

DAILY NEWS, MONDAY, OCTOBER 1, 2001

Getting back to work

BUSINESSES



WAY FORWARD Jordan Gruzen (center) with partner Scott Keller (extreme L) and Gruzen, Samton LLP staff at new office on Broadway.

Shattered firm trying to pick up the pieces

By WILLIAM SHERMAN and BRIAN KATES
DAILY NEWS STAFF WRITERS

Architect Jordan Gruzen, his partners and his 135 employees used to have plenty of office space.

It was downtown, two floors at 90 West St., across from the World Trade Center — an easy stroll to several of his recent projects, including Police Headquarters at 1 Police Plaza and five buildings in Battery Park City.

Now it's gone. Like scores of other enterprises that were in the World Trade Center and its shadows, Gruzen, Samton LLP suffered no casualties, but its offices and everything in them were destroyed.

"Plans, computers, desks, archives, the safe that was supposed to be fireproof, all incinerated in the fire and the gas explosion that came from across the street," Gruzen said. "It's totally unusable."

The firm has split up, operating out of six locations in Manhattan, and Gruzen, like many other business owners since Sept. 11, struggles to keep his firm running smoothly while dealing with the enormous new challenges of Manhattan's changed business environment.

The biggest is finding enough room to keep his company together.

He's found space — on Fourth St., 14th St., 18th St., 37th St., 57th St. and Broadway. Some space was borrowed from a friend; the rest was sublet on an emergency basis.

But there are other problems.

First, employees had to contact clients and the firm's mechanical and structural

engineers to get copies of plans, backup computer information and other material on projects in progress, including an annex to 1 Police Plaza.

"We had to reconstitute all our work," he said.

Then they had to get equipment.

"Fortunately, my son is a vice president at Compaq, so we got computers right away," Gruzen said. "We're up and running. Everybody's working. It took us days, but we did it."

Like other big dislocated firms, Gruzen's business is covered by insurance.

"Valuable papers insurance, business interruption insurance, tangibles insurance, all of it," he said. "So we've got a big fund to work with."

When he's not racing around town checking on projects, Gruzen, along with his partners, is looking for enough space in one location to house his firm.

"We need at least 20,000 square feet, and it has to be built out with telephones, desks, everything — fully equipped," he said. "But with the dot-com failures, there's a lot available — all above Canal St. We'll make a deal soon."

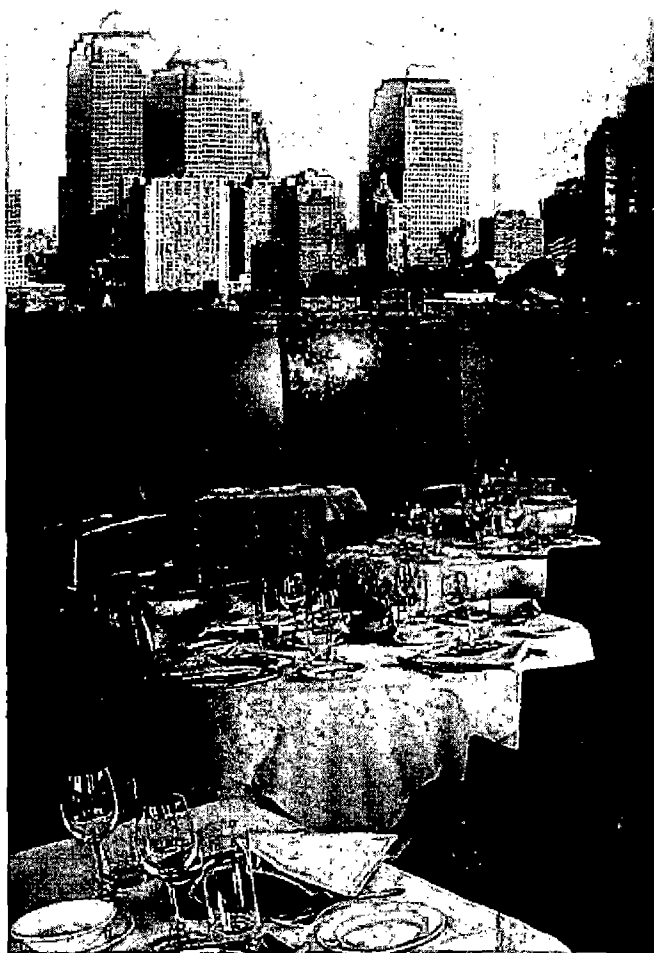
Gruzen also is trying to rebuild his home life. He lives with his wife, Lee, at The Regatta, in Battery Park City, one of the buildings his firm designed.

Along with thousands of other downtown residents, the Gruzens were forced to leave their home Sept. 11. They were able to return only late last week.

"We had no clothing, nothing," he said. "But compared to others, I feel very, very fortunate."



Gruzen, Samton's wrecked building.



RESTAURANTS & RETAIL

Desperate time for city

By WILLIAM SHERMAN and BRIAN KATES
DAILY NEWS STAFF WRITERS

Sal Marciante, 43, is looking for a job for the first time in 20 years.

A bartender at the Tall Ship Bar and Grill in the Marriott World Trade Center hotel on West St., Marciante poured on the 4 p.m.-to-11 p.m. shift.

So he avoided harm from the immediate devastation on the morning of Sept. 11 that destroyed the bar and the hotel, formerly known as the Vista International.

But he didn't escape unscathed. "I was making \$1,000 a week. Now I got to start looking for work like a teenager," said Marciante, who is married and the father of a 3-year-old daughter, Christina.

