

BLACK ROCK GAZETTE

THE NAKED TRUTH SINCE 1992

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In Search of the Poopacabra

DURGY

Know it or not, your future as a Black Rock citizen depends on the well-being of the Poopacabra. Unfortunately, the *Cacavacuo Peripetica*, or wandering honeysucker, is threatened by adverse conditions on the playa.

Late summer marks the annual migration of these gentle creatures through the Black Rock Desert. Nearsighted, with bright-colored hides, adult Poopacabras can attain a length of 15 feet and carry retractable probosces that can extend 30 feet more. They roll, rather than walk, on stubby, rubbery feet. Most extraordinary is their diet: nothing but urine, excrement, and toilet paper, which they ingest through their noses while emitting a low rumbling sound reminiscent of an idling diesel engine.

There is a symbiotic relationship between the Poopacabras and Black Rock City: we feed them; we need them to clean out our crappers.

Although they pass through our temporary autonomous zone, the Poopacabras are creatures of the mundane world. Responding solely to the physical realities there, they are unable to process anything but the slurry that results from the waste products that are their diet and the special chemicals that predigest them.

Their long noses are slender, a mere two inches in diameter. If they get plugged up with an object such as, say, a beer bottle, it can take two hours to dislodge and complete what should be a two-minute cleanup of a potty. The only way these clogs can be cleared is manually, which is not a task relished by the shepherds that bring the beasts to the playa.

In addition, the only local company that accepts the accumulated waste for processing has threatened to boycott Black Rock City

because of past contamination. Last year, indigestible lumps of matter out of place included rotten watermelons, shoes, aluminum cans, tampons and condoms.

This year began inauspiciously. Beer bottles, fruit and clothing were found in the potties on the first pass by the contractors, according to Will Roger, head of the Department of Public Works. The shepherds were livid and threatened to quit, which would immediately shut down Black Rock City.

An information campaign, which included strict warnings by the Greeters, "seemed to have worked," he said on Tuesday. There was "absolutely no debris" in the 300 potties that were in place.

"Peer pressure," he said, "may be the best way to keep the process flowing." If he sees someone toting stuff into a john, he will speak up. Anyone aware of the problem can spread the word. If your body did not make it, the potty cannot take it!

So protect the Poopacabra. Peer pressure can keep MOOP out of the potties. When someone with their hands filled (with trash?) is heading into a john, be friendly, but do speak up and put a stop to it. If we cannot keep the Poopacabra happy, then Burning Man will truly be knee-deep in problems.

Playa Survival Tips

Use drained cooler water to soak hot feet. If everything was properly sealed, the water won't be too gross.

If you have enough coolers in your camp, designate one for perishable items; meat, dairy, chocolate, anything that melts, and use the rest for more high traffic items, fruits, snacks and drinks. Open the coldest cooler as infrequently as possible. Everything stowed in a cooler should be sealed, or placed safely above the ice.

A car can function as 2 decent tent stakes. A bus, RV or van can be 2 corners of a simple shade



It Ain't a Real Community if We Leave the Kids at Home

GREGORYP(TM)

Midday on the Playa means a lot of idle bodies inside chill tents lounging the day away to escape the heat. But there are no idle bodies at "Space Dome," and lounging is out of the question. Inflatable couches and bean bag chairs become ammo in an undeclared war that also features beach balls, Nerf table tennis paddles, and a lot of happy screaming. Clearly, these people did not stumble back to their camp at five o'clock in the morning, and they probably aren't nursing any kind of hangover. That's because the "Space Dome" is the chill tent of Black Rock City's largest kids camp, appropriately known as "Kidsville."

"Black Rock City is really our home," said Tiffany from Spokane, Washington, who at "eleven and a half" is a four-year veteran of Burning Man. "When we're in Spokane, we're kinda like freaks. But here, we're actually kind of normal."

The kids had good reason to be "chillin" in the Space Dome, as they had just spent the morning "Ice Rustling," a daily foraging event where a posse of kids ride into Camp Antartica on pogo-stick horses to rustle up five bags of ice and bring 'em back to camp in a Conestoga wagon.

"Today, the guys at Antartica sprayed us down with a fire extinguisher," said 10-year-old Ian Affleck-Asch, a two-time Burner from Seattle. "But we still got our ice," he said with a smile.

