

# Fell's Point Out of Time



## Ed Kane Interview, April 30, 2003

*Interviewer, Richard Kirstel*

**[Richard]**

In the belief that the best vantage point from which to observe the winds of change is the eye of the storm, I'm going to ask you to begin in the middle of our concerns. Raised in Arbutus, educated at parochial schools, a midshipman at the Naval Academy, an almost emblematic Baltimore area life, yet at a time when the tide started to flow outward, away from center city, you evinced the commitment to downtown. That's what captured you. Why? Was that a conscious decision? Just one of the accidents of life? How did this concern grow and deepen, and can you reflect on this both as a recollection from that period, and as an examinary review from the now, with the benefit of what we call perhaps twenty-twenty hindsight?

**[Ed]**

How many hours do you want?

**[Richard]**

How many hours can you fill?

**[Ed]**

Actually, for reasons that are inexplicable, I have been wed to downtown since I was in the second grade. The reason for that, and I think that it's instructive to speculate on it, is, when I was in the second grade we moved from Highlandtown to Arbutus. And, it was determined that my sister Mildred, who is six years older than I am, was to take me to school. She was a big girl. She was in the eighth grade at the Institute of Notre Dame on Aisquith Street, and Saint James School was just a block away. So I was hauled from Arbutus to Saint James School everyday, escorted by my sister so I would not fall into trouble. Well, when you have an eighth grader who is interested in boys and a snot-nosed little brother who is not interested in boys, it becomes an inconvenience, and very early on I was taught how to make it across town on my own, with the result that I soon discovered that there were many ways across town. For example, to get from Aisquith and Eager Street, you can walk over a block or so and catch the 8 car, the old 8 trolley line downtown, and you can transfer at Fayette Street, or you could stay on it and transfer at Gilmore Street, or you could walk down the street the other way and catch the 19 and you could transfer at Baltimore Street, or you could go out to Gilmore Street and transfer at Gilmore Street to the old Q bus line that ran out to Arbutus.

**[Richard]**

How long was this trip?

**[Ed]**

The trip itself took about forty minutes; however, the possibilities of the trip became very, very apparent, because you had to go through downtown. Which meant... My mother was a working woman. We were, in a sense, latch key kids. But, I very early figured it out, that as long as I was home by five p.m., there were no consequences, with the result from 2:40 in the afternoon until 5, I was free to explore, and I was able to explore downtown Baltimore from the eyes of a seven-year-old. And for whatever reason, everything I have ever done has led me back to downtown Baltimore: every job, and... Is that a consequence of what I want, or is it fate? I don't know. Now, someplace along the line our destinies got tied up.

**[Richard]**

When you got out of the Navy and you started working, your first real job was BG&E.

**[Ed]**

Well, actually, my first job,... I was a student at Western Maryland College. I got a job at Dunn and Bradstreet, who, at that time, had their largest office outside of New York here in Baltimore, because Baltimore was a big clothing shopping center in the state. And, guess what, my first territory was the old postal zones 1 and 2. That was my territory, where I got to know a huge number of people. Two years later, when I graduate from school and go to work for Baltimore Gas & Electric, guess what? As a commercial rep dealing with our commercial accounts, my first territory was postal zones 1 and 2, with the result, there was a time when I could go up street after street and tell you, store after store, and tell you the names of people. Frequently I knew how many grandchildren they had. I knew where they had emigrated from. I can't do that anymore, but I can try.

**[Richard]**

Now, this was in the mid-fifties.

**[Ed]**

This is 1956.

**[Richard]**

And you were at the gas company, BG&E for...

**[Ed]**

As a commercial representative, right.

**[Richard]**

And you worked there until 1980?

**[Ed]**

I was there till January of 1982.

**[Richard]**

And it was during that time, in the mid-fifties, that downtown really started to change. That's when the flow really started going outward.

**[Ed]**

Absolutely. Actually, it was probably taking place in very, very quiet ways before that, but I think the seminal event, the change in downtown was probably 1956-1957. And, this is the point at which the great project in Woodlawn is completed, when Social Security is moved out of downtown, *en masse* to Woodlawn, which left a HUGE emptiness in downtown as far as office space was concerned. For example, I know Social Security occupied a huge portion of the Candler Building. There were buildings on Calvert Street that they occupied in very large portion. All that was moved out. We are talking several hundreds of thousands of feet of office space that was empty at the flick of a switch.

**[Richard]**

And of course this impacted upon a lot of satellite businesses.

**[Ed]**

This impacts everything. When you pull, I don't know what the number was, 20,000, 15,000 jobs out of downtown Baltimore like that [finger snap], there is an impact. There is an impact on lunch stands, there's an impact on news stands, there's an impact on retail trade. When 10,000 pairs of pantyhose a day move out, well, there is an affect on the hosiery business, something to that effect. But there was that vacuum, and it is interesting that it's from that period that you have emerging The Greater Baltimore Committee and the planning that leads to Charles Center. The greats like Jeff Miller and Walter Sondheim, who was a much younger man then, but who started this whole process of, "Let us take a look at this," and leads directly to the Charles Center/Inner Harbor project. I believe, however, that the Social Security move is the seminal event. Now, things were happening before that obviously, but the actual event that was the trigger...

**[Richard]**

That was the tipping point.

**[Ed]**

That was a tipping point, absolutely. And then other things started to show themselves.

**[Richard]**

Wasn't that about the same time McCormick started developing Hunt Valley? I know they still had the plant...

**[Ed]**

No, McCormick's is a little bit later. McCormick's is probably... Well, it might have been in their head, because I guess,... Let's see, the Hunt Valley Inn comes in about 1963-64, comes on the scene. So, obviously, they were well along. So, it could very well be that McCormick was into that, but I don't know that for ... I never really connected it, but it is a good idea. But there are some

other tips in here. Things were not what they should have been, or they were not as we would have them. For example, in January 1955, we had our first department store closing down there.

**[Richard]**

Which one was that?

**[Ed]**

Thomas O'Neill at Lexington and Sharp Streets. That was the first of the department stores to disappear. Are the things connected? I don't know. That was a problem of landlord-tenant... There were five buildings there. They were owned by the Shittardhold (SIC?) family, who came to Baltimore in 1798. But there were five people who owned five different buildings and they couldn't agree. The O'Neill's organization said, "Ah, that's it. We're outta here. Bye." That was a loss to Charles Street because, O'Neill's was the anchor at the south end of the Charles Street that is much lauded in fiction and song, so to speak. But that was a significant turn of events.

**[Richard]**

Did that start the exodus of the major Howard Street, in downtown, stores: Hoschids, Hechts, Hutzlers, Stewarts?

**[Ed]**

No, no, I couldn't make that connection. But, there probably is a connection, but I can't make it. That Howard Street thing probably starts even earlier than that. I believe our first satellite department store was Hoschild Kohn at what used to be Edmondson Village. And that was a landmark event, I mean it was a national event. I guess Joe Meyerhoff had something to do with that. He was lauded, his first post-war real shopping center, and Hoschild's right smack in the center of it. And he apparently achieved extraordinary success. And he quickly followed it by another store at Belvedere and York Road which became a success instantly. Well, you might look at that as the beginning of the erosion of Howard Street, because ultimately they all went that way over the next number of years, building their suburban stores. They still held a place down here, but it was very clearly a downhill road, probably produced by first the convenience of the suburban stores, technically, by the proliferation of the motor cars as the primary means of transportation; and third by the fact that people had moved to the... were becoming suburbanized.

**[Richard]**

The national trend.

**[Ed]**

The national trend, that's right. However, contributing to that is also the removal of jobs ala the Social Security thing, movement of large numbers of retail customers, day-to-day retail customers, the customer who spends \$1.98 a day. That's significant to the dealer.

**[Richard]**

Now at that time, when you were the commercial rep with BG&E, were you consciously aware of this, or was it like a slow erosion, or was it something you could feel at the time: "Hey, it's going"?

**[Ed]**

OK, I was a young man and I was trying to make a wrap for myself. And I have to say, yes, I was conscious of it. But I became conscious of it because the second floors were empty. In my youth there were always occupants on second floors of stores. It might be Joe's detective agency, it might be Pearl's podiatrist. All sorts of things. It might be Amy Sue's lampshade repair shop. But the second floors were occupied. Now when I took over my territory, and we had a very elaborate method for managing territory. Today you could do it on a little Palm Pilot, but this was a huge amount of cards and what have you. In my files as I inherited them, the second floors were empty. And this was an indicator, now I didn't know what that indicated. And, I was only 26 or 27 years old, just starting out, but I knew it indicated something. And I used to talk about it, but I didn't know what I was talking about. It was there to be seen, I just didn't know what it meant.

**[Richard]**

That impacted, of course, on also ripples in the stream, all of the side businesses, and so forth. Were you conscious of a civic commitment on your part, in terms of wanting to stem the tide of...

**[Ed]**

No, no, that comes later. That comes later.

**[Richard]**

How did that come about?

**[Ed]**

It came about by an interesting comment by a realtor in 1960, of I guess it was late '64, early '65. It came about when the first African American moved into the Midwood area of Govans.

**[Richard]**

Now, you were living in Govans.

**[Ed]**

My family was there, our family of five children and my wife, and we had a house on Benninghouse Road. We considered doing what the rest of the world was doing, moving. We looked around, found a house, found a nice house, and then took a look at selling the present house. And a man came over, realtor of some sort, I don't remember the company. He said, "You're doing the right thing, because they are coming." For reasons I have yet to understand, that was a bad thing to say. It is at this point that it sort of got under my skin, and I've never thought of myself as a great social reformer, but it got under my skin that "they are coming." And to the chagrin of many of the people I love, I walked away from it. Now, that's the beginning: that comment, that somehow there was something wrong with doing that.

So we stayed there, and one could not stay there without becoming civically energized. Either that or the waves were going to sweep over us. You could not stay without reacting to, or being proactive to, conditions around you. And then things went on from there. God help me.

**[Richard]**

Is that what projected eventually your interest in the City Fair?

**[Ed]**

There are a couple of events in here. In just about this time, yeah about '65. Do you remember Gino Marchetti, the great the great end for the Colts? Well, he had also a successful business. He and Alan Amechi, they went into the hamburger business. They wanted to open a shop there on York Road, right there at the old car loop, there's a steak house there now. It became the Rustler, now it's something else. But under any circumstances, but they wanted to open a hamburger joint. And, our improvement association got its ire up and said, "This is going to generate a lot of trash. It's going to generate an enormous amount of kid traffic. We'll have a drive in and cars will be coming and going, and blah, blah, blah..." So they opposed the zoning.

It is interesting that someplace in a late '60's Sports Illustrated, I no longer remember which copy, that Gino Marchetti would much rather deal with the Chicago Beard line than the housewives of Govans. Because we gave him a hard time. That produced a surge of organizations and the founding of the Community Council of Govans, which was kind of a loose umbrella group of neighborhood associations. But it did produce a lot of interest, a lot of activity. And I got drawn into it, I got drawn into it through perhaps the smartest person I have ever known, Madeline Copper, the late Madeline Copper, who I dearly loved, admired and respected, and was a dear, dear counselor to me for many years. But, at any rate, she sort of sucked me in. And, I had some shall we say minor talents that were of some use, and I got into this thing. Well, we finally beat Gino's.

