2024 Afterburner Report

In 1990 a small caravan of cars containing members of the Cacophony Society, together with Larry Harvey, and a truck with a wooden man in it, pulled off of Nevada 447 into the desert. And when they hit the dry lake bed we call playa, they stopped and got out to look around. As Michael Mikel (Danger Ranger) told the story, "I took a stick, and I drew a line on the ground, and I had everybody line up. And I said, 'On the other side of this line, everything will be different. Reality itself will change.' We all stepped across that line together, and things *have* been different."

That crossing-of-the-line-in-the-desert theme has been a significant touchstone of the Burning Man experience since 1990. Many greeters use it to greet burgins as they arrive on playa. It speaks to how Burning Man is a great transformational experience, not just a festival, or an event, or a city.



Klajdi Tsano's untitled art piece on playa this year, the first placed art by any Turtle, was deliberately lit only from one side and as such immediately creates a line in the desert so that when you step through the piece, everything is different. The work, like all good Burning Man art, invites you to participate and to contemplate what crossing a line means to you. What were you

before? What are you now? "By amplifying this simple act of cutting, the installation seeks to evoke a sense of the sublime and the uncanny, prompting visitors to reflect on their own place within the vast desert landscape," Klajdi wrote.

Turtles hit their stride

This was, by all accounts, an easy year to do Burning Man.

Tickets were easy to get. The weather was great. Things just worked. Alot of the things we've been putting in place have finally all come together to make a camp that is a pleasure to be a part of.

I've been having a little bit of trouble getting started on this Afterburner report. We spend 8,832 hours on playa collectively, and I can capture only a fraction of that in this inadequate report.

Oh, did I mention? We're, like, *popular* now. Somehow everybody knows about the Turtles and comes to all our parties. And boy did we have some great ones!

Doing an **opening night party** as soon as the gates open at midnight is a great idea. There is literally nothing else going on, and the entire queerborhood and everyone that had been busy building their camps showed up. It was great timing this year as the bus with most of our camp had literally pulled up just a few minutes before midnight.

The Monday night **kink party** was probably the biggest hit of the week, not just for the Turtles, but for the entire neighborhood. It was a huge blowout signature party and many only-at-Burning-Man stories are still being told about that party.

Our Thursday night **mud party** was a throwback to last year's 18 hour epic mudpocalypse party, and featured mud wrestling, mud outfits, and general mud appreciation.

Finally on Saturday afternoon we hosted a great **Wardrobe Malfunction** party which was a nice way to close out the week.

All of our parties were big neighborhood hits and I'm glad the queerborhood now knows us and sees us as a fun place to hangout. I really feel that with our corner location, our hub, and our reputation, we are now fully qualified as an anchor camp of the queerborhood... and the fact that we can do that with just 43 turtles is a testament to how great our camp is.

Other interactivity

Shuai taught people how to Shuffle, Jihoon did Tarot readings, and Tristan led two popular yoga sessions. Oh, and we apparently hosted a delightful tomahawk steak and crab dinner for some stupid camp down the road, and actually hosted extra parties that you probably didn't even notice with amazing guest DJs from nearby camps Gymnasium, Paradise Motel, and Dusty Frogz.

We also learned that having a "24/7 play space" is not going to work unless you staff it 24/7. We did a quick course-correction and decided that can only be open to the public when there are a couple of turtles at the door getting people to enthusiastically commit to practice consent. After this correction, we decided the Pillow Fort would only be open to the public during our parties when it could be staffed and monitored.

Food

We had some really insanely superb meals this year; probably the best food we've *ever* had on playa. I don't think any other camp eats as well as we do, not even the fancy plug-and-play camps with celebrity paid chefs. Kudos goes to Future Turtles MVP Benny Bergon who organized the whole thing, with along with celebrity chefs Jon, AlexSF, Christophe, MJ, AlexW, Spacemaster, Romain, Dimitri, Kevin, and Alejandro who blew us away twice a day.

A working camp

Sometimes you're at a party where most of the attendees are standing around, taking a sip out of a can of White Claw, maybe then leaving the rest of the can perched on the edge of a table for the Can Fairy to clean up.

