

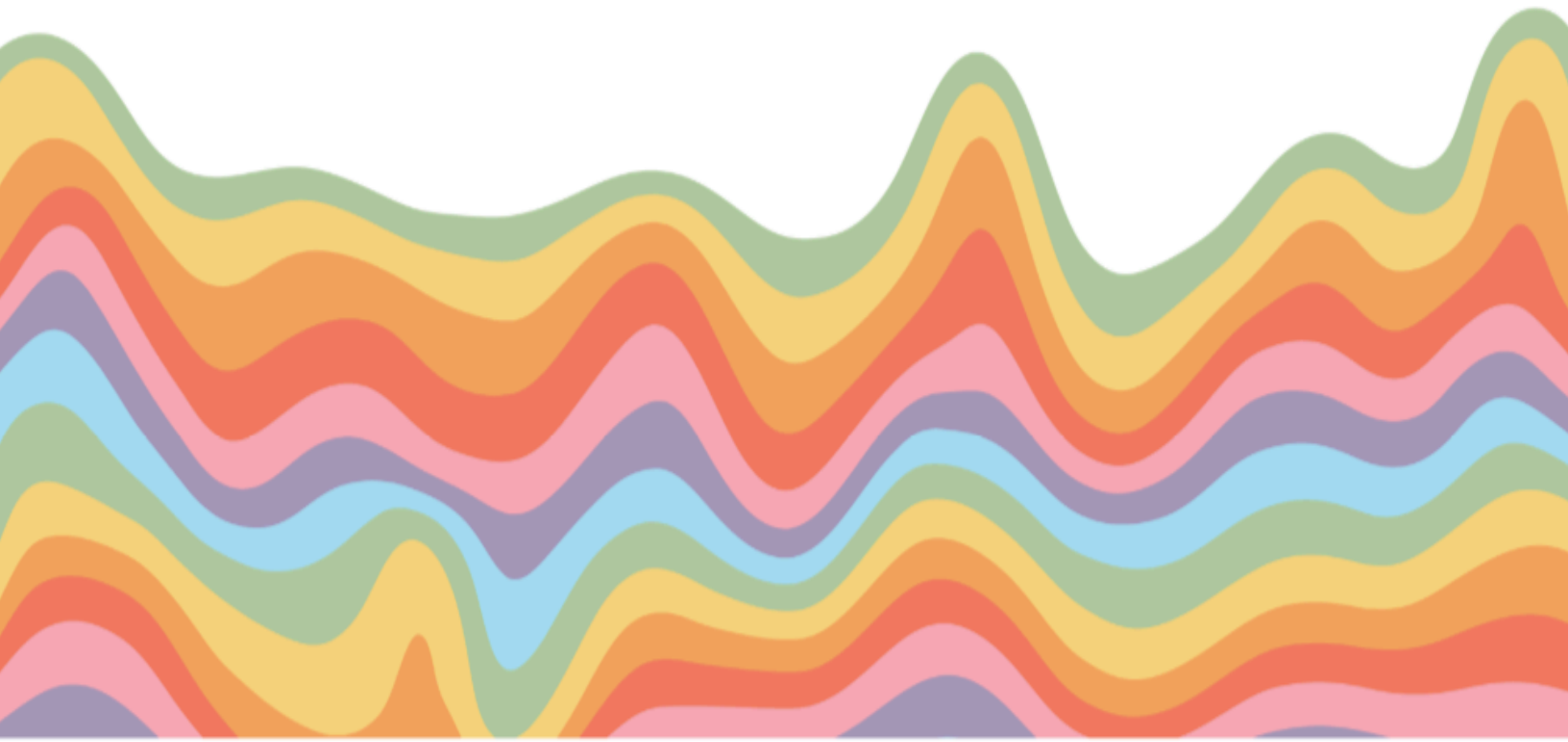
202²3 YOUtopia AfterBurn Report

Preface: That Burning Feeling

Going into 2022, as the pandemic released its grip on the world, we all started to look at how to bring back the things we loved that had been put aside for the best part of 2 years. The thing we lost most in those times was the sense of community. Some people managed to keep the flame alive in small pods, but we were not allowed to commune together, and in the small batches we manifested, it was strife with fear, suspicion and distance.

The story of this AfterBurn report is how San Diego tried to rebuild the community - what worked, what didn't and how we tried to heal the wounds that existed before the virus. The pandemic provided a tabula rasa upon which we could amplify the strengths of our community, and smudge out some of the mistakes, and hopefully apply the art of kintsugi to our deeper wounds, where we look directly at them and try to make something more beautiful.