And this had to do, we had formed an alliance with the Greater Northwood Association. A guy by the name of Paul Langure [SIC?], something like that, and his wife were head of that. We decided that, "Gee, if we could do this, we ought to have some kind of stability." And what we really needed is we needed a sort of a headquarters. And we needed somebody who would sort of do the paperwork for us. And we went to the archdiocese, the Roman Catholics archdiocese, what was then the Urban Commission, a guy by the name of Frank Bean. And we said, "Look, why don't you guys put up fifteen grand a year for the first two years, and this will fund a secretary and an office, and we will communicate, this will be our communications headquarters, and we'll stay on top of things, and we'll be able to deal with matters like this."

Well everybody's building empires, and he went into the inners [?] there, and someone arrived at the conclusion, "Gee, this wasn't the solution to the problem." What we needed was an "activist umbrella group." We weren't quite sure what that meant. But, nevertheless, the Roman Catholic officials went to work. And pretty soon they bring a fellow to Baltimore, incidentally a wonderful priest, a man who I respect highly, a guy by the name of Jack Eagen. And Jack Eagen is a very important man. And he comes in. He spends half a day here. And says, "You're right! You need an umbrella group!" and recommended the formation of an Alinski-style community organization.

**[Richard]**

Just to clarify that for people who may not be familiar, you're referring to Saul Alinski, the great neighborhood organizer and official rabble-rouser from Chicago.

**[Ed]**

I'm going to refer to Saul Alinski. That's right, but at this point we thought Saul Alinski was a Jewish tailor. Most of us had never heard of him, and we didn't know what this meant. And it took us some time to really track it down. And I do remember someplace on this shelf here, there's a copy of his book written in 1948, "Revile for Radicals," which he then reworked and came out with "Rules for Radicals" 22-23 years later, which I also have.

But at any rate, but we didn't know what that meant. And, the next thing we know we have a cadre. Well, the archdiocese has made commitments. They have leaned on other religious groups, and they've come up with a hundred grand a year to underwrite this operation for two or three years. And the next thing we know, we have a fellow by the name of Harry Brunette, who was an ex-Episcopal priest, or maybe he was still an Episcopal priest, but he was playing this game, who was now the lead organizer. We have all sorts of activity taking place from 25th Street to Gittings Avenue; from Perring Parkway to Belona Avenue. Well that's a huge area, and that's a lot further than three miles from 25th Street to the city line.

**[Richard]**

Now this timeframe is the mid-60's, right?

**[Ed]**

No, by this time we're in 1968. All this activity and rep, but we didn't know what it means, except there was one significant thing, actually we learned was significant, was a characteristic of an Alinski organization, was that existing leadership must be removed. Apparently, according to Alinski principles, existing leadership is all bad. Whether it is good or bad or not, it's all bad. It has to be removed, we need new leaders.

And there was intense activity taking place! I mean, neighbor turning neighbor. There were fights. There were divorces. This thing was traumatic to the whole area. And you became known, you were either a neck-tight, or you weren't. That was our nickname, "neck-tight." They had a tendency to turn red in the face. And we had to learn, a whole new lexicon, a whole new body of behavior.

And I became part of, we'll call it the "the resistance movement." And it was a group, certainly Madam was the leader, Madeline Cook, I was there, a writer by the name of Bernie Curtis and his lovely wife, one of the Knots, Frank Knot, and his wife. There were probably about two dozen of us who formed a resistance movement. We had to learn how to do a great deal with very little, and we had a lot of fun doing it.

Madeline, incidentally a very funny story, she ran a little catering operation. She was very well known around Roland Park and Guilford for doing small parties, and her *petit fours* and all this other fancy stuff were famous. And there was many a night where, I'm convinced Madeline was as much into community activity for the free help, because we would sit there chopping peppers and we're talking, "What does this mean?" And somebody would be reading. Now what does that mean, and how does that relate to what happened; as we taught ourselves the principles of community organizing ala Alinski, say 1948. And I'm happy to say, we beat the bastards. We had a good time. We learned a great deal.

Now, that's a long way around to getting to your answer to your question: Now does this lead to the City Fair? City Fair was an event that took about two years to develop in concept, as near as I know, to the best of my knowledge. And it involved, "What can we do to rally the city around something." And when I say two years, we had the riots after the Martin Luther King assassination on April '68, I guess. The city was down at the mouth. There seemed to be an accelerating white flight, middle class white flight.

**[Richard]**

And those riots really devastated central Baltimore.

**[Ed]**

Well, the riots certainly, well actually, when you say central Baltimore, I'm not so sure you're right here, Richard. They devastated the African American central Baltimore. They worked Pennsylvania Avenue terribly bad. They worked Monument Street very bad. They really didn't hit the business district, which has never been quite explained to me by sociologists or anybody else why it went that way, why do you hit these people, why not there, but that's another question that I can't answer.

**[Richard]**

Well that was kind of parallel to New York, hit Harlem, hit Stuyvesant.

**[Ed]**

Yeah, you destroyed home territory, and it's never been fully explained why. There are explanations, but no one has successfully explained it to me. At any rate, nevertheless the idea was: How do we come up with a rallying point? Well there wasn't much for us to rally around. Now, there's another phenomenon that's taking place here simultaneously. We had a young vigorous mayor who all but abdicated.

**[Richard]**

You're referring to Tommy D'Alessandro.

**[Ed]**

Tommy D'Alessandro the Third. Tommy was a fine man, imbued with the popular liberalism of the '60's, and it didn't work. His city went into a state of chaos for a time. And, from where I sat, he all but abdicated. And turned the running of the city over to the then President of the City Council, William Donald Shaffer.

And it is at this point where we get one of those, I'm going to call it serendipitous events, where there is a gathering of eagles, so to speak. In the sense, here in late '68, '69, '70, William Donald Shaffer, for whatever reason, was able to gather around him a body of people who at the least were very, very bright, and at their best were downright brilliant, who for whatever reason found themselves dedicated to the City of Baltimore. Now I talk of people: Sandy Hellman, Bob Hellman, Bob Embry, Charlie Benton, Marion Pine, Joan Baresca, a very long list of people, who to a great extent weren't much more than paid volunteers, paid mere pittance. He had somehow or other,

energized the interest of newspaper editors. I remember Lou Linley from the city editor for the News American going absolutely ecstatic, almost orgasmic over things that were taking place.

Now, I personally am convinced that we all got caught up in this. Well, no, I know personally I got caught up in this. And I believe the influence was, strangely enough, the Kennedy inauguration speech, the "Ask not" speech. That we had a city that was down at the mouth, and it appeared that there wasn't going to be anybody else around to change anything, therefore we somehow had to do this. That is my personal conviction. That's also my personal fate that somehow or other that's what happened.

**[Richard]**

And this had been after years of outflow, especially following that tipping point of the Social Security exodus.

**[Ed]**

Yeah, but I think we were more concerned with the acute present conditions. I don't think any of that occurred to any of us, any of that background really. That comes with retrospection much, much later.

What happened? I'm not sure we were analytical on this. So, some place in the minds of Sandy Hellman and architect Bo Kelly, and Hope Quackenbush, probably Bob Embry, there occurred this thinking in late '68, what can we do? We need an event to energize the city, to rally the city. And they started sort of pounding out some kind of event, but they couldn't find anything that they thought they could make work.

The original concept of the City Fair was as I understood it, I was not part of this, the idea of having on the same day, events on the squares of Baltimore, but they couldn't solve the transportation problem. And then became sort of convinced that it really wouldn't work, that you weren't going to get people, at this point, to travel deep into African American neighborhoods. Although I guess we didn't use "African American," we used "Black" neighborhoods. But, nevertheless, they pounded away at it.

Sometime in the spring of '70, February or March, a guy by the name of Chris Hartman who was a newspaper reporter for the News American, came out and made a pitch to the Community Council of Govans about participating in something called a City Fair. And like everyone else, we said, "What the Hell is a City Fair?" And that it was going to be concentrated on the neighborhoods of Baltimore. Well, I was ... the Community Council of Govans was not part of an NECO [SIC?], we were actually very contrary to this, and I saw this as being a proactive defensive move.

**[Richard]**

Chris Hartman started to convince you in the Govans organization of activists?

**[Ed]**

He became, I guess Chris played the role of executive director that year. Hope Quackenbush was the Chairman and she was working at HCB. We had a huge amount of help out of HCB. We had a

huge amount of help out of CPHA in terms of people. Gee, I just noticed Joann Copes who is in housing, and Joann Copes was secretary of CPHA at this period and she was very, very active and was a dear friend. But, the thing about it is no one, even including the planners, I believe knew what they were getting themselves into.

**[Richard]**

Well, what convinced you that the City Fair was a good idea?

**[Ed]**

Well, I didn't know if it was a good idea or not except, it was a defensive move, we were claiming the... what's the international term ... *hegemony* over Govans, and I advocated for it so that we could block out NECO [SIC?]. That was my motivation.

**[Richard]**

So it was really a political maneuver...

**[Ed]**

It was a political movement to block out this organization. We knew from our readings would not go programmatic. According to everything Alinski and the industrial areas foundation thought, these organizations never went programmatic. And this was in the realm of programmatic. And this was my motivation for taking over the Chair for the Community Council of Govans. It was a blocking device. Now, that maneuver changed my life.

**[Richard]**

How so?

**[Ed]**

Because, now I am no longer just a neighborhood activist. Now I'm getting caught up in the whole city. Now, this is after the summer of 1970, I am so caught up in the city as a wonderful place, in my curiosity about the city.

**[Richard]**

But your working life at that time was still...

**[Ed]**

I'm still at the gas company. Oh yeah, I'm still making a living. But, Baltimore is taking on a greater and greater importance to me, and going back to my friend in 1964, they will not run me out of town, whoever they are. So, you take a mixture of a little Irish stubbornness, a little stupidity, you wind up with a zealot.

**[Richard]**

This must have been taking quite a toll on personal and family life.

**[Ed]**

Suffice it to say, yes. Anyway, and by the first of October 1970, I'm caught up in the whole thing, never, my whole life is changed. Baltimore, for whatever reason, has become the central motivating force in my life, for better or for worse. And that's where it's been these last 32-33 years.

**[Richard]**

Is that what got you in to take over the directorship of the City Fair?

**[Ed]**

To want it. It led to practically all of the good things that have happened to me. It certainly led to some of the bad things that have happened to me.

**[Richard]**

Well what made it successful? What made the City Fair really happen. As I've said, visitors from where I used to live would come to attend the Baltimore City Fair. Everybody thought it was a wonderful event. What was the core of that success that tied the city together?

**[Ed]**

Arguably, but this is my opinion, the first thing is the people who organized it. We were able for a period of years, 10-12 years, to enlist the damndest array of talent to put this thing together you ever saw in your life. I believe a good portion of that had to do with the fact that we were able to supply this talent with toys they had never been able to play with before in their lives.

