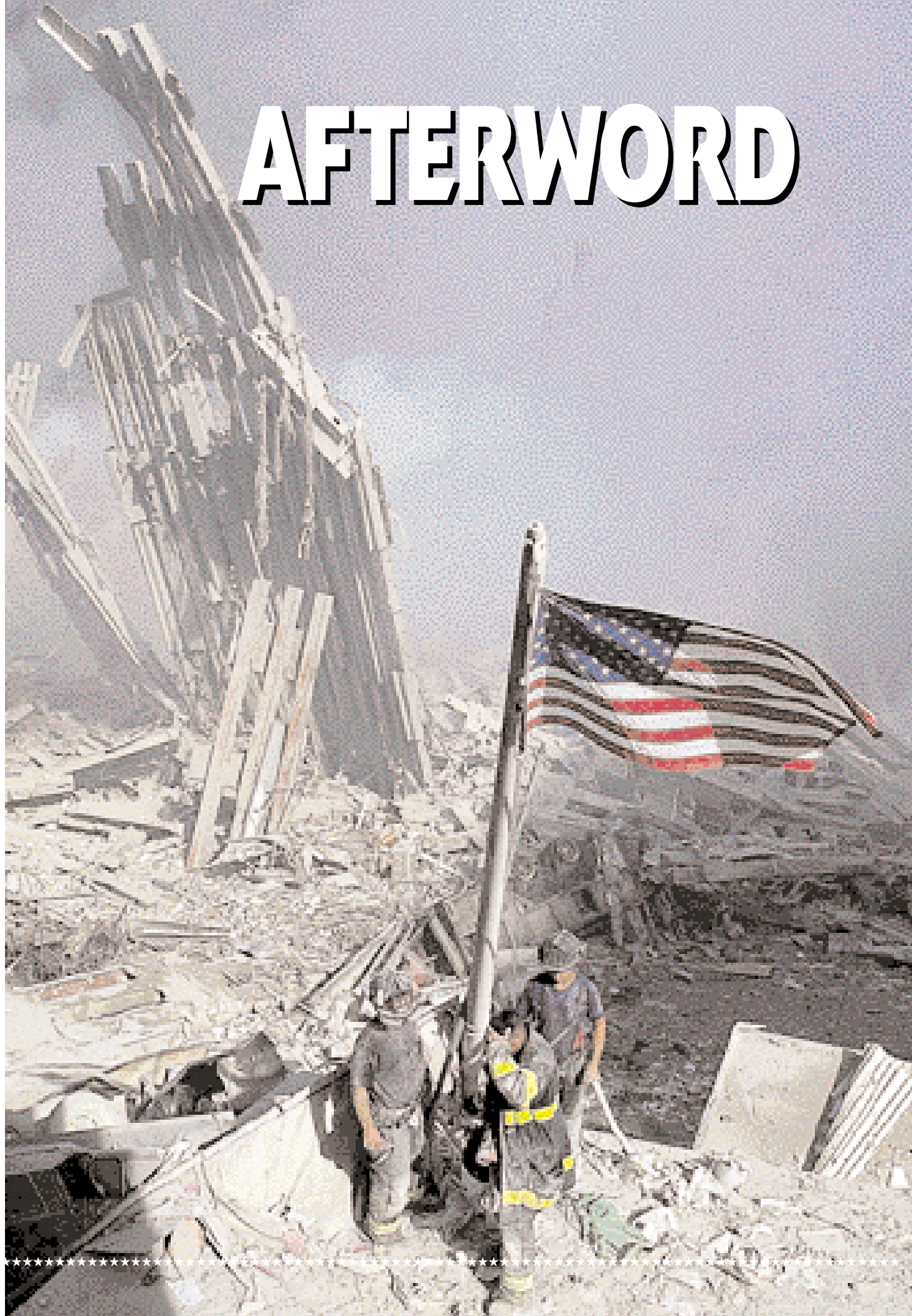




# AFTERWORD



RICKY FLORES / GNS - Journal News



# 'We did more right than wrong'

BY LLOYD DOBYNS

*API asked Lloyd Dobyns to look ahead in the war on terrorism and analyze the effectiveness of the various forms of media in the handling of the Sept. 11, 2001, terrorism attacks.*

This will be the second war that American reporters will not cover. Reporters did not cover the Gulf War, although they certainly pretended to, and, I suspect, other reporters will pretend to cover this one.

