NEWS YOU CAN USE

VOLUME III
ISSUE 4

FEBRUARY 22, 2018

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Weekly Refresher

"Because of your smile, you make life more beautiful."

- Thich Nhat Hanh

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Hammond Alum Plea Bargains to Assault

The Howard County Police Department was unable to provide a photograph of Jason Starks by press time. Seen above is the Circuit Court in Howard County (Photo by **Ricardo Whitaker**)

by **Ricardo Whitaker**

The remaining man charged with a violent home invasion in Laurel was convicted recently. The crime took place in November 2013. Jason Jarvis Everette Starks, 22, formerly of the 8800 block of Hawthorne Lane, Laurel, entered an Alford plea Howard County Circuit Court to conspiracy to commit robbery, first-degree assault, and first-degree burglary. By taking the Alford plea Starks acknowledged that the state had sufficient evidence to convict. He did not actually plead guilty.

Starks is mentioned in a Baltimore Sun article, from May 2012, as being a graduate of Hammond High School.

According to police and prosecutors, Starks was among three men who smashed the rear, sliding glass door in the basement of a home located in the 9300 block of Decatur Road in Laurel on November 7, 2013. According to testimony, the men wore black ski masks, holding what appeared to be handguns. The men ordered four victims to the ground, robbing them of $300 cash, a quarter-ounce of marijuana, a jacket, an iPhone and truck keys, according to testimony. The victims reported that two of the intruders assaulted the resident of the home with a claw hammer — the same used to break through the sliding door. Another victim was kicked in the head, according to tes-

(Hammond Alum Continued on page 15)

Publisher's Notes

Community News: A Critical Element in Digital Age

It was more than a few years ago when the idea came to me to establish a community newspaper. I remember attending networking meetings and without fail one or two persons usually asked why I planned to go with print in the digital age. That is a fair question.

The answer is quite simple. Although this venture is run as a business with the eventual expectation of earning revenue, the primary reason revolves around service to the community. The idea spawned when working with a local school to get parents more involved in the education of their children.

As a member of the PTA, I was one of several who wanted more diversity within the PTA. But more importantly, we wanted to set an anchor so that all of the children would benefit from quality care at school and at home.

To reach some of our objectives, we needed to communicate to the parents. The principal sent out notices and I created a short newsletter that was hand-delivered. A few of us knocked on doors.

The process was exhausting. While there are social media sites where involved parents hang out, there is no such place for the unintentionally uninvolved parent. When I say uninvolved, please do not take exception. Certainly the parents were involved with their children, but they were not connected to the school community.

We had to reach them to old-fashioned way.

With that exhaustive effort, the Guilford Gazette was born and quickly morphed from a newspaper focused on a segment of a larger community, to a newspaper dedicated to the entire area served by Hammond High School.

Now for the answer to the question. A print newspaper, while subscription-based, can still be disturbed freely to non-subscribers whenever there is a community call to action.

When important issues arise, a newspaper, such as the Guilford Gazette, already has the infrastructure in place to connect with thousands of citizens. We can reach those who regularly follow local events and those who do not.

If you live in the local area and you see the Guilford Gazette from time-to-time at the nail salon or the barbershop, feel free to read articles there or take one home. The newspaper is there for you. However, if you see the value that we bring to the place where you live or work, please consider buying a subscription. Those few dollars help us to reach your neighborhood when it counts.

Ricardo L. Whitaker

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Politics

Supreme Court Docket: Maryland Gerrymandering

by **Barry Rascovar**

Warning to good-government types, Gov. Larry Hogan and others demanding non-partisan re-drawing of political districts for Congress: No matter how you slice it, re-districting will remain inherently unfair.

That's the dilemma the Supreme Court faces as it considers whether to step in as it once did and lay down rules for re-districting.