But you notice that there are a couple of people there who are running around doing things. They might be getting people drinks, throwing away trash, making guacamole in the kitchen, futzing with the playlist, or even just introducing newcomers and showing them where the hot tub is.

And in fact those are the people you want to be your friends. Because when you go on vacations with them, you're not going to be the only one cleaning up and you're not going to be the one at 5 pm worrying about where dinner is coming from and you're not going to live in a pile of trash and have to order pizza at 9:58pm from the last place open in town.

That's the principle of the Turtles. We surround ourselves by people who like to make things and do things and who take responsibility for everything they see around them. Through our Reno work weekends, everybody gets a chance to work on preparing the camp for another year. Our build team consists of ridiculously hard-working turtles that spend an extra four days in the Black Rock Desert preparing the camp for everyone's arrival. Members of the food team arrived a few days early in Nevada to get the food fort ready, filled with propane, repaired and fully stocked with food. Some turtles took it upon themselves to organize a truck from San Francisco to bring our stuff in and our trash out and then did the extra work to make spare space available for friends and neighbors. People contributed by designing and creating great parties, great lighting, camp signage, an electrical grid that works so well we just gift electricity to four neighboring camps, ice, ice water, drinks, snacks, a fresh water system and grey water pumping, organizing the Turtle Bus, creating our new kink space; they contributed by keeping the Gayflower sparkly clean and decorated with hilarious signage, by dealing with garbage and even composting this year, which had to be *dried out*, by keeping our fleet of bikes in good repair, by organizing the tool fort so we

can find things, by setting up an incredible sound system and creating great DJ sets, by creating (and cleaning) the magical pillow fort and keeping it safe, by greeting people coming to our parties and getting their goddamn bikes off the street so the party doesn't get shut down, by manifesting the spirit of the mud party through mud wrestling, the wardrobe malfunction party through wardrobe malfunctions, and the kink party through... well, you've already heard about that. In fact what makes the Turtles work as such an amazing camp is the fact that so many turtles went so far above and beyond to make amazing things happen in camp.

This is not the camp for everyone. A completely reasonable way to camp at Burning Man is to bring a tent and a cooler with some food and spend your whole burn outside of camp. Other people might prefer to camp with a slightly less manically industrious group of people, which is fine too.



Camping and Art

One night this year, I found myself, for some reason, at a camp that was running a party of some sort, only the generator had gone off, so the party didn't even have music, which made the costumes people had brought for the party seem kind of strange and out of place. While everyone waited for "someone" to fix the generator and make the music start again, I was wondering what the heck I was doing there. So I left. And I blasted out on my bike to the nighttime playa, which, as you know by now, is the most incredible place on earth, something that doesn't exist anywhere else. Freedom, lights, childlike wonder, play, music, infinity, the best people on earth, house-sized

unicorns shooting flames, lasers, stars, airplanes shooting lasers at the stars, for miles and miles and miles. Why the fuck is anyone standing around waiting for disco music to come back on in their camp.

So now we have great *stuff* at the Future Turtles Theme Camp. We are a camp, which means we serve a residential function, a place to sleep, eat, wash, and get dressed. We are a part of the residential Black Rock City where we put on neighborhood block parties and other events to enrich Burning Man for our friends and neighbors. We have 43 incredibly charming turtles who you should make friends with if you are not already. So that's great.

But now that we have that all squared away, it's important to remember the part of Black Rock City that is not just a fancy campground. It's the playa. The playa at night. The playa during the day. Monumental art. Art you can climb. Art that drives around. The insane, otherworldly, nowhere-else-on-earth feeling of blasting out into playa at night and seeing the spectacle of 1000 interesting life-changing things you can go visit, all lit by LEDs and flames.

The Future Turtles fifth adventure. In 2024, the line we crossed was Esplanade. Thanks to Klajdi's vision and hard work, and the willingness of other cheerful turtles to help him, we built art on the playa for the first time. The spell of Placement's urban planning was broken. We checked that box off our list, thoroughly and completely. It is time to stop fucking around by our tents and venture out to the pulsing heart of Burning Man.



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