



### A Special Quilt Virtual Display Curated by Gert McMullin

**#1453 -- Walter Black:** I knew Walter from the early 1980's. He was a waiter at what is now known as Lookout in the Castro in San Francisco. Walter was indeed a character and I loved him. The drawing of us is done by Donelan (a cartoonist for The Advocate magazine). I used as fabric a tablecloth from the restaurant and napkins for the waiter checks.

**#1522 -- Chuck Barr and Mikel Eaves:** *Chuck* worked as a window dresser in the 80's for Macy's downtown SF. There are two panels here for Chuck. The lower one was made by his fellow co-workers at Macys. I made the top one for him. I knew Chuck way before our time working at Macys together. He used to frequent the more questionable bars (as I did also) and that is where we first meet. Many would have and did call him "Cheap". And that is where the idea for his quilt panel came. A line from the famed DIVINE himself..."When You're Born Cheap...Ya Die Cheap". I just call them the way I see them. On the same block....**Mikel Eaves**. I met Mikel on the 1988 National Tour of The Quilt in St. Louis, MO. He was on the host committee and was having a gala in honor of the tour crew (one of which I was). Mikel was quite wealthy but for some reason was serving drinks to everyone in plastic glasses. I was not having that and demanded my drink be served in one of his fine pieces from the china cabinet. As the night progressed so did my ability to hold my liquor and as such the glass slipped from my hand crashing to the floor. Well I told him a lady doesn't acknowledge these little things and demanded he give me another cocktail. He did and it was served in another fine glass.

**#1816 -- FAIRIES...with each one I die:** This panel has many names on it. It is more a panel that reflected my mental state of the loss of so many of my friends. I would tell people that every time someone else I knew died that I felt a chunk of myself falling away with them. I still feel that way. So as you can see the word FAIRIES is falling apart and the pieces are pink triangles all over the ground. The panel for Don Bye was not made by me but by a friend in Houston. When the panel was being presented I made a comment to the panel maker..."Isn't this tooling hanging off the side of this panel going to infringe on another's space?". His response to me was..."Oh Don always infringed on another's space". I immediately asked him if I could hold it until I finished my panels because I wanted Don to infringe on my space. So they were sewn together. It was just meant to be. I also made the panel that says "Liquor? I don't even know her. A quote frequently shouted out in the sewing room in the early days of The Quilt.

**#2066 -- Scott Lago:** Scott Lago started volunteering in the early days before the 1987 Inaugural Display in Washington DC. He was one of the six Tour Crew members for the 1988 National Tour. You get close to a person when you spend four months with them in a 17 foot Winnebago. The panel has a large gold coin in the center with the engraving..."Bitter Bitter Homosexuals". Scott and I went to a drag show one night during the

tour and well yes we had both had a wee bit to drink and were talking loudly at our table. The drag queen I guess overheard us bitching to each other about something and suddenly stopped her show and announced, "Oh you two are two Bitter Bitter Homosexuals". And we were forever dubbed.

**#3456 -- Jeff Engels, Gregg Reynolds and Paul Alsbach:** This block has several panels that I made (and some I didn't) but all on this block are of great importance to me. The block was assembled because me and the other makers wanted it that way. Also because a couple of the panels have some questionable items on them and we didn't want any chance of someone being offended by the way we chose to remember our loved ones. Many of which had quite a perverted side. Much like ourselves. **Jeff Engels** has two panels on this block (both made by me). Jeff was my neighbor on 25th and Castro St for many years. He was a wild wild man. Explaining him would take hours. I loved him intensely because of that. He had a key to my apartment and made himself at home to any and all of my belongings whenever the mood struck him....at any hour of the day or night. We had wild parties and went out to the clubs regularly to see what kind of trouble we could cause. God how I Loved him. **Gregg Reynolds** (heir to Reynolds Aluminum) was the owner of our building and lived in the downstairs apartment from me. He was also a wild child and would often join us on our quests for fun (generally at another's expense). **Paul Alsbach** was a new friend I made. He worked with Under One Roof that was in the same building. He fell in love with the morning music I would blast out throughout the day. I eventually got him to return to the disco world with me. Paul was no doubt one of the most beautiful men I have known in my life. Just gorgeous!! The last time I saw him he was leaving the club for the night. A few days later I saw his Obit in the paper. How could that be? And that is why on his panel it says, "I Turned Around And You Were Gone". I don't think I will ever get over him. So beautiful inside and out. I need to mention a panel here that I did not make but wish I had. And that panel is for **Bob Kerns** made by Evelyn "VIV" Martinez. Bob was and is very important to the NAMES Project and to me. He was also slightly perverted. Just as we like our friends to be. He was a Handmaiden of the Quilt and would stay sewing into the wee hours of the night. He also liked to dress up on Halloween. His panel is his actual outfit from one of his past Halloween eves. He is in a trench coat that opens up and exposes a huge fake penis (Bob wishes). We love you Bob.

