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Hi
folks -

IT's two days to Christmas. The word processor I bought in August is still in the box in my bedroom.

Me thinks I'll have to do a Co-Co, hand writ note or nothing at all. My dentist complained last year that my Xmas letters were "Too long". Nothing beats professional advice.

Life has been bubbly but not exactly effervescent this past year. The parade of horrors continues but I've spent too many pages detailing them this past decade.

Willie died in his lover's arms in June. Edward Lacey, a lifelong friend since University of Texas days, died the next day. AT 57, I now know what those 'sole survivors' feel like in their nineties - all their friends, family, close ones gone, no one to laugh about the good old days with anymore.

My mother's second husband died at 87. Theirs had been a good marriage for over 30 years & now my mother has just turned 80 & has begun dating again.

With perfect health, great looks, Lincoln Town car, house, Trust fund & a nearly professional track record as an excellent bridge player, mother seems to be the star of San City's Country Club circuit.

Took a couple trips To Arizona to help put things in order - first trips in five

years. A 'working' vacation if you want to call it that.

The year had it's highlights. "OUTRAGE '69" a documentary on the early gay rights movement treated me well. It's been shown on most public TV stations across the country & will probably be a staple, repeated show for many years.

Certainly one of the year's highlights was carrying the wreath in the annual Aids Memorial candlelite parade this past June with Co-Co, in full drag, on the other side.

The "Mother's March Against Aids" took over the annual event after it was abandoned by the discredited Christopher Street Festival Committee - the 'person' or 'group' I'd exposed & taken the gay festival away from in '92.

Marsha's wonderful family has me out on holidays. - visits full of good food & 'Soul' for this sole survivor.

Took in a disabled vet to help me clean up after Co-Co & relieve me of walking the dog.

The retailing recession has taken it's toll on my income this year but the ship is still afloat, 'manned' and/or 'womaned' and/or 'genderized' by an ever changing crew.

I don't do a tree these days, I do uplift's XMAS windows with twinkling rings of Christmas ornaments. - sold eight thousand dollars worth this year - now that proves there is a Santa Claus 'o Biggest hits were the praying black angel & rainbow colored gay santa's. - By next year, the procession will be out the box. All's fine here - as always,



P.S. P.S. P.S. P.S. P.S. P.S.

Golly'o Gee'o Space ran out before I could even say, make a list of all those things that comprise "HAPPY Holidays," and wish you all a healthy, prosperous and exciting New Year!

And what about all those photos & stories I've been saving all year? Well, we'll make do this old fashioned way (an xmas letter hasn't had this crude a format since the early 80's.)

A picture is worth a thousand words which saves me an awful lot of writing - especially since I have two invites to contribute chapters to books which ARE a more enduring use of time.

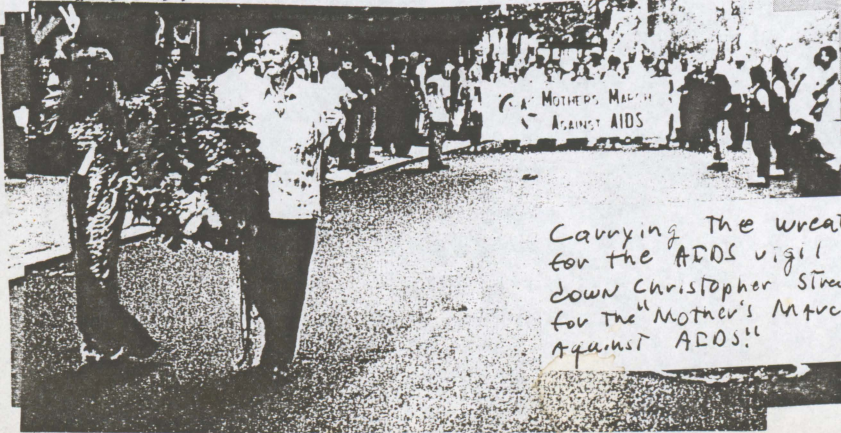
So here goes...



Coco's birthday happened to fall on GAY PRIDE DAY this year & she really made the most of it. We had a birthday party for her at the shop later in the day.



Overexposed, light photos always reproduce the most clearly. This photo finally reveals Co-Co's lovely face which in the last two years has fallen victim to Zerox blackout.



Carrying the wreath for the AIDS vigil down Christopher Street for the "MOTHER'S MARCH AGAINST AIDS!"





Being the CEO of even a tiny corporation isn't easy.

