

# PortalBurn 2015 Afterburn Report

## Preface

PortalBurn 2015 was held from noon July 31 until noon August 3 at Newell Farm, 4064 County Road 4 in Burdett, NY 14818. This document is a post-event compilation of findings regarding the production of the event. Information contained herein was gathered from Organizers and Coordinators for the event. Addendums will be added as necessary, as new relevant input is provided.

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## **DPW**

*Contributor: Greg (Bird) Cunningham*

DPW purchased a significant number of structures for infrastructure this year, moving towards a burn completely owned by PortalBurn where none of the organizer's, or other's, equipment is used.

Most significantly, DPW purchased the following:

- 3 EZ up tents (purple), used at the entrance, parking and for the command center
- Tables, chairs, lights and a new cot for MASH
- Gas-powered water pump and various hoses for the shower

DPW provided infrastructure for PortalBurn. Here are some of the highlights:

- Front gate, parking and command center had sufficient equipment to effectively function during the day and night.
- The shower was heavily used and from all appearances worked quite well. Many thanks to the landowners for the refills of the water

DPW would like to thank the following people for their work before, during, and after PortalBurn:

- First and foremost: Thomas "Water Bee" Tighe - his arrival before the event to set up and non-stop willingness to help out throughout the event was spectacular. DPW's excited to see Water Bee's role expand in the future, if he is interested!
- The lampposts were made by the following amazing people:
  - Marty Collier-Morris: who made a post without even attending the event
  - Greg "Bird" Cunningham
  - Jen Dublin
  - Brett "Blizzard" Kingery
  - "Pocket" Laura Nichols
- The following spectacular people helped with breakdown after the event:
  - Dan Brooks
  - Leah and Loaf
  - Andie Oswald
  - Josh "Bonus" Russo
  - Alan "Sheck" Shechter

In the future, DPW plans to expand; providing more opportunities for more people to get involved.

## **HELP Guide**

*Contributor: Debi (CrackerJack) Monsour*

The HELP Guide process went smoothly. Was very pleased to get some good cover art. The free Cognito.com Forms site worked well and was easy to use. Coordinator did allow a few events in after deadline.

May want to look at a way for submitters to see what they submitted after the fact, and/or a way for everyone to see what's been submitted so far. Coordinator rec'd requests of both "when is my event?" And "if I schedule it for this time, is it a conflict with other events?"

Printing was more expensive than 2014 because paper quality was better. We'll need to decide for next year if we want to reduce quality to save money and print more copies. Printer used to print 100 copies of the guide: PrintRoc.



