

# VIP in BRC

The inside story of how one upscale camp does the Burning Man VIP package right

by ADRIAN ROBERTS



Ya-Ya, Queen of Playa could be your VIP host at Burning Man ... if you've got money to burn.

Photo by: Eric ShutterShot

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**Burning Man to become non-profit: Should you care?**

**"Big-name DJs" didn't get tickets: Boo-fucking-hoo**

**30 Types of Burners, 5 More Principles**

**How you will get hurt this year**

**Dubstep: Scourge of the playa?**

**And of course ... the infamous Out/In List**

With this year's unprecedented sell-out of Burning Man tickets – dubbed **"Tickepocalypse"** by some Black Rock City citizens – burner culture has finally transitioned fully into a society of "haves" and "have-nots." And while this is certainly the inevitable result of the natural evolution – and success – of the 25-year-old event, it's also fitting that it happened during a year when the theme of Burning Man happens to be called **"Rites of Passage."**

Of course, tickets aren't the only things that burners either "have" or "have-not." There's always been social stratification in Black Rock City, even since the early days. Back then, as it is now, there was a noticeable distinction between burners who showed up in a car and simply tent camped versus those who arrived with RVs and box trucks full of generators and circus tents.

But as Burning Man has gotten bigger and ticket prices gotten higher, it has been increasingly attracting a certain class of

so-called "participants" who are more than willing to pay for the privilege of having a significantly more pampered experience at Burning Man than the one you're likely having this year. And providing these pre-packaged Black Rock City experiences are an equally-increasing number of **"burnerpreneurs"** – experienced burners who cater to this upscale class of "participant," giving them the VIP treatment in BRC.



Look beyond the "duckface" – he's wearing an Ed Harvey shirt!

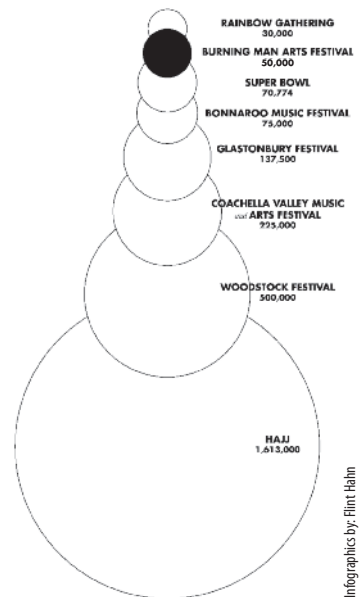
Adrian Roberts

### Burning Man is a Bucket List item

Earlier this year, the burner community was abuzz with an audacious eBay auction for a "Bucket List Burning Man Package of a Lifetime," which promised: "We'll bring you to Burning Man without the set-up and clean-up, flying you into Black Rock City with no wait in line, and with transportation to and from your camp, where 5 coaches and 5 staff members will be waiting." The package included tickets, helicopter rides from Reno for 10 people, a large

continued inside ▶

### EVENT/FESTIVAL ATTENDANCE



Infographics by: Flint Hahn

# Don't hate the playa, hate the game

by ADRIAN ROBERTS

Welcome to the second year of the *BRC Weekly* ... where it took us only one year to devolve almost completely back into pretty much just being *Piss Clear* under a different name. For the first-year newbies reading this – probably half of you, if Black Rock City population statistics are correct – *Piss Clear* was the *BRC Weekly's* predecessor, a 13-year playa institution known for its **snarky editorial tone and acerbic “been there, burned that” attitude**. In other words, very similar to what you're holding in your hands right now!

## What's the difference between a burner and a hippie? A ticket!

With this year's “Tickepocalypse,” it can be assumed that if you're reading this, you're likely Someone Who Has Their Shit Together.

Either that, or you give a really great blow job. **However you got your ticket, the point is: YOU ARE HERE.**

Congratulations! By default, that makes you one of the “haves” rather than the “have-nots.” How does it feel to be seen as an elitist playa douchebag? Are you sensing an overarching theme amongst these pages this year?

