Black Rock Gazette

Your Playa Time Source for Infotainment Since 1992

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Sports Beat - Playa Extreme!

By Lord Fouffypanns

Incredible athletic opportunities abound in Black Rock City this year, including radical adventure sports definitely not for the faint of heart. Some Burners, not content with attempting personal injury by going barefoot, forgetting sunscreen and not hydrating themselves, are engaging in unusual extreme activities.

The Black Rock Desert has long attracted wind-powered sports.Wheeled windsurfers are meeting Friday at 2:30 to sail around the Man, bringing that ocean feel to the burn

At Chris Love's "Jane Fonda Feel the Burn Camp," an homage to the famous radical at 4:45 and Creed, you get a 15-minute butt workout. Classes include beer and cheese cubes. A hard butt and hors d'oeuvres are extremely fine by me.

Out on the Esplanade, radical bike trick jumping showcased gritty Burners being guilt-tripped into copping air off a jump ramp on Wednesday. Some flew and some blew.

At 9:00 plaza in Will Prime's Moons of Mongo Camp, laser tag on bikes at dusk is a big

Photo by Loretta

hit. Bring a bike for 16 contestant games. Everyone's invited, from kids to grandpa, all night. So far, there's only been one busted bike.

Unique Black Rock City extreme sports are available to release pent-up aggression. Sister Mary Pranksters' "Astroglide Wrestling" is at Infinite Oasis Friday at 4:00 p.m. A naked oil wrestling smackdown offers workout and anger management for all comers. Bring opponent/spouse/campmate, towel and baby wipes. And hey, no cameras without asking!

Nightly at 8:00 and Esplanade, Death Guild's Thunderdome crew is the clear leader in serious personal anger management. Contestants engage bungee-suspended opponents and literally cross (padded)swords to grudge-match a "Two enter and one leaves" bout. Annetta vouches that ball-kickin' girls and hippies fight the dirtiest, but the worst bout was between sisters resulting in broken ribs and a ruptured spleen. Noses, fingers and bitten ears aside, Kevvy reports, "You just don't know how good it feels." The Death Guild comprises super real folks who have created a valuable controlled extreme fight sport forum to work out resentments. Now, how to get my boss to Burning Man next year?

Unquestionably, the worst extreme sports injuries result from not using bike/vehicle lights and not slowing down at night when drunk or high. News flash! Pay attention, slow down, use vehicle lights, a horn or honking noises to let folks know you are near. You'll hurt yourself—or worse, another—without extreme awareness and patient caution. Collective respect works! ❦

PLAYACHICKEN

Skivvy from SF asks:

Help! My ride back to the city is bailing early and I'm not ready to leave yet! How can I find another ride home?

The Playa Chicken responds:

Are you aware that I am known all over the world as one of the greatest impersonators currently working the airport lounge circuit? It's true! And guess what, Skivvy, I've been working on an impersonation of YOU! Want to hear it? OK, here we go!

"Chirp chirp chirp. My name is Skivvy and I'm a helpless little baby, Chirp chirp chirp. I can't take care of myself. Chirp. I'm a pathetic waste of carbon."

Pretty damned amazing, isn't it? I captured the true essence of your horrid whining so perfectly that at this moment you probably cannot stand to be in your own presence. Well, join the club, buckaroo, because your quivering lower lip is making me want to plunge an ice pick deep into my left temple, after I peck your eyes out, of course.

Even so, I'm going to help you. Why? Because you said that you need to get "home" and I do appreciate the fact that you recognize that the playa is in fact not your true home, despite what these smelly Greeters may have told you when you arrived. This is my home, and my home only. You are here only by way of my divine benevolence and an amazing amount of cash transferred into my bank account by a mysterious Larry H. But anything I can do to hasten your departure is a soothing balm on my tattered nerves, so I'm going to reveal the secret for getting a free ride out of here whenever you want.

When you're ready to get the hell off of my land, start by carefully packing all your belongings and setting them out by the curb. The BRC Luggage Reunitement Crew will take care of them for you, I promise.

Next, please proceed to one of the numerous Instant Playa Evacuation Stations located conveniently throughout the city. You can recognize them by their large hinged doors, a cute little ventilation tube on top and an aroma that smells like someone from the DPW crew after a three-month bender. Step inside, lift the plastic hatch and lower yourself into the Readiness Chamber. Remain perfectly still until you see a large tube being lowered in towards you and you begin to feel a distinct lifting effect. Put your arms to your sides, point your toes straight down and enjoy your ride!

