

What's it take to put together a large dance camp?

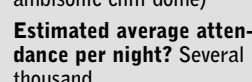
by **BUCK A.E. DOWN**
I surveyed two Burners who have been instrumental in putting together a couple of large-scale sound theme camps, and picked their brains on exactly what it takes to move asses here every night for a week. The results are below.



Name: Sam Wijegunawardena
Camp: Sol System
How many years has the camp survived? 2
Estimated total production costs of camp (sound, power, lighting, structures, transportation, etc.): 2003 - \$35,000
2004 - \$45,000
Financial assistance from BMorg? No
Do you know of any large-scale sound camp that has? No

How did you raise funds for your camp? Parties, auctions, chocolate sale, dues, donations
Did you have any art structures? 2003 - 1/4-mile Sonic Runway, 50' Chakra Wheel, DJ Booth Pyramid, Trapeze; 2004 - 1/4 mile Sonic Runway (enhanced), Sol Henge, DJ Booth Sunrise structure, Solarium (multi-channel ambisonic chill dome)

Estimated average attendance per night? Several thousand
How long did it take to construct your camp once you arrived on the playa? 2003 - 4 days
2004 - 6 days
How much time did you spend working on your camp prior to arrival in BRC? 2003 - 10 months



Name: Mark Hinkley
Camp: Xara
Years: 1999-2004
Estimated total production cost of camp (sound, power, lighting, structures, transportation, etc.): Average around \$7000 over the years, as much as \$18,000 in 2000
Financial assistance from BMorg? No
Do you know of any large-scale sound camp that has? No

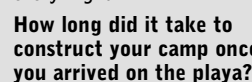
How did you raise funds for your camp? Camp dues, fundraiser events, personal sacrifice, embezzling from my wife and children
Did you have any art structures? The entire camp was a 7,000 square foot, interactive art structure
Estimated average attendance per night? Packed to the rafters every hour of every night
How long did it take to construct your camp once you arrived on the playa? 2003 - 4-5 days
How much time did you spend working on your camp prior to arrival in BRC? 2003 - 354 days



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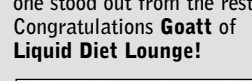
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Building to a crescendo

Dance music's long and tortured journey to the playa

by **SCRIBE aka STEVE T. JONES**
The Black Rock Desert is a wide-open canvas full of possibilities on which Burning Man has made myriad memorable marks over these many years, moving from the Mad Max anarchic freedoms of the early years to the mind-blowing art pieces that it continues to cultivate.

But to focus only on the visual landscape - as some longtime artists tend to do, particularly some of the instigators of the Borg2 art rebellion whose work is now being displayed just off of 2:00 - is to forget sound and the important role the aural landscape has come to play in people's Burning Man experiences.

The large-scale sound camps along the 2:00 and 10:00 radials - such as Opulent Temple of Venus, El Circo, Sound of Mind, and House of Lotus - throw the parties that animate Black Rock City's nightlife and keep people dancing until dawn. But it hasn't always been that way. In fact, music was slow to arrive on the playa, and when it did get here, it experienced a more tumultuous ride than most people realize.

In the beginning, there was... "Unlike other forms of art, sound travels, and you can't escape it," says Burning Man founder Larry Harvey, a reality that explains the many conflicts that sound can create: between early-rising artists and all-night partiers, and the animosities of those who don't like electronic music or desire solitude from their desert experience. Yet Harvey also scoffs at those who complain that sound camps have somehow sullied the event's vibe and taken over. "People were concerned that some partial subculture was going to take over the larger culture, and it's never happened."

Like it or not, in addition to the amazing art spectacle and inspiring experiment in alterative community, Burning Man is also the best week-long party available on the planet - and it's a party whose soundtrack is usually spun by DJs who use this canvas to create countless peak experiences for Burners.

"Some of the deepest and most magical moments of my life have been involved in the dance floors and freakish movement ceremonies that occur on the playa," says Larin, a Berkeley-based DJ whose Burning Man performances have been the stuff of legend. "I feel like, collectively, we are channeling forces of nature that don't exist anywhere else in the world. That's why the sound system aspect of the festival is so sacred."