In the Gulf War, government and military officials announced what they wanted to announce and the press dutifully passed it on – the press as high-speed, high-tech mimeograph machine. No reporters were at the front lines independently covering what happened or verifying what they were told.

In the War on Terrorism, not only will there be no reporters at the front lines, there likely will be no front lines. When things happen, there may be official announcements, but only of those events that cannot be hidden or denied.

This will be the first American war where readers, viewers and listeners won't even know the war is not being covered. Stealth battles will join stealth bombers. The military will know what is being done; the people will not.

American reporters covered the Revolutionary War, the Civil War, World Wars I and II, the Korean War (called a "police action") and the Vietnam War. The relationship between military commanders and correspondents has always been iffy.

In occupied Japan after World War II, Gen. Douglas MacArthur sent 17 correspondents packing, not because they disobeyed orders or revealed secrets, but because they questioned his policies, ("The First Casualty," Phillip Knightley; Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1975).

William Tecumseh Sherman, the Union general, complained that he was "abused by a set of dirty newspaper scribblers who have the impudence of Satan." He said the newspapers gave away his every move, and he blamed reporters for his failures. ("If No News, Send Rumors," Stephen Bates; St. Martin's Press, 1985.)

That concept – the press as spies – has new currency, even in the press. An editorial cartoon by Jim McCloskey shows Osama bin Laden getting his "intelligence briefing as to where the Americans will strike" from CNN (The News Leader, Staunton, Va., Sept. 23, 2001). There is no doubt that the news media, now including the Internet, do provide information, and anyone anywhere can get it. That is not necessarily bad.

The terrorists' attacks on Sept. 11 would have been more frightening, more debilitating if Americans and other



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people had been unable to get accurate, reliable, timely information. Rumor is the enemy of reason, and if we do not have good reporting, we will have rumor and speculation.

The news media performed about as well as could reasonably be expected and made few missteps. Coverage was not perfect – there was no car bomb at the State Department – but coverage was exceptional.

The criticism that has developed includes questioning how many times television reports showed the plane crashing into the second tower and whether video tape and still pictures should have shown people jumping to their deaths.

How many times should the plane crash have been shown? You may have seen it five times, but the person just turning on the set hasn't seen it yet. There is, of course, a saturation point, but when is it? That is one question broadcast journalists might need to discuss.

Jumping to your death to escape burning to death may or may not be a rational act, but it clearly illustrates for all of us that sometimes there is no good choice. At that point, the ethical admonition, "Do what's right," makes no sense; nothing is right, not for the jumper, not for the media.

In whole, however, we did more right than wrong.

Compare how the news media handled Sept. 11 with how we handled a third-rate White House sex scandal. The rumors, the excesses, the violations of every journalistic principle in the Clinton-Lewinsky story were enough to make most journalists blush – once they stopped drooling and looked back at what they had done.

No one is blushing looking back at the coverage of Sept. 11.

It is possible that we will blush, but if we do, it will be a long time from now when the War on Terrorism, or whatever we will call it, is as foreign to college students then as World War II is to college students now. Those future students will study what it will have cost us to fight this stealth war and prove that the media are patriotic.

The Constitution of the United States would not have been ratified without the Bill of Rights, the first 10 amendments. People in the late 18th century wanted their rights spelled out, specifically. "Life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness" had a nice literary ring to it, but the people wanted specifics. They had just fought and won a war, and they demanded to know what they had won.

The First Amendment guarantees five freedoms, among them freedom of the press. To fight and win this War on Terrorism, will we surrender that? If we cannot cover a war that our nation is fighting, do we have a free press?

