



GREETINGS FLIPIZENS:

SUSTAINABILITY: to keep up or keep going, as an action or process: *to sustain an event*. This is the definition to which we refer when talking about sustainability. Our community has grown rapidly in recent years and there have been some **INSTANCES THAT**, frankly, have **THREATENED THE EVENT**. So...your CC and the members of the LLC called a meeting to discuss these issues and address the concerns with the community at large. There were approximately 120 community members in attendance and it seemed everyone there is concerned about pretty much the same things. We all agreed that this is an ongoing conversation. The only real way for us to continue to sustain is for everyone to continue the conversation. Talk about it, get engaged, get involved, speak up, step up and protect it! Let people know this community and event means something. We must all have the **"DON'T BE THAT GUY"** conversation with ourselves, with each other and work to **EDJUMICATE** those who are new to our community. This is what I, personally, took away from the meeting. In the articles that follow, you will be hearing what other people had to say as well. A full account of the meeting is posted on the website at <http://burningflipside.com/node/3272>.

Spending the last four years at the Gate, I have witnessed an increasing number of incidents that have threatened this community. Many of you may not have been aware they were happening, but for the volunteers involved, the LLC, the gate crew and the friends of the injured...it is a very sobering experience. As a matter of fact, the incidents that occurred last year prompted my retirement. (Be nice to gate, they work hard for you) Now I am a part of the community. Consider me a concerned **FLIPIZEN**.

You go out in the middle of nowhere and build a city...together, as one. You work together to create it, secure it, keep it safe, make it fun, and fully express what it is to be alive. You care for one another, share art, make friends, gift. **THAT IS SUPER CRAZY COOL**. Let's keep it that way.

I hope you read on. Perhaps you will be inspired to share your opinions with me. This was a very difficult issue for me to write. I hope you can appreciate that it is **TRULY FROM THE HEART**.


Much respect to you all.

~Flamy Ehhmeh!!

LET'S START WITH THE BASICS

Many of you may remember the mission statement of the LLC being "to put on an event." Things have changed and the mission statement is a lot more involved. The mission statement and information about the LLC is located at <http://burningflipside.com/LLC>. Please take a moment to read it. If you have an understanding of the mission statement, the function of the LLC and the principals by which our community thrives, you will be empowered with the knowledge you need to make the most of your experience at Flipside.

Our community operates by **THREE, VERY BASIC PRINCIPALS**, **SELF EXPRESSION**, **ACCOUNTABILITY**, and **COOPERATION**. The function of the LLC is to take final legal responsibility for what happens at the event. That means that **IF TSHTF**, the **LLC** are the ones who will **HAVE TO ANSWER** to the authorities. Get it? On metaphysical/moral level, they cannot take on the responsibility for what goes on at the event (Self Expression). **THESE PEOPLE LOVE YOU!** Why else would they sign up for so much responsibility? **WE NEED TO PROTECT THEM** if nothing else! The only way we can do that is to look out for ourselves and look out for each other. We



hold ourselves responsible for our own actions and take personal responsibility for meeting our own needs (Accountability). We work together to resolve potential conflicts between one another and between others in our community (Cooperation).

“I’m one of the originals (community members) and that doesn’t make us special, it just means we showed up and did dumb stuff. One of the most disheartening things is seeing people get hurt out there. Look what we can do, when people in our community get sick. We can move mountains. But what are you doing, if you cross one of your own boundaries (in a bad way) and then expect the community to take care of you? I get it, this is the time to set your hair on fire and run around naked...but have a fire extinguisher at the end! You’ll probably get a standing ovation at the end of it. Thank you for caring.” ~Unkie Neal

SO, WHAT’S THE PROBLEM?

WHAT COULD END FLIPSIDE? What would that look like? There could be an event called Flipside that looks like Willie Nelson’s 4th Birthday Party but that’s not Flipside. You could have an event that isn’t called Flipside but looks and feels like it...but is it Flipside? Hmmm. One thing we know for sure, ending Flipside in one of the following ways would make it damn near impossible to hold a burn event in this area again. By area, we mean a very large, multi-county, far-reaching area.

