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*From the Baltimore Sun*

## 2 women sentenced for embezzlement

March 17, 2007

Two former employees of a Jessup-based bakery goods distributor who pleaded guilty to an embezzling scheme that netted \$88,000 were sentenced in Howard County Circuit Court yesterday to 18 months in jail.



Judge Dennis M. Sweeney sentenced both Donna Lynn Hester and Brian Mascetti to five years in prison, but suspended all but 18 months, which will be served in the Howard County Detention Center. Mascetti pleaded guilty in July and Hester pleaded guilty in November to the theft charges.

"This was an absolute violation of trust with an employer," Sweeney said.

He also ordered that Mascetti, 45, and Hester, 47, both of Arnold, each serve two years of probation after being released from the detention center. They also must repay \$38,000 to Soft Stuff Distributors to make up for the amount not covered by insurance, Assistant State's Attorney Lynn Marshall said.

During an 18-month investigation -- the longest conducted by the Howard County State's Attorney's white-collar crime unit -- prosecutors found that Mascetti and Hester, both longtime employees of Soft Stuff, had conspired from 2001 to 2004 in a cash skimming scheme. Prosecutors said Hester, who was in charge of accounting, altered at least 278 customer invoices that Mascetti, a delivery driver, turned in with cash payments, and pocketed the difference.

*[ Tyrone Richardson ]*

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