Will we have to blush?



# The right to produce ‘timely independent reporting’ of U.S. at war

BY MICHAEL GETLER

The nation’s press has played an important role in helping America cope with the devastating terrorist attacks of Sept. 11 and come together in the aftermath. It does this not in any orchestrated fashion but rather as individual news organizations carrying out their role in an open society – informing the public as accurately, thoroughly and quickly as possible. The coverage has captured the horror and heroism, the pathos and patriotism, the words of the president and the images of Osama bin Laden.

It is hard to imagine getting through these early weeks without being able to turn on the television or all-news radio for the immediate update, or to pick up that big morning newspaper or log on to its Web site later in the day.

So far, so good. But the press is about to sail into more dangerous and controversial waters should the country, as seems likely, launch military operations against the perpetrators of these terrible acts.

There has always been a certain natural tension between the press and the military in time of war as they carry out their different roles in a democratic society. But American reporters and photographers have always risked their own lives to accompany U.S. fighting forces into the field and have compiled a detailed, candid and valued record of America in combat.

Reporters also have compiled a record of trust, one that shows they understand and will abide by sensible rules of censorship – not reporting certain kinds of military information that could endanger lives or compromise operations, for example. During a decade of fighting in Vietnam, with thousands of journalists operating within a voluntary system of security guidelines, the number of violations was minuscule and no accreditations were revoked because of violations.

But after Vietnam – during the 1983 invasion of Grenada, the 1989 invasion of Panama and the 1991 Gulf War – new techniques of press control were put into place that either kept U.S. reporters from witnessing the important opening phases of the fighting or sharply restricted access.

In the case of the Gulf War, the Defense Department introduced an array of controls that were so severe that a group of news executives from 15 of the nation’s largest newspaper, television, magazine and wire service organizations wrote to then-Secretary of Defense Dick Cheney, saying they were “deeply concerned about the abridgement of our

right and role to produce timely, independent reporting of Americans at war. We are apprehensive that . . . the virtual total control that your department exercised over the American press will become a model for the future.”

After eight months of talks following those protests, the Defense Department agreed, in May 1992, to a new set of guidelines that addressed some, although not all, of the media complaints, and Cheney said at the time that these new principles were now policy.

The Gulf War turned out to be the perfect war: over in four days once the ground troops went in, with very few U.S. casualties and a total rout of the Iraqis. Americans didn’t care much about press restrictions, which they hardly knew about because it was over so fast and because all those government videos showed how perfectly the new smart weapons were working. But if the war had lasted longer and things hadn’t gone so well, the reaction could have been different.

A Pulitzer Prize that year was awarded for stories uncovered after the war was over.

Today, the country is headed into what could be a war like no other. Passions are intense, and the stakes are very, very high. Some of the same top officials during the Gulf War are also in charge of this one, in the persons of Cheney and Secretary of State Colin Powell, the former chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. And Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld is no slouch when it comes to controlling information.

Restrictions on the press are not likely to rank very high among the public’s concerns.

So as the nation prepares for war, the press is probably about to face the most severe and confounding test of its mission in a free society.

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## API encourages readers of this book to contribute for support of the survivors of the terrorist attacks. Below, you will find a partial list of organizations that, as of October 2001, were accepting such contributions.

The United Way of Washington D.C. The September 11 Fund provides immediate support to established emergency assistance agencies. Contributions may be sent to United Way, 95 M St. S.W., Washington, D.C., 20024, or call: (202) 488-2000. The designation code for donations in Washington, D.C., is 9011 and the code for New York is 9012. <http://www.unitedwayna.org>

The United Way of New York and the New York Community Trust have established a fund to help the victims of the attacks and their families. The September Eleventh Fund provides support to emergency assistance agencies. Contributions may be sent to United Way, 2 Park Ave, New York, N.Y., 10016, or call: (212) 251-4035 <http://www.uwnyc.org>

The Survivors' Fund of the Community Foundation for the National Capital Region focuses on the long-term educational, health, income, maintenance and other needs of victims and their families in the Washington region. <http://www.cfncr.org>

American Red Cross, National Capital Chapter asks that donations be sent in care of the Red Cross, National Capital Chapter, 2131 K St. N.W., Washington, D.C., 20037, call: (202) 728-6400.

