

RENO/SPARKS

ALSO COVERING NORTHERN NEVADA AND THE WEST

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Burning Man: Police report large crowd, but few problems.

By Brian Beffort
RENO GAZETTE-JOURNAL

BLACK ROCK CITY — Traffic jams Sunday greeted folks leaving the 14th annual Burning Man Festival, described by officials as orderly despite a record crowd at the weeklong gathering on federal land.

The event's climax, the burning of a 40-foot wooden man, was on the eve of Labor Day in previous years but moved to Saturday night this year to aid cleanup and avoid traffic congestion. Some participants didn't mind traffic jams of up to two hours leaving the three-mile-long camp 80 miles northwest of Wadsworth.

"I don't care about this traffic," Anne Lin of Los Angeles said Sunday. "It was really amazing following the events last night. Nothing beats really big explosions."

"Given the size and duration of this event, it's been a very peaceful week," said Washoe County Sheriff's Lt. Will McHardy. The gathering began Aug. 30.

McHardy said festival organizers were offering a \$3,500 reward for information about a home-made bomb that exploded at 11:30 a.m. Friday about 100 yards from the compound. No one was hurt, but the device left a 3-foot crater. McHardy said the Pershing County sheriff and Bureau of Land Management agents filed a crime report.

The festival, created in 1986 in San Francisco to celebrate the summer solstice, was moved to the Black Rock Desert in 1991. It draws an eclectic mix of artists and partygoers to celebrate art, free-



David B. Parker/Reno Gazette-Journal

ON PARADE: A Burning Man participant celebrates as the remains of the 'Man' burn nearby Saturday night. This year the

dom and self-expression.

The population at the camp, dubbed Black Rock City, reached 22,931 Saturday morning, not counting a few hundred organizers and volunteers, making it temporarily the 10th-largest community in Nevada. Most of the crowd began leaving Sunday and by today only a cleanup crew will remain.

"We had more people than we expected, and it went much more smoothly than we expected," said "Maid" Marian Goddell, Burning Man mistress of communications.

McHardy said five people had been arrested by Sunday morning — three drug-relat-

ed, one for firearms and one for trespassing.

Medical personnel, however, had a more difficult week. "We're treating more people than we treated last year," said Dr. Jim Allen, medical director for the Regional Emergency Medical Service Agency and Burning Man.

His staff had treated 656 people by noon Sunday, many for dehydration.

But Allen said most injuries were to arms and legs from people tripping over exposed rebar at night. The heavy metal bars are driven into the ground for tying down tents

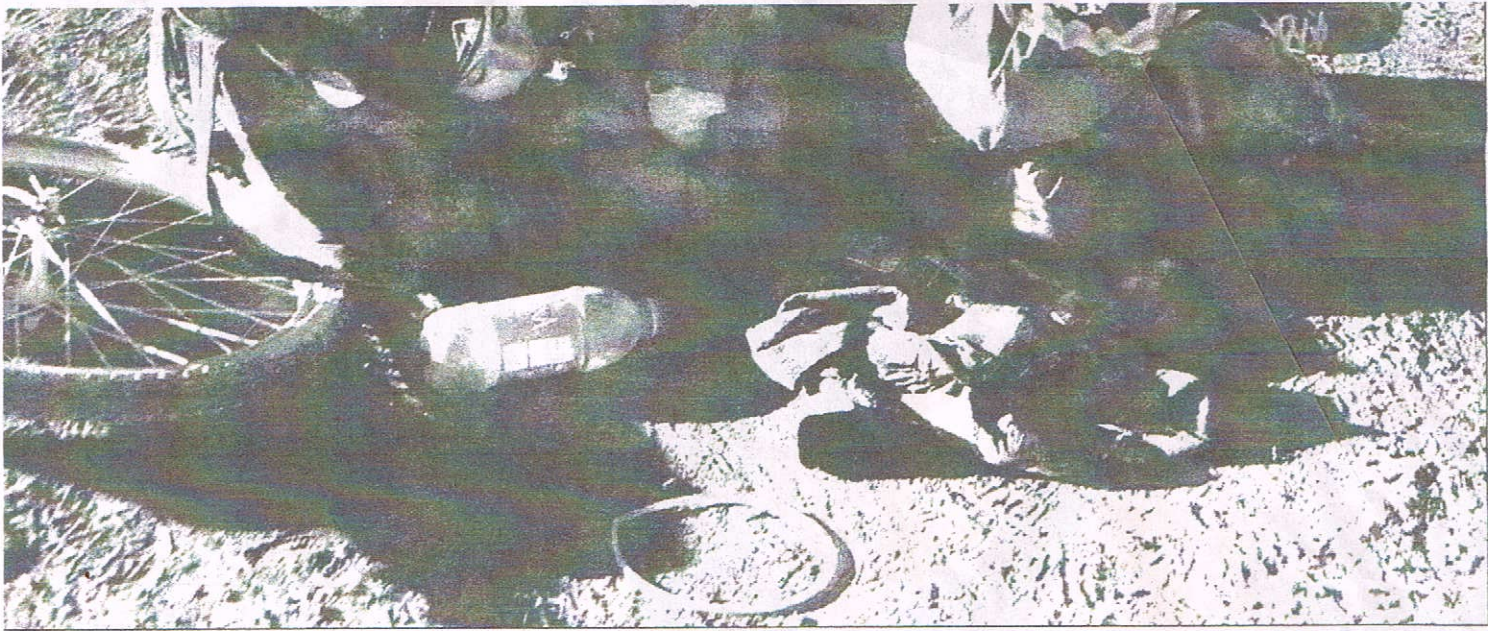
festival's centerpiece, the 'Man,' was burned on Saturday in an effort to spread traffic leaving the event over more time.



