

A Day Of Heroes... Ten Years Later

It just seems surreal that we are already remembering the tenth anniversary of one of the two days that “will live in infamy.” It seems like only yesterday when I rushed out into the beauty shop (on a Tuesday... don’t remember why Mom was working unusually on a Tuesday) to tell everyone that a plane had just crashed into one of the twin towers. I’m sure, like millions of others, that this had to have been a horrific accidental however, minutes later it became clear that the United States of America was under attack! Like everyone else, we were glued to the television.

A few years ago, I travelled with some friends to Ground Zero and saw first hand the remains of the horror. I remember vividly standing at the site where a few years ago, I was on tour with the BGSU Men’s chorus on Spring Tour. Totally stunned! Walking through the building which houses items from the site, video clips, recordings, fragments of the buildings, and a myriad of other memorabilia was very emotional. Seeing the skyline from outside our hotel complex was haunting.

Remembering, what to me, was the worst day in the country’s history. The worst day perhaps but not without a sense of pride in hearing America’s response to the attacks. The hundreds of firefighters, police, and other rescue personnel bravely, selflessly rushing in to deadly environments to rescue the living and search for the departed. Hearing the voices and hearing the stories of those who fought back when their plane was hijacked. TRUE heroes who do not wear capes or leap tall buildings in a single bound!

This weekend, I was presented with a brilliant question: “What do we tell the little ones who may or may not understand the why and consequences of September 11, 2001?” How are the children of those who sacrificed their lives remembering their

parents or do they even remember them?

Today, let our nation remember those heroes not in the spirit of retaliation of those who were responsible for the devastation but in a spirit of forgiveness. This morning's readings and Father Art's sermon could not have been poignant.

How many times must we ourselves forgive others? Seventy-seven. Drawing from the parable of the Prodigal Son (Luke 15: 11-32): [We are] still a long way off.

Remember and forgive.

In Remembrance

9/11/2001

September 11, 2001 was day we won't forget, a defining time in our nation's history, and the first of its kind for the generations who hadn't been exposed to such feelings of terror nor national vulnerability before that day. This blog post is a day late, but I spent some time yesterday reflecting on the sacrifices made and the lives forever changed on that September day in 2001. Alan Jackson wrote a poignant song about September 11, 2001 that asks, "Where were you when the world stopped turning that September day?", and I think that everyone remembers where they were and what they were doing when they learned that the United States was attacked nine years ago. I remember receiving emails from my friend who was serving in the Air Force at the time:

To All My Friends and Family:

I just wanted everyone to know that I'm okay. We are not

going anywhere. Our jets are on standby, but that's it. Also, Jerry made it home okay, for those of you that were worried. I love you all, and I miss you.

Love,

Kel

Hi Everyone,

Things are still going as well as can be expected. We are currently

working 12 hour shifts, 7 days a week. Please, I'm asking everyone,

do not call me during the day, because most of you know that's when

I sleep. I'm working 7:00pm to 7:00am. If you absolutely need to get in touch with me,

you can call me at home between 5:30pm and 6:00pm, or in an emergency I can be reached at work. (Mom and Dad you

