

B · U · I · L · D · I · N · G

Burning Man

The Journal of the Burning Man Project

Summer 1996

Burning Man returns to Black Rock

Burning Man 1996 will take place in Nevada's Black Rock Desert over Labor Day weekend, August 28th through September 2nd, 1996.

See back page for registration and ticket information.

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

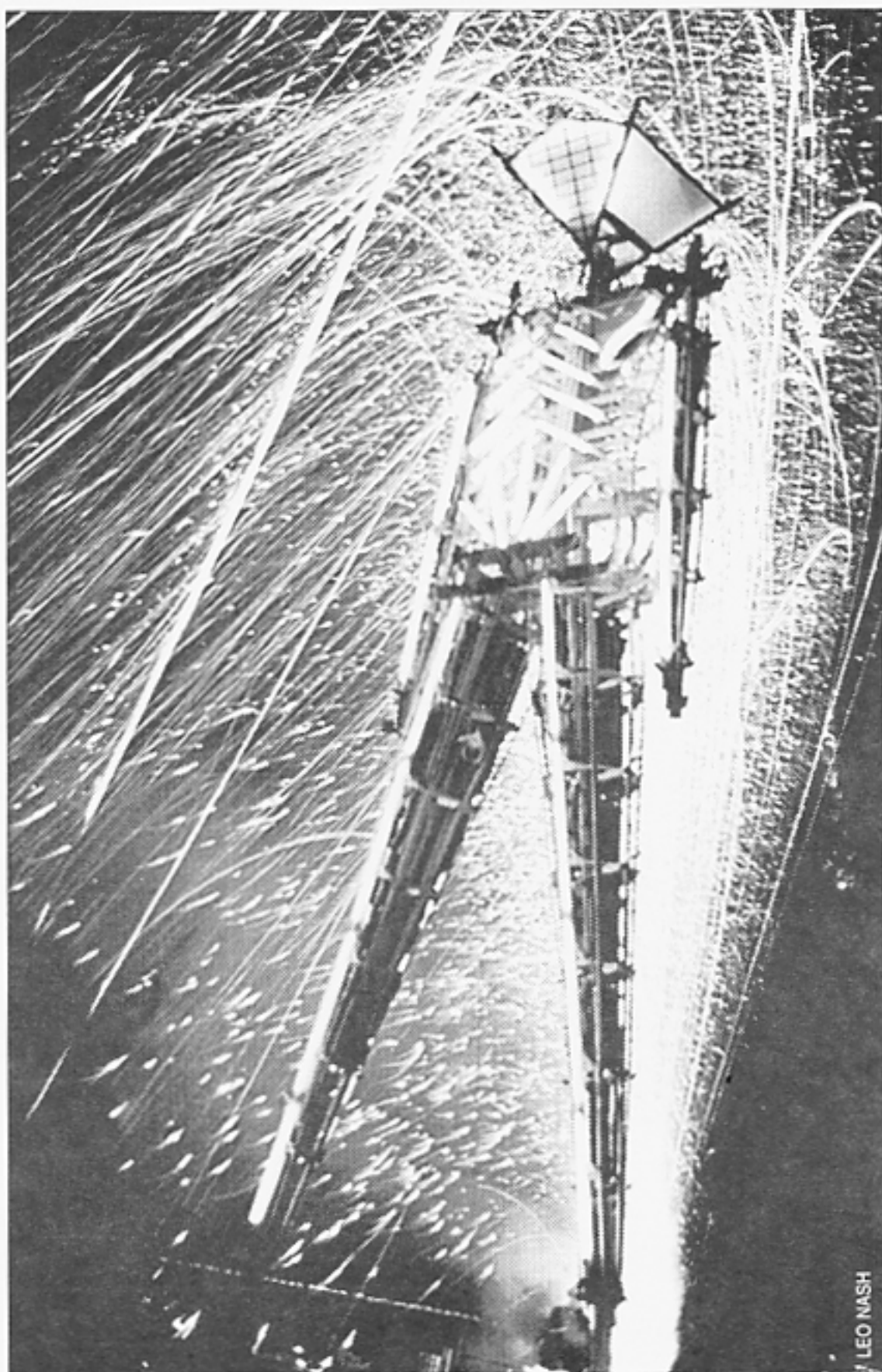
**AN UNINTELLIGIBLE
PASSIONATE
YEARNING DROVE
THEM OUT INTO THE
DESERT:**

—TE, LAWRENCE

*Burning Man Hotline
(415) 985-7471*

*World Wide Web
www.istorm.com/burningman*

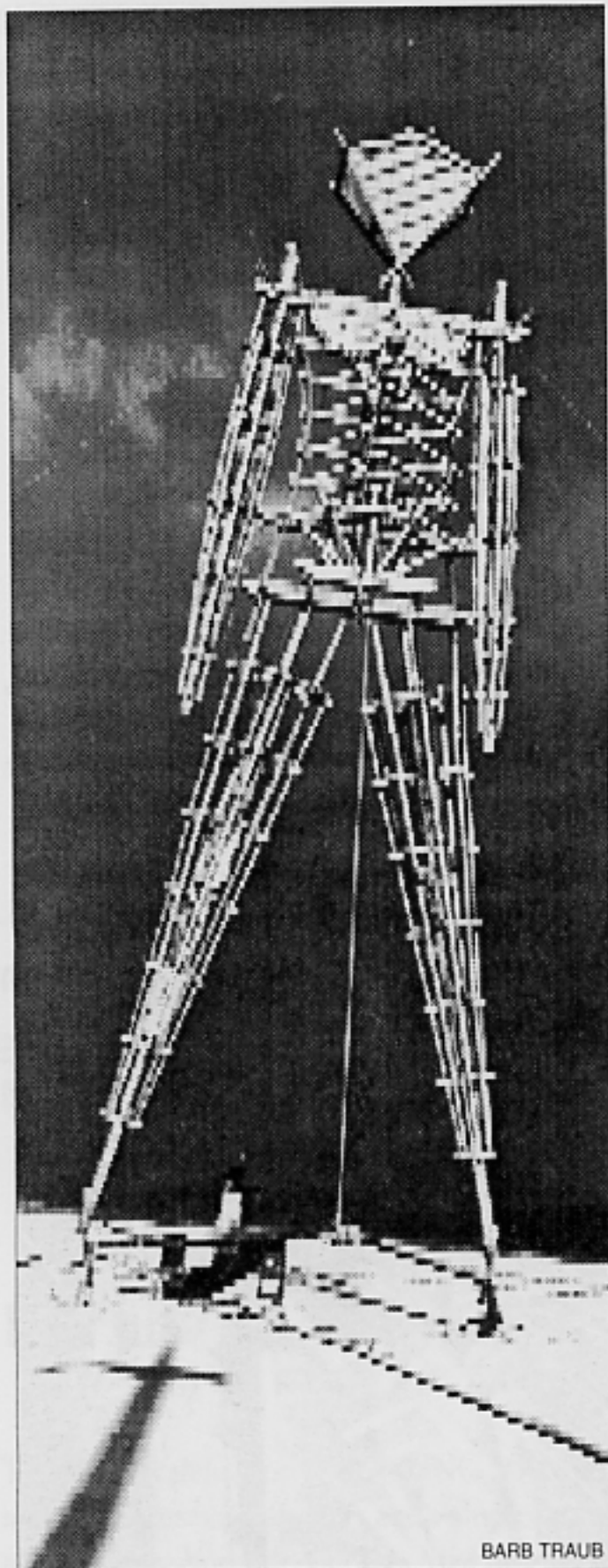
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LEO NASH

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

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Return to the desert Continued

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

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.

wilderness. While we exclude no one, the event is definitely not for everyone! The very nature of this festival chafes 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

necessary measure of self-discipline carries the promise of unique, often sublime rewards. As the wise have known for millenia, the desert can invoke powerful visions. The survival experience is not only life-affirming but frequently life-changing. Don't let the Playa's blankness fool you. Once a year, from a mysterious spring of unknown course, a strange and wonderful fountain erupts from the desert floor. Its flow cannot be bottled. It must be consumed at the source.