You take one example, an accounting type got to be out there with a crane running it, a 30-ton crane, who wandered about, was able to be dirty for four days as we put this event on. And he made himself available for 36 hours a day during this period. Where 4-letters words didn't violate anybody's, well actually, I think that's all the language consisted of during this period. Where you were expected to achieve incredible feats with nothing, that is very few resources. Some hand tools, you had a team of people.

**[Richard]**

Where did the funding come from?

**[Ed]**

Generally we raised the money from businesses. That was a major task. It was the major task of the Director to raise the money. And typically the Fair at its peak years, '73-'74 probably had a budget of \$800,000 to a million dollars. That came from ticket sales and contributions, in-kind services from the city, whatever else you could beg, borrow or steal. We never really made any money. I think maybe we showed profit, over the twenty-one years, maybe four years, showed a surplus, which we used the following years, because now we could go bigger.

But at the heart of the thing, when we started it, there were actually only twelve, I'll use the term authentic neighborhoods that participated. Fair figures say nineteen. Seven of those nineteen were,

we call it ersatz neighborhoods, things created by HCD to participate under one or another government programs. But, they weren't really neighborhoods.

Now twelve neighborhoods isn't much, but we had a hell of a good time. And those twelve neighborhoods did, they produced a synergistic effect that somehow transmitted itself to people who came. And these were the bright lights in the city. This is what we had to sell. It was Windsor Hills and Govans and Northwood and Union Square and Georgie Edgerton's organization out in Wallbrook and Dr. Naomi Camper's garden club. And these were the gems that were active. This is what consisted of Baltimore pretty much of old. And that is what we were elevating.

**[Richard]**

How did you manage to get BG&E to put you on loan for such an extended period?

**[Ed]**

That was in '72. I had a funny job at BG&E. I had a job that no one was ever able to describe, in terms of when it came to a job description. No one was ever able to describe my job. Because I did a lot of funny things, and subsequently Bernie Trusher became Chairman, and said, "I let you go, but you always march to your own damn drummer. I never knew exactly what you were doing, but it seemed to turn out alright. So we went along with it. That's why I let you get away with this stuff..." I was irregular.

The company, certainly in those days, BG&E was very conscious of its position in the community. It was of the community. I mean we had a rule, the object of the employment role was to employ as many families or representatives of as many families as possible. Therefore, if you were my brother you couldn't come to work for BG&E if I worked there. One of us had to go. It was probably a pretty sound set of policies. It gave maximum coverage, that is everybody knew somebody who worked there. And that was important to us.

And our officers were of Baltimore. They weren't like these companies we have today where these hired guns come in from East Upchuck at \$700 million to run a company. These were men who probably graduated from Poly, acorps [SIC]. They were of Baltimore. They were proud of their product. They knew that the town had to prosper. That was relatively easy. Actually, at the time C. Edward Otterbald was the Chairman, and he readily made me available. I think they might have made me available to get me out of the circuit for six months or a year. Not really.

But the other side of it is, it was also expected that you would succeed. It wasn't the case to go out there and do the window dressing, posture. You were expected to succeed, and you were expected to report back that you succeeded. And somebody else better report that you succeeded. I wasn't surplus wood. I was supposed to accomplish something. Somewhere around here I've got a letter on the subject. One took it seriously. And part of that was the success of the City Fair.

**[Ed]**

I suppose.

**[Richard]**

You suggested in an interview done 30 years ago that a lot of the other events, like the Fells Point neighborhood festival spun off from the City Fair.

**[Ed]**

No. No, no, no. The Fells Point Festival led. The Fells Point Festival was two years older.

**[Richard]**

Oh, so that fed in too.

**[Ed]**

It suggested the possibility. There were certainly things we studied about the Fells Point Festival. But it was two years older. It started in '68, might have been three years, '67. Quite a different kind of event. Because down here in Fells Point we were into alternative lifestyle at that point. It was alternative. And it was a one-day event. It was Sunday afternoon as I recall. The first two or three were just single days. But it was an indication that there was a life.

Now, the ethnic festival. There had been ethnic festivals around town for many, many years. They were worth study. They were fairly well confined. Not huge mass things, certainly nothing like the City Fair. And not what the ethnic festivals became once we get to '74-'75, they became very large also. The City Fair was unique. It tried to learn some lessons. We had to learn quite a bit about crowd control. People who put on the City Fair had no qualifications.

**[Richard]**

Why did it dwindle away, do you think? It seems to me that after it moved under the Jones Falls Expressway, that seemed to be the knell.

**[Ed]**

The two I don't believe are really related. Let's get the Jones Falls Expressway out of the way. The City Fair went under the Jones Falls Expressway because I wanted it there.

**[Richard]**

Did you? Why did you want it there?

**[Ed]**

Well, there were several problems that we confronted. Wiring up that fair ground electrically for three days was reaching the point of being absolutely prohibitive. It was costing us \$300-400,000 a year just to wire it up. Secondly, by its very nature, being moved around year after year. There were enormous costs we had to encounter every year, one time costs that were becoming prohibitive. If I moved from this site to that site, things changed. I need other stuff.

Now in, let's see I had it in '85, yeah, that was my year as Chairman. And I took that job only on the condition that I'd be allowed to put it under the expressway. And my rationale was, we'll wire it up hard, once. We have some protection against the weather, and we can decorate it so that it is a

festive place. Well, that's sort of like the objectives of Iraq. They're good objectives. But, as it turns out, I sort of ran out of money to decorate it. However, it still worked.

And it probably would have worked if we hadn't gotten that stupid administration that followed William Donald, whose ability to imagine was somewhere around zero, and who also, incidentally, wanted to do away with Shaffer-inspired operations. But that isn't the reason the Fair failed. I think the Fair came to an end because we lost the ability to attract the kind of talent, the volunteer talent that we had been able to attract to those many years. When you get into the mid-80's, we're now into another world. We're in the heart of the Reagan years.

**[Richard]**

Go go.

**[Ed]**

Go go for get get. Here's a guy who's Chairman one year, Tom Mobley. He runs McCormick Place in Chicago. Well, for eight or nine years we had Tom Mobley as a volunteer! There is no way on earth I could attract that kind of talent, who would give me anywhere from 200 to 1000 hours a year of help today. No way on earth! That was the lifeblood of the City Fair. Now, that kind of talent, by '85, it wasn't there. Now, by virtue of my own position, I was able to pull a lot of people out of semi-retirement, lean on them, bend their arms, and get it out of them.

But, with respect to the City Fair, that was my biggest mistake. I should not have taken the Chairmanship. It should have ended then. Because, after that, it peters out. And, certainly you didn't get the help, the in-kind services that you got from the city, but it peters out after that. That was probably the dumbest thing I ever did. However, in all fairness to the rest of the world, it was my fault, because I had an ego trip on. I did. I wanted to make it work.

**[Richard]**

But, by this time, you had already started to focus on the harbor...

**[Ed]**

Oh, I'm already into the harbor, been into the harbor ten years, into the harbor fifteen years at that point!

**[Richard]**

Had that started with the paddle boats?

**[Ed]**

Yeah, well that all started in 1975. We opened up July 4th, 1975.

**[Richard]**

During these years you are working for BG&E, you're involved with the City Fair, you been involved in the Govans project, what got you down to the Harbor?

**[Ed]**

Ah, it was the City Fair. You see, in '72, when I was executive director, it was my honor and pleasure to sort of open the harbor up with the City Fair. While there had been pieces of the Fair down there, in '72, we put most of it down there. We had neighborhood tents and institution on the main stage and a lot of stuff like that. Now, one of the things that I just did, I became an impresario, and I put on a water ski show in '72. Now, a water ski show in 1972 in Baltimore Harbor was absolutely absurd. They thought we were stark raving mad. And a lovely group in Northeast Maryland, I guess it was Northeast Ski Club did this for us.

Well, on that Sunday afternoon, it was October 1, 1972, that Sunday afternoon, we had the damndest traffic jam in the harbor, beautiful golden autumn afternoon, but the damndest boat traffic jam in the harbor you ever saw in your life. And I looked at it and said, "Go to Hell!" And by the middle of November, I had a proposal into Charles Center and the harbor to put a boat rental facility in, actually sailboats, not sailboats, catamarans. That one-hour-two-hour period on that Sunday afternoon, was again seminal in terms of my life. It took another two or three years for things to sort themselves out, because when we built the Fair, what we built for the Fair, in the harbor that weekend, we moved in immediately behind the contractors who were moving out who had just finished the seawall.

We were the first event there, and had the north shore there where the World Trade Center around to, I guess it was Conway Street. That was our property there, that area. It was the first thing to take place at the renewed Harbor. And I was privileged to see these possibilities. That led to ultimately the dock where most famous for the paddleboats, which were unceremoniously ripped out of my hands by the Schmoke administration, but at any rate, and the sailboats, sort of as an afterthought, which the water taxis are, it led to the water taxis.

**[Richard]**

What made you start thinking about the paddleboats?

**[Ed]**

I needed to make some money. It is easier to rent paddleboats than it is sailboats. Sailboats are wonderful. I love sailing, my kids love sailing. We had a lot of fun sailing. But we couldn't make any money sailing, and you gotta pay the bills, and I was in no way, shape or form able to engage in this as, well I wasn't a rich man, I couldn't afford this hobby.

But the paddleboats paid the bills. And the object of the activity was to make the harbor more attractive to more people, and a hell of a lot more people can operate a paddleboat than they can a sailboat.

**[Richard]**

Did the paddleboats take off right away?

**[Ed]**

Pretty much. Yeah, there was never any problem there.

**[Richard]**

Did the paddleboats lead to the water taxi? Not a straight line...

**[Ed]**

The fact that we were there is what led to it. That's a funny story. William Donald Schaefer was perhaps one of the most accessible mayors this city has ever had. He was easy to track, particularly if you were friends with people on his staff. He had a driver, Chuck Knowles, who was a neat guy. Occasionally I had to see William Donald. You'd call Chuck up and say, "Where is her going to be tomorrow morning?" He would say, "Well, gee, he's going to do his harbor walk through tomorrow." "What time?" "6:30." "OK." And you'd go down and stand behind a potted palm and come out and walk up the promenade with him.

One of those Tuesdays, about 1976. And he says, "Ed, I want a boat that goes from here to there." I said, "Why? There ain't nothin' here, and there ain't nothin' there!" He says, "But there will be." He says, "Give me a boat that runs back and forth." That was basically from the amphitheater, now Harbor Place there, to the amphitheater where the Science Center would be. Neither was there.

I allowed as how "It's gonna cost some money." He said, "I'll give you an extension on your lease." So I agreed to do something, a boat, we didn't call it a water taxi then.

**[Richard]**

Now this was in '70...

**[Ed]**

It was spring of '76. And we fooled with it and it took awhile, but I finally found a boat that I could afford, that was cheap enough, that I could afford to lose money on if I had to, which I did for some time. We started the water taxi in '77.

**[Richard]**

Just that one straight line.

**[Ed]**

Yeah, more or less irregularly. Sometimes it ran, sometimes it didn't. It was interesting, I was imbued with the desire to be environmentally sensitive. My first boat, which was Fair City I, was a little pontoon boat, twenty-one passengers. Had a little plastic roof on it, and was powered with two three-horsepower electric motors, with a very, very bad control system. The control system would burn up with some degree of frequency. Because it was all electromechanical relays. And they would stick and there'd be a loose connection. The battery cables would heat up.