How do you take a state with 5.7 million people (2010 Census), divide the state into eight districts each containing 721,529 people, and make everyone happy? It is Mission Impossible.Political Redistricting -- Inherently UnfairAdd in the complicity of computer-generated map gyrations and district configurations start to look like an out-of-control jigsaw puzzle.

There is no easy fix, though some would have us believe a non-partisan commission can wave a magic wand and congressional boundaries will be fair and impartial.

Don't drink that Kool-Aid.

Even a de-politicized group (if such an animal exists) will produce distorted districts that unfairly discriminate against population groups -- Republicans, Democrats, independents, minorities, rural or urban residents. Some counties, cities and communities will be torn apart no matter how you dice those eight districts.

It is inevitable. You will never please everyone.

Right now, Republicans want to re-jigger the congressional maps to gain at least one additional seat in Maryland by packing the 6th Congressional District with Western Maryland Republican voters and strip out all those Democrats who live in the district's southern portion in Montgomery County.

New-Era Segregation?

That's not a bipartisan notion. It's a one-party plan -- a new form of segregated map-drawing favoring one political party to give Maryland a district that is all rural and nearly all white.

Such a move also would pack more minority voters into districts in the Baltimore-Washington megalopolis -- more politically imposed segregation.

Western Maryland Republicans in their lawsuit claim they are being discriminated against, that their free-speech rights are being suppressed because Republicans in western portions of the state now are being outvoted by Democrats who were added to the district in 2011.

They want a pristine, rural congressional district, much like they enjoyed after the 2000 Census, which might stretch all the way through rural stretches of Baltimore and Harford counties on the east and Montgomery County on the south.

But to do so would wreak havoc in the other seven districts. What's fair about that?

At it stands, there's no guarantee a Democrat will win the open 6th District seat in November.

6th District History

After all, registered Republicans and unaffiliated voters outnumber registered Democrats (253,000 to 212,000). Indeed, incumbent Democratic Rep. John Delaney won by a mere 2,200 votes in 2014 over Republican radio talk show host Dan Bongino.

Historically, the 6th District has favored conservative or moderately conservative candidates of both parties. Over the past 48 years, the district has sent a Democrat to Congress 14 times (Goodloe and Beverly Byron, plus Delaney) and a Republican 10 times (Roscoe Bartlett).

The 6th has had multiple geographic permutations, tying Western Maryland to all of Montgomery County for several decades or sweeping directly east all the way to the Susquehanna River.

In the process of marching to the east, the 6th sometimes has chopped Howard County in half (leaving Democratic Columbia outside the 6th's borders) and segmenting Baltimore and Harford counties according to political leanings.

Compared with other current congressional districts in Maryland, the 6th is one of the most compact and coherent. It respects the district's natural borders and county lines. It does not tear apart towns and communities as is the case with many of the other districts.

The 6th does, though, tie rural Western Maryland with suburban-

(Gerrymandering Continued on page 15)

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Business

'Bach to Rock' in Fulton Preparing for Grand Opening

Pictured above, a photo of a newly opened Bach to Rock facility in Penfield, New York (Photo courtesy **Bach to Rock**)

Bethesda, MD – (February 15, 2018): Bach to Rock (B2R), America's music school for students of all ages, proudly announces the opening of its newest school in Fulton, Maryland. The community is invited to the free grand opening festivities on Saturday, March 17, 2018 from 10 a.m. – 2 p.m. at 8180 Maple Lawn Blvd, Suite G, Fulton, MD 20759. Attendees are welcome to tour the school, enjoy a free music lesson, learn about individual lessons and group classes, try out free toddler "Mommy and Me" classes, enter prize drawings and giveaways, check out the recording studio, and meet the teachers. This location marks Bach to Rock's first school in Howard County and its 29th in the country.

"We are delighted to open our newest Bach to Rock school in Howard County, Maryland. Fulton is an ideal location for families that work or live in the Baltimore-Washington region," said President of Bach to Rock, Brian Gross. "We offer an innovative and progressive approach to music education - gone are the days of boring and solitary lessons.

