## **Open letter** to the granola munchers by YOUR SAGE

"And the people bowed and prayed, to the neon god they made.' It's 2007, and the question I want answered is

this: What kind of granola muncher came up with this ridiculous theme?

Hell hath no fury like a Burner scorned, especially when the scorn comes in the form of a 50-foot wooden icon converted into a soap box on which thousands will preach to the choir this year.

With a few exceptions first-timers and veterans alike are already environmentally-conscious, or at the very least, they try to "leave no trace." Inspiring a crowd like this to recycle is just as pointless and annoying as a Center Camp poet telling you not to vote for Bush or the customary vegan psychopath bitching and whining about the beef jerky you were enjoying

noments earlier The truth of the matter is, Burning Man has been a place to let loose, recharge your artistic batteries, and maybe even find the love of your life. The biggest threat to the "environment" is bringing your politics along for the ride - and it's been littering the streets of this "arts" festival for far too

Vengeance. Unrelenting vengeance. It called to me the moment I first read the words "Green Man" and is still leaving voice mails today. The desire to go as anti-theme as possible had never been stronger: Camp Fuck Up Nevada's Groundwater, the Temple of Aerosol, a Tire Fire Weenie Roast ... you don't know how close I came to bringing one of those demented visions to life. I'd have happily and

blissfully choked a sea turtle to death in front of the Earth Guardians camp using the plastic ring of a six-pack and called it radical self-expressionist performance art if I thought it'd stop this politically-correct takeover of my favorite

So planners, attendees, and especially you, Larry do me this one favor and make 2008 an indoctrination-free year, before some like-minded individual does something rash. See you next year!

## Don't be a 'hoverer' by KENT

# Green Man, John Law, & the corporate barbarians at Burning Man's gate

by SCRIBE

s Burning Man growing up, selling out, or simply fumbling along? Is The Man a powerful symbol, an empty icon, or a valuable brand? How about event founder Larry Harvey? Is he a visionary, a hustler, a dogmatist, or just some guy milking his One Big Idea (and if it's the latter, for selfish or altruistic reasons?)

Or maybe the better question is this: just what the hell are we all doing here?

### Everything's gone green

This has been a banner year for Burners to ponder such existential questions, and not just because The Man has finally reached legal drinking age – although that's as good an excuse as any for some collective navel-gazing. But this year has brought a couple of big news items that raise important questions about

the Burning Man experiment. The first began **JUSt** as we were leaving last year's event, when Harvey announced this year's event, when harvey announced this year's art theme – Green Man – which is fundamentally dif-ferent than past themes, both in its intention and implications. "It's the first theme that has any kind of practical, political character," Harvey told me. Green Man was Harvey's return from the desert, the chance to reengage with a troubled planet and try to do some good, something he's openly toyed with in recent years. That process accelerated when Hurricane Katrina hit New Orleans during the 2005 Burning Man and Burners responded With a nine-month effort doing storm cleanup and humanitarian work on the Gulf Coast.

"We're working our way back into the world. Maybe not the mainstream but certainly Onto Main Street," Harvey told me. "There's a lot out there that needs reform. The time of the reformer is at hand, I believe." Camp Katrina became Burners Without Borders under the guidance of Burning Man's part-time lobbyist, Tom Price, who became Burning Man's first full-time environmental director as

the theme was being selected (and who's about to have a baby with longtime Burning Man spokesperson Andie Grace, a.k.a. Action Girl). "What's exciting about the Green

Man theme and this year's event is it's a perfect illustration of the power of community," Price told me, noting that networking and experimentation have always been hallmarks of the event. "Going back ten years, Burning Man has been a place for early adopters who are on the cutting edges of a lot

of disciplines." That's true enough, but the process of creating a "green pavilion" around the base of this year's Man has created rns that corporate America has finally found a Wedge into the Burning Man world, sneaking around our edicts against advertising, com-



Harvey was

always the one

with the vision

for growing the

event into what

it has become -

a structured.

inclusive gather-

ing based on cer-

tain egalitarian

and **artistic** 

principles, while

Law preferred smaller-scale anarchy

and tweaks on the central icon, any-

"That was really the underlying con-flict, but it got Charged with emotion

year," Harvey told me, one of the few

comments he would make on the record

because 1996 was a harrowing

about the Law lawsuit because of

Law

thing to mix it up.

legal concerns.

use of its images and name. And for all the "Burning Man belongs to every-one" rhetoric, putting the trade-marks into the public domain would mostly mean corporations could

USE them as they please. "We've been fighting attempts by corporations to exploit the Burning Man name since the beginning," BRC communications director Marian Goodell wrote on the Burning Man Web site in response to the lawsuit. "Making Burning Man freely available would go against **everything** all of us have worked for over the years. We will not let that happen."

