Through pain, spurring change

BY LAUREN TERRAZZANO STAFF WRITER

Luz Mari Pelaez first heard about the crash of TWA Flight 800 from a news report that flashed across her television screen. After failing to get through to the airline by phone, she drove straight to Kennedy Airport. The former daughter and son-in-law, Virginia and Eric Holst, had boarded the flight, and there, she figured, she’d get information.

All through that horrific night, she got no useful news. As the evening evolved into a maelstrom of confusion and详情被遮挡，...未完

Unanswered questions

As if the loss of their children, parents and spouses were not enough, those left behind by the disaster felt they were victimized again, by a lack of information and courtesy.

Determined to change that, they eventually formed a significant political force that prompted a federal law that improved the handling of family concerns.

That legacy is one of the most tangible impacts of the disaster. The TWA family organization, which still exists today, sends out newsletters two or three times a year to keep family abreast of any aviation law changes. Like other relatives turned activists — from Rep. Carolyn McCarthy (D-Mineola), who lost her husband in a shoot...详情被遮挡，...未完

Show of support

The families’ reach has been felt in other ways. In 1997, Heidi Snow, then 27, who lost her fiance, Michel Breistroff, on Flight 800, set up a support network that has helped dozens of people who have lost relatives in subsequent crashes.

“The law recognized the human loss, not just the people who were killed but the thousands of other lives that were destroyed.”

— John Seaman, whose niece died on Flight 800

John Seaman, who heads the Families of TWA Flight 800 Association, examines a sculpture placed last month at the TWA Flight 800 memorial at Smith Point County Park in Shirley.