At Bach to Rock, students launch into learning today's favorites while our teachers expertly nurture their potential and share the fundamentals of music as they progress," continued Gross. Families in Fulton, Columbia, Savage, Clarksville, Laurel and Highland will truly benefit from the Bach to Rock method.

At the helm of the Fulton location is Bach to Rock franchisee Sameer Patel. Patel is a Bach to Rock grassroots success story. He first became aware of Bach to Rock when he enrolled his two children at the Bethesda, Maryland school. Noting its success and popularity, he began considering opportunities to become a franchisee, ultimately deciding to become a franchise investor of the Bristow, Virginia school. Now, three years later, he is opening the Fulton school. "Every day, I continue to be impressed by the impact the Bach to Rock method of music education has on children and adults. The transformation is wonderful. I'm excited to help more people express their creativity through our fun and inventive music education programs," said Patel.

For more details on the March 17 Grand Opening, visit: 8180 Maple Lawn Blvd, Suite G, Fulton, MD, call 301-880-3388, Email: fulton@bachtorock.com or visit the web: fulton.bachtorock.com

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Religion

So Nothing is Happening; Just Listen for God's Voice

by **Dan S. Baty**

Never succumb to the idea that your life is on "hold."

There has not been one moment of your life when "nothing" was happening. Every second of your life complex operations have been executed by your body under the conscious and subconscious direction of your brain.

You made that face you make. Debated about whether to watch a movie – and which one. You texted a friend. Looked out the window. Ate a cookie.

Each one of those activities carried with it emotional information that, perhaps imperceptibly but very definitely, nudged your situation and shifted your mood.

At the same time that was going on, metaphysical forces were influencing your spirit one way or the other. You prayed. You wrote in your journal. You turned on music. Flipped through your Bible. Or decided not to.

In addition, the ever-changing time of day escorted you into routines that even in their consistency contain slight variances. What you will eat for lunch. What you need to finish by the end of the day. What you're going to wear tomorrow. What you'll find in your mailbox. What nugget from the evening news will touch your heart.

All those processes have made you a different person than you were even a few moments ago.

But let's just say you don't buy any of what you just read and you want to return to "Nothing is going on in my life." Remember this: God brought forth all the wonders of Creation by simply speaking into "nothing." Listen for His voice in your "nothingness;" you'll be surprised by how abundant "nothing" can be.

Dan S. Baty is the pastor of Valley Brook Community Church in Columbia, Maryland. You can write to him at Pastor@ValleyBrook.church or follow him on Facebook @ Dan S. Baty.)

Health

Senate's Part D Budget Deal Is No Victory for Seniors

by **Sally C. Pipes**

Earlier this month, the Senate announced its two-year budget deal. It contains a healthcare provision that many are touting as a victory for American seniors. The reform aims to close the so-called "donut hole" coverage gap in the Medicare Part D drug benefit by shifting more of the program's costs to drug companies.

But that provision is a gift to insurers -- not to patients. The policy could end up raising costs for seniors on Part D, some of our most vulnerable patients. It must be eliminated from the deal.

First implemented in 2006, Part D allows Medicare seniors to buy subsidized prescription drug coverage from private insurers. Beneficiaries can choose from a variety of different coverage offerings suited to their particular prescription needs. But all plans follow the same structure: After hitting a deductible, patients pay a coinsurance on the price of prescription drugs. If a drug costs $100 a month, and a patient's coinsurance is 25 percent, he or she would pay $25.

After total drug spending reaches a specific limit -- $3,700 in 2017 -- patients fall into a coverage gap or "donut hole" as it has become known. In this phase, seniors generally pay 40 percent of the cost of brand-name drugs. That gap ends once out-of-pocket costs reach a certain level -- $4,950 in 2017 -- after which catastrophic coverage takes over.

