Burning Man returns to Black Rock

Think of Burning Man, a towering four-story tall wooden sculpture in the shape of a human being, as the hub of a wheel, the fixed and central point around which a unique, diverse, and wildly eclectic celebration spins. He forms the necessary link, the primal bond that unites the thousands of people who travel to the Black Rock Desert each Labor Day weekend.

Now in its eleventh year, the Burning Man festival has emerged as a unique event with a distinctive character all its own. Sculptors will install monumental works of art, but it's no gallery show. Bands will perform, but it's not a concert. DJs will set up dance zones near camp, but it's no rave. Participants will erect elaborate sets and don strange costumes, but it's not a play. It is all these things and more—so much more, in fact, that to define it in any of these narrow terms is to lose sight of the whole. By some subtle alchemy not yet understood, Burning Man is immeasurably more than the sum of its parts.

Just as the burning of the Man is a ritual without dogma, a larger-than-life spectacle that people are free to interpret as they choose, so is the festival itself a blank canvas for the creative energy of its participants. The possibilities for self-expression are nearly limitless. As long as you're mindful of public safety and honor the festival's cardinal rule—not to interfere with anyone else's immediate experience—

—continued next page

AN UNINTERPRETABLE PASSIONATE YEARNING DRIVEN THEM OUT INTO THE DESERT!

—TE, LAWRENCE

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(415) 985-7471

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www.isom.com/burningman

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San Francisco
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Return to the desert

you are free to create your own reality on the 400 square-mile gallery/stage of the world’s largest performance space.

Yet inseparable from the notions of creative freedom and personal expression are the very real and practical concerns of survival in the desert. It is impossible to experience Burning Man without also undertaking an adventure into a harsh and unforgiving wilderness. While we exclude no one, the event is definitely not for everyone! The very nature of this festival clashes at any notion of compulsory behavior, but the reality of our environment demands it. We camp on a vast dry lakebed in a remote area, many miles from the nearest services, in an area so parched and barren it might as well be the surface of the moon. Temperatures routinely exceed 100°F in the shade, and that’s only if you remembered to bring the shade! At night, temperatures can plummet. Without proper equipment, provisions and preparations, a journey to the Black Rock Desert can be disastrous. If, on the other hand, you come properly prepared and—equally important—willing to cooperate with your fellow campers in a challenging but manageable survival situation, you can safely enjoy this unique celebration in one of the world’s most desolate places.

Far from limiting creativity, this

It is impossible to experience Burning Man without also undertaking an adventure into a harsh and unforgiving wilderness.

Burning Man in San Francisco

If you live in the San Francisco Bay area, you’ll have two opportunities this summer to experience Burning Man in the City.

The Project will again sponsor a gallery installation and performance series in July at San Francisco’s SOMAR Cultural Center (134 Brannan). Proceeds from this show, "HELL YES! HELL NO?!” will benefit the Project.

Scheduled dates are July 19, 20, 26 and 27. Check our hotline and/or website for more information as the event draws nearer.

The Second Annual Burning Man Film Festival will be held in August in San Francisco (location to be announced—check our hotline and/or website for details). Deadline for submissions to the festival is July 4, 1996. Interested filmmakers and videographers should contact Hernan Cortez at Coffee Achievers, 415-826-3277.

Burning Man

The Journal of the Burning Man Project

SUMMER 1996

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COMMUNITY ALERT!

Black Rock City Confronts Growth Issues

With some 4,000 attendees in 1995, Burning Man has already become the largest (albeit temporary) settlement in Pershing County. With attendance roughly doubling each year, trash and traffic are emerging as vital concerns.

Nothing exists upon the vast blank surface of the Black Rock Desert apart from what you, as an active participant in Burning Man, bring to it. Black Rock City springs from your involvement. However, chief among the things we bring here are two primary products of our civilization: cars and garbage.

Our annual clean-up effort is renowned. Dozens of people have worked hundreds of hours. Our continued presence in the desert depends on our ability to leave the playa as we've found it. This cannot happen without your help. The Burning Man Festival is devoted to immediacy—immediate experience and immediate responsibility. You are in charge of any refuse you create. We also depend on you to snag and bag any garbage blowing through camp and across the playa. Cigarette butts and dog poop are garbage. A refuse disposal site is conveniently located just off freeway I-80 East in the nearby town of Lockwood (the exact location is indicated in our Survival Guide). All westbound traffic from the playa passes by here on the way to Reno. Please use it!

The second challenge we confront is the automobile—our single greatest safety hazard in the desert. Many of us bring the habits that we form in a convenience culture to the playa. We routinely use our cars to travel short distances. However constant automobile traffic in the desert causes dust plumes. Moreover, driving automobiles, particularly at night, poses an extreme hazard to pedestrians. We have no sidewalks or stop signs—no means of separating those on foot from the eccentric courses traced by cars. The increasing number of people attending our festival has created a critical mass. This year we are asking participants to leave their cars parked for the duration of the event with the exception of trips to the surrounding mountains. Parking areas, located at the end of the radial pedestrian ways extending outward from the center of our camp, will be provided for those who prefer to camp at a distance and commute. Most importantly, we strongly encourage all participants to bring bicycles. They are perfectly adapted to the hard-packed surface of the playa and are a more immediate and involving mode of transportation; they're more fun.

