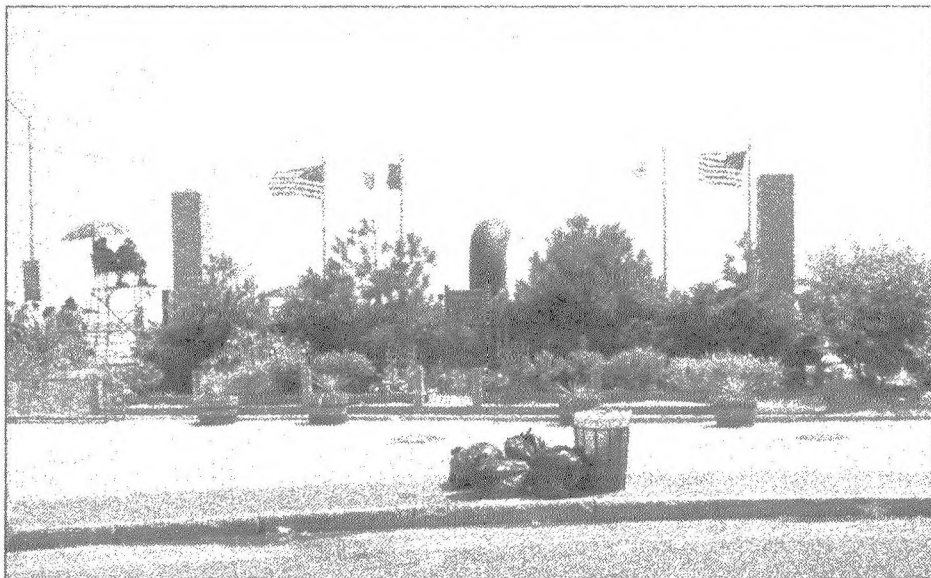


City Picks Six Artist Finalists For Flight 587 Memorial



The city has plans to install a memorial to Flight 587 in this cul de sac, located near the beach on Beach 116th Street in Rockaway Park. *(photo by Sarah Stanfield)*

by Sarah Stanfield

South Queens Editor

The city has chosen six finalists to create a memorial to those who lost their lives in the November 12, 2001 crash of American Airlines Flight 587 in Belle Harbor.

The finalists are Linda Covit; Barbara Grygutis; Toshihiro Katayama; Donald Lipski and David Meyer; Freddy Rodriguez, and Krzysztof Wodiczko and Julian Bonder. The artists represent a range of national origins, including Canada, the United States, Japan, Poland and the Dominican Republic.

They were selected through a panel process involving representatives of the families of the victims, the community, arts professionals, city agencies and other civic officials. The city received 68 submissions for the project.

Finalists are now charged with developing their conceptual design proposals, which they will formally present to the panel in late August. A final design selection will be announced in early September.

The selected site for the memorial is at the ocean end of Beach 116th Street, near the entrance to the beach, in Rockaway Park. As part of this project, the existing cul de sac and the beach entrance will be reconfigured to suit the memorial and improve beach access. The Department of Parks and Recreation and the Department of Transportation will be responsible for the design and construction of the site, including plantings and the memorial's foundation.

The approximate budget for the memorial is \$2 million. The city is raising both public and private funds to support it.

Residents of Rockaway Park have expressed mixed reactions to the memorial. Rockaway Park resident Bill Stauss wondered why the city was situating it in his neighborhood and not in nearby Belle Harbor, where Flight 587 crashed.

"I think (the memorial) should actually be placed where the plane went down," he said.

Frances Hillis, who also lives in Rockaway Park, thinks the city should focus on finishing the memorial to September 11th that it is currently being built in Tribute Park, located on the bay side of Beach 116th Street.

"We lost the most firefighters on 9-11," she said. "There were funerals every day. I understand the loss (of the family members of Flight 587) and I sympathize with them, but our main concern is 9-11."

Other residents were more cynical about the memorial's location. "If it was an Air Lingus flight (that crashed), it would be in Belle Harbor," said one woman who would

not give her name, referring to the large Irish population in Belle Harbor. Flight 587 was headed for the Dominican Republic, and had many Hispanic people on board.

In Belle Harbor, however, residents say there simply is not enough space to locate a memorial. "It's too residential here," said John Reidy, who lives in the neighborhood.

Rosie Wiedener, another Belle Harbor resident, pointed out that a memorial in Belle Harbor might be too much of a reminder of the tragedy for those who live around the crash site. "It's a public street, not a private park. You don't want to live at a memorial."