The donut hole was always supposed to be temporary. Under current law, the gap gradually phases out so that seniors will be responsible for only 25 percent of a brand-name drug's price in the donut hole starting in 2020. Of the remaining 75 percent, drug manufacturers will cover half, while insurers will pay 25 percent.

Unless the Senate's budget deal becomes law. It would change this formula by forcing drug companies to shoulder the full 75 percent of a drug's cost in 2020, letting insurers off the hook entirely.

It's hard to see this change as anything but a giveaway to the insurance industry. One thing is for sure -- the new formula won't help seniors afford their drugs. Once fully implemented, the policy will encourage insurance companies to accelerate drug spending for patients with already high costs.

Once a beneficiary's drug spending passes the donut-hole limit, after all, insurers' share of the costs will drop to zero. So from the point of view of Part D plan providers, the faster an individual's drug costs rise, the better.

This unintended consequence likely will affect seniors with chronic diseases the most, as their drug costs are already high.

In other words, the Senate just struck a deal that benefits insurance companies at the expense of America's sickest seniors.

Sally C. Pipes is President, CEO, and Thomas W. Smith Fellow in Health Care Policy at the Pacific Research Institute. Her next book "The False Promise of Single-Payer Health Care" will be published by Encounter in March 2018. Follow her on Twitter @sallypipes.

Living

Howard County's Larry Walker and Family Set for Feud

Larry Walker, a resident of Howard County and quite well-known in several quarters, gathered his family and traveled to Los Angeles for a little bit of fun and maybe some prize money.

Walker, a member of Celebration Church in Long Reach, where he has held several leadership roles, will be a contestant on Family Feud, a game show where families are pitted against each other in a guessing game about the public's answers to sometimes wacky questions.

The game, originally hosted by Richard Dawson in 1976, has seen many hosts over the years. Before Feud, Dawson was probably best known for his role as Corporal Peter Newkirk on the sitcom, Hogan's Heroes.

Steve Harvey, a comedian and actor, is the seventh host of the show. Hosting since 2015, Harvey is also known for his syndicated radio broadcast which airs on radio stations oriented towards the African-American market.

Harvey starred in a sitcom beginning in the late 1990's aptly named "The Steve Harvey Show" where he played the role of a high school teacher.

Walker is an active participant in Howard County civic life. While he unsuccessfully ran for Howard County School Board in 2010, he also served on several public school-related committees and other civic organizations such as Community Foundation of Howard County; and African American Roundtable, which he heads.

But for now, Walker and family are set to television stardom February 23, 26, and 27.

The program airs on The CW Baltimore, and Fox 5 Plus in DC.

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Calendar

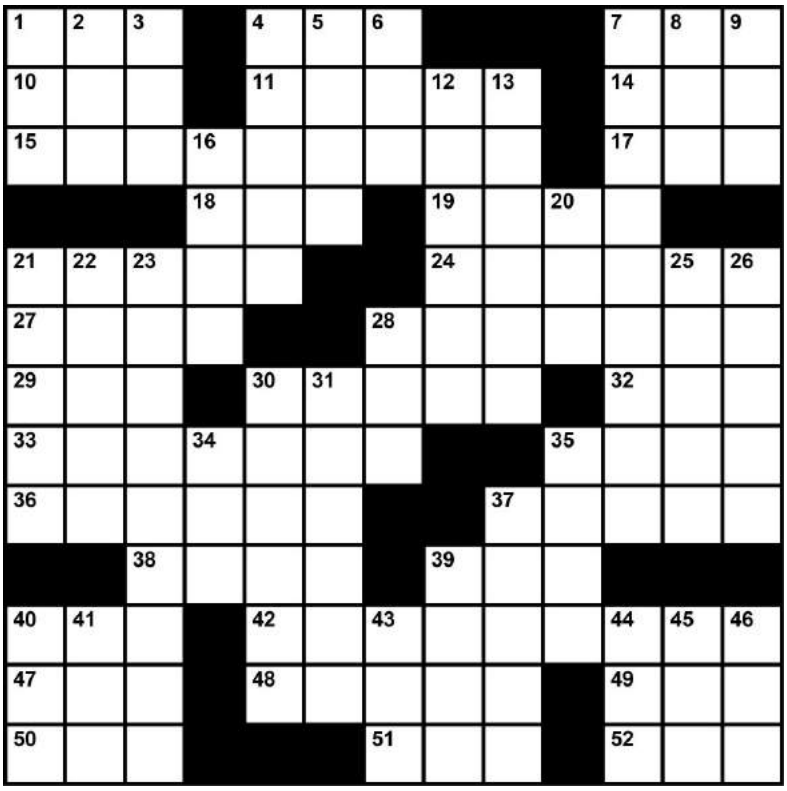
Event: Columbia Democratic Club Meeting
Thurs., Mar 14, 2018, 7:00 pm
Category: Politics and Government
Location: 6030 Tamar Drive, Columbia, Maryland
Description:
The CDC meets the second Wednesday of every month at 7:00 pm. Topics and discussions updated each month.

