

FORT MYERS FLORIDA WEEKLY®

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REMEMBERING

9/11



Journalist Patricia Horwell was covering President George W. Bush, above, on his visit to a Sarasota school Sept. 11, 2001.

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS

Journalist recalls covering Sarasota event with President Bush on 9/11

BY PATRICIA HORWELL
phorwell@floridaweekly.com

SEPT. 11, 2001 — A DATE I PREFER NOT TO remember, even after 20 years. But I am a journalist. It is my job to record and remember. At the time, I was education editor for a publication in Venice. I was excited to cover President George W. Bush's visit to Sarasota's Emma E. Booker Elementary School. He was there with Florida Lt. Gov. Frank Brogan and Secretary of Education Rod Paige to promote a new reading program. I had no notion that I was about to witness history.

SEE 9/11, A12 ▶



The 9/11 Memorial and One World Trade Center today.

Initiative underway for recycled drinkable water in Florida

BY MARY WOZNIAK
mwozniak@floridaweekly.com

How is it that Florida, a peninsula surrounded on three sides by water, with 8,436 miles of coastline, more than 7,700 lakes, 4,500 square miles of estuaries and bays, 50,000 miles of rivers and streams and the River of Grass that is the Everglades, is looking at the reality of resorting to using recycled water for drinking, cooking and bathing?

That scenario is on the horizon, according to the state Department of Environmental Protection and its partners promoting the One Water Florida initiative to get Floridians used to the idea and educate them on what it is all about. They've even created a comprehensive, highly detailed website to launch the campaign and tout its benefits as the solution to Florida's ever-shrinking supply of fresh water for an ever-growing population.

The water is for potable reuse, which the

state DEP describes as "highly treated recycled water from various sources people can use for drinking, cooking or bathing."

The Potable Reuse Commission, a group of water experts, scientists, environmental and health representatives and others, came up with a framework to implement this new initiative, and defines potable reuse in their 2020 study as "augmentation of a drinking

SEE WATER, A11 ▶

INSIDE



Society

SW-Florida Comic-Con at the Crowne Plaza Hotel at Bell Tower. **B16 ▶**



Florida's ale trails

Mapping out a connection fermented by an interest in craft beers and breweries. **B1 ▶**



Business

Keep your talent. **A21 ▶**



For the birds

"The Birds of Southwest Florida" opens at Edison and Ford Estates. **A8 ▶**

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“OK,” I thought. “A terrible accident.” But when another reporter received a call about the second plane, we all knew it was an attack. I felt sick to my stomach. My head ached.

— Patricia Horwell



View of Lower Manhattan from the Manhattan Bridge, Sept. 11, 2001.

PHOTOS COURTESY OF THE LIBRARY OF CONGRESS

9/11

From page 1

Early morning

I arose in darkness, around 4 a.m., since we were told to be at the school quite early.

There were check-in and press credentials to pick up, all under the watchful eye of the Secret Service. Credentials were applied for previously after submitting to a federal background check.

I remember chatting briefly with Linda Carson, a local television anchor.

Then I was directed to the school media center where I stood in line with press, local politicians and other invited guests.

When we finally entered the media center, we took our seats among the several dozen chairs set up for the occasion.

My paper's photographer was already there, on a platform to the side of the room along with other photographers, where they had a clear view of the podium.

A group of schoolchildren with sparkling, smiling faces and their teachers were lined up facing us on the other side of the room. I remember being impressed that the kids were all so well-behaved.

After an early morning run at the Longboat Key Club, Mr. Bush left the Colony Beach and Tennis Resort where he had stayed the night before and headed toward the school.

Even before he arrived, American Airlines Flight 11 had crashed into the north tower at 8:46 a.m.

Unaware of what had just transpired, we were all awaiting the president, who was in Sandra Kay Daniels' sec-

ond-grade classroom, reading “The Pet Goat” with the children.

I remember hoping Mr. Bush would appear soon.

I'm not usually an early riser and getting up that early left me sleepy.

I wanted nothing more than to crawl back into my bed.

To pass the time, I began chatting with a new acquaintance, Emily Leinfuss, who was sitting next to me and was editor of a local parenting magazine.

We also did not yet know that at 9:02 a.m. United Airlines Flight 175 hit the south tower.