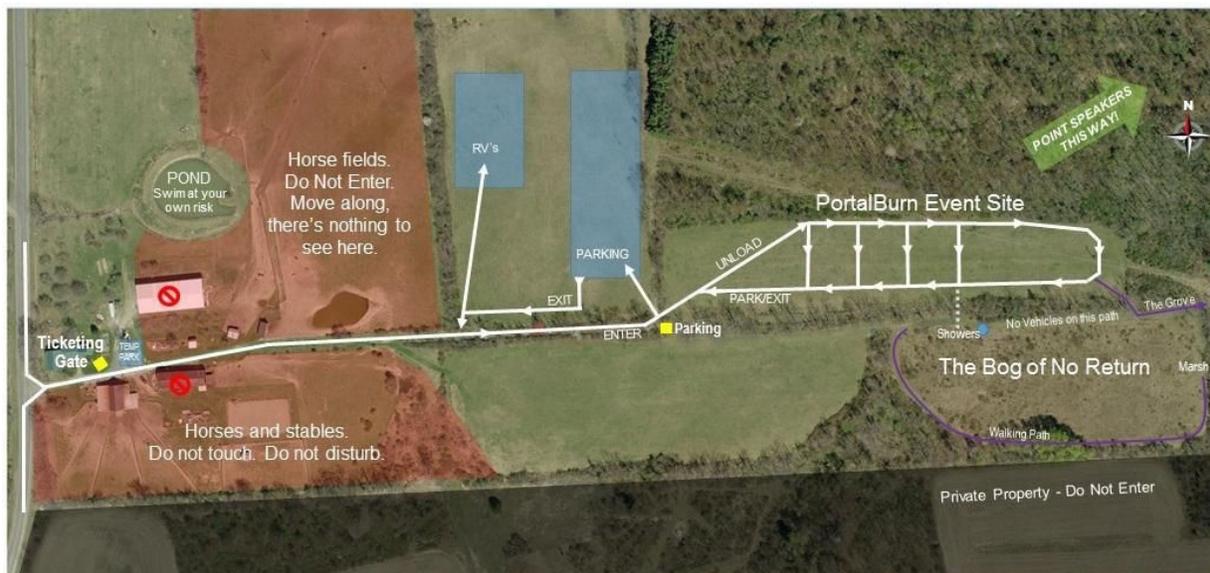
## Parking

Contributor: Alan (Sheck) Shechter

**Layout of the land:** The parking area for this event was located near the event area itself. The parking in Lot B was the only parking area used, and it was a rectangular grassy field perpendicular to the event space. Cars were lined up in two rows, one along the East side and one along the West side. Getting to the parking area and the event, one drove up a sloped road. Rain right before or during the event would cause this road to be unusable pretty quick, but we did not encounter significant rain and the slope was a non-issue.

There was a parking structure that was a purple 10'x10' EZ-up shade structure with a 6' table and one folding chair. This was situated on the road to direct people to unload or straight to parking. A cooler with water bottles was provided, and two portal-potties were nearby.

Temporary parking was situated near the gate structure and was under the guidance of the gate.



**The procedure:** Arriving entrants would be seen driving up the sloped road from the gate area that was West and a parking volunteer, dressed in an orange vest and holding an orange-coned flashlight, would stand in the road and flag them to stop. The parking volunteer would ask them if they needed to unload. If so, he would point them into the event, directing them to keep left onto the one-way road. If unload was unnecessary, the driver was directed into the parking area and told to park next to the last car on either side. No lot attendant was needed. After unload, the vehicle was pointed to parking.

Exiting the parking area, there was a separate exit. This kept the narrow road up the slope as a one-way road.

### Discussions for improvement:

- The major issue with the parking area is that rain could drastically alter the plan. As mentioned, the ground sloped up to the event. Fortunately, this was not an issue as the weather was dry during daytime hours.
- There were a couple of vehicles that could not navigate the slope up without many helping hands pushing. One was a Honda CRV pulling a pop-up camper.
- The solution to both of these issues is to locate to a flatter event space.

## Gate & Parking (Grarking)

*Contributor: Nathan Andrew Wright (Hot Dog)*

I'm gonna call the department that I ran Grarking (and Nyk's Tickgreeting) because we were sort of sharing those (Greeting) responsibilities. So, without further ado, I give you;

**The Good:** Most all things at the entry to the event were smooth as creamy peanut butter. We had ample, enthusiastic volunteers (thank you KT Rex) who took direction well and relayed information excellently to arriving participants. The vast majority of participants followed instructions, used the one way loop, and unloaded their vehicles in a timely manner. Upon returning to the entry way, participants were instructed to park their cars in either one of two rows, with the suggestion to "do it better than the last guy." This was largely carried out independently of specific design (way to go, POrtalBurners!) and required little volunteer assistance. Exodus went much the same way, with little to no problems with traffic, parking in roadways, or failure to follow the one way loop.

**The Bad:** Bad? Well, nothing. Nothing was bad, so to speak. There were a few hang-ups early on, as we felt our way through the "plan of action." A couple of cars did fail to follow the one way loop. We had a few vehicles parked in the event field for extended periods of time. One recreational vehicle with trailer in tow did take its sweet time dropping its load and returning to the designated parking area, blocked one side-street for an elongated period of time, but with a little board/coordinator collaboration, the situation was monitored and remedied.

**The Ug-o:** The one, true "predicament" that occurred was late on Friday evening when a recreational vehicle, missing signage specifying an alternate path designed for said style of vehicle, drove almost to the top of the hill where our Grarking Purple Tent was established, but was unable to "crest the hill". After several attempts, the vehicle started to get a little sideways on the road, nearing a point of no return. That is when we called it quits and made provisions for the vehicle to remain parked in its position until morning, when a tow could be organized. Caution tape and road cones were utilized and signage was altered to redirect any incoming traffic for the rest of the evening. Upon daybreak, the property owner (Tim) and the vehicle owner collaborated on a tow, and the vehicle was moved and replaced without incident.

