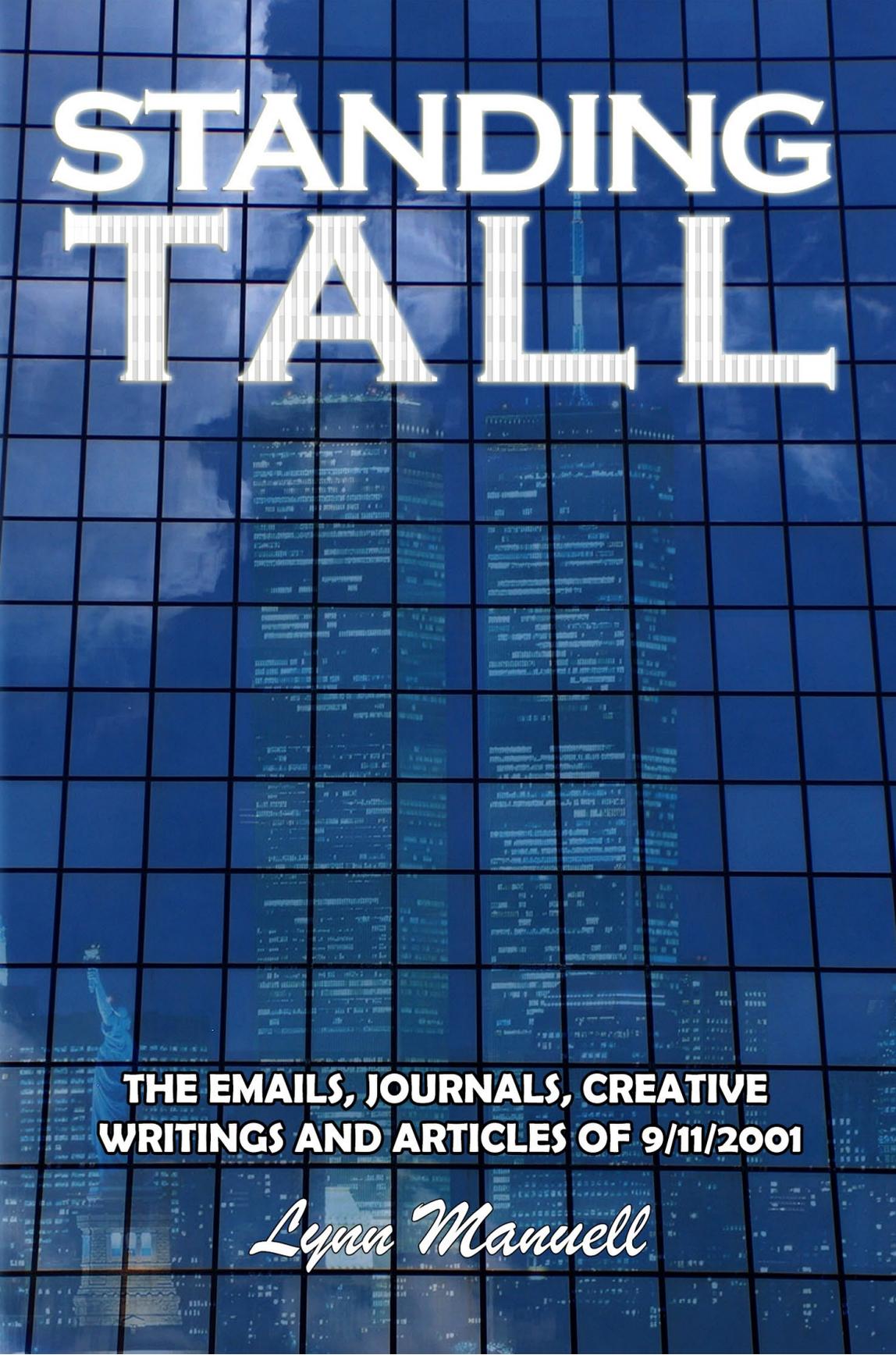


STANDING TALL



**THE EMAILS, JOURNALS, CREATIVE
WRITINGS AND ARTICLES OF 9/11/2001**

Lynn Manuell

STANDING TALL



The emails, creative writings and journals
From the months following 9/11/01

LYNN MANUELL

LIBRARY TALES PUBLISHING

This book is dedicated to those we lost and those left behind and to my parents who were emotionally supportive of the myriad of life choices I have made. It is also dedicated to peace on this planet. May the words here serve as a reminder of the compassion we shared without limitation on 9-11-01.

INTRODUCTION

There was great interest in this book in 2001; however there were also some dubious efforts to raise money for funds on some people's parts. Therefore I was advised to wait until the controversy was over and the ability to find an audience was easier. So, years later I have a book which is just as potent today as it was on the days these emails were written.

This is dedicated to all of the people who so graciously agreed to allow their personal feelings published in this book. I have in the years since, lost track of some of them. Those that I have not I will note how their lives have changed and grown since the event of 9/11.

For myself, I have since that fateful day, gone back to school, received a double master's degree in special and general education as well as theatre and have become a National Board Certified Teacher. I have begun working with autistic children utilizing theatre and arts as a way to communicate. Following 9/11/01 the new tours halted while the economy was uncertain. This provoked my return to school. I also have been ordained an interfaith minister and continue to work as a consultant for performers and to sing and do photography. I am a founding and board member of FACT Theatre Company. Most of these endeavors were a result of the events of 9/11. I went from the life I chose to one that chose me.

The frightened and angry behavior I observed on 9/11/11 would not have been anticipated years ago. As these emails will attest, our ability to be comforting, spiritual and understanding

was far more intact then. I hope that as people read these immediate responses, it will rekindle the kinder, gentler nature we had towards all beings.

I did not write this book. The world wrote this book. I did take many of the photos and like, everyone else included here, I wrote entries that were chosen for the book.

Anyone who reads this book will be exposed to a multitude of stories and opinions. Because this is America, all of types of opinions are represented. You may agree with them, you may not. Everyone from a twelve year old girl to a military retiree, to a pacifist struggling to come to terms with a war brought about by these events are included..

Whether or not you are religious, you cannot read these writings composed around September 11th without a remarkable deference to spiritual views. It is this that has helped us through. Whether one acknowledges spiritual action or not...many Americans have expressed their good will and eased their own trauma by expressing beliefs of the spirit. This is evident in the writings included here.

No matter what ones religious, political or personal opinions may be, this book is history. It is given from us to us through acts of expression. These expressions have been made public because we have the gift of the internet. This has connected us in this event in a way never before seen in history. We have not been alone. We have shared our thoughts with each other, by writing, by chatting and mostly by creating expressive communications.

I thank each person who has contributed to this book through their writings. You may not have anticipated the number of people that would eventually read your writings at the time they were composed. I thank you for supporting our country and its collective soul during that time.

HOW STANDING TALL CAME TO BE

Less than a week after the World Trade Center was taken down by two of our own domestic airplanes...I left New York. Not because I was fearful, although I admit to that at times, but because my family lives in other states. My 90-year-old Grandmother was in Grand Rapids Michigan. So I took a journey across our country, just as it was starting to come to terms with its violation.

What struck me was that every place I went, I was greeted with warmth and with curiosity. Being from New York had a new spin on it. No longer were you the hardened sophisticate from the big city. You were a survivor of a war act. Everyone I spoke with wanted to know my tale. Where had I been at the time of the attack? How were the people of New York?

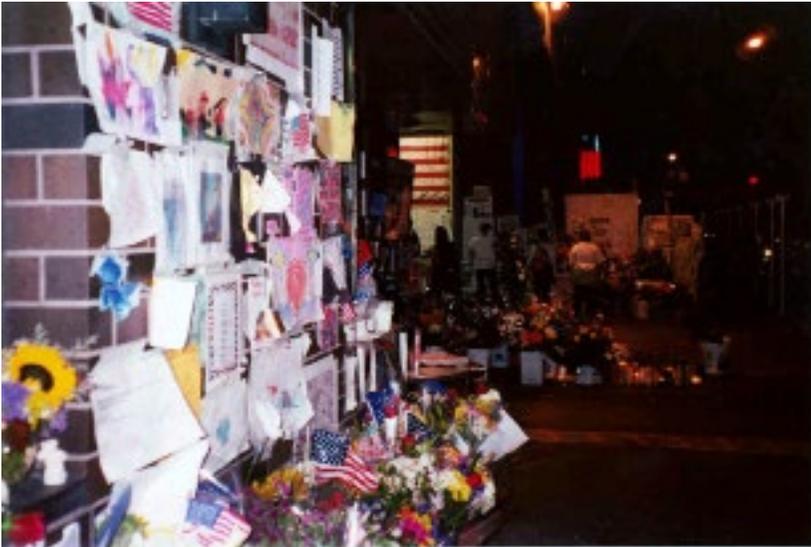
Likewise, they were anxious to share their place in this event. They spoke of how they had heard of the attack and what they believed would happen next. During this trip I decided that this book should be born. The world was in a collective consciousness. The tales of shock, horror and heroism needed to be shared. There was no better reason to collect this than to help others. So my proceeds from this book will go to charity.