'Raver' is a dirty word While use of the term ravers is now sort of derogatory shorthand that many use to describe dance camp denizens, it's certainly true that the dance camps grew out of the underground rave scenes in San Francisco and other urban centers around the world. The word had such strong connotations of drugs, reckless behavior, and illegal parties that Burning Man organizers (who needed official permits to stage the event) avoided becoming associated with electronic dance music. Longtime board member Harley Dubois, who now handles theme camp placement, said, "The cops told us that if they hear the word rave, we're shutting you down."

But by 1995 raves were getting huge. That was the year that Brad Olsen and a group of travelers who had ended up in Goa, India - going to huge parties with trance music - decided to settle in San Francisco. They rented a huge warehouse on Howard Street, pitched in for a sound system, and started throwing underground trance parties (known as the CCC warehouse parties) that developed a big following.

"So when we heard about Burning Man, we said, 'Hell yeah, let's bring our sound system out there,'" Olsen says. When Olsen and the CCC crowd showed up in 1995, they joined up with another group of ravers from Wicked Sound System and set up camp about three miles from the main Burning Man camp. They were only loosely connected to Burning Man, which had a few thousand people and few restric-

If it's too loud, go home

Why don't large-scale sound camps get any love?

by **BUCK A.E. DOWN**
You know you've done it, so don't front. Yes, even though you don't own a single electronic music record, and you probably can't tell the difference between House and Drum & Bass, you have at one point gotten yourself all hopped-up on gofers and gone dancing at some rave camp, bouncing around with 1000 or so other freaks at the top of the city - and dammit, you had fun! It's okay to admit it.

And just because you did, that doesn't mean you have to jam a pacifier in your mouth or start wearing big-legged pants. There are plenty of standard-baring candy ravers left on the playa to do that for you. Yes, while once thought extinct, a breeding pair somehow got loose in San Bernardino County and restocked the teenage hordes capable of performing "energy ball" hand dances in a serious and un-ironic way while wearing strings of bedded sweet tarts as



tions or signs of civic organization. "I don't think they even dropped us a single porta-potty," Olsen says. "We were completely on our own."

The Techno Ghetto The next year, a member of the Bay Area music community named Terbo Ted made contacts with the Burning Man organization, and the "Techno Ghetto" became more of an officially-recognized camp, albeit still placed a few miles away from the main camp. "96 is still my favorite year. It was awesome," Olsen says. "We had our autonomy, which basically went away in the coming years."

But it was also a tragic year. Early Monday morning, three people sleeping in a tent got run over by someone driving back from the Techno Ghetto. "That made everyone realize that the rave camp had to be a part of things," says Joegh Bullock, a promoter who

worked for Burning Man and facilitated the promotion of sound on the playa. One of the resulting changes was a restriction on driving, which meant the dance camps needed to be brought into the camp. Bullock and fellow Burning Man staffer and dance community member Michael Gosney fashioned a compromise: the Community Dance, one night only, after the Burn, for just eight hours. Everyone agreed that the name was a little dorky. It was wholesome-sounding enough so police wouldn't think it was a rave, but the growing legions of music lovers would get their night.

The first dance was pretty ho-hum by most accounts, largely because it was an especially cold night. But 1998 was the year that many say Burning Man and dance music permanently fused. Bullock actually got Olsen and the Community Dance crowd some money for lasers that year, the only time Burning Man has given money to a dance camp.

"So as soon as the Man burned, the UFO started shooting off the lasers and the Community Dance was on. Everybody came over, and it was a big hit. People were just dancing and grooving," Olsen says. Jim Mason vs. Goa Gil But the tension between established artists and this new medium would spill over into the storied standoff between artist Jim Mason and the metalheads and Goa Gil and the ravers. Mason led his mob in the Veg-O-Matic, a pedal-powered drilling vehicle with a massive flame-thrower. He came to stop the music and burn the UFO. The DJ stood his ground and refused to back down, but the incident solidified the division.

