\$65

\$80-90

\$35

OUT / IN

podbelts

free drugs

handlebar

mustaches

a dust bowl

playa dust

Playatech

the Sphincter Tap™

born-again Burners

LED clip-on accents

Letting someone

else have the 10:00

and 2:00 corners

whiny about it

Chimay

pogo stilts

pirate clowns

BRC Weekly

playa walker

nicknames

Depends

mashups

pedicured toe nails

double rainbows

Staying in Reno

for a few extra days

vintage Airstreams

prune juice cocktails

shirtcunting

baby wipes

metalheads

earplugs

minotaurs

lederhosen

the next 25 Burns

SMS text messaging

ukuleles

hard-packed playa sorry, BRC's always

marijuana citations medical marijuana

glow fur boas

participating

fiber optic barrettes

fannypacks

feather boas

glowsticks stuck

funded art

quitars

holy water

jaded Burners

magnetic "body

Opulent Temple & Root Society

lights" that fall off

hugs

IKEA

PBR

peg stilts

pirates

Piss Clear

playa cruise

playa foot

playa names

porta-potties

driving through

Sex On The Beach

psy-trance

rainbows

rental RVs

shirtcocking

steampunks

the last 25 Burns

showers

tinnitus

unicorns

Utilikilts

walkie-talkies

Reno

TICKET PRICE

ears ago, back when Burning Man Morningstar Farms didn't suck, there was this publicabacon strips tion called Piss Clear, full of snarky Bootie BRC Bootie Juplaya insight about stuff the official informacoffee mugs beer steins tion distributors wouldn't touch. One of the most anticipated topics each cowboy hats Tyrollean caps year was the **Drug Issue** – which drugs "Safety Third!" Danger Ranger's were most popular on the playa, how to fingers enjoy them most, even the occasional drum circles brass bands warning against a particular substance. dubstep ragtime Updated from year to year with various personal anecdotes, it was always a dust storms lightning storms handy guide for those wanting to turn Esplanade Kyoto Street their Burning Man up to 11. Exodus Skipping town This is not that article.

Frankly, it's been done to death. Us old-timers are quite familiar with the tune, and all you new folks should just run out and buy the Piss Clear anthology from RE/ Search so you don't come off like such a greenhorn. Oh wait, you're reading this on the playa and it's too late for that? Better luck next year, hayseed.

No, I'm here to explain why I don't take drugs at Burning Man. And let's be clear, when I say "drugs," I mean the common brainwashed American shorthand for "illegal drugs." Alcohol and caffeine are both drugs that I am very, very, very, fond of. They are the yin and yang of alterents, and you can get all sorts of entertaining results from differing combinations of the

Why I don't do drugs out here

There are a lot of reasons I don't "do drugs" in Black Rock City. One is paranoia. Ever since the Gay '90s when people couldn't stop talking to the media about what a drug-fueled orgy Burning Man was, the fuzz have been painting mental target symbols on the backs of every person who steps through the gates. Why worry about the cops finding your stash when you can just get piss drunk and vomit all over a BLM Ranger without fear?

Another reason, frankly, is my own personal phobia about loss of control. Black Rock City is an amazing, mindbending, bizarre, and often dangerous environment all on its own. That's great - but the idea of a bad trip out here is right up there on the top of my list of Things To Avoid. Oh, and techno and rave music don't interest me in the slightest. If you're not planning on dancing all night and don't need some chemical alteration to convince your brain that ooonse ooonse equals music, the need for drugs at Burning Man immediately nose dives.

And let us not forget, in this brave new digital world, nothing you do will ever be forgotten. Remember that time at Dustfish when you spent an hour giggling uncontrollably, then you couldn't stop sobbing, and you *tried* to explain about the owls and nobody got it!? Yeah, it's on YouTube.

Then there's the temptation to share your drug experiences with

Best drug guide ever

about them. They might think they're safe, they might have a clever playa name like 'Malderor' and only write in a tiny alternative paper ... but then that paper goes online, and some jerk reveals that Malderor's real name is

> then page after detailed page about his drug habits comes spewing forth. As for buying drugs on the playa, don't be a fucking moron. The event attracts scam artists as much as it does bike thieves, eager to take advantage of the trusting 'Burning Man is Utopia' attitude many folks seem to bring with them. And unlike the dirty

Philip Kirschbaum*, and a prospective

employer Googles Phil's name, and

\$35

\$35

\$35

hippie who hangs out on the corner of the seedy side of your hometown, you will never see the guy who sold you that bad shit here ever again. And let's not forget the narcs. Trust no one! This is one instance where paranoia will save your ass.