There were literally thousands of emails that flooded the Internet over the weeks following the tragedy. I began to collect personal accounts, articles, spiritual writings, creative writings and journals expressing the spirit of the world during this time. It was not a particularly easy task to track down some of the original origins of the emails. Luckily many people I know are extremely articulate and firsthand accounts of the impact worldwide daily appeared in my mailbox.

I have included my own email and journal of the event, which includes the process of putting together this book. I have

used photos that I have taken over the life of the World Trade Center. I wish now I had taken more, but as Richard said in his journal "They were so much a part of our skyline they had become incidental to most photographs." The inside cover photo was taken through my car sunroof while sitting at a light on the West Side Highway. I looked up and could not believe the strength of the towers above. Now I look downtown with sadness that they are gone. And say a prayer that those that went with them know in some measure how much they are mourned.

Years later we are still standing tall. New York, the USA and the World. It is up to each of us to make sure we continue to do so by not allowing fear to run our lives. May this book help heal through communication some of the pain and continue to strengthen the community that was felt on September 11 2001.



Firehouse memorial for the Broadway firehouse on 8th Avenue.

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EMAILS

EDITORS E-MAIL OF THE WEEK OF SEPTEMBER 11TH

On Tuesday Morning I was riding in my car down the West Side Highway to rehearsal. It was a gloriously clear day as a steady rain had cleaned our skyline the night before. Anyone who has ever driven downtown on the west side knows that the World Trade Center stands proudly on the left. We hardly even notice in New York because they are an integral part of our skyline. You admire them but they are the gentle giants that were always standing at the base of the island to welcome those coming in by air and sea.

Because there are two of them as buildings they were never spoken of as 'it', but the more human "they". This made it all the harder for New Yorkers to depersonalize them after their demise.

Suddenly the radio announced a small biplane had hit one of the towers. The highway became overcome with EMS vehicles. I pulled over and snapped a picture thinking, as we all did in the first moments, "what a hideous accident, I hope few are injured". I thought it might make an interesting photo after they fixed the tower. I nearly went downtown to get closer but I was running late for work. The next vision I will not forget...a horrible fireball blazed off the second tower. They announced there had been another explosion. But no, worse, it was a plane!

I parked the car and walked to the corner of 9th and 56th and gazed upward whilst a fellow was on a walkie-talkie next to me. I was terribly shaken. I made my way, nonetheless, to rehearsal.

I asked if anyone had any idea what was going on outside. They had put a radio on. We learned the Pentagon had been hit. I was shaking from having seen the towers hit. The "show must go on" was invoked and the rehearsal began. I lagged behind and tried to call my Father in Texas. Suddenly from the radio came a woman's voice...reminiscent of the blowing up of the Hindenburg, crying out that the tower was completely gone. I dropped the phone and cried. They had wounded and killed thousands of people and the landscape of New York City. I went into the rehearsal room when word came that the second tower was gone.

Eventually, as there were planes unaccounted for, I suggested leaving Times Square might be in order - so we got permission and left.

Like everyone else I listened or watched all day and continued to do so all week. As I crept uptown I heard a plane above in the sky, and no planes were supposed to be flying. To my horror it was a fighter.

Wednesday they decided to have rehearsal...so feeling like a traitor to my city I drove downtown. I live at 200th street and the scariest part of this for many New Yorkers was being caught away from home and being held on the island. We were trapped and it was a claustrophobic feeling...driving was a must.

We rehearsed...but the air was foul. You could taste it. Only later did it occur to me that in addition to all of the electrical and scientific debris, New Yorkers now carry within them traces of those who died, as they too are a part of the incredible cloud that hangs persistently at the toe of Manhattan. There were no masks. All were sold out. We are ill prepared to deal with war here. Nor are we prepared to deal with it emotionally.

No one I know has not broken down many times this week. We keep staring downtown, thinking if we stare hard enough the great towers will return. All of those people were a tragedy in our minds, but without knowing who they were they were bulked into the damaged skyline and memories of concerts, work, Windows of the World and the Winter Garden. As days progressed the unspeakable sadness of specific individual stories came out.

Wednesday night began the 90 bomb threats and I wanted to flee my city. I wanted to go somewhere that the air was pure and there was no war...but there is no such place.

Thursday I had already signed up to be part of the Unity day of prayer. It was an irony that it was so needed at the time it was scheduled. While I prayed they evacuated Grand Central. I had been sick several times over the week from physical ailments, headaches, inability to eat and the like. The energy at Unity was wonderful and while I wanted to set eyes on my family I also did not want to desert New York.

Friday I went to church and met a girl who had lost an uncle and cousin in the towers. We shared the word of the minister, who told of her own feelings...and the great purgatory that we now found ourselves in. No one really understands where this is going...but most people I know do not want more innocent people to die. We want it to be focused only on the culprits that did it.

Friday night New York, with the rest of the world had candlelight vigils. My neighborhood is predominately from the Dominican Republic. We all gathered on the street. We walked to the church at the end of the street and waited as a service went on. Then nearly 800 people, singing in Spanish walked all around the neighborhood carrying candles. There were flags everywhere and sheets with painting of the towers hanging out of windows. We ended up at the Firehouse where we honored the many losses that the fireman had suffered all of the week.

Sunday was again a healing day. I went to Unity and Paul Tenaglia, the minister there gave a fabulous talk that emphasized that God did not disappear on September 11th. That God was in each of the people who died that day, even the ones who have an ego-shattered interpretation of Islam. I understand that there is often obscuring of religious teachings and no faiths are innocent of such mishandling of religious interpretations.

Sunday was a healing process. I pray each day for peace, even while I battle with nightmares and physical responses to this great loss. Sometimes it takes great loss for us to pause and pay attention. We all need to be tolerant. We need to know that more terror will not end this. To go among the terrorists and find them is the only end to this. Not to attack in general. America is not a worshiper solely of money or war...this nation has proved that this week through the millions of prayers and services that have been attended. Shattering the Trade Center did not bring down America. It is not our cathedral.

I send my deepest sympathies to all who lost people in the World Trade Center and to those who had the misfortune of seeing this deed live, to our wonderful city that has a gap in its skyline...looking as though someone took our front teeth out. They cannot stop us from healing and growing even stronger. I send regards to everyone worldwide who has watched this on TV and on line. Please know we will heal, our lives will change. We are a naive country in some ways. For some reason we felt we were beyond reach. May we learn some humility and dignity in this and let us learn to be prepared for what we are handed.

Remember our alabaster towers. Remember the souls that spent their time in them...and know that they are in a place where no one can now harm them.

Love,

Lynn Manuell

ELVIN, MANAGER OF THE NEW YORK SOUVENIR SHOP IN TOWER I

I was supposed to open the store at 8:30 AM. I woke up that morning at the regular time, and I was just walking around in circles in the house. I finally left my house at 8:15 AM, and ran to the subway station. I got to the subway at 8:22 AM, I remember because that is when my cell rang, and it was my boyfriend screaming at me "Why are you so late to go to work?" I told my boyfriend on the phone "Leave me alone, I know I'm late, I'm just walking in circles today...it's crazy. I keep thinking I'm forgetting something, and that's why I'm late."

I took my normal 7 train and transferred in Grand Central. I took the 4 or 5 express and got off at Fulton. I got off the train and saw a mass of people standing, and thought "Why are they just standing there?" I'm thinking "I'm in a hurry; I'm late for work... move it." I grabbed a cigarette out of my bag, because I can't smoke once in the building, and it is so hard to get out of there once you are inside. Then everyone started looking up, and I saw fire...it was just one or two minutes after the first plane hit. I'm standing in front of the building, and thinking "Oh gosh, this is all I need, I'm late and there's a fire here too. So, I'm just going to stand here until they try and put the fire out, then I'll go to work." Then I saw paper flying. All of the sudden I see something that looks like rolls of toilet paper, and I'm thinking "Why are they throwing toilet paper?" Maybe they are waving white stuff, their tee shirts and the like. I thought they were trying to get attention to be helped out of the building. But as it got closer and closer, I realized they were bodies jumping out of the building.