The Salvation Army is accepting financial contributions to assist those affected in the attacks. Donations may be sent to Salvation Army, 2626 Pennsylvania Ave. N.W., Washington, D.C 20037, or call (202) 756-2600 or (866) 399-2684. [www.salvationarmy-usaeast.org/main/donate\\_online.shtml](http://www.salvationarmy-usaeast.org/main/donate_online.shtml)

The Federal Emergency Management Administration (FEMA) has set up a toll-free number to provide legal assistance and referrals for those affected by the Pentagon attack. The number, (866) 606-0626, is staffed from 9 a.m. until 6 p.m. every day until further notice. Staffers answering the phones arrange for an American Bar Association lawyer to contact the callers, or refer them to a lawyer. Hot line, (800) 801-8092, has information about how to donate money to a World Trade Center relief fund and how to volunteer.

The Citizens' Scholarship Foundation of America has set up the Families of Freedom Scholarship Fund, to provide education assistance for post-secondary study to financially needy children and spouses of those killed or permanently disabled as a result of the "Attack on America." To make donations, make checks to The Citizens' Scholarship Foundation of America (CSFA), designating "Families of Freedom Scholarship Fund" in the memo section. Mail to CSFA, 1505 Riverview Rd, P.O. Box 297, St. Peter, Minn. 56082, or call (877) 862-0136. [www.csfa.org/familiesoffreedom](http://www.csfa.org/familiesoffreedom)

The Associated General Contractors of America's Education & Research Foundation has set up a fund for children of those killed. Send tax-exempt donations to Terrorist Victims Fund, 333 John Carlyle St., Suite 200, Alexandria, Va. 22314.

The Metropolitan Washington Council of the AFL-CIO has set up a fund to help working people and their families touched by the Pentagon and World Trade Center attacks. Send donations to Community Services Agency, Disaster Fund, 1925 K St. N.W., Suite 410, Washington, D.C., 20006. For more information on the union relief effort, see [www.aflcio.org/news/2001/0912\\_disasters\\_what2do.htm](http://www.aflcio.org/news/2001/0912_disasters_what2do.htm)

The Elks National Foundation has established a September 11th Disaster Relief Fund to assist rescue workers and victims. Send tax-deductible contributions to Elks September 11th Disaster Relief Fund, Elks National Foundation, 2750 N. Lakeview Ave., Chicago, Ill. 60614-1889. [www.elks.org/enf/default.cfm](http://www.elks.org/enf/default.cfm)

The National Burglar and Fire Alarm Association has created a scholarship fund for children of the police officers and firefighters killed in New York City. Tax-deductible contributions may be sent to Alarm Industry Research and Education Foundation, Heroes Scholarship Fund, 8300 Colesville Rd., Silver Spring, Md. 20910. For more information, call (301) 585-1855, Ext. 123. [www.alarm.org/What\\_s\\_New/Hero\\_Scholarship/hero\\_scholarship.html](http://www.alarm.org/What_s_New/Hero_Scholarship/hero_scholarship.html)

Entergy Corp. of New Orleans and Exelon Corp. of Chicago have started a fund to raise money for the college educations of victims' children. Send tax-deductible donations to the Power of America Fund, 1055 St. Charles Ave., Suite 100, New Orleans, La., 70130.

