RADICAL RITUAL • GATE EDITION • SUNDAY, AUGUST 27, 2017 • VOLUME XIII, NUMBER I • 3:00 & AWE, WITHIN IRON ROSE • WWW.BLACKROCKBEACON.ORG

Gate Rituals

BY MITCH

One ritual in which we all partake is the journey to the Playa. A few fly in, a few parachute in, and a few live in Gerlach and its environs and do not have much of a journey at all.

For the rest of us, it is the road and the sometimes epic traffic jam. But it is also the trip to the airport or the stop at a favorite diner or watering hole. Each year, as we draw nearer to Black Rock City, we also draw nearer to each other. Few things are Burnier than the parking lots of Reno supermarkets on the Friday and Saturday before the Gate opens.

The delicious anticipation of the approach is one of the best things about Burning Man. Yet ritual can also become rut. A worthy goal would be to vary the trip each year by finding one deviation from the previous route.

While for veteran Burners, the ritual is in the road, that is new ground for new-bies. Their first Black Rock City ritual is a literal rite of passage. When they cross the Gate, they are participating in a recreation of the first time the event took place on the Playa. A line was drawn in the dust and those who had never been to the barren yet majestic desert were told that once they crossed it, everything would be different.



Theme: Radical

BY MITCH

This year's Radical Ritual theme is such an obvious choice for an event that is one big ritual built upon many other rituals that you might wonder why it took so long to devise it. Fact is, we have been here before. The theme is not new at all, it is a virtual clone of 2003's Beyond Belief, with perhaps a sprinkling of Rites of Passage from

Consider the marching orders for each year that appeared in the theme announcements on the Burning Man website:

Beyond the dogmas, creeds, and metaphysical ideas of religion, there is immediate experimetable beyond belief, beyond the dogmas, creeds, and metaphysical ideas of religion, there is immediately interest. ence. It is from this primal world that living faith arises.

"In 2017, we will invite participants to create interactive rites, ritual processions, elaborate images, shrines, icons, temples, and visions. Our theme will occupy the ambigustunningly sublime. The human urge to make events, objects, actions, and personalities sa-cred is protean. It can fix on and inhabit anyrelease this spirit in the Black Rock Desert."

ate experience. It is from this primal world that living faith arises. The intention of Beyond Belief is to explore this mystery.

"In 2003, we will invite participants to create interactive rites, ritual processions, elaborate images, shrines, icons, temples, and visions. Our theme will occupy that ambiguous terrious **ground** that lies between reverence and ridicule, faith and belief, the absurd and the faith and belief, the absurd and the sublime. The human urge to make events, objects, actions, and personalities sacred is prote-an. It can fix on and inhabit anyone or anything. one or anything. This year our art theme will release **this** spirit in the Black Rock Desert." This year our art theme will release **that** spirit in the Black Rock Desert."

That's a stunningly sublime bit of self-plagarism. You can give Founder Larry Harvey

that's a stuffner stuffner without musical accompanient). That was the benefit of the doubt, at least to the extent that he did it consciously and to some purpose. The question is: what purpose?

Larry is obviously fascinated by the quasi-religious aspects of Burning Man (Also see Vault of Heaven and Cargo Cult). Religions use rituals, but rituals need not be religious. Burning a gigantic wooden figure every year is a ritual, and burning a temple the night after (with or without musical accompanient) is another. Virgins riting the hell upon their arrivals at Block Pock City is a both a ritual and a rite of ringing the bell upon their arrivals at Black Rock City is a both a ritual and a rite of passage (whatever happened to spanking?), the Lamplighters going solemnly about their business (we camped next to them one year, they are not always quite so solemn)

is a ritual, stealing the street signs is a (stupid) ritual, a dip in Pyramid Lake (buy a permit) on your way back to the Default World is a ritual.

So it seems that the idea behind this year's theme is to ritualize Beyond Belief, which was based on the idea that the Burning Man principle of immediate experience is the source from which faith arises. Radical, dude.

Is Bernie a faithful kind of guy? If he were filling out an online dating form, he might identify himself as "spiritual but not religious." Poor fellow. He's spending this Burn sequestered in a temple (not The Temple and not the Other Temple, just a temple), with a virtual spit up his butt.