"It was very mean-spirited and intimidating," Olsen says, but Mason still maintains it was "a joke" and piece of performance art - which is how DJ Gosney also saw it - although Mason admits that his animosity toward the dance camps has only grown since then. "We were pretty pissed off and disenchanted at that point. For us, it was the straw that broke the camel's back," Olsen says, noting that they burned the UFO themselves and didn't clean it up very well, further fueling the division and accusation that dance camps don't even clean up after themselves (today, Burning Man clean-up crews say artist camps can be worse than dance camps).

But the die was cast. Gone was the Community Dance, replaced by Dubois's idea of placing large sound camps along the 10 o'clock and 2 o'clock radials, aimed out at the open playa to minimize their disruption of other camps and the town of Gerlach. "We solved the problem by zoning," Harvey says of the noise conflicts. Today, sound camps provide the soundtrack for the event. It doesn't always fit everyone's musical tastes (many complain it's too focused on electronic dance music, although it's also big enough so that just about every kind of music is somewhere to be found) or the desire of some Burners for quiet solitude.

"The BMorg tends to think that Burning Man is not about music and they shouldn't fund it. Burning Man was very much opposed to rave music and rave culture from the beginning," Bullock says. "But if you walk around BM today, it's sort of like one big dance party... What they bring out here now is immeasurable." Dance camps got more organized and responsible, largely shedding the baggage from the irresponsible ravers in the cities and the poor clean-up job in 1998. "I have more and more respect for large-scale sound camps," says Dubois. She said they have declined in number because of their cost and logistical difficulties, but they've gotten more creative.

No funds for large-scale sound Even today, the organization does little to facilitate large sound camps, leading popular longtime camps to burn out and fade away, as Lush did this year. Few last more than three or four years, perhaps because they cost from \$20,000 to \$40,000 to stage and require hard work over many months from a minimum of 40 people, with all that money and effort going into just one big week in the desert. It's a lot to ask of people trying to make a living. "There's definitely a life span on the sound camps," Syd Gris, a DJ/promoter from Opulent Temple, recently told me over pitchers of beer at Zeitgeist in San Francisco that I had to buy because he's broke. "You and I are paying out of our own pockets so people can have this party at Burning Man."

Syd and Laird Archer, another big DJ in the scene, last fall talked about approaching Burning Man for a sliver of the \$7.5 million in ticket sales to support the sound camps. After all, the organization gave out almost \$400,000 to art projects this year, but sound camps have never really gotten funding. "They charge all this money, and then the people who entertain everyone have to do it for free," Lorin says. "There should be more diversity in the share of the capital, period. And I'm not talking about paying DJs. I'm talking about forklift rentals, generators, sound systems, and workers who set up the nightclubs that rage this festival."

But when the visual artists staged their "Borg2" rebellion over inadequate arts funding last fall, Syd dropped the idea. Part of the rhetoric of Borg2 instigators Mason and Chicken John has been to bash the "ravers" as somehow sully the true Burning Man culture. "That's why I was mad at Chicken John's thing, because the artists have been funded and celebrated," says Bullock, who has attended every year since '94. "If you took away the dance and theme camps now, you wouldn't have Burning Man."

The sonic landscape has become an undeniably huge part of the Burning Man experience, whether it is from the big sound camps or the thousands of random DJs, musicians and noise artists all over Black Rock City. "You can go out on the playa and find 6,000 sound systems with some dude and his speakers, and he has decided that he, too, is a DJ, and that's cool," Lorin says. "But there are only a few spots where it really goes off, where everybody comes and it just erupts." So look for that spot in your remaining time out here.

This article was adapted by the author for a piece that was first published in the San Francisco Bay Guardian.