### For Next Time:

**Signage:** Great GOBS of signs, everywhere. Given the misunderstandings about the side streets, as well as the main loop, being one way, I suggest "One-Way" and "Do Not Enter" signs on either side of these streets, more "One-Way" signs along the main loop and just more general information signage. I know, I know, "blocking the scenery/do this, don't do that" and all, but it really is helpful, and reiterates any directions that excited participants may be too "ready to burn" to remember in the moment. After all, safety third.

**RV Parking:** Although everything seemed to work out with the participants camping in their vehicles, I would like to propose a specified RV parking area directly next to the entry of the event. This way, the RV participants will still be in the thick of things, be camped togetherishly as "RV Camp" or whatever and add to the level of organization that really helps parking out. I can elaborate on my vision for this set up upon request.

**Grarking Easy-Up Placement:** I think that if we moved the (underutilized) structure back about 25 feet, it would create a nice little alcove for grarking volunteers and arriving participants to mingle and hug, and share information, in a much more burnery fashion. Creating this "safe space" that isn't on a hill and not in the way of oncoming traffic (standard transmissions and hills don't like each other) would just be nice. Ya know, just nice...

Ok, that it from me, Hot Dog, your POrtalBurn 2015 Grarking Coordinator. I made an honest and steadfast choice not to proof read this, as I feel vernacular will win the day. I'd like to thank the Board for facilitating

this beautiful event, and all the participants for co-creating it with me. Y'all are the stuff dreams are made of. Hot Dog out.

## Theme Camps

*Contributor: Kim (Dusty) Robinson*

**Registration:** Theme camp registrations were gathered using Cognito Forms, a free online forms app. The app was easy to use to create dynamic forms, and output was a spreadsheet making it easy to provide information for the HELP guide. 16 theme camps registered and were placed for the event.

Suggestions: Cognito does not provide the ability to review or edit a submission, nor does it have a method of publishing all submissions so participants can view a live ongoing list of theme camps. I suggest finding an alternative solution since both of these features are highly desirable.

**Placement:** Theme camp placement included road and event layout since the space was new and there were no precedents. Due to terrain, placing camps that needed flat space for projects was a challenge, but the final layout worked overall. One camp changed location due to sound, one felt their space was awkward. All others had positive feedback. Using online maps helped immensely with planning and measurements that were used to lay tape for roads and camps once onsite. Printed sheets with theme camp names were used to designate placement. Two people laid tape and positioned Portal Potties (8 hours).

Suggestions: Consider alternatives to tape such as spray chalk, or plan four people to mark roads and camps. If using tape, two teams are needed - one to measure and chalk corners, one to lay tape. Assume 4+ hours. Invest in one large US tape measure, not metric. Encourage camps to use frontage to mark roads, and create a festive boundary to designate pathways since it's difficult to see ground markings. Ensure size for HELP guide maps is known to prevent stretching and retain 'mapped to scale' aspect ratio.

**Early Entry:** Pre-approved theme camps and artists were granted early entry which helped spread out arrivals and avoid a 'gate open' rush, and allowed camps to setup and establish a recognizable layout early on. Because the event was small, I was able to meet with arriving camps to review their placement. The process for requesting early entry worked well. The process for ticketing early entry folks, not so much.

Suggestions: Need single point of contact for early entry ticketing upon arrival. If the gate isn't open, then Gate Lead should have a designated location to process folks before they go to their site. Also need to have roads, camp placement and signage completed before early arrivals are onsite.

**Sound:** Sound camps were dispersed throughout the event site to avoid interference with each other. There was no established 'quiet zones'. Camps were asked to monitor their sound levels based on posted guidelines. There were zero sound complaints from neighbors during the event, or after. Success.

Suggestions: Include 'music genre' as part of theme camp description so open campers can consider it when choosing a spot. Include a 'quiet zone' in layout that's further from sound camps, for those who desire it.

## Art Placement

*Contributor: Kim (Dusty) Robinson*

**Effigy:** The Effigy was placed in the northeast corner of the event to allow us to use the center of the field, which was flattest, for camping space. Consideration was given to fire and the treeline, and no camping was permitted near the effigy perimeter to allow space to move it farther from the trees if necessary.

Suggestions: A central effigy is desired by many. If the layout can be planned to safely accommodate a central effigy as well as provide sufficient camping space, it should be considered for next year.

**Placed Art:** Artists were very helpful in providing details about their projects to assist with placement. Due to re-opened art grants, last minute projects made finalizing the placement map challenging.

