

# BLACK ROCK GAZETTE

THE NAKED TRUTH SINCE 1992

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Gabe Kirchheimer © 2000

**1990** An announcement for the first Burning Man on the Black Rock Desert appeared in a summer 1990 San Francisco Cacophony Society newsletter. It was billed as a "Zone Trip," a mass adventure in which willing participants would "enter the unknown." Eighty-nine adventurers met shortly before Labor Day at the baseball diamond in Golden Gate Park, and then caravanned behind a rented truck, bearing the Man, for an all-night drive to the Nevada desert. In the morning they arrived at the edge of the playa and drove out onto the desert floor. They piled out of their vehicles, awestruck. In the vast emptiness that most had never seen, a very long line was drawn in the clay; the first burners joined hands, and stepped together across the line and into The Zone.

Burning Man continues to be The Zone where Black Rock City recreates itself each year — different, every time. The most hardy veterans enter the unknown, and even the insiders, who know every detail of the planning and administration, can't predict where the experience of Burning Man will take them.

Imagine a line drawn from the Man to the center of Center Café, crossing the Esplanade like the arrow of a drawn bow; or picture the needle of a compass pointing northeast one year, westerly the next; to the past, or to the present. After Saturday night, there is no Man to give bearing. By end of Sunday your neighborhood is gone.

The first burners went into the nothingness of NOWhere with only the Man, a generator (used to power the movie projector for "Bad Day at Black Rock"), a sound system for the cocktail party that would precede the burn, a single neon sign, party dresses and tuxedos, costumes, a full drum set, and very little material with which to create shade. A handful who knew this desert prepared their companions for the unexpected

cold of the summer nights; the wind and its companion, dust; the necessity of water. And, long before the Man was burned, Sunday, these fertile imaginations obsessed about what they would do the next year (besides bringing more shade structure). Before the Man burned in the desert the first time, this Zone Trip had unquestionably become an annual institution.

The first burners experienced nowHERE in a way that city dwellers, and even ardent campers, may never. Walking a mere half-mile from the camp, one could encounter the extraordinary sound of absolute silence and an undisturbed vision of a starry universe. Since then, these are revealed only for those burners who build Black Rock City, and clean up after it.

"Theme camps" were born the second year at Burning Man. One of Cacophony's most clever pranksters, Peter Doty, created Christmas Camp, where all were invited to drink spiked eggnog, but only if they ate his fruitcake first.

You could visit English Safari Camp or giber with an invented aboriginal tribe — the two of them spending their days on the playa caked in mud and tattered robes, sporting staffs mounted with skulls, trading their own minted currency for beer. A woman sculptor from England fashioned three larger than life-sized female figures using bent willow branches that would also be burned. And one year after the first "Zone Trip," Burning Man was a Mecca for pyrotechnic artists.

Black Rock City is an empty slate, erased each year and left open again to the imagination. You might imagine your own world of Burning Man, but you can't begin to imagine who you'll meet, what you'll see and what manner of experience you'll encounter. Welcome to the unknown: the Zone of the here, and the Zone of the now. Welcome to nowhere. ☐

## Camera Tag Hos!

SUMMER B.

It's your first lazy afternoon at Burning Man, and you're wandering among the freaks on the Playa. You spot a pool of glitter and decide to take a dip. As you emerge naked from the twinkling kiddie pool, your firm, glittered tits sparkling in the sun, a friendly but shifty-eyed stranger engages you in a somewhat pointless conversation for as long as he can. You walk away without another thought about it.

What you don't know is that Shifty Eyed Stranger was wearing a microphone, and 10 yards away his panting buddy was filming your glitter-titties with all the zoom his little video camera could muster. Your sparkle-parts will soon be joining others on an all-Burner-tits, completely illegal pornographic video available for online purchase at just \$99.99.

This is one reason why ALL video cameras, personal and professional, must be tagged — even YOURS. Through the years, sketchy run-ins with amateur pornographers and corporations that wanted to use Burning Man imagery to turn a profit have necessitated a camera-tracking system. Personal-use video cameras wear little round white tags with numbers on them. Professional-use (video AND still) tags are larger, laminated, numbered, and blindingly fluorescent green. If you've just brought your Cam-Corder along for personal enjoyment, you MUST sign a personal-use agreement and get a numbered tag before filming.