Burners can gaze at that right beneath the Man, which seems anatomically incorrect. The omphalos — Greek for belly button — is the bottom of an axis that passes through Bernie's spine, metaphorically adding injury to insult, continuing upward and "emerging high above the temple as a golden spire." There was also an omphallos in 2003, though spelled with two I's in 2003, though spelled with two I's.

While this year's spire is meant to connect to the Golden Spike, the marker ritual-istically placed under the Man each year and the reference point from which Black Rock City is laid out, the artist's conception on the Bmorg website makes it look like Bernie is wearing Tom Terrific's Thinking Cap. Speak of beyond belief. Still, the themes often work out better than they sound, and copying an old one to illustrate a successor has a certain amount of intellectual snark appeal. So here we

go, kicking off another week and another year of ritualistic behavior with trappings of religion and considerably more bacon.

Once Knew: Rod Allen We

BY MRS. LUCKY

Burners

You must be brief when you write for the Beacon. Each inch of broadsheet is allocated. Rod Allen could plug in your thumb drive, click on a story, and with a few adroit taps remove 40 surplus words. "Why those?" I asked him once.

"They didn't advance the story."

I had been struggling alone in my steamy trailer. Writing tight is tough when your friends are leaving to dance. These days every phrase I diddle too long gets marched up Rod's editorial scaffold.

I met Rod Allen and his partner Nod Miller at their first Burning Man in 2007 when he volunteered at the Black Rock Beacon. He was a big, white-bearded British guy in a loud shirt and failing health, holding a stuffed panda. Nod had a sharp wit, flashy glasses, and tendrils of magenta braids framing a friendly, forthright face.

Being around Rod and Nod was part "Mother Goose" and part "Clockwork Orange."

"It's time to shoot up, love," she'd say to remind him to take his insulin.

They cruised the Playa in a black London hack and took a Basil-Fawlty-like glee in teasing silly Americans. But when it came time to prepare a story for publication, it was quite apparent he was a pro.

Rod Allen was born with a digital mind in an analog world. He had a gift for arriving at the threshold of media changes. In the early 1970s he was a British ad man in New York City. When the 1980s dawned, he re-



turned to the U.K. bent on a career in journalism. He championed satellite transmission as an executive producer of London Television, an early non-BBC network. He chaired the Edinburgh TV Festival and edited and published Broadcast Magazine. In the 1990s, he headed Harper Collins' effort to take the dictionary from paper to pixels.

For all his professional accomplishments he was soppy creature. A stuffed bear collector who once called Nod from an overseas conference in tears, his beloved Panda-Panda had been left beneath the hotel bed. A special flight home was

Rod and Nod met on an academic panel, later collaborating on scholarly work including a 1993 paper that anticipated the rise of reality television. Their domestic relationship developed over time. They cared for Nod's aging mother at home until her death last year. They delighted in finding the name of Rod's son, a sound technician, in the closing credits of "The West Wing" and went to back to Burning Man together.

Being edited, like being kissed, is not always a good thing. It is an intimate act. Your work awakens in the hands of a fine editor. The best editors, like the best lovers, leave you better the next time. They pipe advice in your ear long after the encounter.

Rod died on Christmas morning. His son Nicholas Allen survives him, as do three grandsons, a pair of curly-coated Cornish cats, and Panda-Panda. Nod Miller has lost the love of her life. Were it possible to "shoot up love," we at the Black Rock Beacon would pass her a powerful dose.

Now that Rod won't be coming back to Burning Man, with his deft edits and crazy shirts, a bit of magic is gone. I'll remember his advice when I'm desperate to finish up so I can get out to dance. The story must advance. Beacon writing need be terse.

WELCOME TO VOWHERE

BY MRS. LUCKY

In 2001, an artless arrow spraypainted on plywood pointed us to Burning Man. It was Saturday, August 25. Since early afternoon, our truck had shimmied over the washboard surface of Jungo Road, only to arrive at this desolate intersection, more real on the map than on the ground.

We stopped and took stock as the sun descended in the windshield. No tickets, no costumes, no gifts, no survival guide, a few granola bars, two gallons of water, and a funky truck with pool-balls on bedsprings that clattered and clicked on top of the topper. I slid over on the bench seat and tucked my hand under Mr.

Lucky's thigh. We pushed west, following the arrow.

Whoever you are, firsttimer, novice, or long-time Burner, welcome. Measure your preparation against this norm. Today, our level of ignorance would be nearly impossible to attain.