Yet six months later, Harvey and Goodell were featured in a Business 2.0 magazine article entitled "Burning Man Grows Up," that angered many Burners because of its premise that Burning Man was opening itself to cor-



That was the year in which Law's close friend Michael Fury was killed in a motorcycle accident on the playa as they were setting up for the event. And on the last night, attendees sleeping in a tent were accidentally run over by a car and Seriously injured, prompting the creation of a CIVIC infrastructure and restrictions on driving in future years. Law had a falling-out with

porate intrusion, and because of corporate-speak quotes like Goodell's, 'The business model can totally function without Larry Harvey. As long as the LLC exists, the event exists."

Much of the article seemed to equate growing up with becoming more businesslike, and it raised fears that Burning Man wasn't just **GOING** green,

corporate partnerships and syner-

**INSIStS** that just isn't the case, and

that the 30 small environmental entre-

gies and all the MBA crap. But Harvey

t was going mainstream and looking for

WHAT'S OUT	WHAT'S IN
`art' buses	walking
bacon	pancakes
bitchy campmates	beer
black	orange
blinkies	seizures
Borg2	Business 2.0
Burn Night	Crude Awakening's Friday Night Burn
chai	whiskey
drum & bass	Balkan beats
dust masks	playa lung
E-playa	Tribe
faux-fur	real fur
Flambé Lounge	Bootie
floppy hats	pith helmets
glowsticks	rhinestones
Green The Burn	Burn The Green
jaded Burners	pretending to be a newbie
MDMA	MDA
Nambla the Clown	Furtographer
PBR	Tecate
playa names like Desert Sparkle Princess	playa names like Jason if your given name is Brian
podbelts	fanny packs
Powerbars	vodka
psytrance	moustache disco
SF Decompression on a Sunday	3-day Decompression on Treasure Island
shirtcocking	shirtcunting
Starlush Lounge	Black Forest Bar
SteamPunks	NukeMods
trampolines	pogo sticks
Utilikilts	camo-culottes
watching sunrise	rocking the after-party
yarn dreads	real dreads

- by Eggchair Steve

# You're a bad person for everything you've ever enjoyed at **Burning Man!** by WOLFIE

he theme of Burning Man this year, as I'm sure you've had shoved down your throat a million times by now, is "The Green Man '

This, as detailed on the Burning Man website, is about umanity's relationship to nature." It continues with this dualistic question: "Do we, as CONSCIOUS beings, exist outside of nature's sway, or does its force impel us and inform the central root of Who and what we are?"

Who the **fuck** writes sentences like that? Why don't they switch back to pot from hallucinogens at the BRC LLC office? Let's translate that sentence. It SOUNDS like one

could take either stance - scientific detachment, or being one with nature. But quickly their bias shows itself. The site

## **10** things **Burning Man** can do to save the planet

by K'BUSTER FRIENDLY

Sure, putting on a Green front is a great way to show off how much we Care about the environment. And spectating other people's technological efforts has turned out to be even better. But there's more that can be done to help save the planet.

Sure, a lot could be left up to the individual. But self-accountability\_at Burning Man is so late-'90s. And if the BRC LLC can force people to stop bringing out live plants or from setting foot outside the trash fence, just think of all the other things they can make us do in order to attend this celebration of our creative freedom! Here's a **Short** list:

1. Spend less money and reduce your consumption. Every item you buy for this trip - all the food, booze, costumes, **drugs**, and crazy **ironic** shit you get for your camp - takes energy and resources to make. With each purchase, you're essentially increasing your carbon footprint. While the BRC LLC can't limit spending, they certainly can see to it that people have less money to spend by **doubling** the ticket price to \$500. It's dou-bled a few times already, so **nothing** new here.

