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BEVERLEY'S MILL

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PRINCE WILLIAM

EXTRA

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In a football rivalry marked by close games, Hylton and Woodbridge high schools offered something different last night: a blowout. No. 6 Hylton jumped to a 17-point lead and never looked back, winning 45-13 in front of about 2,500 people to spoil Woodbridge's homecoming. With the victory, the Bulldogs (8-0, 4-0)

five and had not had a losing record since the season in the 1990s. "It was their homecoming, which intensified it for both" teams, Hylton Coach Bill Brown said of the rivalry, which Woodbridge leads, 5-4. "You always use that as a tool when you are the homecoming team, and when you are the team
See GAME, Page 7, Col. 1

Parents Urge Improvements at Special School

By ANN O'HANLON
Washington Post Staff Writer

At least a dozen parents of students at PACE West, one of Prince William County's five schools dedicated to special education students, are circulating a petition to improve conditions at the 63-year-old Haymarket school. Although the parents are relatively happy with the education their chil-

dren are getting, they are angry that the school is the only one in the county without air conditioning. That is the lone grievance on a petition that the parents say they will deliver to school officials soon. Still, the same parents say, there are other issues with the school for children with emotional problems. Among their other complaints: The fans used to compensate for the lack of air conditioning are loud and

distracting; a classroom had a substitute teacher for the first six weeks of school; and because lunches are brought in from another school, parents say that their children receive fewer choices than other students and that hot meals aren't always hot and cold drinks, such as milk, sometimes are warm. The conditions, parents say, add
See SCHOOL, Page 4, Col. 3

Mill Fire Was Set, Officials Say



BY TRACY A. WOODWARD—THE WASHINGTON POST
Fire officials say arson is to blame for a blaze that destroyed Beverley's Mill, an 18th-century landmark in western Prince William. Story, Page 3.

Arson Cited in Mill's Destruction

Western Pr. William Landmark Condemned; Its Fate Is Unknown

By LEEF SMITH
Washington Post Staff Writer

Arson is being blamed for a fire Thursday that destroyed a historic 18th-century mill in western Prince William County, fire officials said yesterday.

Officials with the county fire marshal's office said the 4:02 p.m. blaze that gutted Beverley's Mill, just east of the Fauquier County line, was set deliberately.

The six-story stone structure was gutted in the blaze, which took firefighters almost nine hours to extinguish. Officials said that so far they have been unable to go inside the mill to probe for clues but that they are confident the fire was not an accident.

"The building had no electricity and sat unoccupied for years," said Fire Marshal Ernie Little. "There's no accidental source of ignition that could have caused the fire."

The building, unoccupied since the 1940s when it was closed as a grain mill, has long been a gathering place for teenagers. Officials have blamed teenagers for several fires there, including one in July that was set on the floor of the fifth story.

"It's been well-documented by the police and fire departments that break-ins and vandalisms have been a constant problem," said Ron Turner, a member of the Prince William County Historic Commission. "The building was boarded up, but someone would break into it, and it was accessible to kids or anyone else who wanted to get in."

Because the mill is a landmark,

local officials said, they were able to get help with their investigation from the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms.

Yesterday, officials with the county's Department of Public Works condemned the structure, which they surrounded with orange barricade fences. County officials said they have tried unsuccessfully to reach the mill's owner, Athalle Irvine Smith, who lives in California and also owns property in Middleburg.

They said it is up to Smith to stabilize or tear down the structure. If she does not, officials said, it would fall upon the county to make the structure safe.

Smith, a horse enthusiast, bought the mill about 15 years ago and hoped to restore it, said her ex-husband, Morton "Cappy" Smith, a Loudoun County resident.

"It was just quite a historic building," he said. "My ex-wife bought it to put in a historic charity, but that never really happened."

Officials said they are investigating reports that the mill was being sold and that the sale was scheduled to be completed next week.

Worried that the crumbling structure might collapse, officials with Norfolk Southern Corp., which runs freight trains on a track just a few yards away, have lowered their trains' speed limit to 10 miles per hour to lessen vibrations.

"The structure is nothing now but four stone walls going up five and a half stories," Little said. "There's nothing to keep it from falling inward or outward. It's just a matter of which way gravity would take it."

Built in 1742, the mill initially was used to grind limestone for making plaster. It is best known as the site of the Civil War's Battle at Thoroughfare Gap, the day before the Second Battle of Bull Run.

Emily Morgan, executive director of the Friends of Bull Run, which maintains the area north of the mill, called the loss "devastating" to the community.

"It's a loss of 250 years of irreplaceable history," Morgan said. "We've lost an incredible landmark that for years stood as a tribute to the history of the Piedmont. It provided food for the French and Indian War, the War of 1812, the Mexican War, the Revolutionary War and played a role in the Civil War. It's an amazing loss."

As news of the fire spread yesterday, history buffs, even workers employed in the mill during the 1930s and 1940s, gathered outside the mill to view the damage.

Morgan said she and other preservationists are hoping there will be enough public pressure on those who control the mill's fate that the oldest part of it—the first three stories—will be restored or left to stand as a ruin.

Officials are asking anyone with information about the fire to contact Prince William County CrimeSolvers at 703-670-3700. Fire officials said they have reports of people and cars in the area shortly before the fire but no solid leads.

Staff writer Jennifer Ordonez contributed to this report



BY TRACY A. WOODWARD—THE WASHINGTON POST

Beverley's Mill, built in 1742, is best known as the site of the Civil War's Battle at Thoroughfare Gap, the day before the Second Battle of Bull Run.