

When 38 Schooners Slip In, Somebody's Bound to Notice

For three days in mid-October, the spectacle of sail came alive again along the piers of Fell's Point as 38 schooners gathered for a race to Norfolk. One of the least heralded joys of the waterfront, this annual gathering is as nonchalant as its perhaps deliberately obscure local sponsor—the Fell's Point Yacht Club, of no fixed address but reachable via the bar at the Whistling Oyster.

The club's dock master, Carl Engel, said he found tie-ups for all ships—although the first-day arrivals were squeezed by the presence of the Black-Eyed Susan paddle boat in its new, contested, but now permanent site on the west side of the municipal pier at the foot of Broadway. That is the schooners' favored site. Engel said that on request the next day, the owner of the Susan took it elsewhere in accord with the lease approved by the Board of Estimates.

This was the 16th running of the race. It originated among schooner owners who follow fair weather to and from New England and the Caribbean or Florida. Others have joined them as they head south in fall and duck up the Chesapeake for a sociable break in Fell's Point. While here, they set their sails for all who happen to be watching and do a roundabout from the Inner Harbor to Canton. In turn, Fell's Point merchants and sailors lay on a banquet for the crews, this year at the Latin Palace.

The race starts the next morning at the Bay Bridge.

'Point's Prime Characters-III

So Set 'em Up, Turkey Joe, Tell Us Stories We Ought'a Know

By Mark Walker

Marketing Analyst, Puppeteer, Conjuror

Joseph Trabert, or Turkey Joe, wasn't just a celebrity, or character, in Fell's Point. He and his bar were known all over Baltimore in the 1970s. They showed up in the newspapers and on television, much as Jimmy's might today.

The former elementary school teacher opened Turkey Joe's at 710 S. Broadway, the former site of the Parisian Café, in 1972. Many wondered how the saloon got its name and Joe varied his response according to the customer. He told one patron he was born in Turkey. He told another he used to be in the turkey business. In truth, he slightly resembled a turkey in his younger years and when someone said, "Would you buy a beer from this Turkey?" a clever saloon name was born.

Turkey Joe's was a meeting place for the 25-45 crowds. Women especially liked it because they were treated with respect. The bar was well known for its metal storefront and an octagonal window. Every month Joe used white shoe polish to paint sayings on the window. Fun seekers along Broadway would burst into laughter reading, "You can take the girl out of Glen Burnie, but you can't take the gum out of her mouth." Another that made the papers was, "Will Rogers never met Richard Nixon."

Fell's Point was seedier then, still a rough merchant seaman's hangout with rundown bars and flop houses. But Joe declares that during his eight-year run the bar never had a fight—probably attributable to the off-duty police who hung out there. If Joe didn't like you, he'd ban you from his bar for life. Major muck-ups were banned for life plus one day. He banned one lady for life plus two days when she drank herself silly after



Photo by Lew Diuguid

Schooners rest at Broadway Pier while their crews play in Fell's Point before the race to Norfolk.

One entrant last year, the Pride of Baltimore II, was out of the running. It was demasted in a squall off of France on Sept. 19 and is under repair in Nazaire. Its new counterpart, the sleek \$3.9 million Virginia, joined the race and drew onlookers. It is modeled on a 1917 pilot boat.

A lamented absence this year was the founder of the race, Capt. Lane Briggs of Norfolk, who died on the same day that the storm snapped the bowsprit of the Pride. Briggs' crew was present, though, aboard his tugboat, a tugboat he rigged with sails during the 1973 run-up of fuel prices.

Participants say the race is more camaraderie than competition, but for the record the winner overall was Imagine, out of Annapolis. All of this transpired without anybody finding a mention in The Sun, although it had an obituary on Briggs. The Washington Post did let readers in on the contest.

Happenings

Thanksgiving Service Nov. 20

The Rev. Jack Trautwein will offer a Community Thanksgiving Service on Sunday, Nov. 20, at 7:30PM in the Vagabond Theater on the Square.

Stars Aligning for Christmas

The Fell's Point Development Corp. is well into plans for a bountiful yet old-fashioned Christmas, with shoppers sustained by hot drinks and snacks, music and decorating competitions as part of a Miracle on Main Streets promotion. Each Saturday will be Live, starting with Santa's arrival by tugboat at Broadway Pier on Dec. 3 at 9AM, followed by breakfast and magic at the Admiral Fell Inn. Tree lighting is at 5 and the Parade of Lighted Boats at 6. Website www.fellspointdevelopment.com

Homeowners' Nominees

The Fell's Point Homeowners Association nominating committee offered a slate led by current President Jennifer Etheridge for reelection. Others nominated include: Vice President Pat Jenkins, Secretary Emily Perschetz and for treasurer, Neil Tabor. Election will take place in December. Etheridge received acclamation from the floor at a recent meeting with an explanation of why Pointers pronounce Thames Street the way it looks, rather than as the British do, with their "Tems." It seems the British abandoned the straightforward pronunciation of their river to appease their German-born king, George III, who reigned 1760-1820, and who had trouble with his th's. Particularly during the War of 1812, but ever since, Fell's Pointers saw no need to accommodate him. Now we know why Camilla passed up taking the Water Taxi.

