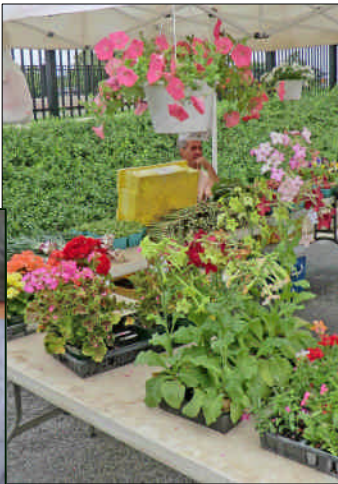


# Barrio de Langley Park

A Neighborhood Planning Newsletter Published by Action Langley Park  
Issue #207, June 2011

## Crossroads Farmers' Market

Once again, the Langley Park area has a farmers' market—and a good one. It operates Wednesdays from 2:30 to 6:30 p.m. in front of the 7676 New Hampshire Avenue building—which is less than one block from University



Boulevard. Rain or shine!

Here are some of the BLP photographs taken during the market's first Wednesday of 2011. As the photos make clear, there are more than vegetables and fruits for sale or for listening. Flowers! Music! Baked goods! Eggs! Herbs! Honey! Crafts including jewelry too.

And every Wednesday, there is a food stamp specialist to enroll or otherwise help people. There's a web site: [thecrossroadsfarmersmarket.org](http://thecrossroadsfarmersmarket.org).



## EDUCATION: WHAT'S UP?

### 1. Ed Administrator Grasmick Retires

Ms. Nancy Grasmick has led Maryland's Department of Education for many years, and in June she will retire. From the *Baltimore Sun* (10 May 2011): "The accolades pouring in upon her announcement formed an instant hagiography of the woman who for 20 years has led Maryland's public schools." For instance, Rep. Elijah Cummings wrote: "Dr. Grasmick leaves a luminous legacy and because of her vision, every student in the state will have an opportunity to achieve academic success."



If Ms. Grasmick created us such a legacy, why is it that the dropout rates at High Point and Northwestern High Schools are not far from 50%? Why is it that in the High School Challenge index rankings of area high schools (see J. Mathews, *Washington Post*, 26 May 2011) Prince George's County is next to last among regional jurisdictions? Why is the "best" high school in the county, Eleanor Roosevelt, not in the top 60 high schools in the region using that ranking index? Why are so many young people struggling to keep up? Yes, we know that family and neighborhood are important factors in school success or failure. But if our county schools are so good, more of the background deprivations should be overcome—working in the schools and with families.

Of course, John Deasy and Bill Hite must also share some of the responsibilities for these problems

Back to the *Sun*: "Dig deeper, and the truth comes out. Many state high school graduates cannot create a sentence from a fragment and can't solve problems with fractions or long division. Some cannot add and subtract whole numbers. Many students run out of financial aid before they take one college-level course. ...

"Education" continued on Page 2

## Corruption! Shame!

Former County Executive Jack Johnson pleaded guilty on May 17 to conspiracy well as evidence and witness tampering. Apparently his corrupt acts are many. What an awful public "servant" he turned out to be—corruptly getting of hundreds of thousands of dollars (maybe millions!) in pay-to-play schemes. May he spend many years incarcerated so that he will have the time to think about his awful deeds. Shame!

"Education" continued from Page 1

"Many students at community colleges take a break to work between high school and college. With time, subjects are forgotten—but the numbers for those going directly from high school to all types of colleges in Maryland are terrible, too. According to the Maryland Higher Education Commission, 56% of those students need some form of developmental education, and 53% need it in math.

**1/2 x 1/6 = ?**

Ten years ago, 47% needed some type of remedial help, 39% in math.

"Evidence from the state's flagship school is bleak as well.

Jerome Dancis, associate math professor emeritus at the University of Maryland, College Park, counted 22 sections of remedial math in the fall of 2009. He also counted 33 sections of college credit pre-calculus and algebra,

**11<sup>2</sup> = ?**

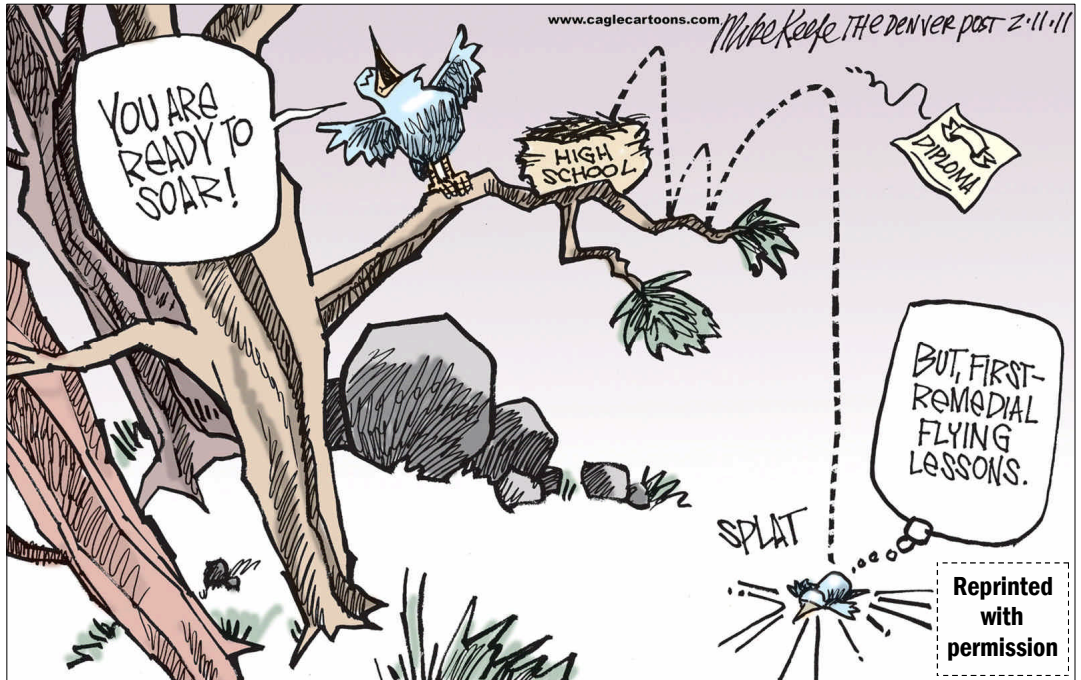
which used to be considered high school subjects.

Worse, his research shows knowledge of basic math for students of all ethnic groups in Maryland has been dropping over the past decade. ..."

And our education is likely to get worse rather than better thanks to the budget-cutting taking place to deal with the recession. Dear Superintendent Hite, Dear Members of the Board of Education:

**169/13 = ?**

We have to do better!



