

# news

## JONAS: Rescue and survival at the north tower

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and the remarkable strength and camaraderie it brought out of his fellow firefighters.

Jonas worked in Chinatown, Manhattan, Greenwich Village and Harlem at the time, but

was stationed at the Chinatown firehouse the fateful morning of Sept. 11, 2001. Another firefighter under Jonas's command told him what had happened while he was eating his breakfast.

Jonas recalled, "I remember seeing the brightest blue sky and a patch of black smoke."

He and his crew went down to WTC and were preparing to fight a high-rise fire, he said, when they heard a crash. According to Jonas, a chunk of the north tower fell on their truck, so they parked it further from the building and prepared.

While Jonas and his crew

were inside the tower on a rescue mission, the building shook violently. He and another firefighter saw that another plane had struck the other tower. The firefighters then knew something was wrong and said their goodbyes before departing to do their job.

"I am the only survivor of that group," Jonas told the audience then.

He rejoined his crew and uttered to them, "They're trying to kill us, boys. Let's go to work."

Jonas received his orders to try to rescue as many people possible, which proved difficult. The only three stairwells in the north tower were narrow and crowded with people racing down while firefighters tried to race up to rescue those in peril.

Jonas described the cheers and word of encouragement people headed downstairs gave the firefighters.

"Normally, you don't go to work hoping that the United States Air Force and the U.S. Navy have your back," he told the audience.

The reason, Jonas said, why he chose stairway B was that it was the only stairway in the building that went to the ground floor. In that stairway, a woman they were

rescuing named Josephine Harris became trapped with them when the building collapsed.

Of all the firefighters responding that morning, the firefighters of Ladder Co. 6 were the only ones that survived the building collapse and being trapped for an extended period of time.

Jonas told the audience what it was like being trapped, the encouragement among firefighters and the relief of being rescued.

As a firefighter, he was not used to being the one needing rescue. The event, he said, made him realize he was not always in control in the midst of chaos.

A 29-year veteran with the FDNY, Jonas is now a battalion chief.

His story has been featured on ABC, NBC, CBS, The History Channel and The Discovery Channel. Since the incident, he has also received awards.

Toward the end of his presentation, Jonas played a video tribute of the 343 fallen FDNY heroes who perished that day. He concluded by asking everyone to take a moment this Thursday to honor those who made the ultimate sacrifice that day for this country.

Photo by DIANA LE / The Capital Times

Then Captain of Ladder Co. 6, Jay Jonas spoke at Penn State Harrisburg about the altruism, heroism and hope that rose when the Twin Towers fell.

## TEXTBOOKS: Campus, state and federal legislators try to bring costs down

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school faculty and staff, but a "no new editions" law is far from being made here or at any other school.

"Professors are very aware of high textbook prices," said Dr. Harold Shill, professor of political science and information studies. "We're just as concerned about it as the students."

Dr. Shill claimed professors actively search for less expensive texts for their classes, but that can sometimes mean a decrease in quality.

"I use the O'Connor/Sabato 2008 edition books for my political science classes this year. They're a little more expensive than their competitor, but the competitor (which was published in 2007)

doesn't include information about the 2006 elections!"

Dr. Shill said he made it a personal rule to try not to go over \$100 when selecting required texts, but keeping costs down and quality up can be tricky.

On Aug. 14, President Bush signed H.R. 4137, the College Opportunity and Affordability Act (COAA). This legislation, brought forth by Congress last month, reauthorizes the Higher Education Act of 1965. This act will, among other things, require textbook publishers to disclose the full cost of all materials to students before they register for classes, and will require publishers to offer the additional materials separately instead of in bundled packs.

In short, if an accompanying workbook or CD-ROM is unnecessary, the legislation

will allow students to buy only materials used for each class, saving time and money.

The COAA is the first federal legislation of its kind since 1998, and is the result of many similar state laws made in the past few years. In addition, the COAA is designed to help students receive financial aid sooner. Many students expressed frustrations of having to wait weeks or even months before receiving financial aid checks. An important provision of the COAA is that financial aid must be made available no later than the first day of classes, so students don't have to wait to purchase textbooks.

About 85 percent of PSH students receive some form of financial aid, according to Student Aid Adviser Carolyn Julian, which is a comparatively high amount to most colleges in the nation.

Timothy Scott, Carlisle Borough

councilman and research analyst for the Consumer affairs committee of the Pennsylvania House of Representatives, is one of the many government officials around the country actively involved in making college more affordable. He is currently working with MakeTextbooksAffordable.com to draft new state legislation that mirrors the COAA. His draft is to be called the College Textbook Affordability Act, and, if sponsored by the House of Representatives, would take effect on Sept. 1, 2009.

"There needs to be a dialog between the students, the administration, the faculty, the publishers, consumer groups and advisory committees," said Scott. "Information needs to be made accessible to everyone. That's how we can begin to fix this situation."

It remains to be seen if provisions set by the COAA and other state legislation will be upheld by the various industries they target. So far, 34 states have either proposed or passed laws to control textbook costs, but state commerce laws can only go so far before running into the commerce clause of the Constitution.

"We view this as a consumer protection issue," said Scott. "The college textbook market doesn't function like a regular market because the consumer is divorced from the price-setting process. Students have no say in which books they have to buy. One of the main purposes of the COAA is to inform students of textbook prices before they buy, and to give students more control over what they buy."