"My wife's working, the union is giving us \$100 a week. I'll get \$400 a week unemployment, so I'll get by for a while,"

he said. "I'll get half what I used to. I don't know what I'll do to make money."

Like others suddenly unemployed and otherwise financially battered in the wake of the terrorist attack, Marciante does not hold out much hope for a quick hire or reversal of fortune.

The city's hotel, restaurant and other businesses have been severely depressed since the World Trade Center attack, and workers are being laid off.

Businesses below 14th St., closed last since the terror attacks, have been hit particularly hard. That is, if they survived.

"I had three restaurants. Now I have one," said Tony May, who owns Italian restaurants, Gemelli and Break, at 4 World Trade Center.

His remaining holding is Domenico, one of the city's finest.

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is a battle for survival



Tony May, who lost two of his three restaurants, at the one remaining, San Domenico on Central Park South

REBECCA MCPALPIN

TOURISM INDUSTRY

Broadway recovery bid more than just a show

By WILLIAM SHERMAN and BRIAN KATES
DAILY NEWS STAFF WRITERS

The Empire State Building opened its fabled 85th-floor observation deck Saturday, welcoming hundreds of tourists and showing the world that New York cannot be cowed.

The day before, scores of actors and actresses massed in Times Square to make a rousing recording of "New York, New York" as part of the Let's Go On With the Show campaign to bolster sagging Broadway ticket sales.

Indeed, the show is going on. But the impact of terror on tourism has been ruinous. Broadway, with its dependence on out-of-towners, provides a reliable barometer of the World Trade Center attack's economic impact on the city's \$25 billion tourism industry.

In the first week after the disaster, 143,641 people attended Broadway shows, down from 181,402 last year. Five plays have been forced to close and producers reported weekly losses of \$5 million. That's just for starters.

Broadway and off-Broadway theaters are expected to give walking papers to 7,800 actors, musicians and stage crew members by the end of October, according to a study commissioned by the New York City Labor Council. The loss to the economy was put at \$873 million.

Among those caught in the economic tidal wave was actor Mario Cantone. He had turned down a role in "The Producers," Broadway's most popular show, to appear in the Roundabout Theatre's upcoming \$4 million production of "Assassins," a Stephen Sondheim musical.

The show, with 20 actors, 13 musicians and 40 stagehands, was canceled. And no



RICHARD CORKERY DAILY NEWS

Nathan Lane and Elaine Stritch lead United Broadway's song for survival.

wonder.

Cantone was to play Sam Beck, a character who hijacks a plane and flies it into the White House. "I know how to pick 'em," Cantone deadpanned. He quickly added: "I'm just glad to be alive."

"We just thought this was not the right moment to do a musical on presidential assassinations," said Roundabout artistic director Todd Haines.

The not-for-profit Roundabout also produces "Cabaret," currently starring Brooke Shields. In 3½ years, the show never had a losing week. In the first week after the attack, it lost \$150,000.

"This is very scary," said Haines. "Broadway is very fragile. Most shows operate on small margins. Even if sales are down only 10% to 15%, that can make the difference."

Other not-for-profit theaters, including Lincoln Center, also are suffering. In a survey by the advocacy group Art in New York, 31 theaters reported a \$1 million loss in the first week after the disaster.

Lincoln Center was evacuated immediately after the attack. Box offices were closed and rehearsals canceled. The first five performances of its Great Performers series were canceled. Opening night galas were scrapped at the New York City Opera and the Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center.

The Metropolitan Opera, which in the week of Sept. 11 last year sold \$2.4 million in tickets, sold \$700,000 this year.

But in recent days, with Mayor Giuliani's urging, lines are beginning to return at theater box offices.

"We seem to have started an upward swing," said Patricia Arnette-Hubner of the League of American Theaters and Producers, "but whether or not that continues remains to be seen."

new jobless & firms in loan search

restaurants, at 240 Central Park South.

Though none of his 55 WTC employees were hurt, all are out of a job, although May said he will provide them with

health insurance for six months or until they find another job.

With the destruction of the restaurants, May estimated a loss of \$4 million, not all of it covered by insurance.

"We are dealing with the tremendous loss of life in this city. That's more difficult to live with," he said. "I can survive the loss of two restaurants."

San Domenico, usually fully booked, has been mostly empty.



Sal Marciante lost his bartending job.

"Generally, we do 300 dinners a night. Last Saturday, we did 40," he said. "It'll get better, though. There are signs it's picking up."

May doesn't need a big loan to stay in business, like so many others affected by the tragedy.

Marvin Rafeld, owner of 14 Wall St. Jewelers, picked up a \$124,000 check Friday from the Small Business Administration. The interest on the loan is 4% a year.

"It'll tide us over," he said, noting that he has lost three weeks of sales even while continuing to pay his four employees.

He has owned his shop, across from the New York Stock Exchange, for 20

years. The store suffered no physical damage, but the loan will not come close to covering his business losses, and he has limited business-interruption insurance.

Verizon has promised to restore his phone service by Oct. 11, and he predicted the return of pedestrian traffic.

"If I can get through the next 60 days, I'll be here another 20 years," he said.

Darryl McCray, owner of the House of Nubian, a clothing store at 35 W. Eighth St., also got an SBA loan Friday. His was for \$50,500, but he said he has lost more than \$100,000 in sales, and he doesn't know how he will make up the difference.

Asked whether he had business-interruption insurance, McCray said, "Before Sept. 11, I didn't know what it was. I didn't even know it existed."

"Now I do."

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