That's when we all started freaking out. We didn't know what to do. They must have jumped out of desperation to get out of the building. I later heard from friends that there was a call that day "Do not leave the building, everything is under control." It was so frightening to see people jumping off the building, and feeling like we had our hands tied up, because we couldn't help. We couldn't do anything. They were falling down to the concrete. I was less than a block away. I was standing by Borders near the Plaza on the right.

I grabbed my cell and tried to call the main store to tell them there was a fire. I called the owner to tell her not to come down. I tried to call my boyfriend to let him know I was not in danger, but none of the cells were working because the antennae were on the top of the tower. So everyone was trying to call people on cells that weren't working. People were screaming, but we were just standing there because we didn't know what to do. We couldn't see the police, we couldn't see the fireman or anything, so we just stood there...and then the second plane hit the second tower.

We were looking up and we saw this plane hit the second tower, there was a huge explosion, something like you've never heard before, and all you could see in the sky were balls of fire, and bits of plane. We all just ran, and ran, and ran in all directions. There was stuff falling around us, there was glass shattering in the windows of the stores in the neighborhood. There were people falling and people stepping on people. It was a run for your life and run, and run, and get out of the neighborhood. We didn't know if something else was going to happen, or what else was coming down. There was glass falling everywhere, there were fireballs in the sky and coming towards us. All I could think was "God, please help me...what can I do? What can I do? What can I do?" I didn't want to hide in any store, I didn't want to duck in somewhere...I just wanted to get out of the area. The first thing that came to my mind was to get in a subway station. That it was the safest thing because it was underground. I ran to the subway station. It was the fastest time I ever found my metro card. I just swiped my metro card and took the first train; I didn't know what direction it was going. There was a seat available and I took it and just lowered my head. When I lifted my head up I was at 14th street.

All I could think was that I wanted to tell people what was going on at the towers, so they wouldn't go to that neighborhood. I didn't know that people already knew what was going on at the time. I got off at 42nd street and when I got to the ground level I saw the scariest thing I've seen in my entire life. Everyone was standing still, there was no traffic, it was like they all froze and they were looking at those big TV monitors in Times Square. I was the only one walking in the crowd, toward Broadway New York, our sister store at the Marriott. It was the only place I could

think of that I could come in, because I didn't know where to go. I was so confused.

There were people at the Marriott Marquis who were moved from the Marriott at the Trade Center. They were coming into the store to buy tee shirts, because they had nothing, they were evacuated; some of them had only money they had in their pocket. Some of them were just having breakfast at that time and told to get out. Or they were sleeping...can you imagine waking up to that? I don't think I'd be able to go to bed again.

I was at the store in the Marriott when the towers fell. Someone asked me which tower my store was in and I told them "Tower one but that we had a kiosk near the TKTS booth in tower two." They told me tower two just collapsed. Then I learned tower one collapsed as well.

My boyfriend was working at a copy shop by the United Nations. It took about 3 hours for him to reach me. He was smart enough to call the Marquis store and found me. He was crazy trying to reach me.

I am so glad that it happened at the time it did and not at the rush hour of 12:00 PM because, my God, it would have been really bad. A lot of people were not there because of Election Day. I am so glad I wasn't there on time because once you were under the concourse you really didn't know what was going on outside.

The other people working at the tower store were stuck in the train. One of the people lived in the Bronx and was evacuated at Times Square and walked home. That night I walked home to Queens across the 59th street Bridge and then about 40 blocks after that. I could not be in a train and so many people were walking. Stores were giving water and soda out to the people walking home. I've never seen New York like it was that day. Everyone was helping everyone.

It was the most horrifying thing that happened in my whole life and it still hits me. For weeks I couldn't sleep. The first day I couldn't sleep I had to get drunk. It was the only way to sleep. I got drunk until I passed out.

I had read so much about the buildings, because we had the store there and they gave us a book about how many windows were in the towers, how many elevators. Everything about the construction of the towers. There was a phrase in the book that

said that a plane could hit the towers and nothing would happen to them. They said the towers could be hit by a 707...so the terrorists took a bigger plane and made sure it was full with gas. I am sure they knew where to hit the towers and everything.

This sort of thing was normal for Europeans. Because I used to live in Spain and there was a bomb every other day. I actually heard that they had found a car bomb at the World Trade Center that previous week. One of the girls at the store said one of the security guards told her about it. I don't think the security was as strict as it should have been. There were so many entrances and so many tourists. There was also a fire in the lobby a couple of months before September 11th. I was in the store and I thought "it smells like smoke in here." I left at 5PM and someone called and said there is a fire in the building what should we do? I said to lock the doors and get out of there. They wanted to know if they should count the money. I said no...go get out. The fire bothered me less..but I was worried about the news of a car bomb.

I know being in the store, you didn't know what was going on above the concourse and we felt the trains passing by everyday... so it always felt like the building was shaking - we wouldn't have known what was going on. There was a Duane Reade next to us and they found a lot of bodies at Duane Reade. I have spoken with some of the people I knew from the Towers. I knew a girl who worked across from us at Crabtree and Evelyn. She said when the first plane hit she didn't feel anything, and then her boss screamed at her to get her stuff and get out of the building and run. So she ran. Till this day she is not working, she is so shaken she can't work or take the trains. She only takes buses. I didn't take the train for two weeks... I live in Sunnyside Queens. Now I take the train but I only get in cars near the stairs or escalators.

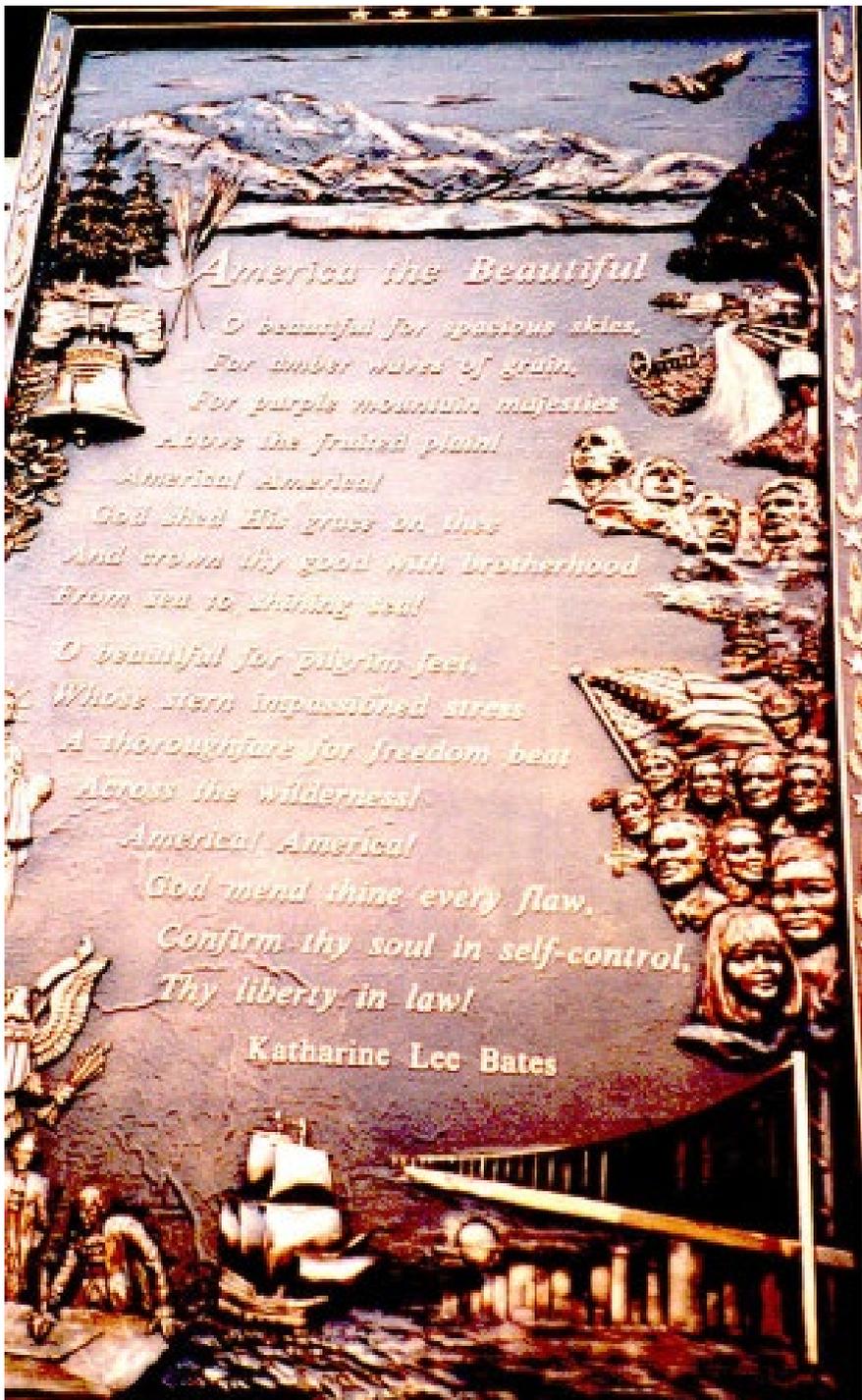
There are still a lot of people who I don't know if they are with us or not, because all my contact information and id's were in the store at the time. I had all of my id's there because I was going to get my driver's license. At this point I just got my social security card. They gave me a hard time too, to get my social security card, because they wanted some proof of ID and I didn't have any. I could give them some photo copies that I have, but they didn't take them. I explained the situation but they just said sorry "if you don't have original ID's we can't give you a social

