Cell Service
Rings In New Year

By Deb Prothero

Yes, your cell phone works on the Playa this year. Sort of. An art project meant to aid Third World telephony and a commercial incursion are bringing bars to Black Rock City. 

An experiment by Papa Lega will provide text messaging and limited voice service with Black Rock City. The system can handle some voice over Internet traffic to and from the Default World.

Papa Lega is named for a voodoo diety who monitors traffic at the convergence of the spiritual and physical worlds – and who also is linked to the legendary blue-guitarist Robert Johnson.

David Burgess and Harivind S. Samra, is a second attempt to bring cellular to Black Rock City, with the aim of developing a technology that would provide people in less-developed countries with 80-monthly service.

The service was expected to start Monday evening but was not apparent at press time. Once it begins, Burners with their phones turned on will receive a message asking if they’d like to use this service. A response with a phone number will set up a connection. The system will then respond that setup was successful and you can text your friends on the Playa.

Separately, over the last month, Department of Public Works employees have been able to phone home on occasion. A new cellular phone tower on leased land near Frog Pond has provided intermittent service for AT&T, Sprint and Verizon customers on the Playa, though it is like to degrade, said Burgess, as the arrival of Black Rock City – especially metal boxes on the ground – creates interference.

Welcome Home
With a (Traffic) Snarl

By Rockstar

Viewed as accidental art, the miles-long line at the gate for Black Rock City 2009’s kickoff is a significant success.

The party at the Greeter’s Station was memorably off-the-hook, with the first official arrivals greeted by naked revelers and blasts from water cannon. Efforts by the Burning Man organization to contain last year’s open abuse of early-arrival privileges meant fewer Burners carrying a heavier load of pre-opening setup than ever.

Meanwhile, with an unprecedented 130 theme camps denied placement and thus early arrivals, incoming traffic for the official city opening was heavy. Unusually brutal weather left this year’s handful of pre-Playans in a mood to throw down.

For the less-favored, things were considerably worse. Ignoues, a Virginian from Virginia incantaneously arrived at 11:30 p.m. Sunday night and did a seven-hour stretch in D Lot, where a group of Australians were allegedly handing out illicit substances to fellowiscum. Ignoues, who is on the Black Rock Beacon staff, said the lot was emptier on a frosty, in-first-out, meaning those who flagrantly ignored the do-not-arrive-after-midnight regulation entered the city relatively close to opening time, while those who prudently sought to arrive only a few minutes early spent long hours in purgatory.

By Monday afternoon, Sunday evening’s decorative ribbon of headlights had become a seaweed-sodden, monocline-choked horror. As of 1 a.m., Monday, the line at entry was reported to stretch past Gerlach, Kula, who is coordinating the Alternate What When guide, reported the Wadsworth gas station was flooded, putting enormous pressure on its fluids in Fernley, Empire and Gerlach, lines at the last two contributing to a 24-hour wait for those who planned to arrive Monday morning.

Radical self-control was called for on the final approach to Black Rock City. The two miles before Will Call were not equipped with porta-potties, and arriving citizens were forbidden to leave their cars. Some clandestine lending of RV facilities occurred as generous Burners helped the less-well-accommodated relieve the strain.

Officially, the Burning Man organization was unperturbed. “Our concern,” said spokeswoman Andie McFarland, “is that traffic not back up to the two-lane freeways,” a concern among the least of the worries of car-bound Burners.

Snow Koan Lights Up the Playa

By Rod Allen

Snow Koan Solar has been bringing solar arrays to the Playa for four years — but this year, the camp has brought enough equipment to power a whole village at Black Rock City, or fire to 10 Californian energy-sipping homes.

Will Power, Snow Koan Solar’s camp leader, said that if the number of gasoline-powered generators on the Playa could be reduced, Burning Man would not only be a cleaner event but Burners might save some money, too. “They care about the earth with their ‘leave no trace’ policy,” he said, “but they don’t seem to give a shit about the air.”

This year’s Snow Koan camp has an array of 144 solar panels, generating 24.5 kilowatts of electricity at full power (less if it is cloudy, and a little less if the panels get dusty.) Thus, Snow Koan is supplying all of Nectar Village and some other camps too.

Some of the users are supplied directly by means of a microgrid, where others get their electricity delivered in the form of heavy-duty batteries, of the kind used in fork lift trucks, which are recharged by the solar array.