History is necessary to understand how we got here, the issues we have faced, and the strengths we have in the community. And as with any story, there are many perspectives, and this is just one and each story is only as reliable as its narrator. Hopefully as we rebuild trust and form a more common story of our community, we will all embrace the light of honest disclosure. With truth and vulnerability, we can all be seen as the hero in our journeys, regardless of where we are on that path. Let ourselves see others as we would have them see ourselves.





A Briefish History

SPARKS BEFORE THE FIRE

Before there were events to attend, people gathered on irregular schedules to do irregular things in interesting rings. Doctors without licenses practiced Techno in Random places without boundaries or borders.

Something Swartie that way came making magic and alchemy as Whirling Girls spun fire around a Magnus opus of collaborative art that shined Mithra's light across the sky. Prep up and step up he did with a heart tinned in gold foil.

Some said to call her Janet if you're nasty, but a fabric of Plaid and Pink cloaked the people in kink cutting polygons out of straight lines.

Norah Jones was chilling, and the community was building one art at a time, in backyards across cross city lines in halcyon times.

And it goes unsaid, that sometimes they Just Fred their memories into a picture that continues to flicker.

Too many individual chance sparks in the neolithic age to provide attribution, defining a shape and form and much education.

Warmed by Burning Man, the sparks began to breathe at home, but needed a bit of fuel to before they could be on their own.



CATCHING A FLAME

Our community was founded less in service to Burning Man, but more as a gathering place for ideologically creative misfits that Burning Man was an avatar for. Early Burning Man had been relatively underground, it was known to the cultural explorers. You discovered Burning Man because you were already on a path and asking questions. Eventually someone would point you in the direction of the ticket booth and say, “Buy the ticket. Take the ride.”

The work of building the San Diego Burning Man community was done by individuals on their own path, meeting each other and finding common purpose. The tribe started forming one small event at a time, with Indy Amos hosting the first very very unofficial decompression at his home in 2003.

The community coalesced through 2003-6, with Mark Hinkley’s Xara project being the catalyst the seekers were looking for. His project was more than just art – it was intentional art that wanted to pass the ethics of Burning Man into the whole culture.

Xara was a theme camp at Burning Man. It was a charter school in San Diego. It was an amazing event in the grassy hills of San Diego at the foot of a monastery. If you’ve seen the glowing flowers made from recycled bottles that XSL (the Xara Sports League) has brought to YOUtopia, you have seen one of his ripples. He passed in 2022, and if we ever build our Mount Rushmore, he will be the first face on it.

2006 – 2010: WALKING ON FIRE

Xara was a catalyst that introduced our kindreds to each other, but the community needed its own personality and events. In 2006, Brady Mahaney formed SunDBurn LLC, which became the entity that formally started throwing community events. The original post-Burn events were called “Decompressions” in honor of the need to safely acclimate with the default world after Burning Man has turned you out, down and around.

We choked on reject cocksickles at Winter Wonderland in Alpine and the Space Bar brought us closer to our friends 50 feet away.

Pu'uhonua gathered us and let every type of relationship flourish. We discussed deep social theories naked in hot tubs, then laughed still naked eating bagels at sunrise. Seeing everyone hang so naturally brought us together as a community. Thanks to the Greys that Sher'd Bill and the Barb who let Fraggles flourish while Cable and Schutte played hide-and-peek from no one.

People took their inspiration to bring what they could to the world that was unfolding. Viagra was hard at work tossing his chicken at Phat Elvis's Chicken Shack and the first SD group gathered as Shangri-La at the burn. Lady Frogs, Busy Buddhas, so many iconic builders in the community came together, raised it, tore it down and re-used it as something else the next year.

If Juwana do something, Juwana do it right and this was the brownie troupe to bring it tight.

2010-2013 FIRING ON ALL CYLINDERS: YOUUTOPIA AND SDCAP

Jacumba hosted our biggest Decom until then, Dreamland Station. Then the tribe that made space for our vibe, the La Jolla Band of Luiseno Indians, without reservation offered us their home to gather our own. Our first year had a population limit of 800 and was rented for \$7700 by SunDBurn, LLC. YOUtopia was originally a theme for the Decompression. Then the Decompression became YOUtopia, with a new theme selected every year, sometimes out of spite.