WHAT'S OUT WHAT'S IN

art cars	art bikes
art bikes	art trikes
black	pink
Borg2	Borg1
braids	shaved heads
BRC as T.A.Z.	your camp as T.A.Z.
bunnies	monkeys
burning out on Burning Man, yet still going	burning out on Burning Man and taking a break
burning plastic	lighting your farts on fire
buying coffee at Center Camp	gifting coffee at Center Camp
gifting coffee at Center Camp	clandestinely posing as a Center Camp barista and "by donation only" distributing coffee to fund your BM trip

camps with sound systems	bikes with sound systems
casting spells	operating machines
celebrating Burning Man	making fun of Burning Man
clowns	zombies
Critical Tits	the Goddess Gathering
Danger Ranger wearing khaki	White Ghost wearing black
documenting the Burning Man experience	camera-free zones
drum circles	marching bands
dying	saving someone's life
electronic dance music	'60s rock 'n' roll and soul
forehead bindis	penis bindis
fur boot covers	fur knee-warmers
generic cowboy kitsch and blinky shit	tripped out formal attire and regalia
getting hurt	staging fake catastrophes to fuck with cops and rangers
gifting trinkets	gifting sperm
goths	cybergoths
half-day joy rides to get here	full-on multi-day road ordeals
having a playa name	having a playa name, appropriate super powers, and an elaborate back-story

keeping secrets	nothing to hide
morning yoga	afternoon lecture circuit
ninjas	pirates
nuclear sex	polyamory
oil	solar
organized events	spontaneous happenings
p.c. people	getting p.c. people wasted and watching their descent into carnality
playa installations	neighborhood art
playa therapy	leaving that shit out there
ravers	party people
re-appropriated iconography of the Burning Man	coming up with your own goddamn logo
referring to the Burning Man organization as BMorg	referring to the Burning Man organization as simply "the Borg."
showing up with room in your vehicle	picking up strangers for the ride home
spinning fire	dancing in an inscribed circle of flame
sticking with your clique	cross-pollinating
the Esplanade	your city block
theme camps on the Esplanade	theme camps in Walk-In Camping
thunder and rain	Thunderdome
tits and ass	pussy
uptight and "burnier than UFO" Burners	provocative and chaotic mutants
utopia	dystopia
walrus-man dust masks	turbans and veils

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Here's the solution to the crossword puzzle from the back page of Monday's edition of *Piss Clear*. It was designed by PF.



Top 10 best/worst rejected theme ideas for Burning Man

by **RYON M. GESINK**
10. **St. Patrick's Day!** Easy. The Man is green, stands on a giant neon shamrock, and, well, figure it out for yourself what everybody does. Corned Beef Camp, leprechauns, lots of Guinness, WAY too many 55-gallon drums full of green body paint, etc. Oh, the horror...

9. **Burning Man, The Musical!** We pack up all our Crap and head off to Radio City Music Hall, to stage elaborate Busby Berkeley numbers about Building Community, Gift Giving, and The Spiritual Rewards of Getting Blown While Riding Around On A Giant Flaming Octopus. We truck in tons of playa dust, build huge fire sculptures in the audience, and have the Extra Action Marching Band sexing up the orchestra pit. As a finale, the Man, anatomically-enhanced, lurches out in ruby slippers and lip-syncs. "Somewhere Over the Rainbow," then JOINS in a Rockettes-style kick line with Larry, the DPW, and hundreds of fire dancers, bringing the house down... in a raging, hellish inferno.

8. **No More Burning Man!** Shut, people, get OFF with your lives! Yes, it's possible, you can have a normal life and escape this spreading CANCER of an art movement! Others have done it, and YOU can too! For a free brochure, call 1-800-FUCK-THIS.

7. **Nuclear Man!** This'll be held at a somewhat different location in Nevada, for those tired of fire and in need of new kicks. The Man will fucking blow up in a huge radioactive MUSHROOM CLOUD, and the festival will be held 50 miles away in underground bunkers.

Out on the town

by **KATIE KITTY**
Like, omigod, I am so jazzed to be at Burning Man this year! Straight outta Melrose, it's Katie Kitty coming at ya with this year's *Out On The Town* column, and I have to say, I'm really looking forward to lots of beautiful people and beautiful art and lots of craziness and fun. So let's get started!
If you're hip and in the know, then you've seen all the art that the Borg2 brought to the playa this year. Call me Chatty Kitty, but evidently there was a fight between some greasy hip fire artists who hung out at a dive bar in the Mission in San Francisco (where you'd go if you were slumming and cruising the thrift stores for deals) and the totally establishment Republican Right-Wingers who run Burning Man. There was a petition like the one Martin Luther King put on the church door, saying that the hip fire artists had a "Dream" that they could all get grants for their art, and so this year everyone brought art to Black Rock City so that we can totally have a retro year like when they used to drive around and shoot their guns and drive over people's tents and stuff.

