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Redistricting battles loom

Numbers from the 2020 census will reshape political boundaries

By **JAMES MCGINNIS**
STAFF WRITER

In Harrisburg and other state capitals across America, Democrats and Republicans are gearing up for gerrymandering — a complex game of maps, numbers and political control that comes with every U.S. census.

In Pennsylvania, the Democrats could soon have the upper hand in redrawing the lines of 253 state legislative districts. A committee of elected legislators and the state Supreme Court — currently controlled by the Democrats — would decide which towns vote for which lawmakers in future elections.

At the same time, the GOP-controlled state Legislature will set the boundaries for Pennsylvania's 18 congressional districts.

With the 2020 census, Pennsylvania could lose one member of Congress since its population is stable, while other states — such as Colorado and Texas — are rapidly growing. No one can say which congressional seat could be eliminated. Whatever happens, these decisions will be made by politicians, and critics say that has to change.

"The dysfunction you're seeing in Harrisburg and in Washington is because of gerrymandering," said state Rep. Gene DiGirolamo, a Bensalem Republican and a 23-year member of the state House. "They've drawn these districts to be safe (for incumbents)."

See **GERRYMANDERING**, Page A6



KIM WEIMER / PHOTOJOURNALIST

Gerrymandering is irritating, said Diane Kortbawi, who was visiting Bucks County from Salt Lake City, Utah. She said, "Just take a block of land, put a square around it and say that's what you're voting for."

GERRYMANDERING:
Where to Draw the Lines

EDITOR'S NOTE

Sunday, Part 1: How does gerrymandering work and how does it affect you, as a voter? Area lawmakers sound off on the issue.

Monday, Part 2: A look at gerrymandering in Pennsylvania House and Senate districts in Bucks and eastern Montgomery counties.

More online: Go to our interactive gerrymandering game at buckscountycouriertimes.com and theintell.com to have a hand in drawing the lines for your own district or others. Our interactive maps also will show you how the congressional, state Senate and state House districts have changed over time.

COSBY TRIAL: DAY 11

Montco DA intends to retry Cosby case

By **MARGARET GIBBONS** and **JAMES O'MALLEY**
STAFF WRITERS

NORRISTOWN — The Bill Cosby show is on hiatus, but will be renewed for another season in Montgomery County Court.

After 11 days of trial, including more than five days of deliberations, the jury in Cosby's sexual assault case announced within an hour of returning to court Saturday morning that it was "hopelessly deadlocked." And after polling each solemn juror, the judge granted the defense a long-awaited mistrial.

County District Attorney Kevin R. Steele stood and said immediately his office intends to retry the celebrity.

The 79-year-old actor and comedian showed no emotion inside or outside the courthouse in the wake of the ruling.

"This is neither

vindication nor victory. It is the justice system," said Judge Steven T. O'Neill.

Before releasing the jurors, O'Neill told the seven men and five women they did not let anyone down, and commended their extended deliberations as the most "selfless" and "courageous" act he has seen in the criminal justice system.

Cosby, of Cheltenham, remains charged with three second-degree felony counts of aggravated indecent assault. The judge allowed him to remain free on \$100,000 cash bail and said he

would set a new trial date within 120 days.

The beloved TV icon once nicknamed America's Dad for his groundbreaking family sitcom "The Cosby Show" is accused of drugging and sexually assaulting Andrea Constand in January 2004 inside

See **TRIAL**, Page A2



Video online

Adrian Sipes gives an update on the judge's call of a mistrial after 52 hours of deliberation.

On A3

- Mullane: The courthouse wreck
- Castor weighs in

Dad's day



KIM WEIMER / PHOTOJOURNALIST

Michael Sharer and his 4-year-old son, Michael Jr., head to T-ball practice in Bristol Township. Sharer has been volunteering his time to coach the Meenan Oil team this season. **Meet four fathers who have become positive role models to their families and their communities, Story B1.**



Video online

Michael Sharer explains what volunteering as a coach means for him.