security card.” Thank God, I had some papers from school and they finally accepted that – because I was so frustrated and I needed my social security card. They suggested I get a passport. Well, they ask for more ID to get a passport than to get my Social Security card. I can’t get one without the other one and I thought social security would be the fastest one. Then they wanted my birth certificate... but I couldn’t get into any hospital building right now because I had no ID...and you now need ID to just get into buildings. I even went to the hospital to visit a friend who was there with cancer, and they wouldn’t let me visit because I had no ID. It was very frustrating I wanted to cry out “I don’t know what else to do.”

Now, the air is still thick downtown. My boyfriend was transferred to a copy shop at Wall Street and he started coughing so badly I told him either transfer or quit. They wouldn’t transfer him so he quit.

I went down a month ago because my Mother in law wanted to see the area and say thank you to all the police that work down there, to say “Merry Christmas.” She wanted to bring gifts, but they are not allowed to take anything. It was strange for me. It was a good thing to tell people to go on with their lives, but I did it – I just got myself into a lot of work and activities, and it didn’t hit me until two weeks ago at the New Year. I got into a huge depression and all I did was cry. I’d be fine for work...but when I got home I’d just cry and cry. To this day I do not watch TV or watch movies. I tried to watch Pearl Harbor. I watched 5 minutes and turned it off to watch Friends. In New York you still see they are not in the skyline and you have to deal with it every day. I still miss them.

One year later Elvin moved from New York City to Florida.



America the Beautiful

*O beautiful for spacious skies,
For amber waves of grain,
For purple mountain majesties
Above the fruited plain!
America! America!
God shed His grace on thee
And crown thy good with brotherhood
From sea to shining sea!*

*O beautiful for pilgrim feet,
Whose stern impassioned stress
A thoroughfare for freedom beat
Across the wilderness!
America! America!
God mend thine every flaw,
Confirm thy soul in self-control,
Thy liberty in law!*

Katharine Lee Bates

Tribute to the lost firemen and police

**PATRICIA R. KLAUSNER,
MANAGER AT STEPS STUDIO**

I was in the process of opening the dance studio for the day's classes.

As I had no radio or TV, at first I thought it was a plane that was out of control. It was only after the second plane hit that I realized something was up. Again, I was relying on information from students who were coming in for class. Finally, we found a radio and teachers, students and administrators gathered around. When the plane hit the Pentagon I was speechless. Reality sunk in. We decided to cancel classes for that day but left the studio open for students who wanted or needed a place to come and be with friends. All day long I continued to work while listening to the radio. My friends called every 1/2-hour with updates. To be honest, none of this sunk in until I arrived home that night at around 8:30 and turned on the television for the first time. I guess my reaction to this day was hours behind my friends and family. That night I tracked down as many people as I could who lived or worked in the area. All were found. The next day we kept the studio closed. I went out to get coffee around 7:15am and had a conversation with my neighbor in the middle of 3rd Ave. during "rush hour." I could not believe it, there was not one car. The city looked like a ghost town. I then spoke to the many police officers that were in my neighborhood and begged them to use me as a volunteer -- to no avail. I even offered my services as a cook! (Those who know me should be laughing) As I live down the block from NYU hospital my neighborhood was heavily patrolled to allow ambulances and emergency vehicles through. For the next three or four days my hours at home were filled with sirens. I prayed that perhaps one person in those many cars was alive. On Sunday I went to church at St. Bart's with my friends Manny, David and Lawrence. I sat next to a woman who was not of that particular church's faith as well. We hugged and sang the psalms (those we knew). The music in the church really lifted my spirits, especially when they played a piece by Aaron Copland. She turned to me after the service and said I really hope Israel and the Palestinians can work it out. I thought that was an

interesting statement as it was clear she felt that was the reason for this. A few days later I joined my family for Rosh Hashanah. I just hugged my nephews who are 4, 5 and 10. I answered as many questions as I could and then we played a game of baseball. Funny how they can make you forget for a few moments.

I am not sure how this event has affected my life. I think that will be answered over time. Perhaps one way is that I no longer get upset with my cab drivers if they find themselves in traffic or make a wrong turn. I guess perspective has become important.

I do not consider myself a religious person. However, I have become less cynical of how people use religion in a time of crisis. Having gone to church and synagogue I realized my spirituality has remained intact because I believe the answers come from within. Although there has been a lot of talk and writings on why this has happened, I have not come to terms with the power of hatred. As an ex-professor of sociology, I have often thought about how much longer the U.S. would be spared from such horrors. The answer has come. We are now one with the rest of the world and given that, it may be a good time to examine our relationships with our allies and foes alike. History may provide many of the answers we are currently searching for. Let's hope our collective memory is not short term. Most of my concerns have focused on our children and what the history books will write of this event. I want them to be proud of how this city, this nation and the world have pulled together, and of how the U.S. chose to respond. At the time of this writing I still pray that our leaders make good choices.

*Patricia Klausner continues to work in theatre and has produced
Scottsboro Boys on Broadway and many new plays.*



Looking downtown on 9/12 in a nearly deserted city.

KATHY GOFF...PROFESSIONAL DRUMMER

I am sending you my account of what I have been going thru these past couple of days. I have been sick to my stomach ever since last Wednesday morning. On top of having to commute to a show workshop that is totally going wrong, I have had to live with my new fear of commuting into the city. I have had 3 bomb scares since last Tuesday and for the first time today, sought out counseling.

If this isn't enough...today was my 36th birthday.

I hope you are dealing better with this than I am. I am seriously reconsidering my moving plans to NYC. Until I can sleep comfortably in my own skin, I think I'll hang in Jersey for a while. I'm this close to quitting my workshop, just can't hack it anymore.

Bless you...
Kathy

To all those who saw me on the chat last night for a brief few minutes, you know that I am okay. At least right now. I have been up since 4:30 AM Tuesday morning and have not been able to sleep. I spent last night in and out of the bathroom, sick as a dog, and with chest pains. My body is achingly sore from having to walk at least 60 blocks in the city. My parents were sick as well. My clothing and bed sheets smell like burnt metal and smoke. But I am home and not certain I can go out anywhere today, I may just stay in bed.

I had an appointment at the Federal Building yesterday in Lower Manhattan to give testimony on behalf of the Musicians Union regarding a show I am working on. As I exited the subway, a woman came screaming down the steps yelling, "It was a bomb". Everyone turned to look at her and as I climbed the steps I could barely get out of them. They were congested with people turned towards the south, slack jawed and eyes wide open. When I climbed those steps and turned, I saw a hole the size of my town in the WTC and the entire top 5th of the building in flames. People around me were screaming and running away. Needless to say I joined them.

For the first time in my life I actually stopped several New Yorkers to try to get directions to my appointment. I ran 5 blocks in what seemed like 10 seconds. When I got to the Federal Building the security guard was yelling at people to get out. I found my friend and we quickly started zig zagging our way thru the Village and SOHO. It was like a parade going thru the city, every single corner provides a vantage point and people were staring up in the sky. Police were shutting off access to all federal buildings and needless to say I had no intention of staying in the one I was in.

