

# Cucci recalls wife's love of Jersey City, asks for time to consider future

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as a simple housewife, simple in the sense of straight, logical desires and no nonsense," he said, adding that she combined logic with a concern for people in her unpaid job as a mayoral aide.

"She loved Jersey City," Cucci said. "She really loved Jersey City."

A hotline he set up in their home, "became hers," the mayor explained, noting that, in the morning, she transcribed messages left on the tape machine before she had prepared breakfast.

Cucci spoke to a gathering of city employees and reporters in the city council chambers which his wife had decorated with portraits of the city's 36 mayors.

Another reminder of her presence was an illuminated stained glass reproduction of the city's seal, suspended above the dais. Mrs. Cucci had the century-old artifact restored after rescuing it from the public works garage.

Mrs. Cucci, 62, was killed Thursday when a tourist tram carrying 11 people derailed and tumbled down an embankment.

The crash happened about six hours after the Cuccis and Councilman Jaime Vazquez arrived in Cuzco to mark the sister-city relationship between the former capital of the Inca Empire and New Jersey's second largest city.

Four men have been detained by authorities in Peru but none has been charged with placing the metal pipe police said was wedged into an expansion joint and caused the tram to derail.

The party on the tram included Mayor Carlos Chacon Galindo, who was critically injured, and his wife, Doris Mayorga Chacon, who was killed.

Recalling the accident, Cucci said, he heard the "clang of metal" and felt a



Jersey City Councilman Jaime Vazquez describes events that led to the tram accident in which Ann Cucci, wife of Jersey City Mayor Anthony Cucci, was killed



Jersey City Mayor Anthony Cucci, left, and Councilman Jaime Vazquez walking into a press conference at city hall

jolt and then the car "constantly bouncing and tumbling" as it rolled down a gully.

"I reached out but there was no Ann there," he said. "It was instantaneous."

When the car stopped, he said he thought he was submerged in blood but later realized it was warm diesel fuel that had leaked from the engine.

Cucci called the conveyance, a modified bus, a "strange-looking contraption" and said he had been looking forward to taking the train tourists usually board for the 2½-hour journey to the Inca ruins at Machu Pichu.

"I depended on the safety and proficiency of the people in charge," he said.

Cucci paid tribute to Vazquez for

hurry off to get help. "By his perseverance and dedication we got help sooner than we would have," Cucci said.

At the press conference, Vazquez, with a cut that stretched from over his left eye to the bridge of his nose, played the videotape he was filming at the time of the crash.

Cries are audible as the tape goes

blank when the camera broke. A little before, the film shows the train running over a pig.

Vazquez said he was reluctant to blame the accident on sabotage but now he and the mayor concede it is possible.

"I saw nothing but friendliness,"

Cucci said, adding there were "no signs of violence" or any disturbances during what he learned was a one-day labor strike in the city.

However, he said he was also struck by the city's deep poverty and hoped the sister city relationship would enable Jersey City to help the people of Cuzco in some way.

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## Restraint lifted on old house

By TOM HAYDON

A Superior Court judge yesterday refused to extend a restraining order preventing the New Jersey Turnpike Authority from demolishing a Civil War-era house in East Brunswick that a group of residents has sought to save.

Judge Erminie Conley, sitting in New Brunswick, also ruled that any advertisement to sell the house must state that the building is at the center of a lawsuit and is being considered for designation as a historic site.

The Turnpike Authority originally purchased the house on Dutch Road to raze it as part of the highway expansion project. Turnpike officials believed that construction activity near the house might cause it to collapse.

Since June, a group of township residents has fought to save the structure, claiming it represents the style built by immigrants who settled in the East Brunswick-Milltown area. In September, the residents obtained the restraining order preventing demolition of the house. That order expired yesterday.

In the meantime, the construction near the house was completed. Turnpike officials now plan to sell the structure.

A state agency is scheduled to decide by Feb. 18 whether the house should be placed on the state historic register. Turnpike officials have said the house probably will not be sold before February.

The residents had requested an extension of the restraining order because they fear the house will be sold to a construction company that will raze the structure to build a new house.

Conley left in place a \$25,000 bond the residents had to post to cover the Turnpike Authority's cost of keeping security guards at the house around the clock during the construction activity. Conley has yet to rule on whether the bond will be awarded to the authority or returned to the residents.

## Police search for Essex man

Orange police are investigating the disappearance of a 21-year-old man who has been missing for more than a month.

**Police Director Charles Cobbetti** said Ronnie L. Duval of 671 Lincoln Ave. was last seen Nov. 3 in Jersey City with an unidentified woman. His 1985 Audi was found in New York Nov. 12.

"He appears to be a clean-cut kid," Cobbetti said. "It appears that something did happen."

The department is making a public appeal for help in finding Duval. Anyone with information about his whereabouts is asked to call Detective James Cullen at 266-4129.

Duval is described as 5 foot 6 inches tall, weighing 150 pounds with black hair and brown eyes. When last seen, he was wearing a gray sweatshirt with the initials FDU on it, blue jeans, white sneakers, a black leather hat, a beige leather jacket and glasses.

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