

# The Quilt: See It and Understand

by Art Polansky

Saturday noon. I climb the gentle slope to the Washington Monument. In my bag, a piece of cloth the size of a coffin lid. I crest the hill. Before me, a sea of cloth. Around it, a quarter-mile ring of people. The quilt, about to open.

If houses were Scrabble letters, you could play four games and still have room for the football-field score pad. If you marched, eyes front, intent only on devouring miles, you might walk all the paths by sunset. But you would miss Frank, my triple-word score.

No photograph, no cute phrase can express the size of the thing. No newspaper article can express the feeling of standing there, amid the names of 20,000 people you will never meet, hearing their family, their friends, their lovers reading the unending list of names.

And no federal appropriation, no "kinder, gentler nation" can bring even one of them back for a minute.

I cry at the sight of a 3-by-6 piece of cloth in the middle of a fifteen-acre quilt. I do not recognize the name. I will never see the face. Have I seen the light.

*These letters are in response to the Community Connections article announcing the Mountain AIDS Coalition bus trip to Washington, D.C., to view the AIDS Memorial Quilt, October 9-11. -Ed.*

To the Editor:

This letter is to say Thank You for helping to make it possible for me to go to Washington to see the Quilt. The trip went very well; it was a very emotional time for all that went. There was a lot of love displayed in the Quilt, the time, the thought, and seeing the many different personalities. The time there was spent in remembering those that have died, and the many more that have HIV. It was a time for me to heal as well as time for my anger, my hurt that there has to be such a disease. To see a sea of people all experiencing much the same feelings. It was awesome. I did get to see four of the Quilt panels from Asheville. They may be gone but they are not forgotten. I thank you again for your love and contribution to help make this happen for me. KEEP THE LOVE ALIVE.

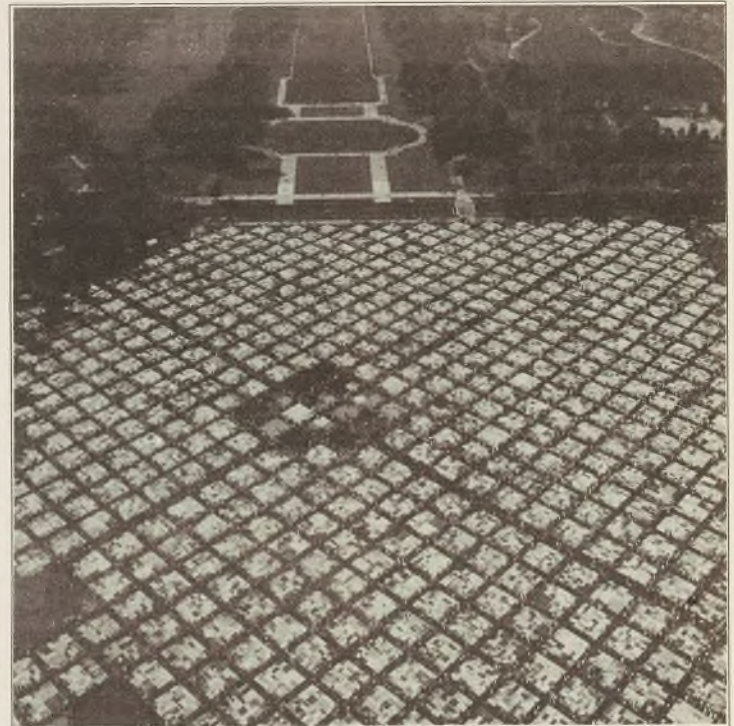
Thomas E. Amerson

To the Editor:

On behalf of the Mountain AIDS Coalition, thank you for your support of the Quilt Project visit to Washington DC. Twenty-six of us had a special experience, thanks to your generosity and that of our other special friends.

We traveled on a chartered bus, provided by Trailways Blue Ridge, from Asheville to Washington on Friday, October 9 and arrived at our hotel in time to have a good night's rest. Then on Saturday (beautiful sunny day), we were bussed to the Esplanade to view the display of quilts made to date. This may be the last time we will be able to see the display in one place because, unfortunately, it quickly growing too large.

Sunday's viewing was rained out by 3:30 p.m., so, after changing out of our wet clothes, we headed back to the moun-



Before the recent display, the Quilt combined 20,064 panels, each 3 ft. x 6 ft. The Quilt is almost as big as 12 football fields. photo by Tom Amerson

tains. We arrived early Monday morning, tired, but inspired by what we had seen.

David Beebe

To the Editor:

Thank you for your including Mountain AIDS Coalition in your publication, and most recently the article concerning our PWA Quilt Trip.

The trip went off without a glitch, we made it there in record time and the weather

for the trip was just great. The accommodations were just as wonderful.

This was a dream come true for all who went, a memorable experience, one that will live in our hearts and souls for a very long time.

To see the crowds of people, from everywhere, to see the twenty thousand panels. Standing at the Washington Monument looking out across the quilt, it looked like a great sea of people.

I found several quilts of Asheville friends. You could never know how much that meant to me. As I look back to my personal experience with those friends and then multiplied that by 20,000, the emotion was mountainous. There was love, fear, joy, anger, and frustration, all real, all experienced all in one moment, 20,000 times.

Bill Allen

## Gay and Lesbian Community Center Your contribution will aid the Asheville Gay and Lesbian Community Council in making this dream a reality.

Complete form and mail to: ASHEVILLE GAY AND LESBIAN COMMUNITY CENTER  
c/o Ron Lambe, 104 Trotter Place, Asheville, NC 28806 (704/252-0643)

### PLEDGE CARD 1992-93

I pledge to contribute \$\_\_\_\_\_ in support of the Gay and Lesbian Community Center.

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Enclosed is my donation now!

(Make checks payable to C.L.O.S.E.R. and mark for Community Center)

### Rich, White, Straight, Male America Responds to AIDS

First, it went after the queers, and I said nothing, because I was no queer.

Then it went after the druggies, and I said nothing, because I was no druggie.

Then it went after the coloreds, and I said nothing, because I was no colored.

Then it went after women, and I said nothing, because I was a man.

And when it finally got me, there was no one left.

Period.

You too can contribute to the extermination of the human species by being racist, sexist, and homophobic, and by voting for George Bush. --Cardiac Arrest: Designs to Give Bigots a Heart Attack