5 minutes after we started walking, I heard a sound I pray God I will never hear again...it was the second plane ramming the second tower. I started to run as did everyone around me and there was more screaming. Everyone started to panic.

My friend and I scrambled into the nearest subway station and headed north. I got off at Penn Station and tried to find a phone to call my family. My cell phone was completely worthless, no signal, nothing. I then decided to try to call my theatre, by then rehearsals had been cancelled.

I ran like crazy into Penn Station and got on a train. It was

twice as packed and I had to stand. Then came the announcement that Penn Station was under state of emergency and they made us evacuate the building. I ran upstairs again and tried to find another phone. No luck. It was 15 minutes later that they made an announcement for the NJ Transit folks to get back to track 15, the train was leaving.

As I got back on the train, the woman behind me collapsed. I watched as some other commuters put her in a seat and I gave her my cold cup of Coca Cola to help revive her once she woke up. I sat on the train for 35 minutes as bomb inspectors went thru the train tunnels to check them out. We were supposed to have been the last train to leave NYC.

No luck... for the second time I had to get off the train. I had no way home.

I finally managed to find a pay phone and call my family. I also called my friend in uptown to ask if she could put me up for the night. Being that the buses were loaded, subways suspended and taxis nowhere to be found I had to walk from 30th to 89th street. My friend Barb was the best sight for sore feet, lemme tell you.

We had lunch at a small restaurant nearby and watched the TV. Most places in the city had closed at that point and I ended up staying there for, what must have been 3 hours. We both wanted to do something, but right then, just felt the need to be around other people.

We went back to her place and finally managed to get thru on a phone line. The PATH trains and NJ Transit had finally been reinstated. I hugged her goodbye and lucked out with a bus that could only go as far as 42nd St. I walked the rest of the way to the train station.

Once again, I got on the train and sat there for 35 minutes. We finally left NYC at 7:15. I can remember second for every god forsaken second as that train booked like a bat outta you know where as we went thru the underground tunnel. I wasn't the only one crying when we saw daylight on the other side.

As the train approached Newark, the entire car turned to look at the NY skyline. There was a giant black cloud where two towers should have been. #7 building was still on fire....

The man who sat in front of me lived in Princeton and

worked in a building across from the Towers. He was covered in asphalt, white dust and gray debris; his hair was full of it. His face was red and flushed. A fireball shot out of one the towers as it collapsed and his store bought the brunt of it. He was going home to see his family and then go to the Emergency room so his eyes and lungs could be checked out. He was pretty shaken up.

I got in my car and did about 90 going home. Once I pulled in the driveway, my parents came running out with my dog. I bear hugged my folks as we all broke down in tears. I looked at my Mom and laughed as I said, "You wouldn't believe the day I've had". 10 hours after I had boarded the first train, I was actually standing in my own driveway.

I am fortunate to say that I knew no one directly (at least as of yet) who worked in that building. I heard of a few people who had loved ones that they had not contacted all day and are still waiting to hear from.

I found the Lord when I was 16. I found him again last night. He was the friend who offered me a place to stay, the friend who called me 6 times frantically trying to reach me, the many Ny'ers who told me to have a safe travel in trying to get home, and the firefighter that I stood on the bus with, headed downtown, holding his gear, getting ready to pull bodies from the wreckage.

Today I am going to try to eat something..... take my Grandmother out shopping....hug my Mom a coupla hundred more times...sleep if it's physically possible....play with my dog... and call a few people for no other reason....just to say I love them. With regard to that last phrase, I recommend you all do it too.

After last night.....do we really need an excuse to?

Kathy Goff continues to work in New York as a musician and lives in New Jersey

CURRENT FEATURE STORY

by the Editors of Religion Today

September 18, 2001

Surviving the 81st Floor of World Trade Tower Two

A testimony of God's hand of protection amidst tragedy

Tuesday, Sept. 11, 2001, began like any other day for Bethel Assembly of God deacon and Sunday school superintendent Stanley Praimnath of Elmont, Long Island. He got up early, took a shower, prayed, got ready and headed for work. The drive was uneventful. The train ride was the same. Yet, this day he would see the hand of God spare his life.

"For some particular reason, I gave the Lord a little extra of myself that morning [during prayer]," Stanley said. "I said, 'Lord, cover me and all my loved ones under your precious blood.' And even though I said that and believed it, I said it over and over and over.

When Stanley arrived at World Trade Center Tower Two, he took the elevator up to his office on the 81st floor. "I work for the Fuji Bank Limited," he said. "I'm an assistant vice president in the loans operations department. The company is located on the 79th through 82nd floors."

Stanley greeted Delise, a woman who had arrived before him. After talking briefly, he headed over to his desk and picked up his phone to retrieve his messages.

"As I'm standing there retrieving my messages, I'm looking out at the next building, One World Trade, and I saw fire falling through from the roof," Stanley said. "Now, this entire building is surrounded by glass, and you can stand up and from there you can see all the buildings, planes and everything flying at the same altitude."

As Stanley saw "fire balls" coming down, his first reaction was to think of his boss who works in that building. He decided to try to call him to see if he was OK. "I'm dialing his number, and getting no response. So, I say to Delise, the temp, 'Go, go, and go --let's get out.'"

Delise and Stanley got on the elevator and went down to the 78th floor. Some other people were there. The company's president, the CEO, the human resources director and two other men joined the group and headed down to the concourse level of Two World Trade Center.

If they had continued on and exited the building, all of their lives would have been spared. As it was, that's not the way it happened.

"As soon as we reached the concourse level, the security guard stopped us and said, 'Where are you going?' Stanley explained about seeing the fire in Tower One. According to Stanley, the guard said, "Oh that was just an accident. Two World Trade is secured. Go back to your office."

That turned out to be fatal advice -- aside from Stanley, Delise was the only one of that group to survive.

"We were joking, and I told [Human Resources Director] Brian Thompson, 'This is a good time to think of relocating this building -- it's not safe anymore.'" Stanley headed back to his office, but before he got there, he told Delise, that with the events of the day, she should go home and relax.

Thompson went to the 82nd floor, the president and CEO went to the 79th floor and Stanley got out on the 81st floor. When Stanley got to his office, his phone was ringing. "It was someone from Chicago calling to find out if I'm watching the news," he said. He told the caller everything "was fine."

But everything wasn't fine -- far from it. As Stanley was talking, he looked up and saw United Air Lines Flight 175 heading straight for him.

"All I can see is this big gray plane, with red letters on the wing and on the tail, bearing down on me," said Stanley. "But this thing is happening in slow motion. The plane appeared to be like 100 yards away, I said 'Lord, you take control, I can't help myself here.' "

Stanley then dove under his desk. "My Testament [Bible] was on top of my desk," explained Stanley. "I knew, beyond a shadow of a doubt, that the Lord was going to take care of me once I got there." As he curled into a fetal position under his desk, the plane tore into the side of the building and exploded.

Miraculously, Stanley was unhurt. However, he could see a flaming wing of the plane in the doorway of his department. He knew he needed to get out of his office and the building fast. But, he was trapped under debris up to his shoulders.

"Lord, you take control, this is your problem now," he recalled praying. "I don't know where I got this power from, but the good Lord; He gave me so much power and strength in my body that I was able to shake everything off. I felt like I was the strongest man alive."

All the while, Stanley was asking the Lord to spare his life. "I'm crying and I'm praying, 'Lord, I have things to do. I want to see my family, Lord, help me through.'"

Stanley's office resembled a battle zone -- walls flattened into dusty heaps, office equipment strewn violently, flames flickering about and rubble everywhere.

"Everything I'm trying to climb on [to get out] is collapsing and I'm going down," he said. "I'm getting cuts and bruises, but I'm saying, 'Lord, I have to go home to my loved ones, I have to make it, you have to help me.'"

Suddenly Stanley saw the light of a flashlight. For a moment, it stunned him. "What were the chances of someone bringing a flashlight to this floor?" he thought. "My first gut reaction was, 'This is my guardian angel -- my Lord sent somebody to save me!'"

Stanley began screaming, "I see the light, I see the light." But after clawing his way through the debris, he realized that he couldn't get out - all the exits were blocked and his "guardian angel" couldn't get to him--a wall was between him and the staircase. "He can't get to me and I can't get to him, and by this time I can't breathe," Stanley said. "I don't know if it was sulfur or what [burning jet fuel, perhaps], but I can smell this thing. I got down on my knees and said, 'Lord, you've got to help me. You've brought me this far, help me to get to the staircase.'"