Nowhere, wear, no wares. We inhabit the uninhabited, wear it bare, and force sell to take a backseat to share. Our culture has entered the outer world's vernacular. This is no longer unknowable

In 2001 we had a flat tire behind the final ridge of that desolate route. A stationwagon carrying Chad, Tony, and Cheryl from Chicago stopped to help. They too had taken the wild road from the east. At sunset we heard the far-away shout.

Darkness brought drums and the far glow that marked our Emerald City.

Underway again, our truck rounded the ridge, revealing a strand of pearly headlights strung 10 miles back on 447, while the satanic red of taillights curled off to the Playa. That's when I became a Burner, helped by strangers, drawn into the tribe, entering the great sum of nowhere.

It's changed. More cops, fewer

cock-rings. No one gets in without a ticket. The food is better, the potties cleaner, and we're still pretty earnest at the Black Rock Beacon.

Here's my code. Don't drink gimlets with Germans. Catch sunrise at the trash fence. Drop your grudges. Hold on to your trash. Blow off a commitment. Make an effort to visit your friends from home. Writing is worth it later. Do not accept gifts you do not want. Never act like a customer. If you fail, do it epically. Stand beneath the Temple of Gravity and shoulder a boulder.

Remember, no matter how many



times you've done it, it's always tough to see the Man fall. He burns, and burns, and then drops in a moment, while you're watching the fire-eater in bootie-shorts.

To truly know this nowhere, less real on the map than in the mind, we must live it beginning now, Sunday, August 27, 2017. Let's make it real and surreal, with all the gumption we can muster. Whoever you are, no matter how empty, Burning Man opens itself to your Imagination.

LETTER FROM THE **PRESIDENT**

BY ALI BABA

At the end of 2016, I wrote to let you know that we had persevered and produced three issues, despite a skeleton crew and small budget. I spoke of fundraising and recruitment to ameliorate these situations. The fundraising didn't happen this year, but the recruitment drive was a resounding success, with dozens of new Beaconites joining us after the Jack Rabbit Speaks published my call for Burnalists.

This cadre of new writers produced the greatest catalog of pre-researched articles [awaiting on-playa verification] that we've had in years.

The Black Rock Beacon has

been serving as Black Rock City's Hometown Paper since our founding in 2005, after Bmorg dissolved the Black Rock Gazette. We're proud to present this slice of independent journalism to the citizens and observers of BRC 2017. Please enjoy this, look for the rest of our issues on-playa and online, and follow us on social media to read more stories throughout the year.

This is our gift to the city.

Lux. Veritas. Lardum.

PUBLICATION SCHEDULE: The Black Rock Beacon will have four more issues: Wednesday, Thursday, Saturday, and Sunday.

BLACK ROCK BACON

it were, put in accord with that wisdom, which is the wisdom that is inherent within you anyhow. Your consciousness is being re-minded of the wisdom of your own life. I think ritual is terribly important." - Joseph Campbell

FUTURE HISTORY OF BRC, PATCHED UP

BY RIA GRIEFF

In 2016, my brother, GroundScore 2, and I arrived at 4:30am on Monday. Unsure of what to do, we grabbed our bikes and headed toward the apex of the Trash Fence — which is also the edge of the known world. We stumbled upon a wooden contraption with embroidered patches and cranked the wheel to take our allocated one. Treasure in hand, we turned our gazes to where the Playa meets the sky, and reveled in the fiery red sphere overcoming the horizon alongside other daybreak revelers.

On assignment for an art review this year, I was asked to find out about an honorarium plaques project out of Chicago: "All we know about it is the name: 0206z. BRC Historic Landmark Plaques — Kelley & Ski Patrol Chicago, IL." Thanks to social media, I knew a guy who knew a guy who knew this guy and I managed to get a hold of

Heyu said, "I don't want to go into too much detail, we at Ski Patrol find that discovery adds to the art experience. This project involves historic markers that are for the most part fictitious, set in the future, and are very tongue-incheek about Burning Man culture. When someone reads about unauthorized mutant vehicles being sent to "D" lot, this also hopefully, will ask questions about what "D Lot" is. The plaque project is meant to expand the culture in a humorous way."

