

Los Angeles Times

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9/11, TEN YEARS AFTER



CAROLYN COLE Los Angeles Times

TRIBUTE TO 9/11 VICTIMS

In Battery Park, near New York's World Trade Center site, almost 3,000 flags honor those killed in the terrorist attacks 10 years ago Sunday. Memorials already are underway across the nation. President Obama and former President George W. Bush will attend a ceremony Sunday. **NATION, A14**

Filling in the blanks

A Perris company answers the call to produce headstones for fallen troops. It's a rush job.

PHIL WILLON

Two blank grave markers sit on the sizzling back lot of Sun City Granite, waiting to bear the names of U.S. service members killed in Iraq or Afghanistan.

Joe Mehochko knows they'll probably be young. Fresh out of high school. Like the scores of others whose names he's carved into black-speckled granite since the wars began. Maybe a soldier killed in a firefight outside of Baghdad. A Marine blown apart by a roadside bomb near Kandahar.

"All I know," said Mehochko, covered in sweat and powdery dust inside the un-air-conditioned shop, "is that we'll get a call.... We always do."

Riverside National Cemetery has relied on Mehochko's four-person engraving company in Perris to produce headstones of all those killed in action and buried there since the war on terror began — close to 100 in all.

"We had nothing for the longest time. Then the first one hit. Then, pretty soon, 10. Then 20. It keeps going on and on," Mehochko said. "On 9/11, look at how many people died. But how many people have died since, fighting this war? It's sad, really. Just sad."

All of the orders are rush jobs, to be completed with just a few hours' notice. Cemetery officials don't want the loved ones of those killed in the line of duty to ever see a barren grave site, so the headstones must be in place on the day of the funeral.

When Mehochko arrives at work before sunup, there may be an order waiting on a desk inside a cinder-block back room. Every other job in the shop is set aside.

Mehochko will never meet the family or attend the funeral. All he ever knows about the dead are scant details provided by Veterans Affairs: name, rank, military branch, where they served, the day they were born, the day they died. Sometimes a [See Headstones, A14]



MARK BOSTER Los Angeles Times

CARVING NAMES: Joe Mehochko is co-owner of Sun City Granite. All he ever knows about the dead are scant details provided by Veterans Affairs.

In China, too few pigs go to market

DAVID PIERSON REPORTING FROM BEIJING

Wang Yuying rattled off the ways she cooked pork at home as if she were Bubba talking about shrimp in "Forrest Gump."

"I can make mu shu pork. I can stir fry it with carrots and cucumbers. I can even 'red' cook it," Wang said, describing the famous sweet and sticky braised pork belly favored by Mao Tse-tung.

But on a recent visit to an open-air Beijing food market, the 71-year-old grandmother walked out with only green grapes, lettuce and tomatoes.

"No pork!" she said. "It's too expensive. I'll only eat it if I have to."

These are trying times for China's love affair with the other white meat. Wholesale prices for the staple have climbed by more than 60% this year because of tight supplies; that's fueling inflation and squeezing house- [See Pork, A6]

A fighter, not always a winner

A keen strategist, the Assembly speaker has a brusque style that some say is a liability.

MICHAEL J. MISHAK REPORTING FROM SACRAMENTO

Earlier this year, with the scandal-plagued city of Vernon dominating headlines, Assembly Speaker John A. Pérez took the unusual step of working the floor in the Legislature's other house, buttonholing fellow Democrats to endorse his bill to dissolve the industrial en-



STEVE YEATER Associated Press

JOHN PÉREZ: The speaker "treats members like adults," said an ally.

clave in his Los-Angeles based district.

He placed the bill before senators one by one, handed them a pen and watched them sign. It was a signal to

lawmakers that the measure was a priority for the man in what is commonly referred to as the second most powerful post in California government.

But when the bill went before the Senate last month, Pérez watched from the other side of the Capitol as it fell eight votes short of passage. Ten of his Democratic coauthors denied him their votes.

By many measures, Pérez, who cut his teeth in the Los Angeles labor movement, has had a successful 18 months as speaker. He has kept his caucus mostly happy and helped increase [See Pérez, A11]

BofA plans to cut at least 40,000 jobs

The layoffs reflect the bank's deepening woes and are likely to take a heavy toll on its California operations.

WALTER HAMILTON AND E. SCOTT RECKARD

Bank of America Corp. is preparing to slash 40,000 or more jobs nationwide, a dramatic retrenchment that reflects the deepening woes of the country's largest bank and the magnitude of the U.S. economic slowdown.