can call me anytime, even at work if you want) Also I check my

e-mail a few times a night, so I will respond to everyone as quickly

as possible. If you have any questions, feel free to ask, but I

only have limited info at this time. For everyone wondering, we

currently have 1/3 of our jets standing by with a full load of fuel

and equiped with armed missles. If anything else happens, the jets

will take off and patrol from South Carolina to the Southern tip of

Florida (the Keys) They will shoot down anything that comes within

that area. They will give the planes one warning and if they don't

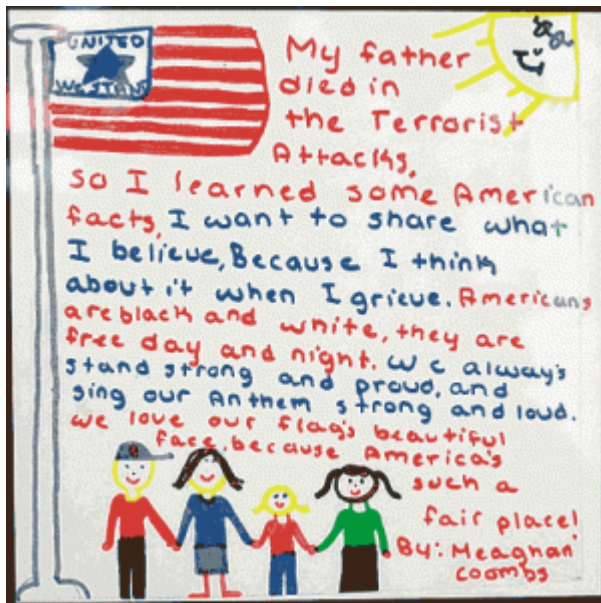
turn back, our jets will shoot them down without hesitation.

We are

very tired and will be even more worn down by the time this is all over. Working 12 hours a day, 7 days a week will do that to you. Again, if anyone has any questions, please e-mail me. I love you and miss you all. Love, Kel

Her emails illustrate the widespread uncertainty coursing throughout the nation at that time as well as the need to keep close contact with friends and family.

One of the most moving experiences I've had was visiting the 9/11 museum in New York city a few years ago. It was a somber experience, and there was scarcely a dry eye left amongst those who came to learn, reflect, and pay tribute to the victims of 9/11. The victims, their families, and those who were affected in other ways by the infamous September 11, 2001 were in my thoughts and prayers yesterday, as well as they are today, and I've included the following video if you'd like to reflect as well. God bless America.



Back In Room 911

So after a few hours of sleep (WHO SLEEPS ON A VACATION?), the troops went to breakfast in the hotel. Interesting experience... not because of something we did. After breakfast, we went to the pool before Big C had to go to work. The water was wonderful... the moment I stepped into the three feet section, it was heavenly warm. Usually, there is a need to get used to the temperature. C encouraged me to do a gold medal dive into an at most five foot pool...ok, sure. While I was doing a good job of keeping the three girls occupied, C&L took Beeber to meet the clients. It was quite fun... chasing Sammers as she made a lap of the entire pool while holding onto the edge. She still amazes me with her adventurous (if a bit mischievous) nature and very inquisitive mind.

After Sammie finally decided to come back to the dull shallow end, we played a game of Shark Attack (and guess who was the shark). We also became acquainted with a few young boys and their Canadian grandmother who have ties to our corner of the

world. It seems that she had accompanied her son's family on a business trip to help take care of the children. Her son lives and works at a factory in the village of Hicksville where I just completed a run in *Meet Me in St. Louis*. Small world, indeed.

About this time, Dis noticed that Mom and Dad were nowhere to be found. So, it was time to make a dash back to the room to avoid a major melt down. By good fortune, Lis was in the room with Beeber so we went down to the riverfront to walk around and feed the seagulls and enjoy the Manhattan skyline. Being my first time to NYC since 9/11, it was a chilling experience to personally take in the empty space where once stood the World Trade Center towers. Yes, my room number was 911.

9/11/01

We all know what that date represents. Well, most of us do. As I mentioned a couple of posts ago I worked with ELL students today. One student actually didn't know about what happened seven years ago as he just came to this country less than a year ago. I suspect there were others as well. Needless to say, he had a little trouble answering the journal question, "What happened on September 11, 2001?"

Believe it or not, I have been subbing for a few years but this is the first year that the school I was at had a big thing going for September 11. The morning started with the entire school crowding around the flagpole. No, it wasn't a "see you at the pole" event, though I would wish it would get these kinds of crowds. If more kids were followers of Jesus there would be so much less trouble at our schools. Back to the topic, the principal called out everyone to observe the

all-too-recent holiday remembering what happened those seven years ago. There was the flag raising of course, a speech by the principal, and some students read poems they wrote. The principal made himself heard, but they really needed some amplification for the kids- I wasn't able to understand, or in some cases even hear a single poem.