The posse, which included Tiffany, Ian, 10-year-old Andrew from Salt Lake City, and 13-year-old Beau Carillo from Los Angeles, were more than happy to give us a tour of Kidsville. The highlights of this tour included the Space Dome, Color Camp, a 32 foot tower, and the Disco Dome.

"On Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday nights, we're going to have a Pajama Disco party

at the Disco Dome," said Tiffany. "Any kids on the Playa are invited to come - including all the kids-at-heart."

Though there has been a kids camp on the Playa since as far back as year one, this is the first year that Playa kids have their own theme-camp village. With an estimated 37 families participating in this year's camp, there are expected to be close to fifty kids between the ages of seven months and fourteen years old.

Mark Favre has brought all four of his children to the Playa this year, including his youngest, aged ten months. Hailing from San Francisco, the family also includes kids aged four and nine as well as an eleven-year-old girl who'll make her DJ debut this year at the Disco Dome as DJ Josephine.

"Preparing to bring children to the Playa is just like bringing any other group of people," said Favre. "Water is still the biggest issue, and it's important to have a lot of food. An RV with A/C is fairly crucial for the infant, but other than that, you just need toys, kids' music, and enough art projects to keep them busy for a week."

For that, Color Camp sure comes in handy. Here, kids, moms, and dads can be found all day, chatting, coloring, playing games, and living on a steady diet of trail mix and pink lemonade.

"When it's really hot, around 2 o'clock, we go into an RV to watch movies," said ten-year-old Andrew from Salt Lake City, Utah. "Yesterday we watched Dune and Austin Powers."

By night, Kidsville becomes an excellent place to play LazerTag.

"And it's fun to ride around on bikes and look at the art," said Andrew.

Kidsville is coordinated by Kama, a four-year veteran of the Playa who, as a single mother, found that a kid's camp was essential for her to be able to attend Burning Man.

"Kids camp has evolved over the years," she said. "Burners have grown up, gotten married and had children, but still

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Vicky Vale from Gotham City asks:

It turns out that my ex is camping in my theme camp. I find that I still have feelings of both intense attraction and intense anger. He has moved on. How do I deal?

P.C.: OK hon, let's skip all the Ricky Lake mumbo jumbo and go right to the real problem here: the fact that you think he has moved on. What, were you sleeping during Girly Talk 101? You must have been, because otherwise you would know that guys never move on. It doesn't matter what Mr. Progressive Manhood tells you, he's still on the hook and will be until he's a pile of ashes on the mantle. Now that we have that straightened out, it becomes pretty easy to resolve your current little dilemma. First of all, take advantage of where you are! Head on over

to Glitter Camp and get yourself dusted head-to-toe in the finest gold powder. As you parade your fine self back to your camp, your ex will notice the long line of admirers you have collected and will do anything to win back your attention. You have now solved the issue of your lingering attraction.

Next, take your ex by his hand and lead him into your tent. Once there, lean in close, let out a small sigh, and PECK HIS EYES OUT! That should take care of the lingering anger. Finally, end your day by bagging a Lamplighter.

George in Hushville asks: Where's my g-spot?

The Playa Chicken responds: Listen hon, if you have to ask, then the only place you're going to find your g-spot is standing on a street corner in the Tenderloin District. Just be sure you have an extra \$20 with you.

Stop by the Black Rock Gazette City Desk in Center Camp and drop off a question for the Playa Chicken. A presentation of PlayaChicken.com, Inc., a proud corporate sponsor of Burning Man 2001.

CEO's HAIR WATCH

Oh, MY! What is THAT on Your Head?



WE LIKED YOUR CORNBROWS, HONEY, BUT CAN'T YOU DO SOMETHING ABOUT YOUR GLASSES?



Spin Jam Classes

Do you have a burning desire to spin, swirl, and dance with fire? First-timers and veterans alike can join a spin jam at Infinite Enlightenment (8:30 and Enlightenment). Tutorials will be held for those who wish to learn how to spin flaming torches and enjoy it safely. Already a fire spinner? Gather with your flame-wielding brethren for the big spin jam on Thursday. Both fire and neon will light up the night. Friday at midnight (that's Saturday a.m., nightcrawlers), Infinite Enlightenment will blend fire and theatrics in Prometheus' Revenge at the Coliseum.