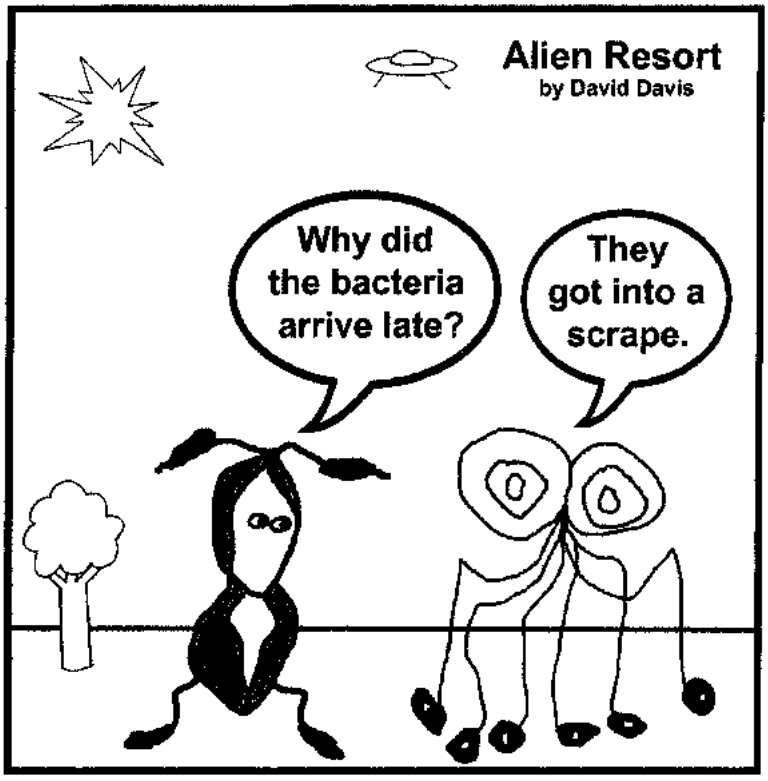
Event: Wine Tasting at Amherst House
Fri., Feb 23, 2018, 7:30pm—9:30pm
Category: Entertainment:
Location: Amherst House @ KC Village Center
7251 Eden Brook Drive, Columbia MD
Description:
Come and enjoy a night out with friends and neighbors! Eric Stein from Decanter Fine Wines in the Hickory Ridge Village Center will present a variety of wines for you to taste and compare. The qualities of each wine will be discussed. Savory snacks will also be served. ADULTS OVER 21 ONLY. Tickets available for pick-up at Amherst House, $15 per

Event: Howard County Board of Education Meeting
Thurs., Mar 8, 2018, 4:00pm—10:00pm
Category: Politics and Government
Location: 10910 Route 108, Ellicott City, MD
Description:
During this Board of Education meeting, the vote and decision on the future location of High School #13 is expected to be on the agenda.