2. Pack light. Bringing less Stuff means lighter vehi-cles, which means less fuel burned, and less playafied goods to clean up (or throw out) after the event. This might seem hard to enforce, but a weigh station operated by the Gate crew would do the trick.

3. Carpool to the playa - three riders minimum. With people spending less money on less stuff and packing lighter, there should be plenty of room. Anyone showing up empty could have the choice of paying a full ticket price for the empty seat or to VOUNTEER for "Adopt A Burner" at the Reno airport.

4. Ban synthetic fibers. Sustainability doesn't mean getting a new fun-fur coat each year - it means using materials from renewable resources. Try switching to a nice thick wool sweater. It'll last longer and you'll be able to get closer to what little fire is left in Black Rock City.

5. No more Center Camp. A large portion of this event's budget goes toward the material, fuel, and logis-tics needed to make that Wal-Mart-sized hangout. There's plenty of other Shady spots in Black Rock City. Besides, the coffee tastes like it was drained from a dead donkey's **ass**, and any of your neighbor's brew probably tastes better. The money and effort it takes to build the Center Camp Café would be better put toward another infrastructure project, one that could actually **help** reverse the impact that 40,000+ travelers have on the planet.

6. Mass transit to the playa. There's a rail line running right outside of Black Rock City. A passenger train service stopping on the playa would give people an **Option** in reducing the biggest impact they have as a participant: their **OII** consumption. Besides, people need to get to Burning Man more than they need coffee, right?

7. Cap ticket sales at 20,000. A camping population of half the size would mean half the IMPACt on the environment, half the oil consumption, and half the rampant consumerism (and half the epidemiological risk, too.)

8. Hold Burning Man every other year. This would result in similar benefits as the above, by halving the impact – but it would also give all that precious and endangered Black Rock silt a chance to heal. What would give the playa even more of a **break** would be to...

9. Stop putting on Burning Man altogether. There are plenty of regional groups already acting locally with their OWN events, thus making the main event redundant. Instead of inspiring tens of thousands of people to pay off their environmental sins of long-distance travel

## I love my **Burning** Man swag – Limericks for 2007 by FAWN LIEBOWITZ

What achievement, what a sensation Burning Man welcomes in corporations! Did you hear that Burger King's Giving out golden cock rings And stash boxes with Disney's dalmations!?

Steve Jobs is here too; such a pleasure He's gifting more "personal" treasure He'll iHump you standing In the name of good branding Then he'll Google you too, for good measure

Soy condoms and gluten-free blow!!! Three Mile Island brand bracelets that glow!!! It's like old Darwin said Evolve, or get dead Then pass the carbon neutral Bordeaux.

Though I'm a little confused I confide Jiffy Lube's giving out Astroglide? And Hushville, I think Gifting energy drinks? Do demands justify the supplies?

Only good ol' Fandango's resisted Yes, when you're fisted there, you're just fisted No logos, no swag And no goddamned tote bag It's amazing that

they have persisted Still, Burning Man shouldn't lose any clout Simply for taking a well-traveled route We all got the memo 'Bout hitting the demo The new edgy's the

old selling out

## I remember when...

### by MATTHEW ROZINBROG

You could take a steaming dump anywhere you wanted on the playa and no one would give you a hard time.