But then Stanley did something surprising. While praying on his knees, he called out to the man behind the wall, "There's one thing I got to know, do you know Jesus?" The man replied he went to church every Sunday. Then they prayed together to enable them to break through the wall.

"I got up, and I felt as if a power came over me," said Stanley.

"I felt goose bumps all over my body and I'm trembling, and I said to the wall, 'You're going to be no match for me and my Lord.' Moments later, he punched his way through the wall and, with the help of the man on the other side, was able to squirm his way through the hole in the wall. "The guy held me and embraced me and he gave me a kiss and he said, 'From today, you're my brother for life.' "

But the danger wasn't over. The man on the other side of the wall, who introduced himself as Brian, was an older man and they still had 81 floors to walk down, with the building on fire and, unknown to them, in danger of collapse. "We hobbled our way down, and at every floor we stopped to see if anybody was there, but nobody was, except a man was on the floor, and his back was gone, and he was covered in blood."

Stanley asked to be allowed to carry the man out, but a security guard told him it would be better to send somebody up. When they finally made it down to the concourse, only firefighters were there. "They were saying, 'Run! Run! Run!' they were telling us to run out, but they were not concerned about themselves," he said.

Stanley and Brian would have run from the building, but now the concourse was surrounded with fire. Wetting themselves under the building's sprinkler system, they held hands and ran through the flames to safety at Trinity Church, about two blocks away. "I wanted to go to the church to thank God," Stanley explained, "As soon as I held onto the gate of that church, the building [World Trade Center Tower Two] collapsed."

Stanley and Brian made their way safely out of the danger area. Before they parted, Stanley gave his business card to Brian in hopes of contact at a later time, and said, "If I don't see you, I'll see you in heaven."

Cut and bloodied, with clothes tattered and wearing a borrowed shirt, Stanley finally made it home hours later to his wife, Jennifer, and his two girls, Stephanie, 8, and Caitlin, 4. "I held my wife and my two children and we cried," said Stanley. After thanking God for sparing his life, Stanley told God whatever he did; it will always be for His glory. "I'm so sore, but every waking moment, I say 'Lord, had you not been in control, I would

not have made it.'

"For some divine reason, I know, beyond a shadow of a doubt, that the good Lord's mighty hand turned the plane a fraction from where I was standing," said Stanley. "Because when it crash-landed, it was just 20 feet from me. I don't care who would rationalize -- what people would say now or years from now, but I know it was the handiwork of the Lord that turned that plane. My Lord Jesus is bigger than the Trade Center and His finger can push a plane aside!" okay, but obviously Okay was a far step away to what we would normally be feeling at this point.

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Mr. Praimath has been featured in a number of specials about 9/11.



Inwood Salutes America with impromptu banners

Date: Sun, 7 Oct 2001 17:44:26 -0400

Subject: What a Difference a Day makes... Annie Butkus

The act of terrorism upon America on September 11 succeeded in bringing about feelings of fear, of helplessness, of confusion and of anger. It was unthinkable, this unprovoked act of destruction. It left our country dumbfounded and horrified. This act, though, which was meant to weaken, if not destroy us, produced a reaction that our attackers didn't count on. This was our remarkable ability to all come together as a nation. In the aftermath of this truly evil act we have become, overnight, aware of the importance of life and the finality of death. We are more tolerant of each other and kind to strangers. We are all, at once, brothers and sisters.

This feeling of unity and this alone, was what brought us to New York's Manhattan early on a Sunday morning following the attack. The basic need to help, to do *something*, was too strong to ignore. So we went.

There were three of us, and with the donations collected from local restaurants and grocers; we had enough to feed close to 600 workers. The generosity of our benefactors was incredible. No one questioned our motives or asked for any credentials. All gave as much as they could give without so much as raising an eyebrow. Despite the warnings of our friends, the ones who had told us that we wouldn't get nearly close enough to help; we found a place alongside hundreds of others from across the country. All there simply to help.

We cooked for many and spoke with more. We heard stories of friends and relatives, even acquaintances, who had been injured or killed, who had somehow suffered a loss as a result of the attack. We watched the workers go and come back, hours later, tired and thirsty and hungry. Many didn't sleep and none complained. They joked about beer and whiskey and made fun of each other. Some had begun calling their vehicles home. We were all neighbors willing to do *anything* to help each other. We were polite and kind and we *meant* it. Out of madness evolved a kinder man. We spent the day listening and talking. We were all there for one common good.

We began to pack up in the early morning hours and I suddenly found myself saddened by the thought of leaving. After having touched, no matter how briefly, by the lives of so many, of the bond I felt we shared, it seemed somehow wrong to go. I was told that this is the feeling one gets when volunteering. Not so. It was much, much more. It wasn't a measure of time, or a trip, or a *thing*. It was a feeling so overpowering it was felt in the heart and all the senses. Yet it was tangible because it was embraced.

Weeks later I still think of those I befriended and those whose paths I crossed. I will think of them daily and remember them always. The angels of Manhattan.



View from the 70th floor of the World Trade Center

A CANDLE IN THE DUST
BY CHELSEA GLEASON, AGE TWELVE
9-11-01

Why have I been sitting in this monotonous orchestra room for so long? It must have been an hour ago that the uncertain voice from the loudspeaker announced that we should not leave our period seven class until further notice. We are supposed to hear some sort of announcement or something, whatever... What do I have to worry about; I'm going to North Carolina with Brittany this weekend! I'll just focus on that, for now. Soon I'll be feeling the sand of the Outer Banks slip between my toes, and massage away my uncertainties!

Later that day...

Finally a voice thunders from the loudspeaker! Please move to home base for an announcement. Then the fumbling voice announced the names of twenty kids who were to report to the office immediately. Among this list of mysterious kids to report to the office was Brittany... I wonder... no nothing could have happened, I mean what could happen? But... maybe Brittany's sister could have gotten hurt, at the High School that was the rumor at this point. But what we found out later was that we were totally clueless to what really happened that fateful day.

Home base

What is going on, why are Mrs. Beardsley's eyes glassed over? Where is my home base leader? Now I'm starting to worry. We muffle Mrs. Beardsley's voice with questions, and she gives us clues as if in a complicated math equation. She asks us if our parents work in New York or Washington DC, I raise my hand and scream confused cries in my head, my dad works in New York! She seems to answer me by saying he's okay since he is near the UN. But is he really? My mind ponders this question. When you start to worry, you paint pictures in your head; my picture was just beginning to be sketched now.

The Announcement

Ah, a voice protrudes from the black box of doom. The room becomes quiet, quieter than the wind that tickles your hair. Our principle's voice is recognized. He tells us everything that has happened to our country. He tells us we have been attacked. His voice still rings in my mind, and it most likely always will. My mouth becomes as dry as the sand I dreamed about in orchestra, and my palms sweat my pain out through my pores. I feel alone, terribly alone, and no words will calm me until I see my father. The paintbrush in my head paints so hard that my skull rumbles with shock. I feel as if my blood has been drained and my principles of life have been violently torn apart. I float through this announcement like a clear bubble that is about to burst. It grows every second of this announcement. My painting is finished and I examine it. I see my father, on an ivory hospital bed. My conscious screams. Then my bubble pops and I am brought back to reality, if that is what you can call it... My hand darts in the sky and I ask to call my mom. I do so and hear her voice, something I needed at this point. So I drank her words and held them in my memory forever, she was alive. She reassured me and told me that dad was fine and she had called him. I could tell that she had drunk his voice into her memory too. My relief made the weight in my stomach lighter, but a whole chunk was still there.

Later in home base....

I just remembered, Brittany!!! She was called to the office previously, was she okay? I had no way of knowing until I got home so I forced that thought out of my brain for a while. Mrs. Beardsley told us that the Twin Towers were no longer standing. This shocked me! Were they really gone? With this new fact I began to compute how many people were lost at this point, and my math scared me. I tried to talk to my classmates.

The girl next to me had anger written on her forehead, and her eyes told me this was her way of expressing herself, so I listened. She told me how it was Stupid Bush's fault and how could this happen? I tried to comfort her, I told her not to blame anyone, but I knew how she felt because I disliked Bush too. I

thought to myself... at this point we have got to accept Bush, he is the guy who's going to save our country, like it or not. The girl had red eyes and I knew she was the first to cry. I had held my mouth and practically cried to. But, I knew everyone had cried the tears of their soul. If they did this inside or outside was not important.