Art Beat

Today the Art Beat brings three beautiful pieces of major playa art to you. First stop: The Plastic Chapel, a Taj Mahal-style structure enrobed in colorful mosaics of recycled plastic melted to a metal frame. It looks like stained glass from a distance. As one approaches the Chapel, its veritable construction and craftsmanship are revealed. The Chapel boasts a 150 square foot interior stage, the site of many performances and even a wedding before the Man burns.

The flaming Chamber of Creation was the second stop on the Beat. A propane-fortified double helix rises some 14 feet into the air, drawing dancers from all over the playa. Four drummers provided the rhythmic inspiration and the whole flaming affair was ringed by spectators.

The final stop on today's Beat is the eclectic set of columns forming the Arena, found in the Coliseum on the way up to the Man. Just about every period of art history is represented here: Minotian, Renaissance, Modern, Art Nouveau, Neon, and more. The images mix the classical motifs with new age impertinence. It is a delight to the eye, well-suited for the Fauxlympic Games held there (and probably befitting of the X-games as well).

Sweet Playa Surprises Flocking Out There

On the playa to the right of the Man a large metal sculpture grows. Its tubular metal has a certain alien/plant/human quality.

Participants arrive at the leanto under which Michael, the creator, and his many helpers rest and revive.

"What is it?" they ask.

"What do you think it is?" queries Michael.

Some don't have an answer and just stare and say, "Really neat!"

Others look and offer interpretation. "I think it's the next evolution of man which incorporates some plantlike qualities," suggests one woman.

Michael is pleased. "Thank you" he says. "I wouldn't have thought of that one myself."

He calls the piece Flock. "People will come to it. They'll flock. Some want to know what it is and some will make their own interpretation."

Michael is hesitant to offer his own idea because it limits creativity in others. "If I tell you my interpretation then you can just say, 'Uh huh. Got it' and go on. People need to trust their own senses, their own interpretation. I made it. You can interpret it."

Michael worked to develop a piece that was ambiguous in its characteristics incorporating creature, human, and plantlike motifs. He wants to provide space to interpret his art.

"Remember, the passion for destruction is also a creative passion." -- Richard Linklater

"And now, cried Max, 'let the wild rumpus start!'" -- Maurice Sendak

"Paradise is exactly where you are right now, only much, much better." -- Laurie Anderson

Liberty is the possibility of doubting, the possibility of making am mistake, the possibility of searching and experimenting, the possibility of saying No to any authority -- literary, artistic, philosophic, religious, social, and even political. -- Ignazio Silone (1900-1978)



THE BLACK ROCK GAZETTE IS A PUBLIC INFORMATION SERVICE AND ART PROJECT. OPINIONS EXPRESSED HEREIN DO NOT NECESSARILY REFLECT THOSE OF THE PLAYA CHICKEN, BUT MIGHT TOMBROW. TRY RISKING WONDERMENT. WHAT MAKES YOU HAPPY, MAKES YOU WISE. CONTACT INFO: BRGAZETTE@BURNINGMAN.ORG @ 6-SPOTS IN THE ZONE, CENTER CAMP, BLACK ROCK CITY, NEVADA. THERE'S NO PLACE LIKE HOME. SEEK OUT THE SMALL STUFF IN LIFE, LIKE THIS FINE PRINT. YEARS LATER WHEN YOU READ THIS YOU WILL FEEL THESE RUBY SLIPPERS ON AGAIN. DELIVERING NEWS WITH SUBTEXT, & WILD ASIDES TO THE NAKED TRUTH IN YOU, SINCE 1992. Recycled Paper

"Some people think it looks like Dali's elephants or his giraffes. Some have asked if I am Dali."

"Flock" has more than one meaning. It could be just one of many. Imagine a whole flock of these creatures coming across the playa. Or, it could be the last of a dying breed.

"Where is it going and where did it come from?"

All this is left to your interpretation.



Playing With Fire

So it wouldn't be Burning Man without the fire, right? Although fire performance has been done nearly to death, somehow this is the one environment where it's still an eye catcher and it's not totally passé yet. So, fire fiends, you should remember a few things that will keep you and your spectators from becoming charred. First off, poi and staff spinners, spin off the excess gas. It is simply rude to light up and spray a bunch of people with white gas, or even worse, lighted white gas. Fire blowers, be careful where you aim the flame. I know that it sounds obvious, but you would be surprised what I witnessed last night. Perhaps many of you lamp-oil spittin' punks didn't know this, but lamp oil messes with your intestines, gums and the whole of your mouth. Want to prevent a future of eating pork chops out of a blender? Gargle with olive oil, don't blow the oil when you're too messed up to hold it in your mouth, and don't do it that often! And a note for all you pyro kids out there, do not use other people's gas without their permission! I know that I only brought a limited supply for myself, and when it's gone, it's gone. No more fire for me. And that means that I am going to throw my last singeing drop of lighted white gas all over your lame ass.

