

WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE?...Suzannah Plant, who was working in her Lower Manhattan office on September 11, captured this image of the devastation at what has been dubbed, "Ground Zero."

The Struggle to Build Up What Was Tragically Torn Down Is Put in Words

By MICHELLE H. Le POIDEVIN
Specially Written for The Westfield Leader and The Times

The entire history behind the erection of the Twin Towers overflows with seemingly insurmountable obstacles like political agendas, unhappy neighbors and strikers, escalating costs and deteriorating popularity.

Astonishing ironies and small miracles arose from the piles of construction materials used to painstakingly build the structures. The saga of the towers and its forefathers, told by Rutgers University American Studies professor Angus Kress Gillespie, is related in ornate and

project, as well as the vast and troubled transportation arteries from N.J. into N.Y.

Perhaps the author, as a professor, is so caught up in reiterating ideas and points, that the reader finds himself or herself anxiously wondering when the pop quiz will be sprung on them.

Sharpen those pencils, because "Twin Towers" drags into one of those 3-4 hour lectures you had to endure in Art History class—or worse yet, an evening of watching slides from your neighbor's vacation to Mount Rushmore.

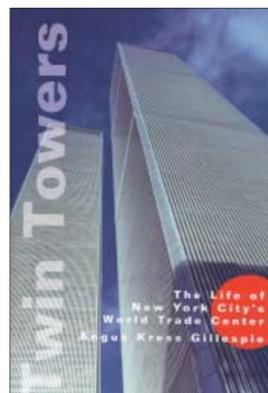
While amazon.com and barnesandnoble.com have reported that Gillespie's tome has been placed on "back order," I fear that the same readers seeking solace in Twin Towers memorabilia will find themselves grappling for answers. You simply can't tell a book by its cover.

Some ironies, which I alluded to previously, do pique the reader's interest.

THE IRONIES:

The Port Authority of New Jersey and New York took out full-page ads in newspapers to fight opposition to the building of the towers; when they

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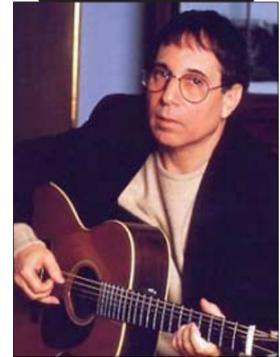
exhaustive detail that eventually fails us in the last two chapters, dissolving into public relations "fluff."

Yet, Gillespie's introduction in "Twin Towers: The Life of New York City's World Trade Center," (Rutgers University Press, 1999 and reprint 2001) willingly answers the reader's questions about the symbolism of the structures. He even addresses what was long perceived as an ugliness or unsightliness of their architecture, which spanned 13 square blocks.

However, as unfortunate as the events of 9-11, the reader's expectations going into "Twin Towers" are tragically buried under often repetitive details and stories, microscopic drawings of the buildings, and public-relations speak, which rears its ugly head at the end of the volume.

Going into his first chapter, "Political Background: The Uneasy Alliance Between New York and New Jersey," the author plays devil's advocate to the Port Authority, the body shouldering responsibility for the

Artist of the Week



Paul Simon (1941-)

By MICHELLE H. Le POIDEVIN
Specially Written for The Westfield Leader and The Times

I had a friend in college named Julie who was my cohort and partner in crime when it came to changing the words of classic rock songs to fit our silly purposes. Any song was fair game.

But, Paul Frederic Simon's "Fifty Ways to Leave Your Lover" served our purposes just right. "Slip out the back, Jack (for Jackie, my pledge mother), Make a new plan, Dan (the nerdy guy who was always trying to cozy up to us), You don't need to be coy LaCroix (the guy Julie liked), don't be a slug, Chug (the guy I liked).

We promised we would never, no matter how giddy the night became, to sing the song in front of the aforementioned folks. But, it happened. Not only had we mutilated a Simon classic, but we managed to target a fifth of the campus frat members.

Newark was the birthplace of Simon, who has worked with every legend from Art Garfunkel in the doo-wop duo "Tom and Jerry," Carol King, James Taylor Los Lobos and Linda Ronstadt. However, Simon called the Forest Hills section of Queens his growing space.

Simon was not only the offspring of a musician and school teacher, but the child of the 60s, a revolutionary voice for the 80s, and a pioneer for peace in the 90s. In the 80s, he wasn't afraid of incorporating Latin, jazz and reggae flavors into songs like "Mother and Child Reunion" and "Mojo and Julio Down By the Schoolyard." A departure from his earlier work, the new sounds was embraced and absorbed by his faithful followers.

The music video for "You Can Call Me All," featuring wisenheimer Chevy Chase, showed listeners the comical personality of a man who always looked quiet and withdrawn. The musician even held a cameo role as Diane Keaton's boyfriend in

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Pen & Ink

By Michelle H. Le Poidevin

Has Rift Between Joisey, New Yawk Truly Changed Since September 11?

By MICHELLE H. Le POIDEVIN
Specially Written for The Westfield Leader and The Times

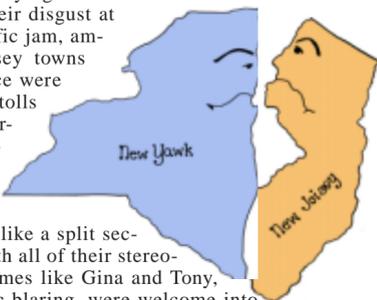
Normally, in a place where New Jersey and New York motorists would be laying on their horns to express their disgust at each other in a traffic jam, ambulances from Jersey towns like New Providence were rushing through the tolls of the turnpike to participate in the rescue effort at the World Trade Center.

