

Black Rock Gazette

The Naked Truth Since 1992

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Thank You For Sharing

By Durgy

A fifth economic system has surfaced at Black Rock City this year, joining the four that were identified in the Gate Edition of the Black Rock Gazette. Taking its place alongside the gift, barter, fiat-money and black-market economies is sharing, which seems to work at Burning Man.

Sharing economies arise when theme installations mandate them. Each camp has the right to set its own rules, and citizens wishing to participate must follow them. For example, you could start a Nude Camp, where clothing is not an option. An Iced Tea camp might require that you write a haiku before getting your tea. It is their camp and their tea, and if you want a glass, you must participate in a way they consider meaningful.

This year, a notable example of a sharing installation was Amazing Larry's Jazz Casino at the Rubber Duck far out on the playa. People coming to the duck must bring something to share that relates to the supply side of a jazz club — ice, cups, hooch, mixers — in order to participate.

Early in the week, the club required visitors to provide some bar-related

item before they could partake. The owners did not accept non-bar-related gifts. Some citizens went away dry and disappointed.

During the week, the duck staff reviewed the policy regarding participation. Chad, a participant who earlier in the week donated one case of tequila, subsequently donated another. In order to serve citizens who trekked out to the bar thinking that any gift would do. In this system, people give what they perceive to be valuable gifts without expecting anything in return. The idea works as long as people keep gifting.

I decided to check out how the share system worked. I made my way out to the duck with nothing other than the clothes on my back, and some Black Rock Gazette pens in my pocket.

Before I had the chance to get to the bar, the manager approached me. He said that if I started up a fire in his burn-barrel, he would reward me with drink pogs redeemable at the duck. I gladly accepted the opportunity to participate. After the burn-barrel was lit, Aaron left me with a couple of pogs.

Other clubs do operate under a pure gift paradigm. The Leopard Martini Lounge at 165 degrees and Mizzen is an example. At the Leopard Martini Lounge, the policy is that all who come may enjoy whatever the bar has to offer until sup-

plies run out. No mention is made to people that they must contribute anything to the bar. While donations are not elicited, the Martini Lounge has continued to operate because enough folks have come back with the supplies necessary to keep the bar rolling.

Some theme clubs at Black Rock City have a gift system for a single event. Otherwise, they just provide places for folks to just chill out with no expectation of giving or receiving anything. But when folks come around making a gift-giving leap of faith, the residents of these camps make sure to carry the gift forward. An example of this type of camp is Playa-go-round at 90 degrees and Esplanade.

Sharing systems may be necessary in some parts of Black Rock City. The traffic at the Rubber Duck is high; it is the only club past the Temple of Joy. The logistic difficulties in re-supplying the bar, and the expense of stocking it, would force the owners to be exclusive or shut down when supplies run out. The sharing system has allowed the Rubber Duck to remain open from midnight to 6 a.m. all the week.

It has been a learning experience for many people of Black Rock City to get used to the gift economy, and its offshoots. What we did observe was that gifting and sharing have made the vibe really good at Black Rock City this year, while barter and unexplained expectations have not worked quite so well. [E]

Fill Out and Be Counted

By JONNO

Many citizens have done their civic duty and submitted completed census forms to the big pink box at Playa Info, across from Center Cafe. But most have not.

After self-administering a brisk slap on your wrist, dig out the form and get to work. It is the pink paper you received at the Gate.

If 30 questions seems like a lot, and if you wonder why Burning Man cares how much you earn whether you vote, rest assured there are reasons for these probing questions.

Marian Goodell, spokesperson for Black Rock City, said: "The outside world has made assumptions of who we are. They think we're a rave crowd of people in their 20s, but we're much more diverse than that. This survey will give us the data we need to defend ourselves."

Each year, citizens' groups petition specific government agencies to not renew Burning Man's permits. If Burning Man can show that it represents a broad constituency with diverse interests, it can make a stronger case for its permits than if we are merely society's misfits on a week-long desert binge.

