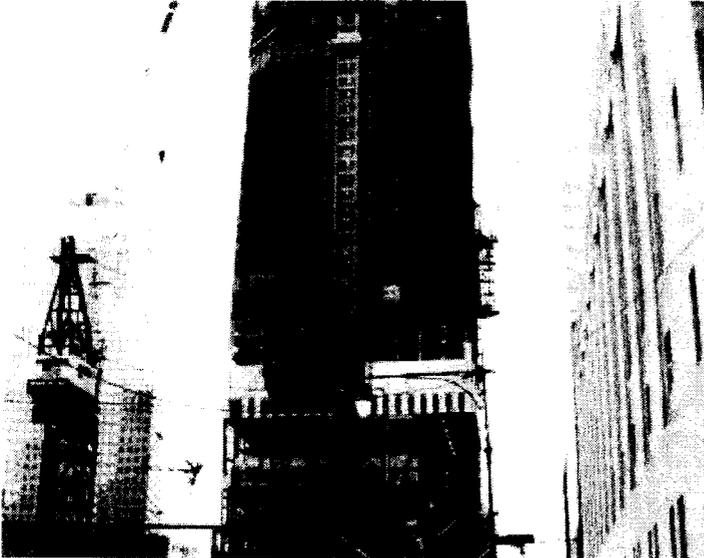


One World Trade Center Rises Again

One World

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Recently, the Five Towns Jewish Times was invited to an exclusive tour of the building site of One World Trade Center. I arrived a little early for the tour and stopped by the temporary 9/11 memorial museum down the block for the first time. My best friend's sister perished in the attack, and the visit brought back a flood of memories.

The mood at the museum was somewhat somber. However, tales of survival and heroism are also recognized there. The leather helmet of FDNY Lt. Mickey Kross is on display. He credits the helmet with saving him from the falling debris. The centerpiece of the museum is a model of the future development planned for the site of the Twin Towers.

The focal point of the model is the memorial pools that are planned for the site. It was decided that the actual footprint where the buildings stood should be left vacant. Instead, there will be reflecting pools where people can ponder the tremendous loss and tragedy that occurred on that infamous day. These pools are scheduled to be completed in time for the 10th anniversary of the attacks, on September 11, 2011.

The reconstruction of One World Trade Center began on April 27, 2006. The building was

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initially referred to as the Freedom Tower, and that name is still used by many. The name was meant to evoke the spirit and determination that Americans have against their enemies. To emphasize this, the height of the completed building (including a 408-foot antenna) will be 1,776 feet, a physical allusion to the year in which the Declaration of Independence was issued. This will make it the tallest building in the United States. (However, judged by roof height, the tallest building in the U.S. will still be the Willis Tower, formerly known as the Sears Tower.)

I met my tour guide, Ms. Justine Karp, an employee of the Port Authority of NY and NJ, at the entranceway to the PATH station. I guess I must have realized what the tour included, but it still was a little frightening for me to go up all those floors in the hoist. I have a mild fear of heights. It was exacerbated by standing on the floors with no windows or walls. The lack of windows was about to change, because at the time of my tour, they had just begun installing them on the lower floors of the building.

So is it possible to just fall off the edge of the unfinished floors? Thankfully, no! There is orange plastic gating around all the floors to prevent objects and people from making the precipitous drop. I was afraid to ask Ms. Karp the question, but I just had to know: "Has anyone been seriously injured or worse, killed, during the construction?" To my great relief, she explained that only mild injuries occurred, which are inevitable at construction sites. There have been no serious injuries.

Stringent safety precautions are meticulously adhered to at the site. To be in compliance, I was required to wear a reflective jacket, safety goggles, and a hard hat during the tour. The hard hat came in handy. I bumped my head in the hoist and I didn't feel a thing! Those who work on floorless shafts are required to be tethered to a stationary object via a cable at all times. Roaming safety inspectors ensure that all the regulations are complied with.

The tour was on a cold and windy day. I imagine that, at the height I was standing, it is always windy. Since not all the windows are in place, you cannot even begin to think of heating the site. The hoist was the only heated place.

The view from the 39th floor was breathtaking, with the Statue of Liberty visible in the distance.

We were constantly meeting workers, who were performing their jobs expeditiously. They were all friendly and didn't seem to mind our intrusion.

The tour ended with a close-up view of the reflective pools. As you can see in the photos, most of the work on these pools is already completed.

On December 16, the Port Authority announced that the building had reached the 52nd floor and had risen to over 600 feet, marking the halfway point for construction of the building's steel frame. The building is scheduled for completion in the second half of 2013, at an estimated total cost of \$3.1 billion.

Considering the destruction of the original World Trade Center buildings, there has been a real question of how many people would be willing to rent space in the new building. Would companies show courage and defiance against the terrorists? Yes!

The building's first lease was announced on March 28, 2009, as a joint project between the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey and Vantone Industrial Co., based in Beijing, that will create a 190,810-square-foot "China Center," a business and cultural facility located between floors 64 and 69. They say it will represent business and cultural communities in China and serve as a hub for Chinese firms developing United States operations, as well as for U.S. companies that wish to conduct business in China. The lease is for 20 years and 9 months.

On August 3, 2010, Condé Nast signed a tentative agreement to move its headquarters and offices of its 18 magazines into up to 1 million square feet of the building.

One World Trade Center will once again be the premier address for office space in the city.