Event: A Celebration of African American History
Sun., Feb 25, 2018 at 11:00am
Category: Religion:
Location: Valley Brook Community Church
7065 Deepage Drive, Columbia MD
Description:
Join us for a morning of uplifting song, spoken word, and a special message from Pastor Baty.
Website: www.valleybrook.church

Comics / Puzzles





Across
1. Drop
4. Previously
7. Visited
10. French way
11. Black color
14. C.E.O.'s degree
15. Dependence
17. Musician's asset
18. 1973 Supreme Court decision name
19. Matinee hero
21. Home ____
24. Nonstick pan
27. Farm team
28. Greenery
29. "Yes, ___!"
30. Bake eggs
32. Tear
33. One who leaves prison without permission
35. Sparkling wine
36. Daze
37. Monopoly purchase
38. Formal accessory
39. Hilo garland
40. "O.K."
42. In between liquid and solid
47. "___ Maria"
48. Decree
49. Protein source
50. Fuse
51. ESPN sportscaster
52. Compass direction

Down
1. Great time
2. Larry __ Melman
3. Growing area
4. Necktie
5. Entry point
6. Kimono sash
7. Be suspicious (3 words)
8. Lawyer's org. for short
9. Combat
12. Stand about idly
13. Make lovable
16. Clothes presser
20. Not edible any more
21. Medical quantities
22. Subsist
23. Tapped firmly
25. Pointed arch
26. Kathmandu's land
28. Story
30. Partner
31. Crowded
34. Likely
35. Spring
37. Trash bag, brand name
39. Human parasites
40. Pilot's problem
41. Apple picker
43. "Thanks a ___!"
44. Bring to bear
45. Kind of chamber
46. Salon job

Solution to last week's puzzle

1 A	2 D	3 S			4 H	5 A	6 S			7 W	8 A	9 R
10 T	O	E		11 A	E	G	I	12 S		13 A	L	I
14 O	D	E		15 I	R	A	T	E		16 I	T	S
17 P	O	M	18 P	O	M		19 E	N	20 B	L	O	C
			21 A	L	A		22 D	N	A			
23 T	24 E	25 N	P	I	N	26 S		27 A	R	28 R	29 O	30 W
31 O	R	E	O		32 N	I	33 B		34 N	I	P	A
35 N	A	B	O	36 B		37 R	E	38 B	O	O	T	S
			39 S	A	40 C		41 S	A	W			
42 T	43 H	44 R	E	S	H		45 I	L	L	46 U	47 S	48 E
49 H	A	H		50 S	A	51 L	E	S		52 N	U	S
53 I	R	E		54 O	M	E	G	A		55 I	M	P
56 S	K	A			57 P	I	E			58 T	O	Y

Crime

Marquise Brandon Brown, 19, Arrested for Bank Hit

FRI, FEB 16

Robbery arrest update

Police have made an arrest in the Jan. 10 robbery of the Bank of America in the 7100 block of Cradlerock Way in Columbia. Marquise Brandon Brown, 19, of Broken Staff in Columbia, is charged with robbery, theft, and assault. At approximately 10:41 a.m., the suspect approached the counter of the bank, implied a gun, and demanded cash. The teller complied and the suspect fled. Nobody was injured. Through investigation, police identified Brown as the suspect and arrested him.

Theft from vehicle

Laurel, 20723: 9600 block of Baltimore Avenue, Feb. 15 9:47 a.m., several items
Savage, 20763: 8300 block of Woodward Street, Feb. 15 1:57 p.m., side mirrors

THU, FEB 15

Theft from vehicle
Jessup, 20794: 8300 block of Linda Court, Feb. 13-14 overnight, airbag

WED, FEB 14, 2018

Residential burglary

Laurel, 20723: 9300 block of Daly Court, Feb. 13 9:05-10:30 a.m. Unknown suspect(s) gained entry to the residence by forcing open a door and stole medication, a wallet, video game console, and other items.