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 (934 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.

B • U • I • L • D • I • N • G *Burning Man*

The Journal of the Burning Man Project
SUMMER 1996

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**COMMUNITY
ALERT!**

Black Rock City Confronts Growth Issues

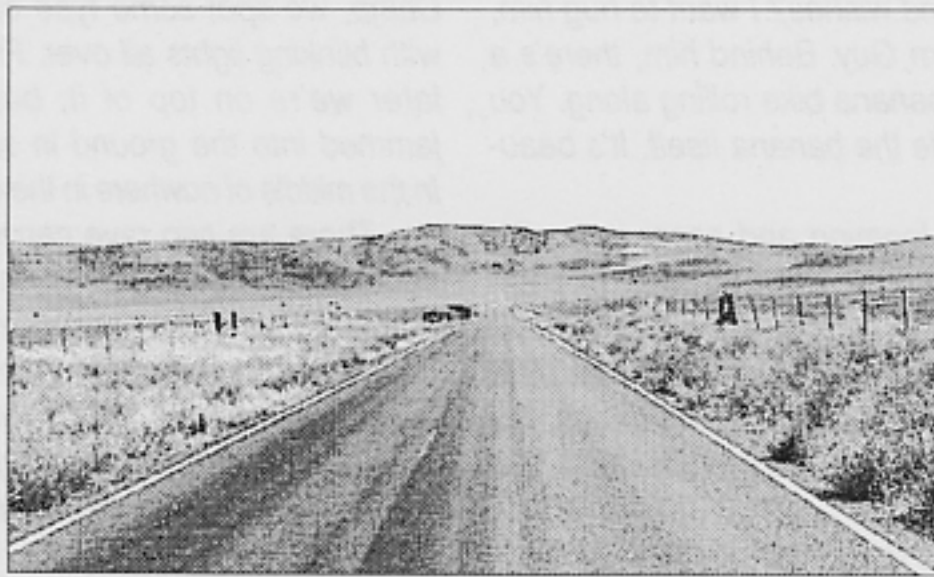
With some 4,000 attendees in 1995, Burning Man has already become the largest (albeit temporary) settlement in Pershing County. With attendance roughly doubling each year, trash and traffic are emerging as vital concerns.

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. Park-

ing 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 found 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*



Cross Country BURN

Editor's Note: Jeff Hansen, publisher of X Magazine, drove out to Burning Man last year from Detroit. A brief excerpt from his road trip diary follows. If you have access to the World Wide Web, you can read the whole story at <http://www.msen.com/~xmag/x14/burnman.html>

"I've come across the desert to greet you with a smile..." —Squeeze, "Take Me I'm Yours"

We enter the playa trailing a massive dust cloud. The checkpoint guy is insanely happy, bouncing and running up to our SUV. He checks our ticket, and gives us desert-type directions. "Four miles straight, take a right, then three miles straight." Our tickets cost \$35; this pays for land use fees, printing, portable toilets, etc; last year, the organizers came out a grand in the hole. More trailing dust clouds as we're flanked by three other camp-bound vehicles. "Okay...the madness begins."

Our first problem after arriving at camp is making sense of it all; there are two pirate radio stations, ten bands, a set of theme camps, several performance art installations, two rave camps, and a daily newspaper, all scattered liberally amongst an estimated 3000 campers. Spin Magazine is here. Tom Tomorrow of "This Modern World" is here. CNN is here with an editing-suite RV. HotWired & Discovery Online are visiting. This must be important.

