Washington D.C. displays the AIDS Memorial Quilt

Last time in its entirety

It was a somber October day in Washington D.C. I was preparing to return to UTK, but before I left I had to see it. I hadn’t seen it yet and the rumor was that this was the last time it would be displayed in its entirety. It was getting too large to be displayed in any one place. It is the National AIDS Memorial Quilt. It contains over 10,000 pieces. Each piece is three feet by six feet and bears the name of someone who has fallen victim to AIDS.

When I arrived at the Ellipse, in front of the White House, where the quilt was displayed, there were thousands of people milling around. As we approached the outskirts of this enormous quilt, the sounds of the city were drowned by the sounds of silent mourning and contemplative respect.

I arrived with my boyfriend and my mother, and we walked around the first couple of panels together. But soon our own reflective introspection separated us and we were soon exploring the many personal memorials alone and silent. There were panels that were written on by many of the victims’ friends. Each expressing their unspoken wishes and affections for the deceased. Other panels were decorated with items from the deceased. One panel had a pair of jeans from the AIDS victim, while another panel had the victims hospital cloths.

When I looked across the horizon, I saw the enormity of the quilt and saw the individuality expressed by each panel. The reality of the tragedy was powerful. It was emotionally overwhelming to look across the 14 acres and not look away or close my eyes. I couldn’t help but to recognize the tremendous human loss and suffering that these panels memorialized.

Perhaps the most moving part of the experience was when I arrived at the center of the quilt. At the center there is a large section of material that is open for those who could not provide a panel or were unable to participate in the making of one. Sitting on the quilt were a number of people silent....continued on page 11
From the Top!

A letter from the GLSU officers

We're very pleased to see this achievement: the first newsletter of the Gay and Lesbian Student Union. It's truly amazing how far we've come in such a short amount of time. To those of you who may not be aware of our history, we were founded on March 14, 1989. Since then, we've held a fund-raiser, sponsored an event for Gay Pride Week, received national and state-wide publicity, taken trips to Atlanta and to Ocoee Lake, distributed DARE newspaper, hosted guest speakers, and started a pen-pal exchange with the University of Manchester in England, not to mention the numerous parties and potluck dinners, which have been a blast.

We're currently busy promoting the Romanovsky and Phillips concert which we're co-sponsors of, and are working hard on our Halloween Costume Party and Fund-raiser, which will be on October 28 at the Laurel Theatre. We're looking at a bright future for the G.L.S.U., and we would like to see the group become one of the most successful in the nation. We hope to succeed in convincing U.T. to add lesbians and gays to it's non-discrimination statement. We would also like to see a course in gay studies, and some networking between our group and other student groups here at U.T.

Some of our other hopes include doubling the group's membership and obtaining either office space or a house for the G.L.S.U. On a larger scale, improved relations between heterosexual society and the gay community. Of course, we'll always be here to provide support, information, and friendship for U.T.'s gay and lesbian students, especially those who are just coming out.

We would like to thank each and every one of you for your time, talents, and hard work. The G.L.S.U. is your group and you've made it a roaring success. Someone in the group once said, "Well, I don't do anything. I just come to the meetings." We don't believe that. Each of you has something special to offer. The simple act of coming to a meeting adds to our numbers and gives others the strength to keep coming back. You'll never know how many you may have inspired just by being there. You are all a blessing, thanks again.

The Officers
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The Homeless: What do They Think of Gays

by Pasha Baswami and Ace Woodward

How many times have we been accosted by bag toting winos who seem intent on stripping us of every dime and quarter in our pockets? You see the bastard coming towards you and you know what's coming. I'll tell him I'm broke... no I'll tell him I gave all my money to the last bum... no I'll tell him I'm Republican... finally, you decide it's easier to cross the street and just avoid him altogether.

Suddenly, here we are in downtown Knoxville doing a story on the homeless, and not a god damn grocery cart is in site. "Where do you think they hang out?" my Clark Kent cohort asks me. "I don't know, let's try the alley", I suggested.

Finally, we come across a worn but pleasant looking woman in her mid-forties. Her name is Christie and has lived in the streets for over 20 years. "What do you do for a living," we ask gingerly. "What do you see me doing? I hustle." I have to admit my first thoughts were "Who would pay to have sex with this unfortunate human being" Our ensuing conversation, however, soon answered this question. It also revealed a warm, sensitive, thinking person who is not as different and alien to us as we might like to think.

"Weird, really weird" Christie describes her customers. "We've had nine girls killed in Knoxville. They don't know who's killing them and, they don't care. I know the police; they just don't care about us. And that's a real shame cause, damn, I may be a prostitute but I've got a right to...

Gay people? I love them. I love them. I love them!

- Christie
live. I cried like a baby when they found that last girl dead.