But enough of the generalities. No discussion of drugs at Burning Man would be complete without addressing

Ecstacy: Quite possibly the most popular drug on the playa, its virtues have been extolled many times in the pages of Piss Clear, Gigsville Trading Cards, and other, less reputable sources. But let me ask you this: Why would you take a drug that makes you want to hug people you'd never get near if you were sober? Yeah, it can make you feel real *good* – so can believing a George W. Bush speech, if you let it. It kind of goes back to that loss of control thing I mentioned – I don't trust artificial happiness any more than any other con.

Speed: Can you say "instant asshole"? I knew you could. Another popular substance among the folks who need to keep going, and going and ... you know what? You're not going to see everything. Just accept it. Even if you stay awake all 208 hours of the event, there will be tons of cool stuff you won't experience. You can rage against the dying of the light and try and pack in as much as you possibly can, but in the process, vou've turned into a strung-out jerk who nobody wants to be around. Seriously, I've seen meth chew people up and spit them out more than any other substance. You can say you've got it under control and that you're just doing small amounts to keep that energy going – but just stay over there until you've passed out and slept 30 hours, m'kay?

Heroin: Just because I'm at peace with the idea of mortality doesn't mean I've got a fucking death wish. Not that you see it that much at Burning Man - not many users can get their shit together ndle the playa tor a weeк.

Nitrous: Suck a balloon, head rush, giggle, fall down, rinse, lather, repeat. Don't see the appeal. Must be a hippie

Cocaine: Much celebrated, much maligned, and way too expensive. 'You have too much money" is a message God has never seen fit to send my way. The ultimate Drug o' Capitalism, it gives you all the joys of being selfconfident, charismatic, and generally hot shit without actually being any of

Slow the fuck down

\$65-130

\$200

\$200

help you focus:

hmygod I'm so excited I love thissongandlookatthoselasersandholy shitIthinktheacidiskickingi nandI justwanttodanceandscreamandjumpandraveinthegloriouslightofexi stenceandfuckeveryoneisbeautifuland lookthere's aguydressed like a craband-WHOAdidyoujustseethatfireballthatwassickheypassthecrackeriwantanotherhit..."

Whoa there. Hold on a second. Just stop right where you are. Take a breath. Starting at your

force it, just release. Keep going. So it's like this: you're at the world's **greatest buffet.** Everything you've ever wanted to eat is laid out before you, and you've got a whole week to enjoy it. Do you pile up your plate and gorge yourself until you vomit all over your sarong and pass out in the truffled mashed potatoes? Or do you pace yourself, and enjoy each dish, one by one?

Even if you had the ability to relive each day here a hundred times, a thousand times, a million times over, you will still never be able to do, see, and fuck everything there is here. More

the experiences you are having is to Slow The Fuck Down and savor them. I know, out here, this is easier said than done. But here are some tips to

\$135-200

\$145-225

\$145-250

\$145-250

\$185-280

\$195-280

Get in touch with the numerous drugs already coursing through your bloodstream before popping that next pill.

You might realize that you're already a lot higher than you

Forget about that fun event you read about in the WhatWhereWhen guide. Actually, just put it back in your bag and read it after you get home (and despite what the Greeters told you when you came though the Gate, this is not "home" ... it's just the most awe some party town ever!) Half the time,

the event listed isn't actually happen-

ing, and besides, 99% of the time you

will encounter something better on the

way there anyways. Get some sleep. I'm not saying that right when you're peaking at sunrise you should go back to your camp and bring your heart rate down to a human level; I'm talking about after you've come

but showing those signs of wear - that's when you go for some recovery time.

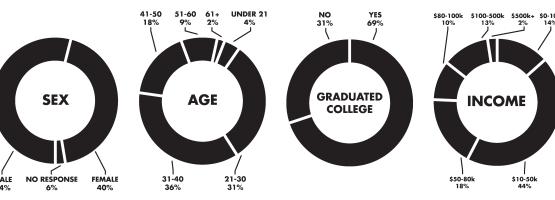
Eat. Food is not just a fuel to keep you raving longer – it's an experience to be savored on its own. Put some love into preparing it (even if you're just reheating a Tasty Bite). Sit down. Chew it, taste it, enjoy it. Let it become a part of you.