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Peppermint Patty from Twinkletown asks:

*By what time do I have to put out my garbage for daily pick up?*

**PC:** Well, Miss Peppermint Prissy-Pants, you already know that the entire world revolves around your supreme comfort and your precious little schedule, so you'll be happy to learn that it's no different here in Black Rock City! By all means, take your garbage out to the curb whenever it might be convenient for you, and in whatever form or quantity that you deem is necessary, because we're all here to serve only you!

But, please do me one favor when you're stacking your stinking pile of human detritus for the crack team of BRCity Sanitation Engineers, will you? Please look up and down your street and kindly notice that no one else is putting the garbage they've created out for collection. And why is that, Priss Peppermint? Is it because they are not yet aware of how precious Patty is? No, it's because there is no garbage pickup, honey, and you deserve to have your eyes pecked out for even asking such a thing.

If you brought it here, you take it home. It's that simple. No room in your car? — consider leaving a passenger behind instead. The coyotes and buzzards will have him picked clean in a matter of days, and the bones will be used for a cool art project next year.

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## the Seven

BY DEGALA

I have read the requirements. I know what is needed to attain enlightenment and gain passage through the doors of the Temple of Wisdom. I am about to play the Seven Ages, the giant board game that is Burning Man's 2001 theme.

To reach my goal, I must collect seven stamps in my passport. I can obtain the first six in any order; Wisdom comes last. I will start at the beginning.

I visualize The Cradle, where artists have created a birthing process that is softer, gentler, and larger than life. I look at my choice to be born, and who I chose for parents. I speak my first word. I get my butt spanked. I get a passport stamp. That was easier than I imagined.

Where next?

I choose the Maze, and its themes of reflection and decision. I heard the art there would hold clues on finding my way to the end. As I wander the corridors I notice I am passing the same art over and over. Hello — does this feel familiar? Amid my confusion I find my pronoia: the idea that everyone and everything is conspiring to help me live my dream. I let go and relax — into the experience. I grow unattached to the idea of getting out. Somehow I find the end and I receive my stamp. I realize that I will trust that others will find their way, too.

Suddenly I want pure play. I run to the Playground and join others cavorting with wonderful, artsy toys. I get hot in the sun, so I rest. Daydreaming of cool water, I remember when I was nine and swam in the ocean for the first time. The water took me for a violent spin and spit me out on my chin in the sand. My mother, sitting under an umbrella reading a book, looked up and calmly said I needed to be more careful. I thought I was barely alive, and I cried for sympathy. She is gone now; I am still alive. I receive a stamp for playing well.

I feel I must go to the Mausoleum. The theme is remembrance, and I want to remember my parents and the good things they taught me. "Read the map." "Get enough sleep." Where is the map? Who sleeps in a city that intersects the physical plane only seven days each year? I find pen and paper and scribble a rough poem, which I decorate with my tears. Someone notices; they give me a stamp.

I wander to the Coliseum. The theme here is struggle, and I struggle with competition itself. I hate to lose, and I hate to see the loser lose when I win. I get a stamp for recognizing that. I know I am better than anyone at being me, and I hula-hoop until I drop.

Now I face the Chapel. Its theme is commitment. I should have traded in my ex-lover at last year's SoulMate Costco camp — he didn't know a thing about commitment. Now I'm stuck having to find someone; or volunteering and watching everyone else exchange vows. How depressing is that? Is anyone noticing my resistance?

Will I ever make it to the Temple of Wisdom? The only thing I really know is that I DON'T KNOW anything for certain. I am mad at all my old lovers because they are not here to help. I turn away from the Chapel and go back to the Mausoleum. I imagine I have a black-and-white collage of pictures and writings that remind me of my ex-lovers. I have placed them in an environmentally friendly, burnable frame. I honor myself for moving on, and I recognize that past relationships were never what I really wanted, except for a few lusty moments. Finally, I return to the Chapel and go inside.

I am uncomfortable witnessing devotion and commitment on a level that I have never experienced. I witness the joy of those who know what they want and commit to it in each other. It inspires me, and I become clearer on how to love myself. I get a stamp for reconnecting with myself and committing myself to my dream.

