

miss clear

Black Re

e newspaper

BORG WARS

the battle over art,
money, and ego begins

Keeping
it real,
since 1995

*piss
clear*

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On the cover:
A propagandist
poster somehow
seemed appropriate
for a Borg2 cover.

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Adrian Roberts

Get rid of all arts funding!

Welcome to the first 2005 issue of *Piss Clear!* Are you sick of hearing about Borg2 yet? I know I am. So of **COURSE**, what do I do? I put them on the cover. We're such suckers for **media hype**.

Yes, the so-called "art duel" between Larry Harvey and Chicken John is all the buzz this year – and I **MUST** admit, I'm curious about how it's all going to **play** out. But can I just say one thing? I think Borg2 has got to be one of the **stupidest** names **ever**. As if Burners don't have a **enough** of a geeky reputation, now we're saddled with being associated with an organization whose name makes them sound like a bunch of *Star Trek*-obsessed losers. What the **fuck**?

Look, we **get** the joke: a few years ago, the Burning Man organization began being abbreviated to simply "BMorg," which was a **quasi**-humorous play on words, cleverly making parallels between the assimilation tactics of both the Burning Man organization and *Star Trek's* Borg character. But by removing the 'M' in BMorg, it no longer became **clever** – it was simply copping a fictional name from *Star Trek* and assigning it to something else. In other words, **geeky**. **Really geeky!**

The only thing geekier would be to name your off-shoot organization something like... **Borg2**. What's their tagline? "This time it's personal"? Dumb. Who the **fuck** thought of this? Was calling it BMorg2 just not "**artistic**" enough?

Despite the horrible name, I was initially quite excited by the prospects of Borg2. Certainly, the Burning Man organization can use a swift kick in the pants every now and then, we here at *Piss Clear* fully support shaking it up a bit to keep things interesting. Yeah! Up with people! Down with the Establishment!

I signed that petition. I read the web site. I tried keeping up on the barrage of propagandist e-mails. But then I started thinking...

Is it really about art? Or is it really about money and ego?

And that's when I started to realize... this whole Borg2 thing is **only kind of** about art. Mostly it's about money ... and **ego**.

There, I said it.

You see, Chicken John and Jim Mason, the ones who started Borg2, used to get their **high-concept-yet-poorly-realized** art projects funded all the time by the BMorg (I'm still calling them that, and you can't stop me). We're talking tens of **thousands** of dollars here, year after year, for half-realized projects, some of which were never even completed.

4th annual Playa Iron Liver Contest

Yup, we're doing it again. It's time for *Piss Clear's* annual **Playa Iron Liver Contest**, where we seek to find the best cocktail on the playa. And if all this just seems like a shameless ploy to get people to bring us free drinks, well ... you're right!

The rules are simple: Bring us your best cocktail, along with the drink recipe. Our expert panel of judges will be accepting drink submissions on **Thursday, between 2 PM and 5 PM**, at our offices at **6:00 Center Camp**, between Inner Circle and Feedback Loop.

The winner will get their photo and drink recipe published in our Friday edition, along with a prize package that includes a shower in the *Piss Clear* RV, fresh sushi brought in from Reno that day, and a goody bag filled with all the playa gifts we don't want, including stickers, poetry 'zines, and Fimo necklaces.



Your
fearless
editor

adrian's rant

(For more nitty-gritty details, check out Chapter 7, "The World's Most Dangerous Drink Blender," in Brian Doherty's excellent book, *This is Burning Man*.)

So, uh ... what the fuck? Is this just a case of **SOUR** grapes, wilting in the desert?

Kinda. You see, a few years ago, after one too many **lame-ass**, unfinished art projects, Chicken and Mason stopped getting funding. And I **GUESS** that sort of bruised their egos. So after they **self-righteous-ly** deemed last year's Burning Man art "sucky," they threw a royal **hissy** fit in the form of a petition, which begat Borg2, generated tons of media buzz ... and now they're big Black Rock City **rock stars** again!