"Hey Christie, what you doing?" yelled a woman from a passing car. Christie waves back and beams at us. "Everybody knows me around here." With each passing day we grew to realize the significance of this comment. There is a living functioning, society among the homeless, complete with heroes, villains and politicians.

"Another time, this guy was wanting a blow job, offered me $20... I said ok. We got parked. I thought he was feeling under his seat for his bill fold. He come out with a lead pipe and hit me on both side of my face. You can see the scars. I had $319 up under my wig and $4 up in my pants pocket-- and that's what he got... $4."

Asked about gay people, Christie exclaimed, "I love them. I love them, I love them! They don't push themselves. I mean if a gay person don't push themselves on me or somebody else, it don't bother me. But if I see 'em pushing, it gets my hair up."

Leroy's interview reminded us of the time we called a refrigerator repairman to our house... he bent over and while a hundred pounds of belly steak poured over his belt the other hundred pounds of but filet popped up as his pants fell off exposing a provocative crack. Mr. repairman wiped the excess tabacoo from his toothless grin as he pronounced: "If one of them faggots ever make a pass at me, I'll flatten them out like a pizza." The irony, of course, is that, like the plumber, Leroy actually entertained this as a plausible possibility. But maybe not.

Behind all the male-ego bravado, behind the tough guy talk, is a man trying very hard to display he is not helpless and powerless. His wife listened admiringly as her man roared; "if some guy tried sucking my dick, I'd just kill 'em". "What would you kill them with?" we queried excitedly. "A knife." "A sharp one?" I asked. "Yes!"

"There's the guy you need to talk to" we were told. "We call him the chief... get him to take you to his 'home'. The Chief is a jolly, bearded character who dresses in a long overcoat and presides over his neighborhood. Uncertain of how to approach the Chief, we began following him. It was Ace's turn: "How you doing?" "Oooh, I'm ok." Bill (The Chief) moves briskly and we had to kick our heels to keep up. "I ain't working for no fucking minimum wage. I either write my book or I live on the streets for the rest of my life." Bill, who is 57 was making $10.50 an hour as an electrician up to 1979. Then "people started putting acid in my food and everything started falling apart. I ain't scared no more. Fuck it. They've done all they can do to me... what else can they do to me?"

We met Bill for lunch at his home the following day. Following a hand-sketch map which took us through railroad tracks and river side brush, we arrived at the Chief's hide-away. A Pretty ingenious specimen of water-front real estate! Coffee was served in the bar-b-q which was kept alive by burning all sorts of styrofoam foam cups and plastics. We were offered a cup of the brewing cof-
"Interview?" garbled Elmer in confused amazement. "That's a bunch of pooey!" As Elmer walked away, shaking his head, we chased after him adding: "Huh, we're paying our subjects three dollars for each interview." "Three dollars?" he repeated. Suddenly we had Elmer's undivided attention.

Elmer is a retired army man. He's 69 years old and draws on social security. Elmer's opinion on gays coincides with his position on several current issues: "That's a bunch of pooey!"

Robert was one segment of our survey demographics we had, admittedly, not expected. He chided us after revealing that not only is he unoffended by homosexuals but is, in fact, gay himself. "Surprised?" he asked.

Robert talked of the hardships of his cir-

As long as they ain't holding my hand, they can hold whatever they want to. I don't think it's anybody's business who or what people have sex with.

- Bill

We found Elmer at Market Square wandering about the park checking the telephone booths for spare change. "Would you mind spending a few moments with us for a brief interview?"

It's a bunch of pooey! Yeah, it's wrong but it doesn't offend me. I take mine as it comes.

- Elmer
No, gays and lesbians don't offend me. Seeing if fit into one of the above groups, they don't offend me in the slightest. Surprised?

- Robert

cumstances: "When you try to get a job, the guy doing the interview is going to find out you don't have anywhere to live and he is going to say to himself, 'I don't want to hire this guy... he's likely to disappear' which is pretty unfair. Just because I don't have a place to live, that doesn't impair my capability to work."

How are you treated when you go into a restaurant or a shop?" we asked him. "You tend to get watched like to hawk when you walk in... [at a restaurant] they'll look at you like 'which rock did you crawl out from under.' Chances are they're going to ask to see your money before they allow you to order."

There was a sense of hurt in Robert's voice when he told these stories, a sense of slight embar-

I don't want to deal with homosexuality! It's hurting you and it's hurting me. It's hurting people and family. I think it's wrong. You have so many diseases destroying peoples' lives.

- Eddie
this as a wonderful opportunity to give away Ace's cigarettes.

Eddie appeared to be in his early thirties. His left eye was completely blood shot, perhaps the result of an earlier disagreement. "I have a seventeen year old son, but he lives with his mother in Georgia."