Now I have all my stamps. I approach the Temple of Wisdom. I walk through the doors and am greeted and congratulated. I have played well. There is no judgment here, and I get a view from the top. I am the Goddess and the God, and for a moment I am bigger than the Man I stand beneath. ☐

CEO's HAIR watch

Oh, MY! What is THAT on Your Head?



DON'T LOOK NOW, BUT THERE'S A HAIR ON YOUR CHAIR! IT'S EVERYWHERE, AND WE'RE WATCHING YOUR DOs, AND YOUR DON'Ts. HAIR HEADS BEWARE! YOUR DO MAY MAKE THE COVER OF THE BRG.

## LNT Camp of the Day Award

Win LNT — Leave No Trace — fame and fortune here in Black Rock City! You creative traceless experts, tell Earth Guardians (EG) Camp about your camp's ingenuity in precycling and recycling, trash sorting, dehydrating food scraps in mesh bags, shower water filtering, and suchlike. Winning camps will: (1) be noted in the Black Rock Gazette, and on the EG bulletin board in Center Camp; (2) be featured as a model camp in the EG web pages; and (3) win two tickets to Burning Man 2002. Let your efforts be rewarded!

## Draka the Dragon

... is Lisa's baby. Conceived and engineered for Burning Man 2000, Draka was built with the help of over 50 volunteers at Hualapai Ranch, close to the 80 Acres. The metallic, percussion-packed, fire-spitting beast terrorized the playa for days, delighting thousands of Burners.

Draka is back again this year — as a bus. That's right, Draka is now BRCity's first official public



Gabe Kirchheimer

playa transport (not to be confused with the Gerlach-BRC bus). Look for the playa-side "B" bus stops marked on your map along the city's inner arc. Climb aboard (if there's room) to experience BRCity's serpentine people-mover.

Lisa Nigro is a major female playa artist whose sculpture installations typically involve theatrical performances, and goddesses. In 1999 Lisa created "Diana... a fertility goddess" sundial for Burning Man. This year she and her mostly female crew are building "Brigid... the Primal Mother," whose belly is a giant, flaming caldron.

Notice a pattern here? (pregnant pause, and drum roll...) Lisa just gave birth to another — her first human one! She and Flynn Mauthe, Director of Operations for BRC-DPW, are proud parents of a newborn they can now hold in their arms. (No word yet on this little girl's fire-breathing capabilities.)

Congratulations, Lisa and Flynn!

## PlayaNet

Black Rock City has its own public intranet. Look for the 8-foot-tall painted wooden cubes with antennas on top, in the Plazas and in Center Camp. Inside, there are instructions on how to connect your wireless equipment to PlayaNet, as well as tactile computer terminals for those who managed to part with their high-tech gadgetry for a week.

On PlayaNet, you can surf the latest weather forecasts, read the Black Rock Gazette or leave messages for friends. A clickable, interactive Black Rock City map lets you zoom in on theme camps; search by event, camp or by a person's name, too, if they've been registered in the system.

Post short messages, drawings and animated gif sequences to SPIN, a huge light-cast-in-air billboard, by Christopher Schardt, who calls SPIN an "interactive, communal art space for the entire city." And, of course, you can chat live with other Burners on the network — just try to keep the "flaming" on the playa.





## Material Culture Immortalized

The Bancroft Library at U.C. Berkeley has offered to be a repository for the tchotchkes we make — and give away — as participants in the Burning Man cultural community. Allegra Fortunati and her crew can be found at The Artery in Center Camp where they are hoping to accept two examples of your gifts, to be catalogued and possibly displayed in future art exhibits. And, remember, **Recycle Camp** will take only your aluminum cans — not steel. No nuttin' else.



## Bikes & Bearings

Bikes tend to disappear, for though Black Rock City is as close to Utopia as most of us will ever get, this unfortunately holds true for bicycle thieves as well. Lock your bike to something too big to carry off if you're afraid of losing it.

