he most important thing to remember about natural disasters in the Black Rock Desert is that there really are none. A prolonged dust storm or downpour is dangerous, but not because you’ll be blown away or sink into the mire. The surface of the playa is less dangerous than curbs or concrete pavement in a normal city. The real hazard, in the case of any prolonged natural occurrence, is human nature. It’s the perception of disaster that creates a problem. If dense dust should blow and keep on blowing, or if rain should fall and keep on falling, you should follow two important pieces of advice: DON’T PANIC and STAY PUT. Typically, these events are over pretty quickly. Most importantly, do not attempt to exit the event!

If you drive about during a dust storm, you’re likely to get lost and risk collision with a tent, another vehicle, or a human being. Instead, tune into BMIR, Burning Man Information Radio (94.5 FM), to receive up to the minute weather reports and soothing, sensible advice. So what if this happens near the end of the event and you’re due home? What is more important: your safety and the safety of others, or catching a flight or getting back to work? After all, you have the best excuse in the world: an Act of God. Sit back and watch the scene as it unfolds. This is your chance to witness both the majesty of Nature and absurdity of Man.

Likewise, if we should experience a prolonged rain storm (such events occur infrequently), you are facing an adventure, not a crisis. So what if your neighbors are suddenly walking about in platform shoes caked with seven inches of mud (this will happen after about ten paces)? So what if they lurch like Frankenstein and resemble characters from The Night of the Living Dead? Calm down, tune into BMIR (94.5 FM), and remember: no one is going to eat you. In fact, the vast majority of participants arrive at our event over-provisioned with water and food. We live in a community.

With a little help from your neighbors and nearby friends, you can comfortably survive. Don’t panic, and DO NOT try to make a run for the gate. If you attempt to drive in playa mud, your car will weave and slide, creating a very real hazard for everyone. Not only will its tires cake with mud up to the wheel wells, your vehicle could sink to its axels. At the very least, you will injure both the playa and your dignity by doing this. You might also be marooned for several days while waiting for a tow truck to appear (and be charged a fee for this service that will most certainly injure your wallet).

Are my keys over here?

I’m not gonna fall for the “mud-in-the-tailpipe” trick again.

The theme of Burning Man this year is Psyche, as in psychological. Here are a few things you should know. In case you haven’t noticed, the concentric avenues ranging backward from our front street, The Esplanade, are arranged in alphabetical order: Amnesia, Bi-polar, Catharsis, Delirium, Ego, Fetish, Gestalt and Hysteria. This will make it easier to find your camp. If you tend to have trouble remembering where you’ve camped, then you probably should not camp on Amnesia.

The Promenade, the spire-lined walkway extending from the city to the Man and beyond, will feature three major attractions. Beneath the base of the Man, you will encounter a maze consisting of 30 insidiously linked rooms filled with art. This is the Funhouse of the Mind. If you suffer from claustrophobia, agoraphobia, or are taking any psychotropic prescription drugs whose names end with the syllables in, ine, an, trin, ac or ex, you should consider not entering this structure. Otherwise, the Funhouse will be [caution: the Funhouse may, in some cases, lead to serious side effects, including, but not limited to, palpitations, night sweats, delusions, bad breath, body odor, impotence and persistent thoughts of suicide] enjoyable!
I am the original BM

I know what I know and these are the facts. For years I have been doing a thing called “burn ‘n’ man” — a scarecrow with battery operated lights all over my clothes — at kid’s parties and regional state fairs around Visalia California. One Saturday in March I met Larry Harvey at a fair, and shortly thereafter Larry started something that is now called the “burning” or “braining” man project (I’ve heard both). Think about it: A highly combustible human form, called “the man,” with lights, allegorical, mythological, metaphysical, reactionary, the scene is vibrant and alive with human interaction, the feeling is electric. All of a sudden, the man bursts forth and the crowd goes wild. My flame is metaphorical, his is natural. Now I’ll admit Larry has added a few things, he’s got numbers, that’s for sure. And the idea of actually lighting the man on fire, and going to the desert, and the event itself is nothing like a weekend state fair in Visalia. Don’t get me wrong: the burning man is a beautiful thing, and I’m absolutely down with Larry’s views on art, and barnyard man lives on, happy to be a part of it. I don’t make any apologies about the way I live my life and I don’t expect any one else to either. And I wanted to say hats off to Larry, the man gave me my first real break in the business.

Respectfully, barnyard man

PSYCHE! FROM P.1

Once you have threaded your way through this maze and found one of two stairways that lead upward, you will be able to rotate Burning Man. With a little effort, the sculpture can be made to turn 180 degrees! How is this possible? The “Man” is a huge scale art installation and the central area where it’s placed is designed so that when you are facing it, the wind (which is constant) blows from behind it. This allows the Man to be rotated. At sunset each day, a ritual will occur at a second node of interaction on the Promenade behind the Burning Man. This area will be devoted to nightly fire art. Large-scale installations will surround a giant human head. The Dreamer, executed by longtime Burning Man artist, Pepe Ozan. When the Dreamer’s eyes are opened, a fire will be lit inside its cranium and fire performances, including dancing and interactive sculptures, will begin to ignite, lasting late into the night. Other guided dream groups will take place at Dreamshare Camp located at Esplanade and 3:00. Drop by the camp for the daily schedule. When attending a dreamshare group you’ll be asked to bring a recent dream, an old dream or a dream that’s haunted you for years. This imposing edifice has been designed by Mark Greaves and built by the same Temple Crew that has constructed artist David Best’s spectacular creations over the last 4 years. This year’s offering will be different and provocative, but like temples of the past it is intended as a place of rest and respite and dedicated to the memory of loved ones we have lost. You may bring an offering to this temple or inscribe a message upon it. The Temple of Dreams will be burned on Sunday.

At the far end of the Promenade will stand the Temple of Dreams. This imposing edifice has been designed by Mark Greaves and built by the same Temple Crew that has constructed artist David Best’s spectacular creations over the last 4 years. This year’s offering will be different and provocative, but like temples of the past it is intended as a place of rest and respite and dedicated to the memory of loved ones we have lost. You may bring an offering to this temple or inscribe a message upon it. The Temple of Dreams will be burned on Sunday night of the event.