

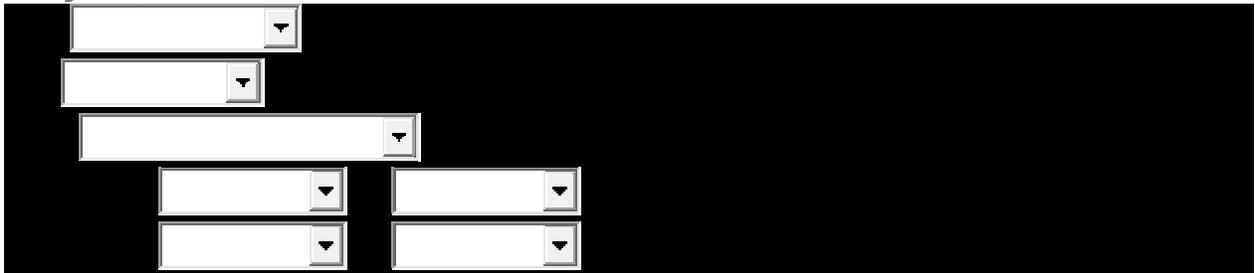
OP-ED

Trump and Kim should hold their summit at Baltimore's HonFest, here's why

By Patricia Schultheis
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Celebrating the hons at Hampden's HONfest. (Michael Ares, Baltimore Sun video) (Baltimore Sun)

President Donald Trump will have his much-anticipated meeting with North Korea's Kim Jong-un in Singapore on June 12. And that's a pity. Nuclear Armageddon, I believe, would be more easily avoided if the president and "Dear Leader" met a few days earlier at Hampden's annual HonFest, which has, at its root, the only thing Messrs. Trump and Kim have in common: hair.

Like Caesar and Napoleon before them, both men evidence a keen appreciation for hair that's been carefully coiffed, strategically styled and perfectly plastered.



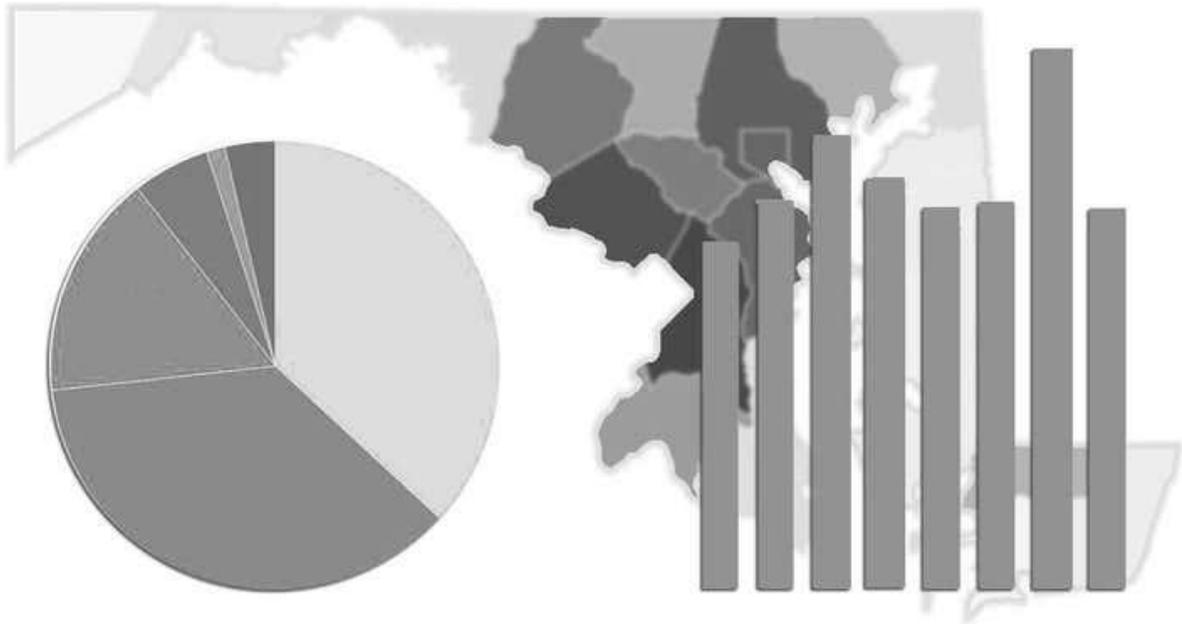
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Take the president's. Across his crown, his hair inexplicably manages to go in two directions at once. Originating someplace in the rear, it scoots forward all the way to his frontal lobe, the seat of intelligence, concentration and self-

awareness. But when it gets there, it executes an abrupt about-face and rushes backward. Almost as if it had hit a wall.

The styling on the sides of the president's head isn't quite as mysterious. From his temples, his hair swoops back like two great wings, which, I suspect, meet behind to form a perfect D.T. Yes, I believe the president of the United States has a duck's tail. He, after all, was an impressionable child in the '50s, when having a duck's tail signaled a young man was a bad boy. Sulking, pouting and wearing jeans so tight he could barely slip a comb into his back pocket, a boy with a D.T. kept a pack of Camels tucked into the sleeve of his T-shirt and rode a motorcycle. In other words, he was a rebel without a cause — just the sort of twitchy, aggrieved personality that grows into a man who boasts about the size of his big red button.

Stylistically speaking the obverse of the duck's tail was the flat top. No less carefully crafted than the D.T., a flat top proclaimed a man with a no-nonsense, self-sufficient, intense approach to life. Is it possible that while he was in school in Switzerland, little Jong-un saw some footage of President Nixon's chief of staff, the convicted felon H.R. Haldeman? And did he think to himself "I want a flat top just like that guy's. I bet if I have hair as flat as an aircraft carrier's flight deck everyone would take me seriously. And if they didn't, I'd just kill my uncle and maybe, for good measure, my half-brother. That way everyone would understand you don't mess with a man with a flat top."

