



Top man in New York



**Frank Powell is up on Cloud Nine
much of the time—but it's all
just part of his job.**

by George Bush

FOR THE PAST 19 years, Frank Powell has been in the rare position of a man who may be off on Cloud Nine while keeping his feet firmly planted on concrete. Furthermore, it has never hurt his reputation that he looks down on millions of people much of the time.

Indeed, all this is part of his job—the highest anyone in New York can attain: that of observation-tower manager of the Empire State Building.

Up over Manhattan, Frank's job is never routine. One day may find him welcoming Queen Elizabeth or Gregory Peck to the world's most inspiring man-made perch; another day, his shirt billowing in the breeze, he may be inspecting the dizzy ladder that clings to the outside of the building's 220-foot TV antenna. Its needle tip scrapes 1,472 feet.

Sometimes he even stands in a blizzard when down below in the city it's merely raining.

Once in 1945, when an Army plane crashed into the 79th floor, killing 12 persons in clouds of blazing gasoline, he led 11 trapped tower visitors to safety.

Powell often settles bets between people who think they know how much the tower sways. Two men recently phoned from London. One insisted 10 feet, the other 20. "They were both wrong," says Frank. "Even in a gale wind, the building's movement from true center is less than one inch."

One of Frank's sadder jobs is taking part in the scattering of cremation ashes over New York. One such case was that of a woman who met her future husband and became engaged to him on the tower. When she was dying, she asked him to have her ashes scattered from this lofty place she loved so much.

Frank's job rarely takes him below the 82nd floor where he keeps his books on admissions (good Summer days have brought up to 10,000 visitors) and souvenir sales (the counter is on the 86th floor). Often he looks in on the enclosed 102nd-floor observation platform, the world's tallest public meeting place.

"I'll say this much," admits Frank, who lives with his wife in a two-story suburban house. "Any other job would be quite a comedown for me."



Frank Powell squats jauntily on a catwalk (left) about 100 stories above New York City. More pleasant tasks include escorting visiting diplomat's daughter from Japan.