Life as an open book for Bucks father, **Life D1**



85° Some sun;
71° T-storms. B3

INDEX

Editorial	A22
Advice	D5
Auto	G1
Classified	G8
Comics	inside
Community	B1
Lotteries	A2
Money	A20
Obituaries	B6-9
Puzzles	G2
TV	D5



The United Way of Bucks County continues to accept donations toward BKO!Hunger's unmet fundraising goal. Canisters will remain in place through Friday, June 27. Donations may also be made online at uwbucks.org/bkohunger or by check to United Way of Bucks County (Bucks Knocks Out Hunger in subject line) and mailed to UW Bucks, 413 Hood Blvd., Fairless Hills, PA 19030.



COMMUNITY




Coach Michael Sharer encourages Jayce Bevins, 5, during a T-ball game in Bristol Township.

KIM WEIMER / PHOTOJOURNALIST

Modern dads

Meet four fathers who have become positive role models to their families and communities.

By DEBRA WALLACE
CORRESPONDENT

Fathers today are fighting a battle that dads in the past didn't even envision — social media.

Heck, most families didn't even have a computer in the house in 1990. The Department of Labor Statistics shows that between 1990 and 1997, the percentage of households owning computers increased from 15 percent to 35 percent. Times have changed. Most of the

kids born in the '90s not only have a computer in their home, but also one in their cellphone. A 2013 Pew Research study found that 93 percent of teens had a computer or access to one at home, and 78 percent had a cellphone. Half of them have a phone with internet access, and, therefore, access to social media.

"Today's fathers are a different breed than the ones who came before them," said Steven Rosenberg, a

certified behavioral therapist in Elkins Park. "When they look at what's happening around them — social media, cyberbullying and so much negativity — they have to take a step up to help their children thrive, grow and feel good about themselves."

Rosenberg, 70, who has 35 years of experience as a therapist and has a doctorate degree, said that the current climate is filled with myriad anxieties.

"In today's world you need someone to respect, look up to and want to follow in his footsteps," he said. "So, that's where the dads of today have emerged."

We talked to some fathers whose kids look up to them with admiration for not only steering them away from the negative by spending time with them, but also by showing compassion to others and giving of themselves to the community.

Homeless shelter volunteer and T-ball dad: Michael Sharer

Michael Sharer, 35, watched his grandmother Joan and mother, Kathryn, volunteer for many community causes when he was a young boy, and while they never specifically told him to follow their lead, somehow he says that it just felt right.



KIM WEIMER/
PHOTOJOURNALIST

Sharer, of Levittown, whose own father, Robert, died before his ninth birthday, is the father of Julianna, 13, Lily, 7, and Michael Jr., 4. "Being a father truly fills my life with joy. My kids keep me young and active," he said.

"I am reliving the best part of my childhood. I love coaching them, teaching them, and guiding them through life," he said. "I love my children for

their strengths and for their weaknesses; all of it is certainly a pleasure."

As the T-ball coach for his youngest child's team, Sharer is teaching by example. He is also going to school to become an emergency medical technician.

In February, Sharer began volunteering two days a week at the Bucks County Emergency Homeless Shelter in Levittown, four hours each day, willing to do whatever is needed.

"Helping people makes me a happier man," he said. "I do my best to guide my children to what are the right life choices, and to me there is nothing better than leading by example."

Those who work with him at the shelter applaud his sentiment. "Michael is kind and understanding, and he always has something positive to say to the residents at the shelter," said Luz Rivera, the shelter's resident life supervisor. "He brings a smile to their faces."



Keith Grimes answers questions about an upcoming Boy Scouts excursion.

PHOTO BY
WILLIAM
THOMAS CAIN

Lead assistant Troop 3 Scoutmaster: Keith Grimes

Keith Grimes, a mechanical engineer for the U.S. Navy for 28 years, works on compressed air systems on submarines. In a nutshell, he enjoys fixing things, and sharing his interests with his children.

The 50-year-old from Hatboro and his wife, Kristine, have been married 21 years and have two children, Kayleigh, 20, and Kyler, 17. He also has two daughters from a previous marriage, Ashlie, 29, and Emily 25.

Since Grimes was a Scout when he was a boy, he signed up his youngest, son Kyler, for Cub Scouts when he was in the first grade. When Kyler was 11, he went to Boy Scout Troop 3, in Hatboro. After Grimes' wife insisted that her husband accompany his son for his first summer camp in Ontario, Canada, his love for Scouts was reignited.

Kyler received the rank of Eagle Scout in November 2016.