You People

By Lady Merv

"You People" - what does that statement mean to you? Was it said to me because because I am a woman? A New Yorker? Partly Jewish?

No. When these words were uttered in 2001, we were returning our RV in Reno.

"You People have no respect!", "You People are pigs", "You People are a disgrace." This was said before they walked outside to look at our vehicle, which we had meticulously cleaned for several hours.

After a hard week at Burning Man we were in no mood to be berated. We had spent time treating this rental to power washes and vacuuming.

We had not dealt with these people before. We had expected to return our RV to the owners we had rented from for years, but they had sold their company to a new couple. After the treatment we received, we considered writing to the Better Business Bureau and posting our experiences on the Internet, but then Sept. 11 happened and it seemed so inconsequential, so we let it go.

In 2002, we rented a truck from Budget, and they give us a gold star for the cleanest vehicle brought back. We figured we were all good and set for 2003.

Not. Budget canceled many reservations from around the country a week a before the event and failed to tell people coming to the Reno area. I arrived at Budget to pick up a truck reserved months in advance and confirmed by phone a week before. After finding the only vehicle available was a van, not the truck I had reserved, I was told by the man at the Budget counter that I would be charged a $500 cleaning fee upfront. He had looked at me and decided I looked like a Burner.

I informed him that if I was African American and he said that I would be charged $500 extra because I looked as if I would return the vehicle dirty, I would have cause to call every newspaper in the country, get a lawyer and report the racism at Budget. The counter guy was confused. I am not African American, but I am partly Jewish, which I stated, but this seemed to confuse the situation.

Luckily, we called U-Haul and were able to rent a truck from them.

What's the message here? Maybe it is that when we return to the default world we need to bring our Leave No Trace philosophy home, at least as far as the vehicles we borrow or rent to bring us to Black Rock City. That will make everybody's chances of obtaining wheels the next year much easier, especially in Reno, which is a small town at heart, despite its claim of being the Biggest Little City in the World.

Here are a few things you can do to help keep your vehicle clean:

1) Cover the upholstery with tarps. The soft waterproof ones that you can tuck under the cushions are good.

2) Cover the floors with tarps and attach them with tape that won't leave marks

3) Keep the windows and doors closed whenever you can.

4) Clean as you go.

5) Find a self-serve pressure washing place in Reno and give your rig a good going-over on the outside and undercarriage if possible.

6) Armor-All is a surface protectant that eats playa dust and removes streaks from automotive interiors and dashboards. Be sure to read the instructions on what you can clean with it. ❦

Showering With a Bug

By M&M

The perfect shower in Black Rock City is a kind of holy grail: everybody wants it but nobody can find it. Sure, you can rent an RV and pay several thousand dollars for the privilege of dousing yourself with a modicum of water pressure but, short of bringing your plumbing with you, you have to deal with the icky question of graywater.

Many Burners have tried to solve this problem, but so far there has not been a widely accepted method of graywater disposal in Black Rock City.

Enter Entomo. Perhaps Burners will catch this shower bug.

The insect has been evolving for eight years. Its creator also calls himself Entomo, derived from entomology, the study of insects. He calls his shower "functional artwork," and it looks like a cross between a dragonfly, a fly, a bee and a spider.

While many graywater treatment facilities use evaporation ponds as their key element, Entomo bases his system around filters. Ponds seem fine in theory, but Entomo says that in practice they create problems. You can't leave before the water has evaporated and most use plastic to hold the solids that stay behind. This can be messy to remove and usually ends up in a landfill.

The water for an Entomo shower starts off in a 55-gallon water barrel. A 12-volt electric pump brings it up one of the insect's legs and into its body. Users position themselves on a wooden platform beneath the shower head and use a foot pedal to release the water.

Photo by Monica

The platform is raised and beneath it the graywater is collected and then pumped through four filters by a 2 1/2-horsepower engine.

Surrounding the last two filters is cationic/anionic mixed-media filter that catches oils, such as those found in sunscreens and detergents, and metals, which can be found in body paints. The material looks and feels like caviar.