"Trust in Allah, but tie your camel."  
— Arabic saying

Now, if YOU plan an exit under the cover of nightfall, THINK about it. When the City and all familiar landmarks dissolve after the Burn, hordes of would-be Houdini's bumble about because, well, face it — we're lost. Plot your escape route. Walk it if possible. Save your gas for the road.



## Where's Your g-Spot?

...in The Zone, of course. The newspaper team publishes the Black Rock Gazette, daily, at 8 o'clock on Center Camp Circle, then delivers it (fresh & LOUD) to you each morning. Also look for BRG news racks in the following BRCity locations:

- ONE inside the Center Camp Café, and
- ONE just outside, facing the Man
- ONE in front of the zONE, 7:30 Center Camp
- ONE in BRCity Plaza, at 3:00 & 9:00/Infant
- ONE at the Gerlach Bus Depot, Ring Rd./Lover
- ONE at 4:20/Enlightenment
- ONE at the Greeters Station

How many? 300+ official Burning Man 2001 volunteers indicated interest between April and now. We've scared most of them away though, so the leftovers are obsessing... Oh. How Many. Well, 8 o'clock each p.m. before satellite-upload of final.pdfs to our Reno-based printer, shibumi calls Mr. Freeze (the real buck-stopper in town) out at the Gate. Half his current census count is the number of papers that will be in circulation by 10:00 the following morning; courtesy of the BRG DisReps. And that's the Naked Truth.

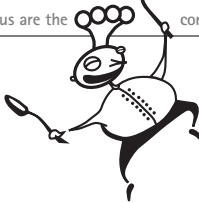


## go POSTAL

The Black Rock City Post Office (BRCPO)\* provides basic lines of communication for all BRC citizens, and will ensure that your messages get through to other camps on-Playa. We at BRCPO also deliver mail off-Playa to a U. S. postal mail drop, as a courtesy service — IF the letters are pre-stamped, and IF we have been sufficiently induced to do so, and IF we feel like it. We DO NOT vend U.S. stamps. However, we do barter Burning Man stamps, postcards and other specialties.

To employ our services, be prepared to grease the wheels of bureaucracy if you aren't planning on volunteering with us as a Mail Carrier, Clerk, or Strip-O-Gram or Playa-Gram Specialist (performer). We're postal, and deeply embroiled in a bureaucratic barter system.

\*The BRCPO is a subsidiary of the Soup Advisory Board (SAB), a not-for-profit art organization creating a global paradigm shift one spoonful at a time since 1997.



## CALLING ALL FOODIES! (and nudies!)

SUSAN KIRR, AKA THE PLAYA GOURMET

Sharpen your knives, sharpen your wits, and sharpen your imagination. The BRGazette's Playa Iron Chef Contest is coming to the Playa!

Do you send your camp into paroxysms of culinary delight? Do you astound your favorite freaks by transforming ordinary ingredients into extraordinary gustatory sensations? Do you top off every luscious dish with the secret ingredient that makes everything taste fabulous, playa dust and all? If so, WE WANT YOU!

We are searching for foodmeisters exhibiting all the qualities of a true Playa Iron Chef. Here's the skinny: Pay us a visit at the Black Rock Gazette, aka "The Zone," between noon and 5 p.m. on Thursday. Bring your most perfect creation to compete in the Playa Iron Chef Preliminary Kook-Off.

Our expert tasters will pronounce two finalists, who will then face off, Friday in the Zone, at 1pm. We will provide the table and the audience but each chef must bring whatever they think they'll need (camp stove, utensils, etc.) to best the other, and may bring one helper. These two chefs will be presented with a mystery ingredient, then dash on a madcap race around the playa to procure five more ingredients from five different theme camps, followed by our BRG reporters and photographers.

By 2pm the chefs will be back, slinging their wares to go up in history with the contest coverage to be printed in the Burn Edition of the Black Rock Gazette. What they will dream up is anyone's guess, but we bet you it will be delicious and will be presented to the judges by 2:30.

The grand prize winner will be selected by a panel of five judges — three of whom will be selected from the audience — and win delectable regional foodstuffs delivered to Black Rock City from all over the country.