## 2. The Great Education Divide

*Across the Great Divide, prepared by a team from Civic Enterprises, examines perspectives of CEOs and college presidents regarding America's higher education and skills gap. It's focus is the so-called "minority" young people in the USA. Below are a few paragraphs. The full report can be accessed at <http://www.civicerprises.net/pdfs/across-the-great-divide.pdf>.*

"In the United States, there is a great divide between the education and skills of the American workforce and the needs of the nation's employers. Many of those looking for work do not have the skills required by companies looking to hire—resulting in high unemployment even as businesses desperately seek new talent. If our nation fails to bridge this gap, we will risk our ability to compete effectively on the global stage.

"The good news is there is broad agreement among business and higher education leaders that a postsecondary degree or credential is important for success in the workplace. Many employers are even taking steps to support the education and boost the skills of their employees. But two widespread misperceptions are standing in the way of efforts to bridge the career readiness gap.

"The focus on 'college' too often excludes the demand for those who hold two-year associate's degrees and trade-specific credentials. Despite the conventional wisdom that bachelor's degrees are critical to success, the job market of the future will demand a vast new supply of talented graduates of a diverse range of post-secondary programs, including those that are two-years or less. Not recognizing the value of these degrees is hindering our efforts to meet the needs of

employers.

"While the nation appropriately focuses on ensuring that more students graduate from high school ready for college, little attention has been paid to the hidden crisis of undergraduates who leave college and other post-secondary institutions before completing their degrees.\* The national spotlight on "access" to college has shrouded another priority: ensuring that those who enter college programs graduate with the skills and credentials they will need to succeed in the workforce and help America remain competitive around the world. ...

Continued below cartoon

**Conclusion:** By challenging the nation to reestablish its global pre-eminence in the rate of college completion,\*\* President Obama highlighted a goal that gets to the heart of one of America's most pressing needs: building a 21st century workforce that meets the demands of the future. The great divide that currently leaves unemployed workers without the skills necessary to meet the needs of the nation's employers must be bridged. Already, businesses and educational institutions are responding. Businesses, eager to empower their employees, are working to help them complete the degrees and credentials they need. And colleges are molding their programs to the realities of student life and the demands of local employers.\*\*\* But much more needs to be done. Today, we know what the nation's businesses will require in the decades to come, and we know what employees will need to succeed. The questions that remain unanswered are whether Americans will keep focused on the demands of competition in the global



economy, and whether we will continue to build the pathways to success that will drive American growth through the 21st century. The future of millions of Americans and the strength of our economy are at stake.

\*To look at the six-year completion rates of students at Maryland System campuses is to realize the vast potential of ability that perhaps is not being properly channeled because of this dropout problem. (And of course there is a severe dropout problem at the secondary school level as well.)

\*\*Do we need more people with four-year college degrees or two-year diplomas, or do we need people regardless of formal education who can do the jobs that are needed?

\*\*\*What are colleges and universities for? Are they to meet "the demands of local employers," or are they to develop the minds and sensitivities of students so that they will have a better understanding of the world and how citizens of a democracy can enhance the quality of a country's life?

### 3. Gresham's Law

Ah, the value of a college degree. Shows you're smart! Shows you can stick to the task! Shows you can produce! Well, maybe. Here are some comments by Walt Gardner on an edweek.org blog:

"Convinced that the best jobs will move to states with a highly qualified work force, President Obama is determined to add eight million college graduates by 2020. I question the wisdom of this strategy.

"First, quantity is not synonymous with quality. Merely increasing the number of college graduates is no assurance that they will possess the knowledge and skills necessary for the workplace. As I've written before, colleges too often are education-free zones where partying trumps studying. Unless steps are taken to evaluate what students have learned after four years, the increase in the number of degree holders provides a false sense of accomplishment.

"Second, many well paying jobs do not require a college degree. In fact, the only jobs that will be safe in the years ahead will be those that cannot be [sent offshore] electronically. As a result, mere possession of a sheepskin is no protection. Moreover, the wage premium attached to a degree has to be weighed against the cost of acquiring it." The complete commentary is at [http://blogs.edweek.org/edweek/walt\\_gardners\\_reality\\_check/2011/05/greshams\\_law.html?cmp=ENL-EU-VIEWS2](http://blogs.edweek.org/edweek/walt_gardners_reality_check/2011/05/greshams_law.html?cmp=ENL-EU-VIEWS2)

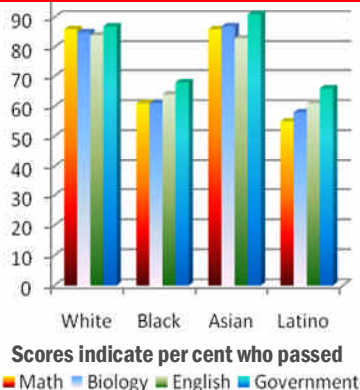
### 4. How Are Our Children Doing?

Prince George's County is certainly not immune from the test-score gap between Whites and Asians, on the one hand, and Blacks and Latinos (the latter including about 15% LEP children), on the other. As the adjacent graph displays (using

2010 test data), the county-wide scores show two test groups hovering around the 80% level, whereas the other groups are around 60%. Note: at the state level, Latino scores are in the 70% range.

The great question for the county and other localities is: Why? If that question is answered, a way to close the gap is at hand. One possibility is that the family members and neighbors don't know how to help

**County-Wide Scores  
10th Grade Students - 2010**



their children. If so, the partial answer may be more school-family liaisons. Also, students not keeping up probably need more time with teachers or tutors. (Neighborhood change is the larger task.) Superintendent Hite: Save the children.

For more on education, go to page 7

## Here and There—1

### Why Are They Here?

Why have natives of Guatemala come to the USA, some with papers and some without? The answer in part is in this AP story (16 May 2011): "Guatemala declared a 30-day state of emergency for the northern Peten region following the brutal massacre of 27 people at a cattle ranch. President Alvaro Colom called the killings sadistic and perverse." By the way, natives of Guatemala constitute the largest group of immigrants in Langley Park.

### Washington Adventist Hospital

The hospital's leadership is moving forward with the plan to relocate the main hospital functions in the White

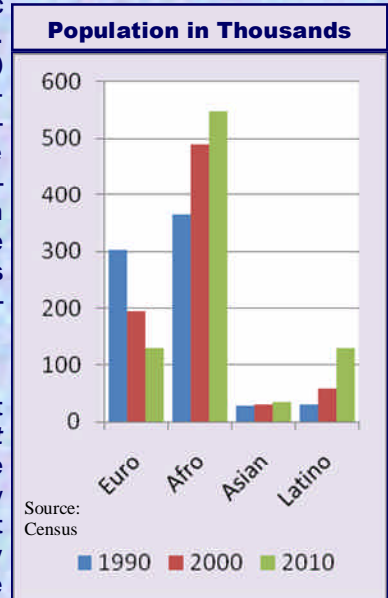


Oak area, leaving a wellness center and some other health functions in the current Takoma Park location. The

sketch for the new facility is impressive. Take a look!