Do you feel discriminated against?" "No, no, no. But I come, I go, and I'm serious about a job; but they won't let [me] hold on to the job. And I'm qualified, you know." Asked why this is so, Eddie searched for an answer; "I don't know"

"What do you think of sex out of wedlock?" we asked. "I don't think its good. I believe in the bible. "Does homosexuality offend you; would it bother you to see two men walking hand-in-hand?" "I don't think God meant it that way, in a realistic way. But if that's their belief, if they believe in doing this and like it, it's alright. It just doesn't make any sense to me."

△ △ △ Homer said to us. His face, etched with deep lines, told a story of a long and rugged life. "The old K-Town was beautiful. It really was... the Old Market House out there, back years ago. The town was booming... places to go, things to do. Now there's nothing. Look at it... nine to five, nine to five. They come in, they do their work and they leave. All these stiffs... doctors and lawyers and indians chiefs. They let the city crumble. Look at it!"

Homer is now retired. "I've plastered all my life. I've worked hard." We were unable to confirm what Homer's living arrangements were. He seemed embarrassed to discuss this subject. "Things are tough now."

Asked about gay people, Homer responded "Yes, they offend me. I'm American. I don't think it's right. A man belongs with a woman. That's what God created them for... man and wife, not boy and boy."

Yes, they offend me. I'm American. I don't think it's right. A man belongs with a woman. That's what God created them for... man and wife, not boy and boy.

- Homer

△ △ △ Walking back to the car, after our meeting with Homer, Ace and I recalled all the homeless people we had met. Over a period of one week, we made friends with a segment of society neither of us had previously had much contact with. It had been a learning experience. The homeless, are much like our roommate, our mother, our next-door neighbor, and our Western Civ. instructor. They are part of a group, but they are also individuals. They are difficult to categorize and hard to make generalizations about. Their ideas concerning gays varied widely from total acceptance to violent repugnance. In the end, we came to realize: They're just people.

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Marriage vs. Domestic Partnership

The Politics of Gay Marriage

by Skip York

The issue of domestic partnership for gay men and lesbians is one which has emerging importance in our communities. This summer in New York, a court ruled that a gay man could remain in his deceased lover's rent controlled apartment on the grounds that he could be considered a member of the lover's family. This looks like progress in terms of gay rights. In fact, many gays actively lobby for such protection under the law for gay relationships.

Cities such as San Francisco, Los Angeles, and Madison (Wisconsin) already have "domestic partnership" laws which allow members of non-tradition relationships to register with the city for benefits which before were reserved for members of heterosexual marriages. These important rights include housing rights, spousal health insurance, adoption rights, bereavement leave and pension rights. Gay rights lobby groups even target federal income tax and veterans' benefits as eventual goals. While all of these rights are welcome in the Gay community, it should be noted that these laws also benefit heterosexual "live-together" relationships and invite potential lawsuits and invasion of privacy about "who" qualifies.

As it stands now, people wanting to declare "domestic partnership" must only prove financial interdependence, commitment to mutual caring and share living quarters. This could as easily be college students, elderly people or anyone else wanting the substantial benefits associated with domestic partnership as it could be individuals in sexual gay relationships. One can see the potential for abuse of this system.

The gay and lesbian community should focus its efforts on the legalization of gay mar-
Celia Who?

By Brick Wright

Celia McCullough is the GLSU advisor, the official link between our group and the UT administration. Celia is also the Director of the Educational Advancement Program - a federally funded program that targets aid to students with a high-risk of drop-out or failure.

Celia and husband, Gary Kaplan, have been married for four years. Gary has a 14 year old son, Tobias, who lives at their home every other week. They are expecting a baby in late January.

In addition to her career and home responsibilities, she has taken time out to be the GLSU advisor. An advisor is someone who knows the ins and outs of the University, as well as, the rules. She is a source of information on events, resources and contacts. Celia is also a friend-on-the-outside; an uninvolved-neutral when the officers need advice.

Celia was originally approached to be the advisor to the Gay-Christian-Non-Christian Student Support Group. However, when the group split, the GLSU seemed "ready to take off." The officers impressed her with their "goals, ideas and enthusiasm." This was her chance to help something that "needed to be."

Celia strongly believes that alternatives need an outlet in a university. This group offers a real community for the gay student. After working with the GLSU officers to fine-tune the constitution she said it would have been a surprise if the charter had been denied.

The goal of the GLSU, Celia feels is to provide a mix of serious and social agendas, including debates, speakers and fun events. This goal appears to be very reflective of the direction the group has already taken.

In the future, Celia would like to see the group "continue to develop a sense of community and continue to educate" those outside the gay community. The group should be constantly "changing, adapting and growing" to meet the needs of the campus community. For example, the current AIDS crisis may be replaced as the central focus by civil rights issues.