Meanwhile, Andrew Card, the president's chief of staff, entered Ms. Daniels' classroom and whispered in Mr. Bush's ear that the second plane had hit.

Apparent terrorist attacks

Back in the media center, as we waited for the president, we began to hear cell phones chime. I recall a reporter yelling that a plane had hit the world Trade Center.

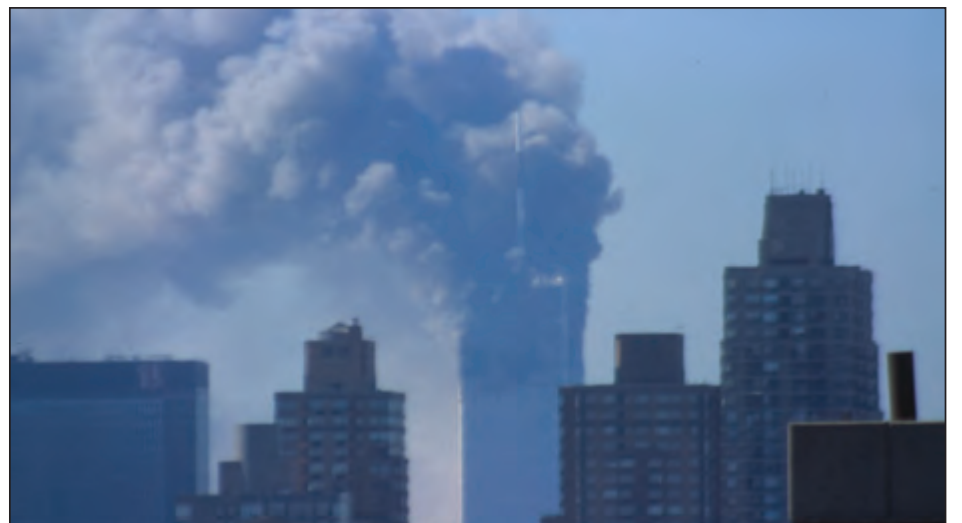
“OK,” I thought. “A terrible accident.”

But when another reporter received a call about the second plane, we all knew it was an attack. I felt sick to my stomach. My head ached.

As if planned, we seemed to rise in unison and head to the audio-visual room next door. Reporters turned on every TV in the room — each to a different network. For a few minutes, no one was working. We watched in horror. We wept. We screamed. We hugged.

I have lived in Sarasota since 1998, but I am a New Yorker. At that moment I felt as if my heart was being ripped apart. My city! My family! My friends!

All I wanted to do was jump into my car and head North. I remember taking a few deep breaths, desperately trying to compose myself. I had a



The disastrous aftermath of two airplanes crashing into the Twin Towers of the World Trade Center in Lower Manhattan after being hijacked by terrorists on Sept. 11, 2001.



THE GEORGE W. BUSH PRESIDENTIAL LIBRARY
Director of Communications Dan Bartlett points to news footage of the World Trade Center Towers burning, Sept. 11, 2001, as President George W. Bush gathers information about the attack from Emma E. Booker Elementary School in Sarasota.



The disastrous aftermath of two airplanes crashing into the Twin Towers of the World Trade Center in Lower Manhattan after being hijacked by terrorists on Sept. 11, 2001.

responsibility here.

By 9:30 a.m., the president made his appearance and spoke to us and to the nation.

He looked weary. His brow was furrowed, his manner somber and his words precise as he spoke to us and to the nation.

“Two airplanes have crashed into the World Trade Center in an apparent terrorist attack on our country,” he said. After a moment of silence, he concluded his two-minute speech with, “May God bless the victims, their families and America.”

We were temporarily held in the media center until Mr. Bush and his entourage were safely whisked off school grounds.

From there the president was taken to Air Force One and flew to Barksdale Air Force Base in Louisiana.

Back to work

I stopped at home to call my office before I headed toward Venice. As I drove to work, I listened to news reports about the American Airlines flight 77 crash into the Pentagon and United Airlines Flight 93 crash in a field in Shanksville, Pa. After that, all I remember of that 30-minute trip was screaming, crying and cursing as I drove. To this

day I can recall nothing more and am truly astounded that I made it to work safe and sound.

Once at my desk, I checked my voicemail. A message from one of my three grown sons simply stated, “Mom, when you get this, please call.”

Of course, I panicked and expected the worst. It took most of the day before I could get through to any of them. As it turned out, they were worried about me. I tried to dismiss my desire to hold them all close and got down to business.