*Eon was a blaze with activity from Dan to dawn.
Tender babies grilled by Mr French and seasoned by Kimmie.
They sought the light after long desert nights.
Cog's in the machine, Arell-evating everyone she smiles at,
building backyard community themes on poetic reams
casting forward molten dreams, an iron foundation laid out
to build our teams.
Juice joints brought us to the river, drinking Cassafrass all
day, leaving us in a haze thinking we were XSLent in Elysian
fields.
Kiwis aren't the only fruit that bring Bats and Miscreants
afoot. Sammy, Nicole, and our G's down the street sang for
their supper and created places to meet.*

2013- 2016 FLYING TOO CLOSE TO THE SUN

As the event grew, it became necessary to unlink the financials from an individual behind an LLC, and step into our purpose as a proper 501(c)3 arts non-profit. The San Diego Collaborative Arts Project (SDCAP) was officially born on January 15, 2015, to support arts in San Diego, with the 10 foundational principles of Burning Man as its guide.

The community was steady and organically growing. Strong bonds were fostered at events and pre-event crafting, teaching and building sessions at people's homes were not uncommon. Into this, CoLab, our local creation space for Burners was launched. Jon Ray's light and Natural's humanity converged to create space to gather the community in a space funded by proceeds from YOUtopia. San Diego finally had a space where tools, knowledge, support and community could flourish.

In the late teens, transformational festival culture exploded, and YOUtopia was caught in the Zeitgeist. Burning Man was the frame on which commercial interests and intentional communities aligned themselves. Regional events like YOUtopia offered minimal barriers to entry for transformational curious participants. However, with it came a lack of acculturation that the existing community wasn't quite prepared for. YOUtopia grew to a population of over 3000 people in a few years.

People who experienced YOUtopia knew it was offering something different than what they were experiencing at other festivals. As much as our culture speaks for itself, the principles of decommodification and gifting, even participation and radical self-expression, only become meaningful when you sit with them. Many participants jump from adjacent but not aligned communities, not having the opportunity to understand the specific gifts that the principles offer the individual for authentic exploration, rather than off-the-rack transformation.

The enthusiasm and vitality that new people brought to the community were welcomed and YOUtopia had some amazing theme camps, artists and volunteers who dedicated time and resources that took the event to a new level. Amazing camps and communities grew as seeds landing from other places.

2017 – 2021 THROWING WATER ON A FLAME

*Trip this bish, my problem children, dominating subs and
stacks, growing up fast and skipping class.*

Missed some lessons but gave some great impressions.

Wonder what they'd be like all grown up.

*Like a caterpillar into a butterfly, or a broken child into a
bitter guy?*

*Queens become Kings, but Monarchs only rule so long, they
spread their wings and spin a new song.*

*Dank food got served to those who went pro, forgetting the
lessons of how we grow.*

*Gatorade and gates that made Cable's fate and the riches
began to fade.*

Starting around 2017, and peaking in 2019, bad blood had begun to grow between factions in the community. Theme camps and volunteers felt underappreciated and had expectations from the gifts they had given. Ideologies competed whether to pay event staff or whether volunteering can be a form of service and personal growth. Many believed that leadership wasn't responsive or communicating well.

The reality is that volunteers and management are the same people and hierarchy is mostly used for organization rather than status. Unfortunately, ideologies built up around doers, the management and participants and became codified in ways that let in default world toxicity, rather than the communal effort and do-ocracy that the 10 principles represent.

At the same time, the Reservation where the event was being handled was doubling our rate which had already been consistently increasing over the years, to \$150,000 which became untenable. We were forced to move the event out of San Diego to California City, which was significantly outside of the community's travel zone. While the 2019 event was considered one of the best in years by its participants, the attendance dropped precipitously, and the event lost money.

Only a few months later, the pandemic would sideline YOUtopia for 2 years. Luckily, SDCAP had reserves they had been accumulating for a land purchase that allowed CoLab to continue through that time, and for the basics of community management to continue functioning.

So, there is a reason for this long historical preface into an AfterBurn report. It is important to understand the challenges of bringing YOUtopia back to the community and the choices that were intentionally made to bring the community back to its core strengths:.

- No existing site to go back to
- Minimal funds to produce the event and keep CoLab going
- A disaffected leadership community that was stewing in resentments
 - Bad word of mouth regarding volunteering for YT

Typically, an AfterBurn report will have a department-by-department review of improvements for the next YOUtopia, but starting at the beginning of Jan 2022, we have built a team that has been running non-stop, progressing forward, integrating, learning in real-time and trying to move the ball down the court as fast as possible so that we could get on with the fun stuff in our community. A few balls were dropped (mostly in my desire to move forward).

