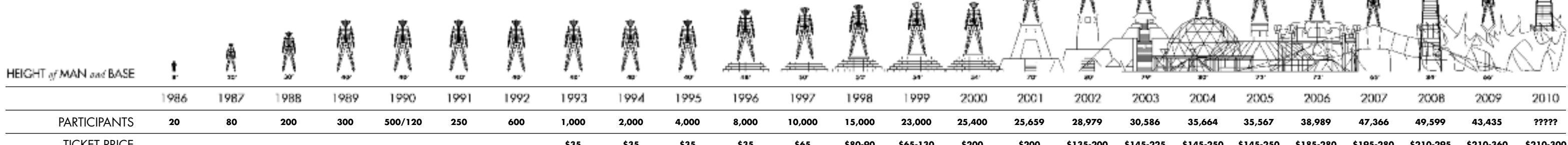


BURNING MAN INFOGRAPHICS

by FLINT HAHN · XMASONS.COM



OUT / IN

| | |
|--------------------------------------|---|
| abstinence | quickies |
| bacon | Morningstar Farms bacon strips |
| Bootie BRC | Bootie Jupa |
| coffee mugs | beer steins |
| cowboy hats | Tyrollean caps |
| Danger Ranger's fingers | "Safety Third!" |
| drum circles | brass bands |
| dubstep | ragtime |
| dust storms | lightning storms |
| Esplanade | Kyoto Street |
| Exodus | Skipping town before the Burn |
| fannypacks | podbelts |
| feather boas | glow fur boas |
| funded art | free drugs |
| gift-giving | participating |
| glowsticks stuck in your dreadlocks | fiber optic barrettes |
| goatees | handlebar mustaches |
| guitars | ukuleles |
| hard-packed playa | sorry, BRC's always a dust bowl |
| holy water | playa dust |
| hugs | the Spincter Tap™ |
| IKEA | Playatech |
| jaded Burners | born-again Burners |
| magnetic "body lights" that fall off | LED clip-on accents |
| marijuana citations | medical marijuana |
| Opulent Temple & Root Society | Letting someone else have the 10:00 and 2:00 corners and not being whiny about it |
| PBR | Chimay |
| peg stilts | pogo stilts |
| pirates | pirate clowns |
| Piss Clear | BRC Weekly |
| playa cruiser | playa walker |
| playa foot | pedicured toe nails |
| playa names | nicknames |
| porta-potties | Depends |
| psy-trance | marshups |
| rainbows | double rainbows |
| driving through Reno | Staying in Reno for a few extra days |
| rental RVs | video Airstreams |
| Sex On The Beach | prune juice cocktails |
| shirtcooking | shirtcutting |
| showers | baby wipes |
| steampunks | metalheads |
| the last 25 Burns | the next 25 Burns |
| tinnitus | earplugs |
| unicorns | minotaur |
| Utilikit | lederhosen |
| walkie-talkies | SMS text messaging |

Contributors: Eggchair Steve, Soulaye, Orange Peel Moses, BobZilla, Sailor, JohnJohn, Adrian Roberts

Best drug guide ever

by APOLLO

Years ago, back when Burning Man didn't suck, there was this publication called *Piss Clear*, full of snarky insight about stuff the official information distributors wouldn't touch. One of the most anticipated topics each year was the **Drug Issue** — which drugs were most popular on the playa, how to enjoy them most, even the occasional warning against a particular substance. Updated from year to year with various personal anecdotes, it was always a handy guide for those wanting to turn their Burning Man up to 11.

This is not that article. Frankly, it's been done to death. Us old-timers are quite familiar with the tune, and all you new folks should just run out and buy the *Piss Clear* anthology from RE/Search so you don't come off like such a greenhorn. Oh wait, you're reading this on the playa and it's too late for that? Better luck next year, hayseed.

No, I'm here to explain why I don't take drugs at Burning Man. And let's be clear, when I say "drugs," I mean the common brainwashed American short-hand for "illegal drugs." Alcohol and caffeine are both drugs that I am very, very, very, fond of. They are the yin and yang of alterants, and you can get all sorts of entertaining results from differing combinations of the two.