## No art project puff pieces here!

As SF Slim says, “**Burning Man is nirvana for logistical fetishists.**” And printing a newspaper on the playa is nothing if not logistics. Which is why we don't do it anymore. Look, we ain't gonna lie: **We printed all this shit last week.** Which explains our dearth of topical articles profiling various art pieces. Besides, that's never really been



our thing anyway. **We're more like a Black Rock City lifestyle rag.** Sure, there's 10,000 tons of amazing shit out here ... but we only have 250 column

inches of space. Since we can't write about it all, we don't even bother. That's what the *WhatWhereWhen* and *Black Rock Beacon* are for – especially if you want to read daily puff pieces about big funded art projects that read like book reports. (Yes, that's pretty much what passes for “news” out here, especially when the Borg puts the clamp-down on any *real* information, such as how many drug busts were made and who died. Because that sort of thing might “harsh your vibe.”)

## Find us at Fandango!

This year, we've pretty much given up on having a newspaper office out here. Why bother when most of the time – in stereotypical journalistic fashion – we can be found just hang-

ing out at the **Fandango bar** anyway, on the **Esplanade at 4:00**. We must admit, we love being on the Esplanade again – two less sides to be surrounded by douchebags!

Every city needs its dive bar, and Black Rock City is no exception. Fandango has been filling that need since 1995. Join us for a drink and tell us how we're doing it wrong!

## Booze sponsorships on the playa?

Apparently, one of the ways we've been doing it wrong has been not getting our bar sponsored by liquor companies. Yes, despite BRC's explicit “no commerce, no advertising” rules, it's an **open secret that many of the playa's biggest theme camps have their bars sponsored by liquor companies**, who give these camps cases of free booze in exchange for getting photos of their product in the hands of burners and posted to people's Facebook and Flickr pages. Apparently, we've been “doing it wrong” all these years!

**So if you're feeling the love and want to “gift us back”** for giving you something interesting to read in the porta-potty, by all means, **the Fandango bar will take donations in the form of booze and mixers!**

## Bootie BRC – music with words!

And we're gonna need those booze donations for **Thursday night**, when the senior staff of this newspaper puts on its headphones to throw **our little mashup dance party, Bootie BRC**. Yes people... all genres, all eras, all mashed up together. And if you miss us on Thursday, then come out to **AutoSub (Esplanade & 3:30) on Friday**. **MUSIC WITH WORDS** is an anomaly here in

## Help deliver the BRC Weekly!

We need people to help deliver the *BRC Weekly*. If you'd like to help, please stop by the Fandango bar at 4:00 & Esplanade and grab a stack to distribute around Black Rock City. It's a great way to meet other burners, see the city, get random gifts, and avoid the BRC guilt trip of not “participating!”

Black Rock City ... which is **WHY** we're doing it! **Somebody's gotta play something other than dubstep, right?**

## What part of 'BRC WEEKLY' don't you understand?

We hope you enjoy this issue of the *BRC Weekly* – because it's the only one this year! Yes, only one issue a week – it's right there in our name! So please don't come up to us at Fandango asking when our next issue is coming out. The answer is: next year!

If, however, this one issue wasn't enough burner sass for you, we heartily recommend getting our **320-page Piss Clear anthology, “Burning Man Live,”** which you can order directly from us at **pissclear.org**. (See the ad on our back cover.)

Plus, your hands won't get smudged with ink! See you out on the playa, BRC! **BRC**



BLACK ROCK CITY'S  
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# Stop the dubstep already!

by SAILOR BOY

Understand that Burning Man is about radical self-expression and it's viewed as a place where anything goes. But I feel the need to ask one thing: **tone down the goddamn dubstep.** You're ruining everything. Last year I found myself at the Temple having a moment with the thoughtful messages left for loved ones, when the dubstep monster came busting through the wall like the fucking Kool-Aid Man: “**Oh yeah! Womp-wompwomp!**” And it made me want to punch a baby.

Though self-expression has made this place the lovely experience that it is, 12 years of Burning Man has also shown me a number of pitfalls. It's how we end up with drum circles and bad



spoken word poetry or vegan fart songs about whales that make me want to go against my better judgment and join a Japanese whaling vessel. But dubstep really takes the cake. I can't think of too many sounds out here that make my asshole pucker the way this genre does, and yet **it's fucking everywhere** and there comes a point

where someone's self-expression is trespassing into the experience of others.

