



BY LARRY ROBERTSON FOR THE WASHINGTON POST

With major league scouts watching every move, pitcher Joe McClain hit two home runs, helping Woodbridge to a 13-7 win. McClain had a harder time on the mound, walking five and giving up four runs. Story, Page 8.

HISTORIC SITE FILE: MT. ATLAS
 PRINCE WILLIAM PUBLIC LIBRARY SYSTEM
 RELIC/Bull Run Reg Lib Manassas, VA

DR. GRIDLOCK

Ron Shaffer

Defensive Driving Prescribed

In the Jan. 29 Dr. Gridlock column, Ann Waigand, of Herndon, said: "I was in rush-hour traffic on Route 7, heading toward Tysons Corner, when I stopped behind an 18-wheel truck. Suddenly the truck driver began to back up, and despite my honking madly, he crashed into my car, bending the hood up toward my windshield and punching my car back about one car length.

"Lucky, no one was behind me. I got out of the car, but the light changed and the truck drove off.

"I gave chase and was finally able to get the truck to pull over. Thirty-five minutes later, when the police arrived to take statements, the truck driver told them he was traveling about 35 to 40 mph and I ran into him!

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Mt. Atlas Won't Burden County

Supervisors Say Preserving Historic Home Too Costly

By LISA REIN
 Washington Post Staff Writer

Prince William County decided yesterday to forgo saving Mount Atlas, a Colonial house north of Haymarket that was donated to the county for preservation.

The Board of County Supervisors unanimously decided that although the 2½-story manor house, built in 1795, is among a dwindling number of historic homes left in a county enveloped by suburban sprawl, it could not devote the costly resources required to relocate and restore the structure.

"If we go down the road of saving every house because it's old, we would soon deplete

Republican supervisors cried foul in the days that followed, adding to an already tense political battle over the roles of the Sheriff's Office and the police department. County officials wereirate over alleged political favoritism—asserting that popular Sheriff E. Lee Stoffregen III (D) was extending a kind hand to another popular Democrat, Mark R. Warner—while some residents complained to supervisors and police that the escort was dangerous and inappropriate.

Some on the board and in the com-

"We have provided escorts for a lot of people, including presidents," Stoffregen said. "We do offer the escort, regardless of political party, to ensure the safety of the motorcade and the citizens of the county. We will do it for anyone who asks."

According to hundreds of documents obtained by The Washington Post this week, the Warner escort has created another stumbling block in negotiations about the relationship between Stoffregen and county

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the county's budget," said Supervisor Edgar S. Wilbourn III (R) of Gainesville, where Mount Atlas is located.

Board members agreed that devoting time and money to preserving the house would dilute the county's other ongoing restoration efforts at Rippon Lodge in Woodbridge, the Ben Lomond Manor House in Sudley and a courthouse and complex of 19th century buildings in Brentsville.

Yesterday's decision virtually assures that Mount Atlas will be torn down by a developer, unless a private preservation group moves quickly to pay the estimated \$55,000 county

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Supervisors Shun Burden Of Preserving Mount Atlas

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officials have calculated it would take to dismantle and store the house while a permanent site is found.

"We have some momentum going on the other projects, and I just don't think we have the money for this without impacting them," said Supervisor Loring B. "Ben" Thompson (R), a strong supporter of the Brentsville project in his district.

Once the house was moved or put into storage, the cost of a full restoration would have topped \$200,000. "The big numbers are yet to come, and we're not even sure how big they would be," County Executive Craig S. Gerhart said.

The loss of Mount Atlas disappointed the county's small, active community of preservationists, who had high hopes to move it to the Brentsville complex or another site.

"It should be saved," said Jan Cunard, a member of the Prince William Historic Commission. "Once these buildings are gone, they're gone forever."

Cunard noted that preservationists have created a thriving tourist destination at Explorer Park, a complex of historic buildings near Roanoke, Va., where an old house was converted into a popular tavern.

Organizers of the Brentsville project considered adding Mount Atlas to their complex but determined that it dates to an earlier era than the courthouse and would be inappropriate for the site.

Mount Atlas is on the National Register of Historic Places, although the designation does not mean it can't be torn

down for development. The house has views of the First and Second Manassas battlefields. A volunteer archaeological dig in the summer turned up nearly 5,000 artifacts, including buttons from the jacket of a Union officer, dishes and tools.

The house, originally overlooking 20,000 acres, is set back 100 feet on a gravel road and has a three-story stone chimney. A distinctive, hand-painted mural in the living room was sold at auction in 1999, the same year that owner Barton Padgett donated the house to Prince William before he died, provided that the county find a way to remove it from the 3.5-acres remaining of the property.

Padgett's estate has notified the county that it plans to put the property on the market this spring, Planning Director Rick Lawson told supervisors yesterday.

Prince William bought Rippon Lodge, the former Woodbridge estate believed to be the oldest Potomac River plantation in the county, from a private owner last year. Structural work is underway to get it ready to open to the public.

Meanwhile, the artifacts found at Mount Atlas last summer will likely be put into permanent storage, possibly at the Virginia Department of Historic Resources, said Debrarae Karnes, a county planner who oversees historic preservation efforts.

"Since the house is on the historic register, we saw an opportunity to record valuable historic and archaeological information that could be exhibited to the public someday," Karnes said.