### Changing Prince George's County

Over the past two decades, there have been some dramatic demographic changes in the county. As the graphic (right) reveals, European-Americans have continued to decline, and the other population categories have increased. In percentage terms, the Latino/a population has increased most significantly.



### Council Budget

According to a report in the *Washington Post* (26 May 2011), the Prince George's County Council's budget has not been significantly trimmed despite the county's budget crunch. Two items jump out of the report: A "crisis management" person (seemingly a PR specialist) is retained by the council for \$160,000 a year. And there are 81 council staff members. Is PR needed? Are 81 staffers needed? Oh yes, the pay for council members is \$96,417 a year, the highest pay for council members in the state. There are good people on the council; let's hope they prove their worth!

# NEWS & NOTES

## IMMIGRATION

**Good News:** The Department of Homeland Security is planning to conduct an internal review of the "Secure Communities" program. The goal is to see if its implementation has strayed from the original focus of removing dangerous criminals from the USA. Of course, we know that it has strayed. The review will also explore the apparent gap between the voluntary participation by jurisdictions as understood by many jurisdictions and mandatory participation as apparently intended by DHS. Hurray! Secure Communities has damaged crime fighting in many jurisdictions, and this must be rectified.

ACLU executive director Hector Villagra: "The federal government is selling us the Secure Communities program as a magic elixir, telling us that it will make our communities safer by targeting the most serious criminals. Nothing could be further from the truth."

**Keeping Talent & Brains Here:** (1) International Students: The Obama administration has changed the rules for foreign students studying in the U.S. "The administration is expanding the list of science, technology, engineering and math degrees that allow foreign students who earn them to stay in the U.S. up to 17 months after graduating. Those months can be spent working. The time also could mean the student may not have to leave before getting an H-1B visa, a visa reserved for high-skilled workers that can last for up to six years." (*Washington Post*, 13 May 2011) That's in the right direction, but students in needed fields should be allowed to make their career in the USA. No time limit!

(2) Returning Entrepreneurs: The Kaufmann Foundation report entitled "The Grass Is Indeed Greener in India and China for Returnee Entrepreneurs" reveals a new and perhaps worrisome trend: "Highly-educated and skilled immigrants are voting with their feet and returning to their home countries where they start successful businesses." Well, there are lots of opportunities in rapidly developing countries, but perhaps our anti-immigrant inhospitable climate is also a factor. So "we are exporting our prosperity and strengthening our competitors."

**Making \$ from Detention:** Detention Watch reports: "As the largest for-profit prison company in the country, Corrections Corporation of America (CCA), prepares for its annual shareholders meeting, new data released today by the Detention Watch Network (DWN) shed light on the growing influence of the private prison industry on the immigration detention system.

"Drawn from a variety of sources, including the Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) Reading Room, and the Federal Lobbying Disclosure Act Database, the data reveal the companies most heavily invested in the business of immigration detention—CCA, The GEO Group Inc., and the Management and Training Corporation—and suggest increased lobbying activity over the last decade, both



in terms of dollars spent and government entities targeted.

"For years, private prison firms have played a critical role in shaping public policy around immigration detention, pursuing the bottom line at the expense of basic civil rights and taxpayer dollars," said Emily Tucker, Director of Policy and Advocacy at DWN. "These data highlight deep corporate investment in the detention business, raising concerns about how the cor-

porate profit-motive is fueling the expansion of the detention system as a whole."

There's a lot of money to be made by building more and more prisons (detention centers), and so the detention lobby is doing its job of influencing the immigration debate. Kind of sickening. For more from this report, go to <http://www.detentionwatchnetwork.org/privateprisons>.

**Victor Ramirez in the L.A. Times:** Maryland's "Dream" law's primary sponsor, Our Senator Victor Ramirez, a Democrat, said "a state wastes its investment when it educates illegal immigrants through high school and then forces them to pay higher prices to attend a public college. The cost difference is significant: In-state tuition at the University of Maryland is \$8,416 a year, but rises to \$24,831 for students coming from out of state. Proponents of more hard-line measures sell them as a way to drive illegal immigrants out of their states, but Ramirez believes they will stay where they are, only without a college education. 'These students, when they graduate, they're not going to go back to their home country, because this is all they know,' Ramirez said. 'They're going to end up being bus drivers or servers, cutting our grass, when they potentially could be doctors, lawyers, helping make Maryland more productive and have a stronger workforce.'" (15 May 2011) Right on!

**Misapplied 'Secure Communities':** Los Angeles now counts as another jurisdiction working to limit or eliminate Secure Communities cooperation with the Feds. In California between May 2009 and March 2011, 38,828 people were deported through Secure Communities actions. About 12,000 were charged with or convicted of major violent offenses, but nearly 11,000 were classified as non-criminal deportees (ICE statistics). So once again (as in Prince George's County), many residents are deported who at most committed a misdemeanor—although many suspected of committing a misdemeanor were not able to defend themselves; they were just tossed out of the country with no counsel. Due process? Ha!

Remember: The Secure Communities program is supposed to focus on dangerous undocumented immigrants. From the Department of Justice website: "ICE prioritizes the removal of criminal aliens by focusing efforts on the most dangerous and violent offenders. This includes criminal aliens determined to be removable and charged with or convicted of crimes such as homicide, rape, robbery, kidnapping, major drug offenses, or those involving threats to national security." That's what DoJ says, but it is not what DoJ does. As we say on the playground: *Liar Liar Pants On Fire!*

*America's Voice* comments: "The Department of Homeland Security under the Obama Administration is simply out of control. They're targeting honest employers, using traffic tickets as an excuse to break up families, and arresting and deporting young people who would qualify for the DREAM Act." There certainly are a lot of people who are disappointed by the apparent balancing act in which Obama is engaged. Could he accomplish more by a bit less of a balance? Would more of a tilt towards the interests of immigrants lead to more positive outcomes for immigrants?

**Catholic Bishops:** U.S. Catholic bishops have just issued a statement urging President Obama "to act faster on his promises of federal immigration reform. In the meantime, they want Catholics to understand how the current patchwork of local laws is affecting 12 million people living and working in the country. 'Our position is that the system's broken,' said Kevin Appleby, Director of Migration and Refugee Policy at the U.S. bishops' conference. 'The law needs to be changed.' 'We think that a lot of these people need to be brought out of the shadows. They've been working and contributing to society,

"News" continued on Page 5

"News" continued from Page 4

despite the fact that they're out of legal status." (Source: Catholic News Agency, 16 May 2011)

**Senate Judiciary Committee:** The Committee explored the courts responsible for deportations—the immigration courts. There was criticism of the courts from the left and the right, Dem and GOP. Senator Leahy wants to improve the quality of the courts and to shorten the wait time. Not surprisingly, the GOP focused on enforcement. Witnesses included Juan Osuna of DOJ, Julie Myers Wood of ICS Consulting, and Karen Grisez of the ABA. The hearing can be seen and heard here: <http://www.senate.gov/fplayers/CommPlayer/commFlashPlayer.cfm?fn=judiciary051811&st=xxx>.