Time and Tide and Chanteys

Fathom the Bowl, says the Preservation Society, each Thursday at 6PM, joining Steven Lampredi, master of the maritime ballad, in choruses of tavern songs and work chanteys at the Time and Tide Theater, 1732 Thames St. Show and access to the bowl, as warm-up to dinner around the 'Point, is \$12. 410.675.6750 ext. 16, or www.preservationsociety.com

Rec Pier Dolled Up for Film

Despite all the fervent activity at Rec Pier suggesting major change, the old trouper of "Homicide" fame is only being made over for a movie, tentatively called "Music High," being shot in the ballroom. The representative of the pier's redevelopers, J.J. Clarke, reported on the first stage of restoring the 1914 structure. An engineering firm deployed divers and found that, as predicted, "all of the concrete pier elements are suffering from advanced stages of deterioration." The city, in seeking a developer, had estimated the shoring up could cost \$6 million. No new estimate.



Barman Joseph Trabert

work and started trouble. She later got even by licking the shoe polish off his store window.

Another Fell's Point regular was Johnny Johnson, or Tambourine John, a.k.a. Turkey Junior. He played a tambourine to jukebox songs. Junior didn't have a steady job and lived above the bar for \$50 a month.

During the 1972 oil embargo, he came to Joe asking, "Is it true fuel has increased?" When Joe said it was so, Junior asked him to raise the rent: "The government just ga'me me more money than I need, so I want to give some of it to you." After he insisted, Joe took it up to \$55.

Reporters there from the old News American started the Wednesday Afternoon Tea Club, which met at Turkey Joe's on Thursday nights. Sun reporters came as the Fellowship of Christian Journalists, on another night. Accordingly, Joe was often quoted in these and even national publications for his wit. He co-hosted a weekly public service radio show on WYST-FM & AM. When I visited Turkey Joe's I was still wearing my brown suede fringe coat and drinking Tequila Sunrises. Life didn't get better than that. Inside the bar were portraits of Turkeys painted by Jim Joyner and Joe's huge collection of beer cans.

Turkey Joe's flow charts for beer vending could be eccentric, too. When his weekly Pabst sales spiked to 25 cases as other bars languished, a team flew in from Wisconsin to ferret out the formula. The suits found no ads on coasters, nary a Blue Ribbon wall clock. But every Saturday, 15 or 20 auto workers from Dundalk would show up for a drawn-out salute to the beer that made Milwaukee, and Joe, famous.

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'Pointer Takes Look at Portland, Offers Eyeful for Red Line Planners

By Donna Zebe

Fell's Prospect Board Member

As one of 10 people sent from Baltimore to study the light rail system in Portland, Oregon, I walked out of the airport late on a Friday night, purchased a \$1.80 ticket with my debit card and boarded the MAX. The cars, clean brightly lit and had great signage. They are smaller than Baltimore's and are entered with barely a step up. In 45 minutes, I detrained a block from my hotel.

Our sponsor was the Citizens Planning and Housing Association. We spent the first day riding the system with two people of the TriMet transit authority, starting in the heart of the city with lots of retail, restaurants and people. About 1.5 million live in the Portland area and can use bus, trolley and the light rail--77% by choice instead of necessity, compared to 44% in Baltimore. All light rail cars have accommodations for seniors and wheelchair ramps activated by the rider shoot out from the side of the car. Four hooks per car hang on to riders' bikes.

Our hosts pointed out highlights as well as the challenges they faced in construction. The stops reflected the heritage of the neighborhood served, with works by local artists. Several financial programs were available, said owners of two small businesses that weathered the build. A founding principle was that no business be lost during that phase. Now, less than two years after the line's completion, over 50 new businesses are taking advantage of the visibility and ease of access the transport provides. It came in four months ahead of schedule.

