

# Black Rock Gazette

Your Playa Time Source for Infotainment Since 1992



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## Playa Shoes – Necessity, personal belief system or cult?

By Lord Fouffpanns



Photo by Loretta

Hanging at the Saint Imelda shoe shrine.

Playa Shoe Whore is back and asking, "Is playa footwear all about performance or presentation?" Clearly, Black Rock City life demands practicality, but playa folks have been madly fashion keen. The people and their shoes are talking loud and clear.

A miraculous playa shrine to St. Imelda, the patron saint of footwear, appeared Monday near the Esplanade. St. Imelda was seen wandering along Dogma before leaving a golden shoe-bag with silver rose-covered pumps as a sign to playa followers of shoe fashion and practicality. Since the apparition, a cult following has sprung up, leaving devotional shoe offerings piled up in reverence at the unexpected miracle altar.

Sides were quickly taken and opinions have been flying like dust bunnies on playa. Unrepentant Shoe Whore Red Fox's daily "bigger than food or housing" goal is to find the happy medium, a shoe that works for the playa and the outfit. Nothing less will do! Bosquare, all function, says, "Powerboots and duct tape are the building blocks of the known universe." Ranger Binky Boot says trust and endurance are key, but concluded, "A unified shoe message? That's redundant!" Fenix and Butterfly serve dual mistresses: practicality and presentation. Sporting dusty leather thigh-boots, they cry, "Don't piss on the playa folks. It yucks up our style!" Playa Shoe Whore agrees. "Work the shoe and get your lazy butt to the porta potty!"

Glitterpussy, a self-confessed shrine devotee and more camp than cult, knows she is "closest to her soul" promenading in silver thigh-high platform boots. And Liza E. declared, "If the shoes are wrong, it all falls apart."

Playa Shoe Whore says, "Playa life demands a reality- and fashion-check!" Whether it's all about the practical or strictly form before function, it is always shoe style and substance as far as I'm concerned. Whatever you're wearing, remember to moisturize your feet daily to prevent playa foot, devoting yourself to foot care and personal shoe decoration that says, "I'm me, I'm here and I'm working this burn!"

## Burning Man is a Self Service Cult.

## The Temple is Coming

By Shipwreck

A well known artist on the Playa, David Best, has returned this year with a fourth intricate temple structure. Each year our community showcases art which is larger than life, Best's temples included. When Best was asked where he thinks this is all going, he said, "In some ways we are getting caught up in what the cities got caught up in, building higher and higher. I would like to build a five foot temple." Yet Best's temple is larger than life in more than just physical scale. The belief behind this year's Temple of Honor is permeating and powerful to the soul. It is the belief of forgiveness.

"Honor belongs to all people, it is honorable to stand-up for your views, resisting is honorable, the temple is about dishonor," Best said. Although the white script on black background may lead some to think that the exhibit is referencing current events and politics, Best said, "it has nothing to do with the War in the Middle East, Bush, or patriotism." The temple is a place to be forgiven, he said. "When we compromise, we dishonor."

It has not been all fun and games for Best. Delays have bogged down the Temple of Honor project since its inception. Confidential sources told the BRG the pieces of the Temple of Honor were originally fabricated by the La Fiesta Pinata Factory operating out of Chula Vista, Calif. The source mentioned that the reason for choosing this factory was that the total cost of materials was \$700, with a \$700 delivery cost to Petaluma. From Petaluma, it only cost Best \$45 to move all materials and crew to the playa. Truly beyond belief and under budget.



Photo by Durgy

Temple of Honor nears completion.

According to the source, difficulty arose in the completion of the temple because of the instructions shipped along with the materials. Since the workers at the La Fiesta facility are mostly Korean, and the factory is located in close proximity to Tijuana, they were written in Koreish, a cross between Korean and Spanish. It seems it is taking longer than anticipated to decipher them.

The source went on to tell the BRG that La Fiesta could have filled the bulbous globes of the Temple with candy for only \$545 over and above the cost of the structure. However, this was rejected by the Best team due to the seri-

ous potential for MOOP upon the release of the candy on impact with the giant pinata bats, which were also left out of the project budget.

But despite the travails, Best remains optimistic. Best exudes a pure, simple, and sacred energy when he speaks about the idea of creating his temple installations over the past few years. "It's easy to do, to make a building where someone is going to walk in and cry. I get to the opportunity to make a place where someone is going to walk in and forgive themselves or their mother. That's what's neat about it."