## HEALTH

**Live-Long Latinos:** The National Center for Health Statistics, a unit of the CDC, has issued "United States Life Tables by Hispanic Origin," which provides life tables based on 2006 death rate data. Life expectancy at birth for the total population in 2006 was 77.7 years; 80.6 years for the Hispanic population, 78.1 years for the non-Hispanic white population, and 72.9 years for the non-Hispanic black population. The Hispanic population has a small life expectancy advantage at birth over the non-Hispanic white population and 7.7 years over the non-Hispanic black population. CDC states that the reasons behind the lower mortality are not known. However, some researchers as well as the ALP staff think that one factor is the return to one's homeland of some injured or ill US residents, and also return in retirement. Another possible factor is the strong family ties among Latino/as. The full report is available at [www.cdc.gov/nchs](http://www.cdc.gov/nchs).

**Early Puberty:** No one is sure why puberty is arriving earlier and earlier for girls in the USA. But studies reveal that the change has occurred among some girls whose ages are in single digits! School teachers and others have reported not only early puberty but also early pregnancy. The issue arises: Are these pre-teens ready? And the answer is, probably not. That places a significant burden on parents, and they had better be ready to help the "child" along this transformational path. Some professional guidance is probably called for.

**County Tightwad:** Prince George's County health and human services programs have been reliant on federal and state funding, with only 16% coming from the county's general fund. This is comparatively a very low figure. The county appropriates only 1.2% of its own general fund to health and human services. Yet the county has many working poor and other poor residents. So now we know that some county decisionmakers don't especially pick on Langley Park area residents. Rather, they pick on the poor.

## IN THE COUNTY

**Chief of Police:** Mark Magaw has been picked by the County Executive to be the permanent Chief, thus losing his "interim" title. The appointment has to be confirmed by the County Council. During Officer Magaw's leadership in the police district that includes Langley Park, ALP's impression is that he did a good job. So the police department should be in good hands. Congratulation, Mark Magaw.

Of course, there are those who apparently don't favor his confirmation. One email asks: does he live in Prince George's County? Another asks: Did he have anything to do with the awful dog shooting in Berwyn Heights? Let's hope these are not valid issues.

**Warrants:** From a WUSA report: "With an overwhelming open warrants list totaling more than 40,000, the Prince George's County Sheriff's Office is looking to put a dent in the numbers. A recent campaign was launched by Sheriff Melvin High involving sheriff's deputies teaming up with other area law enforcement agencies to double the manpower and pursue people on the run." Forty thousand?! What has the sheriff's office been doing the past X number of years? Well, better late than never, although it's a good bet that about 39,000 of the total have left the area. Let's hope Sheriff High does a better job in his new position than he did in when heading the police district that includes Langley Park.

**Housing—the HUD Expose:** The *Washington Post* (14 May 2011) has published quite an exposé of HUD. Money in the millions thrown away over and over again. Because housing is so crucial to a person's wellbeing, the failures of HUD must be corrected by the Obama administration very very soon. From the article: "HUD has known about the problems for years but still imposes few requirements on local housing agencies and relies on a data system that makes it difficult to determine which developments are stalled. Even when HUD learns of a botched deal, federal law does not give the agency the authority to demand repayment. HUD can ask local authorities to voluntarily repay, but the agency was unable to say how much money has been returned."

There are HUD problems in the county. "In Prince George's County, the nonprofit Kairos Development Corp., received \$750,000 in 2005 to build dozens of homes. Six years later, Kairos has not built a single house." Where's the money? Let's hope some of it is not in the pocket of a former County Executive or his wife's bra.

We all want more affordable housing. (Well, most of us do.) But contracting to deliver affordable housing doesn't guarantee a good outcome. Check out this D.C. case: "It sure looked like a good deal at the time. A nonprofit developer promised to spend millions renovating three rotting apartment complexes in some of the most blighted neighborhoods of Southeast Washington. It would be one of the largest redevelopment projects in years east of the Anacostia River, helping dozens of low-income renters suffering through roof leaks and winters without heat. ... Soon after the city delivered the federal money, the [developer] declared bankruptcy and shut down. The District lost millions of dollars while the project was delayed for years. But one group reaped millions." And who were they: real estate speculators. So if ever Prince George's County is to favor affordable housing and meet the affordability needs of its residents, there still has to be considerable caution. (Quotes from *Washington Post*, 16 May 2011)

## THE SECTOR PLANS

As BLP readers probably know, the Takoma-Langley Sector Plan is really two plans because Prince George's County and Montgomery County went their own ways. And the ways are very different. The PG plan calls for demolishing many of the affordable apartments in and around Langley Park, whereas the sister county's plan protects most of the affordable housing.

The City of Takoma Park is in Montgomery County, and it has concluded its review of its portion of the county plan. The plan calls for more housing of mixed income, a greater diversity of uses (residences, offices, retail, etc.), better sidewalks to enhance pedestrian mobility, and new bike paths.

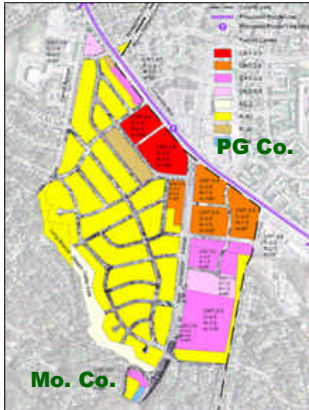
"News" continued on Page 6

## A Nation of Immigrants

Yes, we are "a nation of immigrants," except for those forced to come to the USA (that's not immigration) and those who lived here before the Irish and Chinese and Russians and other immigrants. But who coined that phrase? It was John F. Kennedy in a 1958 essay when he was a senator!

"News" continued on Page 6

The plan states as a key recommendation: "preserve and improve community's affordability and housing options." Preserve! Improve! Maybe the plan



The Montgomery Co. Plan

does not call for bulldozing affordable housing?! Maybe implementation of the plan will not force thousands of residents out of their homes?! If so, how refreshing!

The land use sketch (left) shows residential areas in yellow and commercial areas in the other colors. Grey indicates areas not in the plan.

Clearly, the Montgomery County plan does not call for lots of bulldozers destroying affordable housing. Hurray!