Have you just made a new friend on the playa? Why not try making a deep connection, instead of chit-chatting for a while, then losing track of them at the next dance camp?

Burning Man's a river, and you've only got a cup to drink it with. Slow down and accept the situation, and you'll be a lot happier.

down, and you're still feeling trippy,

PARTICIPANT DEMOGRAPHICS



That's not just a rhetorical ques-

San Francisco Bay Guardian, Piss Clear

upcoming book, "The Tribes of Burning

Man: How an Experimental City in the

Counterculture," set for release by CCC

Since 2004, I've had regular con-

versations with Burning Man founder

Larry Harvey about what Burning Man

exploded, the art became truly amaz-

ing, and the culture took on a life of

As the country continued its

descent into empire and crass con-

sumerism, Larry chose art themes

intended to nudge the event toward

greater sociopolitical relevance: Hope

and Fear in 2006, The Green Man in

2007, American Dream in 2008, and

NEVADA

Desert is Shaping the New American

Publishing at the end of this year.

was becoming during

when the population

those renaissance years,

(BRC Weekly's predecessor), and my

tion, but one that I've been exploring

for years through my articles for the

burned a week later?

Metropolis in Flux

Metropolis theme, the massive collaboration that created it epitomizes the urban ideal that Black Rock City is all about these days, drawing together hundreds of people of all skill sets from a wide variety of camps to design, build, support, fund raise (they needed to come up with nearly \$120,000 beyond their BRC art grant), and create the nonprofit Flux Foundation to continue the collaboration.

to a slightly broader community," said PK. "Whether it's the **Flaming Lotus** Girls or the Space Cowboys or all these other groups that have never really been involved with the Temple.

"I haven't had the opportunity to produce art with these people and it's been amazing the resources we've all poured into this. It's drawn so many people together to make this thing possible," said Iess, expressing excitement at how the group gelled and what it might still accomplish in the future, particularly since that they'll likely remain bound together by, among other things, lingering debt from the largest Temple ever built for Black Rock City.

Even the Temple of Flux that transition from a focus on the individual - be it an artist. formed around it to create the

"Being an architect, I was very interested in working on a space that was non-centered, that didn't have a focal centerpoint that, knowing architectural history, has certain issues,' explained PK. "Historically, the centerpoint is used as a place of reverence and authority, and that to me seems contrary to the collaboration that is Burning Man. To have the Temple reaffirm that, spiri-

The frontier of the early '90s, when Burning Man was all about rugged individuals doing whatever the fuck they wanted, is long gone. It's been replaced by a city, where free expression still reigns, but our collective creations are more important than our individual desires.

Why else would thousands of us creating monuments to nothing more than the art of creation, only to be

continued from cover

Yet if the temple design bucks the

"We see the Temple being offered

It was a natural approach for such a massive understanding by an unlikely trio. Rebecca and Jess are both Flaming Lotus Girls who last year went out on their own to create the art piece Fishbug, while PK is a Space Cowboy from the sound camp community. Together, they're an unusual mix for a project like this but one that worked well.

design ultimately reinforces an organization, or The Man onto the community that has city and its culture.

tually, just seemed a bit much."

the world that we go back and live in," Larry told me shortly after announcing this year's theme. "It's got to be about something that is in the world."

One of the great cities of the world Black Rock City exists as part of

a pantheon of great cities around the world, creating a unique culture, sharing ideas with other cities, and serving as an innovator and incubator for new ways of thinking about commerce, community, and the use of space.

"Four or five years ago, this would have been a hard sell. They still discussed whether they liked the streets and

the rules we imposed," said Larry. "But now, people have come to respect Black Rock City's urban character, so we're ready for a discussion like this." That discussion has involved

exploring new ways of running the event, from turning it into a non-profit, to creating a year-round think tank and retreat, to participating in discussions of urbanism with groups such as the San Francisco Planning

and Urban Research Association (SPUR).

"Black Rock City is one of the great cities of the world," said SPUR's Executive Director Gabriel Metcalf, a Burner who camps in Illumination Village. "It's like being a protagonist in a movie when you arrive in the big city. The Esplanade is one of the great main streets in the

That praise isn't to be taken lightly from someone who lives and breathes urbanism, and runs the premier urban planning think tank in the city of Burning Man's birth. Gabriel was positively giddy when he heard about this year's theme.

