

2012 Annual Regional Recap Report

San Jose-ish/South Bay, CA

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In 2012, our announce list grew by a little more than 13% (to 837) and our yahoo discussion list grew 8% (to 227). The Facebook page (www.facebook.com/sburners) has 597 followers (a growth of nearly 55% over last year). Individual events for monthly meet & greets are created on Facebook and also posted on our webpage at www.southbayburners.org. I make a conscious effort to vary the location of meet & greets over the year, to geographically cover the many cities that make up the South Bay and bring events closer to burners' homes to increase the likelihood that they can (and will) attend.

Our roster of regional activities in 2012 is on our website:

January – South Bay Meet & Greet, Santa Clara
February – South Bay Meet & Greet, Los Gatos
February – Costuming Workshop, Los Gatos
March – First Friday Art Walk, San Jose
March - South Bay Meet & Greet/Warehouse Party, Campbell
April – First Friday Art Walk, San Jose
April – South Bay Meet & Greet, Palo Alto
May – First Friday Art Walk, San Jose
May – South Bay Meet & Greet, Cupertino
June - Soul Fire Annual Precompression Regional Campout in Los Gatos
July – BBQ-A-Newbie Picnic, Mountain View
Aug – On-playa Regional CORE Happy Hour
Sept – South Bay Meet & Greet, Campbell
Oct - SoulFire Annual Decompression Regional Campout in Los Gatos
Nov – South Bay Meet & Greet, South San Jose
Dec - South Bay Santa Con

(in addition to regular CORE team meetings and build days which were also announced)

I post a weekly “Regional Scoop” JRS-style format (used successfully in our community since 2008), rather than individual postings to the southbay-announce list. In addition to the above activities, I also include regional, Flambe, BRAF or BMHQ events in the greater Bay Area when asked to post them.

Our 6th annual precompression event, SoulFire 2012, was a 3-day, 2-night camping event that used many of the same planning team who have been participating since SoulFire's inception. We rely on the "team leads" who have several years' experience in dealing with our venue and known areas of focus (parking, rangers, theme camp & art placement, music, greeting, etc.) We also hosted a ranger training during our event which had 24 rangers in attendance.

Our overall attendance was up to 253 people this year (back to about 2010 levels). The event made \$349 which was rolled over to the fall's Decompression event. The majority of expenses were for color printing what/where/whens and gate swag over and above the basic insurance and ticketing fees. Comps were kept to a minimum for staff, artists and rangers only.

We continue to draw burners who have never been to a local event before, and had a good contingent of BRC Virgins as well (I host a Saturday morning Virgin's Workshop at the event for this reason.) We drew participants from South Bay Cities as well as Santa Cruz, North Bay, East Bay, and San Francisco and Sacramento, Fresno, Lake Tahoe and Los Angeles.

In addition, we held a participatory CORE workshop at SoulFire to invite community members to contribute art to the regional effigy. On Saturday night, we held a "lighting" ceremony to unveil the effigy and invited people to "tag" it with Sharpies on the plank of wood that represented their home city (more on this year's CORE later). Other artists who had installations at the event included Feral's Neon House, Billion Jelly Bloom, and interactive events such as Gypsy Cinema, Frankenanimals, and "Mini-Man" effigy building. We had music for 5 hours by the pool each day on Saturday and Sunday, Reggae on the lawn on Saturday afternoon, and DJs in the restaurant until 1am on Saturday night.

The third SoulFire regional decompression campout was held in October and drew 101 people (up from 73 in 2011). I planned for reduced numbers, and eliminated the color printing and swag expenses that made us go over budget last year. By holding the event in October rather than November, we reveled in great high 60/low 70-degree weather with no rain this year. Incredible interactive music installations included Tim Thompson's Space Palette, Roy Pertchik's Vibraphone, and art included Playuzzle, Breast Stop, Dream Quilt, Field of Rebar, an aerial acrobatics performance, and two art cars. The event netted \$170.

After a successful 2011 CORE project (Valley of Heart's Delight – effigy of wooden laptops surrounded by an orchard), 100% of the 2011 CORE crew re-enlisted for 2012. I posted meeting dates on the southbay-announce list, and we had 5 new people join us for the 2012 effigy. This year, although it was a challenge to agree on another iconic image that was representative of the South Bay, we decided on a water tower to commemorate the hundreds of fruit canneries and millions of fruit trees that used to exist in the Santa Clara Valley (giving it the name, "Valley of Heart's Delight".) We developed a design that was climbable, and inside the water tower each plank had a plaque with the name of defunct fruit cannery, at least one for each of the 23 distinct

cities or neighborhoods in the South Bay. We felt that this would inspire burners' identification of their own town as part of the South Bay, and also give participants a way to visualize how many burners actually live here. And, we reprised the orchard to surround our effigy this year ... because if nothing else, the trees make great kindling!

South Bay CORE was again determined to be self-funding as much as possible, with the exception of the \$500 Burning Man honorarium, but felt that a fundraising campaign did give burners a way to feel they were involved in the project by making a contribution. We chose IndieGoGo as a vehicle, and posted some desirable swag such as stickers, shot glasses and dogtags. Despite very active promotion and even a YouTube video announcing the site, we got only four people who made a donation. Two even declined swag but just wanted to kick in some cash. IMHO all of the art projects, COREs, theme camps and other fund raising campaigns over the summer are a huge drain on people's attention and their generosity. We decided to not host a fundraising event this year, as the one we threw in 2011 didn't prove to be a draw, either. In the end, we raised money through yard sales and CORE team contributions. The project cost about \$5000 and we are left with \$416 to carry over into 2013 (yes, we intend to submit a CORE Letter of Intent again ...) Our first 2013 CORE meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, January 3rd!

We started the year 2012 with \$50.13 in the LLC bank account and ended the year with \$20.25, with a debt to the Regional of \$1,454.00 (CORE funds are separated from the LLC bank account). Significant expenses include LLC annual filing fees, bank fees, web hosting and domain fees, and making payments on the LLC's credit card that was used for the insurance policy of 2011's SoulFire precompression. As the South Bay is an LLC with me as the sole managing member, I am able to reap a small benefit from this on my personal tax return. But, I still have a goal of establishing some reserves for art funding and in case we need to find a new venue for our SoulFire events.

The South Bay continues to be that strange bird --- many burners who live here identify more with their theme camps (which may be based in SF or Oakland) rather than with their region as their "burner family", and SF Flambe events are always a bigger draw than anything local. Regardless, each of our meet & greets has a good cross-section of burners from the ~30 theme camps that actually call a South Bay city their home, and new people join us all the time. I know that I connected many new virgins with the Temple Crew, Gate, Playa Info, Arctica, and the Artery this year as volunteers, and the continued growth and reach of our announce and Facebook communications is encouraging.

This year marked my 8th year as Regional Contact and also my 6th year of attending the Regional Summit. I am always inspired by hearing about the growth and civic direction of other regions, and see this as an ultimate goal: to engage in philanthropy by finding a way to connect major Silicon Valley firms with interactive and imaginative public art, and to connect the burner

community with a way to manifest the 10 Principles in daily life. I look forward to seeing how the Burning Man Project helps bring this to life, and personally finding a way to steer the South Bay beyond the “event mentality” towards sharing a philanthropic commitment. CORE has been a start in providing a central focal point and something bigger than the sum of our parts ... next, I'd like to find a more permanent and humanistic mark that we can make.