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HISTORY

Teachers work to keep Sept. 11 alive



Ryan Weatherman, a fire technology teacher at Los Alamitos High School, on Friday shows his students a rendering of a memorial they will be creating to honor the 343 firefighters who lost their lives on 9/11. It will be unveiled during a remembrance event at the school this week.
 JEFF ANTENORE — STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Students of today don't have their own memories of event that shaped U.S.

By Charlie Borla, Israel J. Carreón Jr., Victoria Le, Teresa Liu and Claire Wang
 STAFF WRITERS

For Ryan Weatherman, his seventh-grade year started out in 2001 just like any other. Like many young boys, Weatherman envisioned a future as a professional athlete or a fighter pilot. But like any American who witnessed firsthand Sept. 11, 2001, the attacks rocked his world and changed his life. "Being on the West Coast, it was earlier in the morning when the attacks happened, so by the time we got to school, our teachers were holding space for us," Weatherman said. "That was one of the first times that I had a teacher be like, 'Hey, there's an event, how do you feel

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THROUGH THE HEART: 25 YEARS AFTER 9/11

Hunt for the missing memorial



The arboretum at Murray Park in Murray, Utah, is seen Friday. The park is home to the next leg of the journey of Southern California News Group reporters Andre Mouchard and Sierra van der Brug and photographer Jeff Gritchen to visit 9/11 memorials throughout the United States. The area was home to a 9/11 memorial that was removed eight years ago because of repeated vandalism and objections to the wording on the plaque. For more on the next stop, see A7. Also, for a look at local 9/11 memorials, see A8.
 JEFF GRITCHEN — STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

REMEMBERING 9/11

Lisa Anne Frost lives on in her father's heart



Rich Archbold
 COLUMNIST

Lisa Anne Frost was getting ready to board United Airlines Flight 175 at

Logan International Airport in Boston on Sept. 11, 2001. But first, she called her father, who was working in Southern California. "She was so excited about coming home after graduating from Boston University," her father, Tom Frost, said in an interview last

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Legacy Runner Tom Frost crosses the finish line at the Long Beach Marathon in 2022, wearing a shirt with a photo of his daughter, Lisa Anne Frost, who died in the Sept. 11, 2001 attacks in New York City.
 PHOTO BY HOWARD FRESHMAN

MIDDLE EAST WAR

U.S. fire targets Iranian oil fleet

3 tankers attacked a day after Trump dismissed 6-month-old hostilities as 'small potatoes'

By Amir Vahdat, Toqa Ezzidin and Cara Anna
 THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

CAIRO — U.S. forces struck three Iranian oil tankers after Navy warships were targeted with ballistic missiles, the American military said Saturday, warning that it would "if necessary, destroy Iran's limited and exposed oil fleet." Experts called it a dangerous escalation after Iran's previous attacks at sea targeted commercial shipping. The strikes — a day after U.S. President Donald Trump sought to minimize the conflict as "small potatoes" — keep up a new tilt back toward fighting after six months of on-again, off-again war that began with U.S. and Israeli attacks on the country on Feb. 28. Both sides have sought to inflict both military and economic pain, and negotiations have collapsed. The military's statement said an American aircraft carrier and a destroyer evaded "multiple unprovoked Iranian attacks" while patrolling in the region and no U.S. personnel were hurt. It wasn't clear when the Iranian missiles were fired. The statement said that two Iranian oil carriers were

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LABOR

Is California job market hotter than we think?

California's economy has more jobs than we thought — and the nation fewer — thanks to what were once geeky economic calculations but became political flash-points.

My trusty spreadsheet reviewed a semiannual deep dive into monthly job counts by the Bureau of Labor Statistics. The August report estimates that, as of March, California's job count was 43,000 workers higher than the 18.2 million previously reported. It's the third-largest upward revision among the states and a boost to the Golden State's position as one of the nation's biggest job creators, so far, in 2026. Nationally, these revisions estimate U.S. employment was 79,000 lower than the 158.7 million initially tallied. Why the ever-changing numbers? It's part of a process that frequently rechecks initial estimates.



Jonathan Lansner
 COLUMNIST

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TEACHERS

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about it?"

Though his uncle was a firefighter, watching hundreds of New York City first responders arrive on the scene, immediately run into the Twin Towers and lay their lives on the line to help others in need became the catalyst for Weatherman's career.

After graduating from Los Alamitos High School in 2007, Weatherman became an emergency medical technician himself. But life quickly brought him back to campus after he was offered a job teaching emergency response and fire technology classes he had once taken.

Now, he prepares students for the dangerous, selfless line of work that 9/11 inspired him to get into.

Keeping the memory of 9/11 alive — and honoring the lives lost and the sacrifices made — is an important part of many Southern California classrooms this time of year. But the attacks on the Twin Towers and the Pentagon and United Airlines Flight 93's crash in Pennsylvania are now almost a quarter-century old, years before any students learning of the tragedy in school today were even born.