Why I don't do drugs out here

There are a lot of reasons I don't "do drugs" in Black Rock City. One is paranoia. Ever since the Gay '90s when people couldn't stop talking to the media about what a drug-fueled orgy Burning Man was, the fuzz has been painting mental target symbols on the backs of every person who steps through the gates. Why worry about the cops finding your stash when you can just get piss drunk and vomit all over a BLM Ranger without fear?

Another reason, frankly, is my own personal phobia about loss of control. Black Rock City is an amazing, mind-bending, bizarre, and often dangerous environment all on its own. That's great — but the idea of a bad trip out here is right up there on the top of my list of Things To Avoid. Oh, and techno and rave music don't interest me in the slightest. If you're not planning on dancing all night and don't need some chemical alteration to convince your brain that *oosne oosne oosne* equals music, the need for drugs at Burning Man immediately nose dives.

And let's not forget, in this brave new digital world, *nothing* you do will ever be forgotten. Remember that time at Dustfish when you spent an hour giggling uncontrollably, then you couldn't stop sobbing, and you *tried* to explain about the owls and *nobody* got it? Yeah, it's on YouTube.

Then there's the temptation to share your drug experiences with other peo-

ple, perhaps even write about them. They might think they're safe, they might have a clever playa name like "Malderor" and only write in a tiny alternative paper... but then that paper goes online, and some jerk reveals that Malderor's real name is Philip Kirschbaum*, and a prospective employer Google's Phil's name, and then page after detailed page about his drug habits comes spewing forth.

As for buying drugs on the playa, don't be a fucking moron. The event attracts scam artists as much as it does bike thieves, eager to take advantage of the trusting "Burning Man is Utopia" attitude many folks seem to bring with them. And unlike the dirty hippie who hangs out on the corner of the seedy side of your hometown, you will never see the guy who sold you that bad shit here ever again. And let's not forget the narcs. Trust no one! This is one instance where paranoia will save your ass.

But enough of the generalities. No discussion of drugs at Burning Man would be complete without addressing the specifics.

Ecstasy: Quite possibly the most popular drug on the playa, its virtues have been extolled many times in the pages of *Piss Clear*, Gigsville Trading Cards, and other, less reputable sources. But let me ask you this: **Why would you take a drug that makes you want to hug people you'd never get near if you were sober?** Yeah, it can make you feel *real good* — so can believing a George W. Bush speech, if you let it. It kind of goes back to that loss of control thing I mentioned — I don't trust artificial happiness any more than any other con.

Speed: Can you say "instant asshole"? I knew you could. Another popular substance among the folks who need to keep going, and going, and going and... you know what? You're not going to see everything. Just accept it. Even if you stay awake all 208 hours of the event, **there will be tons of cool stuff you won't experience.** You can rage against the dying of the light and try and pack in as much as you possibly can, but in the process, you've turned into a strung-out jerk who nobody wants to be around. Seriously, I've seen meth chew people up and spit them out more than any other substance. You can say you've got it under control and that you're just doing small amounts to keep that energy going — but just stay over *there* until you've passed out and slept 30 hours, m'kay?

Heroin: Just because I'm at peace with the idea of mortality doesn't mean I've got a fucking death wish. Not that you see it that much at Burning Man — not many users can get their shit together to handle the playa for a week.

Nitrous: Suck a balloon, head rush, giggle, fall down, rinse, lather, repeat. Don't see the appeal. Must be a hippie thing.

Cocaine: Much celebrated, much maligned, and way too expensive. "You have too much money" is a message God has never seen fit to send my way. The ultimate Drug of Capitalism, it gives you all the joys of being self-confident, charismatic, and generally hot shit without actually being *any* of those things. But you might fool someone

Getting playasexual

by POLLY SUPERSTAR

There's nothing quite like the sight of a bunny giving a pirate a blowjob on an art car as it rolls past your camp on a lazy afternoon. Especially when you look close and see the bunny is a dude. Doubly-triply so when you realize he's holding his bunny girlfriend's hand and she is watching on approvingly with a little happy smirk and a twinkle in her eye.