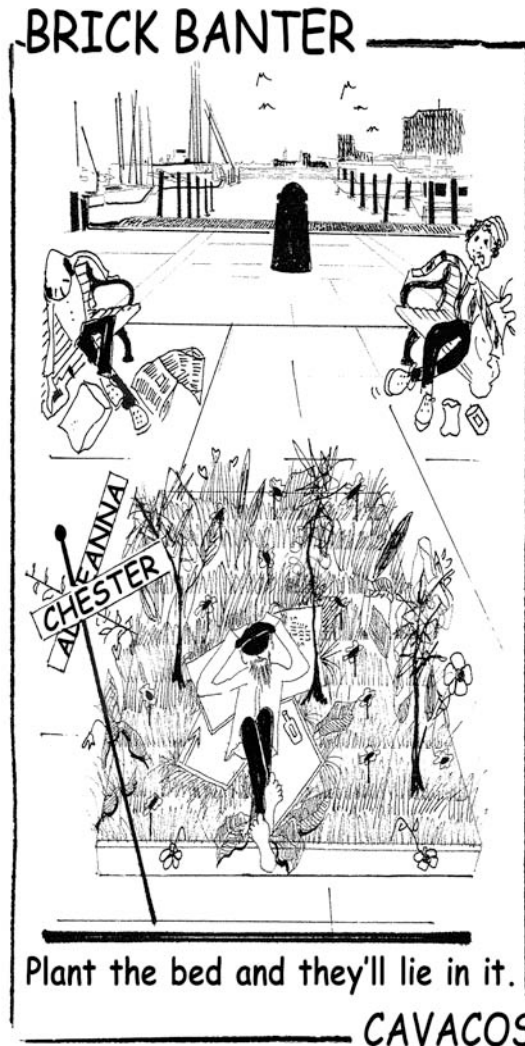
One of the features we tried was dialing a number on our cell phones, plugging in a code for the station where we waited, being told how long till the next train--and it was right! We spoke to many riders and only one took a negative stance. The citizens love their system because it's on time, clean, easy to use and affordable. What made this all work was early participation by the community. An independent entity was established to oversee the project so it wouldn't be driven by any partisan entity. There is real ownership of the system by the users. They were involved, from ideas to reality.

Please attend the MTA Red Line Community Workshop at Holy Rosary Church Hall, 408 S. Chester St., on Nov. 15, open 6 to 9PM, to tell the MTA what we want, not just to hear what they think we should have. This is going to be the largest public works project in our region for the next two decades and part of it is going to run through our neighborhood. Let's make it work by getting involved!

Time Bubble Bursts on Scene At Preservation Society Bash

Several dozen guests and members gathered in the gardens of the Preservation Society on Nov. 8 to dedicate a time machine that narrates Fell's Point's mostly immigration and water-related history in a mini-theater adjacent to the Maritime Museum on Thames St.

Visitors select from artifacts a topic, from slavery to tomato canning to "Homicide," and an actor on screen tells the story in pungent first-person accounts. The crowd in the museum, under a tent, and in the Visitor Center included six of the actors and the Maryland Historical Society's departing president, Dennis Fiori. He teamed with the Preservation Society to create the museum. The main speaker was Jonathan Tourtellot, geotourism editor for National Geographic Traveler, who lauded the porthole on history as the sort of sustainable attraction that benefits the tourist and the setting.



Turkey in the Raw

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Joe sold the bar in October 1980. For about five years the new owner called it Turkey's. It now is Gemini. After a long vacation, Joe worked for the Mayor's Office of Cable and Communication. He eventually became the city Film Commissioner and attracted makers of movies including Avalon, Hairspray and Accidental Tourist.

Joe, 69, and his wife Anne live in Hamilton. He said that "Fell's Point isn't the Fell's Point that I once knew. It seemed to be more fun back then. I think of it as being my first home. I always felt comfortable and safe down there." He still has breakfast on Sundays at Jimmy's. He reminisces about Broadway -- "boulevard of broken dreams, a broken heart for every broken light on Broadway."

And he still collects beer coasters, beer glasses, butterfly art, painted window screens and cheese shakers.

Cheers to you, Joe.

Resident Merchant's Perspective: 6 Sensible Reasons to Shop On the Streets of Fell's Point

1. Enjoy friendly, personal service.
2. Save gas, conserve energy and reduce pollution.
3. Avoid the mall maul.
4. Get a little fresh air and exercise.
5. Bump into neighbors and friends.
6. Support local businesses and help prevent ugly, empty storefronts

Schedules

Trash

Place trash outside in cans or, after 6AM on collection day, in plastic bags. Mondays and Thursdays but no holidays. November 24th is a Holiday so do not put your trash out.

Recycling

Place outside by 7AM on collection day. Glass, metal and plastic in blue plastic bags.

Paper and cardboard in paper bags, cardboard boxes or tied with string. Fridays

Neighborhood Meetings

Douglas Place: Third Wednesday of every other month at the Polish National Alliance, 1637 Eastern Avenue, 410.563.1297.

Fell's Point Antique Dealers' Association: Call 410.675.4776.

Fell's Point Community Organization: Second Mondays, 7PM, Fell's Point Visitor Center, 410.276.5471.

Fell's Point Development Corp.: 9AM every Tuesday, Max's on Broadway. Open to all. 410.675.8900.

Fell's Point Homeowners' Association: First Wednesdays, 7PM, Bertha's 2nd Floor.

Greenspace Action Partnership: Second Tuesdays, 6PM, Visitor Center, 410.675.6750 ext 10.

Society for the Preservation of Fell's Point and Federal Hill: Call 410.675.6750.

The Fell's Pointer is published monthly by volunteers of Fell's Point Citizens on Patrol, Inc. Questions, input and participation in patrols and this newsletter are welcome.

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