

DR. GRIDLOCK

of Nut Cases and Scam Artists

Repeated calls to the mayor's office have not fixed the problem.

Will it take a death to get this fixed today?

MARK DAVIS
Washington

Dr. Gridlock has reported this dangerous situation to the proper officials at the D.C. Department of Public Works. This ought to receive top priority. We'll see.

Lots of Queries About Canal Road

Dr. Gridlock is getting a number of letters from confused motorists wondering what the current traffic restrictions are on the Canal Road NW construction project.

This 2.5-mile Canal Road corridor, with reversible lanes from Foxhall Road to Chain Bridge, is difficult to navigate even in normal times. It is even more so now that the city is rebuilding the crumbling stone walls along the C&O Canal between Foxhall Road and Arizona Avenue and has narrowed traffic lanes.

I have forwarded your letters to the project's area engineer, John Fleming. He says the city is reviewing the signs to see if they can be clearer. If you'd like to fax him comments, the number is 202-645-6154. He says he will review your comments.

The project, by the way, is now scheduled to be completed by June.

A Solution to I-270 Confusion

Dear Dr. Gridlock:

The solution to the confusion over the I-270 split at the Capital Beltway is simple—and tested! In Texas, I-35 south splits north of Dallas and Fort Worth into I-35E (which goes through Dallas) and I-35W (which goes through Fort Worth). They rejoin about 25 miles south of the cities, and I-35 goes on to Austin.

There's no reason I-270 can't split into I-270E (ending at the Beltway heading toward Silver Spring and College Park) and I-270W (ending at the Beltway heading toward the American Legion Bridge and Northern Virginia).

JIM MAYER
Arlington

Howard Benn, of Silver Spring, notes that Interstate 35 is similarly split into I-35E and I-35W to serve the twin cities of Minneapolis and St. Paul.

I'll pass this along to the Maryland State Highway Administration for consideration. I agree with your suggestions: I-270E and I-270W would make things clearer than they are now.

Why Do We Call Them 'Slugs'?

Dear Dr. Gridlock:

Several years ago, I heard a segment on the news about people around Washington, D.C., being picked

Sale of Mill Still in Works Despite Fire, Official Says

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before efforts could be made to make it safe.

"Everyone is concerned they'll tear it down right away," said Emily Morgan, executive director of Friends of Broad Run, which maintains the area north of the mill. "I think people have been panicking a little bit because they're not sure what the situation is. It sounds like the mill will be fine for the time being."

The mill, which was built in 1742, was in the process of being sold when it burned. Mays said yesterday that he contacted attorneys for the potential buyer who said the sale was still on track. The mill's fate ultimately rests in the hands of its owner.

"The inference is that the buyer is still interested," Mays said.

Attorneys representing the mill's current owner, Athalle Irvine Smith of California, and those for the potential buyer did not return calls yesterday.

Questions surrounding the mill's ownership and fate continue to consume local preservation groups and historians, many of whom have tried to offer support and financial help but have been unable to reach the parties involved in the sale.

"We volunteered to go in and stabilize it, but we haven't gotten a green light yet, and we can't figure out who gives it," said Glenn Miller, owner of Miller Brother's Construction, who has offered to shore up the mill immediately so it won't crumble further. "We're in a position to do it, and it wouldn't put anyone in financial hardship, but we can't do anything without permission."

Sources familiar with the property said the potential buyer plans to send a structural engineer to the site, possibly as soon as today, to examine what's left of the mill.

David Edwards, an architectural

historian and director of the Winchester office of the Virginia Department of Historical Resources, said he will visit the mill today at the request of the National Trust for Historic Preservation.

Investigators with the county fire marshal's office and the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms said the structure must be stabilized before they could go inside to look for clues to determine how the fire was set.

Fire officials said the blaze still is smoldering beneath the debris left on the floor of the gutted structure and probably will continue to burn for another week.

Bobby McManus, a former Gainesville supervisor and a member of Save the Battlefield Coalition and other preservationist groups, alleged this week that the Virginia Department of Transportation blocked attempts five years ago to erect a gate or barrier on a drive leading to the mill, telling her that the route was used by highway maintenance crews to gain access to nearby Interstate 66.

McManus said the department agreed only to post no-parking signs in the area.

"I hold the Virginia Department of Transportation responsible for the mill burning down," said McManus, a frequent activist for historic causes. "A gate would have kept anyone from going down there, but they turned me down. I got no-parking signs, and you see what good they did."

Agency spokeswoman Joan Morris would not comment except to say, "If Miss McManus has more detailed information that would require us to review the situation, we would be happy to do that."

Staff writers Dan Eggen and Jennifer Ordonez contributed to this report.

County Reorganizes Agency

AGENCY, From Page 1

among CSBs across the state, directed local governments to formally choose among three types of board structures, including the one chosen for Prince William yester-

sight process, and supervisors agreed.

Supervisor Mary K. Hill (R-Coles) said last week that she and other board members were pleased with reforms enacted by agency officials this year.