

## **Diner Makes a Few Stops on the Way to Liberty**

**By Ted Waddell**

Liberty – Jerry Seinfeld would have been proud.

... But perhaps a bit perplexed with all the media hoopla surrounding uprooting a rundown old diner that was once used as a location for an episode of his early television shows, and carting it from 11<sup>th</sup> Avenue and 49<sup>th</sup> Street in Manhattan to a vacant lot in Liberty, near the corner of Lake and Main.

After a harrowing journey by flatbed that began at 3:30 Thursday morning, Mel Brandt, a veteran “king of the road” of diner movers, touched down several hours behind schedule.

Enroute to its final resting place, the journey was halted by NYC Port Authority Police who took issue with them filming the passage across the George Washington Bridge for a Food Channel special, citing security concerns.

After the cops were convinced this wasn't a threat to national security, the trip began again, only to be waylaid after the 50-foot-long, 14-foot-wide diner clipped an abandoned railroad bridge near Harriman.

Once again, cops took a dim view of the situation. According to authorities, size does matter. Inches are important, Jerry Seinfeld, or no Jerry Seinfeld.

So they measured the bridge and measured the load...

...And ticketed Brandt for hauling a diner that was once inch more than his permit allowed and, upon checking it again with a tape measure, a whopping two inches over what was permitted.

A few hours later, Brandt and his entourage had new NYS DOT Permits in hand and were back on the road to Liberty.

Although several hundred local folks and a few dignitaries showed up at the stroke of 1 p.m. for a press conference timed to coincide with the diner's announced arrival, by the time it showed up and was jockeyed into position, the crowds had dwindled away to a handful of diehard onlookers and a few street people.

As the luckless diner groaned to a stop, several folks in the pint-sized crowd noted that the decrepit rear of the diner was facing Main Street, rather than the distinctive deco-façade.

So instead of looking at the front of a classic diner, passersby will be treated to a peek at age-stained plywood and rotten boards, black with decades of cooking grease and grime.

Nevertheless, a group of local investors acquired the 60-year of Manhattan landmark and within a year hope to have it up and running as a revamped diner.