Making sure that remembrance is passed down is why Nancy Karcher takes her Orangethorpe Elementary School class — ranging from kindergartners to third graders — on a field trip to the home of Fullerton firefighter Scott Townley, who transforms his home into a 9/11 memorial each year.

Eight-year-old Hayden Simao said he's been "excited" to join his classmates in learning about 9/11 and is looking forward to touring Townley's memorial this year.

"I'm a little happy because he's letting us be there, to be a part of it," Simao said.

The field trip has become an annual tradition for the class since first going in 2019.

"It's a tradition for us now," 10-year-old Mia Valencia said of the annual trek. She has led her classmates in singing the national anthem several times during the excursion, in honor of those killed on 9/11.

"And the best thing about 9/11 is that even though a bad guy could want to destroy America, like to be more separate, it brought us more united."

"This is a part of our history, and we should learn from it and grow," Karcher said. "Teaching them through stories, going to the memorial, hearing Mr. Townley speak brings it alive — that this is something that really happened."

Every generation has historical moments that stick with it, said Doug McDermott, a teacher at Ulysses S. Grant High School in Los Angeles and chair of the school's history department.

But even though each generation goes through its own historical moment, McDermott makes it a priority to ensure that the historically significant events of past generations won't be forgotten by the next one.

McDermott still spends about 15 minutes each Sept. 11 telling students his 9/11 experience: He was about to head off to his second day in a classroom, teaching seventh grade at Olive Vista Middle School in Sylmar. Before leaving for work, he turned on the television and saw smoke coming from the North Tower of the World Trade Center Complex. As he watched, the second plane entered the frame and struck the South Tower.

His 11th-grade students, though, have no such memories. Most of them have heard about 9/11 through stories from their parents.

But he expects even that connection to change. Soon, students will have learned about the attacks through memories and stories from their grandparents, he said.

KEEPING THE 9/11 CONNECTION ALIVE

Charles Wu, a senior at Beckman High School in Irvine, said his schools have held a moment of silence following the morning pledge of allegiance each year around Sept. 11. And Wu's understanding of 9/11 — which happened about eight years before he was born — was influenced by his mother's story of being in New York and actually visiting one of the Twin Towers just



Ryann Sutter, a student in the fire technology program at Los Alamitos High School, helps organize dozens of flags that will be used in the creation of a 9/11 memorial honoring the 343 firefighters who lost their lives on Sept. 11, 2001, during class Friday. **JEFF ANTENORE — STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER**



Orangethorpe Elementary School third-grader Hayden Simao and his classmates have been learning about 9/11 ahead of its 25th anniversary. It's part of a school tradition led by teacher Nancy Karcher. **VICTORIA LE — STAFF**

months before the attacks unfolded.

"Seeing the impact, and how much devastation that it caused to the country and its people, I think for me it still carries a lot of weight," Wu said. "I have a lot of respect and admiration for the firefighters, the police officers who risked their lives to provide aid to those people."

But that feeling isn't always shared by his peers, Wu said.

"I don't want to say (some of my classmates) don't care about the event; they're just not as involved, or they don't feel as much emotion towards the event."

But Amy Hale, who just started her 27th year teaching eighth grade U.S. history at Santiago Middle School in Orange, noticed a shift in her students' feelings toward 9/11 about 15 years ago. Apathy toward these tragedies, especially 9/11, has only grown as time has passed, Hale said.

"It's definitely just a meme to them. They don't even really see it as, unfortunately, something tragic or anything that really brought our country together. I don't think they have the same feelings of patriotism towards our country to begin with," Hale said. "Trying to get them to care about anything is very difficult."

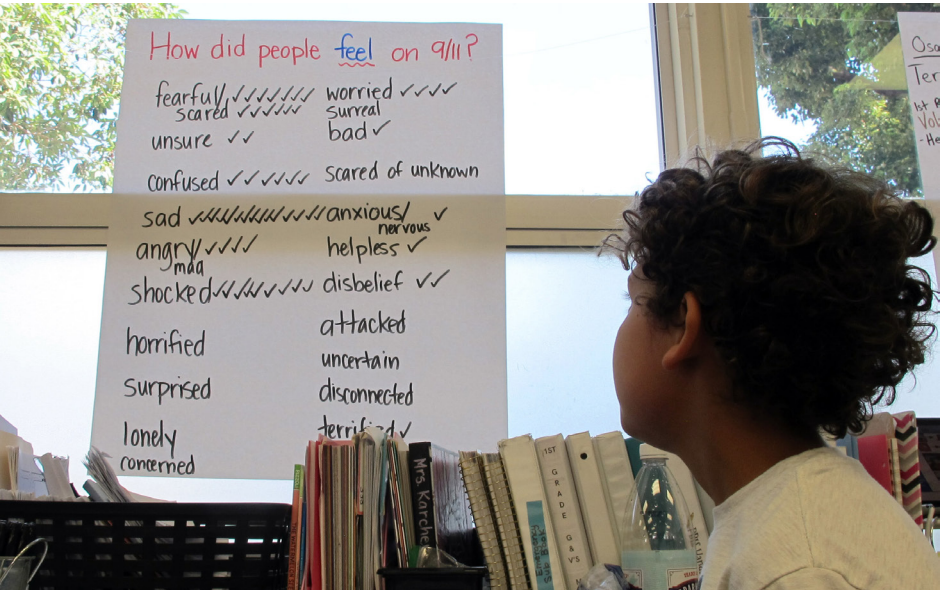
Hale said she used to show documentaries, news broadcasts and other visual media to her students as part of their education around 9/11, leading up to an assignment where students had to interview people in their lives with memories of that day.

