big celebration.

Earlier that same night, a man named Tucker, The Festival Guy, obtains one of those trash fence orange VIP bands for the Daft Punk show. He goes and sees Michael Beegly do his thing and then he decides that he will now do this. And he does. 2016, 2017.

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