Suggestions: Determine what types of art require placement and provide a method for artists to request placement and be included in the HELP Guide. Art Grant forms should include the placement option, and gather info needed for placement. We also need a way for non-art grant recipients to request placement. A deadline for art placement needs to be established and communicated.

## **Art Grants**

*Contributor: Deena/Painter/Prophet*

We had a \$1,000 budget set aside for art grants. The art grants application was originally opened with limited response. The Board made the decision to reopen the grants in order to solicit more art. This was successful and we had almost the entire amount allocated to artists.

\$120 went towards potty grants. \$60 was allocated for SuzQ's Spooning project. \$106 was granted for Professor Willie's Flaming Willie. While Willie brought his project, he did not end up requiring the requested funds for this time. \$100 was awarded to Drew for his Ground is Lava project. While Drew did bring some nets for the trees, he was not able to bring the whole project and did not request reimbursement. We allocated \$100 to each of the following projects: The Secret Grove by Dove Russo, Family Tree by Blizzard Kingery, PortalBurn Barbie photo op by Alan Shechter, The Generation of Prophetic Random Order Via the Creative Process. Phase 1: Live Creation Via Oil Painting by Sara Potocsny, Sushumna by Will Bourne (grant received by James Cooper), and The Lamassu by Kimmy Dudek. It is expected that the total amount paid out will be approximately \$800 of the \$1000 budget.

## **Effigy**

*Contributor: Deena/Painter/Prophet*

We opted to leave the subject of our effigy up to the artists. We had a budget of \$500. The beautiful *Portal of Actualization* effigy was completed by Ice without any incidents.

## Fire

*Contributor: Seth Hardy*

I was present for the effigy burn, the temple/arches burn, and was aware of the Reuben's tube, flaming gateway, art car with flame effects, and my own eight headed flame effect.

### **The good:**

- Perimeter for the two burns were easy. Volunteers were easy to find, very competent, and helpful.
- Flame effects were built by people aware of what they were doing.
- The lead performer from the fire spinners was sharp, eager to work with safety people, and pleasant to work with.
- Having the water pump on hand for the burns was incredibly useful. There were three people, including one Organizer (Sheck) trained on the use of the pump. Sheck is the one who doused the fire each night a few hours after the burn.

### **The bad:**

- The flame effects on the gateway near the grove were often left unattended. This wasn't a huge deal because the event site was small and there was usually line of sight to the art, but this shouldn't happen in the future.
- People lighting up flame effects before inspection/check-in was definitely a thing.
- Nobody sent safety plans for review, even when promised...

### **The ugly:**

- The wind changed hard right as the temple burn was lit. Combined with the proximity to the tree line and the fact that it was made of particle board, this could have posed a problem from the ember cast had the water tank not been there. I wasn't aware of the temple burn or I would have insisted that the materials be placed much further from the tree line - the information on size and materials should be communicated in advance.

### **Closing Remarks:**

- All in all, I think it was a successful year. I think communication between fire artists and safety teams needs to happen ahead of time, and there should be clear communication that without a safety plan, equipment, and someone to attend open fires at all times, fire art will not be allowed to go ahead on site.
- Damon Hudac was very helpful with keeping an eye on the main event grounds for fire safety issues, and the Rangers were excellent support for the perimeters. Formalizing who is in charge of the perimeter recruitment and operation would be helpful - most places have it be Rangers, but it doesn't need to be this way, especially at a smaller event. Also should formalize who is responsible for "babysitting" the effigy and temple burns until they are doused.

## Ranger

*Contributor: Deena/Painter/Prophet*

**Ranger Training:** Ranger Training was held at 8:00 pm on Friday night. It was well attended, but approximately 30 people and the participants were actively involved. While overall, the major points were covered, I thought that I should have covered both fire safety and consent issues more in depth.

**Coverage:** While Ranger coverage for the weekend was excellent, steps need to be taken in the future to ensure that there is one experienced Ranger on for each shift. While in most cases, there were experienced Rangers on hand to mentor the new ones, there were several shifts that did not have an experienced Ranger actively on shift.

**Incidents:** There were two major incidents that required Ranger intervention over the course of the weekend. Rangers called in a severely disoriented participant who needed to be escorted to the medical tent. There was also a physical confrontation between two participants. This incident occurred when there were not experienced Rangers on shift and therefore, it was kicked to the BOC to handle. There was some concern regarding untrained and/or unsober people attempting to assist with the situation.