"One thing I love about Burning Man taking on the question of urbanism is that it's going to not just be about physical placement - how you lay out the blocks and streets - but about community in a larger sense," said Gabriel. "The

exploration of different forms of community is what I think is so interesting and transformative for the people [in Black Rock City]." Larry is trying to make it relevant and to speak to the big issue of the day. The theme Metropolis speaks to the biggest issue: human settlement, how we're going to live together. It's asking the big question."

Transforming Bohemia into a city In April, Gabriel invited Larry to SPUR to talk about that big ques-

tion to a packed auditorium. "We're the first Bohemian scene to turn itself into a city," Larry said, explaining how San Francisco's counterculture transplanted itself onto the playa's flat expanse – an urban planner's dream - and sprinkled it with more modern imperatives. "We did what a lot of

\$210-360

\$210-300

\$210-295

blue room bolt ditching an unwanted companion while they're inside a porta-potty

blue lounge a camp's own private porta-potty

douchebag camp a camp with a wall of RVs against the street, separating themselves away from the rest of the city

darktard an idiot who doesn't wear lights at night - also called a "target" **fafffing** fucking around for fucking

forever – what your campmates do when you're trying to get somewhere Gatestapo slang term for gate staff

gay skirt slang term for a Utilikilt golfer self-important Burning Man staff member driving around in an

undecorated golf cart Hot Topic Dome slang for Death Guild Thunderdome ... so last year

miracle worker a leech at Will Call begging for a free Burning Man ticket

playa points BRC equivalent of

shirtcunting the female version of "shirtcocking" - when a girl wears a top

but with no bottoms ... tres tragic **sit-downers** those assholes at the Burn who bum everyone out by constantly yelling "sit down!"

sleeper camps camps that reserve "theme camp placement" in an effort to secure playa real estate, but ultimately have little to no interactivity - it's just a place for them to camp

sobrietol the "pretend drug" you say you're on when taking a night off from imbibing any alcohol or other substances

sparkle pony high-maintenance playa princess who looks cute in furry leg warmers and hot pants, but who doesn't actually do anything to help around camp

speed bumps darktards laying on the playa at night

Contibutors: Adrian Roberts. Eric 'ShutterSlut' Stein, John!John

people said was unachievable: we got

Americans out of their cars." At first, Burning Man was just a scene, without rules or a prescribed

ethos. But as it grew and a culture organically developed around it, Larry said that some rules and structure became necessary, both to deal with the logistics of such a large event. and to convey to newcomers what the and spread it

"We didn't start out with gift-giving as dogma. It was just natural human behavior," Larry told the group.

Everyone brought something, more than they would need, so that they could share it with the group. Performing and making art was warm ly encouraged and appreciated. There was great tolerance for even the freaki est lifestyles and forms of expression. People picked up after themselves.

And eventually, this lifestyle was enshrined as an overt ethos expected of attendees, conveyed to newbies on the Burning Man website as the "10 Principles": Radical Inclusion, Gifting, Decommodification, Radical Self-Reliance, Radical Self-Expression, Communal Effort, Civic Responsibility, Leaving No Trace, Participation, and Immediacy.

"We said to everyone that you can basically live by the ethos that guides Bohemians," Larry said. And that ethos then helped shaped the culture that formed up around the event. Or as he told the SPUR crowd, "The whole city is an engine for producing culture."

Beyond the playa

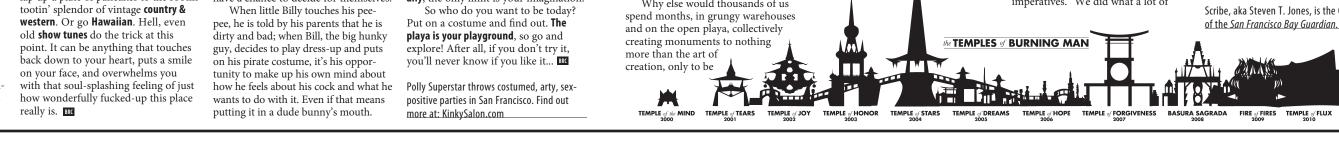
And now that this urban culture has matured, it has manifested in interesting ways in communities around the world, from the disaster relief and community building of Burners Without Borders, to the vast networks of regional events and art collectives.

