

By **KIERAN CROWLEY**  
& **MARSHA KRANES**

**THE** body found by a volunteer searcher in a shallow grave in Staten Island's dense Willowbrook woods was identified yesterday as that of missing 12-year-old Jennifer Schweiger.

Medical Examiner Elliot Gross identified the unclothed, badly decomposed body as that of the Down's syndrome youngster following an eight-hour autopsy.

The identification ended a massive five-week search and came a week after police charged homeless 43-year-old ex-convict Andre Rand with her kidnaping.

The positive identification was based on physical characteristics and dental records supplied by the youngster's parents, according to Gross' spokesman, Ellen Borakove.

She said Gross had not yet determined the cause of Jennifer's death — but stressed that "it is being classified as a homicide."

Among the physical characteristics that helped identify the body were the little girl's Down's syndrome features and a missing right pinky finger.

Jennifer's parents, surrounded by family and friends, learned the autopsy's outcome when a police official arrived at their Wardwell Avenue home.

They cried and embraced

each other. Then the family priest led them in prayer and meditation.

"We discussed how God took such a beautiful thing from them," said Rev. Henry Gentile, adding: "They took it very badly."

A family spokesman read a brief statement in which the heartsick parents, Karen and Ken Schweiger, thanked "everyone who has offered assistance, especially . . . the hundreds of volunteers who

have been searching and praying for such a long time."

One of those determined volunteers, retired fireman George Kramer, made the grim discovery Wednesday night as he dug behind an abandoned building about 150 yards from Rand's crude campsite on the grounds of the former state mental hospital.

Police officials said they will continue to search the area in hopes of finding evidence linking Rand to Jennifer's death — and on the chance there are other graves nearby.

The convicted sex offender is a suspect in the disappearances of two other Staten Island girls.

Rand's arrest on kidnaping charges was based on eyewitnesses, who saw Jennifer walking hand-in-hand with him the day she disappeared.

A funeral mass for Jennifer was set for 10 a.m. Monday at the Holy Family Church on Watchogue Road, Staten Island.

A wake will be held at the Harmon Funeral Parlor on Forest Avenue, from 7 p.m. to 9 p.m. tomorrow and from 2 p.m. to 4 p.m. and 7 p.m. to 9 p.m. on Sunday.

Father Gentile said John Cardinal O'Connor called the Schweigers with condolences and told them he would be at the funeral service.



**REV. HENRY GENTILE:** Local priest was on hand to console the family.

## Ex-fireman's eerie hunch led to grisly find

By **SONIA REYES**  
**RETIRED** firefighter George Kramer just couldn't forget the fresh mound of earth he saw in the Willowbrook woods.

The 56-year-old Staten Island man and his wife, Nancy, spotted the mound on Saturday while they and 200 other volunteers searched for a sign of missing Jennifer Schweiger on the grounds of the former state mental hospital.

"I walked over to where Andre Rand

had lived. I had a hunch about that area," said Kramer.

He decided to check every trail leading away from Rand's home.

Kramer said he and his wife "went into the thick part of the woods on a narrow isolated path" and "saw a mound of earth that was too fresh, with no vegetation. It wasn't nor-

mal.

"We had a couple of sticks. We poked around on the surface. I thought something was definitely buried there."

The two were forced to give up their search when Willowbrook security guards told them they were trespassing.

Not until Wednesday was Kramer able to return to the

area.

"I scraped off some top dirt and saw some roots had been cut," he said.

"I dug down a couple of shovelful and I got a foul odor as my shovel scraped something soft.

"It was white and fleshy, soft and rubbery.

"I knew it was a body. It looked like the lower part of an arm."

Cops dug up the grave — and the search for little Jennifer was over.