

NEW YORK

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experience and my want to come back is more of an exception." Helen Walsch of North Salem, N.Y. said this year marked the first time she could bring herself to travel to the site where the two towers once dominated the skyline. She lost two loved ones on Sept. 11.

"It's not something I really wanted to see until now," she said. "I tried to find the names on a flag, but the letters started blurring together."

One of Walsch's friends from church lost her husband, fire lieutenant Vincent Ohalloran, to the attacks.

Ohalloran and his wife had five boys, but soon after he died, his wife discovered that she was pregnant. "He never got to see that baby girl," Walsch said.

Walsch said the real tragedy is the lack of closure for Ohalloran's

widow. A memorial service was held on the first anniversary of the Sept. 11 attacks in 2002 after a year without recovering Ohalloran's body.

His wife had a cement bench placed in her garden with one hollow leg, where her husband's remains will be placed if they ever turn up.

Hector and Carmen Garcia are regular Ground Zero visitors, always grieving for their 21-year-old daughter, Marlyn, who died in the attacks on the World Trade Center.

Marlyn was working part time at the information desk on the 100th floor of the first tower struck by the hijackers.

"It's something you never forget," Hector said. "Any moment you walk in New York City, you think of it."

Marlyn Garcia's body was never found, but her parents set aside a space for her in a cemetery just in case.

The absence of their daughter's body serves as salt in an already aching wound.

"My wife is still feeling the same situation," Hector said. "Every single day, she cries."

The reasons for holding on vary, but some visiting the site Wednesday said they are unsettled by developments in the world after Sept. 11.

Some are disappointed with the way the Bush administration has handled the war in Iraq, an aftereffect of the Sept. 11 attacks.

Still others say the debate about what should replace the World Trade Center has taken away from the sanctity of the remembrance.

But most say moving on is just something people do.

"I think it's human nature to move on," Peter Cipowski said. "That's why we build memorials."

Cipowski lost three friends during the Sept. 11 attacks. He stood in front of the World Trade Center site with his hand on a rail and his

eyes closed, saying a private prayer for those lost.

Cipowski says he doesn't agree with the U.S. retribution for the attack.

"It's hard not to feel a little confused and angry," he said. "I feel that our response has been equally violent."

Cipowski said it's hard for him to separate what the United States has done politically from the events that transpired on Sept. 11, 2001.

"What happened here was profoundly personal," he said.

But he says that, if at no other time, now is the appropriate moment for people to put those things behind them.

"Today and tomorrow, it's all about honoring the memory of the people we lost," Cipowski said.

"It's all about Rob, Lisa and David."

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STRENGTH

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as it traveled up the East River. Another fire ravaged the Triangle Shirtwaist Company on March 25, 1911. That catastrophe claimed 146 lives and led to increased fire safety measures and improved workplace safety regulations.

"New York's been dealt many blows and always seems to rise above those blows," said Suzanne Wasserman, associate director of the Gotham Center for New York City History.

The city's dominance of U.S. culture has outweighed even its most tragic moment. Within a couple of days of the World Trade Center attacks, Wasserman said, the city was trying to return to normal.

She said that there was a lot of pressure on New Yorkers to recover from the shock of the attacks and that she was surprised by how quickly that shock dissipated.

"It's not just that we wanted to return to the normalcy of everyday life, but the rest of the world wanted us to," she said.

Burns said that when the attacks took place, it was like "part of the central nervous system of the world had been damaged and torn." There was no difference, he added, between witnessing the attacks on 73rd and Broadway in Manhattan or in another part of the world.

He said it had been easy for outsiders to think of the city as a terrible place ever since the 1970s, when a deteriorating New York was seen as a "poster child of things we hate."

But falling to the ground along with the towers, he said, was a last vestige of distrust for the city. "The rest of the country moved close to New York as New York moved close to the rest of the country."

The city that often is thought of as the brash, iron-fisted force "that will leave you flat like a cartoon character" has seen its crime rate plummet and its street mentality diminish in toughness, he added.