There are anti-management propaganda campaigns

And publicly touted plots of corporate intrigue + subversion

These plotters put this self portrait + message on cash registers



NEW OWNERS AFTER HOSTILE TAKE-OVER

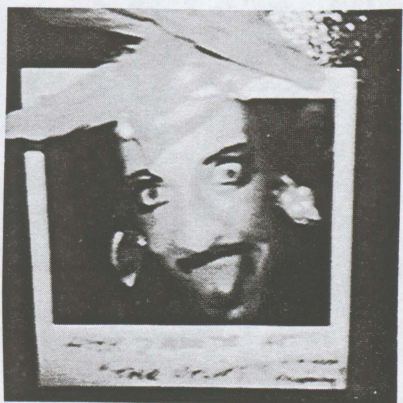


Uplift's everchanging hetero/homo, man/woman transgendered crew's

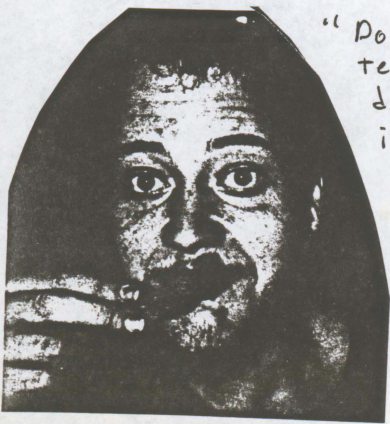


"the one that got away was this big" Tony's + my hilarious title for this unusual find stuffed in a bag behind uplift's counter.

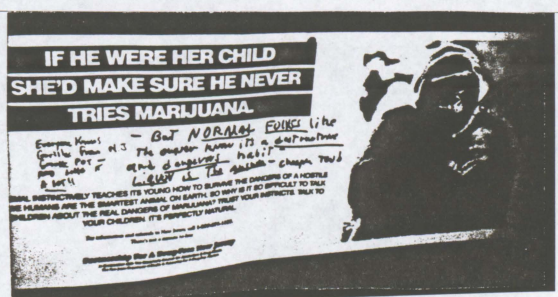
BELIEVE IT OR NOT



Above is a hand decorated self portrait by a heterosexual employee showing his fantasy of what he'd look like as a drag queen's



"Don't ask, don't tell. And just don't smoke pot in the bathroom on company time's" uplift's corporate credo.



In the bathroom, alleged scene of the crime, a propaganda war is waged for the hearts + minds + health of the company's workers.

"Old enemies" sometimes become the most interesting new "good friends."
 For years, I + Sylvia Rivera, famous Stone-
 wall veteran + co-founder + Marsha P.
 Johnson of "Street Transvestite Action Revolution-
 aries" (STAR) considered each other mortal
 social + political enemies.

First at Marsha's funeral + over the last
 couple years we've discovered how wrong +
 mistaken we've both been.

Now we're friends working together to help
 the gay homeless + publicize their plight, to
 wake up the gay bureaucrats + make them take
 notice "The System" + "The Establishment"
 are our real enemies + we'll fight to change
 them together! - Right on, girlfriends!



"If we can do it, so can the
 Irish, the Serbs + muslims +
 The world!"



Sylvia + I marched
 with the Stonewall
 veterans this year.

Queen Allison, founder
 of the Stonewall Republican
 Club paraded with a
 long rainbow train in
 front of the legendary
 "Stonewall car" - a 1967
 Caddy convertible.

Wouldn't you love
 to see her give Bob
 Dole a hiss??

I can barely be
 seen with the other
 occupants in car,
 under arrow, at rear.



Edward Lacey discusses
 his work during our last
 visit together in Montreal
 in 1989.

Edward Lacey,
 probably the only real
 genius I ever had
 the pleasure of knowing.

His poetry is
 riveting even to those
 like myself, who don't
 generally like poetry.

He was a dazzling
 correspondent during
 the thirty-five years
 he drank + whose
 mongered his way
 through central + South America, Europe,
 the middle East + finally to Thailand
 + Indonesia.



The first volume of his letters has
 just been published + hopefully some of
 the two hundred pages he sent me over
 the years will appear in some future volumes.
 He spent his entire life

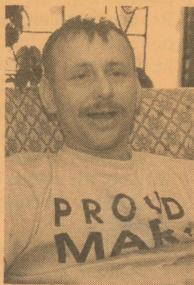
His is a story of epic proportions. Escaping the Canada he so despised. But
 and his family's inheritance in the end, after being disabled in an accident, "Mother Canada" flew him
 home, confiscated his passport + kept him prisoner in a home for the disabled
 for several years before his death from a heart attack and/or broken heart.

LIVES REMEMBERED

Thomas "Willie" Brashears

Thomas "Willie" Brashears, who was known for his acid wit and a big heart, died of AIDS-related complications on June 20 at the age of 31.

Willie was born in Baltimore on December 3, 1963, and grew up in Highlandtown. He came out at an early age, and was a proud gay man and an enthusiastic supporter of his community. In the late '70s, he helped found the Gay Youth group at the Gay and Lesbian Community Center of Baltimore. The organization was the first group in the city designed to provide a safe place for gay teens; Gay Youth was one of Willie's finest early achievements.



In 1980, he moved to New York, where he started his career working at Uplift, an Art Deco/Art Nouveau antique lighting store. With what he learned at the store, he started his own business, Lighting by Grapes, in Baltimore. Willie's work, which continued until the latter stages of his illness, was the restoration of antique lamps and lighting fixtures. He also created beautiful lamps of his own design—many can be seen today lighting up living rooms all over Mount Vernon.

