

miss clear

wednesday / thursday
29 / 30 august 2007
issue 33

**THE
SEX,
DRUGS,**
(and oh yeah)
**ART
ISSUE**

Black Rock City's favorite
alternative newspaper

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piSS clear

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Sex, and drugs, and ... oh yeah, there's some art in the background, right?
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Adrian Roberts

It's all LadyBee's fault! by ADRIAN ROBERTS

In our first issue on Monday, I announced that this would be *Piss Clear's* last year of publishing on the playa. Ever since then, people have been coming up to our camp, begging us to not to stop. "We love *Piss Clear!*" they usually say. "Why are you ending it?" Well, really, you can thank LadyBee.

Pretentious artist alert!

Okay, let me back up and explain. You see, after last year's Burning Man, I inadvertently got into a big pissing match with Black Rock City artist Pepé Ozan, over an off-hand remark I made right here in this editorial space. Simply put, I called his playa sculptures "stupid." Sure, it was a tiny comment made within the context of a much longer editorial discussing the politics of art funding at Burning Man. Sure, it was kinda bitchy. But come on! This is *Piss Clear!* (And y'know, I just really didn't like his art all that much.)

In my editorial, I discussed the perceived favoritism on the part of the BRC LLC for funding certain artists year after year, and called into question the whole idea of art funding at Burning Man. At the time, it seemed unfair that so much work out here is "gifted" to the community, yet only a select few get handed checks from the BRC LLC. It smelled like nepotism, and in the process, Pepé Ozan, who has received arts funding from the LLC nearly every year since 1995, got called out.

Longtime readers know that ever since the days of his "fire lingam operas" back in the mid-'90s, Pepé has often been a *Piss Clear* whipping boy – so much that slagging his name in our pages started to become an inside joke. We didn't even mean it half the time. It was mostly done simply to uphold a time-honored *Piss Clear* tradition.

The problem was, Pepé was never in on the joke. In fact, up until last year, he never even knew *Piss Clear* existed. How can you come to Burning Man for 15 years and not be familiar with the biggest newspaper on the playa? Has Pepé been living in a cloistered Burning Man art-world bubble all these years? Apparently.

So when someone told him I called his art "stupid," he got extremely miffed. (Although, it must be mentioned, he still never bothered to read the actual article.) Instead, he got Burning Man "Art Curator" LadyBee to drag him over to our camp so he could give me a piece of his mind.

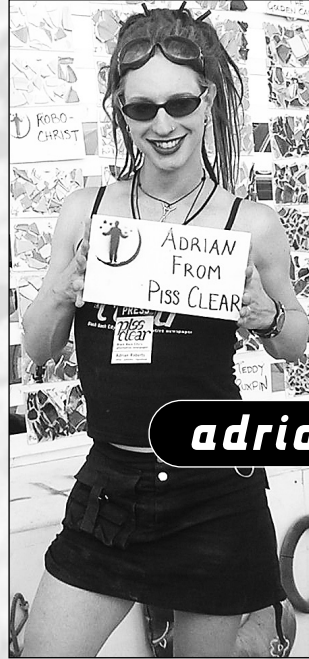
Fortunately by then, it was Sunday, and we had already skipped town right after the Burn. So a few days later, back in the real world, I got an angry email from Mr. Ozan, meticulously listing all the different reasons why his playa sculptures were not, in fact, "stupid." This sparked a very lively flame war between the two of us.

Is it still a gift if I don't want it?

In one of his emails, Pepe said that I was "out of touch with the rest of us" – as if all Burners not only think the same, but also think like him. He also said that his art was a "gift to the community," and that he regularly gets around 20 free tickets a year from the BRC LLC, to give to whoever he wants – in addition to art funding!

Well, *Piss Clear* is also a "gift to the community" – and guess how many free tickets we've gotten for distributing 30,000 papers each year for the past 13 years? Yes, that would be zero. (And it's not because I didn't ask for free tickets this year either.)

However, I'm not bitter. I happen to think that capitalism



adrian's rant

is a fine thing, and I fully support giving my money to companies I like. And I do like Burning Man. Otherwise, why the fuck would I be here?

So I wrote back, attempting to explain that Black Rock City is a community with many different kinds of people, and many different kinds of viewpoints, and that not everyone is here primarily for the art. He may think of his art as a "gift to the community" – but I didn't see it as much of a "gift" if my ticket money paid for it.