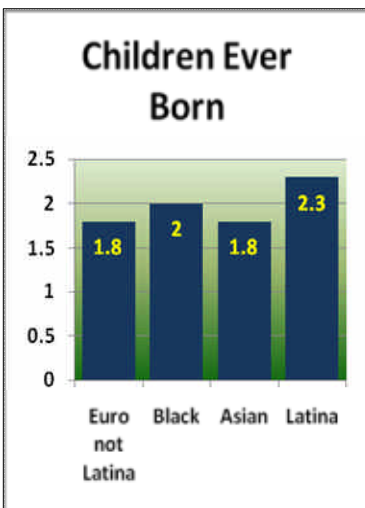
## YOUNG IMMIGRANTS NEEDED

In Japan, Europe, and the USA, the native populations have too low a fertility rate to sustain benefits for older people and probably to fill a wide variety of jobs. That issue was the subject of a conference in London, and it has been reported by *Reuters* (18 May 2011).\* "Rich nations need migrant workers to provide and care for their rapidly aging populations, experts said this week, challenging a wave of hostility toward new arrivals driven by the impact of the economic downturn. Immigration was a recurring theme of a two-day conference at London's Chatham House on managing graying economies ....

"In Europe, for one, antipathy toward foreign workers and asylum seekers has grown in the last few years because of their perceived pressure on scarce jobs and public services. An influx of immigrants from north Africa this year triggered by upheavals in the region has added to the tension and prompted plans to temporarily restore border controls, eliminated between most EU states under the Schengen treaty. The experts said turning away young migrants would be short-sighted as their taxes support an increasing number of pensioners in developed countries who are living longer."

The female fertility rate in the USA is below replacement rate (that rate is 2.1) for European-, Asian-, and African-Americans. (The typical measure is for women in their 40s.) It's the lowest in at least a century. But it reaches the replacement rate thanks to Latinos and African immigrants. Simply put, Latinas make more babies.

The fertility rates are reflected in the ages. The median age of non-Latino Euros is 39 years. For Blacks, it is 31, for Asians 32. But for Latino/as, it is 27. Comparatively young immigrants will be paying for the seniors in the other population groupings. But alas, many people don't realize that.



\*The Reuters article is at <http://www.reuters.com/article/2011/05/18/us-ageing-immigrants-idUSTRE74H2J420110518>

## Here and There—2

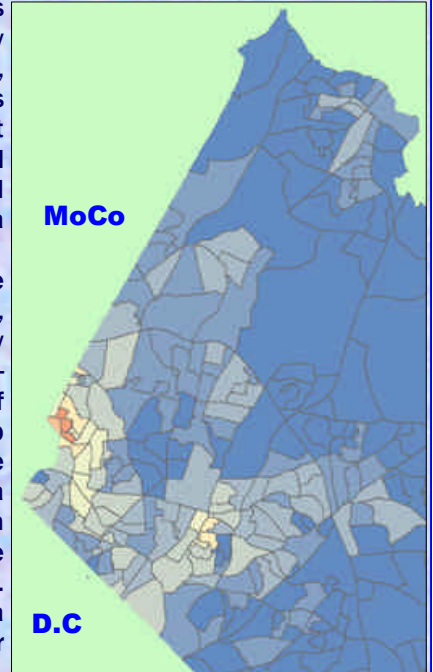
### The Post on Torres

The *Washington Post* is planning to have a feature on CASA de Maryland's leader, Gustavo Torres, on the next Sunday or so. How has he done it? Why do many people love him? Why do some people have a different view? Keep an eye out. Torres has had a remarkable run of success in building the organization from small worker placement to the multifunctions it accomplishes these days—and now in a wonderful headquarters building. The article will certainly be interesting.

### Where to PG's Latinos Live?

The 2010 census can focus on very small areas. Yes, there are census tracts, but a tract usually has a handful of "block groups" and each group has a handful of "blocks."

Looking at the blocks in the county, one can identify where there are concentrations of Latino/as. The map (right) shows that the heaviest Latino/a concentration (brown color) is in the Langley Park area. There are quite a number of other areas in the west-



central part of the county where there are significant numbers of Latino/as (these are beige). But elsewhere (the areas of the county not reproduced on the above map), there are very few Latino/a residents.

### Being Kicked Out—No Legal Representation

Lots of immigrants are being deported these days. That in itself is sad—and sometimes tragic. But some of the deportees had no legal representation, and therefore were unable to mount an effective defense against being kicked out of the USA. According to our country's laws (which perhaps should be changed), these likely-to-be-deported residents of the USA have no right to a lawyer. Former Supreme Court Justice John Paul Stevens: "The need for legal representation for immigrants is really acute [because] the consequences are just so drastic."\*

Of course, some immigrants do obtain legal representation. With a lot of money for that purpose, some of the lawyers are good. Alas, many of the lawyers who represent the likely-to-be-deported are not skilled; they are marginal hustlers. A Court of Appeals judge: "The too-often-poor quality of representation continues to undermine the effective administration of justice." Alas, this is one more bit of evidence that justice does not always prevail in the USA.

\*Quotes from Dolnick in NY Times, 4 May 2011

## EDUCATION!

### The Future of the USA!

*Education and civility are probably the most important elements moving into the future of the USA. We must better educate our young people, and we must have civil relationships with our country companions—and probably people throughout the globe.*

*Education has become more and more important thanks to the global competition with Europe, Latin America, China, India, and other regions and countries. And yet, as President Obama and many others have pointed out, we are falling behind. Yes, we still have the best universities and perhaps even a disproportionate number of the globe's educated elite. But we also have massive educational failures, especially with the sons and daughters of the working class and poor—failures heightened within the Latino and African-American communities that must deal with fragmented neighborhoods, resource-deprived schools, and struggling family adults. On this page are two articles relevant to the struggle.*

### Closing the Gap

Massachusetts Secretary of Education Paul Reville writes: "The data on student achievement in Massachusetts, after nearly two decades of reform, makes it readily apparent that schooling solutions alone are not sufficient to achieve our aspiration of getting all students to proficiency. We have set the nation's highest standards, been tough on accountability and invested billions in building school capacity, yet we still see a very strong correlation between socioeconomic background and educational achievement and attainment. It is now clear that unless and until we make a more active effort to mitigate the impediments to learning that are commonly associated with poverty, we will still be faced with large numbers of children who are either unable to come to school or so distracted as not to be able to be attentive and supply effort when they get there. In other words, we must create a healthy platform in the lives of all of our children if we expect them to show the learning gains expected to result from optimized instructional strategies. ...

"The inclusion of wraparound services is pragmatic approach to long unaddressed problems in the lives of children, problems that routinely interfere with learning. It's high time that we, as educators, recognize these problems and begin to get more active in working with others to solve them as they constitute such a threat to our achieving our educational aspirations. We must maintain our commitment to high expectations, regular assessments, and accountability. However, we must face up to those factors which are undermining our best instructional intentions." (Source: <http://blogs.edweek.org>)

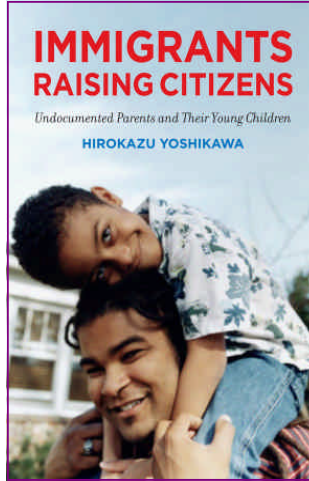
Thus the schools should reach out beyond their campuses, and other agencies (including local universities) should contribute more faculty and student service to the cause. For the schools, this means in part making sure that every school with a significant number of working class and poor students should have one or more parent liaisons to bridge the home-school gap and identify home problems that should be addressed.