Join us in the Zone on Friday to watch the games unfold. Directly after that, at 3:15 p.m., strip down to your own bad birthday suit self and join hundreds of others (meet at the Bus Depot!) as the BRGazette stages the 3rd annual "Naked Truth" photo streak. Wave that Black Rock Gazette high and proud for all to see your all. Food, naked people, the Gazette. What else do you need? ☺

### PlayaChicken Durgy from San Jose asks:

*When a person works for "chicken-feed," is that a good deal?*

**PC:** Considering you humans are a bunch of lazy good-for nothing beakless freaks, it's a good deal whenever any one of you does something that resembles work.

### Leif Notrace from Anywhere, USA asks:

*When I'm done with my beer, can I crush the can on my head and throw it in the porta-potty?*

**PC:** Despite what those lying, shiftless greeters might have told you, it is perfectly acceptable to throw your head in the porta-potty.

**BRG:** Stop by the City Desk at the BRGazette to drop off your questions for the Playa Chicken.

A presentation of PlayaChicken.Com, Inc., a proud corporate sponsor of Burning Man 2001. ©PlayaChicken.Com, Inc. (The BRGazette staff accepts no legal responsibility for anything this Bird says; published only because, if we did not, she would PECK OUR EYES OUT.)

### Camera Tags

Personal-use agreements can be picked up at Ranger outposts, Playa Information, or the Greeters station, and returned to the Greeters or Playa Information.

Seems a bit Draconian for an event with a highly anarchic bent. But if someone sticks a camera in your face without permission, it is nice to be able to say, "Hey, personal-use camera #3003, Stop It!" or, "Ranger, that creep's camera doesn't have a tag." Every single moving-image camera is tagged so that no one can claim "I didn't know the rules;" so that in the rare case where you or BMOrg want to sue for 'impropriety,' it may stand up in court. The alternative is to disallow ALL video cameras, so little white tags are good.

What about the big media? Burning Man doesn't generally \*solicit\* publicity from the major media, but since the event is pretty kick-ass they come out in droves. When they get here, the silver Cowboy-hatted Media Hos of Media Mecca are standing by in Center Camp to give out hugs, cocktails, information, and little green tags. The Hos build relationships with the press pre-event, educate them about what to expect, and let them know what Burning Man expects of them. They dress timid first-timers in funny costumes, and watch as their minds get blown. They're primed to sniff out media vultures, and with their charm and wit, turn them into de-clawed kitty cats.

During their Media Mecca orientation, all members of the media are told not to directly interfere with anyone else's experience, and they know that you have the right to ask photographers and videographers to stop filming you. If you don't want that camera crew with the bright green tags to film your naked ass because you think grandma might see it on the evening news, ask them to stop. If they don't, that's when you march over to Media Mecca, find out that professional-use tag #1313 is from \*Men's Pap\* magazine, and let the Media Hos step in and give \*Men's Pap\* the what-for.

Professional writers, photographers and cinematographers are artists, too. But Burning Man has learned to protect itself and its visual artists. Professionals taking moving or still images with ANY commercial intent (from fashion shoots to gallery showings to documentaries and on and on) must register with the Hos. That means even if you're a semi-pro photographer who \*might\* sell a photo or two someday, come see the Media Team. Photographers can sell images of our event, but it's important to keep track, so that captions can be written, credit can be given, subjects can be found and asked for consent, or invasive voyeurs can be drawn and quartered. Photogs are also encouraged to give their best images back to the community for the archive.

If you're wondering how Burning Man has managed thus far to sidestep Daytona-Beach-style idiot invasions and Woodstock tragedies, it's due in part to the camera-tagging system we practice, our wonderful, self-policing community and the efforts of the silver Cowboy-hatted Media Team Hos (and harsh conditions, and the fact that we're out in the middle of NoWhere. But anyway... ). On the playa, it's your responsibility, too. So tag your video cameras!

Love, The Media Team ☺

It is no failure to fall short of dreaming all that we might realize. The failure is to fall short of realizing all that we might dream. — Dee Hock

## A Daily in the Desert?

KATE FORSTER, BRG CO-MANAGING EDITOR

Welcome Home!!! And welcome to the first edition of the 2001 Black Rock Gazette (known henceforth lovingly as the BRG). Playfully and painstakingly published on the playa, we volunteers bring YOU the news as it is created during a ten hour frenzy in our own fashionable theme camp, disguised as a working newsroom. The BRG is still the only newspaper published live, in the middle of NOWhere (now ask Piss Clear to tell you that). I know the question on everybody's lips is, "How DO you do it?" Well, despite what it may seem, the newspaper does not just magically appear in its printed form.