Please accept my apologies for the Minimal Viable AfterBurn reports to follow. We did listen. We did improve. We didn't document it so well. For the sake of succinctness, the failure to launch YOUtopia shall be referred to as 'FailTopia', our make-up from the 2022 event is 'SpringTopia'. The fall version that resets the timeline is 'YOUtopia2023'. The complexities of this story are myriad. I think the results speak for themselves. Let's move past the past, put a marker at this point in our history, and move forward without recriminations, but with honesty, and build the community we want.

CABLE KING
SDCAP PRESIDENT

3 YOUtopias: One AfterBurn Report

REIGNITION (JANUARY 2022)

Coming out of the pandemic, there were a few embers still burning in the community fire pit. People were learning how to people again, at a minimum distance of 6 feet and a sheath between them. I saw eager people energized and others broken and disaffected. And then the kids throw rocks from the quarry. Those of us who just can't not burn started meeting up again, and slowly oxygen started to enter the stream.

The path to fuel and heat was a painstaking process of reconnecting one-by-one, finding out who is still in and whose life has moved on to something else. YOUtopia is run by individuals, coalescing the energy of many into an abstraction. Everyone who stepped up in the early months of 2022 was fundamental to our effort.

I was recruited to the Board by Alicia, the former president. And immediately following, several board members left to pursue other interests. In order to have some semblance of structure, Trish Kaufman joined the board reluctantly, in service, because of her long experience in the community. Biggie and Kat were the other two board members that remained from the pandemic times.

Richard LeCoultre was recruited outside a bar in South Park to lead the Production team. Richard was smart and enthusiastic, a little green, but modeled the egoless leadership that we sought to perpetuate through the ranks of all who volunteer within our organization. He understood the intangible gift of participation that far outreaches any return we can coerce out of a commodified exchange. We didn't mean to do what we did to him, but.... we did.

He built the team, one by one. There was skepticism from some. Fear of coming out again from others. Outright hostility from a few that didn't trust the 'Under New Management' sign in the window. And the brave few started working diligently to learn everything they could to bring YOUtopia back in 2022.

We had a new site with Houselights, LLC, in Campo. It started well. The site was underdeveloped, but we saw this as a long-term relationship that we could grow with. From March through September, there were improvements to the property that we thought would make it work for a smaller YOUtopia.

The Production team and Board worked with Houselights, communicating our needs, but also, understanding that we wouldn't want to do major clearing too far before the event. A lot of scrub was pulled up and areas were cleared. And it seemed we were on-track for an October 1 operational site. The main outstanding issue was packing the land to make it suitable for walking and camping.

DELUGE (OCTOBER 2022)

Perhaps we were naïve. We were definitely inexperienced. And personally (I, Cable) just returned from a 3-week 80th birthday vacation with my family that had been planned before I got involved on the board. Although we had been in contact over phone and email while I traveled Europe, our final pre-event site visit was set for October 8, the day I returned. We got to the site and none of the soil had been packed and graded properly.

In a mad panic, we all tried the best we could to salvage the situation. The board voted 3-2 to make a last attempt to fix the site and try to save the event. We agreed to share with Houselights the expense of bringing in heavy equipment (>\$20000) that could fix the site quickly, if we could get there in time. Two board members resigned when they determined that their risk tolerance had been stressed by the situation. Completely understandable as the chaos, fear and unknown were palpable to those involved in the decision making.

Ric Moran stepped in to assist us with negotiating with equipment operators. He worked valiantly, but that industry is understandably cautious about the million-dollar equipment it lends out. Ric had managed to get the equipment and driver for the next week, but in the end, it all fell apart at finding a driver who the rental company would allow to transport it to our site.

After so much effort, and coming so close, we had to cancel the event because we did not think it would be safe for participants. We made the announcement as quickly as feasible, with a request to hold on for more details. The community was saddened and angry in some quarters. The leads were disappointed that all their efforts led to this. Artists, theme camps and participants had invested their time, money and energy to create a community event to bring us back after the pandemic. Their losses were more than financial. Trust and faith were tested, and some lost. And to others there was a tangible financial distress.

In retrospect, both teams were inexperienced. Houselights, primarily run by Dean Estes, minimized our requests for grading and compacting the land to make it safe for the event. We could have also done better through continuous monitoring of the site and communication with Dean.

The relationship with Dean/Houselights continued to deteriorate after the event. They chose to withhold the ten-thousand-dollar deposit that we had put on the property, where they were contractually obligated to “remove all scrub brush, grade and compact the land to a condition that is suitable for camping” by October 1st. As of this writing, they continue to hold our deposit and we have determined that we have limited energy to put into the world, and we would like to expend it towards building community rather than chasing former business partners like a repo man.