TUE, FEB 13

Residential burglary

Elkridge, 21075: 6400 block of Harthorn Avenue, Jan. 12-Feb. 12 Unknown suspect(s) attempted to gain entry to the residence by prying open a door. No entry was gained.

The **Guilford Gazette** is a weekly print publication serving Savage, Kings Contrivance, North Laurel, Jessup and Guilford.

Please send your inquiries or comments to:
info@GuilfordGazette.com

(GERRYMANDERING continued from page 4)

ized portions of Montgomery County.

However, there's common interest in that pairing: Large and growing numbers of Frederick and Washington county residents commute to jobs along the I-270 technology corridor in Montgomery. There's an overlap of interests, not a disparity.

Gerrymandering is at the root of complaints about redistricting. Since the early 1800s when Massachusetts Gov. Elbridge Gerry first concocted a partisan legislative map resembling a salamander, political parties have availed themselves of this manipulative tool.

Political Redistricting -- Inherently Unfair Famous 1812 cartoon of Massachusetts Gov. Gerry's 'salamander' district.

Nationwide, Republicans are the prime gerrymandering culprits. In heavily Democratic Maryland, the shoe has been on the other foot.

Obscene versions of gerrymandering can be seen in the districts drawn for Democratic Congressmen John Sarbanes, Elijah Cummings and Dutch Ruppersberger to ensure their reelections.

Sarbanes' repugnant district is the one that should be under attack, not the 6th.

The notion of keeping counties intact is well-meaning but naïve. The Supreme Court requires districts of equal population size. Now, try drawing those eight districts without chopping Baltimore City and Baltimore County into four districts and Montgomery and Anne Arundel counties into three districts.

A safe, rural Republican 6th District can be constructed, but it could require so many drastic alterations in other districts that the lone Maryland Republican in Congress today, Andy Harris, could find himself in a more hostile 1st District in which his reelection would not be a sure thing.

Whatever the Supreme Court rules on the Maryland case and another from Wisconsin, it will not eliminate unfairness, distortions or inequities from the re-districting process. Someone is going to wind up with the short end of the re-drawn maps.

The best we can hope for is a high court ruling that reinstates an earlier mandate from the justices following the "One Man, One Vote" ruling of 1963. It required that each district be compact, consist of adjoining territories and give due regard to natural boundaries as well as political boundaries..

The General Assembly and voters incorporated those requirements for redrawing state legislative lines into the state constitution in 1972.

Why not return to the Supreme Court's earlier congressional redistricting standards? That's a logical way to impose a degree of sanity and ground rules on an age-old political tug of war that is sure to persist.

(HAMMOND ALUM Continued from page 1)

timony.

DNA recovered at the scene matched the DNA of Marques Nico Lucas. Because Lucas had been been accused in another case that led investigators to the DNA match. Police discovered an automobile belonging to Lucas' grandmother was used by the suspects to commit the home invasion. A cell phone linked to Lucas connected him to the second subject, Tavian Ruffin. In 2016, Ruffin's DNA was located on clothing items also left at the Laurel home.

Jason Starks was identified through text messages appearing in a forensic examination of Ruffin's cell phone. He was arrested after police linked his DNA to a pair of eye glasses left behind at the victim's home. Starks sent a text message to Ruffin a few hours after the home invasion. He asked about his missing glasses.

Howard County Assistant State's Attorney Devora Kirschner informed the presiding judge, Richard S. Bernhardt, that she will seek a prison sentence of 20 years, suspending all but five years at Starks' sentencing hearing on June 1.

Marques Lucas, 27 of Laurel, pleaded guilty to conspiracy to commit robbery, first-degree assault and first-degree burglary in September 2015 and is serving a 15-year prison sentence. Tavian Ruffin, 23 of Elkridge, pleaded guilty to the same charges in September 2016 and is serving a 10-year prison sentence.

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