When people leave the safety of their familiar environment, they step out like brave pioneers onto this cracked, baked landscape and experience a sense of freedom. They leave the skin of their everyday life at home, and take a week out of their lives to **play dress-up** — to re-live their childhoods — reclaiming their sense of wonder and innocence.

But wait... how can I talk about "childhood, wonder, and innocence" in the same breath as **bisexual polyamorously bunny/pirate blow jobs**? See, when we are young, before we have a chance to make up our own minds about how we feel about things, we are like sponges; children can absorb ideas, habits, and phobias which are not necessary to their survival, and which they might actually disagree with when they grow up and have a chance to decide for themselves.

When little Billy touches his pee-pee, he is told by his parents that he is dirty and bad; when Bill, the big hunky guy, decides to play dress-up and puts on his pirate costume, it's his opportunity to make up his own mind about how he feels about his cock and what he wants to do with it. Even if that means putting it in a dude bunny's mouth.



long enough for a hook-up — hope you're sober enough to remember condoms.

Marijuana: Irony of ironies, pot is the most benign of illegal substances — less dangerous than booze by any objective measure and yet the easiest for the cops to detect and bust you for. And they will, given the slightest chance. Eating is definitely safer than smoking, and dehydrates you less as well, but tends to put me right to sleep. I may not need to stay awake for the whole event, but I don't want to be unconscious through half of Saturday, either.

LSD: Another perennial fave. Can you say "overstimulation"? Acid is about opening people's brains up and making them say "Wow" — which is exactly the same thing that Burning Man does. Better to save it for a walk in the woods or reading James Joyce.

Ketamine: It's a cat tranquilizer. Are you really that desperate?

Mushrooms: A gentler trip than acid with a shorter duration, and, so I've heard — having never actually done mushrooms, all you prospective employers — far more likely to plug one into a spiritual plane of existence than any other drug you're likely to find outside of the Amazon rainforest. It will make you smile because the chemicals make you feel good, mushrooms will make you smile because you've realized that **Matter Is Just Energy Crystallized And God Is Love And There Is No Death**... watch out for the owls, though.

Clearly, this is no drug for the playa. In fact, if you have any with you I recommend you ditch them immediately before you do yourself serious harm. The safest course is to deliver any mushrooms you may have to the *BRC Weekly* camp right now, where they will be disposed of in a secure manner.

Keep taking the fucking pills

Oh, and lots of people come to Black Rock City and get high in reverse: they think it's such a wonderful place that they don't need that prescription to keep it together. Then the first whiteout hits. Please, please, keep taking the fucking pills your doctor told you to take. Far more freak-outs and breakdowns have happened at Burning Man because of people *not* taking the drugs than people *taking* them.

Years ago, *Piss Clear* writer Sugar Larry opined that Burning Man without drugs is like anal sex without lube: dry and uncomfortable. To continue the metaphor, let me suggest that while lube might make it quicker and easier, a lot of foreplay and a bit of spit can be much more satisfying. **TM**

*Note: Malderor's real name is not actually Phillip Kirschbaum. Phillip "Drugs Drugs Drugs" Kirschbaum was a complete asshole from my 7th grade class and I hope his boss Google's his name, sees all the drug talk, and fires his ass — paycheck time, you bastard. Malderor's real name is Jenna Bush.

Exploring your sexuality can be a scary thing to do, what with so much cultural pressure to conform. People suppress their desires and spend their lives like tightly-coiled springs. Cut to the playa, where you find a liberal attitude towards sexuality — where you can see dominatrixes with spanking booths, naked slip-n-slides, smut domes, tantric temples, and sensual massage. You can experience community support for all different kinds of sexuality; every conceivable sub scene and nano community is represented. Being in this environment — so different from every day life — tweaks your consciousness to release those old patterns embedded when you were young, and allow you to explore who you really are.

Dressing up in a costume gives you permission to embody your sexuality in a way that's exploratory, because you can be whoever you want to be. The costume gives you permission, and the pressure is off. The nagging voice in the back of your head quiets, and you can try on what it feels like to be flogged, give a spanking, make out with two people at once, trade gender with a friend, go down on a pirate, or watch your partner go down on a pirate. As long as you **play safely and consensually**, the only limit is your imagination.