"There is a movement underlying the decentralization and creation of new centers," Larry said. "Something new is emerging.'

The Temple of Flux is a manifestation of that, a project seeking to spawn many more projects and grow the culture through the non-profit it is forming a pathway that Larry said the Black Rock City LLC is also now pursuing. Because now, Black Rock City is increasingly being seen as just one more manifestation of the Burning Man culture.

"I have this idea that they are trying to explode very slowly and be something that spreads out and becomes many other things, instead of just this one thing," Rebecca said, "And I think that would be healthy." BRC

Scribe, aka Steven T. Jones, is the City Editor of the San Francisco Bay Guardian.



Your BRC soundtrack by DELACHAUX

Contributors: Eggchair Steve, Soulaye,

Orange Peel Moses, Bobzilla, Sailor,

John!John!, Adrian Roberts

aytime Avoid

Center Camp. Center Camp is not the place to go to in the daytime. It's like a giant hospital waiting room where nobody's quite sure of how bad their condition is or when the

doctor will see them.

Get on your bike and go hit some day parties, which are kind of the last refuge for house music. As in the Default World, it used to be that house music's ubiquitous drone out here was inescapable. But nowadays, its old hegemony has been greatly eroded and it can be fun again. Think of it as Black Rock City's elevator music. This is also a good time to hit that rock 'n' roll dive

bar, or crash a crash dome playing lounge music. Just find vourself a festive little day party where the beer is cold and the beats are light and you can bob your head, bust a few moves, and still keep it chatty until the sun begins to set.

Dusk

This brings us to dusk, the calm before the storm. As the day's fiestas slowly wind down, legions of revelers return to their camps to eat, mellow out, and prepare for the night to come. These hours are typically for that tiny list of basic responsibilities you might have and as such should be complimented by only the most user-friendly of sounds. Take a shower, take a nap, light the BBQ, do really aid in this recalibration.

foreboding of Italian soundtrack BLÁCK ROCK composers like Nino

Friday 5-6pm burns fast so be o

@ Fandango, 3:30 & Espla

whatever you have to do. Soft beats can As the sun begins to set, you can get playful and BALSA MAN mix it up with

the surreal and soundscapes Rota or Ennio Morricone anything seem ingly light and fluffy but with

While Chaos Fairy and her 'blissed-out' friends are busy taking sunset nudes out on the Esplanade, make sure to crank up those subtle but vile **Edwardian** waltzes to signal the oncoming psychic sunami that awaits us.

Nighttime

Which brings us to nighttime ... oh, the nighttime. Once darkness falls, you're ready to pull the pin and get serious. Make sure to light your bike up before you blast off into orbit because your night should be filled with phantasmagoric pursuits everywhere. Big bass is the electric ghost god of this city and nightfall brings it to wreak carnage on Black Rock.

Maximize your night by visiting as many parties as possible - from the seismic growls of breakbeat jungle to the machine gun trenches of **dubstep** to the laser wars of

teched-out funk. Break it up with some camps pumping gay divas bluegrass or mashups or chiptune or electro or industrial – you'll want to enjoy every whirling shard of glitchy mashed-up shrapnel in-between until..

Sunrise

Oh no, what's that? The sun? Now I don't care what anyone says, sunrise is the most magical time on the playa. You've surfed the night's long and tempestuous pipeline and now the first rays of sun begin to bring into focus this exotic isle where the storm has spit you out. Do yourself a favor and forego those irritating camps that are obliviously still pounding out meth-tronic **sludge**. In these delicate prehistoric moments, you need the warm sounds of tangibility, not the lobotomizing knives of a sonic garbage truck.

Stir up a mojito and seek out the

soothing sounds of silky bossa nova or lap up a plate of pancakes to the rootin



pressure to conform. People suppress their springs. Cut to the sexuality - where you

can see dominatrixes with spankent from every day life - tweaks

your consciousness to release those old patterns embedded to explore who you really are.

can be whoever you want to be. The costume gives you permission, and in the back of your head quiets, and you can try on what it feels like to be flogged, give a spanking, make out with two people at once, trade gender with a friend, go down on a pirate, or watch your partner go down on a pirate. As ong as you play safely and consensu-

one long enough for a hook-up - hope you're sober enough to remember condoms

Marijuana: Irony of ironies, pot is the most benign of illegal substances - less belly, fill your lungs, all the way up to your chest. Let it out, all the way. Don't

dangerous than booze by any objective measure and yet the easiest for the cops to detect and bust you for. And they will, given the slightest chance. Eating is definitely safer than smoking, and dehydrates you less as well, but tends to put me right to sleep. I may not need to stay awake for the whole event, but I don't want to be unconscious through half of Saturday, either.

