CURIOUSER & CURIOUSER

GATE EDITION

SUNDAY, AUGUST 25, 2024

VOL XVI, NO I

HOSTED BY ART CAR CAMP, 5:30 & F

WELCOME TO NOWHERE

BY ADRIANA ROBERTS

Welcome home, bishes! This column has always been called "Welcome To Nowhere." But I feel that's kind of a misnomer. Sure, we may be in a remote Nevada desert. But for this one week, you are VERY MUCH somewhere.

You've probably been jumping through hoops of logistics just to get your ass out here to one of the most inhospitable places on Earth — to be one of the PRIVILEGED 70,000 or so who call this place "home."

So, if you've been here before: welcome back! We see you drank the Kool-Aid!

And if this is your first time here? Welcome to Hell!

Just kidding! Or am I? The past two years have seen some of the WORST weather in Burning Man's history. Look, it's Nevada, we're all GAMBLING here. Are we gonna get pleasant temperatures and no dust, or hellish heat and rainy mud?

Who knows? You're here now, so no matter what happens, you are STILL in one of the most unique and artistic cities in the world.

Astute readers might recognize my byline as the former editor and publisher of the *Beacon's* main competitor, the *BRC Weekly*. Or, as it was known to pre-2007 Burners, *Piss Clear* (as in the Black Rock Desert's #1 survival tip).

Being the editor that I am, I have a burning desire (see what I did there) to rename this column "Nowhere But Here." Because for 30 years, I always said there was nowhere I'd rather be this week than RIGHT HERE. And since you've got this newspaper in your hot little hands, I assume you feel the same

But this year, I'm only in Black Rock City in spirit. After 30 Burns with perfect attendance, this bish needed a break! Besides, ending the print run of the BRC Weekly seemed to light a fire under the asses of the *Beacon* staff, who last published a newspaper here back in 2019. I'm happy they're back to fill the void, and grateful they've given me this column space to still be a small part of this year's Burning Man. Once a Burner, always a Burner.

Who says print is dead?
Well, I did, in last year's "Last
Issue Ever." But I'm happy
to report that BRC is once
again a two-newspaper town,
as there's also a brand-new
upstart publication called
the Playa Provider. My fellow
Burners have picked up the
baton to keep Playa publishing
alive! And if any town deserves two
newspapers, it's this one.

Although I'm not there, I strangely don't have FOMO. No "fear of missing out" – other than DYING to know how Center Camp shapes up this year now that the navigational nightmare of Rod's



Ring Road is gone, which the BRC Weekly bitched about for YEARS.

Also, I'll say it one more time in ALL CAPS, since Center Camp became a ghost town these past couple years: BRING BACK THE CAFE. It's what Larry would have wanted. Bmorg, you know it's true.

And if there's one last bit of advice this burned-out-but-still-a-Burner can share with you, it's this: be like me and don't have FOMO. Live in the NOW. This town is full of distractions and there's ALWAYS something amazing going on somewhere. Never leave fun for "fun." And I hope you all have the "Best Burn Ever"!"

Art, AI and No-Man's Land

BY GROUNDSCORE

Welcome to the curious case of Burning Man honoraria. The 2024 theme, Curiouser and Curiouser, pays tribute to Lewis Carroll's 1865 novel Alice's Adventures in Wonderland. Stuart Mangrum, the late Larry Harvey's successor as puzzlerin-chief, has taken inspiration from the children's classic. It "embraces the irrational and the absurd, and invites the unknown over for tea." So, let's spill the tea on a few of the 76 projects funded.

This year brings a placement never seen before by Burners. The last time I wrote for the *Beacon*, the Esplanade was still a shit-show of sound camps with bikes 50 rows deep, and I didn't have the temptation to use ChatGPT to write my articles. And, as far as we knew, nothing important was at K Street, unless you volunteered at the airport or lived on Billionaire's Row.

Suddenly last year you might find Pac Man, The Monaco Land Frigate, or the Golden Gate Bridge floating around beyond K, mixed with turnkey camp revelers, and those few who dared venture there at night. It was strange because it wasn't The City, The Playa, or Deep Playa. It felt as if you were trespassing beyond the trash fence and the BLM was about to race across the desert in their white pickup trucks to kick you out of the event. The other thing missing

in this no-man's land were the art installations — until now.