But, it wasn't terribly important, because there wasn't anybody rushing. It isn't like we were moving people any place, because there wasn't anyplace to go. And we fooled with it, actually I still have those two motors someplace.

**[Richard]**

So, it was just a boat ride to the passengers.

**[Ed]**

Yeah, it was twenty-five cents. And, the thing of it is, it was a boat ride to nowhere. It didn't cost much, it didn't lose much. Sometimes it ran, sometimes it didn't. Nobody seemed to care. And we fooled with it for what, oh '77 to '80. We didn't really go at it seriously until '81. And in '81, the event, well two things were happening. One, the city finally to building some decent landings for us, and two, the Aquarium opens in August of '81. And that's the cornerstone, the Aquarium is the cornerstone of the development of our harbor, not Harborplace.

**[Richard]**

Really!

**[Ed]**

Yes, I'm going to get in trouble on that.

**[Richard]**

You know, everybody thinks in term of Harborplace as what happened almost as if the Aquarium was an adjunct to Harborplace, which is the conventional attitude.

**[Ed]**

Well, it was there first, but it's not the key to the success, not the key to the success. I couldn't convince you to come down here from some god-awful place in mid Pennsylvania to go to Harborplace. To go to a shopping center? There are a lot of good shopping centers.

If we take a look at what I'll call, and Harborplace is an example of what was called Festival Hall shop. It is a concept developed by the Rouse Company, a brilliant concept, and it seems to work very well at Faneuil Hall in Boston, which is the founding site of this kind of idea. But it never was really that successful. It was successful in Boston, it was successful in Baltimore. And virtually everywhere else, festival hall shopping at best is mediocre in terms of success, because it very rapidly becomes the same. If I've got a festival hall in Baltimore, it's sort of the same as the one in Toledo, Ohio, or Norfolk, Virginia, or Miami. They are essentially the same. And by virtue of that proclivity of large organization to go to efficiency, so you've got the Cordovan Leather Company in Baltimore. Say, we'll make a deal with you, but you've got to put one in each of the others. With the result, they very, very rapidly become the same. Now, why in Hell would I want to travel 600 miles to go and see the same thing. Harborplace was important. It was important because it was a step forward, but it's not the key to the success of the harbor.

And one of the fascinating things about Harborplace was that the first two and a half years was indeed built on Baltimorean. And it was built on Baltimoreans because of something else we talked about, which had to do with the fact that for ten years we had been building a constituency for the harbor via City Fair and a whole range of other activities wherein people were being dragged to the harbor for various reasons, mainly the ethnic festivals and the City Fair. We had Op Sail in '76, which

was a huge success. We had built a constituency, so that people were curious, and for the first two and a half seasons almost, it was Baltimoreans who made Harborplace a success. The bars and restaurants became Mecca's for Baltimoreans.

**[Richard]**

Not out of town tourists.

**[Ed]**

Not out-of-towners, they weren't here yet. They don't appear until really 1982. That is when they began appearing. That makes sense. You do not build a tourist attraction overnight. This was built over a period of years. You must convince the industry to come to your town. You must tell them.

**[Richard]**

So, you were talking about the aquarium really being a draw, opening in '81, the out-of-towners starting to appear in '82, and it was the Aquarium that was the key to the tourism draw.

**[Ed]**

Oh, the Aquarium is the *sine qua non* of our whole tourism trade. It is the unique element, and one of the interesting things about the Aquarium, and I hate to say this, but it is truly the only international destination success we have ever had in the harbor, if you ignore the ballparks.

**[Richard]**

Well, we all remember Don Schafer in his 1900 bathing suit and straw hat being in Time Magazine.

**[Ed]**

But it is the central element without which nothing. They, thank God, have been very conscious of the importance of their role, and have worked very hard at keeping it as a primary attraction to the harbor, well for their own purposes, but to the benefit of the rest of us who are in this new field to Baltimore called tourism.

Because one of the things that's important certainly to the city, is the fact that tourism in Baltimore is the only industry the city has invented since World War II that works, and somehow or other it seems to get ignored with some degree of frequency as being of no importance, yet at this time we probably have somewhere between 28 and 40,000 people who depend on tourism as the source of their livelihood.

**[Richard]**

And you think this radiates out to the health of the city.

**[Ed]**

Oh, absolutely. Look, we'll go back to '72. Let's use '72 as an index year. In 1972, if you wanted a good restaurant downtown, you had Tio Pepes, you had I forgot the name of the seafood restaurant down there on Baltimore Street, Haussner's, Danny's, Prime Rib, Marconi's, maybe a couple of others. You would just barely fill two hands. Today, you can come up with two dozen.

Does tourism radiate out? Obviously it does, with all of the staff and everything. In 1972, you had what was then the Hilton ... and the Lord Baltimore Hotel. That was it. The Belvedere, I guess, was there. They were the hotels. Does tourism radiate out? You bet your sweet bippy. That has to be kept on ...

**[Richard]**

I know that Phillips opened their Harborplace restaurants in 1980, and now it is one of the leading grossing seafood restaurants in the entire country. Did it really take a long time ...

**[Ed]**

Yeah, Phillips was a success from the beginning.

Well, we've had to learn and we are still learning. We've had to learn the skills for being a tourist town. We didn't have the skills. We didn't have the people. We didn't have the services. We didn't know what the hell we were doing.

**[Richard]**

What caused you to expand the water taxi along the way? Was the Aquarium an impetus to expanding the water taxi, too?

**[Ed]**

Fells Point, Fells Point. If you're gonna run a transportation service and expect to make money, you gotta transport people someplace. And that's the simple... and we had to find places to go. And Fells Point became the place to go when we started.

## **Ed Kane Interview, May 9, 2003**

***Interviewer, Richard Kirstel***

**[Richard]**

You had mentioned that in 1977 you started the paddleboats. At the time you were still working for the Baltimore Gas and Electric Company, had not yet been the executive director of the City Fair. What got you started on the paddleboats?

**[Ed]**

Well, let's correct your sequence of events. The City Fair had already existed eight years. It started in 1970. I was executive director in 1972. I started the paddleboats in 1975. We were two years in... Well, it was a paddleboat and sailboat operation. And the intent was the sailboats at that point. That was my dream to have a sailing club.

**[Richard]**

Sailing wasn't feasible?

**[Ed]**

Sailing was feasible to the extent that people wanted to sail, but sailing was not feasible to the extent that it made the cash flow. We were two years into that when William Donald came to us and said, "Hey give me a boat that goes from here to there."

**[Richard]**

And, there was nothing either here or there.

**[Ed]**

That's right, when you went from here to there, you didn't know what you had reached.

**[Richard]**

Which is now Harborplace...

**[Ed]**

Harborplace and the Science Center

**[Richard]**

What convinced you that there would be a here and a there?

**[Ed]**

William Donald Shaffer. He was a man worthy of being followed.

**[Richard]**

And you did feel that his vision of construction and development was both feasible and going to be realized.

**[Ed]**

Well to the extent that, with respect certainly to the water taxi, it was a good deal of money for me at the time, but it wasn't company threatening, the risk involved, that is, if it hadn't worked at all, I could have still gotten out of it with rather small losses.

**[Richard]**

How many boats did you have running?

**[Ed]**

The water taxis? One. One 21-passenger electric powered boat that ran sometimes. We really didn't do much with it from '77 till '81 when the Aquarium opens up. There wasn't anyplace to go! Nothing was there!

**[Richard]**

So, it was just for people who wanted to take a little boat ride.

**[Ed]**

We had a point of origin, and we had no destinations, so people took a little boat ride. And that was fine, but you can't make money doing that, not with what we had. And there wasn't anything to see, because we weren't running that far, no further than what's now known as Harbor Point, the old Allied property. That's as far as we went. It was a cheap boat ride that some people used, but not many.

**[Richard]**

Were you getting people, after the Aquarium opened, were you getting people who had been tourists and visitors at the Aquarium?

**[Ed]**

No, not really, not until '83. And part of that had to do with the fact that, quite frankly, we didn't know what we were doing. In the sense that, it's not until 1983 that we began thinking seriously about the water transportation business, and it is at that point that we really started doing research, and trying to figure out what do we have here. The crucial thing about that is, "Where do we go?" If you running transportation, you've got to go from here to there.

**[Richard]**

And there's gotta to be something there...

**[Ed]**

Something's has to be there. Well, we had, with our equipment, with our franchise, we had no real destinations. There were places that were spotted as destinations, but nobody wanted to go there, because there wasn't much there, landings and attractions at the other end. And this, of course, by 1986, when we laid down the plan that is presently in force, what our service would be, how we saw it.

We did develop a vision of what we had to do to make this thing work, and of course we needed a primary destination. And the primary destination, by 1986, was just around the corner. And it was Fells Point. Because while Fells Point was always there, there wasn't a focal point in Fells Point. There wasn't a place for us to land and could serve as a focal point and that was produced by 1989 in Brown's Warf.

**[Richard]**

So it was the development of Brown's Warf that really spurred the idea of having a specific landing in Fells Point.

**[Ed]**

Well, spurred it? Well, OK. Well, you can say it that way. I kind of think of, we needed a credible landing at a place that was credible to the public where you from Missoula, Montana, would get off. Because up to this point you would be getting off at what looked like an abandoned warehouse, which was not particularly enticing. And Brown's Warf was a rehab building with proper promenade, and a proper landing, and that made it possible to focus on that point and to entice you to get off the boats.

**[Richard]**

So, you would be essentially attracting potential passengers at Harborplace with the idea of Fells Point as being the primary destination because of Brown's Warf.

**[Ed]**

Right on the button. That is exactly what we wanted. And it remains our primary destination for the service.

**[Richard]**

And what got it expanded to other destinations on the eastern end of the harbor? Fort McHenry, I assume, must have been of some importance.

**[Ed]**

Well, Fort McHenry is a whole different can of beans. Let me talk about the other areas first.

A system, we think of what we do as a system. It is not a boat ride. It has to be coherent. One of our missions that we laid down (When I say laid down, it was quite late, 1985-1986.) the object of the water taxi is to transport people on interior lines of communication around the harbor; meaning you don't have to go around the harbor, you go through the harbor to get from A to B or A to Z or

whatever it happens to be. Now, that remains part of our plan. We are the most efficient, delightful way of moving around the harbor. Now, the intent of that, Richard, had to do with who uses us. Well, we pretty much know who uses us. About 85% are people from out of town. And our objective here was to get cars parked someplace and left. We will do the transferring. That was successful.

Now, on the harbor itself, sitting on the shores, are two world-class attractions. I see world-class, attractions, where people will come from back-water Montana to visit Baltimore, to visit a specific place in Baltimore, the Aquarium and Fort McHenry.

