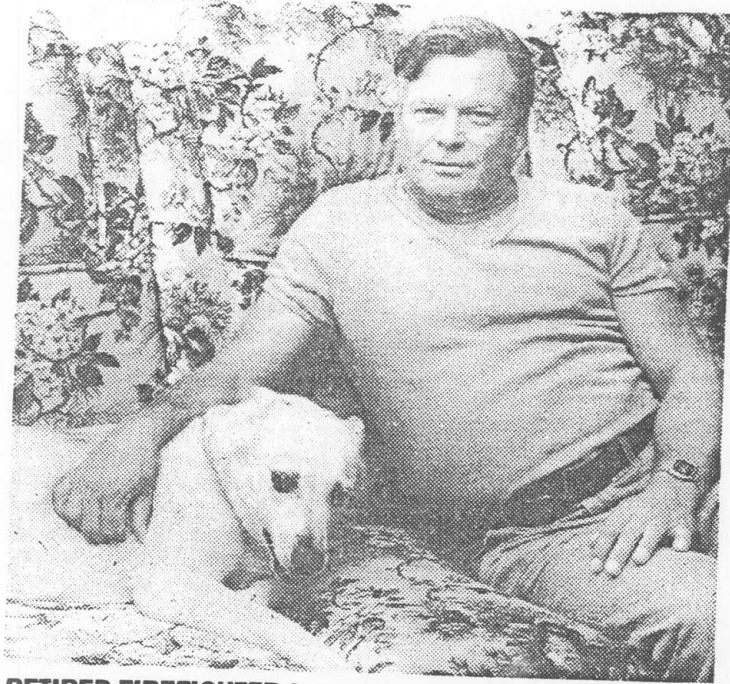


Nagged by a grave find



RETIRED FIREFIGHTER George Kramer first saw the burial site while searching for Jennifer last Saturday. The grim discovery came on Wednesday. Here, Kramer and his dog, Lucky, rest at home.

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For four days, retired Firefighter George Kramer could not shake the memory of the mysterious mound of dirt he had come across last week as he searched the Staten Island woods for a trace of 12-year-old Jennifer Schweiger.

Finally, Kramer had to satisfy himself. On Wednesday afternoon he retraced his steps to the spot near the former Willowbrook state mental institution, and he used a shovel to solve the mystery that had kept hundreds of volunteers searching the woods for the past 35 days.

Kramer, 56, of Great Kills, S.I., discovered the mound last Saturday afternoon, and reported the find to the informal committee that had organized the search for the little girl with Down's syndrome.

When the committee failed to follow up on the report, Kramer returned to the site

Wednesday afternoon and began digging himself. Eighteen inches down, the shovel uncovered what appeared to be an arm. Wednesday night, police excavated the site and found the body later identified as Jennifer's.

Searched the camp

"Last Saturday afternoon, my wife, Nancy, and I were out with a large group of searchers, and we went to the location where (suspect Andre Rand's) camp had been found in the woods, opposite Building 27," said Kramer, who works as a security guard in lower Manhattan and describes himself as a long-time hunter, fisherman and camper.

"The campsite was very neat, and the guy had put twigs around the area so that if anybody had tried to sneak up on him at night, he would have been able to hear them," he said.

"I decided to check each trail leading out of the camp. Some were long, some short. One led to the blank wall of a walkway between two buildings, and I looked at a tree next to the wall and saw it had marks on it like it had been climbed. And at the top of a roof nearby we found a shovel and a rake.

"As we went back toward the site, I came across a big rock with a cross and a circle

been mixed up.

"I started digging, and about 18 inches down I felt something soft with the shovel. I removed the dirt and I saw something white that looked very much like the flesh of an arm.... I knew something was dead down there."

From the moment he spotted the mound, Kramer said, he was sure he had found the burial site. "I'm sorry I didn't check it out sooner," he said. "I tried to tell people, but it was like they weren't listening. They had searched that area dozens of times. But I know the woods, and I knew that mound wasn't natural."

SEARCH FROM PAGE THREE

and other things painted on it, and beyond that there were other big rocks and I saw another small trail. My wife and I followed it, and I spotted a mound of dirt that didn't look right. There seemed to be different-colored topsoil. I took a stake and poked around and I felt something soft. My wife had a funny feeling and wanted to get out of there, and we did."

Kramer said he turned the rake and shovel over to leaders of the search committee, who said they would report the find to police. But in the confusion of checking hundreds of such reports, the leaders did not report Kramer's finding.

"We returned to the search headquarters on Sunday, but we were told that we couldn't go back to the site—they said security guards wouldn't let us in," Kramer said. "I kept thinking about what I had seen, how it looked like somebody had tried to make the area look natural, but it didn't look right to me.

"By Tuesday night it was getting to me, and my wife said she had the intuition that I should go back and see what was there," he said. "So Wednesday afternoon I went back with a shovel. As I started scraping dirt from the mound, I saw that some of the roots had been freshly cut, and the dirt appeared to have