The filter is a fine mesh that traps relatively large solids. It is followed by a sand trap and then a heavy duty filter that removes particles as small as 20 microns. Finally, a carbon filter grabs particles as small as 5 microns.

Entomo, a mechanical engineer by trade, takes the sludge (after removing the last bit of water) trapped by his filtration system to Boise, where he dumps it in a land fill. The system costs about $1,500 and the filters are replaced every year. Most of the materials can be purchased at home improvement stores.

Entomo is located at Pagan Pleasure Palace, on Authority between 7:00 and 7:30. ❦

Announcements

Hands Across the Playa

A mile equals 2,500 Burners. That's how many are needed to form a human chain stretching from Real to Absurd, for Hands Across the Playa. The project takes place this afternoon, at 5 p.m. There will be markers with letters, A to J on the Real side, K to T on Absurd. Meet your friends at any letter.

Hands Across the Playa

Ten Years and And Still Lighting

By Chris Blush

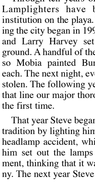
Photo by Mitch

Lamplighters need strong backs.

Dusk is a liminal time in the desert. The tyranny of the sun is over for a time as scorching day succumbs to frigid, friendless, tracklessness night. And every day, about this time, you will see the Lamplighters at their work. Teams of carriers, their lanterns swaying on laden poles, and solemn lifters pace spire to spire raising high the humble lamps whose warm glow makes the night a time of celebration rather than of fear. No one can be so lost that the lights cannot guide them home. This is the very purpose of the lamps, and of the work of the lamplighters: to bring hope to the lost, civilization to the wilderness, and light to the darkness.

Through ten years of diligent service, the Lamplighters have become a defining institution on the playa. The tradition of lighting the city began in 1993, when Steve Mobia and Larry Harvey set 24 lanterns on the ground. A handful of the lanterns were stolen, so Mobia painted Burning Man logos on each. The next night, every single lantern was stolen. The following year, the familiar spires that line our major thoroughfares went up for the first time.

That year Steve began another Lamplighter tradition by lighting himself on fire in a freak headlamp accident, while the fellow helping him set out the lamps watched in bemusement, thinking that it was part of the ceremony. The next year Steve got a new hat.

In 1995, 24 lanterns became 50; in 1996, 50 lanterns became 100; in 1997 there were more than 200 lanterns. Every year as the city grows, the scale and complexity of the task of lighting Black Rock City increases. In 2003, the Lamplighters are raising nearly 600 lamps along city streets and four routes to the Man, by far the largest processionals in their history. Black Rock City has become the world's largest user of kerosene lamps (more than 1,000 lamps), with Disneyland a very distant second.

The work of lighting the city requires the daily aid of nearly 150 walk-up volunteers to clean, fuel, light, carry, and lift the lanterns. The quiet earnest with which these volunteers perform their duties and the sense of ritual lead some to ask if Lamplighters are a cult. The robes may suggest it, but in truth the Lamplighters are a guild into which all are welcomed. The Lamplighters guard no secret meaning or mystery -- theirs is a simple service, to light the way.

For a decade, the Lamplighters have never failed to light the city. To honor this history, they have constructed within their own chapel a shrine to share with all, inscribed with the names of those luminaries who have dedicated themselves to bringing light to Black Rock's streets year after year. Any who wish to contribute to this space by adding their own artifacts are welcome and encouraged; lamplighting is an endeavor fueled both physically and spiritually by collective energy.

The Lamplighters invite visitors to their village to enjoy a luxurious lounge, opulently carpeted and draped, with a misting system, a bar, and an observation deck. A tenth anniversary comes around only once, and the Lamplighters have worked hard to make this the year to remember for the next decade. They would like every citizen of Black Rock to be a part of the legacy of lamplighting.

The Lamplighters Village is located behind their workspace in Center Camp. ❦

Burner Runs For California Governship

by Durgy

Burning Man attendee Jonathan Miller takes radical self reliance seriously. So seriously that he has entered into the pool of candidates vying for Governor of the State of California.

Miller, a third time Burner, lives at Globall of Happiness Camp at about 5:10 and Creed. He has been featured by the Fremont Argus, the San Mateo Daily Journal and Channel 4 KRON News. Miller has entered intending not to win the election, but to express the voice of the people with the hope of making the world a better place. "California is a State of alternative ideas like Burning Man. We need new thinking for the future."