So who do you want to be today? Put on a costume and find out. **The playa is your playground,** so go and explore! After all, if you don't try it, you'll never know if you like it... **TM**

Polly Superstar throws costumed, arty, sex-positive parties in San Francisco. Find out more at: KinkySalon.com

Slow the fuck down

by WHELPLEY

Ohmygod!msoexcited!lovethis songandlookatthoselasersandholyshit!thinktheacidis kickinginandI justwantto danceand screamand jumpand raveinthegloriouslightofexistenceandfuckeveryoneisebeautifulandlookthere's a guy dressed like a caraband WHOADid you just see that fireball that was sick they passed the cracker want another hit..."

Whoa there. Hold on a second. Just stop right where you are.

Take a breath. Starting at your belly, fill your lungs, all the way up to your chest. Let it out, all the way. Don't force it, just release. Keep going.

So it's like this: **you're at the world's greatest buffet.** Everything you've ever wanted to eat is laid out before you, and you've got a whole week to enjoy it. Do you pile up your plate and gorge yourself until you vomit all over your sarong and pass out in the truffled mashed potatoes? Or do you pace yourself, and enjoy each dish, one by one?

Even if you had the ability to relive each day here a hundred times, a thousand times, a million times over, **you will still never be able to do, see, and fuck everything there is here.** More

importantly, the only way you'll enjoy the experiences you are having is to Slow The Fuck Down and savor them. I know, out here, this is easier said than done. But here are some tips to help you focus:

Get in touch with the numerous drugs already coursing through your bloodstream before popping that next pill.

You might realize that you're already a lot higher than you think.

ADVICE

Forget about that fun event you read about in the WhatWhereWhen guide. Actually, just put it back in your bag and read it after you get home (and despite what the Greeters told you when you came through the Gate, this is not "home" ... it's just the most awesome party town ever!) Half the time, the event listed isn't actually happening, and besides, 99% of the time you will encounter something better on the way there anyways.

Get some sleep. I'm not saying that right when you're peaking at sunrise you should go back to your camp and bring your heart rate down to a human level; I'm talking about after you've come down, and you're still feeling trippy, but

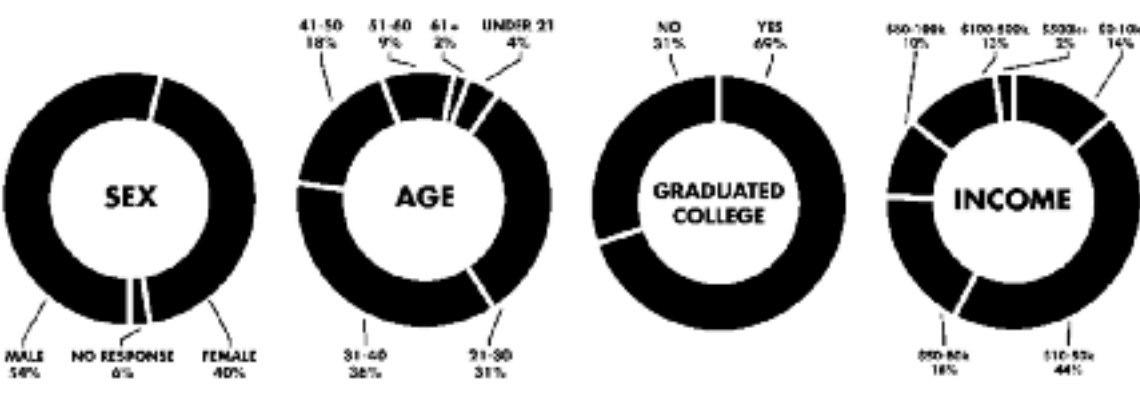


showing those signs of wear — that's when you go for some recovery time. **Eat.** Food is not just a fuel to keep you raving longer — it's an experience to be savored on its own. Put some love into preparing it (even if you're just reheating a Tasty Bite). Sit down. Chew it, taste it, enjoy it. Let it become a part of you.

Have you just made a new friend on the playa? Why not try making a deep connection, instead of chit-chatting for a while, then losing track of them at the next dance camp?