Unfortunately, getting to the Fort has not been easy for us. We are a bit like the old problem the B&O Railroad and the Pennsylvania Railroad had. With the Pennsylvania Railroad, it was trying to get into New York, and it never did get into New York except by contrived method. And we are not permitted to go directly to the Fort. However, the Fort is a very, very important attraction for Baltimore because it completes the set. You ought to be able to go into our harbor and reach everything on the harbor with the greatest of ease. We do that pretty well, but we've not come anywhere close to the potential of Fort McHenry as an attraction, and given a little bit of luck and a little bit of time, we'll remedy that. Because it is a national shrine, and it is a beautiful site, and it is a place that can inspire and spur people on to see more of Baltimore. And that's why it ought to be there, and not so you're riding Ed Kane's water taxi, but so you can taste Baltimore to the fullest.

**[Richard]**

But the third point on this triangle, being Fells Point.

**[Ed]**

Ah! Well, Fells Point on the other hand, represented an interesting problem in the early days. Until 1990 or 1991, if you walked up to a concierge in the harbor, and asked "What's at Fells Point?" You'd have been told, "You don't want to go there."

**[Richard]**

Even that recent?

**[Ed]**

Even that late.

**[Richard]**

That almost reminds me of what you had said about, as a boy, being warned away from the water. And I heard Gilbert Sandler, who tells Baltimore stories on the radio the other day. He is also within our age range, and he said when he was a boy he was warned away from the waterfront and warned away from Fells Point.

**[Richard]**

I'm sure. It was no place for kids to play. It was dangerous place, physically dangerous in terms of even whether individuals were out there with malice or forethought. But it was physically dangerous

with trucks and loading and unloading and all sorts of things, which was a good reason. You know, Mother: "Don't play with that, it will put your eye out."

We set up a program, Cammie and I, wherein the course of a season, we would haul two or three groups of concierges out to Fells Point, just sampler trips so they could see what was here, because the concierges were keeping people away from Fells Point.

**[Richard]**

And that was as late as the early 1990's.

**[Ed]**

That was as late as 1990/1991. And, to a certain extent, we have made a contribution toward the popularization of Fells Point as a destination for visitors, which is rather important.

**[Richard]**

At that point, did Fells Point have still all the antique shops and old book shops?

**[Ed]**

Ah, OK, good question. In putting Fells Point in perspective, one must think a little broader.

Fells Point is an area. Some call it a neighborhood. I call it a state of mind. It is an area, that for more than two hundred years has been in a state of transition. It still doesn't know what it wants to be when it grows up.

Now, what we had in the timeframe I'm talking about, we had a community that was just recovering from having been condemned. Because at one point, in the late '60's and early '70's, what we think of as the beautiful Fells Point/Canton waterfront was destined by sort of government fiat to become an expressway. That was successfully forestalled by thousands of people who fought that idea. But it still left Fells Point a bit of an empty place. Lots of people wouldn't invest in it.

Now almost simultaneous with that, there was another great change that has been overlooked, and that was the transference of virtually all sea-going shipping from Fells Point to the Dundalk Marine Terminals and to the Maryland Port Authority, which was created in 1964. So that we had the effect of one of the old western boom towns. The gold rush was over. The seamen no longer came.

**[Richard]**

So, Fells Point was sort of a waterfront ghost town?

**[Ed]**

To a degree, yes. You didn't have the seamen. They were out at Dundalk or someplace else. Lots of residents had been forced out by the condemnation process, with the result that, from a period of let's say 1965 to maybe 1975, Fells Point was a community in very dangerous flux, is a good way of putting it. Because, you could get places down here very cheaply. You could rent a place. The guy who rented it to you might not even own it. He'd collect the rent, but he might not own it.

But at any rate, with the result that we wound up with a community, shall we say, seeking alternative lifestyle, or as when we were much younger used to call them "hippies" and that sort of things, and it became a laid back community. And, in certain circles very, very popular. Certainly it was popular of Friday nights, certainly was popular on Saturday afternoon and Saturday night. But, it was an alternative lifestyle. Our shops were funky. Our shops opened more or less irregularly and infrequently. The merchandise they offered was certainly different...

With the result that you get a period, a fairly long period in there, where lots of people walked around ringing their hands, "What is going to happen?" That seems to be straightening itself out. There seems to be a destiny being sought now.

**[Richard]**

And this is all in the aftermath of defeating the plans for the east-west expressway.

**[Ed]**

Oh, absolutely! Yeah. What you have is an extensive and expensive rehabilitation going on for many, many of the properties. You have your retail space, which commands premium prices. Many, many of what were Friday and Saturday night beer bars find themselves changing into trendy restaurants, trying to upgrade, upscale their whole operations to coincide with a lot of development that is taking place. There are office buildings going up all around us. Those people must be served, or demand services, with the result that we are in a latter day state of rapid and radical change to something, I know not of what, except it will be different.

**[Richard]**

But you don't doubt that that kind of development is going to continue.

**[Ed]**

Oh, there is no doubt in my mind at all! It must happen. Because you are getting a whole community of offices and upscale services down here. People are going to work there. Those people are going to want other services that are something more than just a hotdog with some onions spread on it.

**[Richard]**

Do you think many of those people will intend to live in the Fells Point area as well as work here?

**[Ed]**

There seems to be a lot of indication of that. You have properties that are being built and sold at very, very substantial prices. And, I would say it another way, too. I believe the aggravation of driving to and from work is pushing a lot of people into Fells Point, so that they might walk, or perhaps go by water taxi, or ride a bike, or roller skate to work rather than fighting 83 twice a day or any of the other traffic. There seems to be a lot of evidence that that is happening. Almost a precipitous matter.

**[Richard]**

But, the Market and the area around the Market, the square, really hasn't changed very much.

**[Ed]**

Yeah, but it's gonna happen. It'll happen.

**[Richard]**

Do you think the Market is gonna go?

**[Ed]**

No, no, no, the Market won't go. The Market will change. We have the Market, the Broadway Market, capital M-a-r-k-e-t, and then we have the Fells Point market, lower case m-a-r-k-e-t. The Market will change to meet the market, to provide the services that are needed.

**[Richard]**

All of the various antique shops and funky shops along Aliceanna Street or Fleet Street, are they relatively actually new to Fells Point development, or had they been there such a long time and slowly grew?

**[Ed]**

Well, antique shops are a funny animal. There have been quite a few antique dealers down here for twenty/twenty-five years. Now, there is another class of antiquer, who I like to call it "cherry-pickers." They say, "Oh, this'll work. Let's rent this place for three months." And they come in, and then they, too...

Antiquers are notorious for their hours. Many of them don't keep hours. Or, he's understaffed. There is one man. He can't be out buying merchandise and serving as his own retail clerk, with the result that he isn't open enough. So there is a constant turnover.

But I will tell you, since 1991, we've had a fairly constant count of about 37 or 38 antique dealers down here. Now they may not be the same dealers, but the count remains the same.

**[Richard]**

When did you move down here?

**[Ed]**

We started water taxi service into Fells Point on July 2nd 1989. That was the opening date of the Brown's Warf project.

**[Richard]**

Oh, so you deliberately coincided with that.

**[Ed]**

Yeah, well I had no place to land!

**[Richard]**

Had you been living here personally?

**[Ed]**

No, no no, at that point we were living in Federal Hill, down on South Charles Street. Then in 1990, we moved in to Fells Point. Now, Federal Hill to Fells Point is not that far, right? I objected to the drive.

**[Richard]**

Why didn't you take the water taxi?

**[Ed]**

Well, I had to get to work the first time. That was the problem. I objected to the drive, so we moved down on Shakespeare Street, almost where we live today, but across the street. And it was very, very convenient, within a block and a half of the office. Well, the services in Fells Point offered what I wanted. I've become very comfortable.

**[Richard]**

And your office at that time was a trailer.

**[Ed]**

Right, right on the water at Brown's Warf. And we've had a good time. It's been a good place to work and live, play, fight, do everything else.

**[Richard]**

When did you move over to 1732 Thames?

**[Ed]**

Oh, we moved onto Thames Street on February 1, 1999.

**[Richard]**

But that is going to have to move, too, because of the Maritime Museum.

**[Ed]**

Yeah, we're going to move some, but not substantively. We'll be in the same place, but a few yards one way or the other.

**[Richard]**

The dock area on Thames Street, that was the original docking area that you established.

**[Ed]**

Where our water taxi lands now? No, we landed at Brown's Warf.

**[Richard]**

Right on Brown's Warf?

**[Ed]**

Right on Brown's Warf proper. That space was committed at the time we started service down here. It was committed to old Maryland Tours Company, had that space tied up. We weren't able to get in there until '99. So, that's a fairly recent ...

**[Richard]**

The fight that went on over the east-west expressway, which took so many years, did that, you think, function as a unifying element to the community. Did it make people more community conscious? Or build more of a family kind of atmosphere into Fells Point, as a result of that, a kind of cohesion that came from so many people being kind of mobilized by this concern?

**[Ed]**

Well, certainly it created common cause, no question about it. It created a sense of community. There is no question about that. It worked. It did indeed save the community. I mean, we could be presently blocked out by six lanes of highways from the harbor.

**[Richard]**

Which would have destroyed the whole area...

**[Ed]**

Which would have destroyed... I mean, one need only to look at parts of New York, any other big city where they built expressways along the water's edge, and you separate the water from the people.

But it also created a lot of turmoil. Because, when you create by, particularly, government fiat; when you create a vacuum, something has to fill that vacuum. That's what they did with the condemnation. I mean, all these properties were condemned. And with that condemnation, you created a vacuum. Something will fill that vacuum, so that we've had a lot of feuding, fussing and fighting over what kind of occupancy is going to take place in this broad band: The conservationists versus the preservationists, versus the recreationists. That argument still goes on, and one has fun with that.

Well, my neighbor, God love him, wonderful guy. He is a recreationist. He says, "I want Fells Point to be like it was!" Well the next question is, "Like when was?" Then one points out, "Gee, are you sure you want that?" By and large, for most of its history, Fells Point wasn't a very nice place. I'm not sure it was ever nice until recently, simply because it was dangerous, it was lawless. It was subject to a lot of transient traffic, in terms of residents coming and going not for very long either way...

With the result of – to what period are you going to recreate it? And when you get there, you're not going to like it, is the question. With the result that it seems to be shaking out now; seems to be shaking out, there seems to be not a great public agreed on destiny, but rather kind of a quiet, "This is happening. We'll get someplace." But, whether that's good or bad, I don't know. That remains to be seen.

**[Richard]**

Do you think that gentrification involving Fells Point is irresistible?

**[Ed]**

I have problems with that word "gentrification."

**[Richard]**

Why?

**[Ed]**

I have problems with gentrification because it implies that you can read and use a three-syllable word, that somehow this is bad, and I think that is absurd. There is a population that is going to move into Fells Point that has the wherewithal to move into Fells Point. Now, if that's "gentrification," fine, but that applies everywhere else.

And I resent, to a degree those journalists that put a tag on people because they are willing to put half-a-million dollars in a rehabilitation in a 200 year old house and live there. So, excuse me while I express my rancor.

**[Richard]**

What about the impact, you think, of the plans for perhaps big condos, the Broadway Pier kind of thing, or the possibility of killing the open space or access to the harbor?

**[Ed]**

Well, that's always the battle. OK, the big condos... I'm not much on that idea. I'm not much on it because condos always bother me. It seems like the people who live in condos aren't part of the community. Now, that is my personal impression. I know it's not true, but that's my feeling.