Did you know that one of the original pioneers of dubstep, Steve Goodman (DJ Kode9), just wrote a book on the weaponization of sound? Of course he did. “From being a DJ and playing on various good and bad sound systems, I'm very aware of the fact that sound — and music — doesn't always create enjoyment and pleasure,” Goodman says. “Actually, sound has a very special power of cre-

ating irritation and bad vibes.” No shit, Goodman, and your baby has taken a dump on my yearly pilgrimage to the playa. Now some asshole with a \$10,000 sound system can express his way into my losing an erection or ruining an acid trip. **Whatever happened to music with words anyway?**

I'd like to end this with a quote from a good friend of mine, Bill. He's a clever bitch: “**Dubstep is literally the rhythm of vomiting.**” The staccato expectoration of bile punctuated by intermittent cacophonous attempts at melody that more resembles a broken jackhammer operated by a crack-head. It is the favorite music of those incapable of actually dancing, simply because everyone looks like an asshole trying to dance to it.”

In sum, **your “radical self-expression” sucks. I'm just sayin'.** **BRC**

**SAILOR BOY**



# The Tickepocalypse Tango

by MALDEROR

Since we're all here, I presume Tickepocalypse isn't really a burning issue for anybody anymore. Congratulations on planning ahead, hippies. But I *do* think it's worth mentioning that the Borg screwed the pooch on this matter, and they did it with characteristic vigor and a bestial lust for canine bootie. I have a

ton of sympathy for the many folks who were caught unaware by the sudden announcement that "tickets have sold out." WTF? And I could have been one of those poor sad bastards, hunting eBay for \$600 tickets which then turn out to be fake. I've been dust-bowl poor since ticket sales started. The economy SUCKS, in case anybody missed that tidbit of modern life. (If I hadn't been lucky enough to help with a certain airborne art project out here, I wouldn't have a ticket at all.)

The Borg claims they "warned us" tickets might sell out, via their regular propaganda arm in the Jack Rabbit Speaks. Horsepucky! The JRS didn't tell us IN ADVANCE that the event was going to sell out. They said "it might," "it could," "we anticipate.".. **The JRS is usually comprised of 3 parts nonsense, 2 parts vapor camps, a large dollop of Kickstarter begging, and endless pleas to feed the artists on the playa.** So... for your veteran burner, the JRS is only slightly more useful than the

largely useless WhatWhereWhen guide.

Even so, the Borg should have sent out a single warning saying "tickets will DEFINITELY sell out. Next week, if not sooner. Buy yours NOW." That would have been the proper, adult way to handle this mess. Telling the city after the fact, "Tough luck, we warned

## MALDEROR

you it could maybe-possibly happen" smacks once again of an organization that's more "befuddled" than "organized." **If they had a preset size limit for Black Rock City, why didn't we hear about it back when tickets went on sale? Why did they keep it a fucking secret?**

## Epic utopian fail

There is nothing here but wide open space. The notion we could "sell out" the playa is ludicrous. I presume the reason they put a cap on the size of BRC is because the BLM mandated a limit for personnel per so-many hundred cracked out E-tards. Our city size is limited by the number of police required to patrol it. Hurray for freedom.

It makes me weep that something like BRC, once constrained only by imagination, is now confined by limits dreamed up by cops and bureaucrats. We really showed the world what a utopia could be like, right?

But... whatever... at least I got a ticket.

Then *this* flopped into my inbox, like a darkwad tripping over rebar.

## "Hello recipients of Early Arrival Passes:

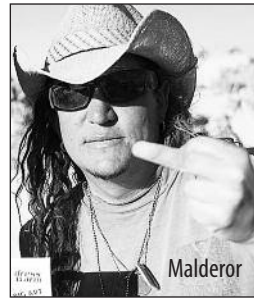
We have seen an increase in requests for Early Arrival Passes and are seeing instances where they are being treated as collateral and being traded, sold, or given away. Camps have been "burned" by folks who traded a promise of setup labor in exchange for a pass, and then left the camp high and dry, short of labor and out of passes.

This year the Early Arrival bar code pass will reflect the name of your placer, your sector and the name of your Theme Camp, and are not transferable.

This year all participants arriving early will be expected to have their torn ticket and their Early Arrival bar code pass with them at all times until the event begins, to confirm your authorized early presence on playa."

So now we have to carry around our fucking PAPERS? What is this, Arizona?

