NYC 9/11 Public Portal Document

AMERICA'S ORDEAL

Courthouse Reopens

Back to work in Foley Square

By Patricia Hurtado
STAFF WRITER

Crossing several checkpoints where armed U.S. marshals and National Guardsmen stood watch, the 750 people who work at the federal courthouse in Foley Square returned to work yesterday for the first time since the terrorist attack on the World Trade Center.

A week ago Tuesday, helmeted U.S. marshals armed with machine guns and wearing flak jackets ringed the perimeter of the old courthouse and its adjacent high-rise of offices a few blocks north of the Trade Center.

The colonnaded old courthouse has been a high-security zone since the 1998 bombings of American embassies in Kenya and Tanzania, terror attacks for which four al-Qaeda members have been convicted of federal bombing conspiracy charges. Members of the group are high-level associates of Osama bin Laden, whom President George W. Bush has called a prime suspect in last week's attacks.

Yesterday in Foley Square, things were back to some small semblance of normalcy. Tourists walked on the sidewalk around the perimeter still in place around the courthouse, the site of numerous terrorism trials, including that stemming from the 1993 World Trade Center bombing.

During the lunch hour, federal prosecutors whose offices are in the high-rise adjacent to the courthouse ate and chatted at outdoor picnic tables. The food stands at St. Andrew's Place did a brisk lunch business, and marshals patrolled the area.

U.S. District Court Judge Michael Mukasey, the chief judge, issued two orders Monday. The first granted prosecutors extensions in their cases and suspended so-called "speedy trial" deadlines for filing motions in cases, citing "extraordinary circumstances."

He noted that federal law enforcement authorities had deployed thousands of staff members to the scene of the attack.

"To date, these agencies continue to devote the overwhelming majority of their officers and resources to rescuing victims and to investigating terrorist crimes," he said.

Mukasey noted that all trials in the Southern District had been suspended and that no grand juries had been able to reconvene.

Clifford Kirsch, district executive for the Southern District, said the building was serviced by the Verizon phone system at 140 West St., which was damaged in the attack.

Phones still were not working in the courthouse complex, he said, and it was unclear when they would.

"We're all getting by on cell phones here, and it's unclear when it'll be up again," he said.

Kirsch said that jurors sitting on cases should call the courthouse in White Plains at 914-390-4220.



Newsday Photo / Julio Cotes

Islamic leader Shaykh Abd'Allah Latif Ali, left, and Rabbi Ronald Sobel embrace at a Manhattan service yesterday.

A Somber Holiday

Synagogues give solace on Rosh Hashanah

By Herbert Lowe
STAFF WRITER

The Wall Street Synagogue is several blocks from the heart of the city's financial district and not the place where Jeff Lederer and his family had planned to observe the first day of Rosh Hashanah.

But as this Jewish New Year came a week after the Trade Center terrorist attacks, Lederer, the president of an investment banking firm on Maiden Lane, was led to do something different.

On Monday, the day the district reopened for business, Lederer happened to walk past the synagogue. It is on Beekman Street, near the Brooklyn Bridge and next door to Fire Department Engine 6.

"I thought it was symbolic for us to be here," Lederer of the Upper East Side said as he, his wife, *Judi, and children Cecilia and Josh were leaving* to worship at another synagogue.

"And as I walked past," he said, "I noticed that it was next door to the firehouse, which lost some of their men, and across the street from [New York University Hospital — Downtown] that did such great works over the past week, and I thought it was something that all of us should be a part of."

Four firefighters based at the firehouse are still missing in the rubble.

Three members of the Police Department's school safety unit stood watch yesterday outside the synagogue. Police were posted outside many temples as residents sought solace and spiritual guidance in the tragedy's aftermath.

On Monday night, as the religious holiday was beginning, several synagogues opened their doors to the hundreds of Jewish Red Cross volunteers still in the city after arriving to help with disaster relief.

Yesterday, at the Puck Building at Houston and Lafayette streets, Aish HaTorah, an international Jewish outreach organization, invited rescue workers and their families to one of two worship services.

Few rescuers seemed to attend. One who did, Joe Steibel, 48, of Westchester, said those who didn't probably were either still helping out or *spending the day with their families — whom they* haven't seen much of lately — at home.

Steibel said he would not stay long.

He wanted to return to the Jacob Javits Center on the West Side, where he said he was helping coordinate the area where truckloads of rescue-related donations were being delivered.

No doubt, the holy day was important, Steibel said.

He said, however, "What I'm accomplishing there is just as important."

Blood Donations Sap System of Platelets

By Martin C. Evans
STAFF WRITER

Queens and Long Island hospitals came within hours of having to postpone surgeries Tuesday morning because the supply of blood platelets dipped dangerously low after last week's surge in blood donations clogged the certification process.

Long Island Blood Services, which supplies blood for 40 Queens and Long Island hospitals, was down to its last 12 units of platelets yesterday morning.

"It was very tense [Monday] and [yesterday] morning," said Long Island Blood Services director Dr. James Louie. "We were very close to asking people to delay surgeries."

Blood donations came in at three times the usual rate following the World Trade Center disaster, overwhelming the Red Cross' National Test Center in Philadelphia, which certifies the safety of most of the blood from the New York area.

"It could be serious in the next few days if they don't get caught up," said Dr. Robert Jones, director of the New York Blood Center. "We're getting pretty concerned about it."

An official with the federal department of Health and Human Services said his agency was taking the platelet shortage "very seriously."

Because platelets last only five days, any delay in testing affects the supply. Extracted from whole blood, platelets are vital to cancer patients receiving chemotherapy and are critical during open-heart and other invasive surgeries because they promote clotting and can prevent patients from bleeding to death.

Louie said the shortage of platelets could diminish in the next few days because last week's spike in donations is subsiding, allowing Red Cross labs in Philadelphia and Massachusetts to catch up.

The shortage developed as officials with the American Red Cross and the competing America's Blood Centers — which collects about 80 percent of donated blood in the metropolitan area — differed over whether to encourage or moderate donor enthusiasm.

The Red Cross wants as much blood donated as soon as possible, while America's Blood Centers prefers the donations be spread out over time. Centers officials say that because the shelf life of blood is only 42 days and volunteers are allowed to donate blood only once every 56 days, a spot shortage could occur in six weeks.

Red Cross officials in Washington are continuing *to urge donors to come forward, saying they want to* build a 10-day blood reserve nationwide and that any surplus blood can be frozen.

"We feel we have a tremendous opportunity to ensure the blood supply today, over the next weeks and months, and for the future of this country," said Jacquelyn Fredrick, vice president of biomedical services for the Red Cross.

But officials with the New York Blood Center said sudden spikes in donations can overwhelm their ability to process and store blood without wasting it. They said blood that is frozen is more expensive, more difficult to handle and more likely to be discarded because it must be used immediately once it has thawed.

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