This year just past Kelter Street, on the road to the airport, a Relevé Lady will emerge from the alkali flat.

Relevé is a ballet term that means to rise. These danseuses are an homage to the Nine Ladies Stone Circle in Derbyshire, England. Legend says the nine boulders are maidens turned to stone for the crime of dancing on the Sabbath. By bringing the maidens back to life in a form reminiscent of Playa Dust Devils, artist Rebekah Waites and her Relevé Ladies Crew hope to empower women.

The other nine ladies are to be placed in a circle elsewhere on the Playa, inviting participants to enter their sacred space and rise with them.

The project's successful bid for Bmorg dollars included images of towering figures in colorful flowing textiles. The images on their fundraising page differ from the proposal. But who's keeping track? Apparently, many of us are.

There is a bit of a dustup on Reddit about how artificial intelligence could alter the selection process. "We're probably gonna start seeing more and more amazing AI concept art with lackluster execution," frets one Redditor. Others worry that artists will send Bmorg AI-generated images, or (gasp!) AI-generated ideas, and that these artworks will end up underdelivering in real life.

The Bmorg recognizes "the growing use of Artificial Intelligence (AI)" in grant applications "image creation and written materials." Jurors do consider, "Will it actually look like that?"

continued on other side



From the Editor

The Black Rock Beacon is back, last seen in 2019. We could have been done in by Covid. But then in 2023, forced to endure Default World media catastrophizing about a little mud, we found ourselves wishing we were with you to tell a fuller story.

Adriana Roberts gifts us with her keen take and trademark sass. GroundScore eyes the future. Indie dishes on street names. Smash updates the fate of Barbie Death Camp. As the step-child of the Black Rock Gazette, our origins extend into the misty days of the early 1990s, look for details in CURi-OUS's profile of Danger Ranger in our Wednesday edition. We're also pleased to welcome the Playa Provider to our dusty press corps.

We're doing three issues. We need help in every way, production, city desk, paper delivery, reporting, layout, and photography. Join our Morning Meeting 10A.M. Black Rock Beacon, at Art Car Camp, 5:30 & Fascinate.

—Mrs. Lucky

For more *Black Rock Beacon* goodness and to read past issues, visit us any time at **www.blackrockbeacon.org**.

WE'RE BACK

~ first time since 2019 ~

BLACK RECK BSACON

We plan on issues Wednesday and Friday. Come visit us at Art Car Camp, Corner of 5:30 and F (facing the Man on the sunrise side, look for the giant TV).

Curious about the street names?

BY INDIE

Welcome to Black Rock City, a whimsical place where things aren't as they appear and the street names may not mean what you may think.

AGOO – A state of intense anticipation or excitement. An emotion displayed by all but the most jaded Burners.

Baffle - To confuse or perplex, or to prevent someone from reaching their goals. A baffle can be a structure designed to redirect the flow of something, such as sound or liquid. It's a playful nod to Black Rock City's uncanny ability to divert even the most single-minded travelers from their mission.

Captillate - To charm or fascinate someone, holding their attention ... at least until a shiny new marvel passes by.

Delight – To bring great pleasure, joy or satisfaction.

Preferably all three.

Enchant - To charm or delight someone deeply, often through the use of magic. Or, to cast a spell with the result of a magical transformation. See also: the friend of a friend who talks about Burning Man at every opportunity because it "changed their life."

Fascinate - To arouse deep interest or curiosity. Bmorg really leaned on the synonyms for street names this year.

CODSMACK - To astonish or amaze resulting in a strong emotional reaction of shock or disbelief. Guess they cracked out the thesaurus again.

Hypnatic – Mesmerizing or trance-inducing. Something that is compelling and difficult to resist, like the siren song of Robot Heart at 3A.M.

intrigue – See also: Captivate; Enchant; and Fascinate. Jabberพocky – In a year with the theme Curiouser and Curiouser, it's curious indeed that this is the only street name directly lifted from Lewis Carroll's works. It's a nonsensical poem from his 1871 novel Through the Looking-Glass, and What Alice Found There.

kelter - (or "kilter") Means being in good condition, order, or alignment. The phrase "off-kilter" indicates something out of alignment or balance, often in a way that is quirky or unconventional. An off-kilter spelling of an unusual word.

