



# Again!

By Andy Walker

Canada is a wonderful place. Crossing the border into Canada warmed our spirits, though my co-horts and I were emotionally chilled from our experiences. Driving on the highway by my parents' place on the way home to my apartment in the city filled my heart with thanks. Canada is a great place to call home.

Our technology-dependent culture is fragile. In the first hours after the attacks, cellular phones would not always work. My Mastercard would not authenticate when making credit-card calls from America to Canada. The aviation system in North America usually gives me confidence that home is never further than a four-hour flight. That week I felt very far from home. The lesson I learned? Technology makes us feel safe. Our wits and our will keep us safe.

People are the same. While in East Hampton, NY, I went to a candlelight vigil at the local church. Jews, Christians, agnostics, atheists and others gathered together not as individuals with differences, but as humans with a common bond. One young man who works in mid-town New York I spoke to said: "I came with a sense of wanting to be with other people, to share in patriotism, humanism and a sense of spirituality." Amen to that.

Miracles happen. On the ferry crossing Long Island Sound, I came across a numb fellow who worked as a bond broker. He had been in the building next door to the World Trade Center Tuesday morning. The conference window blew in. He escaped to the street and somehow found his stunned girlfriend outside her office building. They escaped the carnage together. The mayor of East Hampton saw the two towers collapse on TV. He turned to his wife and said "our daughter is in heaven now". She worked on the 55th floor of one of the towers. As fate would have it, she went to her desk and dropped her purse; then went downstairs for a coffee. Then aircraft struck the tower. She escaped unharmed.

Big business is not all bad. IBM was my sponsor in New York. They flew us Canadian journalists down for the day. When we became stranded, they found us a hotel, picked up all expenses, and made us feel secure. Then they got us home safely. Thank you, Big Blue.

Laughter is not a cure-all, but it helps. It was hard to have a sense of humour when the world around you is coming apart. It was hard to tell jokes during those fearful days. I learned more than I wanted to know about my fellow travellers. Being with people, even if they are familiar strangers, is a good thing. Laughter always brings people together and humour arrives at the strangest times. At one point a female colleague roused a fellow male traveller by knocking at his hotel door. I learned that an almost naked journalist is funny in almost any situation.

And I learned the value of some maternal wisdom. "Make sure you put on clean underwear" is not a mother's nag. It's darn good advice when you're supposed to be in New York for a day and that day turns into four. ➤

*"Ground Zero" World Trade Center disaster one week after the Sept 11th terrorist attack that collapsed the World Trade Center and destroyed a section of the Pentagon.*

*U.S. Navy photo by Aaron Peterson.*

9:05	9:39	9:40	9:58	10:10	10:25	10:28
United Airlines 175	American Airlines 77	F.A.A.	NYC	United Airlines 93	F.A.A.	NYC
hits south tower WTC in New York City	crashes into Pentagon outside Washington	halts all flights in U.S.	south tower collapses	crashes near Johnstown, Penn.	U.S.-bound flights diverted to Canada	north tower collapses