



# The Tribes of Burning Man: How an Experimental City in the Desert Is Shaping the New American Counterculture

*Steven T. Jones*

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Burning Man is the premier countercultural event of modern times, growing over 25 years from a strange San Francisco beach party into an experimental city of 50,000 colorful souls in Nevada's Black Rock Desert, which burns brightly for a week before dissolving into dusty memories and changed lives.

Longtime newspaper journalist Steven T. Jones embedded himself in this blossoming culture starting in 2004, a dispiriting year for American politics but the beginning of Burning Man's renaissance, when it exploded outward in unexpected ways. The result is the most in-depth book ever written on this intriguing social phenomenon - *The Tribes of Burning Man: How An Experimental City in the Desert is Shaping the New American Counterculture* - which is being released in January, 2011 by CCC Publishing.

From covering the Borg2 artists' rebellion to learning how to make large-scale fire sculptures with the Flaming Lotus Girls, from helping Opulent Temple showcase the world's best DJs to cleaning up after Hurricane Katrina with Burners Without Borders, from regularly interviewing event founder Larry Harvey to covering Barack Obama's nominating convention speech, Jones gives readers an inside, meticulously reported look at a time when Burning Man hit its zenith just as the country hit its nadir.

Hundreds of thousands of people from all over the world have made the dusty pilgrimage to Black Rock City to take part in this experiment in participatory art, commerce-free culture, and bacchanalian celebration--and many say their lives were fundamentally changed by this truly unique experience.

*Tribes* reveals how Burning Man has taken on a new character in recent years, with the frontier finally becoming a real city and the many tribes of the event--the fire artists, circus freaks, music lovers, do-gooders, sexual adventurers, grungy builders, and myriad other burner collectives--developing an impactful perennial presence in sister cities all over the world.

*Tribes* grew out of a series of cover stories that Jones wrote for the San Francisco Bay Guardian, where he has been the City Editor since 2003. But the project took on a life of its own as Burning Man's story took unexpected turns, compelling Jones, aka Scribe, to delve deeper into this culture's wide array of urban tribes. "The physical landscape of Burning Man is a fascination - but of greater interest to culture watchers is the social landscape that forms there each year. What does this gathering mean to our modern times? Steven T. Jones is both a fearless explorer and the definitive guide to this astonishing terrain," says Ethan Watters, author of *Urban Tribes: Are Friends the New Family?*

From its anarchic early days to its present dreams of world domination - and from the dark days after President George W. Bush's reelection to the inspiring creation of the Temple of Flux in late 2010 - this is the untold story of Burning Man. Wandering through Burning Man's renaissance years from 2004 to the present, this epic journey features some of the culture's most inspiring and colorful leaders, searching for meaning in the most unexpected places.

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