The layoffs will come mainly from the BofA's sprawling consumer-banking operations, which will take a heavy toll on branches, loan centers and other offices throughout California.

Bank of America has 45,000 employees in the state, about 1 in 6 of its nearly 300,000-person workforce, and is expected to roll out the job cuts over the next several years. The company, which for years was based in San Francisco and maintains its huge mortgage unit in Calabasas, also is in the process of closing 10% of its branches nationwide.

California has the highest concentration of BofA

branches in the U.S. with 956 throughout the state, though it has been losing ground in recent years to rivals like Wells Fargo & Co. and JPMorgan Chase & Co.

The layoffs are another blow to California, with its battered economy and nearly 12% unemployment rate. From tellers to middle managers, laid-off Bank of America employees are likely to have a tough time finding new jobs.

"We don't need to lose any jobs in this environment, whether in financial services or anywhere else," said Esmael Adibi, a Chapman University economist.

The details of the cutbacks were not officially announced, but the information was disclosed by three Bank of America executives who have been briefed on the plan but were not authorized to speak publicly. Brian Moynihan, Bank of America's beleaguered chief executive, is expected to unveil [See BofA, A16]

Debt fears send stocks sliding

European and U.S. markets tumble as investors worry that Greece will default on its bonds. **BUSINESS, B1**

INSIDE



GARY FRIEDMAN The Times

He sticks with it for his brother

Joe Esposito dug for months at the World Trade Center site looking for the remains of his brother, a fellow firefighter. He vowed to quit once the search was over, but he knew his brother would have wanted him to stay. **NATION, A12**

Obama's delicate balance on 9/11

The president will honor those who died, but also tout achievements in national security. **NATION, A13**

COMING SUNDAY

Return to the unfathomable

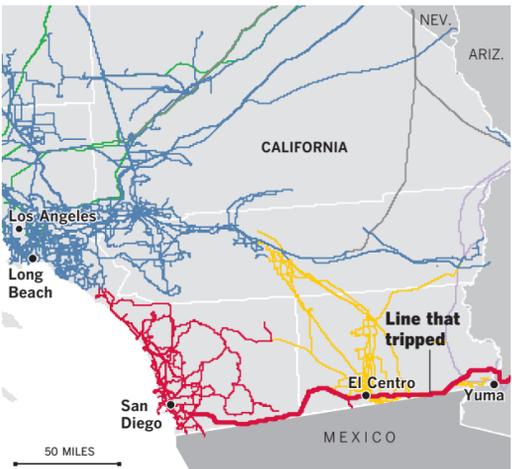
Columnist Steve Lopez heads back to New York, where in 2001 he got a close-up look at the destruction of 9/11. **PAGE A1**

Travel misery

Airlines are starting to see profits as fliers grudgingly accept heightened security. **BUSINESS**

Line that triggered blackout

A mishap involving a 500-kilovolt transmission line caused an electrical blackout across parts of Southern California.



Source: California Energy Commission PAUL DUGINSKI Los Angeles Times

Utilities hunting for answers in failure of blackout safeguards

SAM ALLEN, RALPH VARTABEDIAN AND MITCHELL LANDSBERG

The failure of a single piece of equipment in Yuma, Ariz., ignited a massive blackout that left more than 4 million people without power, baffling utility officials and highlighting the vulnerability of the U.S. electrical grid.

Authorities in Arizona said Friday that safeguards built into the system should have prevented the breakdown at a Yuma substation from cascading across southern Arizona and into California and northern Mexico.

They didn't, and the resulting instability led to the sudden shutdown of the San Onofre nuclear power plant, cutting off power to a large swath of Southern California. "We lost all connection to the outside world," said James Avery, San Diego Gas & Electric's senior vice president of power supply. "This happened in a matter of seconds."

Energy experts and utility officials agreed that the breakdown was troubling.

"We're struggling," said Daniel Froetscher, vice president of energy delivery for APS, the largest electricity provider in Arizona. "We have to take a hard look at the system design and figure [See Causes, A20]

Republicans split on cut to payroll tax

Some in Congress question whether the idea, part of Obama's proposal to create jobs, will do more than increase debt. **NATION, A10**

Bird migration puzzle answered

A new finding may explain why some species can fly thousands of miles without food or water stops. **SCIENCE, A18**

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SMALL-SPACE SOLUTIONS HOME

The Big Picture

Mel Gibson gets flak for a film he hasn't even made yet. **CALENDAR, D1**

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