For what seemed like a split second, Joiseyians, with all of their stereotypical big hair, names like Gina and Tony, and Bon Jovi music blaring, were welcome into the Empire State with open arms. A truce was called. Both sides, which have been fighting since the dawn of the metropolis, found a common ground – saving the world from unthinkable destruction.

It's hard to tell whether or not the ceasefire has been obeyed, save the recent skit presented by *Clerks* and *Chasing Amy* filmmaker Kevin Smith at the recent Concert for New York City. Throughout the barbs thrown by a handful of New Yorkers, my teeth began to clench. I started to seethe. I felt the blood rushing to my head. I began to stare blankly in anger at the folks who complained about Garden Staters and their hairspray use, toxic waste smell, bad taste in sports teams, and poor hygiene and skincare, their "overcrowding" the city, and their obsession with malls.

Okay, let's get this straight (in the effort to maintain a truce). If the 9-0 all-Democratic Union County Freeholder Board and Linden Mayor John T. Gregorio didn't bow down to the money gods when accepting the proposal for taking New York City's garbage on a train, maybe the toxic waste smell wouldn't be so horrendous. Although the plan has derailed slightly, it doesn't mean the whole thing and those involved don't "stink." Maybe, and this is just a hunch, Jerseyans would not have to inhale New York's waste, if it wasn't constantly forced down our throats.

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Local Theater: Has The Show Gone On?

By KERRIANNE SPELLMAN CORT
Specially Written for The Westfield Leader and The Times

That old adage, "The Show Must Go On" has never seemed more pertinent than it does today.

In the wake of the tragedy of September 11, businesses of all shapes and sizes, including professional and community theaters, are hoping not to suffer irrefutable losses.

However, if we listen to the words of New York Mayor Rudy Guiliani, we cannot let these tragic, and, unfortunately, continuing events paralyze us.

New York Theater suffered a huge monetary wound in the weeks immediately following September 11. Several well-known and beloved shows had to close due to lack of attendance.

I would like to add, however, that business is on an upswing at the moment, after careful and unprecedented moves by the producers of some shows that included cast-member pay-cuts and shortening the playing schedule.

The hysterically funny Off-Broadway *Batboy* has continued to run despite some tentative sales, and, in an unparalleled action, Broadway's *Rocky Horror* will re-open after being dark for several weeks. This is all terrific news.

Locally, theater is doing just fine with community companies forging full-speed ahead into the new year.

Cranford Dramatic Club recently staged the long-running musical, *The Fantastiks*, and Westfield Community Players (WCP) has announced their upcoming season. WCP is currently staging Tennessee William's revered classic, *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof*, and three other shows are planned, including a delightful musical review of composer Jerry Herman's work, titled, understandably, *Jerry's Girls*.

I recently attended a performance of *How I Learned to Drive* at the Theater Project at Union County College and I was happy to see that attendance was definitely better than it had been at some of their previous shows. Perhaps, long overdue word of mouth about The Theater Project is finally making a difference for this impressive company.

New Jersey's ProfessionalTheaters are also thriving. Paper Mill Playhouse in Millburn has virtually never had a problem with ticket sales, and despite the recent events, the current attendance is no exception. A Paper Mill spokesman said that sales are quite good at the moment, perhaps in part because audience members

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Dining Out After Terror: Proprietors Dish About How Business Has Been

By CAROL F. DAVIS
Specially Written for The Westfield Leader and The Times

Christopher Boyle and his brother are the new proprietors of the Northside Trattoria, a popular establishment on downtown

Westfield's Prospect Street.

When he talked about the night of September 11, Boyle described his "shock and amazement" at the number of patrons who dined out. The place was packed.

In contrast, Brianna's in Scotch Plains was quiet. According to Michael DeVita, the first week following the attacks brought a decrease in the number of customers.

That Saturday night, however, a group of regulars came in. The three couples just wanted to sit and talk. DeVita brought out a few bottles of wine and joined them.

When it was time to order, no one really felt like eating, so he made some appetizers, as they continued to drink wine and share their feelings. DeVita also noticed that customers are more compassionate.

"It really did touch me," DeVita said. "One guy was on the 109th floor, and saw the plane coming. Another guy was on the 64th floor," he stated. Obviously, both were lucky.

Christopher Pica of Theresa's on Elm Street agreed. "People are more reserved. They are happy to be out," he said. Theresa's, too, saw an initial decrease in customers. It took a few days for things to return to normal, and now the numbers are reaching a new high.

"People don't want to go to New York," Pica added.

Another trend noted by some restaurateurs is the increase in the number of larger groups going out together.

Joseph Carnevale of Novita in Westfield wishes he had more room

to accommodate these groups who realize the value of time spent with friends and loved ones.

Concerned about attacks on Arab-owned businesses, I went to Salt & Pepper on Park Avenue in Scotch Plains to check on Nabil. The soft-spoken, friendly Egyptian told me



Michelle H. LePoidevin for The Westfield Leader and The Times

that the place was very quiet, but there had been no trouble. Relieved, I ordered some take-out, and was delighted to see more customers begin to flock in.

Restaurant owners are doing what they can to help. When Pica realized that the pregnant woman who was ready to pay for her meal had just lost her husband in the attack, he refused to take her money.

Boyle has donated food, collected 5-gallon buckets from Robert Treat, Panera's, and the Mountainside Deli in order to help with the effort to clear debris, and he has been in

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