Wiedener said that family members of those who died on Flight 587 occasionally visit the area where the plane went down, which is between Beach 131st Street and Rockaway Beach Boulevard, laying flowers in the yard of one of the houses damaged by the wreck.

A woman who lives in this house declined to give her name, but said family members of the Flight 587 victims had originally clamored to have "half of 131st Street" turned into a memorial. She said the community fought against it.

"The people who live here want to move on," she said. "I think the memorial is a good idea, but not in the neighborhood." It's too traumatizing for those who saw and lived through the aftermath of the crash, she added.

Flight 587 was headed to Santo Domingo when the crash occurred at 9:16 a.m. on November 12, 2001, shortly after it took off from JFK International Airport. Many of the passengers were flying together in family groups, either returning to the Dominican Republic after a visit to New York, or were beginning a visit home. All passengers and crew perished, along with five people on the ground.

The event created a profound loss for families in the United States, the Dominican Republic, France, Haiti, Israel, Taiwan and the United Kingdom, and particularly for two New York City neighborhoods, Washington Heights and Belle Harbor. It was the second deadliest aviation accident in American history. 

I.D. Card Program

The Office of Assemblywoman Nettie Meyersohn presents a free identification card program for senior citizens on Thursday, August 4th from 10:30 to 11:30 a.m. at the Forest Hills Senior Center on 108-25 62nd Drive. Bring proof of age.

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Henry's Dept. Store Closes After 25 Years

by **Kim Brown**

Central and Mid Queens Editor

When Henry's Department Store on Fresh Pond Road closes, it will not just be the end of the sales for Ridgewood residents, but the end of an era.

Since 1981, the store and its owner, Victor Gindi, have been fixtures in the community, selling reasonably priced clothing, appliances, electronics, furniture and other household items.

But after 25 years in the neighborhood, Gindi is too tired to keep working and plans to help his children with their wholesale business instead.

"I can't take it anymore, it's too much for me at my age" he said. "Retail is like going to jail. You lock yourself in and throw away the key."

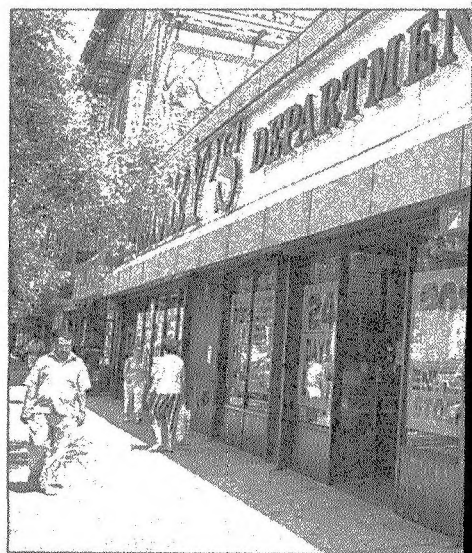
Despite the hard work, Gindi, who came to America from Syria in 1975, had mixed feelings about the store's final days. "I feel sad and happy. Sad, because I'm going to miss my customers. And happy because maybe I can relax a little bit."

During one seven-year period, Gindi did not take a single day off. The store is still open every day, but he works fewer hours than he did in the past.

Although there are going out of business signs on the store's windows and everything is marked 20 percent off, Gindi did not want to reveal the exact closing date.

He also declined to say who the new tenant is. Longtime customers who were shopping at the store on Tuesday, said they hoped the business would not be replaced by another 99-cent store, drugstore, cell phone store or bank.

"It's like we have millions of dollars and nowhere to deposit our money," said resident John Houston, about the number of banks in the neighborhood. "The people are going to miss this store. Anytime you



After 25 years on Fresh Pond Road, ow Department Store will close.

needed something, you came here."

Another Ridgewood resident, who gave her name only as Marion, said she has been shopping at the store since it opened and was concerned that other stores would leave as well. "When one store goes, they all follow. The old-timers notice, but what can we do? Times have changed."

In the past, she never left the neighborhood to go shopping, but that has changed. "Whatever happened to all the nice stores? To me, it's just junk coming in."

Nearby, a devoted customer who gave his name as Artie, agreed. "What else can I say but I'm very, very sad. We need a store like this. I've been coming here more years than I can possibly tell. Everything is going. Nothing is the same."

Henry's, named for Gindi's father and one of his sons, was originally opened in