On the Bus

Elizabeth, Liana!! They were there! I walked over to my best bud, Elizabeth, and whispered, are you okay? She said she was okay, but obviously Okay was a far

step away to what we would normally be feeling at this point. Elizabeth is a religious person, but she is the funniest person I know. She never stops her cycle of laughter, which surprises me. Her goal is to make others happy. She always says, "Laughing burns calories!" Elizabeth is the kind of friend a person dreams about, and I'm lucky that she's mine. Liana had glassy eyes. We both agreed we had to write something about this. I soon became annoyed with all those kids who were laughing, how could they be happy? But I knew this was just a cover-up for them because they have enough time at home to mourn, but they had to act normal, for a while, at least. The whole bus ride I was in another world of depression. When I finally looked over to Liana, she was crying, but just slightly. Liana is one of the strongest people I know, and it shook me to see her with red eyes. I knew her dad had worked a block away from the Twin Towers, and was in a basement when the towers fell. I later found out that he came home with a white coat, instead of a black.

Home At Last!!

My eyes take photos of my mom and I store them in my brain, and I hugged her, and for a second, I was safe. Her eyes were red, just like all Americans on that day. At this point I was emotionally drained, and the dramatic results of 9-11-01 did not seep in to me until I watched the television. I saw the full blast of what had happened to America. I saw screaming people, crashing buildings of hope, and suicide attempts that no one wanted to

decipher. I saw dusk, tears, and cries. I saw more than I ever wanted to see in my life, and what was bad about it was that I saw this at age twelve. I knew my life was different, and our country had been bruised for life. At first, the word war bothered me. At first my mind made me believe that war would take place here, and boy was I scared. That's why when my mom told me that war would happen in Afghanistan, I sighed, at least a little. I felt a little safer now, I was home. But my father was not.

Dad's Home!

It was so weird. My family practiced what to do when Dad came home. We were to comfort him and hug him. Did mom think I was dumb? I was going to do this anyway, of course. But I often have trouble showing my feelings; they're more interesting when you only know them, because then you have secrets from the world. The only time I really show my emotions is when I write. Dad! He's home! I run out to him and hug him. You can tell by his eyes that he is baffled, scared, and confused. He later tells me that he felt hopeless, because he had no way of saying that I was safe, because I really wasn't. When I hugged my dad I cried, I cried inside, which really made me feel better. The picture of dad on a hospital bed only appears in my dreams, now. The chunk in my stomach became lighter, once again.

Good Night, Don't Let the Terrorist's Bite!

Night was the hardest for me. At night I pour my feelings out onto the bed sheet and examine them. I had trouble going to sleep, and whenever I closed my eyes, I saw the Twin Towers, falling, falling, falling... I cried, externally, but not a loud cry. A cry where your eyes turn slightly red but your mouth stays closed. I never stopped praying that night. I never announced amen in my head. I simply prayed on and on... until my eyes finally closed. For the next few nights, this is how it went. If I heard a plane, I'd pulled the blankets over my shoulders just a little more. As for mornings, I never wanted to go to school, for the first week. I felt like a criminal, how could I go to school when so many have fallen to their eternal sleep? But I had to go on, for America and myself.

Church

The Sunday after 9-11-01 I went to church for the most emotional sermon I have been to in my lifetime. It was sad because it was real. It wasn't about the past, yet it told about the present. What I remember is that my pastor told us to pray for the terrorists, and pray that they're minds shall transform into that of a joyous person. I liked this because from then on I felt pity for the terrorists, and wished that their hearts would turn from black to gold. Another thing that stood out in my mind was that my brother told me he had cried. Yes, my brother, the one who held fits about going to church, and never sang the songs. He cried. That's when I knew that this incident had touched us all, like it or not.

North Carolina

Brittany was safe! She was called to the office because her mom wanted to tell her that her dad was safe, but many, almost all, of his clients were lost in the rubble. Brittany told me that we're going to North Carolina. But later her parents decided they weren't going to go. I was sad, because I really need a vacation from this insane world. But I was also relieved because what if we declared war when I was gone, or there was another attack? I would have wanted to be with my family then. But right now I was just happy that Brittany and her family were safe.

The Car Wash

About two weeks after 9-11-01, my youth group at church had a car wash. I brought Elizabeth along because she wanted to help (and who wouldn't want to be with their best friend anyway?) All the money was going to go to the Red Cross. At first, I thought that no one would come. But to my surprise, many people came. When I washed those cars I imagined that I was washing away their depression and loneliness, and it felt good. At the end, we made five hundred and fifty dollars! Later IBM matched our price and we got one thousand dollars. I had helped, which we really all needed to do, because it was the release of our

pain. One lady stood out in my mind. She was from New Jersey, and I could tell that she had seen the towers fall, or had lost loved ones. She gave us money and told us she didn't have time to wash her car. She said what we were doing could make her cry. As she drove away I ran up to her car and handed her an American flag, and I'll never forget the look on her face when I handed it to her. That image returns to me whenever I see our Countries colors.

Changes

When I think about the people who have gone to see the rubble of the towers, like my dad, I wonder if I have the guts to. Would my body break into a million pieces of glass and disintegrate into the dust? Or would it help me, so I could become a stronger person? I give credit to all those who have gone down there. When I think about all those doctors who sat crying because they had no patients from the Twin Towers, or those firefighters looking for a needle in a haystack, I overwhelm with pride for this country. We have all gone through changes from 9-11-01. And my way of expressing myself is to write it all out on paper. I don't know what is to become of this nation, but I am ready. Because that's the way it is, you've got to be ready for anything. But even if you do this, never forget the past, and those 6,000 people, lying in the dust, forever. But don't worry; America will always be that vibrant candle in the dust, forever.



Street Tribute

**A VERIZON EMPLOYEE'S ACCOUNT OF HER
EXPERIENCE ON 09/12/2001 12:50:22 PM**

To:

A family friend of one of our coworkers. - Verizon Employee to all - Yes Jose, I work in Manhattan and I was also at ground zero. I will try and type briefly all that I experience; however, I do not know if I will ever be able express the events I witnessed yesterday.

I commute into Manhattan from Hoboken via path. It was a normal commute in for me, though I was a little late. I stopped at J. Crew - don't know if you know that the WTC has loads and loads and loads of stores on its ground floor. Many people were commenting about how wonderful the day was....as you can see from pictures...it was a perfect day, weather-wise. I stopped for a cup of coffee at Devon-Blakely in the WTC. I walked across the street, passed 7 WTC towards West St (west side hwy), to the next building-Verizon building. At my desk, I have a view of the WTC. I typed an email to Barry, made a phone call to Eric and suddenly felt an incredible jolt and heard a tremendous explosion. My colleague ran into my office saying someone must have bombed the trade center. We looked up and the first 20 floors from the top where engulfed by flames and smoke. Two other people ran into my office to see the sight. We were all in awe. I ran to the phone to call my brother-in-law who worked in 2 WTC. He did not answer.

I called my sister and her secretary could not find her. I phoned my parents.... (Oh, info you need to know...during the bombing in 1993, my mother, brother-in-law, uncle and pregnant sister were all in 2 WTC - - my mother had broken her shoulder when she was pushed down the stairs)... I informed my mother of the explosion and she turned on the TV. Announcements were being made to evacuate our building since we were right next door to 1 WTC and 7 WTC. Debris was falling. One of the guys had a set of mini binoculars, though we could see clearly. I had to wait to evacuate since a person who works on my floor is blind. The stairwells were chaotic. While on the phone with my parents, we found out it was a plane. On my second line, I continually tried to get in touch with my sister as well as her husband. (My

sister lives across the street next to World Financial Center in the Battery Park City). Announcements told us to stay in because of falling debris. We then watch people burning on fire jumping off those floors...people dangling just giving up hope and dropping 100's of feet to their death. We looked down on the roof adjacent to us and saw gray bodies surrounded by pools of blood. I could not stop crying and screaming helplessly...begging people so far away not to jump. My father and I were speaking as I watched the 757 approach...I could not explain to my father what I was witnessing. I was yelling "daddy, it's a f'ing plane"; He said he knew that already..."no, no daddy it's a f'ing plane." He did not understand a second plane was approaching the area...it was all in slow motion. My father turned to the television and realized it was second plane. The plane disappeared behind 1 WTC because I only have 1 WTC in my view and I saw an explosion lower than the first and flames shooting out about 60th floor. My father screams, "Jesus Christ, get the hell out of your building"; my colleagues and I yelled "terrorist attack" simultaneously. We gathered everyone on the floor and tried to go down the stairwell. The stairways were dark and packed. I could not take Vinay, who is blind, down those stairs safely. I offered to take him via elevator and told everyone else to leave. My buddies, Ray and Mike, tried to persuade me but I refused to leave Vinay....they refused to leave me. We waited 15 minutes for an elevator. The building was empty except for a few emergency personnel, who escorted us out of the building onto West Street. We walk out of the building and walked right. I looked left and saw hundreds of firemen, police officers and emergency workers in front of our building and 1 WTC, 25-50 yards away.