A notable absence from this year's city map is Rod's Road, the ring road around Center Camp. This road was deemed 'confusing' and the revised map appears to be part of BMorg's push to draw citizens back to Center Camp. Coffee would also work, just sayin'.

BRAINTEASERS BY MARCIA TAPP

STREET SMART

Words can be found in any direction (including diagonals) and can overlap each other. Use the word bank below.

Т	М	Н	Т	G	0	В	S	М	Α	С	K	I	J
G	R	Р	С	Е	N	Т	Е	R	С	Α	М	Р	Α
D	Е	L	I	G	Н	Т	С	Н	Р	D	D	Α	В
K	В	Α	В	Υ	Κ	С	I	N	Е	D	Α	В	В
Е	N	Υ	Ε	I	Т	I	Ε	Е	Е	R	R	0	Е
L	Т	Α	Т	0	R	Т	Т	N	S	Е	Κ	Α	R
Т	Е	Α	Α	Т	Α	0	Α	С	Р	G	W	Е	W
Ε	М	С	V	R	S	N	N	Н	L	N	Α	U	0
R	Р	Т	I	0	Н	Р	I	Α	Α	Α	D	G	С
Α	L	С	Т	Р	F	Υ	С	N	N	R	Α	I	K
С	Е	0	Р	Α	Е	Н	S	Т	Α	Υ	J	R	С
0	Ε	Т	Α	G	N	F	Α	Е	D	G	I	Т	R
I	I	N	С	0	С	0	F	С	Е	Κ	Т	N	Ε
T	Р	Α	K	G	Ε	Ε	L	F	F	Α	В	Ι	Α

WORD BANK

- 1. intrigue
- 2. fascinate
- 3. enchant
- 4. darkwad
- 5. agog
- : 6. playa
- 7. centercamp8. gobsmack
- 9. kelter
- 10. ranger
- 11. gate
- 12. porto

13. delight

- 14. jabberwock15. temple
- 16. esplanade
- 17. baffle
- 18. captivate
- 19. hypnotic
- 20. trashfence

BURNER BARBIES STAY WEIRD

BY SMASH

Some BRC camps can be summed up by a single image: amped-up, cheering Burners clinging to the grid of a dome; naked Burners filing through a tunnel of hoses and foam; Burners roller skating to disco music. And, of course, Burners bemusedly observing hundreds of Barbie dolls being marched into ovens under a sign reading "arbeit macht plastic frei."

But images can be deceiving. The Playa's infamous Barbie Death Camp Village, founded by a group of Jewish Burners in 1999, was never a neo-Nazi stronghold. Its goal has always been to do what the best Burning Man art does — elicit emotions, spark discussion, and invite connection.

Things got a little hairy

at the 2019 burn, when a group of disgruntled Burners – protesting perceived antisemitism – vandalized some of the Barbie art, which led to a physical altercation, police presence, and the arrest of a village member. (Charges were later dismissed, and the vandals were never held accountable.) There was speculation that Barbie would not return, as Burning Man may have become too mainstream to appreciate its absurdist message.

But that was never an option. The village was already undergoing a friendly leadership change prior to the incident, and it re-emerged on playa post-COVID with renewed energy, lots of community support, and free publicity provided by a much-beloved movie that has attracted new and veteran Burners to check out what it has to offer.

Mom, who took over as the village's lead in 2022, says its current goal is to bring people together, "to make connections and explore who we are. How can Barbie make dreams or exciting things happen?" The provocative art is only a means to this end - "moving your mind, provoking thoughts, being silly" - and will be paired this year with daily activities including a chili cook-off, a comedy show, a swim-up bar, and a **Bob Ross Happy Accidents** painting lesson.

And what about that movie? Mom sees its release as a happy accident. Last year the village hosted a pre-Playa "Barbie" screening at a Reno theater, then brought

· · · 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 porkbelly 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 10A.M., where we chew the fat. Come by then or whenever the mood strikes (we're around most of the time). You'll find us at Art Car Camp, Corner of 5:30 and F.

that energy to their hosting (or "pinking") of the Gate at opening. "Before the movie, I already knew Barbie was about being what you want to be," Mom says. "The village is basically a collection of weird Barbies."