## The 'Anti-Cult' speaks out

By How Weird and Liane Gabora

We have with us an intergalactically acclaimed expert on cults, who for reasons pertaining to his discreet, wallflower nature — not to mention fears of persecution — shall be known by the psychonym "Funkydude." Our acclaimed expert says, "The real cults are pussies when it comes to individual freedom. Notice that they are not a common sight at Burning Man. They can kiss my big white hairy ass. But I digress. Although to be honest, that is everything I have to say on the topic."

But not quite. What is the difference between a group of people who are genuine-

ly interested in what they are doing, and a group of people involved in a cult? The test to determine whether a group is a cult, Funkydude says, is to see what happens when members decide to leave. If the group accepts the will of the individual and allows the wayward being to continue down his or her unique and merry path, then no worries. But if the group tries to pull the wayward being back, watch out! For a cult will pressure you to bend your belief system into the group groove, Funkydude says, distorting you from your true path, your reason for being, and your inner nature. Your soul is captured.

Funkydude also describes a cult as being

about the dichotomy between survival of the individual versus survival of the group.

"It is the realm of the damned," he says. "And I should know, for I am Funkydude, man of the Anti-Cult."

With his eyes glazed over in disdain, Funkydude notes the presence of cults in our midst, including the fashion-fixated Costume Cult, the Turnip Head Cult (not available for interview), and the nipple torture cult headed by Nipple Girl, who will lure you to suckle her tortured nipples — only to put you under a heady spell, leaving you lying in a puddle of playa dust in a state of breathless exhilaration.

## Dog Gone Confused?

By PlayaFrog

If Burning Man does not allow dogs any more, why are there still dogs on the playa?

The exceptions are the dogs that reside with Department of Public Works members and other Burning Man staff — who spend weeks or months building, setting up, maintaining and removing Black Rock City from the desert. These folks work long weeks in the sun and dust to secure the infrastructure of our beautiful city.

Some staff members do not have a permanent address, or have no choice but to have their dog with them at all times. A week in a kennel in Reno may cost \$100, and two weeks or more can bring the cost to an unreasonable amount. Additionally, most of these dogs have attended Burning

Man in the past and their companion people are fully aware of their dogs' needs and are competent to take care of them. As always, the companion person of a dog is responsible for picking up poop (dog poop) and ensuring proper care of the animal in the desert.

Making sure that our core staff members are good dog people is fairly easy. Trying to ensure the same of thousands of unknown participants is impossible.

If any dog or cat (there are rumors of two felines being on the playa this year) should be lost or found, or there is an animal emergency, report it to Playa Info. Ask them to radio PlayaFrog.



# BRC's DMV

By Painter Carl

"Art Cars are encouraged to offer rides," reads the Hot Points sheet from BRC's Department of Mutant Vehicles. That's not as any kind of a taxi service, but as an integral part of the "Art and Performance" aspect of Burning Man.

"We are a pedestrian city," says Miz Jewelz, DMV manager for the past five years. At their inspection station behind Center Camp, Jewelz and her team of 42 DMV Hotties must check every moving vehicle that expects a license to operate on the playa. Day License, Night License, Pyro License — they have them all.

Burning Man is likely the largest display of Art Cars in the world. The world knows it. Builders come to Black Rock City to be inspired and to meet fellow artists.

Scrap Daddy (www.scrapdaddy.com) is here from Houston with a scorpion-like machine. He'll host a program on the History Channel in October called "Scrapyard Scavengers." The Outlaw Shriners are on playa. The Roachster is here, featuring a "makes-me-street-legal" Texas Truck license plate in the rear. And that's only a quick sample of who was at DMV one recent afternoon.

Last year, more than 500 vehicles came through DMV, reports Miz Jewelz. Not everyone who presents a vehicle is approved; about 10 percent don't make the cut.

"We have a difficult job," says Jewelz. "Having to say no, it has its tough moments." Anything resembling a Lincoln stretch-limo is likely to be refused a license. "Couches-On-Wheels are way too 1996." If a vehicle has simply been painted, it cannot be considered an Art Car. Burning Man expects a conveyance to be "creatively, permanently, radically and safely modified" in order to gain that status. People who are turned down one year are usually inspired to build something that really shines the following year. Jewelz recommends www.artcars.com and the discussion list on the topic at the burningman.com Web site as useful resources. But just being here is a great way to meet builders.

"Safely modified" means, in part, that vehicles must be well-illuminated if operated after sunset. It's also important that vehicles not tip over and that drivers be aware of their surroundings.