About 10 years ago, Hale began requiring that students only speak to people born before a certain date. Ultimately, she also did away with the in-class video component altogether because her students' attention spans were waning so much, she said.

"They really don't have the stamina to focus more than their little TikTok videos. Unfortunately, like showing movies in class anymore, if it's longer than a 10-minute video, they just shut off," she said. "It doesn't matter how exciting it is, it's too long."



Students in the fire technology program at Los Alamitos High School on Friday paint strips of cardboard that will be used in a 9/11 memorial honoring the 343 firefighters who lost their lives on Sept. 11, 2001. **JEFF ANTENORE — STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER**



Orangethorpe Elementary School student Hayden Simao, 8, and his classmates will take a field trip to see a local 9/11 memorial in Fullerton. **VICTORIA LE — STAFF**

Weatherman of Los Alamitos High School — who teaches the ins and outs of the dangerous, selfless trade that is being a first responder — wouldn't describe his students' initial feelings toward 9/11 as apathy, although he acknowledges students in his class may be predisposed to have a more sentimental connection to the event, since they are in elective classes that set them up for careers as first responders.

Still, Weatherman said, he makes a point to show

students exactly what kind of sacrifice was made by the 343 New York firefighters on that day in 2001, that it's not just another detail in an otherwise momentous tragedy.

"Students that young are still kind of self-centered, which is part of their development. So it helps them shift from being self-centered to kind of an altruistic view," he said. "I get to help people; it's about service to others. And I think that's the really cool part of teaching 9/11, that these first responders were looking out for the better-

ment of other people."

Edwin Pastor, 16, a junior at Canoga Park High School in Los Angeles, said he first learned about Sept. 11 in middle school and remembered watching videos of the attacks. The images initially seemed almost unreal to him.

Sept. 11 does not feel like ancient history to Pastor; he said. He also sees value in continuing to teach it.

"Everything they teach is about the past," he said. "It's a good, valuable lesson" for preventing future mistakes.

That's a key part of the

work high school students do in Paul Hoxie's U.S. history class at Redlands Adventist Academy in San Bernardino County each year: connect the past to the present.

Sept. 11, he said, is the genesis of a historical throughline that connects "nearly every major event in the last 25 years of United States history."

Each year, Hoxie first tasks his students with creating a broad timeline of that Tuesday, using resources from the 9/11 Memorial & Museum such as flight records and early cellphone footage of the attacks, he said. Once students are finished broadly putting the events in order, Hoxie jumps straight into narratives of that day.

Though they start with the timeline, Hoxie said it's his goal to expand his students' understanding of Sept. 11 beyond a series of events, that it's "a real day that impacted the lives of real people who were working a normal job."

Their final assignment is to interview a family member, teacher or someone they know who was alive and remembers 9/11, followed by a class-wide discussion, Hoxie said.

His students, once they can connect with a story, are taken aback by the scale of devastation, he said.

"Students often think that the only impact is taking off shoes at the Transportation Security Administration, but the implications of 9/11 stretch much further than that," he said.

"The obvious connections would be the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, but there is also a connection to the rise of (President Barack) Obama as a response to the Bush years, and then the response of the Trump era to the Bush years. You could include events like the Tea Party and even Occupy Wall Street in the downstream impact from 9/11."

As part of his fire technology classes' activities leading up to the 25th anniversary of the attacks, Weatherman is also tasking his students with creating a "343" art piece that will be unveiled as part of a ceremony on Friday. The memorial project symbolizes the 343 firefighters who lost their lives while trying to get people out of the World Trade Center.

His two fire tech classes — with help from Los Alamitos High's art department, which built the art piece's wooden frame — will construct it throughout the week leading up to Sept. 11. Students in each class will also fill the wooden frame with 343 American flags, as a way to honor those firefighters and remind themselves what kind of career they may be stepping into.

Weatherman's students, as well as students from the school's music and videography classes, plan to hold a flagpole ceremony.

Weatherman's lesson to his students:

"They had a family, and this is somebody who made the ultimate sacrifice in service of other people," he said. "This is not just a piece of wood and a piece of cloth that you're putting in. ... These are people who were doing a career, a job, that you want to do."