Ski Patrol has been doing guerrilla work for several years at Burning Man, with members scattered in Phoenix,

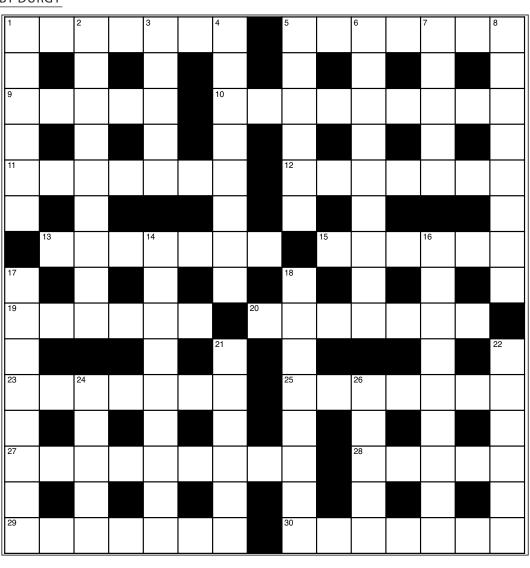
Michigan and Chicago. They wish to remain anonymous because, "Art at BRC should be a gift, not about selfpromotion." This year, these underground fighters are randomly distributing their works of farce throughout Black Rock

Explaining a project from last year, Heyu sent me a photo and said, "We gave away 5,000 of these patches." Pausing for a moment, slightly stunned, I then shot a photo back to him and wrote, "I picked up one of them." It was the embroidered patch that my brother and I had scored – one of 5,000 in a sea of 70,000 people.

Heyu replied: "That was your reward for going all the way out to the Trash Fence." Net net, satirical gifts for amusement that you might be lucky enough, like me, to serendipitously receive. Forever from the trenches — GroundScore 1



CRYPTIC CROSSWORD



- 1. Cad! Liar! Subversive! (7)
- 5. One who didn't take trash to the back door (7)
- 9. Let it corrupt the name (5) 10. Filled with malice, 158 rot horribly (9)
- 11. Rabble at giant upheaval (7)
- 12. Pensioner to sleep in the middle of bed (7) 13. Atones for a slithering serpent (7)
- 15. Pain dealer terrorizes a district group (6)
- 19. Unblemished tin cat dances (6) 20. The bane is insane at a low level (7)
- 23. Without Swiss leader, esoteric weird clique (7)
- 25. Imperial without a risk (7)
- 27. Estimate a viola nut made (9)
- 28. Pure first unit never could use treachery (5) 29. Let peer become well stocked (7)
- 30. Reveals former stances (7)

- 1. You end trial disrupting ceremony (6)
- 2. Confused last son remitted harm (9)
- 3. Espresso foam and whipped cream (5) 4. Will Evita teach some to rise up? (8)
- 5. Darter made slow (6)
- 6. Egalitarian pricing policy is middling exchange (4,5)
- 7. First space orbit launches a Russian about the sun (5)
- 8. About three creatures ate to refresh (8) 14. Censure for ore I exact brutally (9)
- 16. Engages between scenes? (9)
- 17. Criticize shade and find out! (8)
- 18. Trust I can reel wildly (8) 21. Delaware sin gadget (6)
- 22. Lazy ones lost high school gambit (6)
- 24. Lit up bizarre flower (5)
- 26. Top lumpfish portion is fat (5)

What the street Names mean

take its name from the week between the Jewish New Year and the Day of Atonement, the religion's highest holidays. The Days of Awa are a period of reflection and repentance, when God first writes each person's fate into the Book of Life and then finalizes the decision. The period begins this year at sundown on Sept. 20.

Breath - Ritual breathing acts known as it is prescribed by Christian denominations for insufflation and exsufflation (the first can be taken to mean "snorting" in a medical context) were common in early Christianity, usually connected with baptisms. While the words respectively mean "blowing in" and "blowing out" they were used interchangeably to denote repudiation of the Devil and consecration by breathing, hissing, or puffing.

Ceremony - A close synonym for "ritual," a in Celtic countries.

Manager Jocko.

organizations like the Post Office.

Uncle Larry wants YOU!

ceremony is an act or sequence of acts performed Inspirit - Larry gave us a clue in his theme essay: for a special occasion. The word implies multiple participants, while ritual does not.