Wow! How totally exciting!
Even little me, Katie Kitty, has brought out an art project this year. I call it **The Psychic Katie Kitty Portal of the Mind**. My boyfriend Chaz hired some of Daddy's Mexican gardeners to put together a small stage with mirrors around it and a pole in the center where I'll show off my gorgeous body and teach everyone how to dance all SEXY, day and night. Can you believe it? Katie Kitty is now officially an artist! It's so fun to be creative and use your imagination to make funky and weird things. We're going to burn the Katie Kitty Portal on Sunday, so please come out and reflect on what this year has meant to you and how many hotties you hooked up with on the playa. Yo!

Whew, Art is fun, but it's a lot of work coming up with ideas. Now let's talk about something I know a lot about, and that's **PLAYA FASHION!!** Since we're retro this year, consider the Boho look with long floral patterns and lots of belts and bracelets - but don't go too overboard, girls - remember that Boho is really just a nice name for "hippie." Shrunken jackets that show off your toned midriff and long, flowery-printed skirts are appropriate for the nighttime - remember to leave your boas at home. Leave No Trace!

Faux fur arm cuffs and headwarmers are interminably funky, but are fair wings. Be sure to get as many gift necklaces as you can and wear them around your neck with your mardi gras beads, because the number of necklaces you wear truly shows how HIP and COOL you are. Also, bring some cute blinkies to complete your nighttime stepping out look and you'll have the boys eating out of your hand!

This year, you'll want to take care of your feet in the height of style, girls. Bring blinkies to complete your nighttime stepping out look and you'll have the boys eating out of your hand! This year, you'll want to take care of your feet in the height of style, girls. Bring blinkies to complete your nighttime stepping out look and you'll have the boys eating out of your hand!

Whew! What a great year we're having! Don't forget to come see my art project and have a safe burn and always remember... KATIE KITTY ♡ YOU!!!

your vintage Miss Capezio butterfly inlay boho cowgirl boots (just like Jessica's) and wear them with prairie skirts, miniskirts, jeans, or with your Daisy Duke shorts. WHO says you can't have a sense of humor and still be so hip that the boys will drool? Also, high heels are popular and practical for those long strolls along the Esplanade so I hope you brought at least five pairs so you'll have one for every night. Let's face it, you've been working out and starving yourself all year baby, and now's its time to show off your stuff! Tee-hee!

This year's hottest accessory, the miniature dog, will unfortunately have to be left at home because the Republican Right-Wingers who run the event decided to ban dogs right before they became such a NECESSARY fashion item. I mean, I'm totally not like one of those spacy drug people who don't respect their bodies and who would let their sweet little dog run away when the explosions and fire cannons start up. My mini Chihuahua, Chi Chi, is such a darling that he wouldn't even notice the constant thumping of raves, the screaming drunk people tearing through camp, the megaphones, the sirens, or any of the other ambient sounds on the playa, and he certainly wouldn't end up running out into the desert to be eaten, shot, or to die of exposure. He'd stay safely tucked to my beautiful ta-tas in his faux diamond-studded, fur-lined pooch pack at all times.

Oh well, just because you can't bring woman's best friend, that doesn't mean that you can't bring your BlackBerry and your Kate Spade La Jolla Penelope bag with matching Broome Street iPod case. C'mon, girl!, and show them that you mean BUSINESS when you're networking with people at Center Camp and picking up your daily Starbucks.

And don't forget girls, to bring glowsticks and blinkies to GIFT to the scary-looking artist types in their dusty plain clothes who are always WORKING on their "serious" and "hardcore" art projects. How can they be having any fun at all if they're aren't participating by wearing blinkies and dread falls and crazy playa costumes? Give them something to at least make them feel like they're part of the craziness of Burning Man. They'll sure appreciate it. Whew! What a great year we're having! Don't forget to come see my art project and have a safe burn and always remember... KATIE KITTY ♡ YOU!!!

