

Fells Point Citizens on Patrol INC

A newsletter by and for the people who live, work, and own businesses within the Fells Point area.

February 2003

Volume 5 Number 2

What Is This Task Force, Anyhow?

At last month's Fells Point Homeowners' Association meeting, several members expressed confusion over "anonymous" activities of the Task Force that formed four years ago to link informally all interested civic groups in the community. The idea was for the groups to exchange information and, where desirable and possible, to take a common stand on issues with broad impact. The focus has been on problems with bars and on construction, with developers presenting plans.

The Fells Point Task Force formed under the leadership of retiring State Senator Perry Sfikas and continues under Delegate Pete Hammen. Community groups are represented at the monthly meetings by their presidents or designees, who report back to their memberships before taking a stance at the Task Force. Attending last month's session were the Homeowners' Association, Waterfront Coalition, Citizens on Patrol, Business Association, Preservation Society, FP Community Organization, Eastern, Dallas, Bond Streets Association, Friends of Fountain Street, and a representative of the city Planning Department.

The Task Force was instrumental in coordinating a community effort that culminated in the closing last year of a bar at 723 South Broadway following repeated complaints. The owner, George Karabelas, came to the last Task Force meeting with a proposal to reopen a portion of his extensive property as a restaurant, George's, without a liquor license. Karabelas operated his own restaurant there before leasing the space that became effectively a mega-bar.

... Renewing Renewal Plan

A committee of the Task Force is looking at the land-use aspects of the Fells Point Urban Renewal Plan, that, with numerous modifications, has guided development here since 1975. On the initiative of Robert Quilter of the city Planning Department, the committee initially is recording apparent violations of the plan's requirement that commercial use in mixed residential streets be confined to the first floor.

Another eventual objective is to seek elimination of the "hole in the doughnut," blocks that are excluded from the plan along Lancaster and Aliceanna Streets between Broadway and Washington Streets, including, notably, the St. Stanislaus Church properties.

Well-Wheeled in Need

Meals on Wheels seeks volunteers in Fells Point who can spend two hours per month delivering food and a few kind words to the homebound. Call 410.558.0932 ext.3023 or e-mail mowvolunteer2@hotmail.com.



Trash and Recycling Schedule

Trash should be placed outside in metal trash cans. After 6:00 AM on collection day, it is okay to use plastic bags. Trash collection days are usually Monday and Thursday.

Recycling material should go out by 7:00 AM on collection day. Recycle paper tied, in paper bags, or in a box; glass, metal and plastic should be in blue recycling bags.

Monday, February 10 - glass, metal, and plastic
Friday, February 14 - paper
Monday, February 17 - HOLIDAY
Monday, February 24 - glass, metal, and plastic
Friday, February 28 - paper
Monday, March 10 - glass, metal, and plastic



Move Over, Ellis Island

- - The Immigration Epoch

In the last decades of the 19th Century, Europeans bundled their belongings and set out not just for New York but for Fells Point and Locust Point. And efforts are afoot to commemorate that traffic second only to the flux through Ellis Island. Already, the Preservation Society plans tours in the spring telling the story and marking the sites on Fell Street where boats docked.

Across the harbor at Tide Point, foundations have seeded \$80,000 to fund a park and signage on the promenade in front of Struever Brothers' revamped Procter & Gamble plant and even pictorials on molasses tanks just to the east. That is where the Baltimore and Ohio's trains met the boats and offered transit west. Earlier, indeed, immigrant Irish provided the strong back of the workforce that built the B&O west.

The recent flows though Ellis Island, this time of visitors seeking traces of ancestors, have confirmed the viability of immigration tourism and the Preservation Society is weighing a broader program. Preserved steamer manifests can be made accessible to facilitate visitors' genealogical searches. Parker Pennington, of the Society, pointed out that for all of the raw material available here, including lore of the families who settled into Fells Point's ethnic streets, little has found its way into the history books. That research must be part of a coherent program, he said, that could culminate in accounts so complete as to justify a museum of immigration.

... Also on the Waterfront

Captain Jan Miles of the *Pride of Baltimore II* and Executive Director Linda Christenson took a tour of the Recreation Pier for a look at facilities that could serve as a small museum and home dock for the Fells Point-connected schooner.

The visitors came away convinced it makes a perfect fit, said a spokesman. The Maryland Historical Society, which is rebuilding the Trolley Barn across Thames Street from the Pier to house a maritime collection, reportedly added its endorsement of having the classic *Pride of Baltimore II* docked so nearby.

Delegate Pete Hammen described efforts well under way to cut off at point of entry much of the harbor's clutter of bottles and styrofoam floating in from storm sewers. Trash racks would catch the detritus in great bags for collection after rains that empty the city's gutters into the Patapsco.

A trial rack is to be installed on the drain at Harris Creek, hard by the site of the yard where the *Constellation* was constructed.

Owners of the *Black-eyed Susan* paddle tour boat informed the Task Force meeting of a proposal to dock the 149-passenger craft on the west side of Broadway Pier. Its home base currently is in Canton.

The Fells Point Citizens on Patrol Newsletter is published monthly by FPCOP Inc. Your questions, input, and participation regarding patrols and this newsletter, are welcome.