So the rules are simple, just an extension of fire common sense that all of us should have by now. Some things that you may not have dealt with if you haven't done fire out here before are the healing time and the incessant pain of burns. If you burn yourself, stop immediately! Either wait for your fire to go out or take your wet towel (you do have a wet towel, right?) and put it out. After you burn yourself it's very easy to get distracted and burn yourself again. And, you may not realize how seriously you've burned yourself until you check. Slather on some burn cream or lotion or whatever you have. During the day, try to keep your burn out of the sun. Injured skin is very susceptible to heat, and the pain when healing skin burns like the touch of Satan himself. Just remember to take care of yourself.

So you've seen fire performance and always wanted to try it, but have no idea how to go about learning it. Do not light your socks on fire and swing them around. Instead, try going up to a fire performer (not while they're performing) and ask if they'd be willing to show you some things the next day, when you can see what they're doing. If you do indeed light up, don't panic, just do what you feel comfortable with, and don't wear polyester.

Bottom line? Don't hit people, use your own fuel, treat your burns and ask before touching! That's basically all you need to know. And kudos to the non-poi, non-fire eating kids out there doin' something different.



PLAYA DUST

JANNA DENIG

Black Rock City would not be Black Rock City without playa dust. So what is this pale-green mist that envelops our existence?

The playa is what remains of Lake Lahontan. Mammoths and saber-toothed tigers roamed its marshy environs in the Pleistocene epoch. The lake eventually dried up, leaving terraces on the mountains which surround the current playa surface. The granite hills leached silt into the lakebed, decomposing and forming bentonite clay.

The silts of our playa are among the world's finest particulates: they are smaller than sand, smaller than salt from the Great Salt Lake, smaller than any dirt known. In some places, it is suspected to be up to 10,000 feet deep.

The playa is also alkaline. Why? A combination of desert climate and mineral salts.

Over the millennia, salts leached from the surrounding hard rock into the developing playa. Moisture evaporates much faster than rain can replenish it, and these salts became concentrated and close to the surface, creating an inhospitable environment for plants and animals.

The playa is so flat and long that the world land-speed record was set here in 1997 by a British car powered with a jet-engine. That car went 763 miles per hour, slightly faster than the speed of sound.

The surface of the playa changes annually; this year the top inch is softer and more powdery than usual. The playa typically breaks up in the winter, as the frost thaws, then repacks when it floods in the spring, creating the familiar cracked-tile surface. Lack of spring rains this year prevented the usual settling and packing of the playa, leaving instead a soft crust that easily becomes airborne, as you may have noticed.

Loki the Trickster of the Earth Guardians says: "I have seen the worst dust storms in my history on the playa this year. Imagine not being able to see two feet in front of you and choking on the air you breathe."

Dust storms can build gradually, or can descend upon the playa as a gray wall two miles



high. They last from a few minutes to several days.

Historically, dust has been a symbol of suffering and poverty.

In the Babylonian "Epic of Gilgamesh," King Gilgamesh's dead friend Enkidu has a chilling vision: "There is the house whose people sit in darkness; dust is their food and clay their meat. They are clothed like birds with wings for covering, they see no light, they sit in darkness. I entered the house of dust and I saw the kings of the earth, their crowns put away forever..."

The Baha'i scriptures say, "Oh, Children of Men! Know ye not why We have created you all from the same dust? That no one should exalt himself over the other."

In the Bible, Jehovah threatens to bring on the land of Israel, as a punishment for forsaking him, a rain of "powder and dust" (Deut. 28:24). To cast dust on the head was a sign of mourning (Josh. 7:6); and to sit in dust, signified extreme affliction (Isa. 47:1) To throw dust at someone is a sign of abhorrence (2 Sam. 16:13); and to lick the dust indicates abject submission

Dealing With Dust

There is no evidence that breathing the dust is harmful, but dust masks are a good idea. Keep your possessions covered as much as possible. Keep tents and vehicles tightly closed. Even when dry, playa dust tends to build up in nooks and crannies. Add trace amounts of moisture, and it sets like concrete.

