

Artist Responds To Sept. 11

By Megan Clair

Several days after the terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center, artist and designer Karen Rossi finally was able to reach a friend in Manhattan.

Her friend was driving across the George Washington Bridge, telling Rossi about a grieving New York neighborhood, when she broke down over the phone. The largest flag she had ever seen hung over the bridge.

"When she saw that flag, she burst out crying," Rossi said.

Rossi responded to her friend's display of emotion and the run on flags at store by deciding to make her own. "Betsy Ross did it," Rossi said, "What would be better than a homemade American flag?"

Rossi's creations - "Uncle Sam" and "Lady Liberty" - are canvas mural measuring 9 by 4 feet. They had been on display outside her shop in Windsor Locks, within sight of passing trains, but she is moving new murals to Route 5 in South Windsor, where more people can see them. Rossi lives in South Windsor.

She is also creating a series of 4 by 8-foot laser-cut aluminum outdoor sculptures of Uncle Sam, with flag and stars, for display at fire stations.

The murals and sculptures



"LADY LIBERTY" is one of the 9 by 4 canvas murals created by South Windsor artist Karen Rossi in response to the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon.

will be sold, Rossi said, with all profits going to relief funds for the victims' families.

"It is better use of my time to donate my talent... the way I know how to participate and be effective," Rossi said.

This week Rossi was asked to create banners for street-level windows at a wholesale trade building on Fifth Avenue in New York.

Rossi hurriedly is churning out line drawings of flags for students in South Windsor and is sending some to New York City children to send to rescue workers.

Silvestri, a Boston manufacturer of home-decorating accessories that reproduces and licenses Rossi's handmade designs, will donate a portion of the sales from

her "Little Uncle Sam," a 4-inch metal sculpture, to relief efforts.

Rossi, known for whimsical metal sculptures, said, "I've always done patriotic images, but if just feels so important right now."