

October 3, 2011

On Saturday October 1st the Village of Floral Park dedicated our 9-11 Relic Steel Monument on the lawn in front of Village Hall. While dark clouds and sprinkling of rain may have greeted us earlier that morning, at 10:55 the clouds opened and bright warm sunshine shone down. The dedication ceremony was a wonderful tribute to those honored but was also emblematic of the heart, support and love we unselfishly extend to our neighbors in times of need. We also saw abundantly expressed the foundation upon which the spirit of Floral Park is deeply rooted and that is, the spirit of volunteerism, which was generously shared with us by our FPPD Color Guard, the American Legion Color Guard, our greatest volunteers; the Floral Park Fire Department, its Color Guard, officers and members, Life Scout Ryan Perge, Eagle Scout James Calan, the New York Metro Pipe Band, FPM students; vocalist Janina Salorio and violinist Fiona Calberson and finally by all the wonderful ladies of our Administrative Staff who graciously gave of their time to host the events of this historic day. Special thanks to our Village Clerk Susan Walsh for coordinating and attending to the countless details which made for the dignified ceremony we enjoyed.

With your kind indulgence I provide the text of my remarks from Saturday.

“In your programs you will see an insert describing the series of events and the persons responsible for obtaining this relic steel beam. I would like to describe the monument. The relic steel was a 24” steel girder and the top flange, or the top of the beam, is facing the monument’s stairs. As you ascend the steps to approach the beam, and we hope you do, you would be walking towards the top of the beam and those twisted and bent bolts were connected with the concrete floor. The steel is placed within a 12 sided segmented circle. The berm is formed by flame finished absolute black granite, in filled with a cobblestone platform. On 11 granite stone faces are etched the names of those we honor today.

But we can all see that this beam is hardly 24” deep, the effects of pressure and heat have twisted, sheared and deformed this beam. When Architect Frank Gunther first saw the beam in a garage one rainy Sunday afternoon, as the rest of us stood about in awkward silence, he shattered that silence with a whisper. He haltingly said and aptly named the piece we see today: AGONY. He described the tortured process of catastrophic collapse that the buildings experienced but again in silence we all recognized how this beam is symbolic of the confusion, the torment, the sadness and yes, the agony we all still experience.

This 5000 lb. beam being displayed vertically, as if it is piercing the earth, allows us to view the raw and brutal effects of physics and heat. This may be difficult, but it is honest.

May I share with you this thought, this relic beam is more than a memorial; it is a work of art. I say that as, like art, it is evocative. Moving us, agitating us, overwhelming us with feelings and emotions which are genuine and must be explored and best shared with others, friends and neighbors.

Therefore it is wholly appropriate that we place this monument on the village green. As a resident of Floral Park, I am proud to have this relic steel memorial.

What makes America great; our freedoms, our liberties, the opportunities afforded all and our welcoming spirit to peoples from around the world was embodied in this project. We had the sons of Portugal with the deOliveiras of Alliance Steel and the Martins of J&A Concrete, sons of Italy with Claudio Campoli and Anthony Vani of Ora Construction, proud men of India from Hindustan Granite and of course Joe Guido of Foro Marble from the distant lands and canals of Brooklyn, New York. Each contractor, each mechanic and each tradesman who worked on this project gave their best efforts. They shared their talent, their energies and - they shared their memories of that

day and the lasting effect that day had on them all. They were honored to contribute to this project as it was an honor to be associated with them and I thank them all. On the back of your programs we list the contractors and professionals who gave of their time and talents.

I was especially humbled by the spirit and support from many talented men and woman in Floral Park who contributed in the design; notably Frank Gunther architect. I hadn't finished the sentence asking for his help before Frank said, "Yes". He guided the Relic Committee through an exciting, fruitful and expedited design process culminating with this elegant design. Timothy Tweedy, P.E. design engineer - I didn't have to ask him, he is my younger brother - his ability to interpret an architectural concept and translate that into a structural design-an engineered design with a 5000# raked steel beam projecting at a 76' angle was accomplished with equal speed and ingenuity: the jeweler-like precision of the steel fabrication by Frank deOliveira, P.E. and the dedicated attention and supervision of Victor, Dominick and Peter deOliveira will always be remembered. And lastly I would also like to publically recognize the men in our department of public works without whose contributions - and always accomplished with pride and a smile - this monument may never have been completed.

This monument will not only allow the opportunity to remember and reflect on loved ones lost but will teach generations about the exceptionalism of this great country...Evil may have brought down the Towers, but it did not bring down our nation, our hearts or our American way of life."