So really, this **whole** BMorg vs. Borg2 thing comes down to one thing: **Money**. It's about certain artists not getting **handed** checks from the BMorg to produce their **epic vanity** projects – which, of course, they

happen to think are better than anything Larry Harvey or LadyBee would choose, because, you know ... they're **true** artists. **True** artists who expect hand-outs – and apparently don't know how to apply for a **real** arts grant.

Want lower ticket prices? Cut art funding

Look, if it were up to me, there wouldn't even **BE** funding for art projects here at Burning Man. How much **cheaper** would your ticket be if part of your hard-earned cash wasn't being used to **subsidize** sub-par projects that wouldn't get funding **anywhere** else?

We wouldn't even be having this whole **stupid** BMorg vs. Borg2 battle if there wasn't art funding to begin with. I say: **GET RID OF ALL BURNING MAN ARTS FUNDING**. I'm not fucking kidding. Get rid of it. That will **prevent** something stupid like this from ever happening again.

And as an added bonus, maybe ticket prices would get lowered in the process, allowing real **starving** artists to actually attend Burning Man. As it is **currently**, the high ticket prices tend to keep a lot of the "**riff-raff**" out. Of course, that very well is probably the point.

Look, the very **nature** of BMorg arts funding is by its very nature set up to foster favoritism and **nepotism**, which, dare I say, doesn't do **much** to create a sense of "community." In fact, deciding who gets arts grants and who doesn't is the equivalent of deciding who the "have" and the "have-nots" are. Not very **inclusive**, is it?

I know what you're saying: "But if BMorg didn't give out arts grants, these artists couldn't afford to do their work!" Look, there are **plenty** of other foundations and arts organizations that dole out money – and **that's** who these artists need to be sending their grant proposals too, not to the BMorg.

Of course, the problem is, most of the art out here probably would get rejected. **Context is everything**. A lot of what passes for "art" out here would otherwise come off as pretty half-assed and **mediocre** out in the "real" art world.

You know, much of my favorite art from years past have **not** been things that BMorg funded. If there weren't any arts funding, Burning Man tickets **could** become more affordable. And if that were the case, I suspect many **MORE** people – like all the starving artists who can't come because it's too expensive – would bring their artwork.

Piss Clear has been publishing for 11 years now, and has never received a single dime from the BMorg. We even pay for our tickets. So hey, if you want to **help us deliver papers**, please stop by our camp at **6:00 Center Camp**. We could really use the help. Thanks, and we'll see you out on the playa!

What's really wrong with Borg2

by MALDEROR

So how about that Borg2, huh? Oh boy, what a colossal waste of our **minimal** attention span *that* was.

I mean, when they came out of the gate, I was **super excited** for Chicken John, Jim Mason, and their hippie associates. I was completely smitten with their stated goal to revolutionize Burning Man by demanding democracy in the Burning Man organization. Their '14 Theses' got me seriously excited. Woo-hoo, **power** to the people!



malderor's rant

So what happened almost immediately? Just like democracy in the real world, they got completely **bogged** down in the money. Instead of sticking with their "democratize the art curation" agenda, they began obsessing about where the funding went, and who was in charge of arts grants, and who could raise more funds, and how **much** of the money **should** go to the orphan poor, and so on. Instead of making 'democracy' their goal, they went wandering off with this "we can raise a quarter of a million dollars and distribute it **OUR** way" claim. Uh...**what?**

Look, let me be clear here: as a 15-year participant of Burning Man, I could care **less** about the money. The Borg2 lost my support when the cash became their focus. I wanted to be involved, and we **seriously** considered having our 350-person village camp in the Borg2 section as a show of solidarity. But then they started wittering on about the damn money, and it was like I was going to

camp with a bunch of stock-brokers – only without the cocaine and dominatrix **SEX**.