You could drive a pickup

truck with a blindfold on

one hand and freebase

shaving cream with the

other

and your buddy, Les, would

shoot flares up his ass with

How do you think the seats in the porta-potties get soiled? It's called "hovering" - and it's precisely how toilet seats get shit and pissed upon. Folks that firmly plant their asses on the toilet can't soil the seat. In my fifty years of sitting on toi lets, not once have I ever managed to shit on a seat. You are not harmed by placing your glutes and upper thighs on a piece of plastic that someone else has sat upon. However, you can get soiled by sitting on a seat that some dirtbag hovered over. Our portapotties have urinals. The seats only get pissed and crapped on by hoverers. Only hoverers shit on the lids. Only hoverers shit behind the lids. Only hoverers shit down the front of the tank. Only hoverers track filth onto the tank alongside the seat that your skirts and shirttails get into. Hoverers cannot see out their ass to take aim, so they miss. Hoverers don't care enough about the rest of us not to hover, so they don't care if they miss. Hovering works for hoverers, but not for anyone else. That hovering does not work for everyone else is proved by the number of times we've come across toilet seats at Burning Man that have been crapped on. Every single one of those was fouled by a hoverer. The very psychological aberration that defines hoverers also makes them the least likely to clean up the facility they just fouled. Hovering takes portapotties out of service until Johnny-On-The-Spot comes by in half a day, and leaves the remaining tank capacity unused while the dwindling supply of remaining crappers fill to overflowing capacity. If there were no hoverers, the cans would always be clean for everyone. That is why you should never hover, or accept the selfish folks who practice it.

Only hoverers soil toilets when urinals are available. The appropriate strategy for potty-phobia is psychiatric care, not making toilets foul for others.

modification, or other commercial intrusions, even those bearing green gizmos. "In **SOME** ways, we hope this year will be an environmental and alternative

energy expo," Harvey told me in January, using language more reminiscent of a Las Vegas trade show than the middle-of-nowhere freakfest he fathered. Harvey, Price, and company are very aware of the dangers of letting the business people ply their wares on the playa, and they've made it **Clear** that the rules against logos, advertising materials, and other forms of OVert marketing still apply in the green pavilion. But it's a tough balancing act that hit some early rough spots - such as what kinds of donations could be accepted from questionable companies trying to greenwash their image and the jury was still out at press time

on how it would all play on the playa. They fought the Law

But just as Burning Man - or rather, Black Rock City LLC, the San Francisco-based corporation that stages the event – was donning do-gooder duds and stepping into an exciting and uncertain future, an old flame reemerged to dump gasoline on those existential questions.

"Burning Man belongs to everyone. Burning Man is the sum of the efforts of the tens of thousands of people who have contributed to making Burning Man what it is. The name Burning Man and all attendant trademarks, logos, and trade dress do not belong to Larry Harvey alone or to Black Rock City LLC. If they don't belong to anyone, they belong to the public domain," was how

John Law began a Jan. 9 blog post. Law ISN't your average Burner. In fact, he hasn't been since 1996 and has usually bitterly refused to even talk about it since then, but he has **MOP** claim on Burning Man's trademarks and logos than anybody except Harvey and fellow founder Michael Mikel, a.k.a. Danger Ranger. And the occasion of Law's blog post was a federal lawsult he filed that seeks compensation for that claim, transfer of its control into the public domain, or both.

"If it's a real fucking movement, they can give up control of the name," Law told me at the time. "If it's going to be a movement, **Great**. Or if it's going to be a business, then it can be a business. But I OWN a part of that." Harvey may have Started Burning

Man on Baker Beach in 1986, but it was Law, Mikel, and their Cacophony Society cohorts who in 1990 brought the party and its iconic central symbol out to the Black Rock Desert and helped grow the event into what it

Harvey and no longer wanted anything to do with the event, while Mikel opted to remain; today he and Harvey Serve on the BRC's six-member board of directors. But Law didn't want to completely give up his stake in Burning

Man, in case it was ever sold. The three agreed to create Paper Man, a limited liability corporation whose only assets would be the Burning Man name and associated rademarks, which the entity would ICENSE for use by the BRC every year for a nominal fee, considering that almost all proceeds from the event get put right back into it.

When Mikel perceived that Harvey was trying to let Paper Man's rights lapse and take more direct control of the trademarks a year ago, he filed a lawsuit, which is what Law said prompted his own. "I didn't start this particular battle," Law told me. "My options were to sign over all my rights to those guys and let them **duke** it out or do this."

The still-pending lawsuit prompted a vigorous discussion, particularly online and in San Francisco where the three principals and many of their supporters live. When pressed, Law admits that he wants either money or to put the trademarks into the public domain. But it's the latter point that became the subject of all those existential questions as people used the occasion to defend or attack the status quo.

