

2013 Los Angeles Annual Regional Report

So much was created anew in 2013. New life was breathed into continuing projects as new projects were born. All to form a stronger, healthier more unified Los Angeles Burner community.

TOWNHALL MEETING: Our 5th Annual Town Hall Meeting and Ice Cream Social was a huge hit. We talked about all the wonderful plans for community outreach for 2013. Put together many teams to implement them. We spent a lot of time talking about our new regional overnight event, “BEquinox”, and our school garden projects. There were approximately 100 people in attendance.

CALIFORNIA STATE PARK: Our partnership continued with California State Parks with their invitation to attend a planning meeting for the LA State Historic Park (where we hold Decom). This was the 7th year they sponsored the event and they were looking for our input on the future development of the park. It was a huge honor to be invited to their final planning meeting where they revealed the approved plans for the parks development. We were also asked by State Parks to partner with them for their Earth Day Celebrations by leading a drum circle and teaching drumming. In attendance were mainly local East LA neighbors. The cross pollination was wonderful.

LA LEAGUE OF ARTS: We continued holding monthly board meetings on the 2nd Tuesday of every month. We created a combined board to include the RCs in all meetings. Each meeting is held at a different person’s home where we have a pot luck dinner, then get down to business.

BEQUINOX: Our inaugural overnight camping event was a truly rousing success with a high level of community participation. We had over 800 Burners present for the three night event that concluded with the burning of “Seraphim 2.0”, a recreation of the 2012 CORE Project. Artists, Performers, Art Cars, and Theme Camps all stepped up to make the event feel like we had transported six square blocks of Black Rock City 700 miles south and six months in time. “BEquinox” asks participants who they would like to BE, what they would like to BE, and allows them to BE. The planning is well underway for BEquinox 2014 “Mythos”.

NEWBIE ORIENTATIONS: This year we again hosted 3 Newbie Orientations because of the large amount of Newbie’s going to Burning Man and also the geographic size of Los Angeles. The first one was in May, then June, and July. Each one was in a different part of Los Angeles and each one had about 30 people in attendance. We covered an amazing amount of information then opened it up to the veterans to add their best practices tips and tricks for making your playa stay more enjoyable. Even the old dogs learned new tricks.

TEMPLE GRANT: Since we were not building a CORE project this year and through the success of our fundraising efforts, we awarded a \$10,000 grant to Gregg Fleishman for the “Temple of Whollyness”. We were very proud that the temple was coming from Los Angeles and wanted to support it not only with our labor, but also with community generated funds.

LA ARTS FUNDRAISER: Our 2nd year of this event and each time it gets a little more cohesive. Following the basic Alchemy model for their arts fund raiser, the community came together to vote on their favorite pieces that will be at LA Decom. We invited anyone trying to fund art to participate. We had 15 art installations. Everyone who attended the fund raiser paid \$10 and received a ballot. The ballot allowed them to choose where they wanted their \$10 (all or part) to go. After the event we counted the votes and cut checks with a matching percentage amount being added to their totals. The only requirement was that the art piece being funded must be presented at LA Decom. All complied and participated. One problem we had was the stuffing of the ballot box.

Since anyone could purchase as many \$10 ballots as they wanted, some artists had their friends buy 10 or more ballots and voted for their pieces. We solved this problem at our “White Blissmas” event (more on that below).

LA DECOM: This was the 11th (actually 12th) year of the LA Decompression Celebration. It was a little smaller this year. But it still felt more like home than ever. We had 12 stages of scheduled music going from 1pm till 2am. Although amplified sound had to end at 12am, we went acoustic and silent disco. Beyond the 12 stages, we had about 80 art installations and theme camps. Over 1000 people volunteered to make Decom happen for the 4500 people who attended the 13 hour event. This was the first year we conducted a census. Of all the people who attended over half had never been to the playa. We gathered a lot of wonderful data regarding the attendees of Decom. There were lots of costumes, immense amount of gifting of everything from dinners, hot chocolate, ice cream, and custom made Decom swag from various theme camps. Our door process was flawless with a bank drop system that kept the majority of the cash off site.

15% of the profits from LA Decom was used towards the BWB project at Santee High School.

LA DECOM APPRECIATION PARTY: One month after Decom we held an appreciation party for all the volunteers, theme camps, sound camps, and artists who made the event happen. We held it at Athena’s house with music, fun, food, art, and community conversation. This year about 150 of the volunteers were able to attend.

AQUAPONICS AT SANTEE HIGH SCHOOL: We finished Carver Garden in 2011 and started a very ambitious project of building an aqua-ponic ecosystem at Santee High School. This is a very large garden which will be incorporated into every class at the school. We spent most of 2013 going over the engineering of the system and upgrading the drawings to meet the needs of the school district. Now the system will cost around \$50,000. So far we have raised \$25,000. With our new 501c3 we plan to apply for grants and larger donations to complete the project in 2014. The drawings have been submitted to the district and we are waiting for final approval. Also part of the project will be a summer symposium of teachers and perma-culture experts combining their knowledge and creating an open sourced curriculum approved by LA Unified School District and available to any school district anywhere in the world. This symposium will be an annual event held every summer at Santee High School. The curriculum will be ever growing like the garden and technology.