Furthermore, the Borg2 is responsible for bringing back the lamest theme camp I've ever visited, the Life-Size Mousetrap Game. Remember those folks? The camp who set a bunch of random passers-by **ON fire** with non-dairy creamer-based napalm? The folks who injured themselves and others **day** after day, and **NEVER GOT THEIR PROJECT TO WORK?** Borg2 spent some of their **hard-earned** donations to bring the Mousetrap back out to the playa to try again. Thanks, guys. That's money well-spent. Not. Obviously, there's some **misdirected** funding on both sides of this arts grant equation.

I don't care what happens to my \$250 when I buy a ticket. Or, I should say, I hope that money is evenly distributed

between worthy artists and deserving porta-potty cleaners or **what-have-you**. But who gives a damn, **really?** Is Burning Man all about arts funding to you? I guess I wasn't so interested in the distribution of money as I was in the Borg2's goal of 'democratization.' Let's get **rid** of the Art Nazis, let's vote for an art curator, and then let's have the funding be determined by the results of that **election**. (I know, I'm so quaint. It's like I **think** democracy could actually 'make a difference' or something. What can I say? I'm a product of public schooling.)

The Borg2 went **off** the rails almost **immediately**. They got into this pissing match with Larry Harvey about fundraising, and then they just **lost** my attention. I wanted democracy. What did I get? A contest over who could raise the most money, with the loser getting placed in a **dunking** booth. This is like a quarter-million-dollar wager on a kindergarten bake-sale. Whoop-dee-fuck.

If we have an **elected** art curator, I'm fine with their distribution of funds. Even if they think a **non-functional** Life-Size Mousetrap is super-keen. (Honest, I'm sure it'll be neat. Just like playing the board game... but, like, you know ... **BIGGER**.)

I think focusing on the money **undermined** the Borg2's otherwise well-intentioned mission in life. Instead of Art Democracy, we got Art-Accounting. **Bummer**.

After he wrote this rant, Malderor went and donated some money to the Borg2, because he still thinks their basic premise was a good idea.

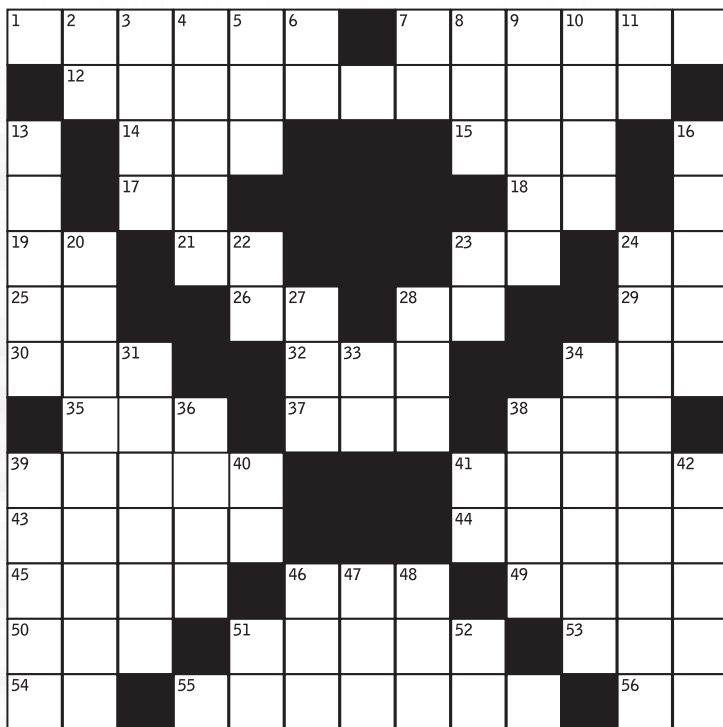
After all, don't you have money to burn?

black rock citi
Burn richly.