After that, everyone went in and first period started (late). The 9/11 theme continued with the aforementioned journal question, and then we saw an interactive CDROM. Apparently the Chicago Tribune gave away these CDs back in 2002 commemorating the one-year anniversary. It provided archival footage of ten days of the Tribune headlines following the destruction with some commentary and a Flash intro to start. I was hoping to provide a download link for this, but I guess after six years it's either off the map or I didn't look hard enough. Actually, I did find a torrent (peer-to-peer download) with the title (*When Evil Struck America*) but there didn't appear to be any seeds, meaning it couldn't be downloaded. I'll check Usenet in a bit, but I'm not holding my breath. To the students' credit, they really were engaged and asking questions. A few periods later I was helping in the 7th grade social studies classroom, and the teacher did his own presentation on 9/11. He chose some really thought-provoking pictures, including one building closeup where people could be seen to the side falling because they had jumped from the towers, perhaps hoping for a better outcome than death by fire or smoke inhalation.

These were the only periods I had dealing with this topic, but it seemed like half the day. The rest of the day had typical lessons. I either taught, helped out, or led a review. I could say more on that, but I think I will leave this post focusing more on 9/11. Until tomorrow.

EDIT: I may not be able to give you the Tribune CD, but the History Channel has it's own interactive media: [102 Minutes that Changed America](#)



(Not my picture. For more pictures like this, [CLICK HERE](#))

If Music Be The Food Of Love, Play On

This afternoon two communities who are usually big rivals came together to honor someone who has touched the lives of quite possibly every person who either lived in either town or attended school in Edgerton, Ohio. Emily Curtis grew up in Edon but has taught music in Edgerton for 27 years at all levels (junior high, high school, and, most recently, elementary). Last year, she was stricken with leukemia and is in Columbus at the medical facilities on the OSU campus undergoing treatment. Through it all, she has been the same tough, strong, stubborn woman she has been for at least 20 years. She has given so much to everyone not only in this area but worldwide. Since 09/11/01, she has spear-headed a Troop Care package program sending supplies to the armed forces in Iraq and all over the world. The program has sent tons of necessities and has received numerous plaques, letters, and medals for its generosity.

At the benefit, there were thousands of dollars worth of donated items in a silent auction. Ohio State and Michigan memorabilia, beautiful artwork, Edgerton apparel, too much stuff to even begin to describe. School children danced and sang. Mrs. Balser, who started her teaching career at Edgerton 40 years ago, has generously taken Mrs. Curtis position for the year. A second grader sang "Rainbow Connection" and sounded like he should have provided the voice of Kermit the

Frog in the "[Muppet Movie](#)."

There are just so many personal levels on which I could write about my experiences with Emily. She is one tough cookie and will push you until you have reached your potential. During my four years in high school, she arranged for the band to travel to Chicago to see [Phantom of the Opera](#). We attended a performance of Annie in Toledo as we were just beginning to stage our own production. Speaking of our production of [Annie](#), I originally auditioned for the role of Daddy Warbucks. The day after tryouts, I was called over the PA to report to the band room. "OH, LORD... what have I done now?" I was asked to read for the role of Rooster. Read a bit of dialogue, sing "Easy Street," and CROW. Emily and the drama director told me then and there that I had nailed the role of Warbucks, but they thought I would do even better as the villain.

In November 2006, I played the part of Vinnie in [The Odd Couple](#). This was the first time I had been in a non-musical play since 1991 Two people were instrumental in my decision to try out (aside from myself that is). I called Emily the night before auditions and asked her what she thought. She has told me for years that I need to let my light shine bright (among other things) and that she knew I would do well. And following the Sunday matinee, she told me "Who is it that has been telling you for years to stop limiting yourself?" Thanks Ma