NEW YORK, NY 10048

As the horror of Sept. 11 unfolded on national television, many people, including Christine Bagley, Salve's curriculum resources librarian, sought comfort in ritual and routine. For Bagley, an avid quilter since 1985, that meant creating with fabric and doing what she calls "fiber therapy."

Within the first week she made four blocks of red, white and blue and mailed them to a group in Arizona that was making patriotic quilts for families of victims. At the same time, she was beginning a much larger design statement. Quilt making gave voice to her feelings of sorrow over the unspeakable tragedy of that day.

"I felt so heartbroken after Sept. 11," Bagley explained. "I didn't know what else to do, so I quilted a memorial. I wanted to help, to be part of the mending process, so I made something to gently remind people. You do what you can do."

Bagley, who was born in Queens, N.Y., began her quilt, "New York, New York 10048," on Sept. 11. She named it to bring attention to the fact that the World Trade Center held enough people and businesses to have its own Zip Code. "I began cutting and designing that day and completed it four weeks later," Bagley added. "My sorrow found a focus in my quilt."

"New York, New York 10048" is comprised of 49 blocks, representing the states other than New York. The top left-hand corner represents daybreak - a clear, perfect autumn morning. As your eye moves diagonally down across the quilt, Bagley depicts the darkness and fire of the tragedy. The background fabrics are hand-painted by a woman in Connecticut, and some of the towers are made of Civil War reproduction fabrics with small flags, cannons and mourning designs. Some of the fabrics resemble broken stained-glass windows. The lower right-hand corner contains sunrise tones, the light of a new dawn, which Bagley says represents the inner strength one needs to face each day.

Bagley has a personal connection to the World Trade Center as well. In late September she heard that her cousin's husband, Richard Fitzsimons, was confirmed among the missing. "He was a fire safety inspector for the World Trade Center," Bagley explained. "He called his wife when he got to the lobby to say he was okay, and then he went back in to help."

She added his initials and a shamrock to the quilt after her memorial service on Nov. 10, 2001, and is now working with his wife, Patty, to make a personal quilt.

"New York, New York 10048" was featured in the exhibit, "America: From the Heart," at the International Quilt Festival in Houston, Texas, last fall. Bagley's quilt also made an appearance in a Sept. 11 tribute in "Quilter's Newsletter Magazine," in April 2002, and was displayed in the 15th Annual Members' Juried Exhibit at the Newport Art Museum this spring. It will also be featured in a newly released book by C&T Publishing called "America: From The Heart: Quilters Remember Sept. 11, 2001." All proceeds from the book will be donated to the Families of Freedom Scholarship Fund for the children of Sept. 11 victims.

"We can't allow ourselves to forget the events of Sept. 11.,

Fifty years before the collapse of the World Trade Center, Bagley's late aunt made a hand-crafted rug to commemorate the attack at Pearl Harbor.

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- Christine Bagley
Curriculum Resources Librarian

Bagley said, "I will keep the quilt traveling to be exhibited as much as possible." Already shown in Middletown, R.I.; Houston, Texas; and Newport, it will be shown in North Kingstown, R.I.; Lowell, Mass.; and Portsmouth, R.I., later this year.

After finishing "New York, New York 10048," Bagley found new meaning in a wool needle-punched rug hanging in her den. This hand-crafted, framed memorial that her late Aunt Eleanor made in 1941, shows a full-winged eagle clutching a banner that reads, "Remember Pearl Harbor."

"She made it right after the attack of Dec. 7, 1941, for my father, who was an Air Force pilot, and since Sept. 11, I've found a much deeper appreciation for it," Bagley said. "I didn't think of my aunt making that rug when I started this, but now I do. I wonder if she was as grief-stricken as I was. It's so intriguing that I responded to the World Trade Center attack in the same way she responded to Pearl Harbor. Fifty years later, history repeated itself in more ways than one."

Editor's Note: Christine Bagley has a B.A. in anthropology from S.U.N.Y at Oswego and an M.S. in Library Science from Syracuse University. She came to the McKillop Library in 1995 and is currently the curriculum resources librarian, serving education majors, faculty and local teachers with books, materials and research assistance. Bagley has taught quilt making since 1998. She has assisted the Names Project, Rhode Island Chapter with panel preparation for the AIDS Memorial Quilt and was a volunteer for the Rhode Island Quilt Documentation Project conducted by the Textile Department at the University of Rhode Island. She served as president of Quilters By The Sea, a local quilt guild with over 100 members, from 1998-2000. Her quilts have won awards in juried shows in Rhode Island and throughout the country, and have been featured in several books and magazines. In addition to creating her own quilts, Bagley enjoys restoring antique quilts and primitive rug hooking. A mother of three sons, she and her husband reside in Middletown.

- Erin Barrette Goodman and Deborah Herz '80, '92.

Left: "New York, New York 10048," a 6 x 7-ft. quilt created by Christine Bagley, Salve's curriculum resources librarian, on display at the Newport Art Museum this spring.