Why do they even care? I can think of at least three valid reasons for trading passes between camps. What if you're sharing a generator with another camp and they need a pass? What if Death Guild's truck broke down, and you're carrying Thunderdome for them, so you need their pass? What if you wanna get down with that hot sparkle pony over in Camp Timbuktu and he or she needs



Malderor Highshade

your spare pass? It's not up to the Borg to decide our priorities for us.

If I'm dumb enough to trade a pass to somebody who flakes on building my camp, what

goddamn difference does it make to the Borg? Was this really a problem of epidemic proportions? Will new rules prevent me from being a shitty judge of character? Thanks for watching over me, Nanny-State Borg. Clearly, I couldn't possibly manage to be self-reliant without your benign guidance.

Seriously, **if you volunteered for the Borg in any capacity, and you think the way to solve ANY problem on the playa is to create a new rule, you, YES YOU, are ruining this event.** Something I've

sadly learned in my 20 years of coming out to this retarded campout: If you give most people a tiny position of authority, they will abuse it. "I'm in charge now, I better make some rules!" (Try registering an art car if you need further proof of this lesson.)

People flock here for the freedom, the inspiration, and the ability to live without rules, laws, and arbitrary middleclass bullshit for a few days. Demanding that we carry our Early Arrival papers is just a grasping effort to control some small, meaningless, aspect of the event. Good luck with that. **You may as well try to keep us from getting dusty.** BRC

# Yeah, I'm a fucking elitist

by SHUTTERSLOT

After this year's Tickepocalypse we started hearing cries and screams from the unticketed hoards about how Burning Man has "sold out" and become elitist. An upsurge of discontent that had amazingly not existed at all on July 24 suddenly blew up on July 25 with that "Sold Out" notice. No longer were we all one group - we had become the "haves" and the "have-nots."



I won't even go into the whole issue of how any even vaguely-aware burner could have missed the signs of an impending sell-out with the first three tiers gone in two days and notices in the Jack Rabbit Speaks email newsletter to buy tickets now; no, really, *now*. Lets stick to the complaint about this new elitism fostered by the sell-out. Guess what? They're right. **Burning Man is elitist... it always fucking has been.**

The problem is that all the whiners

tie "elitism" to money, when that's only part of the equation. There is nothing more elite than a self-selecting crowd of people who go spend a week in one of the most inhospitable places in the U.S., regardless of whether they scrape up a few hundred bucks or tens of thousands of dollars. You're not going to find a whole lot of people out here who are struggling to pay rent, eat, or clothe their children. Sure, there are *some* - usually sleeping in Center Camp and trying to mooch food from you like your camp is a soup kitchen - but you will find thousands more people of the "lets-make-this-happen" variety.

**Burning Man isn't a "need." It's a vacation.** It's not going to save your soul or "recenter" your life, no matter what you and your crystal-filled hippie chakra bullshit thinks. It's a camping trip in the desert with amazing art, some huge fucking sound camps, and some of the best bars you'll ever find hidden on the backstreets.

Yeah, we're the fucking elite - and we should revel in the fact. It doesn't matter if you bought your ticket on

Day One or from a scalper last week - you made it out here. You figured out how to make it happen and you did. As my friend Junglesmacks says, **"Those who plan, burn."** Those left behind crying into their pillows, whether a virgin or a 14-year burner, fucked up. They forgot that the most important part of the trip is having

that Golden Ticket that gets you through the Gate. How could you

not be superior to someone who's built a huge theme camp or booked to play a big sound camp but then didn't get tickets for themselves? How stupid do they have to be to spend thousands of dollars planning a trip without making sure they can cross the threshold?

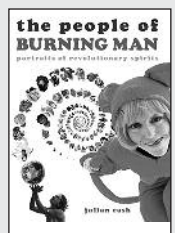
As for the rest of us, our elitist asses are in the middle of the greatest week-long party of the year, surrounded by sounds and lights and amazing people and ending with a fireworks show that puts Disney to shame. If you think tossing 30 grand at fireworks that only a paying audience can see isn't a sure sign of elitism, you're an idiot. BRC

## SHUTTERSLOT

## Haiku book review for *The People of Burning Man*

Due to space restraints, we can only review **Julian Cash's** gorgeous new burner photography book in the form of haiku: **Burning Man is more / About the people, not art / Why aren't we in this?**

Go to: [thepeopleofburningman.com](http://thepeopleofburningman.com)



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