

Santa's Arrival Makes Splash, And Shop Owners Sustain It

Christmas came early and with flourishes to Fell's Point last Saturday, as Santa Claus in colonial garb pulled up at Broadway Pier aboard a tugboat while fireboats made rainbows for bundled youngsters on a frosty morning. Santa and his sidekick Charles Dickens had breakfast with them in The Admiral Fell Inn, then gamboled in the Square. At dusk came a Punch and Judy show, tree lighting and the Parade of Lighted Boats. The tree in the square--"Look, it's real!"--was a gift of the Homeowners' Association.

The Development Corp., inspired by a national "Miracle on Main Street" program, has led a massive effort to offer resident and visiting shoppers treats and a taste of history along decorated streets. And the pace quickening as Christmas approaches. The Development Corp., reworked from the Business Association, offers full details at www.fellspointdevelopment.com, or phone The Preservation Society's Visitor Center, 410.675.6750.

Today (Saturday, Dec. 10) provides the spiciest event, with shops offering egg nog and partakers voting for their favorite cup. The day also launches a two-tiered outdoor decorating contest, residential and commercial, with winners to be chosen



Photo by Lew Diuguid

Colonially garbed Santa arrives at foot of Broadway on Dec. 3, with help from elves, the Fell's Point Development Corp., two plumbing fire boats and a Moran tug

by viewers on Saturday, Dec. 17. To enter, decorate. On-street parking is free for both weekends.

Also on Dec. 17, at 2 PM with thanks to the Preservation Society, is a talk on "The History of the Baltimore Christmas Gardens," including a display, on the second floor of the Captain's Hotel, 1631 Aliceanna St. The building, being acquired by the Society, once was the sleeping quarters for visiting ships' captains. That evening, from 7 until 8:30, the Amrani Na Gaeilge Irish Men's Chorale will perform at Kooper's/Slainte, 1700 Thames St.

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'Point's Prime Characters-IV Sgt. Armiger, Still Missed, and Forever on the Square

By Mark Walker

Marketing Analyst, Puppeteer, Conjurer

The signs at Broadway and Thames honor a policeman who walked the beat there in the 1980s. They read "G. Mike Armiger Square." He was much beloved, he wasn't at all square, and he adored working the area. When he died young, Preacher Jack Trautwein's eulogy included a typical assessment by one of the many residents that the sergeant served: "Mike's mission in life was to bring together all segments of Fell's Point."

At age 41, with a wife and 9-month-old twins, Mike died of a heart attack just before the shift change at Southeastern Police Station on June 24, 1994, leaving an extended family here. According to Jacquie Watts, editor of The Baltimore Guide, "Mike knew every pan-handler, con man, grifter and daytime burglar in the neighborhood, and as he arrested them he treated them with the same courtesy he treated the more law-abiding denizens. . . . He never made that many arrests but he was very effective. He always tried to defuse the situation by talking to the combatants. If there were a couple of guys slugging it out in the square, Mike never pulled out a billy club, but nine times out of ten he would stop the fight. The tenth time he'd call the paddy

wagon, but that was a last resort."

Mike and I went to St. Elizabeth's School in East Baltimore in the '60s. His classmates found him friendly, funny, and outgoing--there on North Streeper Street, around the corner from me. Everyone went their separate ways after grade school and when I spotted Mike again he was a policeman on the square in Fell's Point, standing next to his three-wheeled motor scooter. It reminded me of an ice cream vendor's cart and as I snuck up behind Mike I said, "I'll have a Nutty Buddy, please!" That became our running gag.

In the late 1980s, after the movie "Ghostbusters" was released, my brothers and an I dressed for Halloween in Fell's Point as Ghostbusters accompanied by me as the Stay-Puff Marshmallow Man. I was single,

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The late Sgt. Gerald M. Armiger

Happenings

People's Counsel Bill by Kraft

Councilman Jim Kraft has cosponsored a bill introduced last month to establish a People's Counsel, appointed by the City Council, who would provide technical assistance to citizens' groups embroiled in land-use issues, such as zoning variances, with the City government. Fell's Point groups including the Homeowners and the Preservation Society that challenge City decisions repeatedly have found themselves over-matched at hearings. The bill sponsored by eight on the Council vows to "encourage effective participation" of citizens and their organizations.

Thames Park Charette

The Greenspace Action Partnership, supported by Struever Bros., Eccles & Rouse and H&S Properties, held a charette for Fell's Pointers interested in improving the little-used Thames Street Park. About 35 neighbors heard landscape architect Amy Cooney relate the space to parks that have proved popular elsewhere. Discussion produced a seemingly emergent consensus that a more open park would draw more people. GAP President Kay Hogan said suggestions distilled from the charette will be presented at follow-up session early next year. The group celebrated the outcome by decorating the gazebo and light poles for Christmas.

Frequent Floater Bobs Up

Cammie Kane, admiral of the Water Taxi fleet, announced that the Frequent Floater Annual Passes for 2006, now on sale, cost \$80 each or \$75 each for more than one. "We consider this, still, to be a great deal," she said, and a timely gift for the holidays. The taxis do not operate on Dec. 31 but maintain regular winter hours, 11AM to 6PM, weather permitting, on Jan. 1.

CHAP Bill Takes Effect

The City Council passed a bill that places the City's Commission for Historical and Architectural Preservation within the Planning Department, as the mayor already had done by fiat. Civic organizations starting with Baltimore Heritage had sought more autonomy for CHAP, the last line of defense against destruction of historic structures, and council members modified the law to address that concern in some measure.