Things that will end Flipside:

- There are certain I.A.s that will reflect on the entire community that all we hold dear. **DUI, ASSAULTS** of any kind, etc. We must **FOLLOW STATE AND LOCAL LAWS. USE COMMON SENSE** if referring to nothing more than the “I don’t want to go to jail,” factor.
- **AMBULANCE CALLS:** If you leave in an ambulance, you, the community, and the experiment has failed. **PLEASE DO NOT LEAVE FLIPSIDE IN AN AMBULANCE** ...(unless you are giving birth...I think that would be ok and congratulations)...(on second thought, perhaps being *THAT* pregnant at Flipside is not such a good idea, but I digress). **SOME COUNTIES CONSIDER US AS A DRAIN ON THEIR RESOURCES.** Too many ambulance calls, and the county can’t respond to the people who live there...the county residents. Conversely, one too few calls could be a very bad thing. If someone needs to get out, we need to recognize it, and get him or her out. (Safety 3rd, {well really it’s 1st}) so just keep that in mind)
- **CROSSING BOUNDARIES:** There’s a difference between pushing boundaries and crossing boundaries. Part of the experience is pushing our personal boundaries. Crossing boundaries means you are not hearing the word “No.” Not hearing NO is a buzz killer. Be respectful of people’s boundaries. **NO MEANS NO!** Period. End of story. **DON’T CROSS THAT LINE.**
- **SOUND COMPLAINTS** from the outside put **A HUGE, COLD, WET BLANKET ON THE EVENT.** If our resident neighbors can hear us and they can’t sleep because of us, they will complain. Which means we have to **SHUT DOWN** all sound art and it gets **QUIET AND CREEPY.** Neighbors can call the authorities. They can also contact other counties to warn them about us. **IF A SOUND MARSHAL VISITS YOUR THEME CAMP** and politely asks you to turn your equipment down, it means that complaints have been made and **WE ARE ON THE EDGE OF NIXVILLE.** Turn it down, mark your equipment at the appropriate sound level and...once again...don’t cross that line.
- Inclusivity: We **WELCOME THE STRANGER** (as long as the stranger doesn’t slap our mothers, piss on our children, molest our sisters...see where is heading?) Just because we are **RADICALLY INCLUSIVE DOES NOT MEAN THAT YOU CAN FUCK WITH PEOPLE.** We also continue to welcome people who are not strangers, but still cause problems at the event. We might want to rethink that.
- Us vs. Them: **“US” MEANS ALL OF US,** all of the community, everyone at the event. **“THEM” ARE PEOPLE OUTSIDE OF THE EVENT** and we need to **BE MINDFUL OF THEM.** “Them” is not the LLC, not the Rangers, another camp, etc ... that will chip away at our community. Get to know your neighbors, establish rapport with them. **WE ARE ALL RANGERS.** Practice **PEACEFUL CONFLICT RESOLUTION** and **WATCH EACH OTHER’S BACKS.**

~Mostly Nobody among other contributors



WHAT R U GONNA DO ABOUT IT?

AND NOW, A WORD FROM REV. MARK

“The problem people are not in this room (at the Warehouse for the meeting), because you showed up (we know that many of you wanted to come, but couldn’t so we are not talking about you here either). You are the people who can carry on the message. The people who create the problems we are having won’t show up here. That is my concern, how do we get that message out to those people. There are many ways to do that. Theme camps are neighborhoods. Get to know your neighbor theme camps – proverbially borrowing and lending a cup of sugar. Theme camps’ communicating is the same as individuals communicating. Theme camps need to be responsible for their members. Be responsible for your own experience. That includes being responsible when you fuck up. However, I’m preaching to the choir. Halleluyah! (can I get an AMEN?!?!) We need to start policing ourselves. We need to get that message out. **THIS IS A DO-OCRACY, NOT A DEMOCRACY.** If you see someone doing something stupid, step in. Don’t stand back and watch, going ‘Daaaaayum!’ Go talk to them about it.”

THE MONK SPEAKS

“This is an important discussion, I’ve only been coming to Flipside for 3 years and I feel pretty passionate about this. This is a great event; I love what you do here in Central Texas. It’s been fun to do art for this community. It is also about being responsible. We have always created this event and we still create this event. We need to take responsibility for the event. The ways we perform and interact and participate are really important. I do this because I love this event and what we do and the people (who join me in experiencing Flipside for themselves). If you don’t like what’s going on, speak up and help out. Make it what you want it to be.”

SING IT SYSTAH!!

“I’m hearing that there is frustration with self-reliance and responsibility. I think that people in this community have experienced feeling like outcasts and that means we are reticent to call people on their shit, so as to not make them feel like an outcast. When we see people doing major transgressions we need to hold them accountable without making them feel like an outcast.”

BRING IT HOME CLOVIS...

