

## Wolcott flag designers hope to reach each victim's family

By BRENDA PITTMAN, Times Staff Writer



Kathleen Lange/Finger Lakes Times

Stephen and Joanne Galvin of Wolcott designed a flag in remembrance of 9/11; proceeds will go to various relief efforts for families affected by the terrorist attacks.

**WOLCOTT** — It took time and a great deal of effort, but the flag that Stephen Galvin designed last year to remember the victims of 9/11 has finally reached some of their family members.

The quest to get the flags produced and officially recognized has been painstaking, but the poignant and heartfelt expressions of gratitude he and his wife, Joanne, have been receiving in e-mails, cards and letters have made "every second" worthwhile.

"It's been very time-consuming, but it's a dream come true because of the appreciation that's being expressed about what the flag looks like, what it stands for and how it makes people feel when they see it," said Stephen Galvin, a heavy equipment operator for Elderlee Inc. in Phelps.

The first manufactured flag the couple got last month was shipped to Patricia Scales, wife of Lt. Col. David Scales, who was killed when the terrorist-commandeered plane slammed into the Pentagon.

"She thinks it is absolutely wonderful," Joanne Galvin said, adding that Scales has been helping them spread the word about the flag.

After the events of last 9/11, Stephen Galvin thought the best way to memorialize all the lives that were lost was on a flag. The couple sketched a design with each color, star and emblem representing various aspects of the unforgettable day:

- The background of the flag, which is called the "National Remembrance Flag," is separated into three panels — two blue and one black. Blue represents the state colors of New York, Virginia and Pennsylvania, where planes went down. The black center panel, represents the sorrow felt for the innocent lives lost in the tragedy, including those on the planes, those who were working in the World Trade Center and Pentagon, and all the rescue workers who died trying to save others.

- There are four stars that are each joined at two points. They represent the four planes that crashed, and the fact that the stars are touching each other, as well as the state colors, is meant to represent

the unity the tragedy brought to the nation.

- The blue star represents the Pentagon and American Airlines Flight 77 that crashed into it.

- The two white stars represent each of the Twin Towers and American Airlines Flight 11 and United Airlines Flight 175 that crashed into them.

- The red star represents United Airlines Flight 93 that crashed into a field in Shanksville, Pa., including the heroes who sacrificed their lives and tried to stop the terrorists onboard so that others would be saved.

The flag's design was copyrighted, and Bobbi Chilson, of Waterloo, who had been referred to them, volunteered to make the first one. They also had 4-inch-by-7-inch color decals of the flag printed.

After months of searching for a flag company that wasn't too backlogged making American flags, the Galvins found — with the help of Patrice Corletta in Rochester — a Valley Forge, Pa., business willing to produce their flags in May.

Corletta is from Stars & Stripes, a flag store at 455 South Ave., and liked Galvin's flag so much that she wanted to help them find someone to make it.

Last month, the company began making 3-foot-by-5-foot flags and will soon begin production of a smaller version for waving by hand.

The flag's primary purpose is to help people remember 9/11, just like the POW/MIA flag which reads "You Are Not Forgotten." The Galvins have been working tirelessly trying to gain exposure for their flag, appearing on area news broadcasts and being interviewed for articles. They have made numerous appearances at malls, parades and other outdoor events, such as the Memorial Day events in Waterloo. Today, they were to appear at a morning ceremony at Monroe Community College in Rochester and then participate in a memorial procession on Main Street in Canandaigua at 6:45 p.m.

"We are very honored," Joanne Galvin said.

Their son Dan Fitzmaurice, recently traveled to New York City and put a flag up on the unofficial memorial site at Ground Zero. He also visited various N.Y.C. fire departments to tell firefighters about the flag and to give them information about how they could get it.

In hopes of gaining official designation for the flag, the Galvins sought assistance initially from Assemblyman Robert Oaks, R-128 of Macedon, and later Congressman Tom Reynolds, R-27 of Clarence.

Oaks applauded the Galvins' efforts "to try to honor victims appropriately and for coming up with an attractive and respectful design that does so effectively."

Because they knew of no protocol to have a non-military or government flag receive official designation, Oaks and Reynolds have encouraged the couple to obtain signatures from citizens who'd like the flag to be the "official" flag in honor of the victims of 9/11. So far, they've collected about 1,000 signatures.

The Galvins also wanted to make a flag in hopes of raising money from its sale to donate either directly to victims' families or to charities that support them. They are working to get information from victims' families to find out what charities have been most helpful, and then they plan to contribute to a number of them.

Stephen Galvin said they aren't looking to profit from the endeavor,