

# Staten Island Advance

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## 2 places come up aces

**Snug Harbor and Mandolin Brothers among 10 city landmarks to be feted**

By GREG ALVAREZ

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STATEN ISLAND, N.Y. -- Snug Harbor Cultural Center in Livingston and Mandolin Brothers music store in West Brighton are not just good neighbors, they have become part of the fabric of Staten Island.

Now a movement is afoot to bestow iconic status on both.

Musicians who have shopped for guitars at Mandolin Brothers on Forest Avenue include Bob Dylan, Paul McCartney, Joni Mitchell and the late George Harrison.

Along with bucolic Snug Harbor, Mandolin Brothers is being recognized by the Municipal Arts Society and City Lore, organizations that advocate the promotion and preservation of the city's past and cultural diversity as part of their Place Matters program. The Place Matters initiative helps protect and ensure the existence of sites throughout New York City that have cultural and historical importance.

To celebrate its 10th anniversary, Place Matters has chosen 10 landmarks from a list of 650-plus nominees to receive awards at a ceremony tomorrow for their contributions. The sites also will be given plaques commemorating the occasion.

"They were wonderful in their own right and also symbolized the ways that places contribute to all of our lives," said Mari Reaven, City Lore's managing director.

"It's always wonderful to be acknowledged and to know that there are so many people throughout the city and on Staten Island who recognize how wonderful and unique Snug Harbor is," said Fran Huber, president and CEO of the Snug Harbor Cultural Center.

Mrs. Huber also said the rehabilitation of every building at Snug Harbor, which receives approximately 400,000 visitors annually, is expected to be completed within two years.

Selling new and used guitars, mandolins, banjos and ukuleles since 1971, Mandolin Brothers moved to its current West Brighton location in 1976.

It has grown into a multimillion-dollar business since its humble beginnings, and its reputation has led high-end guitar manufacturers such as Gibson and C.F. Martin and Co. to refer queries to president and co-founder Stan Jay.

Despite the shop's overwhelming success, Jay has never contemplated moving Mandolin Brothers. He believes its Staten Island location allows it to have a unique, small-town feel while still having access to a global market.

"Have you ever gone into a store where the proprietor was really cranky? If I lived in Manhattan, I would be that proprietor," said Jay. "I am so much happier here, where I am accessible to the whole world."

Jay credited his store's prominence to its unprecedented variety of fretted instruments and attentive customer service. Visitors can play any instrument in the shop and are encouraged to "ask up to a million questions."

"The thing that draws people here is selection," said Jay. "We try our best to never have someone come in and say, 'I've seen and played everything you have here, I need to go somewhere else to see something new.'"

In addition to the two Staten Island locales, Place Matters honorees include: JCR Percussion, The Bronx; La Plaza Cultural Armando Perez, Lower East Side, Manhattan, and basketball mecca West Fourth Street Courts "The Cage," Greenwich Village, Manhattan; Greenpoint Manufacturing & Design Center and Weeksville Heritage Center, both Brooklyn.

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