

JAPANESE IMPORTS

SWEEP DONNER AWARDS

By Mike Wooldridge

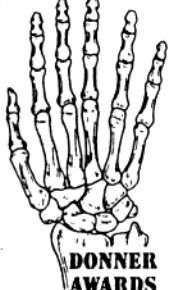
Greenhorn city folk don't have a monopoly on poor judgment when it comes to surviving in the Black Rock Desert. As the 1995 Donner Awards prove, locals can also rise to the occasion.

Named for the 1846 wagon party whose late start on the journey west led to a cannibalistic free-for-all near Truckee, Donner Awards are presented to Burning Man participants who tempt fate in the desert and lose. Badly.

1995's winners, as selected by the Black Rock Rangers: three boys and a Mazda, all hailing from the town of Empire, south of Gerlach.

It began innocently enough. After Saturday night's camp festivities, two teenage brothers and a friend hop in their RX7 for the quick trip home. They aim their headlights at the glow of Gerlach in the distance and put the pedal to the metal.

Predicament #1: Those aren't Gerlach's lights, but the lights of the mining town of Sulphur. The



Larry Harvey and John Law were spotted outside HELCO headquarters

ORGANIZERS DENY

TAKEOVER RUMORS

"Burning Man is not for sale." That was the six-word statement, in 72-point type, released to the press Wednesday by Larry Harvey, founder and director of the increasingly popular but financially strapped Burning Man event. Harvey issued the statement in response to rumors of a takeover bid by HELCO, the supranational corporate giant that acquired Hell and its underworld subsidiaries in June.

Sources say HELCO's Chief Spokesperson, Papa Satan, arrived in camp early this morning but was uncharacteristically terse and declined to comment.

HELCO has been unabashed about its interest in the desert event. "We're in the process of diversifying, and Burning Man is certainly high on our want list," said HELCO executive Nick Scratch, speaking from his Colma office. "We have similar corporate cultures. HELCO and Burning Man are a good match."

Some believe Satan may have an inside track, having secured various licensing deals with Burning Man in the past, but Harvey denies it. "It was strictly an independent contractor relationship," he says. "We may have bought from him in the past, but we aren't interested in selling to him now." —Mike Wooldridge

CENTER CAMP PERFORMANCE SCHEDULE

Subject to change, interruption, lost bass players, electrical failure and Acts of God, here's the performance schedule for the West Stage in central camp:

THURSDAY AUGUST 29	SATURDAY AUGUST 31
7:15 Accidental Tribe (music)	5:30 Magical Power Mako (music)
8:30 Aqua Men (music)	6:15 3 Day Stubble (music)
9:45 Solar Temple (music)	Parade of the Triage of Doggies
11:00 Bad Press (music)	7:30 Idiot Flesh (music)
12:15 Viennese Noise Choir (music)	8:30 Helco Stockholders Meeting
	9:00 Procession to The Inferno:
	Gate of Hell
	Helco Tower
	Tinsel Town
	The Arrival of Empress Zoe
	Crushfest
	12:00 Deli Creeps (music)
	1:15 Polkacide (music)
	2:30 Bio Naut (music)
FRIDAY AUGUST 30	SUNDAY SEPTEMBER 1
Mistress of Ceremonies: The Sisters of Perpetual Indulgence	
6:00 Pepperdoll (music)	4:45 Amazon Queen (music)
6:45 Michael J. Peppe (spoken word)	5:30 Fashion Show
Stephanie Galletti (music)	6:30 Cacophony Cocktail Party
7:15 Charming Hostess (music)	at Central Pavilion
8:00 Patrick Martin (magician)	7:30 Mermen (music)
8:30 The Venusians (music)	8:30 Scott Jenerik (Fire)
9:15 Fireplay (fire)	9:00 Gather to Proceed to
9:45 Bless & Burn (music)	The Burning Man
10:30 The Staggering Libido Sisters	Beyond Race (music)
(Theater)	11:00 Human Torches (music)
11:00 'Tchkung! (music)	12:00 Ring Children (music)
11:45 Mystery Spot	
12:15 Ovarian Trolley (music)	

*The CABARET STAGE is located within the Central Camp Pavillion. It's an acoustic stage that is open to everyone. First come, first sign up:*