More testing is not the answer. A National Academy of Sciences report states that after nearly a decade of test-based accountability systems ("adequate yearly progress," high school exit exams, etc.), they have shown "little to no positive effect overall on learning and insufficient safeguards against gaming the system." Little to no!? And we have been subjecting teachers and students to this highly bureaucratized approach for almost a decade!? Whoops! (The report, *Incentives and Test-Based Accountability in Education*, will be published this year by the National Academies Press.)

## Immigrants Raising Children

Hirokazu Yoshikawa at Harvard has written a book that focuses on the plight of many children whose parents are undocumented. It's a scary read because of the scary future of too many of the children in such families. Here are several overview paragraphs:

"There are now nearly four million children born in the United States who have undocumented immigrant parents. In the current debates around immigration reform, policymakers often view immigrants as an economic or labor market problem to be solved, but the issue has a very real human dimension. Immigrant parents without legal status are raising their citizen children under stressful work and financial conditions, with the constant threat of discovery and deportation that may narrow social contacts and limit participation in public programs that might benefit their children."



The book "challenges conventional wisdom about undocumented immigrants, viewing them not as lawbreakers or victims, but as the parents of citizens whose adult productivity will be essential to the nation's future." The book's findings are based on data from a three-year study of 380 infants from Dominican, Mexican, Chinese, and African American families, which included in-depth interviews, in-home child assessments, and parent surveys.

"The book shows that undocumented parents share three sets of experiences that distinguish them from legal-status parents and may adversely influence their children's development: avoidance of programs and authorities, isolated social networks, and poor work conditions. Fearing deportation, undocumented parents often avoid accessing valuable resources that could help their children's development—such as access to public programs and agencies providing child care and food subsidies. At the same time, many of these parents are forced to interact with illegal entities such as smugglers or loan sharks out of financial necessity. Undocumented immigrants also tend to have fewer reliable social ties to assist with child care or share information on child-rearing.

"Compared to legal-status parents, undocumented parents experience significantly more exploitive work conditions, including long hours, inadequate pay and raises, few job benefits, and limited autonomy in job duties. These conditions can result in ongoing parental stress, economic hardship, and avoidance of center-based child care—which is directly correlated with early skill development in children. The result is poorly developed cognitive skills, recognizable in children as young as two years old, which can negatively impact their future school performance and, eventually, their job prospects."

There are perhaps one thousand families in the Langley Park area that include one or more undocumented parents. So the book should be an alert to everyone in Prince George's County—as well as in Maryland and the USA. Policies and programs must be developed that free the "document chains" of these parents so that they can more effectively help their children to flourish. In the Langley Park area, there are some non-profits and even county agencies that do not screen parents or children about immigration status, but there must be more if we care about the future of the United States. The anti-immigrant "gangs" are de facto impairing our future.

## TAXICAB REGULATIONS

What's going on? Here are segments of a press report in the *Sentinel* (18 August 2010) and an email sent by Henock Wogderes (27 May 2011). He's an independent taxicab driver in the county. He wants to limit the "monopoly" of taxicab companies, and to have the county maintain the number of new medallions issued to independent drivers late last year. But there's an effort to rescind the new medallions.

"The companies have a monopoly on the industry," said Wogderes. "The cab companies set the rates to rent a cab at

whatever they want. There's no competition that I can go to. With the current law, drivers are not supposed to drive more than 12 hours.

"To make their payments at the end of the week," Wogderes continues, "you might have to drive 15 or 16 hours a day." But "on behalf of the

taxi industry, John Lally and Wayne Curry have gotten Council Member Will Campos to present a bill (CB-3-2011) that will take away the newly won gains for drivers. Almost all of the newly authorized certificates will be rescinded. Just as bad, the newly issued certificates—which presently may only be owned by individuals—would become eligible for acquisition by the taxicab companies."

And more: "In the midst of the very busy budget season, on a day that the County Council would not meet, Council Member Campos has made repealing the 2010 freedom for taxi drivers the number one priority of County business—all to reinstall a monopoly system that has long been known for allegations of corruption and unfairness. Council Member Campos, who has received thousands of dollars in campaign donations, in conjunction with his former Chief of Staff, Brad Frome, ... is adamantly pushing repeal of a bill that gave drivers of modest means economic freedom and independence at the behest of unregistered lobbyists who are longtime politicians in Prince George's County."

Again, the *Sentinel*: Taxi cab companies say that the new law could spell disaster for the industry. "Not only is CB-36 bad public policy, but bad law and it should not be enacted," said John Lally, a lawyer representing the cab companies. "There are currently about 200 medallion owners that already work independently (via) metro stations. Those people are the one(s) who are going to be hurt by this legislation. They are going to have their workload cut by two-thirds. It's supply and demand. If you double the amount of cabs, you're going to cut the supply in half.

"The average driver grosses about \$30,000 to \$35,000 annually. The average cab company charges a driver \$330 a week to rent a medallion, which amounts to more than \$17,000 a year."

The BLP staff does not have sufficient information about the conflict or the taxi industry to form a judgment as to which side has the stronger case. Reader input is welcome.

If the *Sentinel* figures are correct, it is clear that driving a taxicab is not an easy way to great wealth. So let's hope the county government takes that into consideration.



## Here and There—3

### The Boy's Name José

One upon a time, the most popular name for a Latino newborn was José, but no longer. Indeed, that name has dropped out of the top fifty names for boys born in the USA. Reportedly, Angel is the top ranked name for a Latino newborn, and it is 42nd among all of this country's boys' names. Is this a sign of assimilation? An attempt to avoid anti-ethnic behavior? BLP doesn't know.

### Temporary Protective Status

The US government has extended the TPS status of Haitians another 18 months. But even before, many Haitians did not apply for TPS. Why? Because of the very high fee of \$470. Kicking 'em while they're down!?

### Bikes for the World

This program accepts and repairs bicycles and then gives them to those in need in the DC area and in developing countries. The day for receiving the bikes is June 4, 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. The site near Langley Park is the Vansville Community Center, 6813 Ammendale Road in Beltsville.

### The Anti-Folks Rave

It is amazing how negative the anti folks are. As many readers know, one of the anti centers is the so-called Center for Immigration Studies. (Of course, few are serious studies that would pass a rigorous test of methods.) The CIS regularly lists articles that its staff thinks are supportive of its anti position. Just for fun, here are some of the items listed in a late-May distribution.