<http://laleagueofarts.org/what-we-do/school-gardens/>

LA FIRST TUESDAY MEETUP: Seeking a way for our region to get to know each other between major events, we followed San Diego's successful lead and created meetups at a local burner-owned bar, The Other Door. Our first LAFT (LA's First Tuesday) meet-up was in July, and we've seen a steady increase in attendance as word gets out about their existence. The demand was high enough for multiple LAFTs, so we started a second meet-up on the other side of town; Our Regional Representatives have claimed the meetup nearest their homes and have actively welcomed all who come. We have been seeking out Burning Man related photos, video, and music to show and play at the meetups to help add to the playa vibe, and even have DJs volunteer to play at the west side meet-up. We have found a delightful mix of virgin and veteran attendees; all seem to enjoy the new connections they make at “LAFT”. Future plans for additional meet-up locations throughout the LA region are in the works.

WHITE BLISSMAS CHARITY BALL: We ended 2013 with the 2nd Annual “White Blissmas” Charity Ball raising and distributing funds for “BEquinox” participation. The event was a huge success. Although we lost money on the event, the importance were all the connections and cross pollinations being made. We had two rooms filled with 38 prospective participation projects. We called them participation projects instead of art

projects because anyone who was creating something for “BEquinox” could participate in this fund raiser, whether it was a performer, a troupe, a single art installation, a theme camp, a sound camp, a dinner, an art car...you name it, as long as it was participatory and for “BEquinox”. Everyone dressed in their white holiday finest and celebrated the endless possibilities we create as a community. 292 community members attended. We solved the problem of ballot stuffing by creating wooden nickels that were used to vote. Everyone who attended the event paid \$25 and got 10 votes. Since there were 38 projects, you really had to meet every artist and decide where your vote was going to go. Some people came and put all 10 in their theme camps bucket. Others carefully divided their votes between projects they wanted to support. But the best part was watching artists gain new members of their teams, finding engineers to help, and working with other artists with similar goals to join forces and funds to create something even bigger and better for “BEquinox”. This event was very inspiring.

NEWSLETTER: In January, new Regional Representatives Gloria & Plaid took over the newsletter. Now issued regularly on Tuesday afternoons, we took our lead from the JRS and created a new format. Our category headings put emphasis on participation and supporting projects. By releasing the newsletter on Tuesdays rather than Thursdays, we also are giving the community a bit longer to plan for weekend events. Also like the JRS, we created a form for community members to use to submit their events and announcements. Our goal has been to include as wide a range of highlighted items to reflect the vast amount of variety in the large Los Angeles region.

WEBSITE: We are in the process of redesigning laburningman.com. Gloria & Plaid have developed a detailed outline of the new site from the ground up (the old site will still remain as an archive/time machine). The new site will be a learning tool for those new to Burning Man AND those new to the Los Angeles Burning Man region. The site will be a hub of connection, with links to theme camps, art projects, performers, all social media connections, and official events such as Decom, “BEquinox”, “LA First Tuesdays”, and “Newbie Orientations”. Our web designer, Avi, and programmer, Art, are already well underway with this project. Soon, we will be reaching out to editors, blog contributors, and more.

SOCIAL MEDIA: LA Burning Man's main social media outlet is our rapidly growing Facebook page, with more than 13,000 likes. The LA regionals, with the help of two very enthusiastic burners (CuriousJosh and Media Mecca maven Cathleen Cotter), update the page frequently with content from the weekly newsletter and topics to spark conversation. There is also a lively LA Burners discussion group on Facebook, LA Burners, which was rescued from spammers and is maintained by CuriousJosh. We also utilize several other social media outlets, such as Twitter, Flickr, and Instagram which are gaining popularity.

WEBSITE: <http://www.laburningman.com>

OFFICIAL LA BM FACEBOOK PAGE: <https://www.facebook.com/laburningman>

LA BM DISCUSSION GROUP: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/laburners/>

LA BM CLASSIFIEDS ON FACEBOOK: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/laburnersclassifieds/>

INSTAGRAM: <http://instagram.com/laburningman>

TWITTER: <https://twitter.com/laburningman>

FLICKER: <http://www.flickr.com/photos/laburningman/>

ON-TOPIC EMAIL DISCUSSION LIST:

<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/LABM-Discussion>

OFF-TOPIC EMAIL DISCUSSION LIST:

<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/LABM-OffTopic>

MORE INFORMATION:

For questions: la@burningman.com

Now to look towards 2014 and all that we can accomplish together as one.

Respectfully Submitted,

LA RCs: Athena Demos, David Wedeen, Jenn Ramsey, Gloria Lamb, John Simmons

LALA Board of Directors: Athena Demos, Deb Stiers, David Wedeen, Esquire Jauchem, Debi Cable