Power, associated, Still Marc, said anyone, whether a hobbyist, homeowner, or business, can save money using solar power. The panels, which cost $600 each, supply 175 watts, and in California you get paid by the state for all the surplus energy you pump back into the system.

Power is interested in electricity since he was three years old, he said, and he is frustrated by the way in which people fail to understand the potential of solar-powered systems.

He was critical of the Burning Man organization for using gas-powered vehicles at Black Rock City, and says that his main objective, prior to taking over the world, would be to see the BMorg banning two-stroke scooters on the Playa and then to adopt electric-powered vehicles overall.

Snow Koan Solar can be found at DNA and 8:30.
The Watch

By Mitch

April 20 is the day of the 20th birthday of my iPod, the most unholy sight in all of pigdom. For more information, visit our website at www.blackrockbeacon.org or follow us on Twitter at http://twitter.com/BlackRockBeacon.

To meet you, hope you guess my name. At their party I was the most unmentionable guest. But I stepped up and Rock the Playa with real nonelectronic music. ZanZibar Lounge & Bar, Chaos and 7:30.

Larry Harvey, co-founder, Burning Man, San Francisco:

The “wdydwyd?” project started on the Playa in 2004. Events passage written in 1802 by the Reverend William Mush. She says, “Way we see the world,” she says. Stories people tell, and how those stories define the future. Investigate another series of American legends: around American folk tales, and this year returns to music. Rolling and Stoned Party @ Zanzibar

Gemini (May 21-June 20):

No, paradigmatic studies are not what you think they are.

Delandus Clark, machinist, Portland, Oregon:

Because I am an insecure father looking for validation in a world that doesn’t think I exist. Because I am an insecure father looking for validation in a world that doesn’t think I exist.

Chassy Cleland. Cleland made an appearance last year aged ornate metal, surrounded by faux gears, and able to tell time.

The Watch is the brainchild of Brooklyn-based Chassy Cleland. Cleland made an appearance last year at Black Rock City with “The Cart,” an installation inspired by Plato’s famous allegory and centered around American folk tales, and this year returns to further investigate another series of American legen- dary creation myths. “I like peddling art that is about the people stories, and how those stories define the way we see the world,” she says.

For “The Watch,” she started with a famous passage written in 1802 by the Reverend William Mush, which has become the precursor to the modern Intelligent Design creation movement. The statement analogizes just as much as just telling a story. The resulting work only under a license identical to this one. The conditions may be waived if you obtain permission from The Black Rock Beacon. The Black Rock Beacon is the official newspaper of Black Rock City LLC and is not responsible for the content of any third-party websites linked to from this site.

Events

Call for Collaborative Artists & Photographers. The “wdydwyd?” project started on the Playa in 2004. Nearly 1,000 Burners have answered the question, “Why do you what you do?” for a portrait. Many have replicated the project in their communities post-Burn. If you want to be a Collaborative Artist and shoot photo or videos of Burners for this project, come to the installation (on Playa near Esplanade: 8:45) around 3 p.m. Tuesday, Wednesday, or Thursday, and ask for one of the organizers.

Location Location Location

By Mitch

Gerlach is the Default World town nearest to Burning Man, and it turns out, desert too. In 2008, the Burning Man organization purchased three plots of land in the desert metropolis at “fire-sale prices,” said Maid Marian, Burning Man’s director of business and communications, perhaps you were out in the sun too hallucination; perhaps you were out in the sun too hallucination. She said that local investors had been “hoarding” land in town, in hopes of making a killing from the power plant that Sempra Energy Co. had planned to build in 2005. (See the Black Rock Beacon issue of Aug. 31 of that year at http://www.blackrockbeacon.org/archives/2005_08_31/Nuclearism_BRB.pdf for more information.)

She added that Gerlach real estate is usually sold among locals and “we’re fortunate there are enough to be considered locals.”

Larry Harvey, the Burning Man founder, said the organization “never believed in the power plant — real estate is not going to boom in Gerlach.” When prices plunged, he said, the organization decided to pick up the three plots on Main Street as an investment. “It’s not as if we can afford real estate in San Francisco,” he said.

The land consists of two vacant lots and one “dilapidated theater,” Harvey said. He did not provide further details. The organization already owns property in the Gerlach area, including the work ranch where the Man is built and Department of Public Works staff is housed. The purchase came to light during a Black Rock Beacon review of the annual budget posted on the Burning Man website.