**Thursday:** 12:00 Noon - 7:00 pm  
**Friday:** 12:00 Noon - 5:30 pm  
**Saturday:** 12:00 Noon - 5:00 pm  
**Sunday:** 12:00 Noon - 4:30 pm

The Black Rock Gazette is published by the Burning Man Project's Department of Information Services. No copyright. No guarantees of accuracy. No regrets. Managing Editor: Lloyd Vind. Contributors: Mike Wooldridge, Jeff Hansen, Stuart Mangrum, Doug Long, Larry Harvey, Michelle Mangrum, Dr. Anderson, Ian Gerrard, Crimson Rose, Danger Ranger, your name here. "Cogito ergo flambe..." BURNING MAN PROJECT • PO BOX 420572 SF CA 94142 • (415) 985-7471 • HTTP://WWW.ISTORM.COM/BURNINGMAN

DONNER (continued)

boys are heading in the wrong direction.

Predicament #2: Between them and Sulphur is several miles of Quinn River runoff, one of the most treacherous areas of the playa.

The mighty Quinn has different plans for the boys, and the RX7 is soon half buried in the alkaline bog.

After spending the rest of the night in the car, the first one to wake the next morning decides to follow the tire tracks back to the Burning Man camp. He takes the only water they have — a half a jug.

He eventually makes it to the outskirts of camp and is picked up by a Black Rock Ranger, who rallies the other Rangers for a search.

The second kid is found in the early afternoon, hatless and feckless, stumbling and incoherent. By now, the sheriffs and parents have been called, and an air rescue team is searching the playa from above.

HOT SPRINGS UPDATE

Fly Geyser is the spring of choice this year. The owners are charging \$5 per visit, but you get to swim in the crown jewel of the area's geothermal sites. The preferred route will be posted on the bulletin board in central camp. Bordello and Trego Springs are located across the playa and unfortunately across the world land speed track; both sites will be closed this year. Stay away from Double Hot Springs—it's dangerously hot and accessible only in a 4x4. Black Rock springs will be near our camp but difficult to find at night—the trip should only be made by playa veterans, and only in daylight hours. Fly is the place.

BLACK ROCK

GAZETTE ONLINE!

If you miss an issue of the Gazette, don't stress: you can download a copy from the Burning Man website when you get back to your cube-sweet-cube. This is the second year we'll be uploading daily editions of the Gazette to the World Wide Web, but this time there's a major difference: we don't have to drive out to Gerlach to do it! Thanks to the Big Geeks at i-STORM Studios, InterNex and MediaCast for being crazy enough to drag all their expensive high-tech gear out here and set us up with a wireless link.

In addition to the daily paper, the Burning Man '96 Netcast will feature content from our stages, streets, radio stations and video cameras, bringing events in Black Rock City to a global audience. Organizers expect thousands of invisible campers to visit the virtual tents of "Absentee Camp," and are going to try to make these offsite participants as much a part of the festival as possible.

Netcast operations are headquartered in Media Circus camp, near the big antenna tower. And no, you can't use their connection to check your email! (As if you would want to...)



The third kid is found waiting to die on the train tracks at the playa's west end at around 6 o'clock.

"They were from Empire so they should've known better," says Danger Ranger. "Just like many greenhorns, they came unprepared — no water, no hats. They also didn't register, so they didn't get survival information."

This year's first place prizes: a bouquet of signal flares and three wide-brimmed tiaras.

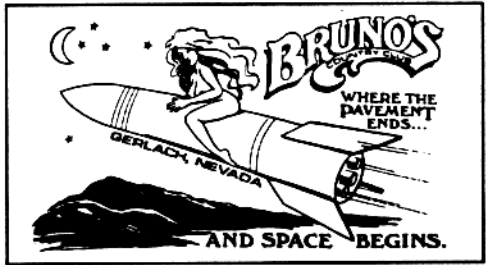
On last account, the Mazda is still missing in action (and possibly still ripe for pick-your-part).

Runners up for the 1995 Donner Award were two amateur stunt men from Reno who decided to take their car out for some fancy maneuvers after one of the midday rainstorms. They ended up totaling mom's new Isuzu Trooper and learning an important lesson in playa physics. On the alkaline desert floor, cars roll before they skid.

This year's runner-up prize: A replacement for mom. One Mazda RX7: fair condition, some mud in the wheel wells.