### Growing up or selling out?

The reality is that BRC has vigorously defended its trademarks from commercial exploitation, even successfully suing Girls Gone Wild back in the

preneurs that will fill the green pavilion is not the **Opening** of Pandora's Box. "It all started with the Business 2.0 article. That's what ginned it up. We had announced our plans in detail months before and no one said anything. And with the Business 2.0 article, I believe, people are responding to the

writer's attempt to translate what we were saying into business-speak," Harvey said in July on the R.U. Sirius radio show. "And then they got the idea that we were **Opening** our gates to big corporations.

Which Harvey said **iSn't** true. Any big corporations that had expressed interest in Setting up shop in the green pavilion were driven away by the Burning Man rules, and the principle of "decommodification," which states, "In order to preserve the spirit of giving, our **COMMUNITY** seeks to create social environments that are unmediated by commercial sponsorships, transactions, or advertising. We stand ready to protect our **Culture** from such exploitation.'

And so, we all wait and see, whether the green pavilion gives any of us the consumerist Creeps, whether Law can tip the Man into the public domain, and most of all, what Burning Man will look like after celebrating its 21st birthday. Cheers.

Scribe, a.k.a. Steven T. Jones, did most of this reporting for articles in the San Francisco Bay Guardian.

**Burning Book** 

This is pretty much like the best Burning Man scrapbook, ever - you know, the one you always wanted to make, but you just couldn't get your shit together enough to do it. It's the just-published Burning Book: A Visual History of Burning Man, by Jessica Bruder, and it's beautiful, jam-packed with photos, as well as all manner of Black Rock City artifacts, such as images of camp flyers, stickers, etc. But more than just the imagery, it's the writing I especially love – Jess has a way with words that vividly captures the experience of what it's like to be out here on the

playa and spotlights some of the people and projects unique to Burning Man culture. Highly-recommended. Also, the publisher has "gifted" some copies for us here at Piss Clear, which we'd be happy to "re-gift" in exchange for, um ... let's call them "camping supplies." And if you don't know what that means, the cover of Wednesday's issue should give you a good hint. - Adrian Roberts

goes on to invite us to join the "environmental blog". However, it does **not** invite us to join the "scientific detachment" blog. Because this year it's all about the environmental agenda. Like many dogmatic movements, only agreeing voices are encouraged. This isn't about being pro-environment or anti-environment. What I am against is political movements replacing genuine themes at Burning Man.

Let's examine previous years' themes: Beyond Belief. The Floating World. The Body. These are themes. Open-ended explorations. Nothing to be approved or disapproved. There is no "right" or "wrong." There is no inherent guilt built into your approach to "The Floating World." You're not going to hear someone say "Hey, buddy! Why isn't your art car built in the shape of something that floats?! Either you're for the floating world, or you're **destroying** it!"

The Green Man. Pro-environmentalism. This is a Stance, not a theme. What room do we have to explore environmentalism? Its tenets are clearly defined. You're not going to add something artistic to the core environmental movement. Either you are pro-environment ... or you're a douche bag. Pull back a moment and look at the larger picture. It's

not whether you like or dislike a movement. Just notice that it is a movement – and not an art theme to inspire radical self-expression. It's **Orthodoxy**.

41

R

### Keeping the eco-balance right

Here is where this year's "theme" destroys the heart of Burning Man. Suddenly, your **EVEry** move is judged by the movement. Are you towing the eco party line, or are you – gasp! – having your radical ENINGTHE self-expression bow to other considerations?

Let me give you a **CONCrete** example, from being on the team that throws the LA Decompression. We had some great people teaching us how to move 0 towards being an environmentally **TRENDLY** event – like Kachina Katrina. She was wonderful. Made suggestions, but understood that every time a decision had to be made, it didn't have to be the environmental elements ruling all other considerations. Lots of **Progress** to turning the event Green, and no quilt trip when we had to choose artistic considerations or financial considerations over ecological considerations.

But others that we reached out to were Eco-Nazis. One group had some special eco-friendly generators. They offered to bring them to power the whole event. The only trouble was that they only put out about 6K of power. The LA Decompression needs about 700K, all the theme camps and sound stages going, and all the nighttime lights for all the artwork. We told the group "That's a wonderful offer, but it's just **NOt** enough power." The answer back was, "Well, make it a rule that people have to use power-efficient LED lights! Make them use **Iess** power! Maybe if you had fewer sound stages for performances.