But his passion became his life-partner of seven-and-a-half years, Robert Hooker. The two met and fell in love in Baltimore, where, with the exception of one year spent together in New York, they made their home. As a pair, Willie and Bob took great pleasure in their community and each other. They threw many of the fiercest parties in Mount Vernon. Bob, an accomplished chef, would cook, and Willie would dazzle guests with his flair for design.

Willie was never at a loss for words, either—he was the first with the latest and could "read" with the best of them. Of course, two seconds after giving someone a tongue-lashing, he would offer him a bite to eat, an antique dish, or a place to sleep for the night. He was almost unerringly generous.

After Willie found out that he was HIV-positive, he became an active member of the People With AIDS Coalition. As part of the organization, he founded the Positive and Comfortable Coffeehouse, a monthly event that gave PWAs a place to relax, listen to music, enjoy tasty treats, and, for a short time, get away from the harsh reality of living with a terminal disease.

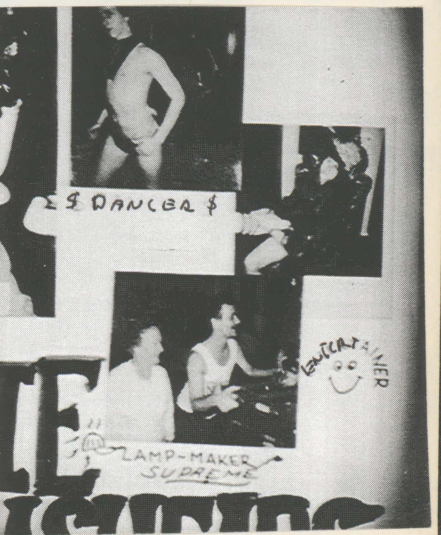
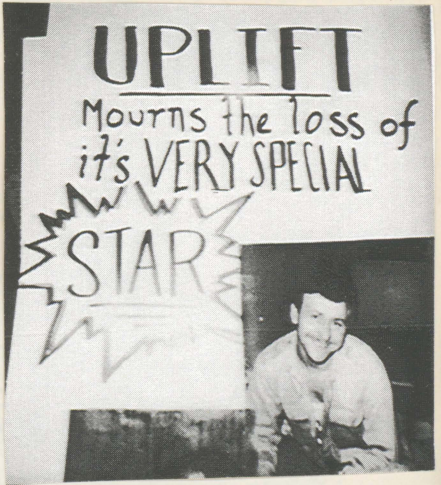
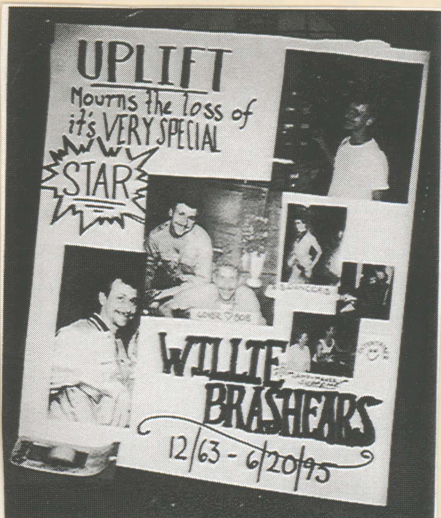
And make no mistake, Willie lived with AIDS—he stayed active in the community for as long as he could and fought the illness

until the end. And he died peacefully, surrounded by his favorite things, in his own home, and in his lover's arms.

Willie is survived by his partner, Robert Hooker, his mother, Sally Calo, four sisters, a host of nieces and nephews, many friends whose lives he touched, and his devoted dog, Agnes Marie.

In accordance with Willie's request, there will be no services. In lieu of flowers, donations may be made to AIDS Action Baltimore, 2105 N. Charles St., Baltimore, Md. 21218; or HERO, 101 W. Read St., Suite 819, Baltimore, Md., 21201.

WE commemorated
WILLIE THIS PAST SUMMER,
IN UPLIFT'S WINDOW.
AS "STAR" - he was always
someone who stole the
show - "DANCER," AS
MANY KNEW HIM - "ENTER-
TAINER" which he had a
great talent for, + "LAMP-
MAKER Supreme" which he was.



LIVES REMEMBERED Articles honoring the memory of recently deceased members of the gay and lesbian community are published in *The Baltimore Alternative* without charge. Friends and family may submit the pertinent information either by telephone, fax, or mail. *Alternative* reporters will then compose the "Lives Remembered" article in standard form. For more information, call (410) 235-3401 or fax (410) 889-5665.

When David fell ill for the last time in the summer of '89, Willie answered my call + with his lover, Bob Hooker, took care of uplift while I took care of David.

His natural energy + creativity, boosted by a total commitment to making uplift beautiful + profitable, was unbelievable.

He + Bob created more beautiful lamps and set sales records that to this day have not been equalled. He was a great blessing in my life. On his last visit this past spring, he thanked me for "always being there" for him.

I could only cry + thank him for being there for me in my darkest hour. No one ever had a finer, more wonderful son's outer space couldn't hold the hole in my heart:
XXOO
R