And, the other thing is, we have a community that is to scale. Right now, we've got a community of buildings that, oh, date from as early as 1765 to 1810-1820 and later. And they fit. And we can bring visiting vessels in here, and the vessels are in scale with our buildings. And I think it's nice. It's nice to look at. And you can get a feel for it. At any rate, our buildings right now are in scale with our waterfront and the way we are using the waterfront down here. Yes indeed, we do have the Rec Pier, which is certainly is an interesting building. It is one of the more attractive buildings on the harbor at this point. We certainly will not have that recipe again to do such a thing, is deserving of every attention and meticulous care in how it's to be used.

With respect to the use of the harbor and access to people, it is one thing the community is very sensitive to: that the harbor, the water's edge be accessible, and that it is willing to fight for it. I'm very conscious of that. Site lines – after all, the Harbor is popular because of the harbor. If we block you off from it, then, what's to be popular? It's one of the problems City Planning has, in terms of, if we let every Tom, Dick and Harry put a barge wherever he damn well pleases, well, we use up the water

A number that's worth thinking about – it's two and a half miles from Harborplace to Fort McHenry. The average width of that water might be 350 to 400 yards. That isn't very much water. It doesn't take long to fill it up. And we have idiot developers, who are one in the same time eating their seed corn, because they want barges on the harbor to do this and to do that. And that's what it amounts to. They are eating their seed corn. And, they are idiots. No matter how much money they make, they are still idiots.

**[Richard]**

The tourism is really the long range? You had mentioned before that tourism is the only really the viable industry that Baltimore has invented in the past half century. Do you think that kind of tourism is the viable future of Fells Point?

**[Ed]**

Well, I mean I think it is part of it, Richard. The community is made up of many interests. We have, I'll call it, a latent ambiance here in Fells Point. We certainly have a history that is worthy of being trumpeted all over the place. We have the buildings. Tourism is part of Fells Point. It is a major part of it, at least for the present. Now, as our retailers and our restaurateurs find new markets, will that remain the same? I don't know, but everything is subject to change.

Well, on the other hand, if we pursue tourism with a vigor, we have a lot of fun. It's certainly going to fill up what I'll call a long transitional period to the extent that one need not really worry about it too much. I think tourism will grow, tourism will grow two or three times what it is today. Then what happens I don't know.

**[Richard]**

Would you want to see tourism as the primary economic motor here?

**[Ed]**

Not really. As one of the motors, yes. As the motor, no. Tourism is too volatile. You get a fire in Bangkok; somebody develops a cough in Hong Kong; you have an oil spill in a railroad tunnel. All of this hits this kind of business with astonishing rapidity.

However, as a transitional industry, as an important element, yes. But as the element, no, I don't think it makes good economic sense. We aren't the city of London, we aren't the city of Paris. We are Fells Point. We gotta remember that.

**[Richard]**

But Fells Point does have the historical background of being the oldest, or arguably, one of the oldest, living, working waterfront communities in the country. Isn't this something you like to see maintained?

**[Ed]**

Oh, absolutely! But we have a number of obstacles. Yes, I'd like to see that played. And the first obstacle we have, is we haven't learned how to convince the world that this is an important place. And the world is not convinced, and we're not convinced yet.

We've got a mile of waterfront out here, oh I'd say a mile and a half, that is perhaps historically some of the most significant waterfront in North America, by the things that have been done here, by the things that have been caused by the things that have been done here. We haven't learned how to sell it yet. We're just now learning. We've been in the tourist business, lo these 22/23 years, and we are just now learning the things to do. But Thames Street, the curiosities that take place along Thames Street. Well, the history of Thames Street, just in its names is important! We have the job of how do we...

How do I get you from the Bronx excited over Thames Street. How do I get you excited over the fact that just down a couple hundred yards from where we sit, almost directly behind this house, the first U.S.S. Enterprise was built? How do I get you excited over the fact that just a few yards from that was the first riot of Baltimore during the Civil War. Nobody knows about it. We have to learn how to get people excited over that.

**[Richard]**

Would you like to see some of these things recreated? I don't mean like a Disney theme park, but along the lines of a Williamsburg or a South Street Seaport, as in New York, like Kemp Shipyard, or you did have an idea a couple of years ago of wanting to recreate the immigration experience between Locust and Fells Points?

**[Ed]**

Well, I'm a believer in interpretive history, and being a historian, I of course, would spend many hours digging, but you can't expect the world, in search of recreation, to be that enraptured. We go on vacations to vacate. What we are doing is relaxing. Now, if we happen to learn something as we are relaxing, that's wonderful. But if I tell you, you are going to learn this, you immediately get on a bus and go the other way. Because we spend a lot of our lifetime doing that.

Interpretive history gives us the possibility of triggering your interest, triggering the public's interest in a subject upon which they may want to expand their knowledge. Interpretive history also raises people's expectations. And that's the arena in which we should exert a great deal of effort, which is to elevate of mythical person from Missoula, Montana's expectations on what are they going to find when they get to Fells Point, Fort McHenry or Locust Point, or any place else. Those expectations are going to be raised and then we have to meet those.

**[Richard]**

There was a famous story where a radio announcer, his first big break, Harry Vonzell, who was a very big radio announcer, and he very famously, when he had the opportunity and introduced: "and now the President of the United States, Hebert Herver!" This was before tape, you know, live! So, going back to then asking you about that Fells Point, not a fly in amber, but, how do you offer a kind of interpretive history? Would you want to see recreations of say Kemp's Shipyard? I think of that just as an example. I didn't mean that necessarily specifically. Something like the "Chausseur" docked at the waterfront?

**[Ed]**

Well, I think certainly you strive to get there, but I think one has to crawl before one leaps, bounds over the moon.

**[Richard]**

Now, you do give a Thomas Boyle award for outstanding contributions to tourism, so you are promoting the tourism, and certainly maintaining the name of and the history of Captain Boyle.

**[Ed]**

Now, you ask me how are we going to get someplace. I'm gonna answer that question.

With the possible exception of Constellation energy, or what have you, around town, I see no means of building Kemp's Shipyard, recreating Kemp's Shipyard, and building old Baltimore clippers as a tourist attraction.

But what I do see is the possibility of having some of our neighbors participate in a fun thing, that at one and the same time elevates the visitors expectations. For example, here was a group here in Fells Point known as the Baltimore Fencibles, a quasi-military group who participated in Old North Point.

Now, if I had the money, and if I had the means, and if I had the time, I would create what amounts to a volunteer group, and I would get myself one big damn cannon. And we would have, at least for the season on Saturdays and Sundays, we would have a regular color ceremony at the end of Broadway Pier. There would be a big flagpole down there. And, we would do, using military drill (?), a kind of tattoo. Given the season, we could make that the most well attended thing you could ever find. Out of that grows some other things, what, I don't know.

However, assuming I still have all this money, I would also have myself a ceremonial welcoming crew, because in the period which Fells Point had its hay day, so to speak, it was customary that when a distinguished visitor came to town, that he was greeted, and he was put in a barge that was rowed by the leading citizens of the town. And it was regarded as an honor to be a member of that crew.

Now, given my druthers, we could have a lot of fun with that. We could build a very, very active body of people. And, then, other things would happen. What other things? Fill in the blank. It

doesn't matter. Other things would happen, because not only are we giving you from Missoula, Montana, some fun, but we're having a ball ourselves. And, that's the contract.

**[Richard]**

You had wanted, it turned out it wasn't feasible, money, this and that, to recreate the immigrant experience. Ferry boats coming in to Broadway Pier.

**[Ed]**

Absolutely, yeah. It's still a valid idea. It is just that I'm running out of time. It has to do with ... the average American has an image of immigration, as the immigration experience, which comes from two places: 1 - Hollywood, and 2 - what he sees when he visits Ellis Island. And, there is nothing wrong with that.

It was my desire to take that image and make it an experience, which is – these people who came from wherever they came from had a moment of truth. There had to be this moment of truth as you got off the boat, "My God, I've landed in the New World. I've landed in the land of milk and honey. I've landed where the streets are paved with gold." ... all of that nonsense, not nonsense, reality.

**[Richard]**

Well, they weren't told that the streets were paved with gold, they were told that they would have to do the paving.

**[Ed]**

That's correct. But, under any circumstances, where I'm going is – What few of us can even conceive what that moment, that instant, as you were getting off the boat. In the case of Baltimore, as you were coming across the harbor, what that instant was. What was the experience of my grandfather, my great grandfather, with his family in this strange land? What did he feel? I believe that that little instant is important to create for our third-generation citizen. I think that instant of uncertainty, that instant of doubt, that instant of fear is important to re-create. That it all wasn't just here. That you had to grasp it.

And in that sense, I believe there is room for a project back and forth across the harbor, re-creating that moment, well, it was four minutes, as one got on the boat over at Hull Street or thereabouts, and came over here to Broadway Pier, this four minutes which served as a break between the old life, between the ties to the Hapsburg Empire and this new land that was going to be my own. I believe there is room and it would be a popular thing, and it could be made extraordinarily popular, it could be made an attraction of great value to those who played with it/used it and to those who were presenting it, in terms of Baltimore, Fells Point, tourism, general prosperity, general citizenship, and thank-God-I'm-an-American.

**[Richard]**

That kind of tourism, of which Fells Point would be a center, a kind of re-creation, a re-living, re-examining, re-experiencing the past would be you think critical to the financial health of the whole city, not just Fells Point.

**[Ed]**

Absolutely. Well right now, you take the whole city. We probably have something like 30 and 35, 38,000 people working in tourism in one way or another. The number ought to be up somewhat higher than that. We could probably support as many as 70,000 people. That is a lot of jobs. And the intriguing thing about it is, with the proper mindset, those jobs can be created relatively cheaply. Far less cheaply than creating a manufacturing job. A manufacturing job, you take \$200,000 to create. You can create one of these jobs for far less, which is interesting.

**[Richard]**

William Wagner, one of my favorite quotes that I like to remember and talk about when I'm doing living history characters, William Wagner remarked, when he got the Nobel Prize, "The past is not dead. It's not even past." Would you like to see Fells Point as a repository for that idea?

**[Ed]**

I'd have to think about that statement a little bit, Richard. But, let's put it in the context of the way I think about history.

I have long ago reached the conclusion that history is a force on which, at any given instant, we are all on its leading edge. It is pushing us. It has, by whatever internal forces, there is a direction, there is a weight, there is a momentum to it. In this sense, I agree. Yes, there is a place. Fells Point is worthy of being remembered. It's worthy of being put into a context, and it's worthy of pointing out the idea that we can learn from the things of our parents.

And it is important to us, back to my example from a little earlier, it is important to us that we somehow try to grasp that instant, those four minutes, whatever the length of time is, that were felt in my case by Earhart Zigler [SIC] back sometime in 1848 or thereabouts when they ran him out of Germany. I think that's important. Now is that past, is that present. I don't know, but it affects that fact that I am here, and it certainly affects that bunch of political pamphleteers that were some of my people certainly had an impact on the way I think. I don't know how they had an impact, but it's there. And I don't know whether that answers your question or not, but that's my answer.

