

AIDS quilt ends stay at Lafayette

20 local panels added to 15,000-plus others

By JOE NIXON
Of The Morning Call

Hugs and tears were plentiful yesterday at Lafayette College's Kirby Field House as the Names Project AIDS Memorial Quilt concluded a three-day stay, ending its local mission of touching hearts and stirring souls.

More than 20 local panels were presented during the closing ceremonies. They will be added to the quilt, scheduled to be displayed on the mall in Washington in October.

The quilt, as large as 14 football fields, is made up of more than 15,000 3-by-6 panels. Many contain only the names of AIDS victims. Others also contain Bible verses, pictures, ties and jackets. People from 50 states and 26 countries are represented.

On the 12-by-12 Lafayette signature quilt near the center of the fieldhouse floor, some viewers who were touched expressed their feelings.

"Now, the names have faces," wrote one person.

"I understand," said another.

Still others proclaimed, "To those I've never met: You've changed my life."

"Never forget what we witnessed here."

Student volunteers took turns reading the names of AIDS victims while the quilt was available for viewing, as they had for the last three days.

When the reading stopped, local residents walked silently to

the center of the fieldhouse, where they presented their panel to Howard Yeakel, a community volunteer, Lisa LeMoult, panel-making chair for the event, and Keith Riley, site coordinator for the Names Project.

Student Dave Unanue, co-chairman of the event, told the crowd, "This has definitely been the highlight of my Lafayette career and it has changed my life."

"I put so much time into this in the past four months," he said after the ceremony. "Everyone on the steering committee just dedicated so much time, so much energy. I think this is one thing I'll be able to walk away from Lafayette [with] and say I did make an attempt to make a positive change on our campus and the community in general."

As part of the closing ceremony, Lafayette seniors Jean Harris and Theodore Morris sang "It's Okay," while onlookers held hands around the quilts. Harris and Morris were followed by bagpiper James Ruhf of Bethlehem, who lost a brother to the disease.

As he stood on his brother's panel, Ruhf played "Rowen Tree" and "Amazing Grace" to a still audience. He said he wasn't allowed to play at his brother's funeral, but that he was glad he got a second chance.

"I think it was very nice they let me play here," he said. "Too many times [people think] it's somebody else. It's not."



A group of people embrace after presenting a panel to the AIDS quilt.

DON FISHER / The Morning Call

Phillipsburg rejects school tax plan

Town wants expenditures cut, not bookkeeping shuffle

By KIRK BELDON JACKSON
Of The Morning Call

The Phillipsburg Town Council yesterday agreed with the School Board that Phillipsburg residents need \$200,000 in tax relief.

But the council disagreed with the board on how to provide it.

School Superintendent Pete Merluzzi said Monday the board had proposed a one-time deal in which

figure. However, there was no proposed decrease in taxes because the assessed valuation of district homes has decreased.

Rummerfield said that although state education officials had approved the board's plan to pay for city services, council rejected it because it creates problems with next year's municipal budget. The state only allows municipalities to raise its taxes by 5 percent over the previous year.

The \$200,000 would lower taxes by a little more than 3 cents per \$100 of assessed value.

He argued after the meeting that cutting the modules also might be the best way to ensure that the state does not overturn the budget. "I've seen the state overturn budgets when you cut into personnel or programs," he said. "This doesn't cut either of them."

School Board President James Shelly said of the council's decision, "It wasn't anticipated at all. I only heard from the superintendent today that council was having some problems."

Two teens are chased 60 miles

Police from several municipalities chased two New Jersey teens in a stolen car about 60 miles in 35 minutes, ending at a dead-end street in Allentown early yesterday.

Police pursued Nathaniel Hawkins, 18, and his 16-year-old Newark passenger on foot after they abandoned the car at Mortex knitting mill.