Burning Man's a river, and you've only got a cup to drink it with. Slow down and accept the situation, and you'll be a lot happier. **TM**

PARTICIPANT DEMOGRAPHICS



Metropolis in Flux continued from cover

Yet if the temple design bucks the **Metropolis** theme, the massive collaboration that created it epitomizes the urban ideal that Black Rock City is all about these days, drawing together hundreds of people of all skill sets from a wide variety of camps to design, build, support, fund raise (they needed to come up with nearly \$120,000 beyond their BRC art grant), and create the nonprofit **Flux Foundation** to continue the collaboration.

"We see the Temple being offered to a slightly broader community," said PK. "Whether it's the **Flaming Lotus Girls** or the **Space Cowboys** or all these other groups that have never really been involved with the Temple."

It was a natural approach for such a massive undertaking by an unlikely trio. Rebecca and Jess are both Flaming Lotus Girls who last year went out on their own to create the art piece **Fishbowl**, while PK is a Space Cowboy from the sound camp community. Together, they're an unusual mix for a project like this but one that worked well.

"I haven't had the opportunity to produce art with these people and it's been amazing the resources we've all poured into this. It's drawn so many people together to make this thing possible," said Jess, expressing excitement at how the group gelled and what it might still accomplish in the future, particularly since that they'll likely remain bound together by, among other things, lingering debt from the **largest Temple ever built for Black Rock City**.

Even the Temple of Flux design ultimately reinforces that transition from a focus on the individual — be it an artist, an organization, or The Man — onto the community that has formed around it to create the city and its culture.

"Being an architect, I was very interested in working on a space that was non-centered, that didn't have a focal center point that, knowing architectural history, has certain issues," explained PK. "Historically, the center point is used as a place of reverence and authority, and that to me seems contrary to the collaboration that is Burning Man. To have the Temple reaffirm that, spiritually, just seemed a bit much."

A city of collective collaboration And that's the story of **Metropolis**. The frontier of the early '90s, when Burning Man was all about rugged individuals doing whatever the fuck they wanted, is long gone. It's been replaced by a city, where free expression still reigns, but our collective creations are more important than our individual desires.

Why else would thousands of us spend months, in grungy warehouses and on the open playa, collectively creating monuments to nothing more than the art of creation,

only to be burned a week later? That's not just a rhetorical question, but one that I've been exploring for years through my articles for the *San Francisco Bay Guardian*, *Piss Clear* (*BRC Weekly's* predecessor), and my upcoming book, "The Tribes of Burning Man: How an Experimental City in the Desert is Shaping the New American Counter Culture," set for release by CCC Publishing at the end of this year.

Since 2004, I've had regular conversations with Burning Man founder **Larry Harvey** about what Burning Man was becoming during those renaissance years, when the population exploded, the art became truly amazing, and the culture took on a life of its own.

As the country continued its descent into empire and mass consumerism, Larry chose art themes intended to nudge the event toward greater sociopolitical relevance: Hope and Fear in 2006, The Green Man in

world for a long time. It's really about the world that we go back and live in," Larry told me shortly after announcing this year's theme. "It's got to be about something that is in the world."

One of the great cities of the world

Black Rock City exists as part of a pantheon of great cities around the world, creating a unique culture, sharing ideas with other cities, and serving as an innovator and incubator for new ways of thinking about commerce, community, and the use of space.

"Four or five years ago, this would have been a hard sell. They still discuss whether they liked the streets and the rules we imposed," said Larry. "But now, people have come to respect Black Rock City's urban character, so we're ready for a discussion like this."

That discussion has involved exploring new ways of running the event, from turning it into a non-profit, to creating a year-round think tank and retreat, to participating in discussions of urbanism with groups such as the **San Francisco Planning and Urban Research Association (SPUR)**.

"Black Rock City is one of the great cities of the world," said SPUR's Executive Director **Gabriel Metcalf**, a Burner who camps in Illumination Village. "It's like being a protagonist in a movie when you arrive in the big city. **The Esplanade is one of the great main streets in the world.**"

That praise isn't to be taken lightly from someone who lives and breathes urbanism, and runs the premier urban planning think tank in the city of Burning Man's birth. Gabriel was positively giddy when he heard about this year's theme.