LSD: Another perennial fave. Can you say "overstimulation"? Acid is about opening people's brains up and making them say "Wow" - which is exactly the same thing that Burning Man does. Better to save it for a walk in the woods or reading James Joyce.

Ketamine: It's a cat tranquilizer. Are you really that desperate?

Mushrooms: A gentler trip than acid with a shorter duration, and, so I've heard - having never actually done mushrooms, all you prospective employers – far more likely to plug one into a spiritual plane of existence than any other drug you're likely to find outside of the Amazon rainforest. E will make you smile because the chemicals make you feel good, mushooms will make you smile because you've realized that Matter Is Just Energy Crystalized And God Is Love And There Is No Death ... watch out for the

owls, though. Clearly, this is no drug for the playa. In fact, if you have any with you recommend you ditch them immediately before you do yourself serious harm. The safest course is to deliver any mushrooms you may have to the BRC Weekly camp right now, where they will be disposed of in a secure manner.

Keep taking the fucking pills Oh, and lots of people come to Black Rock City and get high in reverse: they think it's such a wonderful place that they don't need that prescription

out hits. Please, please, keep taking the fucking pills your doctor told you to take. Far more freak-outs and breakdowns have happened at Burning Man because of people *not* taking the drugs than people taking them. Years ago, Piss Clear writer Sugar Larry opined that Burning Man with

out drugs is like anal sex without lube:

the metaphor, let me suggest that while

lube might make it quicker and easier,

a lot of foreplay and a bit of spit can be

dry and uncomfortable. To continue

to keep it together. Then the first white-

much more satisfying. BRC *Note: Malderor's real name is not actually Phillip

Kirschbaum. Phillip "Drugs Drugs Drugs" Kirschbaum was a complete asshole from my 7th grade class and I hope his boss Googles his name, sees all the drug talk, and fires his ass — payback time, you bastard. those things. But you might fool some-Malderor's real name is Jenna Bush.

see the bunny is a dude.

Doubly-triply so when vou realize he's holding his bunny girlfriend's hand and she is watching on approvingly with a little happy smirk and a twinkle in her eye. When people leave the safety

of their familiar environment, they step out like brave pioneers onto this cracked, baked landscape and experience a sense of freedom. They leave the skin of their everyday life at home, and take a week out of their lives to play dress-up - to relive their childhoods – reclaiming their sense of wonder and innocence.

But wait ... how can I talk about "childhood, wonder, and innocence" in the same breath as bisexual polyamorous bunny/pirate blow jobs? See, when we are young, before we have a chance to make up our own minds about how we feel about

things, we are like sponges; children can absorb ideas, habits, and phobias which are not necessary to their survival, and which they might actually disagree with when they grow up and have a chance to decide for themselves. sexuality can be a scary thing to do, what with so much cultural desires and spend their lives like tightly-coiled playa, where you find a liberal attitude towards

ing booths, naked slip-n-slides, smut domes, tantric temples, and sensual massage. You can experience commu nity support for all different kinds of sexuality; every conceivable sub scene and nano community is represented. Being in this environment – so differ

when you were young, and allow you Dressing up in a costume gives you permission to embody your sexuality in a way that's exploratory, because you the pressure is off. The nagging voice

ally, the only limit is your imagination.

Evolution in 2009. "This city is connecting to itself

A city of collective collaboration And that's the story of Metropolis

point, what it has naturally become is a Metropolis. "I thought it was about the rest of the world for a long time. It's really about

faster than anyone knows," Larry told

me in 2008. "And if we can do that, we

can connect to the world. That's why

for the last three years I've done these

sociopolitical themes, so they know

they can apply it. Because if it's just a

long enough."

vacation, well ... we've been on vacation

to Burning Man that is difficult to alter

or focus. It just is what it is, and at this

But after 25 years, there's an inertia