

LEA Communique 6 - Bringin' It Home

That Burning Man is transformational is something we all know. It has touched our lives and pushed us to be more open, accepting, creative, industrious – the list goes on. We do a great job at fostering the culture of Burning Man in our own Alberta Regional community. Well, the BM Organization says that the magic doesn't have to stop with us, nor should it. We agree.

Enter the Burning Man Global Leadership Conference (GLC).

2015 marked the Ninth Annual GLC, a gathering of Regional Contacts, community leaders, and Burning Man staff. The intention of the GLC is to inspire greater engagement with the Burning Man global community and culture as a whole. This year's conference theme was "The Next Creative Renaissance: Buildin' it up, Bustin' it Out, and Bringin' it Home", aimed at inspiring civic engagement through art and community. In April, the League of Extraordinary Albertans (LEA) sent 5 representatives from our region and they all agreed on one thing: this is a great return on investment.

Here's the low-down:

Who?

This year, 5 members of the LEA board attended: Leslie, Dreegyn, Partytime, Rae Rae and Joelle. Various other community members have attended in the past or were given the opportunity to attend including Regional Contacts, event producers, community organizers, and other movers and shakers who have influenced our region with their ideas, input, and actions.



The camera loves us at the Carnival of Chaos, a magical night with fellow regional leaders.

Where?

San Francisco, home of Burning Man's headquarters.

Why?

First, it confirms that we're doing a lot RIGHT!

- The LEA was recognized both for our organization and our wicked name.
- We got a shout out for our gifting food event.
- We were recognized for Freezer Burn: our art, our Survival Guide, our organization.
- After rubbing elbows with inspiring doers from around the globe in a highly creative environment, we're convinced that some of the best live in Alberta.



Is that a Freezer Burn poster, front-and-centre on registration day or are you just happy to see us?

Secondly, we get a lot out of it.

- Confidence in what the LEA and Freezer Burn are doing to manage risk and protect our community from harm.
- Improved knowledge on risk management for increased capacity as board members and when working on LEA initiatives.
- The opportunity to share what we're doing with others, and get valuable feedback from people with immense skill and experience.

- Valuable perspectives on how to respond to tragedy in the community.
- A network of people from around the world who are willing to provide advice and support for different projects and activities.
- Pride in the amount of civic engagement we are doing with the LEA.

According to your participants from Alberta, it goes beyond that. Here's what they had to say:

- “In my first couple hours at the GLC this year I felt like a stupid asshole. Somehow, I've been immersed in this community for a decade, while working for social change as a day job, and I didn't connect the dots to see the full potential of what we're doing. This 'Burning Man' thing we're doing, and the community we are building here in Alberta, it's going to change the world. In the Alberta Burner community, we're unmatched with our passion, talent, and imagination. Let's nurture what lies in the community and let it inspire the rest of the world to be different.”
- “It is so inspiring to be in a room full of motivated, dedicated doers. So much support and knowledge is given and received. All working together to strengthen our community and seeking ways to push the 10 principles into the default world.”
- “This is a GREAT investment. We get great return from it because this allows us to sharpen our skill sets and become stronger leaders & more passionate. This, in turn, means that we see how important art, in conjunction with science, is. We saw awesome examples in Detroit and Derry and it was amazing to experience the passion and feeling that was in the room when we were talking about it.”
- “Every single shared experience, workshop, conversation, and interaction was useful and applicable to our region. I will be able to apply what I've learned to make our events safer and enhance the experience that each offers.”



Keynote speaker, Former US Congressman Dennis Kucinich. Inspiration is everywhere.

Finally, it will translate into ACTION for our region. Here's what our reps had to say:

"I've got three pages of projects and ideas to implement or incorporate in existing projects, both for myself, the LEA, or others."

"This will continue to drive us towards positive actions we can take to prevent and also deal with any events that occur at our initiatives, most especially our regional burn and decompression events. It gave me personally more confidence in myself and my leadership skills and has contributed highly to my growth.

"A challenge/goal was put forth and we submitted 2 initiatives to it: the food bank & river cleanup events. <http://www.burnerswithoutborders.org/projects/the-bwb-128-initiative>"

"The examples from Detroit and Derry show us that we can take an idea that is rooted in shared experiences and translate it into transformational art for communities. We've already started brainstorming about what we can do in Alberta."

As you can see, there's lots to do and the GLC continues to be an essential step in helping us transform the world.

Now ... we leave you with this thought-provoking quote from Leslie:

"There is so much we can do, and so much we are already doing. Many of us have been thinking about it wrong: we don't need to protect Burning Man from douchey bros and greasy corporate plug-n-play slags. Instead of using Burning Man to escape the world they are imposing on us, we're going to push back with a vision of community that values self-expression, communal effort, inclusion, and all those other damn principles. We've already started doing it here in Alberta. There's a fire-breathing Hippo in the stampede parade for goodness sake!"

*here are some links to the talks <http://burningman-glc.com/video/>