Life-Size
Mousetrap





ACROSS

1. Another desert
7. Early Chrysler
12. Carroll poem
14. Digestive problem
15. Corn unit
17. A drop of golden sun
18. Arkestra leader Sun
19. Six-pack muscle
21. Punk possessive
23. Male determiner
24. Birthplace of the Man
25. Half of salt
26. Other half of salt
28. Blond Duke
29. Nauseatingly cute alien
30. Ed. institution
32. Descendants of the Descendants
34. Shelters from the storms
35. Riot grrrl Bjelland
37. Karen Finley prop
38. West of Hollywood
39. Tripper's buddy
41. Hippie ink
43. Mexican impersonator of the King
44. What happens there stays there
45. Sudanese supermodel Wek
46. '80s one-hit wonder
49. Found at frat parties
50. It comes after 'Oy'
51. What you are on
53. Good place to buy supplies
54. Wizard of Oz lyricist Harburg
55. Hotline
55. Badlands state

DOWN

2. Langer of *My So-Called Life*
3. Hippie musical
4. London studio, with *Road*
5. Sandwich chain, for short
6. First two of five, sometimes six
7. Filmmaker Griffith
8. A fair place to work
9. Spice also known as Mel Brown
10. Ingredient in bhindi masala
11. The Handy Guy of *Trading Spaces*
13. Pepé and his family
16. Basis of the economy, supposedly
20. Like many abortions before 1973
22. Cheap pop
23. Elliott Smith album
24. 2001 theme
27. Corrupt energy mogul
28. Where most of the money goes
31. Invisible rabbit
33. Randy Newman "loves it"
34. Danger a.k.a. Michael squared
36. A walk to the trash fence
38. Inheritors of the Earth
39. Many do it on Labor Day
40. Followers of X
41. Shocking power (abbr.)
42. Stinky hallucinogen?
46. Furry alien wiseguy
47. The computer who sang "Daisy"
48. Nanny in Bangladesh
51. Author Bronson
52. Coffee time

– crossword created by PF

daily haiku

A jaded Burner
I'd give you my two
cents worth
But there's no commerce

One wonders... who does
One have to fuck to
become
The Art Curator?

DMV Hotties?
Bureaucrats!
Or, more aptly
"DMV Haughties"

– Malderor

Good playa campmates!
(Available only in
All-weather model)

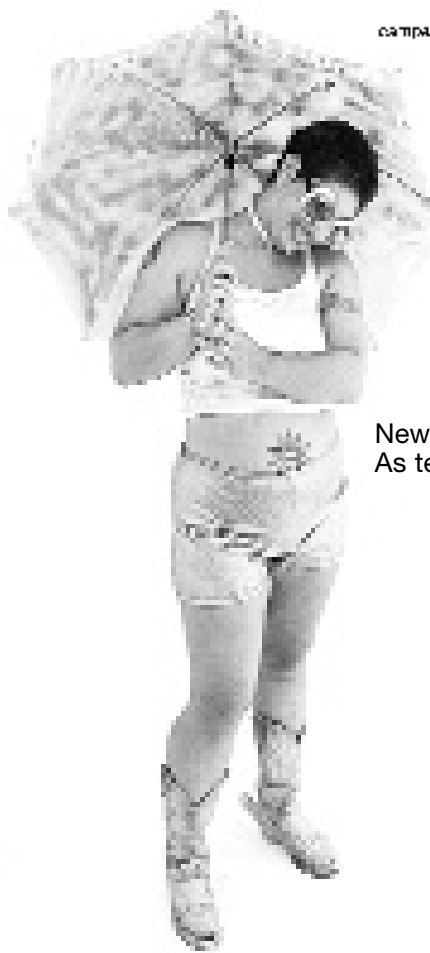
Vince and Mike...
Brits both
Regulars,
Fandango's bar
Come see us this year

Hot white dusty heat
No clouds in the August sky
"Welcome home!"
– to hell

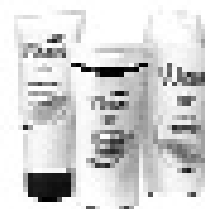
– J-Bolt

– Funk 'N' Wagnalls

campaign:maa beauty.com | Dove



New Dove Firming.
As tested on real Burners.



Once the bar was set up
in his camp, he figured
the playa sculpture
could wait until Thursday.

BANANA REPUBLIC