Dance - Various kinds are used in rituals. The fire dancing that precedes the Burn is an example.

out they were used interchangeably to denote made sacred. As a noun, hallow is an archaic way that is depicted as a torpid female snake located repudiation of the Devil and consecration by to say "saint," which is why the evening before at the root chakra, the lowest of seven major the Holy Spirit The rituals can include blowing to say "saint," which is why the evening before at the root chakra, the lowest of seven major the Holy Spirit. The rituals can include blowing, All Saints Day is called Halloween, a hotbed of power centers in a human body, found at the rituals that likely developed from pagan customs base of the spine. It can be roused from its stupor

"The experience of spirit is identified with breath. The word inspiration has a pedigree that extends back to the middle of 16th century, deriving from the even more ancient Latin word inspirare, Awe - While many rituals inspire a certain Eulogy - Eulogies are speeches of praise, often amount of awe, this year's A street seems to take its name from the week between the last rituals they will ever attend.

Lowish New Year and the Day of Atonoment dictionary kind of word, an intransitive verb meaning "to infuse or excite spirit in" or

by ritual and other methods. As it awakens, it rises and passes through the other chakras, activating each in turn.

Lustrate - To purify using an expiatory sacrifice, ceremonial washing, or other ritual action. The Lustrate Process was a studio album by Swedish death metal band The Project Hate MCMXCIX, released in 2009. It featured such toe tappers as "See the Filth Become Flames in This Furnace."



Gate opens: 12:01 a.m

First light: 5:51 a.m. Sunrise: 6:19 a.m. Black Rock City begins: 6:00 p.m. A nearly full-quarter moon is in the sky at Sunset: 7:38 p.m. Twilight ends 8:07 p.m Moonset: 11:12 p.m

Monday • August 28

First light: 5:52 a.m. Sunrise: 6:20 a.m. Ice sales begin: 9 a.m. Ice is available at Center Camp and the 3 and 9 o'clock portals 9 a.m.-6 p.m. through Sunday and 9 a.m.-noon on Labor Day Sunset: 7:37 p.m. Twilight ends 8:05 p.m. The moon is in the sky at dusk (42%) Moonset: 11:48 p.m.

Tuesday • August 29

First light: 5:53 a.m. Sunrise: 6:21 a.m. Sunset: 7:35 p.m. Twilight ends 8:04 p.m. The moon is in the sky at dusk (51%) (First

Moonset: 12:11 a.m. (Wednesday)

Wednesday • August 30 First light: 5:54 a.m. Sunrise: 6:22 a.m. Next issue of the Beacon appears.

THE SYSTEM IS DOWN

The Volunteer Resource Team is expanding, Bad news from Tribe.net. As the Beacon reported. adding to its traditional presence at Center in 2015, the text-centric social network was trying Camp with branches at the 3:00 and 9:00 to get back on its feet after years of technology and portals. It's part of what VRT's Mac calls the ownership issues. It was limping along with a few Black Rock Citizen project, an attempt by \$5-a-month subscribers and revenue on advertising. Bmorg to make it easier for Burners to condirected to nonpaying users, a significant percentage. nect with volunteer opportunities on the Playa. of whom were active in pornography groups.

For each of the last three years, VRT has Disaster struck in March after an article on Heavy. placed about 1,000 citizens and educated com (https://tinyurl.com/brb-tribe-heavy) about at about twice that number about volunteer Reddit thread (https://tinyurl.com/brb-tribe-reddit). opportunities, according to Mac and VRT described particularly unsavory child porn activity. on the network.

Black Rock City services, such as Lamp group that owns Tribe, said the Federal Bureau of Investigation is looking into the activity and the site. projects also employ them. Theme camps account for a smaller percentage, usually service The address has been parked with a French domain. name provider called Gandi, she said, adding "We. The Center Camp V-Spot is open daily from have not completely given up the hope to have a. 9-6 and the two satellite offices are open 10- sustainable social network that supports anonymity. and free speech."



It was the year of the Green Man, based both on the concept of ecology and that creepy vine-entwined head that peers out from garden walls and such in British art. Art under the Man was provided by tech and solar companies, brand names removed, a concept that riled some participants and has yet to be repeated.

Tuesday , Aug. 28, 2007 Special Issue: The Man's Bacon Gets Cooked By the dark of a lunar eclipse early Tuesday morning, the Man burned. An arsonist, later identified as actor-writer Paul Addis of San Francisco, set fire to the wooden statue days before its intended demise as a protest against what he saw as the increasing predictability of Black Rock City.

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