We walked about 100 yards and a rumbling filled the sky. We turned and noticed the west facade of about 20-25 floors fell from the building. I jumped up and down and screamed "no.. no...no...John". (John is a firefighter who I dated for 8 years)... I watched as this burning material hit the workers in front of 1 WTC. I could not move; tears were streaming down my eyes. Mike and Ray were telling me we have to leave and all I could say was "John must be dead; John is dead". I was so out of it; I did not react to what looked like a nuclear cloud approaching our area. Firemen and cops ran toward us screaming "get the f' out of here;

run for your lives" ...with Vinay between Ray and me, we could not outrun the cloud and quickly became engulfed. We did not stop running for about $\frac{1}{4}$ - $\frac{1}{2}$ mile...I could not see between the smoke and my tears. We stopped and hugged each other. We watched from our area on the West Side Hwy...We watched 2 WTC fall and were amazed. These buildings are not supposed to come down.

We spotted a payphone, which people said was not working. We figured the switch was out of WTC. We, Verizon employees, knew an access number out of White Plains, NY switch. We called people. My colleague, Hulya, I knew was in the WTC...I just had a feeling...I knew she stopped for coffee at Devon Blakley as I do every morning. She did...she was in the coffee shop as the first one hit. She walked down to our building and watch as the 2nd approached. She said the plane was on top of her and screamed, "What is this maniac doing" ...everyone she said screamed as she saw an inferno. She told me later she left Turkey to escape this craziness. Anyway, we stayed at the phone and dialed numbers out for people who needed to call loved ones to say that they were alive.. People kissing us and thanking us. This was the only way we felt we could help. Another rumbling started. Everyone ran out to the street and looked at the gray cloud that covered the sky...we witnessed 1WTC's demise. No one could speak...no one wanted to look at one another in fear that there would be a breakdown of emotions. Hundreds of people watched the empty skyline silently. Until someone spoke and said "we witnessed history"...."we will never forget"...people then ran down the street with burnt metal and plastic stuck to them screaming... people taking off shirts and jackets covering them and hailing down emergency workers....

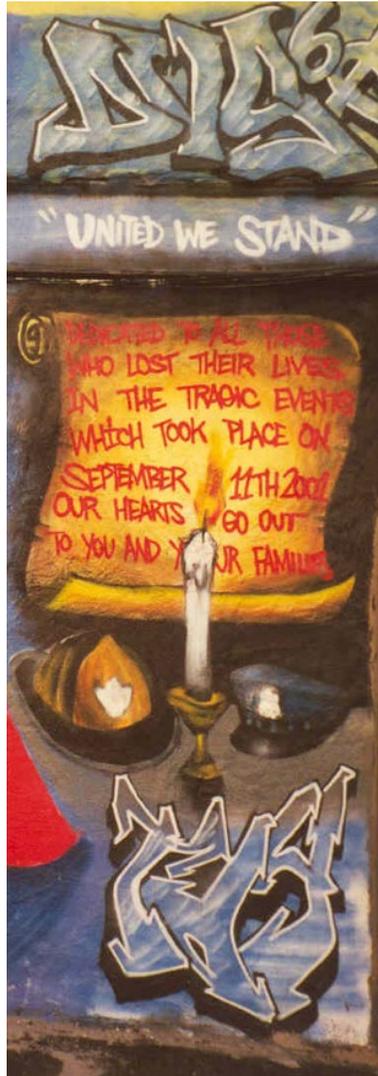
I finally made a phone call home, my parents thought I was dead, because of my late evacuation; they witnessed the facade coming off the building and the demise of the trade center. My brother-in-law was still missing. After making a few more calls, gas lines around us exploded; we dashed. We were finally safe, walking aimlessly north. People were dazed. Water, signs for bathrooms, people offering phones and people offering help lined the streets. Automobiles running with the doors opened and the radio blasting became a familiar scene. It was like the movie

Armageddon...all these people...Chinese, black, corporate people, hippies, Jewish, Christian.... just listening to a car radio and hugging. We were all in shock. Finally a police officer informed us that the "F train" was running uptown only; it runs into Queens. And ferries are running from pier 11 (39th and Hudson River) to Hoboken and Weehawken. I departed from my friends who live on Long Island....we just hugged and kissed for about 5 minutes.... as I walked down the street, I ran into someone who use to work for Verizon and now works for Met Life...he saw me and started crying ...we hugged and then said "what is your name again?" This made me laugh for the first time since the disaster started and then I broke down. I informed him of the burning bodies and the people on the adjacent roof...he walked me to 39th Street. There was a four-hour wait for the ferry. The lines just wound around like we were in an amusement park. It was hot...and everyone was exhausted but no one complained because we were alive and we could feel hot and tired. Not many conversations were held... it was primarily silent until we were loaded onto the ferry and everyone clapped and cried.

My cell phone finally started working...17 messages. The two most important messages were from my sister, Sheila, telling me that Mike called her from her apartment next to the world financial center and was leaving because of gas leaks. He ran to the east river on the east side of Manhattan, begged a man with a tugboat to take him to Brooklyn because my niece and nephew are in school there. This man sailed my brother-in-law across to gather the kids. And the second call was from John, he knew I was in the building next to it and left him a message when the fire started in 1 WTC. So he did not know if I got out. He was at the Woolworth building 2 blocks away when the WTC came down. I arrived in Hoboken only to be detained. But I did not care; I was alive. People within 10 block radius had to be doused by fire hoses...clothes and all...the only thing they would hold is a laptop out of its bag...cell phones, pagers, etc. could get wet and were a causality that did not matter. The EMT were worried about jet fuel and asbestos on our skin and in our clothing... so people in suits, skirts stepped through a bubble with fire hoses saturating them. Drs were there when we came out to listen to our lungs and offer any medical help. From there people were being informed

of all the trains leaving Hoboken and times. I just walked home from the path as I would any other day, but this time my clothes were wet and I knew I would be a different person from what I witnessed.

Thank you to all the people who left me messages yesterday, concerned...I am okay physically but mentally I have been deeply affected. I cannot believe it all happened and I was there. My heart and prayers go out to all the families and friends of those who perished.



Graffiti tribute in Soho

IMPRESSIONS FROM ALASKA

Ellen Walker

We had had a long but uneventful return from North Carolina to Juneau on Sept. 10. In fact we had flown from Greensboro, NC into Newark to change planes for Seattle, and I had remarked on the Twin Towers to Garland, my husband, as we were circling to land.

That evening around 9pm, and our bodies were still on east coast time (4 hours difference), we were unpacking when Garland received a phone call from the leader of Juneau Mountain Rescue to join a search party for a 79 year old Alzheimer's victim who had become separated from his family at the top of the Mt. Roberts tram. He declined to go because he was very tired; however, he said that if he was needed the next day to give him a call in the morning.

At 5:45am our phone rang, and my first groggy thought was "damn it Steve. Do you have to call so early?" I answered, but it was one of my sisters-in-law from North Carolina (Garland's sister) calling to make sure we had returned to Alaska and had not stopped off in NY. She proceeded to hysterically describe the first plane crash into the World Trade Tower and insisted that we turn on the TV. I told her it was too early...the remote was not nearby... there was nothing we could do, etc. Then she said that there was a second crash, and her husband was on another phone to tell her about the crash into the Pentagon. She then hung up, and we fell into a semi- sleep state until the radio went on at 6:15am.

That's when the reality hit us as we heard Bob Edwards on NPR's "Morning Edition" describe the horror in NY. Then we turned on both TV's and saw the explosion of the second tower as it happened.....

To keep reading, please purchase your copy of the book at
www.Amazon.com

Thank you