Miller's campaign centers on the development of clean and nearly inexhaustible energy to meet the electricity and water needs of the people through the use of solar power. Miller's vision is the development of a long-term resource plan that will be around for the next few billion years.

Photo by Smaze

Miller spends some time with Kyriakos.

Miller bemoaned the lack of a vision propounded by the more visible candidates in the race for California's highest office. According to Miller, "It is the third tier candidates that have the ideas. We are free of the influences of big money interests." And Miller truly is up against big money; his focus on developing alternate fuel sources puts him at odds with many large corporations that profit from the energy trade.

According to Miller, "A hundred-square-mile patch of solar panels could supply the needs of the entire country." By Miller's reckoning, this would mean that a 500-square-mile patch of solar cells could supply the world's energy needs. Miller noted that "California has a lot of desert."

Miller points out that "one day of the sun's energy that reaches the earth provides enough energy to meet the world's needs for energy for 30 years. If even 0.1% of that energy could be harnessed, that would roughly meet the world's energy needs for about 30 days."

According to Miller, five states are battling over riparian rights to the Colorado River. He believes that the ability to harness the sun would also reduce such water disputes by making seawater desalination plants practical. Says Miller, "If it can be done in Saudi Arabia, we should be able to do it here."

Miller describes himself as a pro-business to centrist Democrat. He is in favor of the right to choose, the decriminalization of victimless crimes, and is high on education. Miller also endorses policies that would emphasize personal responsibility on the individual level, the State level, and the national level.

Miller's believes that a decreased dependence on fossil fuels and a greater emphasis on self-reliance could only help stabilize the world's political climate. If there is no incentive to fight for scarce resources, conflict would decrease. For California, as at Burning Man, things seem to work better for people if they have their own affairs in order. By throwing his hat in the ring, Miller is setting an example that Burners do have a vision of a better planet. By moving on this vision, Miller believes we can move the entire world in the right direction.

Miller is willing to debate any other gubernatorial candidate present in BRC, either behind podia or in Thunderdome. ❦

Pantzooka Patrol Sighted on the Playa

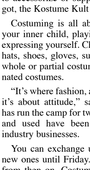
Photo by Gothalot

Ready, aim...

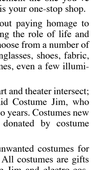
Photo by Gothalot

Pants!

By Gothalot

Due to a spate of increasing pantlessness, the Pantzooka Patrol is waging a war against males wearing shirts and nothing south.

Rising temperatures seem to be responsible for increased sightings of botomless ones.

Two members of the Pantzooka Patrol, Citizen X and Cap'n Joe, are perturbed by the lack of fashion sense and all around bad taste. "We don't mind full nudity at all, in fact we often conduct exercises completely naked but come on - the shirt, really now, that's just bad taste," Cap'n Joe said. He concluded by saying, "We take no prisoners!"

The patrol aims to rectify the imbalance by blasting pants at the sartorially incorrect. They travel fast and light, so beware, if you are caught without pants and wearing a shirt: Pantzooka Patrol will gladly supply you with some trousers with reckless and merciless abandon. ❦

Upgrade Your Look

By Natasha

If you don't have a costume or if you'd like to accessorize or supplement the one you've got, the Kostume Kult is your one-stop shop.

Costuming is all about paying homage to your inner child, playing the role of life and expressing yourself. Choose from a number of hats, shoes, gloves, sunglasses, shoes, fabric, whole or partial costumes, even a few illuminated costumes.

"It's where fashion, art and theater intersect; it's about attitude," said Costume Jim, who has run the camp for two years. Costumes new and used have been donated by costume industry businesses.

You can exchange unwanted costumes for new ones until Friday. All costumes are gifts from them on. Costume Jim and electro-costumer Christopher create illuminated costumes and own online costume businesses. They believe Burning Man allows you to optimize your individual style with the costumes you wear on the Playa.

Christopher made national news in his electronic wire wear when he skated the streets of downtown Manhattan on his electro-rollerblades in a brightly-lit cowboy costume, chaps, vest and hat, during the New York City blackout.

Kostume Kult camp is located on the Esplanade at Serious. ❦

Jesus Christ, Mohammed too, are not here to pick up for you.

The Dusty Puzzler

Answers to Wednesday's Puzzle

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