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### GENEROUS NEWLYWEDS SPREAD TRUE LOVE

DON KAPLAN. *New York Post*. New York: Jul 23, 2001. pg. 074

#### Abstract (Article Summary)

The donation came after Lorenzo Abundiz and Peggy Beeuwsaert, who won a dream wedding on ABC's "GMA," asked the show's producers to donate the money the network planned to use for their honeymoon to the families of the Astoria firemen killed in the tragic Father's Day fire last month.

Lorenzo and Peggy weren't comfortable having their wedding the same week as the tragedy, and almost canceled their televised vows.

Lorenzo Abundiz and Peggy Beeuwsaert donate \$10,000 to the families of the Astoria firemen killed last month.

#### Full Text (410 words)

*Copyright New York Post Corporation Jul 23, 2001*

THE Post's Astoria Fire Heroes fund received a \$10,000 boost - thanks to the generosity of a pair of newlyweds and "Good Morning America."

The donation came after Lorenzo Abundiz and Peggy Beeuwsaert, who won a dream wedding on ABC's "GMA," asked the show's producers to donate the money the network planned to use for their honeymoon to the families of the Astoria firemen killed in the tragic Father's Day fire last month.

"It was so touching, he said he just wanted to give away anything that he could to them," said "GMA" executive producer Shelly Ross.

"To me, they're in Fire Station Seven guarding the streets of heaven," said Abundiz, a 25-year fire department vet from Santa Ana, Calif. "Those guys will always be heroes to me."

Abundiz, 47, who has been decorated for bravery, is battling a rare form of muscle cancer that forced him to retire last year. It's in remission now, but he's also helping to care for his father, who is ailing from prostate and colon cancer.

The network decided to give \$10,000 to the Astoria Fire heroes' fund and send the newlyweds on their honeymoon to Europe anyway.

The couple were married in a televised wedding on "GMA" just days after the

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tragic Queens fire that claimed the lives of firemen Harry Ford, John Downing and Brian Fahey.

But Lorenzo and Peggy weren't comfortable having their wedding the same week as the tragedy, and almost canceled their televised vows.

"We felt kind of funny about the whole thing because we had such a tragedy happen the same week as our wedding," Peggy said. "The fire department is just one big family nationwide. Fire departments just stick together, they have that kind of camaraderie.

"And we were really sad about the three fireman, especially the fact that they left behind so many children between them," she added.

It was only after "GMA" producers contacted members of the New York City Fire Department - who then urged Abundiz to go through with the wedding - that he relented.

Contributions have poured in since the fund was established to help the families of the three firefighters who died in the Astoria blaze more than four weeks ago. The Post's initial \$10,000 donation has now been turned into more than \$1 million, thanks to the generosity of people across the nation.

**[Illustration]**

Lorenzo Abundiz and Peggy Beeuwsaert donate \$10,000 to the families of the Astoria firemen killed last month.

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People: Abundiz, Lorenzo, Beeuwsaert, Peggy

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