

Events bring community together

Day's activities highlight range of U.S. beliefs.

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The third anniversary of Sept. 11 went unrecognized by the city, but that didn't stop the community from memorializing the event.

About 50 people gathered Saturday morning at the post office, flags in hand. Young children wove through the crowd displaying signs reading "Never forget" and "God bless America"; signs they weren't old enough to read but already beginning to understand. Cars honked their horns in support.

Dean Goodale brought his two sons, Skyler, 11, and Tanner, 9, to participate in the day's event.

"It's one thing to see it on TV," Goodale said.

But he also wants his boys to understand. "It was as real as you and

I," he said. "Real things happened; real people were affected."

KFRU radio personality Fred Parry organized the event. He urged participants to use their persuasion and ensure that Sept. 11 will never be "just another day."

Ernie Lee, president of the Missouri Association of Veterans' Organizations, said because nothing was planned by the city for Sept. 11, he changed his plans. He spoke to the crowd about how Sept. 11 has changed the face of America. "There is no sense of duty anymore," Lee said. "All you have to do to be an American is not break the rules."

He said he believes this lack of dedication makes patriotic holidays less meaningful.

"It's a crying shame," he said.

The Rev. Max Jennings spoke out as well. "The people who did this are evil and bent on our destruction." Jennings said he thinks Sept. 11 was more than a direct hit on our home-

land, but also aimed toward believers in Jesus Christ. He encouraged his audience to be true to the Christian faith. All three speakers praised the leadership of President Bush.

As the event came to a close, participants joined in the Pledge of Allegiance and "God Bless America." Several citizens exiting the post office stopped in their tracks and, clutching mail, put their hands over their hearts.

"I'm from Missouri," Columbia resident Darrell Gravitt said. "But Sept. 11 hit home."

About an hour after the event ended, another was just getting started downtown at the Freedom Festival and Sept. 11 Memorial. Beginning at 3 p.m. at the Boone County Courthouse, the Columbia Peace Coalition had a different tone than the previous event, which it delivered via speeches, music and poetry in the courthouse square. "Sept 11, 2001, was a horrible tragedy," said Mark Haim, director of Mid-Mis-

souri Peaceworks. "Our country's response magnified and exacerbated this tragedy."

Each of the four speakers at the event spoke on one of four freedoms inspired by Franklin Delano Roosevelt's 1941 address. John Coffman of the mid-Missouri ACLU addressed freedom of expression, Uthyr Riverbear of the Pagan Community addressed freedom of religion, Mary Hussmann of Grass Roots Organizing addressed freedom from want and Mark Robertson of Mid-Missouri Peaceworks addressed freedom from fear.

Coffman also warned listeners against the Patriot Act. "When we cede our rights," he said, "the terrorists will truly have won."

The culmination of the event was a candlelight ceremony to the music of "Buds of Peace," a Muslim girls' choir, and a moment of silence in remembrance of the lives that were lost Sept. 11 and in the subsequent wars.