He wrote back another long diatribe, ending it with the following statement: "I'll make sure the money from your ticket pays my rent in the years to come."

Okaaaaay...

To his credit, Pepé did cite several examples of large-scale art projects (The Flaming Lotus Girls, The Temple) that would pretty much not be possible if it weren't for Burning Man art funding. He then said that if there weren't projects like that, then all *Piss Clear* would do is bitch about the "lack of art on the playa." (And, y'know, he's probably right!)

Bring on the Bee!

Here's where LadyBee comes in. As the Art Curator of Black Rock City, both Pepé and myself felt she might be interested in our exchange, so we CC'ed her on the discussion. When she finally chimed in, she chastised me for what she perceived as "negativity" in these pages. She wrote: "*Piss Clear* seems to be getting way more negative and whiny than ever before. It used to be amusing and relevant but now seems ... tired. Adrian, are you getting bored with the paper? It kind of looks that way."

And that's when the seeds were planted. Was LadyBee ... right? Could she see something in me that I could not see myself? I had to look deep within and ... well ... I had to wonder – was I indeed getting ... "bored?"

Mind you, at first I didn't think I was bored doing the paper! I felt like I loved doing *Piss Clear* just as much as I did when I first started it back in 1995. But with LadyBee's help, I finally saw the truth – I was, in fact, living a lie. I was making snide comments about her art cronies and being bitchy about art funding because ... I was bored.

And with that, I felt free and liberated. Thank you, LadyBee! Thank you!

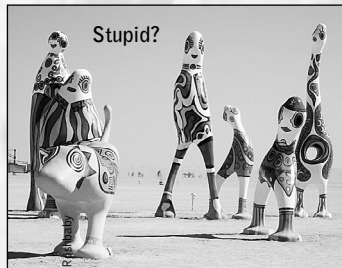
Because she's right. Working with talented and funny writers every year, and camping with such a great staff can get pretty boring. Expressing an alternative point-of-view, and presenting it in a newspaper for lively playa discussion is definitely pretty dull. And printing 30,000 copies of this stupid thing (see, I called my own project "stupid!"), and having a zillion people stop by just to say they appreciate it is absolutely boring. Yawn.

And unlike Pepé and his friends, I don't get funding – or hell, even 20 free tickets – just for coming out here to do it every year for the past 13 years.

No, LadyBee was strangely prescient. Maybe she unwittingly sowed the seeds of my own malignant discontent. But she was right. It's time to move on.

But not without an interview with her first! You can read it in this issue. Because there had to be at least one article about "Art," otherwise, this would have been just another typical *Piss Clear* "Sex & Drugs" Issue – and that would be, you know ... "tired."

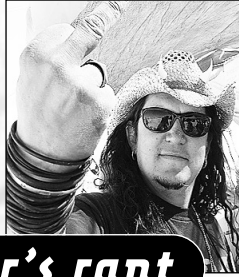
See you out on the playa!



A modest proposal

by MALDEROR

A bunch of you dope-addled dingleberries are all up in **arms** about the whole Profit-Pagoda or whatever the hell the Burning Man Corporate Trade Show Tent is called. The fact that Larry **allowed** these earth-friendly businesses to come out to *our* playa or to **save** *our* planet really **got** your goat, didn't it? I mean, Christ, it's like the basic **fiber** of the event is somehow changing. It's like they stopped letting you ride your motorcycles on the playa or **fire** off your heavy-caliber machine guns or something. Good god, how will it ever continue?



malderor's rant

Far be it from this column to encourage any sort of dangerous, stupid behavior ... but if it **means** so goddamn much to you to keep the event free from the **evils** of corporate influence, why don't you **do** something about it? If you're such a standard-bearer for the Burning Man ethos, you could always just go out and set fire to the Pavilion. I'm not suggesting you should ... **but you could.**

Let's think, for a moment, what it might be like if you put your tinder where your mouth is. What would you **do** if you saw a ring of flames shoot up around The Man, say, tonight? Call me crazy, but I'm betting most of us would run out there and have a little party. We'd **dance** around the embers, laughing about how we were all **whirling** around the stripper pole at Outpost Autosub, and almost missed all the fun. Sure, most people would only notice the conflagration once the art cars started running over all the unlit **darkwads** in their haste to speed out to the (impromptu) Burn. (What do you call a gaggle of unlit darkwads, anyway? Speed bumps?)