**[Richard]**

But you wouldn't want to see Fells Point preserved like a fly in amber.

**[Ed]**

Oh, God forbid!

**[Richard]**

or Williamsburg...

**[Ed]**

No, no, no. I like Williamsburg. I enjoy it. It is wonderful to be surrounded by these wonderful, wonderful artifacts. And, the meticulousness with which they attempt to pursue authenticity. I think that's great.

Do I learn from it? I'm not sure that I do. Because in spite of their search and quest for authenticity, it isn't authentic. Williamsburg was never that clean. Williamsburg was never that healthy. The people who make Williamsburg work never looked that good. They were always sweaty. And, in saying that, I don't mean to be critical of it, I just mean to say that it's too much prophylaxis has been provided.

**[Richard]**

Take it as a kind of a theme park...

**[Ed]**

It is, a notch above a theme park. And that's my problem with it. It scrubs out all the smudges. The smudges had to be there. That's what made the place work.

**[Richard]**

Are we getting cleaner here in Fells Point? I mean, obviously, all those properties are not condemned anymore.

**[Ed]**

We've got a lot of smudges. But, it's not ersatz. It's not falling apart. Williamsburg is the way it is because it's the way it wants to be and that's fine. It becomes a corporate objective. Is Fells Point cleaning itself up? It is, slowly.

**[Richard]**

There's sort of an odd contradiction here, a lot of Americans tend to think that learning something while they are on vacation is going to be somehow morally uplifting, which of course accounts for the popularity of someplace like Williamsburg, but Fells Point, not exactly morally uplifting, but people do seem to get excited about the historical understanding that they glean from just walking these old streets and learning about the old buildings. Is this something that Fells Point is going to serve a need for?

**[Ed]**

I certainly think it is one of the stepping stones that we have to build on. Lawyers have a term called discovery, and artists frequently use the word serendipity. I believe Fells Point is one of those communities wherein the visitor can engage in a lot of discovery, "Oh, my God! I never knew that!" and achieve a pleasant surprise in this unlikely spot. So, discovery and pleasant surprises in a place serves to drive home a memory that sticks with them.

In my tours over the years that we've had, the object is – just an hour tour, give them something they can tell, not point out seven million bricks, give them a story they can take home. What was the old song, "give me a [kiss] to build a dream on..." There are things you can carry home and tell over and over again if you put it together. And that's a part of how we get to where we want to go.

**[Richard]**

We live our lives by narrative, by the stories we tell each other, by the stories we tell ourselves. And this whole area, the harbor in general, Fells Point in particular, seems to be a marvelous sort of quarry from which to dig out wonderful stories of American history to expand on. Is this what you think we are doing with the light tours?

**[Ed]**

We're getting there. And of course we've got, sometime in the next two months, the new museum will open. And I think it is absolutely important...

**[Richard]**

The Maritime Museum...

**[Ed]**

The Fells Point Maritime Museum here on Thames Street. And, I believe it is an absolute major step in that direction, and that out of it a number of things will emerge, particularly in the realm of interpretive history. I think we have to make the effort to provide a little taste of interpretive history around the town. And, of course, there are a whole bunch of things. There ought to be markings up, more markings on our streets, explanatory plaques in greater profusion. But, I think the major step will be the opening of the Fells Point Maritime Museum.

**[Richard]**

Do you think that is going to develop into a real destination attraction?

**[Ed]**

Yeah. You see, we don't have an authentic maritime museum. One of our problems in stimulating tourism has been the lack of an authentic maritime museum. Now, we have a maritime museum, but it doesn't remember anything, in the sense that it's not associated with Baltimore. Actually it went out of its way to disassociate itself with Baltimore. But what is about Baltimore, and what is relevant? In this case, we are going at the heart of one of the rich maritime pockets of our national maritime heritage here in Baltimore that is unremembered largely. Now, does this become a primary destination, that's a long ways away. This is just a small museum. A primary destination requires either a miracle, a saint of some sort doing something, or....

**[Richard]**

Saint Patrick marched in the parade!

**[Ed]**

There we go... or a major plan. Well, we're a long way from both of those. But, it does give us a very, very strong ability to focus. And, I believe out of bringing parts of Fells Point into sharp focus, other things happen, other things relative to Baltimore, relative to immigration, relative to industry, something happens. Somebody says, "Wow! We can do this. Why can't we do that?!" With the result that you create excitement. You generate traffic. Will it be in the near future something that

will attract our mythical momma from Missoula? No, it's a long ways away, but you gotta start someplace.

**[Richard]**

But might not it attract if not somebody from that far away a great many people from New England or Pennsylvania or Virginia or Ohio? Regional, northeast quadrant?

**[Ed]**

It will get good attendance. How strong an outreach it will have, well, that remains to be seen. But, it will be well-attended. And if it's well-attended, they will seek greater attendance. And whether you can make the next step will be a function of the vigor of both the Fells Point Preservation Society and the Maryland Historical Society and the citizens and the industry and the city, who says, "Wow, we ought to have a first rate..."

But, keep in mind, as you well know, building museums is not easy. Just finding the artifacts that make a museum work takes many, many years and, obviously, lots of lots of dollars. So that this is a contributory force, perhaps a vigorous contributory... and perhaps it becomes the husk wherein my mythical honorary crew can find a home and the mythical Fencibles can find a home. Perhaps it becomes that. But, under any circumstance, it becomes a stimulus. And that's part of its purpose, too. Not only to stimulate you coming in from some other place, but to stimulate me as a citizen of Fells Point, "Gosh, this is a pretty good place I live in!" And revealing to me things I don't know, which I discover everyday.

**[Richard]**

Cohering and community spirit, too.

**[Ed]**

Right. What's that terrible... I hate to use it. It's a "synergistic" kind of thing. Advertising people use it all the time... But, under any circumstances, that's its importance to me, as the Water Taxi. It's important to me in a direct line, because it gives me a chance to sell something about Fells Point. Right now, Fells Point doesn't have a focal point. The museum becomes the focal point for my people on my boats to say, "Gee, when you get down there you wanna go down a half a block before you do anything else, do this." This is the starting place. What's the French phrase – *raison d'etre*.

**[Richard]**

Do you have sort of in your head, that kind of snap shots of your memory of Fells Point at specific points in time, either when you were a boy, or a young man when you were here, when you were at the Naval Academy visiting, or, *vis a vis*, Fells Point the way you saw it when you first actually took up domicile when you were here?

**[Ed]**

Sure, the way I can think of it maybe I guess the better part of a hundred years, we had a seamen's mission across the street here on Broadway, in the middle of the block about two doors down from

Jimmy's. And it catered to the spiritual and temporal needs of sailors on the beach. A very dedicated body of people. And one can remember Sunday mornings, Sunday afternoons, people coming and going to religious services at the mission.

**[Richard]**

That was right on Broadway?

**[Ed]**

Right on Broadway in the 900, 800 block. Two years ago, I have a very clear memory, the mission had closed. It had ceased functioning. But, I have a very clear memory of a Sunday morning of a large number of people waiting outside of Cooper's which is just around the corner, nice restaurant, for Sunday brunch. That is probably symbolic of the range of change that has taken place in this community in the last, well say, thirty years, in the sense that there are nice people going to Sunday brunch for their mimosas or whatever. Is that the idea you're looking for? It the best idea I have, best snapshots I have in my head.

**[Richard]**

The change from seamen's mission to Cooper's mimosas.

**[Ed]**

Both had to do with survival, but in different ways. Now the mission has become a furniture store. There are other examples which capture little vignettes in time, but none come to mind right now.

**[Richard]**

These changes, and the changes you see, they are not positive, they are not negative, they just are life changes. I mean you don't have an opinion on that, in terms of whether it's good or bad. It just is.

**[Ed]**

Well, the seamen aren't here. The seamen are downstream three miles. Not only that, the nature of change on maritime transport is such seamen have a hard time having enough time to get off the ship. They load them and unload them so fast, with the result that the traffic has disappeared.

Secondly, just because I look for a drink in the morning doesn't mean I'm evil. Those are nice people, too. They've got brunch, Sunday brunch, nothing wrong with that. It's just that society has changed. A lot of people can afford to go out for breakfast on Sunday. Which is symptomatic of the community. A lot of people can afford a lot of things that the community couldn't afford before. Doesn't hold water? I think it does, or something, mimosas.

**[Richard]**

If, and this is a great big if, if money were not the direct problem, and if we had our druthers, what would you like to see done with the [Rec] Pier?

**[Ed]**

Now, I would like to see what amounts to a Baltimore municipal marine center, wherein that facility becomes a vital facility with real uses dedicated to real people. To do that would of course keep in public ownership, and would indeed be a statement that there is room on our shores for one, I mark that, public building dedicated to serving the public in a myriad of ways, that it all need not be put in the hands of developers or real estate people or whoever else.

In the case of Rec Pier, there are a number of boat clubs around the harbor, whose facilities for meetings don't really exist. There would be room here for that. There are a number of vessels that need a home ... the Pride of Baltimore. The Pride of Baltimore belongs in Fells Point. The original was built here. It is in scale here. Maybe it ought to be a home here. Perhaps this is the place for the fireboat headquarters, someplace along the pier. Perhaps the Baltimore City Marine Police Detail should be assigned there.

The community needs a community center in terms of meeting place. We have enough protest meetings that would keep that building pretty active.

The tugs? I have no problem with the tugs staying there. We learned to live with each other. We live with each other very well. But, I would do two other things. I would have this facility take over jurisdiction of Broadway Pier, the long pier, and Ann Street Warf, in order to create a facility that is also inviting and useful to visiting vessels. I think it is very, very important.

**[Richard]**

By visiting vessels, you mean...

**[Ed]**

Well, I get schooners in here all the time and have them put them on Broadway Pier. I manage that now, but I don't have to manage it. It doesn't require that much management.

But then there are cruise ships. We get the visiting men of war, Britain, Holland, Germany, France, all the time. But this should be a vital area of maritime activity, capable of being used by the other facility we are just about to open, the Maritime Museum, for gatherings or brief exhibits on the water. And this would give that institution the capability. And then, as I'm very fond of saying, ultimately something else will happen. I don't know what that is. It's not in my purview. But that's what I would like to see. I would like to see Rec Pier remain a public facility. Now, how do we do this? We have to find a means of funding it, but it's doable. There are lots of other things that are funded, so it's doable.

**[Richard]**

But it looks like it is going to be going in the hands of developers...

**[Ed]**

Fells Point hasn't fully spoken yet.

**[Richard]**

One of the things that you've said several times, you came back to keeping things in scale. That would be, for you, a critical concern.

**[Ed]**

Absolutely, you can't... Well, for example, there has been the persistent move to bring in the John Brown in over here. I like the John Brown but it doesn't fit.

**[Richard]**

Well, they talk about Jane Jacob's idea of the importance of density and diversity. Fine, but they don't mean the kind of density I think that Jane Jacob's was referring to. How does this get avoided, and you said, "Don't count the community out yet."