Special Thanks

———— to the true believers ————

who stepped up and led us out of
the pandemic

*Aaron Ward (Man Candy), Alicia Smith, Amanda Crutchfield (Fifty Shades of Blue),
Amanda Nevarez (MeowMeow), Andy Liedholm (Shit Wizard), Brie Peach (Con
Queso), Cable King, Cassy Haynes (Cassa Frass), Christopher Abshire (Rex), Dan
Smith (Professor), David Bever (51), Di Ionescu (Do or Di), Eilish Roisin- GrayWoulfe
(Mewfz), Emily Effner (Leaf), Emily Romero, Erica Lowenberg (Esoterica), Frank
Padilla Jr., Jason Wilkins (Jace), Jeff Makey (Riggerus), John Cardinale (Codec),
Joshua Hanson (Squirrel D), Ladonna Alequin (Kuddlz), Leslie Liberty, Louise
Bloomfield, Marc Caron, Marco Primi (Feedback), Mathew Pequeno (Duchess),
Natalie Ann Nucci (Nastalie), Natalie Watson (Satya Kaur), Nicole Hickman
(MissInfo), Ric Morgan (Ric Without The K), Richard LeCoultre, Rishi Dhiri (Blaze),
Sara Sennott, Stephanie Zierenberg (Stumbles), Trish Kaufman*

Embers (November - December 2022)

The production team and Board were manically trying to figure out how to salvage the situation, explain it honestly but in a way that wouldn't create further damage. And over the next weeks, we had to swiftly determine the next steps that would allow us to make another attempt at bringing YOUtopia back, but also do right by the community that invested in us to lead them.

Because of the sour ending with Houselights, it impossible for us to consider them as a future partner. We needed to mitigate the financial effect on the community and regain the trust we had been trying to earn back. The team remaining to handle the tide: Richard, Jeff, Trish, Cable, Alicia, 51 keeping us safe, Emily managing volunteers. And most of all, the leads who had worked so hard and still believed we could bring YOUtopia back.

We spent a few weeks figuring out our financial losses from the event. It became obvious that we could not offer full refunds to everyone if we were to try to host another YOUtopia event. But we wanted to offer a way that would make people whole in the end, if they could wait it out. And to refund as much as we could to those who needed money now. Even though we had an explicit no-refund policy and we determined that legally, we had no obligation to refund any amount of money, we decided that the following policy was best for the community practically and morally.

- 1) Ask the community to hold their tickets to a rescheduled event. Eventually we offered either a date in June for Spring YOUtopia or the traditional date of third weekend in October for a Fall Event.
- 2) For those who needed some immediate financial assistance immediately, we offered a cash-refund of 67% of the ticket price with a 33% credit towards an event in 2023.

Understandably, community disappointment and anger were expressed in social forums. We tried to answer as candidly as possible. A contingent of former leads and board members started encouraging people to contact their credit companies for a direct refund of 100%. Some of the latent anger against past leadership was used to cause further dissension in the community and a certain number of ticketholders decided to pursue the bank-refund route.

While it took over 120 days for most of the bank-directed disputes to settle, they were generally successful, and we took a financial hit based on that. Had the tickets been purchased through Ticketmaster, they wouldn't have received refunds on a rescheduled event, but it was in the bank's interest to keep their customers happy, and the squeaky wheel gets the refund. This effort by disgruntled former Leads put a dent in our budget, but most importantly aggravated existing emotional wounds that we had been trying to heal.

Building Fire: Survival Edition

It took the rest of 2022 to bring FailTopia to conclusion. An exhausted, depleted leadership crawled into 2023, unsure with no site and not sure where to go. Alicia, the board president, was about to move away to a new job, and Cable was elected as the president of SDCAP. Some leads had to leave for real-world reasons, but most stayed with the ship, having gained a lot of knowledge through their first effort.

Luckily, the distress signal had been heard and a few people came to rescue the SS YOUtopia. The CoLab family stepped up and brought some of their best to help bring YOUtopia back. Cecile Pham joined as Producer and brought an intentionality and marketing/communication background that was desperately needed. Diane Hoffoss came on as an advisor, with great real-world experience that helped quietly guide us. Vic Laio, the managing director of CoLab, joined the board, with a lot organizational experience helping to ground the board as we navigated choppy waters. Emily/Leaf joined the PLT and began the process of rebuilding the volunteer teams that create the event. Even Cable, who likes to keep his fingernails clean, joined Production as another hand to bring the ship ashore. New leads came out of the community to fill out the crew and give us faith we were still supported. This

was a team built on egoless leadership, a desire to serve and a laser focus to earn trust through action.