Wash your bike thoroughly when you get home, or it will rust horribly. Clean your car as soon as you can. Some people recommend power-washing your engine.

Playa dust is invasive, so it gets inside engine compartments and upholstery as easily as closed tents and body cavities. Like any alkaline dust, it is corrosive, attacking seals, gaskets, and finishes.

It attacks skin as well, so lest you suffer the dreaded Playa Foot, keep your feet protected

Double Nabbing of BRG volunteers!

RICK BOY

Rick Boy and Snapper were cheerfully placing the BRG mailboxes for the benefit of the entire playa when they were first apprehended by an impostor ranger (convincing ranger suit and attitude donned by Sky Squid). This Squid was clearly on a do-or-die mission.

"We approached 9:00 and the Man to place a box, and suddenly, from amidst the zipping red lights a ranger blocked our path," Rick Boy said. "The ranger said to us, 'Stop! I need you to go to 6:00 and help me get the concrete buckets!'"

Squid hopped in the back of the Gazetteers' cart and were off to pick up 10 five-gallon cans of cement, each one of immeasurable importance to the zipping red light project.

Just when they thought they were done, "ranger" Squid said, "Now to 12:00! Pick up

Playa Kids

find that they want to remain a part of the Black Rock City community."

During the year, Kama can be reached at kids@burningman.org, and she answers many letters from parents who want to bring their children, but are concerned about the rigors of the desert environment and the unique issues of BRC.

"Teaching children that they MUST drink water constantly is by far the biggest obstacle to keeping children safe on the Playa," she says. "Beyond that, I am very clear with parents that there's extensive nudity, open sexuality, drug use, and chaotic and loud environ-

those buckets!"

"What could we do?" queried Rick Boy, "A 'Yes, sir' and off we went."

When the mission was accomplished, Squid released his cohorts back to their BRG duties. Just a few mailboxes later, Rick Boy and Snapper were commandeered again -- this time by a real ranger.

"Our art car was stopped by a ranger who needed to execute an emergency evacuation," said Rick Boy.

An unfortunate playa dweller got a gash in her foot when a knife fell from a high scaffolding. She was bandaged, wrapped up warmly to prevent shock, and taken to the medical center in the art car.

Kidnappings? Abductions? Whatever they were, the dual nabblings provided service to the city followed by a good night's rest for Rick Boy and Snapper.

ments out here, and that if they want to come and bring their children, they really have to come with a very open mind."

Kama encourages all parents to bring their children to Kidsville. Here children have a peer group and parents are given the extra support of other parents. Kidsville is a very cooperation-oriented camp, and there are no fees to participate in the camp.

"If what we're doing here is building community at Black Rock City, then children have to be included. Making kids feel welcome here reinforces the idea that Burning Man is a real community that will continue over time."

Kidsville is located at 6:30 and Lover, and welcomes kids of all ages. Come on down Wed., Thurs. and Fri. night for the Pajama Disco Party, featuring the music of Britney Spears, 'NSYNC, the Backstreet Boys, and Madonna. Don't forget your jammies.



Through The Fog

VAUGHN SOMETHING

Well, i made it through the fog...literally. There was about a 25 mile stretch in southern Washington and into Oregon where the fog swooped down to the highway and then thinned and came back a few times like some beautifully symbolic opening scene from a suspense film. i even passed under Tangent Drive about 36 miles from Eugene -- how appropriate is that?!

i suppose everyone here at Burning Man has gotten through "the fog" in one way or another. The escape route from the outside world has some fog to it, usually a healthy amount right by the door to obscure the good stuff on the other side and keep us bound to our responsibilities to make dollars for someone else. Then there are the mists of illusion, the representations of danger, terror, and evil decadence created by "mismedia" and the rumor mill of people who have never been here.

It is time for me to start the battle against the mists and fogs. i am going to scrawl some notes about the charming, the pleasing, and the completely wondrous things on this side of the fog. Some will be mental notes, and some will actually be set down in the pathetic attempt that writing makes to capture the cosmogonic spirit of a not so inadvertent happening such as Burning Man.

The first thing i am going to do when i get back to the "real world" is go and buy a brand new map and highlight the route down here so i never lose my way, fucking fog or not!

Never play poker with a guy named "Doc". Never eat at a place called "Mom's". Never date a woman named "Spike". And, never pet a burning dog (at least, not heavy petting).

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