**In the future:** It would be ideal to have two Ranger coordinators to share Lead duties. If that is not possible, another solution would be to have an experienced Ranger step up as a Lead on call. As the event continues to grow, it will become necessary to have more resources available for new Rangers.

## MASH Camp

*Contributor: Steven Lowinger*

Overall thoughts were things went well. Really well. MASH camp seems to have been a relative success. Both in part, to people not hurting themselves too badly and having good people that volunteered their time to help aid those minor injuries that did occur. Things that we saw over the weekend included a few deep slices into fingers, one twisted/sprained ankle and two people with altered states that just needed a little extra monitoring. The cot provided a good place for them to sleep off whatever it was and keep a close eye on them in case their condition were to change.

A couple of comfy chairs could be added for the volunteers to hang out in and for the patients especially if they are going to be there for a few hours at a time.

Supplies were adequate and I don't think we ran into needing anything that we didn't have, although there was a request for more decorative band-aids (flames, rainbows, sponge bob?) - they did not approve of the boring flesh colored ones that were supplied.

It would be good to have most of the shift covered by people with some medical training (at the minimum - up to date BLS/first aid) and I think it best if shifts are covered by two people at time instead of one. It was also recommended that more than one lead have a radio, just in case one is unreachable for some reason.

Some thoughts and ideas:

- Because we don't have official sanctuary it should be part of MASH. Extra bed needed.
- More comfortable chairs.
- Shifts should be longer (3-4 hours)
- Additionally there should be 1 paramedic or doctor on 12 hour shifts to make sure we have coverage. They don't need to be at MASH camp.
- A good sign with a radio attached to it telling people what to do if MASH camp is unmanned.
- Anyone volunteering needs to have at least first aid training.

Equipment was sufficient if anyone can think of anything they should let MASH know.

## Local Area Communications

TBD

## Volunteers

TBD

## Financials

Ticket cost for the event was \$40. For each ticket purchased, all through PayPal, a payment of \$1.37 was automatically sent to Brown Paper Tickets. No ticket sales were on site, and the event did sell out of all 300 tickets. The revenue for the event was (\$40 price - \$1.37 fee = \$38.63) per ticket x 300 tickets = \$11,589 gross revenue. The expense report is still in progress, pending receiving receipts from artists.

<b><u>General Expenses</u></b>	<b><u>Estimate</u></b>	<b><u>Actual</u></b>
Land Rental (\$1000 or 10% whichever is higher = \$1200 maximum)	\$1,200.00	\$1,200.00
Insurance	\$414.00	\$429.23
Porta potties (12 potties Thurs noon - Monday noon, serviced Saturday and Sunday)	\$1,836.00	\$1,836.00
Fire wood	\$705.00	\$705.00
Checks bought for bank account	\$78.00	\$77.71
Generator for Command Centre	\$1,000.00	\$1,078.92
Gas for Command Center genny	\$50.00	\$13.68
Art Grants	\$1,500.00	\$1,363.33
Medical total bought from amazon	\$250.00	\$227.27
DPW total bought from amazon	\$1,300.00	\$1,224.42
DPW total bought elsewhere	\$250.00	\$238.32
DPW bought on site		\$200.54
Magnetic Roller	\$76.00	\$75.48
Ranger shirts 1 color	\$190.00	\$191.00
Fire perimeter shirts/vests	\$35.00	\$43.45
2 Sound dB meters	\$250.00	\$119.98
DPW expenses		\$115.79
Volunteer stickers	\$112.00	\$98.00

Storage unit in Burdett	\$414.00	\$414.00
Rome NY post-burn meeting		\$307.88
Dock	\$150.00	\$52.92
HELP Guide printing	\$190.00	\$204.12
Total expenses	<b>\$10,000.00</b>	<b>\$10,217.04</b>
<b><u>Revenue</u></b>		
300 sold (38.63 each)		\$11,589.00
Revenue less expenses (surplus revenue carryover)		\$1,371.96
Surplus carried over from PortalBurn 2014		\$2,128.15
Current surplus in bank account		<b>\$3,500.11</b>

### **Addendums**

*This space is reserved for contributions, from anyone who played a leadership role for the event, following this reports initial publish date.*