On the first business day of January, Diane sent Cable an email reminding him that, “We needed to start yesterday.” “Damnit” said a slumbering bear crawling out of an igloo made of icicle tears. Hadn’t Greg Young sent him a message months before, but too late for the FailTopia. He mentioned a place a few miles past DirtHeap that he thought would work well.

Cable called DeAnza Springs Resort and had an unexpectedly positive conversation with the management. It was determined over the next few weeks that this site might work out. Before signing a contract, our operations team had to visit. The last voices of approval that were necessary were 51 and Riggerus. 51, aka David Bever, keeps us safe from ourselves and the civic bureaucracy of permitting. Jeff/Riggerus is our on-the-ground man orchestrating the practical complexities of YT, grounding the chaos that can swirl around. They signed off on the site and we were ready to begin anew with battle-scarred leads, fresh voices, and humbled leadership.

SpringTopia 2022

The writing of this brings up a lot of memories. I don’t think the specifics of execution are really the story to tell for this version of the AfterBurn. Each team delivered a list of lessons learned for each event that have helped us improve our processes internally. We are developing deliberate processes that improve the volunteer experience and help share knowledge from event to event. We want every volunteer to have the opportunity to build YOUtopia in the way that calls them. And to grow the personal toolbox of skills that will aid them throughout their life.

Our team came together. We created something magnificent out of the carnage. Our thanks go out to everyone who stayed with us, supported along the way, and got to experience the fresh rebirth of our community. The named leadership in this memoir could not have accomplished anything without the day-to-day operational execution and perseverance of all our Leads.

I would like to send a very special thank you to David Bever (51) and Erica Parks (Esoterica) who lead our safety and ranger operations. Through their professionalism and the dedication of their teams to protect every participant, we had an event with 0 reportable incidents of any magnitude. It is a silent gift they give to the community that allows us all to safely explore the playground of YOUtopia. As this was our first permitted event, they were also instrumental in navigating the bureaucracies and demonstrating our commitment to safety to the County.

*We could not have done anything without the Leads
who devoted their time to bring YOUtopia back.
Thank you.*

Aaron Garrett (Levandur), Aaron Land (chaos), Aaron Ward (Man Candy), Amanda Brovold (MJ or Amanda Joy), Amanda Crutchfield (Fifty Shades of Blue), Amanda Qassar (Quasar), Andrew Bianchi, Andy Liedholm (Shit Wizard), Anthony O'Brien (king), Be McCune (KillerBe), Cable King, Cecile Pham, Chris Jones (Fire Hazard), Christopher Abshire (Rex), Dan Smith (Professor), David Bennett, David Bever (51), Diane Hoffoss (Sparkle / Prof Hotsauce), Doris Dialogu (Swampy), Ed Bloomfield, Emily Effner (Leaf), Emily Effner (Leaf), Erica Parks (Esoterica), Evan Castroverde (Dopee), Indy Am, Jason Wilkins (Jace), Jeff Makey (Riggerus), Jessie Thomas, John Cardinale (Codec), Joshua Hanson (Squirrel D), Kacey Komloski (Kacey O'Lacey), Louise Bloomfield, Marc-Olivier Caron, Marcy Jo MacGregor (Cat Bite), Matt Pequeno (Duchess), Natalie Watson (Satya Kaur), Nick Twyman, Nicole Hickman (MissInfo), Ric Morgan (Ric Without The K), Richard LeCoultre, Rishi Dhiri (Blaze), Robert Rukavina, Scott Ketcham (Scottie), Stephanie Zierenberg (Stumbles), Trish Kaufman (Trixy), Victor J Liao (JollyRancher)

Through a very fly-by-our-pants execution of SpringTopia, we were supported by the individual volunteers of our community who stepped up to put in the hours to make it happen on the ground so that each participant had the best experience possible. One of the best compliments to our team was from a participant who said, "I've never seen the volunteers so happy and friendly at YOUtopia". We thank each volunteer that took it upon themselves to create the vibe they wanted to see in the world.

The artists and theme camps are the core of our event. YOUtopia is about YOU expressing yourself, finding a community of like-minded people and offering a piece of yourself that helps define the event every year. Thank you for participating!

