

# Burning Man – now a 30-year tradition

**By Jenny Kane, Reno Gazette-Journal**

Burning Man was born 30 years ago as a bonfire beach party in San Francisco.

An 8-foot-tall wooden stick figure planted in the sand of Baker Beach, and the Golden Gate Bridge loomed in the background. Three dozen avant-garde souls surrounded the recycled lumber effigy as it burned, the attendees summoned by two vagabond comrades, Jerry James and Larry Harvey.

“It was like a second sun brought down to this earth, it was just ... it transfixed us, but ... that’s where the story begins, in fact. Because at the moment it was lit, everybody on that beach, north and south, came running,” Harvey would later say in a 1997 speech.

The burning of “the man” stuck, became an annual tradition and, after a few years, the free spirits traded sand for dust. They migrated to an ancient lake bed outside of the gun-toting, leave-me-alone, 200-person town of Gerlach in Northern Nevada. Over a bizarre three-decade evolution, the getaway would turn into Burning Man, a weeklong capital of nowhere inhabited by 70,000 fancy desert rats driven by mischief and mindfulness.

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