After camp set-up: time to explore! Our first stop is the Burning Man himself, to pay our respects. He's got a smoke alarm attached to his chest. I think I could take him in a fair fight. There are several other companions for Burning Man around the camp: Burning Dog ("Burning Man's best friend"), Water Woman, Flaming Man ("Burning Man's gay brother"), and other nice flammable things. This whole place is gonna blow! Get out of here! Second, a whirlwind visit to several of the theme camps. The theme camps are arranged in a large circle around "Central Camp," headquarters for music stages, the community bulletin board, cafe, marketplace and medical station.

Too much to see! Too much to do! There's someone shouting random bits of comedy into a bullhorn. "Everyone...go home...the man will burn without you." Who is Bullhorn Guy? What

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 13-year-old World Land Speed Record of 633.468 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 playa's 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 distrib-

uted 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 50's, 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-79 jet fighter engine that's capable of producing over 45,000 horsepower.

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

are his hopes and wishes? I want to hug him, for he is Bullhorn Guy. Behind him, there's a three-wheeled banana bike rolling along. You actually sit inside the banana itself. It's beautiful.

Something looming and scary is on the horizon. Dust storm! We run back to base camp. It overtakes us quickly; everything turns into blurry shapes. A big nylon tumbleweed tent rolls by. Our tent strains at its moorings, but holds steady. The dust storm subsides a few minutes later.

Night begins to fall. Burning Man glows in the distance; red neon on the one side, blue on the other. A handy navigational aid. We visit the "Conception" kinetic neon art piece. Powered by generators, Conception is a spinning whirligig of roughly thirty frames of a lone minimalist neon sperm fertilizing a lone minimalist neon egg. The piece spins around; hanging bars from each frame make contact with live posts and the neon flashes for an instant.

As we walk in total blackness to Rave

Camp, we spot some type of airport runway with blinking lights all over. Five hundred feet later we're on top of it; bunches of LEDs jammed into the ground in strange patterns. In the middle of nowhere in the center of nothing.

There are two rave camps. One of them seems to be dominating the biggest crowd. There are two pyrotechnically-minded women here having a fire catfight via 12-inch flaming Lee Press-on nails. And then, what the hell, they swallow each other's finger food fireballs. I found this incredibly erotic, and was surprised I didn't faint.

We "rave" for a while, canteens on the ground. On the way back to camp, we hear something ridiculously loud. There's a glowing THING out in the middle of nowhere. It's moving back and forth. It stops occasionally. "Some type of plane trying to take off?" "Car?" We believe it's best to just leave well enough alone, and bed down for the night...

Jeff Hansen (xmag@mail.msen.com) lives in the Detroit area. He's planning on attending BM96 and helping out with the onsite newspaper.

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—Mudhenge, the Inferno on Saturday night, and our burning pageant 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.

ARTISTS

We are recruiting dancers, actors, musicians, costume-makers, stilt 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 Maul Plaza, Tiki Camp, Winter Wonderland, White Trash Camp, NY Playground, Algonquin Roundtable, Saurintology 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' Plundertown, the Lahontan 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—anyone who's truly martyred to a style—will receive bonus points also (be pathetic).

COCKTAIL PARTY

Fashion sin will be followed by our quasi-annual semi-formal cocktail party, early Sunday evening. Hobnob 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.



THE BURNING MAN VIDEO:

Relive past glories or see what you missed in this 48-minute film by WeirdTV's Chuck Cirino. A substantial portion of the proceeds benefit Burning Man.

\$19.95

(See back page to order)

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 materials! In the spirit of constant renewal that has always been a hallmark of this project, a new "official" site (www.istorm.com/burningman) has been constructed to better showcase these many 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@vli.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 toasty discussion, send an e-mail message with "SUBSCRIBE" in the subject line and your e-mail address in the body text to:

burnman-list-admin@www.chorus.com

RETAIL

Videos, 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.

Burning Man presents

HELL YES?! HELL NO?!

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JULY 19-20 AND 26-27
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Burning Man 1996
**REGISTRATION
MATERIALS**

BURNING MAN FESTIVAL

WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 28 THROUGH MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 2, 1996

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 Burning 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.