So, given that these two world leaders have almost nothing in common except an interest in what covers their pates, Hampden should be an obvious choice for their summit. What better place than a community rooted in the art of curling, teasing, spraying and mounding mountains of hair?

Just imagine the last evening of HonFest, when a Hampden grandmother with a bow-decked beehive notices that the president's duck's tail is drooping, and that Dear Leader's flat top looks jagged. Now, she hasn't gone to an Ivy League college like the president, but she has been to beauty school and can judge that negotiations aren't going very well. So, she invites Messrs. Trump and Kim to set a spell on her stoop, and she'll listen to them whine how hard it is to reach an agreement. There's China, Japan and South Korea to consider, plus missiles, testing, verification and disposal and hundreds of other niggling details.

Their hostess will listen patiently, but just about sundown, when it's time for her to get her granddaughter's nightly snowball, from deep in her housedress's pocket she'll extract her shears.

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Image1 of 13





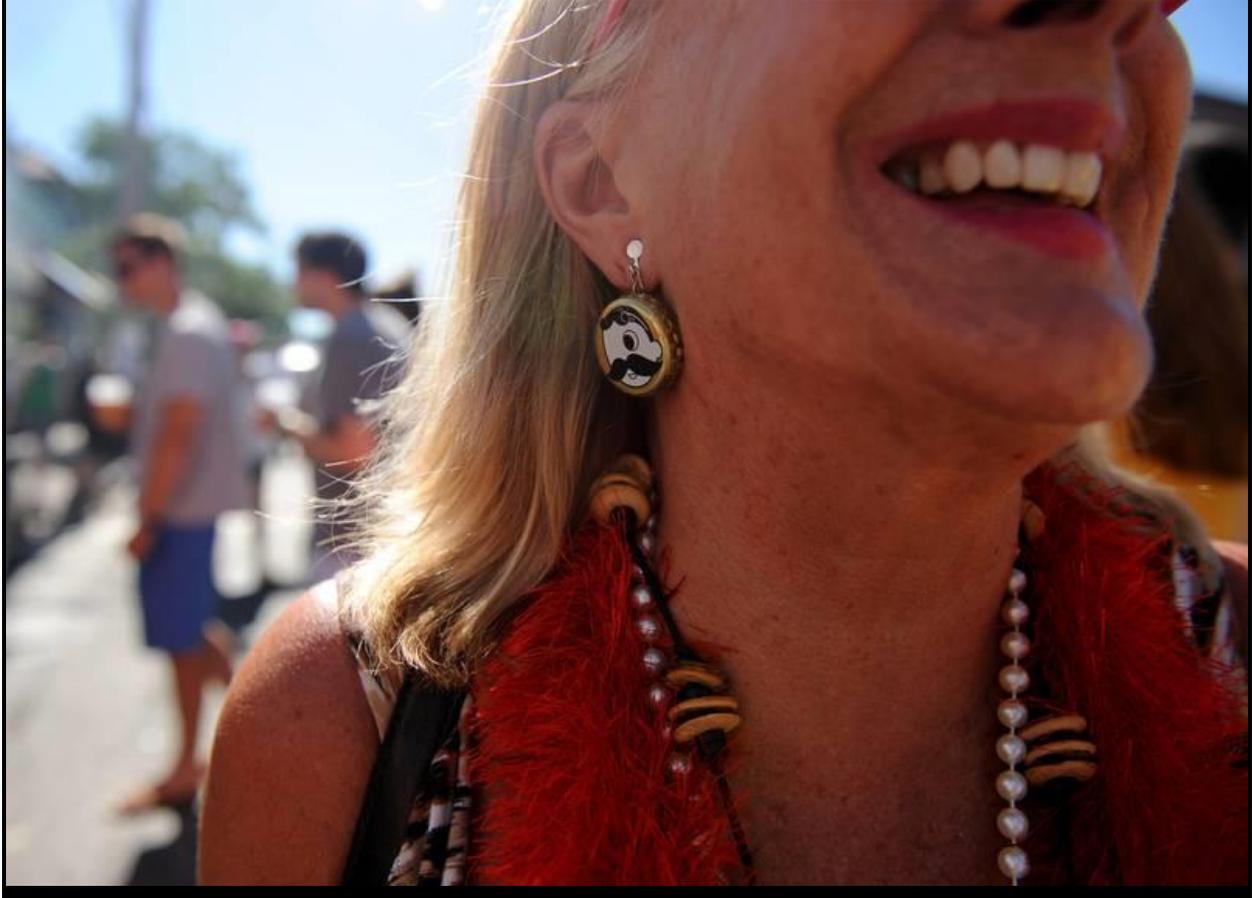


















Katherina Zotos, of Columbia, checks out her new beehive hairdo. (Caitlin Faw / Baltimore Sun)

“Listen to me, you two,” she’ll say. “I may be just a Bawlmer Hon, but I know my Bible, especially what happened to Samson when Delilah trimmed his hair. So, if you don’t put your heads together and figure a way not to annihilate mankind I’ll clip you both as bald as the bowling ball stowed next to my Elvis shrine.”

Now a threat like that is enough to scare a man to death. And that’s why Hampden, not Singapore, should be the site of this history-making summit.

Patricia Schultheis is the author of “Baltimore’s Lexington Market” and “St. Bart’s Way,” a collection of short stories about a fictional street in Baltimore. She teaches in the Odyssey Program of Johns Hopkins University. Her email address is bpschult@yahoo.com.