With a laugh, Jewelz acknowledges that all of us on the playa, driver and pedestrian alike, are "easily distracted by bright, shiny objects and things that go boom in the night." That's pretty much a working definition of Burning Man. Drivers must be aware of their vehicles and the people on and around them. Noting the success of the Department of Mutant Vehicles since its inception in 1997, Jewelz points out that there "haven't been any real incidents with Art Cars. People have fallen

off. But people fall off a lot of things."

Jewelz notes that the federal Bureau of Land Management (BLM) last year conducted a study relating to the amount of oil spilled on the playa. Jewelz recognizes that since the basis of any good Art Car is usually "some old beater," oil spills can be a real problem. Operators of any vehicle — Art Car or not — should place cardboard under the engine and transmission when not in motion. The cardboard can be burned. The oil won't be in the dust. Help keep the cars alive on the playa.

DMV Hotties get to meet a lot of people during the performance of their duties. They see a lot of fireworks and sparkles during pyro and late-night inspections. It's a tough job with rewards. No matter what the size, if it will be moving on the playa it has to come through BRC's DMV.

Photo by Weegee



Hitchin' a ride on an art car at BRC.



Kenny Boy from No Camp asks:

How many chickens does it take to screw in a light bulb? Which are better, human breasts or chicken breasts? Why does it hurt when I pee?

The Playa Chicken Responds:

Kenny Boy? I think we're going to call you Piggy Boy because of your obnoxious barrage of question after question! This ain't an all-you-can-ask advice buffet at a cheap Reno hotel, Mr. Oinker. Proper etiquette dictates that you ask one question and then move along. Rest assured that I would gladly peck your eyes out, but you'd probably want them pecked out seven times... each!

Oh, Sweet Harlan Sanders, why am I bothering with you? Either I'm feeling unusually compassionate, or the Vicodin and Bud Light energy drink I had for breakfast is making me so lethargic that I simply can't bring myself to read another letter. Don't worry, I'm just joking... I'm never compassionate.

OK Mr. Clever Piggy Boy, let's take care of your questions so I fix myself another energy drink and stay passed out for the rest of the day.

1) You are really, really stupid, you know that? How big is a light bulb? And how big is a chicken? How are you going to fit one chicken in a light bulb, let alone another so the dirty deed can take place? Next!

2) Humans are ugly, smelly, revolting creatures and do not come in "better" than chickens in any category. That said, if it came down to just you and me, I'd have you lying face down on the BBQ with an apple in your mouth faster than you could mumble "Pass the honey glaze!"

3) To answer this final question, Piggy Boy, I had to consult your doctor, your high school gym teacher, your mommy, your shop steward, your downstairs neighbor (who, incidentally, hates your music), your co-worker Ned and finally, your imaginary childhood friend, Mr. Bubbles. The unanimous conclusion is that it hurts when you pee because you're supposed to zip up afterwards, not during.

## Rev. Billy's Church of Stop Shopping

By Lancelot Smith

The guerrilla war against consumerism takes a new leap forward with Reverend Billy and the Church of Stop Shopping.

He's a cross between Jimmy Swaggart and Elvis's love child.

Overlooking the building of his section of stage where he will be holding services later on, Reverend Billy explains to me that a primary tactic of the Church is public performances in private spaces. Reverend Billy leads his congregation into such corporate spaces as Starbucks, where his congregation sings songs decrying the sins of consumerism and preaches the virtues of life beyond a five-dollar latte. Of course, these performances elicit reactions on the parts of the corporate powers-that-be. So, like virtually every other up-and-coming religious movement before them, Church members have had to face persecution, on one occasion in the form of an arrest for trespass. Mother Jones even anointed Reverend Billy with the coveted title of "Hell-Raiser of the Month."

According to Reverend Billy, this highlights a more serious underlying issue, and that is the way in which public spaces are being converted into zones free of public discourse. Corporations like Walmart replace a block of downtown with one of their mega-stores. Whereas in the past one could set up their own soap box and shake one's fist at the system, the dissenter now faces eviction for trespass as well as private security forces who do not necessarily recognize the Bill of

Rights. This in a political culture in which surveillance and Big-Brother cameras are ever more pervasive. The result is a stifling of dissent and an enforcement of a growing conformity in which consuming ever larger amounts of prestige goods, from that five-dollar latte on up to the Humvee, is promoted as life's fulfillment.