Burning Man dipped its toes into the sea of politics in 1998 when it asked Burners to write letters to the Bureau of Land Management, the federal agency that administers the land on which Black Rock City sits. About 400 people responded. Last year's Internet survey drew 3,000 replies.

Most of the items in the second half of the questionnaire are aimed at helping the leadership of Burning Man plan for the future. Take time to fill it out, and if you can't get it done until you get home, mail the completed form to P.O. Box 884688, San Francisco, CA, 94188-4688. [E]

Leaving Home

By ENIGMA

It might be a bit shocking at first.

None of the cars are covered in EL wire. And they don't yield to pedestrians.

You can't go to a bar, recite a haiku, and get a beer for your efforts. You can't pay for dinner with a necklace. There's this green paper stuff that you're supposed to use instead. It's called money, and some people say it's the root of all evil.

It's not safe to walk around naked.

You live on a street that's probably not named after a part of a ship, and the cross street is not a degree measurement. Your neighbors don't have a burning car on their front lawn or a giant octopus in their backyard. And that loud music isn't coming from Mission to Mars.

Not all that glitters is glitter. Not all that glows is EL wire.

You'll never see your publisher fight the competition in the Thunderdome. You don't have all your ducks in a row because there aren't any ducks "out there." The bus isn't a pirate ship.

Community is real. So are hot showers, bathrooms in the same block, and electricity.

Put your clothes back on, continue to be kind to your neighbors, and if they give you funny looks, give them a hug. Have a great year! [E]

BRC Honors Emergency Heros

By POSEIDON REX

Since 1994, Senior Builder of the Man and Fire Chief Emeritus Dale Scott has affixed a plaque to the Man that honors firefighters who have perished in the past year. The 2002 honor roll includes the names of policemen and other emergency services workers who lost their lives in the disaster, combined with those of fire and emergency workers across the country who in the past year lost their lives in the line of duty. Thursday night, just northeast of the Man, a memorial service was held to honor their memory and to fill a brass casket with cards bearing their names and affiliations.



Photos by WeeGee and PixMan (bottom right).

Burning Man

By IAN "ANGEL" GABRIEL ROWEN

Now he is gone.

His face was a sheet of soft white satin nearly graced by Ginger's red bloomers. His heart: adorned with names of his selfless builders in incendiary dedication. His kidneys: brand new to cover rigging and impending dehydration. His crotch: a timeless smoke detector.

This year's Man, with arms raised, stood a proud 37.5 feet atop a 40.5 feet Lighthouse, achieving an astounding binary height of 1001110 feet.

Most of this year's Man was constructed in a record eight days at the DPW Work Ranch, some 23 miles north of the playa, with its 110-plus degree temperatures and delirious camaraderie making it a cut beyond the typical construction site.

Led by the indefatigable Dale Scott and Spyril, volunteers molded standard lumber through the hot windy days.

The ceremony was in grave contrast to the sunset revelings going on elsewhere around the playa. Facing a semi-circle of attendees and flanked by BRC emergency services and North Tree Fire Department members and families, BRC Fire Chief Russ Kane opened with a brief dedication. Six burn barrels from the New York burners' Society for Education and Learning disaster assistance project stood as glowing presences, three bagpipers played "Amazing Grace", and to a solemn drum roll a flag-draped caisson was rolled out. As the colors were folded and presented to Fire Camp, Phat Mandy sang a bluesy and soulful a cappella rendition of "Amazing Grace." The fire and other emergency workers, and other participants from the crowd, then read from the cards. After each name a firebell rang once — a bell that left

First, workers cut and assembled rings for arms and legs. Next they fabricated rib, torso and cross pieces. To ensure even burning and a sporty tan line, burlap, permeated with 300 pounds of wax not quite fit for candles, interlaced his arms, legs and spine. Finally, crewmembers finished the head, with its oak facial lattice, in Scott's personal shop.