- ◆ 'USCIS Moves (Gasp!) to Upgrade Arriving Immigrant Populations,' David North
- ◆ 'Golden Parachutes for Illegal Chipotle Workers?,' David Seminara
- ◆ 'Alligators, Moats, and Other Such Nonsense,' Victor Davis Hanson
- ◆ 'U.S. Loses Track Of Millions Who Overstay Visas,' JW Corruption Chronicles
- ◆ 'ICE Halts Deportation At ACLU's Request,' JW Corruption Chronicles
- ◆ 'Obama, Hypocrisy, and Immigration,' Michael Barone
- ◆ 'Fox, Drudge Notice: Non-White Immigration + Affirmative Action = Disaster For White Americans,' Patrick Cleburne
- ◆ 'San Fran Rolls Out Welcome Mat to all Illegal Alien Felons,' Adam Sparks
- ◆ 'Obama's Wise Investment: Making Life Easier For 'Illegals',' Doug Sauders

### Migration: Third Global Wave

Migration across national borders is sometimes called the "third wave" of globalization, after the movement of goods (trade) and money (finance). Trade and finance are regulated by international organizations, but migration is not. National governments determine who can enter and what foreigners can do inside their borders. Some groups of nations, notably those in the European Union, have added free movement of labor to free flows of goods and capital. Most governments consider international migration inevitable and desirable; many governments ask why their richer neighbors do not simply open doors wider to the migrants that they are likely to need as their populations age and shrink. Migrant-receiving governments, on the other hand, point to high unemployment rates for the migrants within their borders and public opinion polls that show most residents want to reduce immigration.

### For Non-Emergencies

Prince George's County residents and others in the county may now use a new public safety non-emergency phone number, 301-352-1200, for non-emergencies pertaining to the police, fire, EMS or sheriff. The emergency number is still 911.



# LANGUAGE MATTERS!

A recent article by Keith Cunningham-Parmeter in the *Fordham Law Review* (vol. 79, No. 9, 2011) makes it clear that language matters in court cases and otherwise. Think of "illegal" versus "undocumented"; or maybe more vividly, African-American versus the so-called N-word. Perhaps the reader will be as shocked as was the BLP editorial staff seeing the very biased language used in the Supreme Court. Free speech: yes! But highly biased speech by justices: vile!

## "Wetback"

"Metaphors," the author writes, "tell the story of immigration law. Throughout its immigration jurisprudence, the U.S. Supreme Court has employed rich metaphoric language to describe immigrants attacking nations and aliens flooding communities. ... Three conceptual metaphors dominate legal texts: 'immigrants are aliens,' immigration is a flood,' and 'immigration is an invasion.'" These are not irrelevant uses of the language. Rather, "immigration metaphors influence not

only judicial outcomes, but also social discourse and the broader debate over immigration reform."

What's the evidence? From the introductory sections of the article: "William Rehnquist referred to Mexican children as 'wetbacks.' No one disputes that the future Chief Justice

of the Supreme Court used the ethnic slur in front of his colleagues in 1981. When a shocked Justice Thurgood Marshall objected, Justice Rehnquist defended himself arguing that 'wetback' still carried 'currency in his part of the country.' Justice Rehnquist would go on to author some of the most important immigration decisions of the late twentieth century. In those opinions, he did not refer to immigrants as 'wetbacks.' Rather he employed a rich array of metaphors to describe a nation at risk. He wrote of 'an avalanche of claims' coming from unauthorized immigrants. He described the fight against illegal immigration as a form of 'national self protection.' He argued that federal law must 'combat the employment of illegal aliens.'

"The larger cognitive frame structuring these statements might be described as 'immigration is a losing battle.' A growing body of research in cognitive linguistics demonstrates

## "Invasion"

that illegal aliens are entering the country like an 'avalanche'—dangerous, monolithic, overpowering, and unstoppable. Law enforcement officers are engaged in 'combat' for national self-protection. In this metaphoric war, Supreme Court Justices become soldiers who must protect citizens against the impending alien offensive. ...

"The metaphors floating in our minds determine our linguistic choices, which in turn affect social discourse and ultimately social action. Thus, how we think metaphorically affects how we talk about problems and the solutions we formulate in response to those problems. This becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy: the more we repeat, circulate, and repackage certain metaphors, the more our conceptual domains become tied to a limited set of associations."

The author explores several Supreme Court cases. In *Hoffman* (535 U.S. 137 (2002) (No. 00-1595), 2002 WL 77224), he reports: "The alien is a person who 'conceal[s] the facts ... that he's here illegally and has no right to work.' This person tries to 'phony up more documents and ... extend for the longest possible time the charade that the worker is here lawfully.' ... He 'subverts the cornerstone' of immigration law, all the while

'evading apprehension by immigration authorities.' At one point in oral argument, Justice Antonin Scalia assumed the first-person voice of a crafty, lazy alien: 'I can just sit home and eat chocolates and get my back pay.' The Court lamented the 'massive problem of illegal immigration' in the United States. One Justice said that 'we have to do something to reduce this massive number of ... illegal aliens.' Seen from this vantage, illegal immigration is a crisis that we, the citizens and victims of illegal immigration, must address immediately."

## "Phony up"

If the reader ever thought of the courts as neutral arbitrators seeking justice, reading the Cunningham-Parmeter article will certainly change your mind. However, we all knew about the non-neutrality before, including the decision in the Bush-Gore presidential election ruling. Moral of the story: If you're not on the side of the powerful, be prepared for discrimination. But heck, we know that. At least in the USA, it's not as bad as in, say, Burma, Iran, or Zimbabwe.

**Note:** Rehnquist and his "conservative" colleagues just issued a very harsh opinion favoring the anti-immigrant gang. Hire someone undocumented? Then your business license may be revoked. The ruling means the Court will not unambiguously disallow any state action on immigration—however harsh it might be. See [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wDBS\\_WwWxeg](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wDBS_WwWxeg).

## Here and There—4

### What's in a Jurisdiction's Name?

Prince George's County was reportedly named after Prince George of Denmark. From that source of all knowledge, Wikipedia, we learn: Charles II "famously said of Prince George, on the occasion of his marriage to Anne, 'I have tried him drunk, and I have tried him sober; and there is nothing in him.' George was considered a fine-looking man, being tall and blond. He was neither clever nor learned. [He was] a simple man without envy or ambition." Any calls for renaming the county? Maybe Alexander Hamilton County after the man who set the course of U.S. democracy? Or Martin Luther King County?

### The Purple Line

The cost is going up! The current estimated cost is \$135 million more than the previous estimate. Current total: \$1.93 billion. And the estimated completion year has slipped to 2018 or 2019 or perhaps 2020. Will this lead transportation planners to rethink the project? Or if the Sector Plan is finally approved in its current bulldoze-affordable-apartments version, will the bulldozing be delayed a year or so?