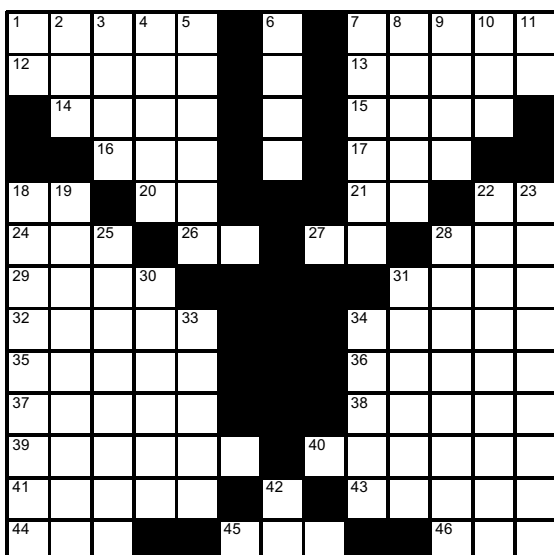
When asked if he considered his group a cult, he calmly replied with a Southern minister's charismatic smile and a glint in his eye, "No, hopefully we have devotees who are Beyond Belief."

Reverend Billy is accompanied by his nemesis and Director Savitri Durkee, Conductor Brother James Solomon and Music Director Benny Key. He will be appearing under the Man on Wednesday, Thursday and Friday at 8:00 p.m.



Rev. Billy preaches at the Man.

## The Dusty Puzzler



Across

- 1. Face with courage
- 7. Metal fastener
- 12. Possessive of you
- 13. Apart
- 14. Stain
- 15. Guide
- 16. Female Bambi
- 17. Angry
- 18. "Comin' Right \_\_\_ You"
- 20. Objective pronoun
- 21. \_\_\_ top
- 22. "Good to \_\_\_"
- 24. Together with
- 26. "Light \_\_\_ Fire"

- 27. "I'm \_\_\_ Heaven"
- 28. Bulgarian monetary unit
- 29. To suppose
- 31. Motion picture
- 32. To rip open
- 34. B. Bonds favorite
- 35. Make reparation
- 36. Arab princes
- 37. One that razes
- 38. Lat. pl. stiff hair
- 39. Picasso's peninsula
- 40. Landed property
- 41. A radical
- 43. Type of chemical compound
- 44. Var. pl. meadow
- 45. Adult
- 46. Spelling of a letter

Down

- 1. Take a pass in cards
- 2. Steal
- 3. Old
- 4. Comic book sound
- 5. High regard
- 6. Amor
- 7. Endangered fish
- 8. Neat
- 9. Street
- 10. Stop
- 11. "\_\_\_ are family"
- 18. Statistical
- 19. Old stereo part
- 22. Makes
- 23. Watches
- 25. Saddy
- 28. Restrict
- 30. Pinot producer
- 31. Celestial bodies
- 33. Danger
- 34. Herman \_\_\_
- 42. Yo Yo \_\_\_

Answers to Tuesday's Puzzle

The dyslexic atheist and the PETA member both argued against the presence of a dog on playa.

# Announcements

## Join the cult!

Are you a member? If you have a Cult of Abby button, yes you are! Your only responsibility is to have a good time! The purpose of the buttons is to help you recognize fellow members, which should facilitate an embrace. No money, no dogma, no genuflection. Just FUN! Join today!

## Gerlach High Fundraiser

Gerlach High School car wash fundraiser. Labor Day weekend, Sunday, Aug. 31 and Monday, Sept. 1, 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. both days. The car wash will be in the Gerlach Post Office parking lot and will cost \$6 for cars, \$8 for large pickups, \$10 for SUVs and \$25 and up for RVs.

## Playa Questions?

Want to learn more about the playa? Joey Carmosino will be available from 2 to 4 p.m. Thursday to answer your questions and distribute a map with current route information. Joey can answer questions on playa conditions, type of vehicle needed and best scenic spots. See you at the BLM Media Camp behind Media Mecca.

## Smart Camping Wins Tickets, Glory

Got LNT? Then nominate your camp for Earth Guardians' LNT Camp of the Day.

Each day, EG judges visit nominated theme camps and choose one for notable ingenuity in solving Leave No Trace problems on the playa. Winning camps get two free tickets to next year's event, plus recognition in community media. Any theme camp can nominate itself by signing up at the Earth Guardians Pavilion, 5:45 Esplanade.

Also at the EG Pavilion, check out the map of this year's self-guided Leave No Trace tour of the city. The tour features innovative gray-water systems, trash management, showers, reusable structures, and "Good Neighbor" camping practices.

LNT is really a way to camp smarter, not harder, on the playa. So see what the model camps are doing. And if you've already Got LNT, nominate your camp for the coveted Camp of the Day award.



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## Take a Shower \$5

Go to Gerlach and wash your body you damn hippie! You can even take the bus for \$5 more. For more information go to Playa Info.

The views expressed herein are not necessarily even ours. Somebody thought it was a good idea, so we ran with it!