Catholic Charities USA asks anyone wishing to contribute to send their donations to Attention: Pentagon Victims Funeral Fund, Catholic Charities of the Diocese of Arlington, 200 N. Glebe Rd. Suite 506, Arlington Va., 22203. [www.catholiccharitiesusa.org](http://www.catholiccharitiesusa.org)

The Jewish Federation of Greater Washington is collecting funds for local and New York agencies working directly with victims and their families. Send donations to the Jewish Federation of Greater Washington, New York/Washington Victims Relief, 6101 Montrose Rd., Rockville, Md., 20852.

B'nai B'rith International has set up a fund to aid victims and their families. Send donations to B'nai B'rith Disaster Relief Fund, U.S. Terrorism Relief, 1640 Rhode Island Ave. N.W., Washington, D.C., 20036. [www.bbinet.org](http://www.bbinet.org)

The Newseum in Arlington has created a poster featuring coverage of the Sept. 11 attacks on the Pentagon and the World Trade Center. The poster is available at the Newseum for a minimum suggested donation of \$5; proceeds will go to the Survivors' Fund of the Community Foundation for the National Capital Region. The Newseum is at 1101 Wilson Blvd., Arlington, Va. 22209. For information, call (703) 284-3544.

The Arlington-based Navy League of the United States has set up a LifeRing Fund to assist military victims and their families. Online donations can be made, or call toll free 877-NAVY-USA. [www.navyleague.org/life\\_ring.htm](http://www.navyleague.org/life_ring.htm)

Catholic Charities of the Archdiocese of Washington has set up a \$20,000 Emergency Assistance Fund to aid families who may have been affected by the attack on the Pentagon. Donations can be sent to Catholic Charities Disaster Relief Fund, 924 G St., N.W., Washington, D.C., 20001, or call (202) 772-4300.

The Kaplan 9/11 Fund will be used for a variety of services including family counseling, rent/housing payments, tuition, food and clothing. Donations to the Kaplan 9/11 Fund (it is important to specify the Kaplan 9/11 Fund or your donation could go to other causes) can be sent to the Children's Aid Society, 105 East 22nd St., New York, N.Y., 10010. [www.kaplan.com/fund/index.html](http://www.kaplan.com/fund/index.html)

USO Worldwide Operations is soliciting donations for the USO Fund for Freedom's Finest to support U.S. armed forces here and abroad. Send contributions to USO World Headquarters, 1008 Eberle Pl. S.E., Suite 301, Washington Navy Yard, Washington, D.C., 20374-5096. [www.uso.org](http://www.uso.org)

The American-Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee has established a fund for victims of the terrorist attacks. All contributions will be donated to the American Red Cross to assist the families of those who died. Send tax-deductible donations to ADCRI September 11 Victims, c/o ADC, 4201 Connecticut Ave. N.W., Suite 300, Washington, D.C., 20008.

International Association of Fire Fighters asks that donations be sent in care of the The New York Fire 9-11 Relief Fund, c/o Firehouse.com, 9658 Baltimore Ave - Suite 350, College Park, Md., 20740. Please, do not send cash. [www.iaff.org/](http://www.iaff.org/)

New York Fraternal Order of Police Fund asks anyone wishing to contribute to send donations in care of the New York Fraternal Order of Police Fund, 911 Police Plaza, c/o Robert Lucente, Hicksville, N.Y., 11801, or call: 1-888-NYS1FOP. [www.nysfop.org/](http://www.nysfop.org/)

The Independent Insurance Agents of America and the Independent Insurance Agents Association of New York are raising money for victims' families. Send donations to America's Survivor Relief Fund, c/o InsurBanc, P.O. Box 615, Farmington, Conn. 06034. [www.independentagent.com](http://www.independentagent.com)

The National Association of Realtors has set up a relief fund to help pay mortgage and rental costs of victims. Send donations to Realtors Housing Relief Fund, 430 N. Michigan Ave., Chicago, Ill. 60611, or call (800) 874-6500.

The Burn Center at Washington Hospital Center is seeking tax-deductible donations. Call (202) 877-6558 or mail contributions to Burn Center Fund, Washington Hospital Center Foundation, 110 Irving St. N.W., Washington, D.C., 20010-2975.



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