Please contact us by:

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410.342.7354 leave message

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Baltimore, MD 21231

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Point Pointers

Keep Trash Anonymous; Look Both Ways

A readers' guide to life on the Fells Point streets:

- Do not put anything in the garbage that could be used for identity theft without shredding or otherwise spoiling it first. This includes anything with your social security number on it, pre-approved credit offers, credit card bills, receipts with your credit card number on them, bank statements, and canceled checks. When in doubt, shred.
- If someone on the street asks your assistance, offer to call the police or an ambulance.
- Especially during prime drinking hours, don't assume traffic on a one-way street will be going the right way. Look left and right before crossing and be as cautious when driving. Even during the day, bicycles may be going in the opposite direction and can be quiet enough to miss until too late.

Book Review -

Footner Evens Constellation's Keel

USS Constellation -- From Frigate to Sloop of War, *By Geoffrey M. Footner, Naval Institute Press, Annapolis. 367 pp. (For sale at Visitor's Center, South Ann Street)*

For all the fascinating turns in the history of the famous frigate launched in Fells Point in 1797, none is more curious than the retroactive conclusion by the Navy in 1991 that it had created an altogether new ship in 1853 during one of Constellation's numerous rebuilds. As sketched in prior articles in this Newsletter, the 'Point's own naval historian has rebutted that portentous conclusion. In this interested reviewer's opinion, Footner has refuted it.

Constellation's passage was rarely smooth, and the recounting of its overhauls, plank by beam, can be demanding for the layman. But the effort is repaid with a sense for the boat's continuity through 200 years of contest against the French, British, Barbary pirates, rot, gales, bureaucratic entanglements over ratings, and shipyard satraps—all culminating in the latest, most loving, rebuild for Constellation's place of honor in the Inner Harbor. —Lew Diuguid

WANTED: Newsletter Pagemaker

FPCOP Newsletter is about to lose its volunteer desktop designer-layout genius, a consequence of the neighborhood attrition that comes with motherhood. If you are willing to translate an editor's monthly ramblings into two camera-ready pages, please e-mail us forthwith.

Thanks for the Support

FPCOP wishes to thank Myrna Poirier and Frank Tribull, Sr. for answering our call for financial support with a generous donation. These donations allow us to continue publishing the newsletter.

Printer's Ad

Ice-Encrusted Craft Tucks In



At last, warmer air wins out

Near the outset of last month's cold spell, a small craft enshrouded in frozen sea spray struggled up the harbor and docked at Rec Pier - looking like the Pequod after an Arctic quest of Moby Dick.

A check with its bemused host at Moran Tugboats produced this account: A Maine boat builder bought the surplus Landing Craft Module (looking like a miniature LSD with a derrick) from the Navy in Norfolk and it headed north. The bay was tossing such breakers into the freezing air with winds at 35 knots from the northwest that the blindsided crew radioed for safe harbor at Fells Point to sit out the storm. By month's end, the LCM was still hove to, and clumps of ice still clung.

Troubled Rats - - Solace in the Cold

With the winter lull in the crowds visiting Fells Point, and the consequent shortage of street food available to rats, traps become much more effective. During the cold snap we killed four rats in a single trap, bated with crunchy peanut butter, in a 24-hour period. Over all, we hauled out of our backyard more than 25 in this coldest of Januarys. With these numbers we can put a dent in the rat population before spring arrives.

When I used to live in Malawi, the African farmers in the fall would clear the fields by placing the corn stalks in a large mound in the center of a field near the village and letting it settle for a few days. Then villagers would stand around the mound with nets and set fire to it. The mice that had set up residence amidst the stalks would come running out, and they were easily caught, put onto a stick and roasted in the fire. This was a great treat and during that time of year you could see kids selling "mouse-on-a-stick" by the side of the road. The experts told me that the tail tasted the best, much as some fish fanciers say the head or tail is the most savory.

Since the rats of Fells Point are three or four times larger than the mice of Malawi, such a plan would probably not be feasible here, but setting out traps and clearing them is a cold-morning start on limiting the city's rat population.

- - Michael Arida, President of FPCOP

Corrections and Amplifications

Last month the Newsletter reported the unlikely tale of a beaver with homing-pigeon inclinations who keeps returning to the waterside at Living Classrooms' peninsula after being hauled to safer environs. A disinterested panel of scientists insists, however, that beavers take only to fresh water. Forced thus to backpedal, we have deduced the presence of a muskrat with paddle, nutria, or major rat with an unlikely tail.

The Newsletter regrets failure to print dates, now passed, for residents to renew parking permits at the Vagabond Theater. Permits now must be obtained during February in the city office at 417 East Fayette Street. Prices for residential and guest passes are \$20 each. Information available at 410.396.3042. Those who purchased their parking permits locally can pick them up after February 22 at the Coldwell Banker office on the Square.

Neighborhood Association Meeting Schedules

- Fells Point Antique Dealers Association:** (meetings as needed) Call 410.675.4776 for more information.
- Fells Point Business Association:** (Third Tuesday of every month) 9:00 AM at EBLO, 606 South Ann Street.
- Fells Point Community Organization:** (Second Monday of every month) 7:00 PM at the Fells Point Visitor Center, 410.276.5471.
- Fells Point Homeowners Association:** (First Wednesday of every month) 7:30 PM at Bertha's 2nd Floor Studio.
- Fells Point Marketing Group:** (Third Monday of every month) 6:30 PM at Kooper's, 410.276.1410.
- Mid-Point Community Association:** (First Tuesday of every month) 7:30 PM at Conrad-Miller Gallery, 2007 Fleet Street.
- Society for the Preservation of Fells Point and Federal Hill:** Call 410.675.6750 for more information.
- Eastern, Dallas, Bond Streets Association:** (Every other month, the second Monday of the month) 7:30 - 8:30 PM at 1637 Eastern Avenue.