Scott Sady/Reno Gazette-Journal

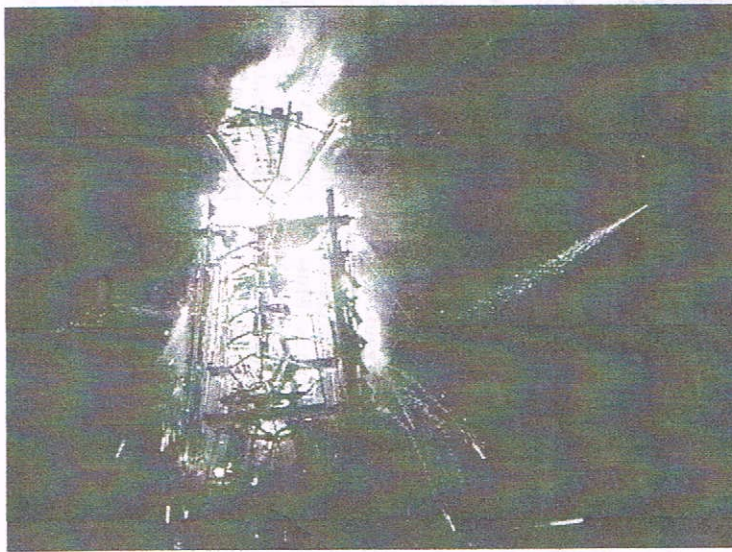
TIME TO GO: Crowds form early Sunday morning as Burning Man participants file out of the desert.

See **BASH** on 2C



Scott Sady/Reno Gazette-Journal

FAST ASLEEP: A Burning Man festival reveler grabs a few winks in the smoldering ashes of the Man early Sunday.



David B. Parker/Reno Gazette-Journal

FAMOUS FLAMES: The Burning Man does his thing Saturday night.

Bash

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and other structures.

The most serious was a burn case, a female who was flown to Washoe Medical Center Saturday night. One man fell from a 30-foot structure and was hospitalized for chest injuries.

The only death related to the event was Tuesday morning, when a Brigham City, Utah, man rolled his sports utility vehicle on Nevada 447.

For thousands of participants, the event was a kaleidoscope of dancing, art and other events. Among the attractions were a two-story fire-breathing model of a Phoenix bird, a car with a three-story lighthouse on the roof, at least a dozen dancing venues, a choreographed fire opera and nudity.

For Jason Romine, a first-time participant from Sacramento, the highlight was helping to raise the 40-foot burning-man frame. The model is po-

CORRECTION

A story in Thursday's editions incorrectly reported two people were killed in 1996 at the Burning Man Festival. They were injured when a car drove through their tent.

sitioned atop a 10-foot pedestal before being ignited.

"I got to help pull the man up," Romine said. "The energy was incredible. The crowd was roaring all around us."

Ted Selker of Palo Alto, Calif., said the highlight was teaching his 5-year-old daughter, Leah, how to ride her bike.

"This is the third year in a row that I've brought the kids," he said. "This is the most supportive environment you could ever find for them. If you turn on the TV at home, you can find yourself staring down the barrel of a bazooka. Here, there are people looking out for each other everywhere you turn."



Scott Sady/Reno Gazette-Journal

HOUSE CALL: Burning Man participants in doctor garb circulated among the crowd administering "cures."