Everything stays the same, only we change the name to **'The Big Hoo Ha.'**
3. **The Bible!** With our man Jesus as the Man, naturally. Although I suppose the locals might get the WRONG idea when a giant cross is burning out there in the middle of the night with thousands of white people gyrating around it. So the hell with it, let's just put God up there, and we can burn His ass down and initiate some new Nietzschean eternity or something. Anyway, chariot races down the Esplanade, sheep and arks and thunderbolts and shit everywhere. This is some rich material to draw from - it could go on for years...

2. **Satanism!** Fuck, let's just admit it: Yes, Burning Man really is about worshipping the Devil. We're not fooling anyone here. So why not come out with it? We lay out the city in the shape of a huge pentagram, have wild blood-soaked orgies, and slaughter lots of goats and children and shit. Metal, metal, metal, and more metal. The Horned One will be pleased.

1. Aaaaaand, the number one rejected theme for Burning Man 2005 is, OF COURSE ... **DURRING MAN 1996!!**

Playa lingo: the lexicon of Black Rock City

camp potato people who never seem to get up off of their deck chairs while lounging underneath the shade structure. "I've been such a camp potato all week, I've seen hardly any art!"

champion a BLM or Black Rock Ranger who takes credit for every playa urban legend. "Remember the bomb threat from a few years ago. Yeah, he's such a champion because supposedly he defused it. Everyone knows there was never even a real bomb!"

drive-by art art out on the playa that you don't even need to get off your bike for. Something pretty to look at, but it's not interactive. You can just roll by slowly on your bike, gawk, then move on to the next thing. "Last night, we hopped on our bikes and went on a drive-by art tour!"

gift shark somebody who promotes the "gift economy," but won't stop reminding you of the gift they gave you. "Nate is such a gift shark. He won't stop reminding me about that bottle of vodka he gave me."

hippiecrist the sort of Burner who has dreadlocks and fake tits. "Jenni tries to be all pro-environment and 'burnier-than-thou,' but she's such a hippiecrist. Did you see the gas-guzzling SUV she drove here in?"

Long-Term Parking slang for the DMV Impound Yard. "Jim didn't have enough lights on his art car to get a nighttime permit, but he drove it around the playa last night anyway. So now it's in Long-Term Parking."

playaitis the "sickness" one has upon returning to the Default World, resulting in calling in sick on Tuesday. "Yes, I'm sorry, I can't come to work today. I caught a bad case of playaitis at Burning Man."

Playanetics slang term referring to the "cult" of Burning Man. "All these first-year Burners, converting to Playanetics!"

poindexter an annoying, precocious Burning Man newbie know-it-all. "Yes, I've read the *Survival Guide* too, so you can stop being a poindexter."

stealth virgin a newbie who acts so much like a jaded veteran, that you'd never know they'd never been to Burning Man before. "He seems really cool, but I wonder if he's a stealth virgin."

atmospheric moop all the toxic "leave no trace" gases which unwittingly find a new home in your lungs. "Last year, one camp burned their couch, and I totally was breathing atmospheric moop."

cracker crack the texture of your ass after reacting with alkali dust over a few days. "This toilet paper feels like sandpaper on my cracker crack."

crustifarian sprinkle a more benign way of referring to a pummelling alkali dust storm. "Don't worry about our shade structure blowing away. It's just a crustifarian sprinkle."

firoglyphics special meanings deciphered from playa burn scars. "I wonder what was here last night? From the firoglyphics, it looks like it might have been a giant octopus."
ghost burners freaks you know from the outside world who look and talk "Burner," but year after year, they never seem to make it out here. "Most of my co-workers at Rainbow Grocery are ghost burners."
playanetics secret messages decoded from playa urine stains. "Don't step in the playanetics!"
sperming man any well-endowed, healthily-sexed, male Burner. "Check out the sperming man over there. Do you think he's gay?"

- Cosmic Swilly