The weekend before Burning Man, the team converged on the playa for the final assembly. Arms joined shoulders, legs joined torso, and our one-ton alchemical exploding icon was hoisted by the neck atop his pedestal, along with his arterial two miles of electric cable and holders for the Burn. Scott floated up to the top with the aid of a cherrypicker, placed the head, and took some fine photographs.

On Saturday night, the Man and his 300 pounds of pyrotechnic material, overseen by Dimitri Timohovich, transmogrified in grand dissolution. One arm lost its light as the limbs were raised toward the sky, then blazing colors spewed: blue as the ocean world we float in, and green and red for the directions of port and starboard we must use to navigate on this impossibly huge ship we inhabit together. [E]

San Francisco for the first time in its history to make this trip to the playa — and the card was placed in the brass casket.

At the conclusion, the caisson, bearing the casket, rolled away accompanied by bagpipes and an honor guard. A brief fireworks display, staged by the pyrotechnic team of Dimitre and Becky Timohovich, represented the twin towers with two red comets, and closed

Out, Out Sneak-Shot Shooter

By MITCH

Four men who arrived on Thursday were involved in an incident of improper videography later that day that led to two of them leaving Black Rock City, one of them ending up hospitalized for psychiatric reasons in Reno.

Actiongrl of Media Mecca said the four men apparently arrived on Thursday morning and spent some time in the city before driving past Waterboy's camp at 150 degrees on the Esplanade. They asked the camp director, Tania, if they could stay there, and she gave them permission to do so.

A few minutes later, one of the men asked if he could videotape an interview with Tania, to which she assented. The interview concerned her Burning Man experience, and she was clothed. Afterwards, she went to take a shower, and the videographer was seen by another member of the camp surreptitiously capturing her image.

He attempted to explain to Tania why he had taken pictures of her showering without asking permission to do so, but she did not allow him to speak, Actiongrl said.

Members of the camp were furious, she added, especially the mother of a 17-year-old girl, and the four men quickly left the area, abandoning their vehicle.

After about 90 minutes, two of the men came back and claimed to have just met the other two, one of which was the videographer. By then, Rangers and Actiongrl had arrived and placed a vehicle behind the men's minivan, preventing it from being moved.

The two men who returned — one of whom had rented the vehicle — produced three video tapes that they said belonged to the videographer. Only one of them had been recorded, and it contained innocuous images of performances, Actiongrl said, without any nudity.

The two other tapes were unused, and there did not appear to be any additional cassettes.

The men also had about 10 rolls of still-camera film but they did not have anything to use it in.

The two men were told to find the other pair and the car and its contents were kept under surveillance by the Rangers.

Eventually all four returned. The driver opted to leave the event with the vehicle, and the two men who were not involved in the videotaping decided to stay.

The videographer refused to discuss the situation, saying he had taken some kind of psychedelic drug, according to Actiongrl. He was taken to the medical tent and later sent to a hospital in Reno for observation.

Actiongrl said there was no apparent link between the videographer and Voyeur Video Inc., a company that Black Rock City LLC has sued for distributing videos of naked people at Burning Man.

Anyone bringing a video camera into Black Rock City is required to register it and to abide by restrictions on how images may be used.

Cameras are given tags that must be attached to them in the city. The three men who accompanied the videographer as well as Tania of Waterboy's Mermaid Lounge indicated that the videographer might have registered his unit. [E]

with a twenty-one-gun salute of white airbursts.

Dale Scott noted that the event, organized in only a few days, needed serendipity as well as planning. The New York burn barrels traveled to the playa without any specific use in mind, and their inclusion in the ceremony was arranged only the night before. Phat Mandy was invited only on Thursday morning. But Scott was visibly shaken when I mentioned to him that as we turned to leave the ceremony after the fireworks finale, a quick check of the digital time band revealed the numbers 9:11. Serendipity, both ethereal and profound, is alive and well on the playa. [E]



Dale Scott officiates at a ceremony for fallen emergency personnel across America. The bell caisson rang as each name was read and placed in the box that burned with the Man.

Photo by Garthalla