"One thing I love about Burning Man taking on the question of urbanism is that it's going to not just be about physical placement — how you lay out the blocks and streets — but about community in a larger sense," said Gabriel. "The exploration of different forms of community is what I think is so interesting and transformative for the people [in Black Rock City]." Larry is trying to make it relevant and to speak to the big issue of the day. The theme **Metropolis** speaks to the biggest issue: human settlement, how we're going to live together. It's asking the big question.

Transforming Bohemia into a city In April, Gabriel invited Larry to SPUR to talk about that big question to a packed audience. "We're the first Bohemian scene to turn itself into a city," Larry said, explaining how San Francisco's counterculture transplanted itself onto the playa's flat expanse — an urban planner's dream — and sprinkled it with more modern imperatives. "We did what a lot of people said was

LINGO

blue room bolt ditching an unwanted companion while they're inside a porta-potty

blue lounge a camp's own private porta-potty

douchebag camp a camp with a wall of RVs against the street, separating themselves away from the rest of the city

darkard an idiot who doesn't wear lights at night — also called a "target"

faffing fucking around for fucking forever — what your campmates do when you're trying to get somewhere

Gatestapo slang term for gate staff

gay skirt slang term for a Utilikit

golfer self-important Burning Man staff member driving around in an unadorned golf cart

Hot Topic Dome slang for Death Guild Thunderdome... so last year

miracle worker a leech at Will Call begging for a free Burning Man ticket

playa points BRC equivalent of "good karma"

shirtcutting the female version of "shirtcooking" — when a girl wears a top but with no bottoms... tres tragic

sit-downers those assholes at the Burn who bum everyone out by constantly yelling "sit down!"

sleepers camps camps that reserve "theme camp placement" in an effort to secure playa real estate, but ultimately have little to no interactivity — it's just a place for them to camp

sobrietol the "pretend drug" you say you're on when taking a night off from imbibing any alcohol or other substances

sparkle pony high-maintenance playa princess who looks cute in furry leg warmers and hot pants, but who doesn't actually do anything to help around camp

speed bumps darkards laying on the playa at night

Contributors: Adrian Roberts, Eric "ShutterSlut" Stein, JohnJohn!

unachievable: we got Americans out of their cars."

At first, Burning Man was just a scene, without rules or a prescribed ethos. But as it grew and a culture organically developed around it, Larry said that some rules and structure became necessary, both to deal with the logistics of such a large event, and to convey to newcomers what the culture was about in order to maintain and spread it.

"We didn't start out with gift-giving as dogma. It was just natural human behavior," Larry told the group. Everyone brought something, more than they would need, so that they could share it with the group. Performing and making art was warmly encouraged and appreciated. There was great tolerance for even the freakiest lifestyles and forms of expression. People picked up after themselves.

And eventually, this lifestyle was entrenched as an overt ethos expected of attendees, conveyed to newcomers on the Burning Man website as the "10 Principles": Radical Inclusion, Gifting, Decommodification, Radical Self-Reliance, Radical Self-Expression, Communal Effort, Civic Responsibility, Leaving No Trace, Participation, and Immediacy.

"We said to everyone that you can basically live by the ethos that guides Bohemians," Larry said. And that ethos then helped shape the culture that formed up around the event. Or as he told the SPUR crowd, "The whole city is an engine for producing culture."

Beyond the playa And now that this urban culture has matured, it has manifested in interesting ways in communities around the world, from the disaster relief and community building of **Burners Without Borders**, to the vast networks of regional events and art collectives.

"There is a movement underlying the decentralization and creation of new centers," Larry said. "Something new is emerging."

The Temple of Flux is a manifestation of that, a project seeking to spawn many more projects and grow the culture through the non-profit it is forming, a pathway that Larry said the Black Rock City LLC is also now pursuing. Because now, Black Rock City is increasingly being seen as just one more manifestation of the Burning Man culture.

"I have this idea that they are trying to explode very slowly and be something that spreads out and becomes many other things, instead of just this one thing," Rebecca said. "And I think that would be healthy." **TM**

Scribe, aka Steven T. Jones, is the City Editor of the *San Francisco Bay Guardian*.

Your BRC soundtrack

by DELACHAUX