This could be The Man on Thursday morn!

But, **wait**, what would it be like for all these people who aren't **here** yet? What if you and your RV-mates didn't **roll** in until Friday night and the Man was a pile of smoking rubble? Well, **tough cookies**, kiddiewinks, The Man burned down before you got here. **Sorry about that.** If it matters to you all that much, go on **home** and maybe we'll try again next year.

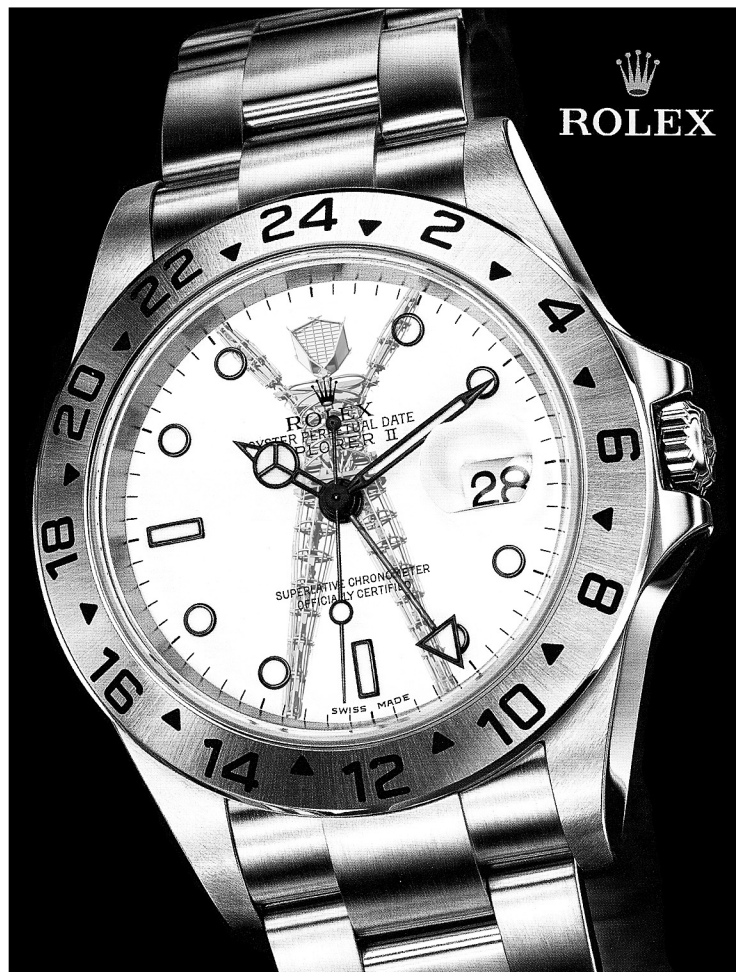
Now, I'm not suggesting you should **do it**. It'd be a **bad** idea, and people could get hurt. But ... if one wanted to, how could one go about setting the Pavilion on fire? Let's look at the problem from a **practical** standpoint. Look around. This is the most **arson-friendly** atmosphere on earth. Where else can you **pop** next door to borrow your neighbor's **flamethrower**? Or fire-cannon? Hell, Dance Dance Immolation probably has enough spare propane to make Dresden look like a marshmallow **roast**. And that hemp-fabric the BRC LLC used to weave the pavilion isn't made of environmentally-unsound asbestos ... a few stray **sparks** and it would go off in **spectacular** fashion.

And The Man? He's built and designed to burn. Heck, I'm surprised they **allow** smoking anywhere near him. (Oh, right, they have to. Larry smokes.) But the damn thing could go up in a **ball** of flames at a moment's notice.

Seriously, try to **imagine** Burning Man **without** The Burn serving as its apex. Wouldn't it be interesting if half the "participants" arrived later in the week and found out they'd **missed** their little fireworks show? How much rampant vandalism, date-rape, and drunken violence would be preempted by the absence of the massive fiery climax of the "festival"? How amusing might "Burn Night" be if we had to **jury-rig** some **half-assed** scrap-lumber "man" together on Saturday, just to have something to immolate for all the late-comers? **One wonders...**

Obviously, you shouldn't do it. **But**, I mean, you do stand by your principles, **right?** You know what **Burning Man is All About**, right? You know that letting these evil corporate voices into our blessed event is the **worst** thing that's ever happened, right? Are you, or are you **not**, going to keep Burning Man from changing, by **any** means necessary. Come on, villagers, to your torches!

