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To THE EDITOR & YOU

Nine-Eleven... Home to Heaven

These are my personal accounts and feelings about the (recent terrorist) attack in the form of a poem. This was written two days afterwards on my lunch hour.

It seemed as if it was yesterday, I saw the Twin Towers from the air,
I did not think it would be the last time to see them there.
Magnificent buildings of steel and glass,
feeling they would forever last.

Manhattan Island; a sight to behold,
a place for me of memories and stories yet to be told.

Childhood summers for my wife were spent there,
running through Central Park and counting the buildings soaring in the air.

The island where my grandparents became a pair,
formed a new life, and love to share.

The place where I will start a new life one day,
the place I hold dear to my heart and for where I will stay.

On Tuesday, Nine-Eleven,
so many souls were taken home to heaven.

Planes crashing to the ground,
hitting buildings...killing all around.

News flashes filled the air,
almost too much to bare.

A nation on her knees,
with the cries of her people to God to hear our plea.

Throughout the day, continuing with usual pace,
trying to act like nothing was wrong and maintaining face.

Thinking selfish thoughts, I did.
Oh Man! I hope my party places are still around.

I got alot of life yet and people to meet in that town.
Damn! next month my plane better leave the ground,

for back to Manhattan, I am bound.

But deep inside, other thoughts filled my head,
of all those missing...all those dead.

Then thinking of the last words had,

with those in my life...hoping they weren't bad.

The reality finally hit as I drove home,
Lee Greenwood's voice over the radio struck to the bone.

The words to the song heard before,
when I returned home to my wife and young son from serving in the Gulf War.

I spoke with a friend on Tuesday night,
we were strangers as we left New York on that June flight.

Words were shared about the last time we saw,
the Twin Towers standing tall.

Holding back the tears in my eyes,
hiding feelings deep inside.

But the need to connect seemed right,
somehow hoping everything would be all right.
...needing to get through the night.

Wishing to become a prisoner of the dark in sleep,
for when awake; I live in a nightmare that has dug in so deep.

Trying to forget the images of the buildings built at great cost,
praying for angel wings to cover the humans the world has lost.

Next month return to Manhattan I will,
to pay respect to the place that now stands still.
Somehow hoping to get answers to what went wrong.
Somehow hoping the feeling of closure will come along.

As I offer my deepest respect in prayer at the place... at the ground,
to the souls whom flew up when the Twin Towers went down.

Nine-Eleven is a date I will remember, when so many souls went home,
...to a place called Heaven.

Mark Rotter
Eagle Lake

State, local politics finally stirring

The nation remains in crisis, but state and local politics finally began to stir a week and a day after the East Coast terrorist attacks.

The biggest development by week's end was the announcement by Democratic gubernatorial candidate Marty Atkins that he was dropping out of the primary race.

That puts Laredo oilman Tony Sanchez in the proverbial catbird seat, setting up a race with un-elected Republican incumbent Gov. Rick Perry.

As for Atkins, he has set his political sights on the state comptroller's office now occupied by Republican Carole Keeton Rylander.

Though state politics is slowly returning to normal, most Texans still have their minds and hearts tied up with what happened in New York, Washington and Pennsylvania.

In announcing that Atkins was switching horses in mid-trail drive, his campaign staff decided not to call a press conference "in light of recent national tragedies."

In a written statement, Atkins said he had telephoned Sanchez with news of his decision to drop out of the governor's race.

"He supports my candidacy for comptroller 100 percent, as I do his candidacy for governor," Atkins said.

The announcement is good for Texas Democrats, who can now focus their efforts on unseating Perry and not have to worry about an intra-party contest that would be costly and divisive.

Akins' departure from the race was the second Big Political Rumor to come true in the last few weeks. The first was Republican Senator Phil Gramm's announcement he would not seek another term, an action rumored and denied before finally admitted.

Problems on Padre

In normal times, what happened last week at Padre Island would have been huge news.

State Capitol Highlights

By Mike Cox
Texas Press Association

Even considering the events of Sept. 11, the collapse of a portion of the causeway connecting Port Isabel with South Padre Island is having a tremendous impact in the Rio Grande Valley.

Five people died when vehicles plunged into the Laguna Madre after a barge struck the bridge on Saturday

and three others still were missing late last week.

Since the causeway is the only connection between the sandy island and the mainland, Padre Island and Port Isabel are back to where they were before 1952, when the only way to reach the island was by boat.

The Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) moved a ferry down coast from Port Aransas, but it only will be used for local traffic. Tourists, the economic lifeblood of the island, will have to get over by boat and leave their vehicles on the mainland.

(See Highlights, Page 3)

Rep. Cook appointed to two committees

Speaker of the House, James E. "Pete" Laney announced the appointment of Representative Robert L. "Robby" Cook (D-Eagle Lake) to two important committees: the Joint Committee on Water Resources and the Agriculture Policy Board.

"Rep. Cook has been a leader in rural issues and has worked on various water and agriculture issues important to his district and rural Texas," stated Laney. "Cook's expertise will play a key role in developing and shaping policy in an effort to address long-standing water and agricultural issues in our state."

"I'm honored by the confidence Speaker Laney has shown in me to help address such important issues. Agriculture and water are essential to my district's future and to the future of the entire state," said Cook.

Cook is currently serving his third term in the Texas House of Representatives as a member of the 77th Legislature. He represents District 28 which includes Bastrop, Colorado, Fayette

and Wharton Counties.

He is the Vice-Chairman of the House State Recreational Resources Committee, and member of the House Natural Resources Committee and the House Local and Consent Calendars Committee. He also serves as Third Vice-Chairman of the Rural Caucus and Vice-President of the Board of the Texas Conservative Coalition.

Additionally, he was appointed to the National Conference of State Legislatures' Agricultural and International Trade Committee, the National Conference of State Legislatures' Leadership Institute, and the Council of State Governments' Agricultural Policy Task Force.

Cook encourages those interested in legislative issues and other state appointments to contact his Capitol office in Austin by mail at P.O. Box 2910, Austin, TX 78768; or call 512-463-0682.

Legislative information is also available on the Internet at www.capitol.state.tx.us.

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