The BRG is you, my dears — the culmination of the blood, sweat, and jeers of a team of dedicated volunteers for Burning Man. Like you, the staff members of BRG show up for many different reasons, but we all have one thing in common: our dedication to the Naked Truth. Everything you will read is true. Names are not protected. No one is innocent.

We are the tiny voice that bubbles up through the cracks in the playa and seeps into your subconscious. We represent the heartbreak of discovery, and the speechlessness, awe (a wonderment that might well fill you up to your eyes) of the unbelievable present; captured (however flawed) upon the page before you.

Okay. Not to go strutting our feathers and fish scales or anything, but get this: We have captured that infamous and smarmy hen, the PLAYA CHICKEN! She's giving advice and may answer your plucky questions — HOW COOL IS THAT?!? (Come to the BRG Camp after the burn for a chicken barbeque!!!) We also kidnapped from the streets of San Francisco the splendid and sassy Sister Dana Van Iquity of The Sisters of Perpetual Indulgence (natch; she LOVED it). And, from the cold white North Country (where they speak funny, eh?), we have a resident phantom to conjure "Something Brief"—weather permitting. NoW Here is MStill. This nut actually pedaled his bike + 60lbs. of survival shit all the way to Black Rock City from Palmyra, New Jersey and is/will be indentured at our fair BRG HQ (where we hope he arrives) soon!

And we, of the BRG Zone, this year are even providing a convenient, up-front and personal (yet essentially anonymous) computer text posting station out in the middle of Center Camp Circle, where you may emote in the full view of ALL, yet still preserve your delicate sense of secrecy as you submit news to us in our "Terminal Enlightenment" terminal. (Well. It sounded good after a couple of martinis.) All citizen emissions will be collected daily, of course, AND edited, harshly (see! you are not to blame).

Trip along Black Rock City's grid of time and head-space. Pick up this rag, and remember that we are you, my friends. Years later you'll read (us) again, and realize that we needed you. Yup. Here is it, for all to see; read; laugh; or jeer — and remember. ☺



## Liquid Voice

DR. JONES

The Center Camp Café is the caffeinated place to kick back, for service with a smile or a shout. Here, Café volunteers deliver 24/7; here our Decor teams have created visual texture and art in a space that encourages social experimentation. Find eclectic music and poetic styling, storytellers and puppeteers to inspire mood and thought, on two beautiful stages. Even our trained volunteer baristas will entertain as they serve chai, lemonade, espresso drinks, tea, electrolyte replacement fluids... more. The Café is the "Oasis of Aaaaah" — where liquid and desert dreams are conjured... here for you...in the middle of nowhere. ☺

## Literary Horizon Expands on the Playa

TY BILLINGS

The Black Rock Library, or "Bookmobile," marks a new frontier for literacy on the playa. Prior to its arrival, the only place I could go for a good read was Bianca's Smut Shack. At "Your Friendly Neighborhood Bookies" you may exchange, donate and borrow books for a day, or for Eternity. Sounds like heaven, but it's Nevada.

Connoisseurs of the "round-fendered Chevy," Rolin Stutes and wife, Shyvonne's, family & friends provided the initial donations and psychedelic paint jobs to restore the 1951, 2.5 ton van.

Though dyslexic (or maybe because), Rolin's into books, and looking for volunteer librarians so the library may stay open longer hours. Ring Road/Infant, when Rolin's not rolling. BRG



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## PolyGoddess Presents The Burning Man Wedding Singer Talent Contest

Where: Finley Fryer's Plastic Chapel  
When: FRIDAY, August 31st 2001 @ 1 P.M.  
Hey, all you golden throats, join femcee Miss Connie Champagne for Fun! Prizes! Talent! (well, optional...) Karaoke accompaniment provided. Sign-ups start high noon. Come on out and show us your stuff!!!  
*(oh god not another contest!)*