10,000 Miles, Democracy and a Dream

By Misty Mocracy

Since July 22, 2004, the VoterDrive Bus has been using the roads and highways of America to create the largest artwork in the world - the word VOTE in script, starting with the letter e and unravelling the word westward across the United States. The VoterDrive started in New York City, and has stopped in small towns and huge cities and registered, questioned people anonymously, and learned from people from all walks of life.

Black Rock City citizens have been overwhelmingly positive, forward-thinking and engaging regarding the primary mission of VoterDrive: to increase participation in your community through engaging the democratic process. The Voter drive car is non-partisan, nor are we electioneering for any particular party or candidate. It is up to the individual to educate herself about the issues and the candidates and get herself to the polls.

Our questionnaire on board asks four questions. Why don't you vote? What issues are important to you? What can your elected officials do to make this country better? If you ever ran for office what would your platform be? After a participant fills out a form, it is scanned onto our website and then the participant can read what others have written across the country in the folders on board the bus. You can also register to vote on the bus.

What has been learned so far from this project is that Americans have basically the same concerns regardless of their party affiliation: Jobs, healthcare, social security and freedom.

After finishing the drive in San Francisco and underlining the word VOTE back to NYC, only one question will be asked of Americans: What is your definition of freedom? These answers will be posted to our website as well.

So if you aren't registered, or if you would like to add your opinions to our "voices of America" project, stop by the Voter drive bus in Center Camp or flag us down and get on board the "VoterDrive."

The website for VoterDrive is www.voterdrive.com. This project is not corporately sponsored, it is not with any large org, and does not ask you for your real name on the questionnaire. We help you fill out registration forms and give it to you mail it in and get registered and prepared to VOTE. All VoterDrive asks is that you participate in the "default world" and please be positive!

Save The H2O Tower

By Howard Jones

Driving through Gerlach on the way to the default world, you may be1 you, ruining the old red water tower next to the small park just across Main Street from Bev's Miners Club. It may have been a nice piece, but it is in bad repair. The town has already raised close to $30K of the $50K they are targeting for its renovation. Every little bit helps, so consider donating to that cause. They have "I helped save the Gerlach Water Tower" T-shirts and tank tops available for $10. If the T-shirt stand to the right of the tower is sold out, you might be able to park by the Water Tower and pop across to the Miner's Club and leave a donation with Bev. You can also make donations at www.burningman.com.

Greeters Three

By Matt Mullin

Jack, 70 years old, is the oldest of three generations of active Burners in his family. "We are all volunteers with Greeters," explained Jack, who joins his son, Riffle, and daughter-in-law, Beanie, as well as grandchildren, Lulu and Cin, each year for their annual family trek to the playa. "Our family has been represented at Burning Man since 1999," he said.

"We never get tired of Burning Man," Riffle said as he showed off his tattoo of the man, circa 1999. "Jack and Lulu have their own Burner tattoos too." John and Beanie's youngest daughter, Cin, 17, that she has been struggling this year to meet new friends. "I've been ditched a couple times this year, which is frustrating," she said, indicating that she believes the behavior is due to her age. "Maybe I'll organize a Miner's Camp next year, or at least an activity that gives older teens a place to gather and meet." It was interesting to note the family's difference of opinion on the presence of children at Burning Man, but all seemed to agree that the decision should be left to the families, not the event organizers. "As a mom, I get nervous sometimes having a teenage daughter out there," Beanie said. "But I also think there is a tremendous value to be found in the experience."

The family hopes to continue participating as long as the event exists. "As long as I keep seeing those 'thrilled-to-be-' here' looks on their faces as they process through Greeters Station, I'll keep coming back," Riffle said.

"I'll probably stop coming to Burning Man the day after I die," Jack said. "This is my fifth year here. I'm having a great time, and I know next year will be even better."
Mayor elect of Black Rock City

City and friends

Aerial view of Black Rock City

Black Rock City 2004.
See you next year!