Thank you to the artists and theme camps that created YOUtopia Spring 2023

YOUtopia Spring 2023 Financials

And because truth, transparency and honesty are foundational to a strong community, here are our financials for the event. We thank everyone who bought a ticket and supported us. The proceeds from Spring and Fall have allowed us to get a new location for CoLab that will bring the community together for years to come.

Total Income	\$272,354.25
Total Expense	\$226,895.33
Art Grants	\$21,986.45

Land Contracts; Permits	\$30,102.80
Equipment: Contracted Services (Power, Heavy Equip, Tents, Portos, etc.)	\$40,209.28
Equipment: Owned/Replaced	\$2,343.86
Equipment: Transportation (Kubotas, Box Truck, Fuel, etc.)	\$26,990.68
Commissary; Ice Sales	\$3,764.71
Security; Law Enforcement; Fire Dept.; Medical	\$24,102.85
Overhead (Ins., Training, Schwag, Wristbands, Printing)	\$35,285.57
Contingency	\$28,537.80
Total Proceeds (See adjustments in Fall related to tickets)	\$73,996.72

YOUtopia Fall 2023

There were staffing adjustments between Spring and Fall, but we were lucky enough to have most of the Spring Leads and PLT re-join. Richard LeCoultre and Emily Effner both chose to take a break after the grueling year and half. Cable went back to board duties. And Cecile stepped in to the executive producer role.

Included below are some of the lessons we captured in the Fall.

Thank you to the leads and volunteers that created YOUtopia Fall 2023

Robert Rukavina (Ant), Andrew Bianchi (Bianchi), Marcy MacGregor (Cat Bite), Aaron Land (Chaos), Jesse Karras (Coconut), Stephanie Fredriks (Commander Buttcheek), Daniel Schwartzman (Dan), Danya Ramos (Danya), Matt Pequeno (Duchess), Erica Parks (Esoterica), Amanda Crutchfield (Fifty Shades of Blue), Chris Jones (Fire Hazard), Vic Liao (Jolly Rancher), Be McCune (KillrBe), Peter Ingargiola (Lupo), Marc Caron (Marc), Amanda Nevarez (Meow Meow), Lauren Perkins (Moss), Nicole Hickman (Nicole), Amanda Qassar (Quasar), Raul Barajas (Raul), Sarah Cohen (Sarahdactyl), Natalie Watson (Satya Kaur),

Kimberly Jacobus (Sheba), Andy Liedholm (Shit Wizard), Matthew Smith (Smitti), Laura Makey (Spectrum), Keith Macgregor (Split), Josh Hanson (Squirrel D), Anila Madiraju (Ziptie)

Thank you to the artists and theme camps that created YOUtopia Fall 2023

PRODUCTION STRUCTURE

This event used a multi-Producer structure with ONE Executive Producer, FOUR Producers who supported department hubs (Comms, Infrastructure, Logistics, Content and Volunteers), and TWO adjacent roles (for Safety and Rangers).

It is noted that there are two ideas for the structure in the future. There has been some discussion regarding the best number of producers, between 2 (the old model) and around 5 as we've been practicing. The team has determined that having a TEAM worked better for all. As we are all volunteers, and life happens, this option allows for changes to happen within the personnel and get support quickly by other team members to keep the production rolling in a positive manner.

Overall, the PLT team made space for each other's voices, balanced each other's strengths and weaknesses and mostly operated as an intelligent and respectful group of peers. While there were disagreements, the team mostly understood the importance of operating as an entity and supported the majority vote.

INFRASTRUCTURE NEEDS

We need more dedicated Hub Leads that really understand where to step in to guide and provide resources for individual departments and when and how to initiate inter-department collaborations.

Egos and competitiveness aren't productive in this organization and it's imperative to protect those that altruistically lend their time and dedication to the production to continue to make it fun and an opportunity for an enriching experience.

Leads also need better guidance on what is appropriate behavior and, ethically, where their resources should go, and their benefits/exemptions start and end.

This event had a lot of new experiences for the team, first timers who were challenged with getting and/or maintaining historical knowledge. But most of the team not only met the challenge, but excelled in their new roles, thanks to the overall support of the entire team.

INFRASTRUCTURE INVESTMENT NEEDED

We need to replace our present dilapidated shade structures with more robust and easier to assemble EMT structures.

We need to invest in an auger for stakes.

We need to grow department leads' awareness of how their work affects other departments within the production timeline.

CRM / Project Management Tool: Streamlining multiple points of information for SDCAP projects, including YOUtopia.