There is some good Donner Award news this year. Thanks to the heavy rains, no historical structures were accidentally burned down by Burning Man campers in 1995. (See "1994 Donner Losers" in last year's Black Rock Gazette.)

Donner nominations are now being accepted for 1996. Don't let it be you!



Two phone numbers we hope you won't need:

Cedarville Hospital  
 Cedarville • 911 or 279-6111  
 Big Ben Auto Repair  
 Fernley • 575-6229

More Pirate than U

Radio Free Burning Man returns to 99.5 FM for its third year on the Playa, bringing an oxymoronic controlled chaos to the world of desert pirate radio. "We have taken an oath of allegiance to our transmitter," says station manager George "Red Beard" Burke, "and we'll keep it going 24 hours a day, as long as we have power."

"This is community radio in the best sense," Burke says. "We have about an 80 share of the community market, so we have a responsibility to broadcast a wide range of music and entertainment, as well as survival information about the extra warm clothes you should have brought."

In a related development, Playable Television will be on the air, bringing with it "a huge amount of unknowns," said Burke. It may be seen on channel 13. "Or channel 7. That's one of the unknowns," Burke continued. "There won't be as many TVs out here since people tend not to drive while watching television." The sets that are on the playa will have the opportunity to watch local talent do its thing. What that thing is, however, remains to be seen.

Be The Talent! Bring your acts, unnatural or otherwise, to Playable Television for a chance to broadcast them to an appreciative audience.

—Ian Gerrard

ASK DR. DOUG...

YOU'RE STANDING ON IT!

Hold your breath, kids. You are standing on the pathetic remains of one of North America's largest lakes. At the height of its glory, 75,000 years ago, huge Lake Lahontan covered over 22,400 square miles, had a depth of over 650 feet, and was almost 300 miles across at its greatest width. Today, the lake has receded to just a few barren playas and the comparatively tiny Pyramid Lake to the west and Walker Lake to the south. So what gives? Well, things were different back in the Pleistocene, or the Ice Age. The stereotypical ice sheets you usually associate with the Ice Age extended only as far south as Puget Sound, but prehistoric Nevada received more rainfall than today, creating lush rolling forests and grasslands. Glaciers also capped the adjacent Sierra Nevadas, looking like those montaine glaciers on Shasta or Rainier, but a hundred times more extensive. This region is known as the Great Basin, because unlike most other areas where rivers run to the sea, a basin has no connection to the ocean and all water drains in, but not out. Runoff from the Sierra glaciers, combined with greater rainfall in the Black Rock Desert, filled the basin and Lake Lahontan was born.

Beginning about 12,000 years ago, the climate changed, the glaciers retreated, and Lake Lahontan was shrinking. The deepest depressions became relic lakes, and shallower ones became dry playas. The playa dust that gets into your eyes, cakes your nostrils, and ruins your stereo equipment is actually lake mud — a complex combination of two ingredients. The Sierra Glaciers scoured the underlying rocks into the first ingredient, a fine powder that flowed in to the basin; chemicals like carbonates and alkali salts that were dissolved in the lake water had no where to go when the lake finally dried up, and also ended up in the lake with those glacial muds.

The Burning Man Playa still takes in any water it receives, but most of it is sucked through the cracks in the Playa; rainy winters like the one in 1994-95, which give more water than the mud can hold, create temporary lakes. However, the playa's mud layer can be up to 10 feet deep, and a dry, inch-thick crust can form over it, creating the appearance of a surface safe for driving. (Just ask the dozens of mud-mired idiots who made the local towing services quite rich last year.)

So why the name "Black Rock Desert"? The black rocks of the far-away hills are basalt, a dark, dense cousin of lava rock. It cooled from the extensive volcanic complexes of the Miocene about 12-25 million years ago. The amount of volcanic activity back then made St. Helens look like a party pooper! —Doug Long

IN THE SKY 2NITE...

Planets to watch for tonight include Jupiter, which should be visible by 10 pm at about 25 degrees above the southern horizon, and Saturn, which will be following the moon closely all evening. Meteor activity from the Alpha Aurigid Shower may also be visible after midnight low in the northeast. Constellations with cool names out tonight include Camelopardis - the Giraffe - below the Little Bear/ Dipper to the north and Orichius. The Serpent Bearer, to the south-west. Comet Hale-Bopp is in Orichius, but the recently full moon will probably make viewing difficult as it is still faint. —Ian Gerrard