Fell's Point chose not to take part in CHAP in the past, relying instead on the Urban Renewal Ordinance for protection. The Preservation Society now is seeking to bring the historic neighborhood under CHAP and apparently this could be accomplished by mailing ballots to property owners. At least one neighborhood, Fells Prospect, has indicated a preference not to join

Churches of Broadway-VIII For Sale, 1869 Ex-Lutheran Haven

By Lew Diiguaid
Editor

The 1869 one-time Lutheran Church at the foot of Church Hill—that crest overarching the steeples of the once and current houses of worship on lower Broadway—is for sale. The prim brick building at Fairmount St. is in good condition, the surroundings are attractive, and Pentecostals currently worship there. But the selling agent says it is more likely to be converted to housing than to find a permanent congregation. Whoever buys will find the 136-year history sketchy in the extreme.

Founders of the undoubtedly German-speaking church put "Ev. Luth. St. Maren's Kirch" on the cornerstone in 1869. Commemorative plaques inside the sizable hall identify it as The Evangelical Lutheran St. Mark's Church—through its years a relatively wealthy assembly. But toward the end of its first century, attrition was setting in. Briefly before disbanding, probably in 1969, the independent congregation joined the Lutheran Synod. This collective apparently ended up with the building. The Pratt Library's extensive collection of references to Baltimore churches has nothing on this one at 105 N. Broadway, probably because it was so briefly in the synod.

The building was sold to the black Koinonia (Greek for Brotherhood) Baptist Church. A retreat-turned-bed and breakfast in Greenspring Valley also was named Koinonia, adding confusion. The Baptists

Armiger Legacy on the Square

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with more money than sense, so I had the costume custom-made for \$400. It was worth every penny. When the four ghosts walked into Birds of a Feather on Aliceanna Street, they brought the bar down around the doubled-up John and Alicia Horn - as the Marshmallow Man peered in through the front window. When we headed for the square, Mike was working the beat. He looked like he'd seen five ghosts as we adorned him and all thereabout with stripes of Silly String.

As Trautwein recalled, Mike could draw a crowd

Shopping, Grog, Even Free Parking

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Free-lance carolers are urged to join the chorus at 7:30PM on Dec. 23, at the Polish Home Club, 512 S. Broadway. They will sing their way, with stops along the route, through Fell's Point and the Upper Fell's Point/Fells Prospect neighborhoods. For more information, call Ed Marcinko, 410.340.1600.

On Christmas Eve, Preacher Jack Trautwein will offer a Midnight Candlelight-Carol Service that starts at 11PM in the Vagabond Theater on the square. He will ring in the day on Christmas. And the celebration continues even after Christmas Day. P.J. is adding an Old World Christmas Tradition: The Christmas Blessing of the Home. He does this by appointment on Dec. 27 and 29 from 7 to 9PM. Each blessing lasts 5 to 10 minutes. Call him at 410.746.7494 or



Photo by Lew Diiguaid

Ex-Lutheran Church as seen from entry to ex-Church Hill Hospital.

recently moved to Greenmount Avenue and the Iglesia de Jesucristo Pentecostal Adulam now congregates in the building on Sunday afternoons. It has little prospect of being able to buy the property. President William R. Caltrider Jr. of the Federal Realty Co. (410.377.8993) notes that the historic Church Home Hospital across the street recently was converted to apartments and condos as part of a major housing development that has added to property values. He sees a related future for this church, although an ecclesiastical group also has shown interest.

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This may be the last of the series on the churches, although I hope not. At least one more has not been spotlighted, the Har Sinai Church of Christ at 300 S. Broadway. This is because repeated efforts to interview the pastor have been unavailing. Others, current or past, probably lurk in the shadow of St. Patrick's spire along the storied Broadway between Church Hill and the water. The 'Pointer hopes readers will bring them to our attention with a few well-informed paragraphs. Our contacts are below.

just of people who came to talk to him on the square: "He had time for everyone, with the patience of Job. . . I thought, 'We're going to have to hand out numbers or schedule appointments.'" He remembers Armiger's building frustration with the caliber of Baltimore's police performance generally and believes that could have contributed to his illness.

During his 21 years on the force, Watts wrote in an obituary, Armiger received three Bronze Stars for bravery, six commendation ribbons, countless plaques, and Policeman-of-the-Year awards from area civic groups. The sergeant was buried with full police honors and the procession was two miles long.

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A non-starter this year is ice skating at the rink that kept nearly vacant Harbor Point lively last season. The City announced that it was unable to muster a crew for the operation, which already was heavily subsidized by Struever Bros. Other ice is available, though, and nearby. The Dominic 'Mimi' DiPietro Family Skating Center at 200 S. Linwood Ave. in Patterson Park offers skating sessions on Tuesdays and Fridays 12-2PM, Fridays and Saturdays 7-9PM, and Saturdays and Sundays 3-5PM. The phone is 410.396.9392.

Among the leaders in packaging Christmas are Development Corp. President Jeremy Fennema, Jack Etheridge, Mark Walker, Tricia Ellis, Emily Perschetz, Katy Greene-Davis, Ellen VonKarajan and Barbara Cromwell.

Schedules

Trash

Place trash outside in cans or, after 6AM on collection day, in plastic bags. No Collections on Monday, Dec. 26th or Friday Jan.2.

Recycling

Place outside by 7AM on collection day. Glass, metal and plastic in blue plastic bags. Mondays December 12th and January 9th

Paper and cardboard in paper bags, cardboard boxes or tied with string. Fridays December 23 and January 13.

Neighborhood Meetings

Douglass 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.: 8AM every Tuesday and Thursday, True Restaurant Admiral Fell Inn. 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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