More than 3,000 people had perished.

Conferring with staff, military

Following the attack of the fourth plane, Mr. Bush conferred with Vice President Richard Cheney and authorized the use of force in response to the attacks.

The president met with military personnel at Barksdale and then headed to U.S. Strategic Command at Offutt Air Force Base in Nebraska, where he was taken to a secure bunker and participated in a national security briefing.

The next leg of his journey was to Andrews Air Force Base in Maryland. From there he boarded a helicopter to the White House. After attending more meetings, he spoke to the nation at 8:30 p.m.

“Today, our fellow citizens, our way of life, our very freedom came under attack in a series of deliberate and deadly terrorist acts,” he said. “This is a day when all Americans from every walk of life unite in our resolve for justice and peace. America has stood down enemies before, and we will do so this time. None of us will ever forget this day, yet we go forward to defend freedom and all that is good and just in our world. Thank you. Good night. And God bless America,” he concluded.

“Shocked disbelief”

Last week I asked my friend Emily to share her thoughts of that morning. (We remain in touch.)

“Shocked disbelief was in the tenor in the voices of the talking heads coming from the TV and in the hush of those watching with me as ‘fallers,’ looking like little dots, were forced or blown out of windows. The hard-boiled news hounds around me were weeping,” she said.

Eventually, that October, I made my way back to New York, visiting every family member and friend. A longtime buddy and I made a painful pilgrimage to Ground Zero. The air was acrid, the sky gray and no one smiled.

Someone recently asked me if I had

visited the Ground Zero Memorial Museum yet. “No,” I replied. “It still stings.”

And every Sept. 11, I take time to reflect and I cry. ■

— Pat Horwell is editor of Florida Weekly’s Babcock Ranch Telegraph and Wellen Park Journal.

In the KNOW

Moments of silence to observe (all times EST)

- » 8:46 a.m. – American Airlines Flight #11 collides into the World Trade Center
- » 9:03 a.m. – United Airlines Flight #175 collides into the World Trade Center South Tower
- » 9:37 a.m. – American Airlines Flight #77 crashes into the Pentagon
- » 9:59 a.m. – World Trade Center South Tower Collapses
- » 10:03 a.m. – United Airlines Flight #93 crashes in Shanksville, Pennsylvania.
- » 10:28 a.m. – World Trade Center North Tower Collapses

Naples resident authors book 20 years in the making

BY PATRICIA HORWELL

phorwell@floridaweekly.com

Naples resident Ed Zier has his own 9/11 story to tell.

The former COO of financial technology company Baseline has written “Undaunted,” a book about a group of his brave coworkers who managed to survive after 2 World Trade Center was attacked by terrorists on Sept. 11, 2001. While the company employed 170 workers at that site, most of them were spared because they weren’t able to get into the building after the first plane had hit 1 World Trade Center.

Sixteen employees were working on the 77th and 78th floors when their building was hit.

They banded together to seek a way out of their jet-fueled flaming inferno. Only 12 survived.

Mr. Zier, who lived in New Jersey at the time, was not in his office that day.

He managed to make it to Hoboken where he planned to take the Downtown Hudson Tubes to WTC when he heard about the attack.

The PATH trains run under the Hudson River through the tubes between New Jersey and New York City.

He tried to call the office. Then he called his family to let them know he had not perished.

Coincidentally, he had a meeting scheduled in San Francisco, where he often traveled on business, the week before. The flight he usually took was Flight 93, the very same flight that crashed in Shanksville, Pa.

“The book would have been impossible to write the first 10 years after 9/11,” Mr. Zier said.

Although it was difficult to talk about the happenings of that day and the loss of four beloved employees, he found the act of writing to be somewhat cathartic.

At some point he found that his writing appeared to be turning into a book.

His story parallels his company’s supportive corporate culture of resolve to the determination of those 12 survivors who worked with employees of Baseline’s Philadelphia office to pull the company back together rather than accept defeat.

“Undaunted” is now available on pre-order and will be released on Sept. 11.

It will be carried by Amazon, Barnes & Noble and Indiebound. For more information, visit www.edzier.com. ■



COURTESY PHOTO

Ed Zier with his book, “Undaunted,” in Hoboken, N.J., across the Hudson River from the World Trade Center.