But first, do me a **quick** favor. Go out there to the Pavilion and talk to some of those people. Look somebody in the **eye** who is earnestly trying to make a difference with his life and his livelihood, somebody who is **trying** to create a product to **improve** the planet and **maybe** save us all from living in fucking "Waterworld" ... and if you still want to go and set fire to his stall, hell, I'll **lend** you a match.



Warm beer sucks!

by **SIR LOIN**

Is warm beer keeping you from a revelation?

When you go to an art gallery opening, you're often served wine and appetizers, right? So why would people at Burning Man behave any differently? They don't ... but they should! Here's why:

Alcohol sort of **SUCKS** on the playa. The euphoria of alcohol lasts for **only** a few hours, it makes you pee, and it dehydrates you. It takes up a lot of room in your car, generates a **lot** of garbage, and requires a lot of energy to keep your cocktails **fresh**, beer cold, and wine at the proper cellar temperature.

Face it, out here, alcohol is **not** the ideal playa party favor. It's like, alcohol is your father's Oldsmobile, but what you need is a **peppy** car. Plus, sweating out a **hangover** in a hot tent is no way to start your day.

So, after analyzing the pros and cons of alcohol, I've determined that it's **counterproductive** to rely **solely** on booze to sustain an **altered** state for a week on the playa. I enjoy a drink as much as the next guy. But

on the playa, I tend to focus on quality over **quantity**. So when I'm out and about I look for venues that match my interests.

Sakénoma says that their cold saké pairs **nicely** with playa dust. And then for you high-brow types, there's the Barbie Death Camp and Wine Bistro. What I'm saying is, the idea of drinking 18 warm beers and then **throwing up** in your tent is not my idea of fun. And **WHO** the fuck drinks vodka and Kool-Aid anyway?

Recreational drug use is better in many ways than alcohol. Drugs have **inspired** musicians, artists, scientists, and people of all walks of life. Take a moment and consider all the great contributions drug users have

given Western society. From Sigmund Freud to Stephen King, the virtues of cocaine have helped **stimulate** more than just the **creative** types. And what would music be today without the steady infusion of LSD among its pioneers, like the Beatles and Jimi Hendrix. And when you add marijuana to the list, well, it's evident that drug use has shaped our society for the better.

Compare that to alcohol's fallen heroes: Mel Gibson, David Hasselhoff, George Bush ... well, you get the **picture**.

It's plain to see that drugs are better than **booze** on the playa and they're far **less** destructive on your body too – so why are we **gorging** ourselves on drinks? Has the low carb lifestyle caused us to stop smoking pot in order to **avoid** getting the **munchies**? I **guarantee** you won't steal a car stereo if you put down the **bottle** and pick up the bong. If history can predict the future, you're **more** likely to become an enlightened being with drugs than with booze.

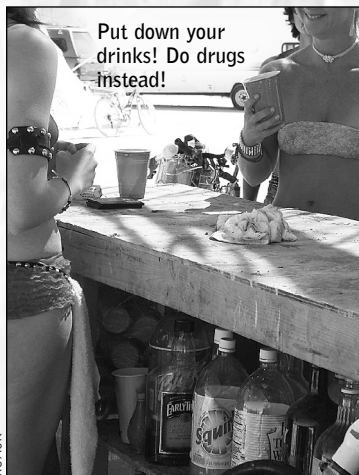
Drug use can expand the mind, develop your **imagination**, or move you into a different reality and help you see things from a different perspective. **Drugs** can accentuate colors and feelings too. **They're great!**

So remember, the next time you're snorting coke till dawn or tripping on mushrooms with friends, take **notice** of that **crazy talk** because you just might be on the verge of an epiphany.

Try that with a can of warm beer.



sir loin's rant



Put down your drinks! Do drugs instead!

BLAOK

haiku

by **MYSTERIOUS D**

Biking off to play
Whoa! I almost
hit someone
Another darkwad

What to do Thursday
Fandango
Bootie Mashup
Nice break from techno

Another late night
Someone gifted me
absinthe
Dude, where is my bike?

Kermit once told us
It's not easy being green
Larry disagrees

Piss Clear's final year
Sarcasm and snark
are dead
Thank you, LadyBee

Adrian Roberts
Piss Clear's former
editor
Your sass will be missed

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