Last year, as in all previous years, the Sheriffs' Departments of the surrounding counties have been our welcome guests. They have at different times assisted in search and rescue operations. This year there will be a Sheriffs' check station at central camp near our radio and communications structures. These folks are not here to police your life-style (it is rumored that they will find a theme camp and distribute coffee and donuts Sunday afternoon). They are here to help in case of real emergencies. The State highway leading to Gerlach (the nearest town) and all other roads in the area are patrolled by another law-enforcement agency, the Nevada Highway Patrol. They are very efficient. 25mph, as posted in surrounding towns, means just that. Lastly, as in the past, we request that all firearms be kept unloaded in our camp. Burning Man will sponsor no shooting events in 1996. Interested parties may learn of appropriate locations for small group activities of this nature at our Black Rock Ranger headquarters.

"The city is a fact in nature, like a cave, a run of mackerel, or an ant heap. But it is also a conscious work of art..."
—Lewis Mumford, The Culture of Cities

"...the first care of him who would found a city...must be to have his citizens be virtuous."
—Aristotle, Politics
Playa to host speed record attempt

Burning Man will be sharing the Playa this year with another extraordinary group engaged in an unusual and visionary pursuit. A team led by U.S. driver Craig Breedlove aims not only to demolish the 15-year-old World Land Speed Record of 635.468 mph, but to cross the 700 mph mark and actually break the sound barrier on land. The team includes our own Dezso Molnar, known to Burning Man participants as the driver/creator of the amazing pulse-jet go-cart.

Meanwhile, an English group led by current record-holder Richard Noble is determined to defend its title, and may also join us on the Black Rock Desert. With the famous salt flats at Bonneville heavily damaged by mining, the Playa is one of the last places on earth where these teams can find the requisite 11-mile flat track. Noble set the existing record here in 1983, a fact well-known to denizens of Bruno’s bar in Gerlach.

While neither team currently plans to conduct trials while the Burning Man festival is in session, we’ve agreed to make every effort to control our vehicular traffic and steer clear of their operating area, where even minor damage to the playas surface can jeopardize both speed and safety.

We won’t know our exact locations until later in the year (when conditions are drier), but detailed information will be included in the Survival Guide distributed to all participants, and we expect everyone to cooperate.

Breedlove, who grew up in L.A. and raced custom hot rods as a teenager in the ’50s, set his first Land Speed Record in 1963 and was the first man to break the 400, 500 and 600 mph barriers. His new car, “Spirit of America,” sports a sculpted composite body, wound-filament tires, canards to control airflow and traction, and a souped-up military surplus J-39 jetfighter engine that’s capable of producing over 45,000 horsepower.

And believe it or not, it runs on regular unleaded gasoline!
Survival

Burning Man is entirely supported by participant contributions. Bear this in mind: there is no "they." They have never funded us, nor will they pick up garbage off the desert floor. They have refused to help us build the Man, construct our camp, provide electricity, or help publish and mail this newsletter (you know, of course, that they won't supply your car with gasoline, stock it with water, or provide you with food). Only when "they" become "us" does anyone contribute. Burning Man is about survival: survival of each individual, of our community as a whole, and survival of the Burning Man Project itself. Here are ways you can help:

CONTRIBUTE

Send in your $35 registration fee today! Buy a t-shirt or a video. If you can, make an extra contribution (see the check box on the order form). Our many projects—Madhenge, the Inferno on Saturday night, and our burning pagant Sunday night—are being readied for the desert. None of this will happen without your early support. If you are among those people who already know they are coming to Burning Man, help us now!

VOLUNTEER

There is only one way to become a member of the Project. You must do something. Burning Man is a society of activists. There are hundreds of tasks which sustain our community. Greet people at Black Rock Station, our desert outpost. Be a lamplighter in camp. Help staff our coffee house and cabaret. Stay after the event and help with our extensive clean-up. We are also looking for experienced builders, people to assist with transport of materials to Nevada, and individuals who wish to join our advance set-up crew in the desert. If you have a skill or any material resource which you think might help us in our preparations, please call our Hotline (415-985-7471).

ARTISTS

We are recruiting dancers, actors, musicians, costume-makers, still walkers, fire performers—artists of every kind—to assist in this year's creation of "Dante's Inferno" on Saturday night and our burning pageant on Sunday night. Have you a sculpture or installation? You may wish to place it on our Plain of Dreams or at our pavilion in Central Camp. We will also feature performances on our stages. If you wish to be a featured artist, please contact our hotline (415-985-7471).

