

NEW YORK POST, THURSDAY, OCTOBER 4, 2001

Fright's away from Great White Way

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AFTER three endless weeks of being displaced, disconnected and disgusted, Eloise Heppard had had enough.

Terrorists had damaged her way of life, not to mention her peace of mind. Heppard decided to fight back.

So, she got up yesterday, corralled two of her best friends, and marched down to Times Square, where she stood in line with hundreds of others who had the same idea.

And when her turn came, she proudly did her part — she bought a ticket to a Broadway show.

"This is definitely a way to help," said Heppard,

who was evacuated from her TriBeCa apartment in the hours after the attack. "I believe that."

For days now, the mayor and every star whose name has ever been in lights have been begging New Yorkers and tourists to come to the Great White Way and throw some money around.

And slowly but surely, like a production coming together, the people are coming around.

"It feels great to be in New York any time," said Frank Penna of Livermore, Calif., who waited with his wife, Brenda, at the TKTS booth for discount tickets.

"I took Giuliani's message to spend a little money here."

The Brooklyn-born Penna was hesitant about flying cross-country for the prearranged trip to visit relatives on Long Is-

land. But after President Bush encouraged travelers to fly, Penna packed his bags and headed for the airport.

Penna lived in the Bay Area 12 years ago when it was devastated by a massive earthquake that killed 68 people.

Penna recalled it took seven years to rebuild the double-decker freeway that collapsed in Oakland — a reminder, he said, of what New York has in store.

"But there's a big difference between a natural disaster and a manmade terrorist attack," Brenda Penna said. "Still, there's nothing like New York."

Theater owners are reporting Broadway is getting its act together again — box office receipts increased 14 percent over last week, even though four shows closed after the Sept. 11 attacks.

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