SUGGESTED CHANGES/IMPROVEMENTS

- Increase the number of dedicated Leads and better communicate the Production Roadmap so that departments understand how their timelines integrate with others.
- Re-evaluate whether an Operations role is really needed.
- It would be helpful for Dispensary to communicate more broadly, so that
 - 1) Departments can share resources
 - 2) Departments can update and request once they see the final needs list
 - 3) Comms can know better how many maps and such each department needs.
- Many departments need to consider pre-event training and / or resources for their volunteers.
- We need to develop protocols to handle situations that may not warrant police intervention but violate community ethics.
- The event may want to re-evaluate the ticket pricing model. We had more late ticket purchases than normal which added unnecessary stress to the production process. Incentivizing early ticket purchases would help with event planning and budgeting.
- There are many advantages to our current site that facilitate production. However, the site's conflict with its residents due to revoking its nudist policy causes tension within parts of our community that feel aligned with their cause. We have acted as ambassadors between them and have hopefully helped the situation. In fact, some participants held a Pro-Nude march through the community, which was joined at points by the management. We hope this was an olive branch for future improvements in relations.
- The sound policy for this space is an evolving negotiation with the residents with potential effects on our permit requirements. We would like to find ways to create a sound area that doesn't affect the residents. The benefit of limited sound hours has been fewer emergency service requests.

IDEAS FOR OUTREACH OPPORTUNITIES

We were unable to lock-in our insurance until late in the planning. Getting this process under control is necessary to reduce risk that the event won't be able to get permits and equipment. We have reached out to a couple other regional burns such as Bequinox and UnScruz to trade ideas on how they handled their insurance. In those discussions, it became evident that there would be great benefit to increasing overall communication between regional events, in order to develop a stronger network of these kinds of key players to share ideas beyond just insurance. Topics of common interest include:

- Increasing community engagement

- Best practices with marketing for a 10 Principles Event
- Managing personality conflicts within leadership
- How to best develop Standard Operating Procedures
- Increasing cross-attendance and mentorship opportunities at each other’s events
- Sharing referrals of good brokers, agents and vendors.
- Embedding a Culture of Consent in every component of the event and communication.
- Enculturation methods such as Leadership Programs

BOARD OPPORTUNITIES

The board is constantly seeking to expand representation by different parts of the community, to include different perspectives and diverse identities. We look to continue helping the community understand the ways they can participate, the relationship between the non-profit, the event and the activities that the event profits support year around. A fundamental requirement of participation, regardless of background, must be the ability to work collaboratively, understand different viewpoints, reach consensus, and understand that dogmatic solutions don’t allow our community to flourish in all its variations.

YOUTOPIA FALL 2023 FINANCIALS

Revenue	
Youtopia Ticket Income	\$185,168.81
Donations to Colab	\$286.74
Total Ticket Income	\$185,455.55
Deduct Fall chargebacks	-\$13,090.95
Deduct Spring chargebacks	-\$380.95
Adjusted Event Revenue	\$171,983.65
Ice Sales	\$4,753.45
Total Revenue	\$175,561.66

Other Expenditures	
YOUtopia Art Grant	\$14,384.00
YOUtopia Commissary	
Coffee and Ice	\$2,310.00
Commissary/Please Dept	\$1,441.32
Total YOUtopia Commissary	\$3,751.32
YOUtopia Equipment-Contracted Services	
Portos	\$13,806.00
Radios	\$3,014.59
Tents/Structures	\$515.00
Total YOUtopia Equipment-Contracted Services	\$17,335.59
YOUtopia Equipment-Transportation	
Kubotas/Gators	\$15,137.38
Mileage Reimbursement	\$350.98
Perimeter Vehicles & Equip	\$3,126.39
Total YOUtopia Equipment-Transportation	\$18,614.75
YOUtopia Land Contracts	\$28,697.60
YOUtopia Overhead	
Insurance	\$9,229.57
Office Supplies/Expenses	\$66.00

PLT Discretionary Budget	\$2,237.98
Printing	\$779.80
Rangers support	\$973.13
Schwag	\$3,020.60
Training-Offsite July Meeting & Safetopia	\$600.00
Volunteer Party	\$2,543.04
Wristbands	\$342.12
Total YOUTopia Overhead	\$20,467.16
YOUTopia Security/County Fees	
Fire Suppression (staff)	\$1,500.00
Medical	\$5,970.29
Security	\$9,862.00
Total YOUTopia Security/County Fees	\$17,332.29
Total Other Expenditures	\$120,582.71
NET REVENUE	\$54,978.95