“Once the outside world comes into our event, we have failed. The other thing we are talking about here are boundaries: personal, community, and theme camp. When the Rangers come to your camp and there is an issue, then there is AN ISSUE. If your behavior is no better than what you see on 6th St, that’s not art, you’re a frat boy, keep it in your camp. {Derek from a distance...‘**WE ARE NOT RAVER DAY CAMP!**’} **NO WE ARE NOT.** There is no tolerance for sexual assault, theft, etc. We will not accept that. There are other acts egregious enough that you will not be welcomed back. We all need to have a thicker skin...You have to be willing to have your boundaries pushed. Boundaries are different in your camp vs. other people’s camp. If you don’t like something in someone’s camp, roll on down the road. With respect to outreach...this is the outreach. There are 120 of us here (at the community sustainability meeting). We are counting on y’all to carry this message out there. You are the people that people know. Practice a buddy system...it’s part of taking care of your brother. Take turns being the train-wreck! Be willing to say, “Friend, are you sure you wanna do that? That might not be the best idea.” Accountability starts right here. We take it personally. You take it upon yourselves.”

The choir sang on and on...the point here is to understand that **FLIPSIDE** is supposed to be a **FUN, EXCITING, AWESOME, GREAT, WONDERFUL** and **FANTASTIC PLACE** to be **FOR EVERYONE** who is **THERE**. If your actions impede on the fabulousness of Flipside in any way, YOU are part of the problem. Can I get a witness? **HALLELUJAH...AMEN!!**



RADICALLY ASKING FOR ASSISTANCE

The term **“RADICAL SELF-RELIANCE”** gets tossed around and we generally think we know what that means and what that entails. However, even if you “hold yourself responsible for your own actions, and **TAKE PERSONAL RESPONSIBILITY** for meeting your own needs, for the event itself, and for the event's impact on the world at large.”*, there will be times when you'll need assistance. Someone will need to hold that pole for the shade structure, so you can attach the widget. So, **HOW DO YOU WALK THE LINE** between holding yourself and others accountable **AND EFFECTIVELY ASKING FOR ASSISTANCE**, when needed?

There are several ways you can go about asking someone to lend a hand. Yelling at the top of your lungs “This pole won't hold itself!” might get someone to jump in but that is a shot in the dark. Effectively, radically ask for assistance (outside of an emergency) is easier if you **UTILIZE THE FOLLOWING STEPS**:

1. Realize that the **PARTICIPANT** you ask **HAS THE RIGHT TO SAY "NO."** The rest of the process flows from this point. There are a myriad of reasons that someone might not be able to chip in at that moment. Be willing to hear "No." and ask again.
2. **BE SELF-RELIANT:** Try to accomplish your goal, yourself. You may find you don't actually need assistance and if you do, you can be a more effective leader, when you do ask. If you discover that it's not possible (you lack 4 hands) then **DO WHAT PREP WORK IS NECESSARY** and possible, so someone can jump on in.
3. Stop and Think: Take time to **FIGURE OUT WHAT THE PROBLEM IS** and what you need. **KNOW SPECIFICALLY** what your goal is and **WHAT TOOLS ARE NECESSARY** to get 'er done. It's much easier to lend a hand when the person asking knows what they want.
4. **KNOW THE EXISTING INFRASTRUCTURE:** What infrastructure is already in place to assist you? **THERE ARE VOLUNTEERS WHO SIGN UP TO HELP THE CITIZENS OF PYROPOLIS**, ask them. Check out the volunteer page on www.burningflipside.com and see what is available (and if you have the time, sign up for a shift!). Knowing what help is already established greatly increases your ability to receive it.
5. **FIND SOMEONE(S):** The **VOLUNTEERS ON SHIFT** are generally well marked and are usually around the grassy playa. Meander over there and ask if anyone has seen the **SHAVEN APES/PARKING/ETC** ... these volunteers also **WANDER THE CITY**, one will likely be by shortly. Take a load off and flag 'em down when they come by. When it comes time to ask, approach them, **INTRODUCE YOURSELF**, and **ASK IF THEY HAVE SOME TIME ON THEIR HANDS TO HELP YOU OUT**.
6. **COMMUNICATE:** If they say yes, then it's time to **CONVEY WHAT YOU DETERMINED IN STEP 2**. State the goal, the tools needed, and what prep work has already been done.
7. **GET 'ER DONE!**
8. Gratitude: **EXPRESS GRATITUDE AND BE SPECIFIC**. "Thank you, I really appreciate your help with ____." **OFFER A BEER/SNACK/WATER/TIME TO CHILL/hospitality** at a later date/ etc ... People have **GIFTED THEIR TIME** and resources; **EXPRESS YOUR APPRECIATION**.

There is **NO DISHONOR IN ASKING FOR ASSISTANCE** but how you go about doing so can make or break whether you receive that help and whether people will help you in the future. We take **CARE OF EACH OTHER** but ensuring you **TAKE CARE OF YOURSELF FIRST** generates a more positive experience for all participants.

A Message brought to you by
~Gyesika Safety

BEING A PART OF THIS COMMUNITY IS A PRIVILEGE, NOT A RIGHT.

PLEASE BE RESPECTFUL OF THAT!

THANK YOU FOR READING THE FLAME.