**[Ed]**

Well, OK. One of my fascinating stories about Fells Point is the fact that, and it's frequently forgotten (If I'm repeating myself, cut me off.). It had to do with back in 1794, the legislature authorized the incorporation of Baltimore City. But it didn't happen until 1797. Now, why was that? Well the reason for that is Fells Point didn't want any part of it. And they didn't want any part of it because they were absolutely certain that those people in Baltimore were going to filch away the tax monies and improve the inner basin to the detriment of Fells Point, because they thought of themselves as separate entities. Well, that ability to argue and fuss and fight and fume still remains. It rears its head every once in awhile. It certainly showed itself in the road battle and I can pretty much guarantee that it will show itself in this battle.

We do not need condos on Rec Pier. We do not need townhouses on the Rec Point Pier. If perhaps the entire world were filled up and that was the last open space, maybe so. But it isn't the last open space, and what could be built there commercially is a mere pittance to the future.

What could be achieved there socially and municipally is a great contribution to the future, in terms of it being a center of activity, a center of activity to which people can walk. People won't need their cars to get there. A center of activity that is the outlet onto the water. We have access to the water by the promenade. We have sight lines to the water, but where do we get access to the water. That facility should somehow lend itself to, I'll call it, a public-private partnership of how do the citizens of Baltimore get to the water and use it. And the city needs space for fireboats and they need space for police boats. We need a home for the Pride of Baltimore that is in context. We need a place for visiting vessels. All of these things come together and create a Baltimore Marine Activities Center that fills a need that goes far into the future. And that is my personal view on it.

**[Richard]**

And this would be, then, the ideal usage for the Rec Pier, benefiting not just obviously Fells Point, but really for the good of the whole city.

**[Ed]**

Benefiting the whole bay, benefiting the whole bay! That's my concept.

**[Richard]**

Do you think that, likely, realistically, the city is so upset about the immediacy of the tax base and so forth, that they're likely to fall into a short-sighted stop-gap...

**[Ed]**

Well, one has to recall there was an instant, I guess I encountered in a biography of Franklin Roosevelt, where a group came to him, and they made an impassioned plea to do something. And he said, "OK, you have convinced me to do this. Now, put pressure on me." That, I believe, is where this thing rests at this point. That we could, indeed, convince Martin that this is important. But, we would have to figure out a way to put pressure on him to do it, because there are a whole range of other vital priorities he's got to meet, having to do with money, having to do with running the city. I think that depicts the present situation. Would we put pressure on him to do it? I think so.

**[Richard]**

In terms of long-term values, although those long-term values are kind of hard to get a politician who has to run for re-election to envision. There is a story that when Zouwen Lie [SIC] was asked what did he see as the long-term effects of the French Revolution, he said it's too soon to tell.

**[Ed]**

Yes, it's true. Well, that may be.

**[Richard]**

Do you think we have a political system that will look down the road that far?

**[Ed]**

It has at times. Sometimes it does, sometimes... This is a function of the group, what a body of citizens want. That's the function of pressure is to bring issues of this sort into focus. This isn't a very large issue. It's a relatively small issue. It's a case of generating the will to do something about it, which is in the hands of the Mayor and others. This isn't like trying to decide whether China should be admitted into the UN.

It's like that old story of the successful marriage. A guy says how do you do it? He's been married forty years. He says, "Oh, we long ago made a decision. I make the big decision, and Cam makes the small decisions." I said well how does that work? He says, "Well, I decide whether we're going to go to war with Iraq, and Cam decides whether we're going to buy a new car." Well, we're in that kind of a state. I don't make light of it. It just has to do with, in the case of our present mayor, he is confronted with such a shopping list of things left undone for twelve years by the idiot preceding him. That dealing with what are all these trifles. Dealing with it becomes hard because it is complex, but the city isn't going to rise and fall on it. It will tick off a lot of people, but it's not necessarily going to mean the difference between being elected or rejected.

And how do we elevate its place on his priority list that this should be taken care of? And, in saying that, no, I don't mean to impugn anybody. It just has to do with simple physics. There is only room for so much. That's the way I see it. We have to properly dramatize it, bring it home.

**[Richard]**

Again, here is one of those wildly speculative "ifs", but you knew him so well – What do you think William Don Shaffer would be doing? There are people who are talking about wanting to see him run for mayor, become mayor again, in spite of his years, because he doesn't seem to age. What do you think William Don Shaffer would be doing?

**[Ed]**

Oh, Lord, what do you ask me a question like that for?

**[Richard]**

Too speculative?

**[Ed]**

Yeah, that's not a fair question. I can't speak for William Don at this point in his life, I can't speak for him. At any other point I can't speak for him. William Donald in 1968, William Donald in 1975, William Donald in 1985, he would probably do three different things. He would do something.

**[Richard]**

But he had a long-term vision, certainly, when he was the mayor of Baltimore.

**[Ed]**

Yes, you're right. Yes, he did.

**[Richard]**

I mean just the idea of him saying, "Ed, I want a boat that goes from here to there." One day there'll be a place to go.

**[Ed]**

Yeah, that's true. One of the things that when we start talking about somebody like William Donald. One of the things about William Donald is we have to grasp the fact that, for whatever reason, he had a body of people available to him that are not available today. In all seriousness. A body of first rate executives who made their time available, made their money available, made the talent that they had available to them, available to him that he could tap.

I was just looking today, an early (he was in the City Council at this point) but at an early report by the Greater Baltimore Committee, looking at the giants that made their time and talents available. These people are not available today. We don't have them. Many of these companies cease to exist. They moved out of town. This talent has gone elsewhere. One of the problems that we confront in our efforts to go ahead is a huge brain drain. We've got a huge brain drain. Our young people aren't sticking around. They aren't here to start with. They are going elsewhere. With the result that the solution that William Donald could find in another day is not available today. You can't get there from here, to put it crudely.

But, at the heart of the thing is the fact that, I don't know how you solve it. I don't know how Martin is going to solve it. I don't know how anybody else, known or unknown, is going to solve these things, but we do not have available for the public wheel the kind of talent we had available thirty years ago.

**[Richard]**

Do you think that's been part of the flow of life or just a glitch in the curve, so to speak?

**[Ed]**

I think it's a function of economics. I can remember William Donald's early staff. These are people who were not well paid. These were very, very talented people, but they were not well paid. They were, in many cases, they were little more than paid volunteers, volunteers who were getting what amounted to kind of an honorarium rather than a salary who were absolutely dedicated to the task. That fire in society does not seem to be there. I believe, and I might have said this earlier, I believe that William Donald came at a time when we were still being driven by the Kennedy inaugural talk, the "ask not" speech.

**[Richard]**

Do you think even in an area which is as defined as Fells Point, you talked about "don't count the community out" and I know there are people in and around Fells Point dedicated to feeling the preservation of Fells Point as a critical issue. Do you think, even in the immediacy of Fells Point, that has dissipated?

**[Ed]**

Yeah, the amount of volunteer, "I'll use the term volunteer," work you can get is very limited. Now it's limited for a number of reasons. That is going to change, though, I think. I think there'll be a slight change, simply because of the size of some of the organizations that are moving into Fells Point, in terms of the architects, consulting engineers, law firms, advertising agencies. We haven't had any big companies down here.

Now, for me, as a business owner, to take on a volunteer task, which I have on many occasions, means I have to look at my time, I have to look at my budget, and say yes, I can afford to, when we get to this point, I can afford to take a week and give it all. For a major company, a sizeable company, the capacity of giving somebody for six months and getting and having him or her to give us what they've got. That capacity is increasing, the capacity for some of these companies to take on a seminal leadership role, I think, increases. Because, even when I was president of the business association, there were times when we all agreed we should do something, but the question was who will do it, and the answer was, "Well, I can't do it." And we had to wave off on the subject. But, to a degree I think our capacity is increasing as the development comes along. It's one of the things we've got, I think, I hope.

**[Richard]**

I'll ask you something really quirky, getting back to what Jacquie said about snap shots, if you were seven or eight years old, do you think your mother would warn you against Fells Point today?

**[Ed]**

Well she probably would, but for a different reason. As mothers would warn anybody seven/eight/ten years old today. I mean, you go on a playground behind your house, you're warned. The world has changed.

**[Richard]**

Well, of course, but I mean it wouldn't be the kind of dangerous place...

**[Ed]**

No, but the warning would be there, but the reason would be different. Ah, yes. We're all aware of. There are some nasty people out there on the street.

**[Richard]**

Indeed. Indeed, but I meant specific to the Fells Point feel...

**[Ed]**

I mean the only ones that killed children in my day were mothers.

**[Richard]**

I have heard people express the fear lately, that if they built a big condo-hotel anywhere in or around Thames Street, that this would kill the Admiral Fell in , and if the Admiral Fell Inn hurt, that would then ruin much of the quality of the whole area around the square. Do you think that's valid?

**[Ed]**

No, no, Admiral Fell's got capacity going. Admiral Fell can survive. Admiral Fell has created a product. It's a very nice product. They sell it well. They might have a few months of competition, where they felt the competition, but they would fill up again. No, I think that's smoke more than anything else.

**[Richard]**

Another thing, going back to concern with experiencing and the history, interpretive history, and I was saying this to Jacquie about some of the ghost stories we tell: Silas Clinchman and Mica Adams, Morgan Williams... that are drawn, and you have built on the history of Fells Point. Is this a palpable contribution to the lore of the neighborhood, of the area, of the idea of Fells Point?

**[Ed]**

Oh, certainly. Fells Point is an old enough community. We've got lots of ghosts around here. We're blessed because they are fairly quiet ghosts. To find them we really have to dig them out. But, I was recently impressed by a program on the history channel having to do with the ghosts of Charleston. They have a remarkable gathering of ghosts, and of course the reason for that is those Charleston families have been there for seven and eight generations with the result that there is lots of room for the ghosts to find proper subjects to whom they can reveal themselves.

One of our problems in Fells Points is really not enough of us have been here long enough to recognize that sometimes strange phenomena that takes place is really a ghostly event, not an accident. That takes two or three generations to recognize that, gee, this happens with some regularity. And certainly, with more than a two hundred year history, oh, yes, we've got ghosts. We've got 'em. We're finding more all the time.

**[Richard]**

I'm going to wrap you up with my point of view? One last off the wall question. What do you think Edward Fell would say? What would Edward Fell say today if he walked down what he called George Street, would he recognize Fells Point. Would he not be surprised, would he be astounded today?

**[Ed]**

Well, I don't know about George Street, but I think he'd recognize Shakespeare Street if we took the streetlights off. I think there would be a sufficient number of familiar silhouettes there that he would not feel like a stranger in a strange land. Now, he'd be baffled by the cars.

**[Richard]**

Well, the obvious technology, of course.

**[Ed]**

And he would also be baffled by the paving. But, I'm not sure. I often have said on some tours that when I point out that Frederick Douglas bought his first book there on Thames Street. And, I said, Thames Street, the silhouette on the north side would not alienate Frederick Douglas in 1839 or thereabouts. He wouldn't feel at home, but he wouldn't feel totally alienated. With that in mind, Fell, being a ... ex-Quaker, would probably want to know what the rent was. What are the monthly collectables?

And ... maybe he's one of the ghosts knocking on the door all the time. I don't know.