Finally, she is very pleased with the success of the GLSU. For example, Tom's letters to the Beacon are promoting a positive image for the group. Also, the group is continuing to grow with the addition of possible sub-groups such as a political action, public and cultural awareness committees which function as a sub-set of the GLSU.

Thanks to the help of Celia McCullough and our officers, the GLSU has a bright future as the center of the Gay community at the University of Tennessee.
ly writing sentiments to their friends and family whom have died from AIDS. In one corner, a man wrote solemnly, occasionally stopping to rest his face in the palms of his hands. In another corner, a man and two young girls were quietly writing their memorials. Above them two women hugged and supported each other as one cried with intensity.

The story of the quilt starts back in June 1987 in the Castro district of San Francisco. A man by the name of Cleve Jones was searching for a way to memorialize his friend; and to communicate the loss and frustration he and many like him felt. He spray painted his friends name "Marvin Feldman" onto a piece of cloth the size of his friends grave. The concept caught. Soon, all across America and the world, people were making their own memorials to express their sadness and anger.

The Mouths of Babes
by Brick Wright

Every few weeks, my lover "Todd" and I take my 7 year old nephew "Adam" out for the day. On a recent trip to the zoo, Todd picked up Adam and on the way to our house Adam said "Todd, I have something to tell you... I'm gay." Remember Adam is just seven. "You know what that means don't you?" He asked. "Well, it has two meanings" he explained to Todd. "One of them means happy... and I'm happy."

All afternoon Adam kept saying things like "I'm so gay" and "I can't believe how gay I am"

In the immortal words of Tammy Wynett "Kids say the damnest things."

Today, the Quilt includes more than 10,800 memorial pieces and spans 14 acres. It is now too large to be displayed in any one place, yet only accounts for 18% of AIDS deaths in the US and only 5% world wide. Although it can no longer be displayed in its entirety, the Names Project (the Quilts sponsor) will continue to accept new panels and display it, in sections, worldwide.
Love brought me quietly in the dreaming night
A softly laughing boy of just eighteen.
I pressed him to me and I hugg'd despair.
Memory burns me
And my eyes still see what they saw.
Ill-starred lover,
You must forget the warmth of beauty
Even in your dreams.

- Meleager

All I said was - Alexis is gorgeous. Now
Everyone stares, ogles him everywhere.
Dear heart, why show the dogs a bone? You'll care
Later, Remember? Phaidros went that way too.

- Plato

'Borns and Sport'

Blest is the man who loves and after early play
Whereby his limbs are supple made and strong,
Retiring to his house, with wine and song
Toys with a fair boy on his breast the livelong day!

- Solon
Coming Out

Number One
In the self defeating agony
Of the silent sky in fall,
I question my strength,
My direction,

Even my goal.

I erode what I feel
With the torch of logic,
The sword of denial.
It wants to be hurtful,

Yet,

Its beauty is so simple,
Its temptation so pure.

When I feel these things,
I read all the pain.
But when you see me,
I ask that you view the struggle.

Pain is an ugly beast,
But always at the mercy of the struggle.
If you are overcome by this beast,
Then how can you aids in the struggle.

Ignore my pain.
And my struggle.
It is patience we endure.
It is victory we smell.

Like the white rose in fog,
The one we can not see.
Yet the one we feel and know must be.

Number Two
Within my family,
Some look with curiosity.
Some tease with imagination.
Others contemplate in silence.

My friend condescends,
And is confused.
He backs away, restricts my view,
yet never leaves.

So many don't know,
For I have just begun.
But the hurt seems no less.
The loneliness so strong.

In Boredom my mind wanders.
In blackness I lie,

Tense,
Confused,
And Alone.

The double edged blade of loneliness.
Because no one knows, and I know of no one.
No one to share a thought with.
No one to hold or hug.

Things will change.
But how the tomorrows seem so far away.
So distant.
So elusive.

Poems by Ace Woodward
Saturday, October 28  8pm-1am
Halloween Costume Party and Fundraiser at the Laurel Theatre, $3 in advance, $4 at the door.

Tuesday, November 21,  6:30pm
Thanksgiving Potluck Dinner (at Christian's Pad)

Saturday, December 9,  8pm
Christmas Party (Place to be announced later)

SPECIAL EVENTS:

Friday, November 10
Romanovsky and Phillips Concert
UT Music Hall
$9 in advance or $12 at the door.

Submissions to the CALENDAR are welcome. If you know of any future events that may be of interest to GLSU members please submit them at the Tuesday night meetings. Include the event title, date, time, and cost.

... And for the edification of anyone (in this world) who may, by now, not know - Eric, our Vice Pres., made a 91 on his Black Lit exam!
The GLSU invites you to attend our HALLOWEEN COSTUME PARTY

It will be held on October 28 at the Laurel Theater at 8pm until 1 am

Tickets $3 in Advance, $4 at the door