For five years, Grimes has been with Troop 3, currently as assistant scoutmaster. The Scouts were a great match for Grimes since he loves camping and backpacking.

Grimes believes fatherhood is similar to Scouting because it is about going all-in. "I want to be there and be supportive. Rather than stopping them from falling, I will always be there to help them up, dust them off, and encourage them to keep moving further."

Kyler proudly talks about his dad. "My dad is always there for me to talk to; he is caring and he is fun to be with. We have many shared interests. My dad is definitely a positive role model, so one day I'd like to be a dad just like him."

See DADS, Page B2



Frank Kuepper (center) shares time with sons Frankie (left) and Michael.

CONTRIBUTED BY FRANK KUEPPER



Daniel Buckley and Diamond visit with Marguerite "Pat" Hannon at Luther Woods Nursing & Rehab Center.

PHOTO BY RANDIE DURETZ

Dads

Continued from Page B1

Autism Cares Foundation co-founder and president: Frank Kuepper

Frank Kuepper, a business executive for many years, continues to work tirelessly to improve the work climate for everyone in the company.

Yet, he considers his biggest accomplishment, and the one that gives him the most pride, to be caring for his two sons: Frankie, 21, a recent graduate of Penn State, pursuing a career in pharmacology research or in genetic engineering, and Michael, 19, who was diagnosed with autism before his third birthday.

From the moment his older son was born, Kuepper was hooked on fatherhood. His wife, Linda, needed extra medical attention, so father and son immediately

bonded. "Frankie was placed in my arms and we were in a rocking chair for the first few hours of his life," the Northampton resident said.

"I had a long conversation with my infant son and he discovered my wry sense of humor, as I was imparting wisdom to him about Einstein and Newton," a teary-eyed Kuepper said. "He was wide awake that whole time, and I didn't hear a peep out of him."

Two-and-a-half years later, Michael was born and early on showed signs of developmental delays, including poor eye contact and social interaction. Michael was diagnosed with autism and a new kind of adventure began for the Kuepper family.

"The best part of being a dad is that I am privileged to have two sons — one typical and one severely autistic," Kuepper said. "Each of them has inspired me and helped shape me into the man that I have become."

Kuepper and his wife came up with the idea for the nonprofit Autism Cares

Foundation in 2006. To date, more than 1,000 events, programs and life-enrichment opportunities have been held by the organization. "It was about not only persevering," he said, "but also striving for positive solutions."

Frankie Kuepper praised his father's dedication and strong will. "What I love most about my dad is that he genuinely cares, so he is emotionally invested in everything that he does."

Therapy doggie daddy: Daniel Buckley

Daniel Buckley, a retired electronics worker, who turns 86 on July 1, gets

up every morning in his Glenside home, ready to take his canine companion to work.

Buckley, who is the father of seven and grandfather of seven, said he needed a purpose after the 1997 death of his soulmate and wife of 46 years, Joan, as well as retiring at age 70 in 2001.

Each week, he takes Diamond, an 8-year-old male Shetland sheepdog, to Luther Woods Nursing & Rehab Center in Horsham for friendly visiting. The hardworking team goes to 11 facilities, including Edgehill Nursing Home, Drescher Estates, Brandywine, and the VA Hospital in Coatesville.

The first time he went to Luther Woods was in 2002, as part of Diamond's training through Bright and Beautiful Therapy Dogs in New Jersey, and the two of them never looked back.

During a recent day of visiting at Luther Woods, Buckley and Diamond spent some time with 80-year-old Marguerite "Pat" Hannon in the activities room of the nursing home.

"I enjoy coming to this nice facility," Buckley said, "and the people love my dog, so it is a great arrangement."

Buckley added that Diamond makes an ideal therapy dog because he never "snaps or growls" at

anyone. Hannon, a lifelong dog lover, used to have her own dog, a lovable chow. "Our visitors are wonderful," she said. "I look forward to them coming each week."

Buckley said he was a strict father who instilled many life lessons.

"We raised caring, hardworking and well-behaved children. We taught them responsibility, a work ethic and the importance of giving back."

One of Buckley's daughters, Trish, 55, admires her father for his work at the nursing homes. "My dad is very patient and dedicated to his children and to his entire family."

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