**#5000 -- Joey van-es Ballesteros:** There are some people that mean everything to you. There are some people you can't and won't ever get used to not having in your life. Joey was that to me. Trying to tell you about Joey is not something I can do in a few sentences. He took everything when he died. I will never be the same without him. The letter that is on his panel is what I read at his memorial service. He worked at The NAMES Project and was on the Tour Crew for the 1988 National Tour of the Quilt. He worked for the mayor's office writing the sunshine law. He and I worked on countless marches with Cleve Jones. He was an activist. He was my friend. He was everything. I was married in the mid 1990's. I used his prince albert as my wedding ring. I worked the dials on the machine when he was cremated. I wanted to go as far as I could with him. I loved him more than one should love anybody. I ache when I think of him.

**#5231 -- Ken Borg:** Ken worked with me at The NAMES Project for many years. Ken and I had a mutual dislike for the cat named Blinky that had somehow made his home at the warehouse. And the cat felt the same towards both of us. As a joke I made a half a dead cat out of some fur and positioned it to look like it had been squashed under the file cabinets. Its tail stood straight up and gave many a passerby something to laugh at or be horrified by. When Ken died it seemed an appropriate thing to add to his panel...and I did. Sorry Blinky.

**#5748 -- Neil Lewis and Brad Hay:** You know how I said that there are those people who you just will never get over? Well here are two more. Both are so important in my life. Both took so much when they died. I can't explain the pain I feel when I think of them. The loss is overwhelming. I met **Brad** at the Pleasuredome. We started out as mutual lovers of dancing and flagging and then turned our friendship into the kind you always dream that you might have in your life. There is nothing...nothing that I would not do for that man and he for me. He was so beautiful and had the most beautifully evil little giggle. He melted my heart every time he would do something to antagonize me and then giggle. He could giggle his way out of anything. **Neil Lewis.** What do I say? What could I say? How do I speak about a man or try to explain a man who was total love? Neil was the resident DJ for The Pleasuredome Nightclub in San Francisco. He also worked with me at The NAMES Project for years helping me bundle The Quilt (the process of selecting the panels to be sewn into the blocks) Neil believed in love and I am not talking about romantic love. I am talking about the love you should have for every human being on this earth. Neil taught me about that. Neil showed me about that. Neil believed he was sent down from a star to bring joy, happiness, love and beautiful music to the people he loved. And you did Neil and so much more. He used to say all the time "Gert It's All About Love". Neil, your friendship meant everything to me. Your friendship was complete love. Thank you for that. Note: Neil's panel is a replica of a game board I made for him on his birthday. It was a night at The Pleasuredome gone wrong.

**#5875 -- Tim Leming:** I met Tim in Atlanta, GA and fell in love with him immediately. We shared a love of many things, one of which was music, dancing and fanning. And so his panel was born. Tim died an ugly drawn out death. I was with him when he died and may or may not have helped that process go a little shifter per his request. It was horrible seeing how much misery he was in. Tim I hope I helped free you. You deserved to be free.

**And Lastly....The Pleasuredome 12x12 (no block # have not been able to emotionally let it go) -- The PLEASUREDOME!!!** You were everything! Anybody who really knew me knew exactly where I would be at 9pm on Sunday evening (every Sunday from 1988-2002)....first in line when the doors opened at The Pleasuredome. And always last to leave the next morning at 6am when it closed. AIDS had been devastating the community and me all through the 80's and my every waking hour was consumed by it. I wanted it to consume me. But one evening a week I would pass through those doors and leave all of that at the entrance. It was not allowed in. All that was allowed was the music and the beautiful men that surrounded me and protected me from what was outside. Pleasuredome gave me the strength I needed to get through every week of my friends dying one by one by one nonstop. It replenished my soul. It would be what some people describe as going to church. It gave me hope. It showed me beauty in the world. And when I say Pleasuredome I mean everybody that crossed over that doorstep. The Security people, door people, coat check, bartenders, owners, the beautiful men I would need to squeeze by to get to the dance floor, the lightmen, DJs and the flaggers and fanners that would spin their newest creation to the beautiful music the DJs would play for us. You are Pleasuredome and you saved me every week so I could go back and fight again. THANK YOU PLEASUREDOME !!!!