A profound change has taken place, he said, in that there is no longer a sense in New York that differences between the city and the rest of the country are meaningful.

"I think two years have come

and gone," he said. "It's receded somewhat, but the consciousness of what happened is lurking permanently below the surface."

But signs of recovery are plentiful. Two years after the towers were destroyed, efforts to rebuild the strength of lower Manhattan — where the World Trade Center once stood — have proven effective.

Despite the lasting psychological effects of the attacks, 97 percent of the homes in lower Manhattan are occupied, said Bryan Evans, a spokesman for the Downtown Alliance. That mark is higher than it was immediately preceding the terrorist attacks, he added.

"The residential market is strong," he said. "People want to come down here to live."

The part of Manhattan that houses the city's financial district — including Wall Street — is on its way to becoming a 24-hour-a-day, seven-day-a-week environment for living and working, he said.

New York's resilience has become all the more evident after Sept. 11, he said, and it is easier to identify the "spirit of New York."

"The attack on the World Trade Center clearly wasn't an attack on buildings," he said. "It was an attack on the economy and an attack on the financial well-being of New York and the nation."

"So I think that New Yorkers in general do recognize what New York means to the rest of the world, and it's very powerful."

The connection among New Yorkers has grown more powerful, Burns said.

He recalled standing one day at the bow of the Staten Island Ferry, looking back and forth from his fellow New Yorkers to the Manhattan skyline. He said the sense of knowing what weighs on other New Yorkers' minds has been "astounding."

He said a depth of feeling brought on by a profound sense of sorrow — but not depression — has increased the civility and empathy of those who live in the Big Apple.

"We've checked our guns before we walk into the saloon now," he said. "It's very simple. We've seen what rage can do."

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LIBERTIES

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aliens have been detained secretly without counsel, he said.

Camp compared the new levels of racial profiling and surveillance to past instances in which civil liberties were endangered — such as the World War II internment of Japanese Americans and the communist "witch hunt" that took place in the United States during the 1950s.

"We somehow manage to at least do the right thing eventually," she said. "But it's becoming harder and harder to say that. People are afraid, and when people are driven by fear, they do things that they

would never consider otherwise."

But if a recent Michigan State University study is any indication, many people in the United States are willing to make that trade-off. The study, administered by the university's Office of Survey Research from Jan. 31 to May 28, found that 43 percent of those surveyed prefer a total preservation of liberties. This is compared to 54 percent in the months following the attacks.

"I think as citizens, we all owe it to each other to give up some of our liberty in the name of security," Scott said. "The question is: How much is too much to give?"

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CAROLINAS

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all of us," Shughrue said. "(It) affected so many people, it was only right."

Though Durham will not host a public ceremony, officials are planning for an internal commemoration recognizing city employees such as firefighters and police officers, said Beverly Thompson, the city's public affairs director.

The candlelight ceremony, meant to honor government workers who serve the community, will begin at noon.

"I think everyone was touched and heartbroken by what happened," she said. "Firefighters and police officers have a certain kinship with the public service people in New York."

Wilmington will host two memorials today, with the Eternal Flame ceremony beginning at noon at City Hall. The flame burns all year in remembrance of the terrorist attacks, said Renee Buergey, administrative specialist for the mayor and City Council.

The second ceremony will take place at UNC-Wilmington in Kenan Auditorium, with firefighters, police officers and members of

"This is a way to show that we don't take freedom for granted. ... We have to celebrate it."

PAT MCCRORY, CHARLOTTE MAYOR

the military speaking.

On the other side of the state, Charlotte will sponsor a tribute to the victims and survivors and honor military personnel, said Dennis Marstall, assistant to Charlotte Mayor Pat McCrory.

The ceremony will feature a U.S. flag for each person who died in the attacks, a moment of silence and four bell tolls — one for each of the hijacked planes, he said.

In a statement issued through his press office, McCrory said the ceremony is a way to express patriotism.

"This is a way to show that we don't take freedom for granted," he said. "We have to celebrate it."

Staff Writer Alex Granados contributed to this article. Contact the State & National Editor at stntdesk@unc.edu.

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