Visit Barbie Death Camp Village at 6:00 and F. ★

Can you really slide down a

ginormous unicorn's mane

Almanac

GATE OPENS at 12:01a.m.

Sunday • August 25

FORECAST 93° • Feels like 97°

SUN ☼ 13 hours, 21 minutes
6:18A.M. Rise • 7:39P.M.Set.

MOON ① Waning Gibbous

11:00P.M. Rise · 2:49P.M. Set

Monday, August 26

FORECAST 94° · Feels like 98°

SUN ♣ 13 hours, 19 minutes
6:19A.M. Rise · 7:38P.M.Set.

Tuesday, August 27 FORECAST Still HOT Feels like Burning Man

SUN ☆ 13 hours, 16 minutes 6:20A.M. Rise • 7:36P.M. Set

MOON ● Waning Crescent 12:22A.M. Rise · 3:56P.M. Set

Horoscope

The sun has entered Virgo and mercury is having its third retrograde of the year. Release the need to control everything and let the Playa provide.

ART continued

or "Is this really feasible to construct?" Waites says AI can be a timesaver but she feels that machines create a different look. She does her submission drawings by hand, wanting her art to be "imperfect, the way our bodies are." She adds, "If you use AI in any way for an end result, then it is not your creation."

Waites' ability to deliver isn't in question. She earned bad-ass status with "Church Trap" in 2013 and "Singularity" in 2018. Speaking by phone from her Los Angeles studio, Waites says you won't see the flowing fabrics on Playa because the cloth hid the manzanita branches and distracted from the metal structures built around them. Instead, the dancing ladies will be dressed in metal mesh. Like most of us, Waites enjoys speculating on what will show up on the Playa. She acknowledges that artists can find themselves with too many obstacles to finish the job.

Will water surround the Viking Ship ("Fable Bound"

by Build to Strike)? Maybe if you experience a desert mirage or ingest enough psilocybin to morph dyed fabric into waves. Or perhaps lightning will strike twice and another lake will form in the Black Rock Desert and you can sail across the basin amongst the fairy shrimp.

Decide for yourself if sus illustrations make good on their dusty promises. Be on the lookout for the friendly sea serpent ("Naga and the Captainness" by Stephanie Shipman, Jacquelyn Scott, and Cjay Roughgarden).

("Dream Slide" by William Nemitoff and Curious Form)? Will geothermal steam puff out of the giant orange traffic cone ("Coney McConeface: The Life and Death of a Traffic Cone" by "Kiwi" Hankins and Conecophany Collective)? It's supposed to be placed atop a crack that runs deep below the surface. Hey AI, can you generate that? Don't f*** around on this one though, it goes up in flames on Thursday.

BLACK ROCK BEACON UNINDICTED CO-CONSPIRATORS: Ali Baba, president; Gothalot, vice president; Angie Zmigewski, treasurer, web-site & wonder-kin of production; Lena Kartzov, page design & layout, Mary Jane LaVigne, always Mrs. Lucky, editor-in-chief; Mitchell Martin, editor; Danielle Cezanne, copy chief; Francis Wenderlich, masthead; Marcia Tapp, volunteer coordinator; Staff this issue: Danielle Cezanne, almanac; Ria Greiff, GroundScore; Smash!; Clementine Hazelwood, Indie; Adriana Roberts, her ever-marvelous self; Marcia Tapp, brainteasers.

LEGAL MUMBO JUMBO: Copyright © 2024 The Black Rock Beacon, a not-for-profit corporation organized under the laws of the state of Washington and located at 32657 9th PL S, Federal Way, WA, 98003, some rights reserved. You are free to copy, distribute, display, and perform the information and images contained herein, to make derivative works, and to make commercial use of this work under the following conditions: You must attribute the work to the Black Rock Beacon and, if you distribute the resulting work only under a license identical to this one. These conditions may be waived if you obtain permission from The Black Rock Beacon. Visit us at www.blackrockbeacon.org.