And here is where we leap into dogma.

We're not going to make a rule forcing people to buy a particular type of light, because the generators weren't up to he demands of the festival. We don't need to be Wasteful in the extreme, but we don't have to live like freaking monks either. **Sometimes** it's just about the artistic expression, not about the political environmental statement.

In all fairness, there were some Eco-Haters involved with the conversation, equally as anti-environmental as the Eco-

by buying carbon credits, why not just eliminate the trip altogether, and have them put their energy into a regional burn? Or if the above nine SUGGESTIONS seem a bit extreme, you could...

10. Go read and heed the myriad of books and websites concerning the numerous things you can do to help save our planet. Make it a personal goal to act in an environmentally-conscious way 100% of the time during the 51 weeks of the **Year** you're not at Burning Man. It's like eating corn dogs as the county fair: if you're only doing it one week out of the year, then relatively speaking, the impact really isn't that bad.

Nazis were pro-environment. Their stance was just as rabid in the other direction, giving no consideration whatsoever to Mother Earth. Trust me, we hate those extremists just as much. But this year's theme isn't "The Burn More Fossil Fuels Man", and they aren't in charge, nor are they shoving their anti-ecological agenda down our throats, either. And if they were, I would be SKeWering them as well, and for the same reasons.

### This year's hypocritical guilt trip

٩

N

So what's all this about a carbon footprint? Alright, I guess the Survival Guide isn't the ONLY part of the Burning Man website you ignored. And I quote:

"In 2007, we will calculate the amount of climate changing gases that are released into the air by the construction and the burning of the Man and its pedestal. This is called a carbon footprint. Then we'll sponsor projects in the outside N world that will efface this imprint. Such actions might include the planting of trees."

What is this really? "I feel guilty for setting some WOOD on fire at Burning Man, so I'm going to buy myself some absolution." That's right, Larry. Pay some guy in Guatemala to plant some trees for ya. Aww, that's Nice. Don't you feel way less guilty?

Don't buy your way out of your week-EDUCE - REUSE long drug-fueled consumer binge by paying some South American 42 cents an hour to plant trees for you. Stop fooling yourself. Anyone standing in this desert, all 40,000 of them, burned a bunch of gas to get

here, spent anywhere from \$150 to \$300 to buy a ticket, and on average spent \$500 at Tar-gay or Wal-Fart to survive the week. It's wasteful, it's obscene, it destroys the environment, and it's life in the desert. For me, it's worth the resources. How hypocritical is it to consume all manner of goods it takes to keep your 175 pounds of bio-mass alive for a week in the desert, all the while hosting lectures on environmentalism? If you really want to be eco-friendly, stay the fuck home and leave the rest of us obscene energy consumers to our beautiful propane fireballs.

What I would IOVE is a return to Themes. Let Kachina Katrina, and the Entheon village bring us this ecological message. They set a **GOOD** example, and don't make you Wrong for living your life. They just share a point of view, and let me ChOOSE to join in their world view by being inspired by their example. Don't **force** it on me by making the entire festival's central theme a **movement**.

You didn't even have to duct tape Christmas lights to the truck to get "The Man" to approve your "Art Car.'

You'd go to the general store at Gerlach and jerk off in the porn aisle and no one would be "Like, hey man, don't do that. Respect the local infrastructure." As if "jerking off" has anything to do with "infrastructure."

Johnny-onthe-Spot by NOCTURNAL

STEVE We know you're in a hurry,

To do your thing and rush. Remember this is Burning Man,

These toilets do not flush. No cans or bottles, baby wipes They'll clog it up you see.

The only thing good for the JotS Are tissues, poop, and pee.

**Top 10** albums for the playa by GAVIN HECK

Charlotte Gainsbourg Peter, Björn and John -

> Writer's Block Adrian Sherwood -Becoming A Cliché

> > Telesma – 0(h)m

Lily Allen -Alright, Still **The Mops** – Psychedlic

Sounds in Japan

Yeveto - Stars and Atoms Dan Deacon – Spiderman

of the Rings (Carpark) Ken Nordine -Upper Limbo

Joe Nice – MySpace.com/JoeNice

