W
ether you’re a new
comer, or a blast
veteran, you’re greeted
at the Black Rock City gatel
with the words “welcome home.” It’s a recognition of the idea
that Black Rock City, even though it
takes existence for just seven days in
the desert, is where your heart and soul live — and the other 51
weeks of the world are spent away from home, giving you time to reflect, dream about and plan your next trip home. But how did your home get to be the way it is today?

Semi-macho

Black Rock City has its origins in a 1986 semi-mystical, semi-macho, semi spontaneous gathering on Baker Beach in the Bay Area where father figure Larry Harvey and a few buddies set fire to a small wooden figure. (Yes, and there are other origins too, including the Cacophony Society, Mary Grauberg, and the thousands-of-years-old tradition of ceremonially burning ag-pigs, often at Solsitice or the other.) By 1990 the burners had been ejected from the San Francisco beach and had to go play in the northern Nevada desert, where for some years their main annual activity seemed to be driving rented cars around the desert and shooting live firearms at each other.

Forbidden

It all seems very unlike the experience you are about to undergo this year. Firearms, for instance, are absolutely forbidden; and the Burning Man Organization (Bmorg) likes to be known in public as opposed to illegal drugs, though heaven knows many of the activities at Black Rock would not be possible without some sort of artificial stimulus. You can burn things, of course, but only in officially-designated areas with health and safety regulations strictly imposed. (This newspaper believes that smoking tobacco in the desert, as in Nevada’s casinos, is still legal. Don’t stub your cigarette out on the ground, though.)

Madly unsustainable

Most of us who have been drawn back year by year to the inhospitable, madly hot, madly cold, madly dusty, unsustainable desert come back not for the music, not for the food, not for the sheer bravado of continuing existence in the desert climate, but because of the population — the 60,000 people who call Burning Man home. We are the Burners for whom the plays will provide, and far from leaving no trace we know that simply from being present on the playa there will be a profound impression left both on us and on those with whom we interact. And far from radical self-reliance, our most profound memories will actually be of the kindness of strangers, the helping hand or evening cocktail, the delicious meals and the hugs and kisses we all give and get.

So don’t believe that stuff about the Bmorg providing a magic experience for you; the magic experience is made by you, the magic is made by you, and you, and you. And who would want to be anywhere else in the world, as August gives way to September, but home?

GREGGESS BURNERS
The Black Rock Beacon is pleased to bring you the ninth annual installment of Black Rock City’s saltiest independent newspaper. After today’s issue, we’re aiming to publish on Tuesday, Wednesday, Friday, and Sunday. Wanna help out? Drop by any morning this week for our 10:30 a.m. meetings, where we chew the fat and dole out assignments. We’re looking for writers, editors, layout folks, photographers, illustrators, schwag-happy delivery people, and people who like makin’ bacon. Find us at 1:00 on the Inner Circle of Center Camp. Lux. Veritas. Lardum.

FEDS OKAY 68,000 POPULATION CAP

Rod Allen

Whether you’re a new veteran or a blast veteran, you’re greeted at the Black Rock City gateline with the words “welcome home.” It’s a recognition of the idea that Black Rock City, even though it takes existence for just seven days in the desert, is where your heart and soul live — and the other 51 weeks of the world are spent away from home, giving you time to reflect, dream about and plan your next trip home. But how did your home get to be the way it is today?

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The government of Nevada is starting to wrestle with the issues surrounding its recently-enacted medical marijuana law. But it has made it clear that medical marijuana cards issued by other states, such as California, will not be recognized by Nevada law enforcement, and possession of marijuana by anyone other than a Nevada citizen with the appropriate paperwork remains illegal.

The Nevada medical marijuana law, finally signed by Governor Brian Sandoval in June this year, tackles the detail of growing and prescribing marijuana in the state. The use of medical marijuana has been legal in Nevada since passage of a constitutional amendment in 2000, but until now there has been no legal way of growing or buying buy marijuana.

Among the regulations introduced by the new law is one which limits the number of dispensaries in any city to one tenth of the number of regular pharmacies (which will not sell marijuana). Thus there will only be two dispensaries opened in Reno, and possibly two further in Sparks.

Each dispensary will have to pay an upfront registration fee of $30,000, show it has access to working capital of at least $250,000, and pay an annual renewal fee of at least $5,000. Sales of marijuana will be subject to a 2% excise tax as well as regular sales tax. 25% of the money raised will fund the marijuana regulatory system; the balance must be spent on education.

The law takes effect in 2014, although medical recommenda-
tions are already being issued by Nevada doctors.

Medical marijuana sales, now permitted in 20 states, are still illegal under Federal law, and the Feds have been ambivalent over whether they will pursue medical marijuana users, sellers or growers. Only Colorado and Washington have legalized recre-
tional marijuana use, and they’ve already made it clear that the no-tolerance policy they follow at Burning Man.

RegionalstospayBMorg?

Burning Man founding father Larry Harvey met over a hun-
dred adoring burner fans at the Bedroom Bar in London’s trendy Soho in June. The purpose of his visit was to check out the regulations and affiliations, and to make a featured appearance at Le Web, an international confer-
ence of on-line entrepreneurs at London’s Central Hall.

Larry said that the BMorg wanted to spread expertise and knowledge throughout the world, but he also thought that regions should pay BMorg a consultancy fee in return for its help and support.

He said that it was amazing to see so many people coming to meet their founders/leaders/idol in a Q&A session organized by regional rep Yongs.

Questions from the audience addressed issues such as “leave no trace” — apparently in the early days photography was regarded as leaving a trace but Larry pointed out that BM doesn’t ad-
vertize and the dissemination of photos taken at the event helped to publicise and spread the word about BM, so he prevailed over the photog-haters.

He emphasized that BM must be open to everyone, despite col-
leagues who wished to fire on frat boys as they arrived on the playa, though he didn’t address the fil-
tering effect of ticket prices.

Cryptic Crossword by Durgy

ACROSS
1. Graft that contains the log you see splin-
ed from John's forest (5,4)
6. Talk about the motor bike (6)
9. Multa was wrong about the tip (8)
10. Football team unseen above (4,4,2)
11. The reason one says the serpent fish (9)
12. Lose water when they dance to a symphony (8)
13. Sombre (5)<!-“The creatures outside looked from pig to man, and from man to pig, and from pig to creature, but that was impossible to say which was which.” —G. Orwell

Larry on the big screen at Le Web

Black Rock Beacon - Today's Weather Hot and Dusty