Another possible option would be the less-costly express bus; it could operate on dedicated lanes with one stop each in Bethesda, Silver Spring, Langley Park, the University of Maryland, Riverdale Park, and New Carrollton.

### Keep an Eye on Planners

Weekly public hearings of the Prince George's County Planning Board of can now be watched and heard live online. The service can be accessed via the Planning Department's web site, [www.pgplanning.org](http://www.pgplanning.org). Links are provided there to the Board's meeting agendas and the staff reports for individual cases. The Planning Board meets most Thursdays at the County Administration Building in Upper Marlboro. This is very good news for those who care about the future of the county and its neighborhoods—but cannot always get to Upper Marlboro although they can get to a computer.



# BUSINESS

## The New Avenue

What's that? It's the catch phrase for the part of New Hampshire Avenue within the City of Takoma Park plus a little bit more. The northern end is the Takoma-Langley Crossroads area, and the southern end is at the crossroads with Eastern Avenue. The City officials appear to be a bit uncertain about including parts of Prince George's County, especially the commercial strip across University Boulevard from Takoma Park—that is, Langley Park. Well, if it's good for Langley Park, count the neighborhood in. For instance, they do include Woodlands, the very good vegetarian Indian restaurant, which of course is in Langley Park. (They also include the old Udipi Palace, which has been overtaken by the new Walgreens.) And they include two good Latino bakeries, Casablanca and La Chapina, both in Prince George's County (the former in Langley Park). There is ample information about the plan at this web site: [http://www.thenewave.com/\\_files/docs/new-hampshire-avenue-concept-plan-web.pdf](http://www.thenewave.com/_files/docs/new-hampshire-avenue-concept-plan-web.pdf)



## Mom and Pop Businesses

A writer for the Maryland Public Policy Institute wonders in print (10 May 2011) why Maryland has so few "mom and pop" stores and restaurants. Clearly, he has not been to Langley Park and other parts of Maryland's International Corridor. Want to walk into a small restaurant and talk with the owner? Stop in quite a few places along and near University Boulevard. Pity the parts of Maryland that don't have such vitality. And let's hope the "Bulldozer Plan" (aka the Sector Plan) doesn't bulldoze or otherwise chase the small entrepreneurs away. Alas, that's a very real danger.

## The Takoma-Langley CDA

This organization of businesses on the Takoma side of the International Corridor has helped to improve business in that area. It has been led for a number of years by Erwin Mack, a friend of Action Langley Park—and a good leader/manager of the CDA. Mack will retire at the end of 2011, but the organization has just been renewed by the City of Takoma Park into 2014. That's a plus because of the promotional and other tasks. The only regret is that the organization doesn't operate on both sides of University Boulevard; the four quadrants are really one business area, and better coordination would be a plus. Perhaps local leaders such as Will Campos can help to coordinate better the efforts of northern Takoma Park and southern Langley Park for the gain of both sides.

## What's Up with Natali?

Some readers will remember Natali Fani (now Fani-Gonzalez) from her work at CASA, the University of Maryland, the Baker transition team, and elsewhere. She has founded and now directs the Matea Group, a "team of professionals with unique substantive expertise in an array of issues that directly impact Latino and immigrant communities across the United States. Our work covers a broad range of sectors, including human and civil rights, labor, education and health care." The Matea Group is a certified woman-and-minority-owned firm based in DC. Natali has been featured as a commentator in a variety of news-outlets in both English and Spanish such as CNN, the Washington Post, NPR, Univision, Telemundo and TeleSUR. Natali graduated from Goucher College and Georgetown University. Go Natali!

# BASIC INFORMATION

## ACTION LANGLEY PARK

The nonprofit 501c3 organization, Action Langley Park, is a coalition of residents, businesspeople, workers, academics, church leaders, and others. It was founded in 1998 to improve the quality of life of residents in and near Langley Park. The means include services, information-sharing, and advocacy. The organization's service/event activities focus on a Fall "Health Check" and a Spring "Langley Park Day." Meetings of the organization take place about every other month, usually on Thursday evenings, at the Langley Park Community Center. All meetings are open, and participation is encouraged. For information, send an email to [actionlangley-park@yahoo.com](mailto:actionlangley-park@yahoo.com).

## BARRIO DE LANGLEY PARK

This neighborhood planning newsletter is edited and published by Action Langley Park, with a supportive link to the Langley Park Project of the University of Maryland. (Editor, Bill Hanna) It appears irregularly, but approximately every two weeks. Submissions and suggestions are welcome at [actionlangley-park@yahoo.com](mailto:actionlangley-park@yahoo.com). Back issues of BLP will soon be available on the web.

## HAPPENINGS

Here we list upcoming ALP activities and other events that come to our attention. Have an event to list? If so, send information well in advance to [actionlangley-park@yahoo.com](mailto:actionlangley-park@yahoo.com).

**June 2—Councilman Will Campos' town meeting** at Northwestern High School, 6:30 p.m. Everyone welcome. Will he talk about the bulldoze-Langley-Park "Sector Plan"?

**June 4—Washington Folk Festival** at Glen Echo Park, 7300 MacArthur Blvd. Information: 301 634-2222.

**June 11—Fun Day** at St. Michael and All Angels Church, noon to 6 p.m. Games, music, moon bounce, and more. 8501 New Hampshire Ave. For information, call 301 434-4646.

**June 17—Last day for PG County schools** Let's hope that the public and private sectors provide summer activities for the school children.

**June 18—Free Community Dinner & Food Distribution** at the St. Michael and All Angels Church, 8501 New Hampshire Ave. in upper Langley Park. From 5 to 6:30 p.m. This is a monthly event; it takes place every third Saturday of the month. For information, call 301 434-4646.

**June 21—Envision Prince George's**, a "conversation," 6 to 8:30 p.m. at the County Ballroom, 2411 Pinebrook Ave., Landover. Information: 301 952-3594.

**June 30—Action Langley Park meets** at 7 p.m. in the Langley Park Community Center. The main agenda item will be planning ALP's work for the coming year.

**June 30 to July 4 and July 7-11—Smithsonian Folklife Festival** on the National Mall in D.C. Themes: Colombia, Peace Corps, Rhythm and Blues.

**August 2—National Night Out Celebration**, 3-5 p.m. in and around the Langley Park Community Center. Music, games, and friendly police officers.

**September 18—Hispanic Festival** in Lane Manor Park, noon to 6 p.m. Lots of food, music, and games. The location is on the south side of University Blvd. about one-half mile west of the University of Maryland.



**November 6—Health Check 2011** from noon to 3 p.m. at the Langley Park Community Center. This annual event provides free screenings for many potentially harmful health conditions; high blood pressure, rotting teeth, HIV, diabetes, poor kidney function, and more. Yes, it's free!

