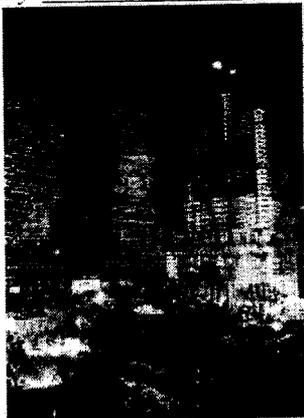


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## One World Trade Center Is Halfway Up (By Our Call)

By DAVID W. DUNLAP



Port Authority

In 2010, so much progress was made at the World Trade Center that officials saw no need to cook up fabricated milestones, as they had in the past. But in December, the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey showed that old habits die hard. It announced in a press release (accompanied by this picture) that 1 World Trade Center — the building formerly known as Freedom Tower — had reached “halfway to the top.” Meaning what? That the structural steel had reached the level of the 52nd floor in what will be a 104-story building.

However, “104” is a fiction — a relatively harmless one, but a fiction all the same. The authority, like developers of other tall buildings, has played a bit fast and loose with the designation of floor numbers. Its “104th floor” may be at the *altitude* of a hypothetical 104th floor, but it’s really the uppermost of 95 floor slabs. (Let’s be fair. Floor numbers have been fungible for generations. How many apartment buildings do you know with a “13th floor”?)

So anyway, we told the Port Authority that we didn’t see this as a story. But we promised to take note of the moment that 1 World Trade Center reached or exceeded the halfway point in its planned height of 1,368 feet. On Wednesday, we were notified that perimeter steel had reached 693 feet above street level. That was the number we were looking for. We’ll call it now.

(We’ll leave the discussion of whether a mast planned on top of the tower will earn it the symbolic height of 1,776 feet for another day.)