THEME CAMPS

Theme camps are an evolving mode of personal expression on the playa, a genre of interactive installation that gives our community much of its color and flair. Bring props and costumes. Build a unique structure. Create a world of your own and be ready to invite others into your fantasy. Theme camps in the past have included: Bigfoot Strip Mall Plaza, Tiki Camp, Winter Wonderland, White Trash Camp, NY Playgroup, Agonquin Roundtable, Charactropolis Camp, Crucifixion with a Celebrity, Croquet Camp and the Elvis Graceland Tea Tent. This year we expect Lunar Lander Camp, Alien Abduction Camp, Plunder Industries' Plunderstown, the LaaHochia Heights Country Club, and many more. If you wish to reserve a site in Central Camp and be featured on our map and schedule, call us now! If you are planning a mega-theme camp with large space requirements, call our hotline (415-985-7471) and we'll help you find a good location.

FASHION SHOW

Our 7th annual Black Rock Fashion Show on Sunday afternoon will feature the Seven Delicious Fashion Sins. Come as your favorite fashion "don't"! Anyone who combines more than seven sins in a single costume receives bonus points (be audacious). Fashion victims—who's truly martyred to a style—will receive bonus points also (be pathetic).

COCKTAIL PARTY

Fashion show will be followed by our quasi-annual semi-formal cocktail party, early Sunday evening. heroine with the beau monde of Black Rock for a sophisticated hour at the Central Pavilion, hosted by the San Francisco Cacophony Society. Bring formal wear.

INTERNET

Burning Man's presence on the Net has really skyrocketed over the past year. There are now over three dozen sites on the World Wide Web containing Burning Man related material. In the spirit of constant renewal that has always been a hallmark of this project, a new "official" site (www.sitem.com/burningman) has been constructed to better showcase these fine independent efforts, capitalize on emerging Net technologies, and eventually host live Netcasts from the desert.

Web publishers with Burning Man related content: contact our Net Coordinator, Erik Salmonson (geekboy@v.com), to make sure our links are current.

The Burning Man mail list, our ongoing forum for yakking about the event via e-mail, has gained a new address. To join the tasty discussion, send an e-mail message with "SUBSCRIBE" in the subject line and your e-mail address in the body text: burnman-list-admin@www.chorus.com

RETAIL

Vendors, t-shirts and registration tickets can be purchased by mail (form on back page) or after August 1st in San Francisco at HELD OVER (1543 Haight at Ashbury) and CLOTHES CONTACT (473 Valencia at 16th). Personal checks will be accepted for mail order tickets, but not for over-the-counter sales.

THE BURNING MAN VIDEO:
Relive past glories or see what you missed in the 45-minute film by WeirdTV's Chuck Cirno. A substantial portion of the proceeds benefit Burning Man.
$19.95
(See back page to order)

Burning Man presents
HELL YES?! HELL NO?!
A Journey Through the Underworld

Descend with us into a realm where pathos, horror and hilarity are strangely intermingled, where visions float in darkness like fragments of a dream...

An interactive art experience at

SOMAR GALLERY
934 BRANNAN ST, SAN FRANCISCO
FIRDAY & SATURDAY
JULY 19-20 AND 26-27
8:00-12:00 PM. $10 ADMISSION

Check our hotline and website this summer for details!

Brought to you by NELCO and its friendly family of companies!
The annual celebration of BURNING MAN will take place over Labor Day weekend in the Black Rock Desert of Northern Nevada. All attendees, including artists, performers and volunteers, must register for the event, and must bring their own shelter, food and water. This form can be used to register and/or order Buring Man merchandise. Feel free to make copies. If you are purchasing tickets you will receive your registration packet (including directions to our site, camp map, survival guide, and schedule of events) approximately one month before the festival.

Tickets: Purchase advance tickets now for Burning Man, August 28 - September 2, 1996. We will mail you a ticket, your survival guide map, and a detailed schedule of events approximately one month before the event. Tickets can also be purchased in San Francisco (see "retail" on inside back cover for locations).

Video: Be chased by a giant shark. See visions in a pyramid. Witness a jet-propelled rocket car. These are a few of the scenes you will see in our 48-minute Burning Man video. Price: $19.95.

T-shirts: Buy a Burning Man t-shirt. Color on black, available in sizes Large and Extra Large. The image that appears on the shirt is also displayed in the "Survival" section of this publication. Price: $15.00.

Make checks payable to BURNING MAN
Detach this form and mail, with payment, to:
Burning Man
P.O. BOX 420572
SAN FRANCISCO, CA 94142-0572

NAME: ______________________________ PHONE: (_____) ______________________________

ADDRESS: _____________________________________________________________

CITY: __________________ STATE: _______ ZIP: ____________

BURNING MAN VIDEO QTY: _______ $19.95 = $_______

BURNING MAN T-SHIRTS QTY: _______ LARGE _______ EXTRA LARGE

TOTAL SHIRTS-QTY: _______ X $15.00 = $_______

REGISTRATION TICKETS

NUMBER IN PARTY: _______ X $35.00 = $_______

OPTIONAL EXTRA CONTRIBUTION: _____ $_______

TOTAL AMOUNT ENCLOSED = $_______

Burning Man is a 100% participant-funded event, entirely dependent on your support.