

# Barrio de Langley Park

A Planning Newsletter Published by Action Langley Park

Issue #290, February 2012

## IMMIGRATION COURTS = ABSURD

The editors of the *New York Times* (3 January 2012) comment: "A stinging opinion by Justice Elena Kagan for a unanimous Supreme Court reinforced last month a message that lower courts have been sending for many years: the law applied in immigration cases too often fails to meet the standards of justice. In *Judulang v. Holder*, the failure was total: a decision on deportation that made no sense.



"As Justice Kagan pointedly wrote, 'We must reverse an agency policy when we cannot discern a reason for it.' That judgment, unfortunately, applies to much of the snarled and absurd processes in the immigration courts."

At one point, Justice Kagan referred to layers of arbitrariness. On what bases are the arbitrary decisions made? It's often hard to know.

She wrote that the approach used "does not rest on any factors relevant to whether an alien (or any group of aliens) should be deported. It instead distinguishes among aliens—decides who should be eligible for discretionary relief and who should not—solely by comparing the metes and bounds of diverse statutory categories into which an alien falls. The resulting Venn diagrams have no connection to the goals of the deportation processor the rational operation of the immigration

*"Absurd" continued on Page 7*

## SECURITY ↔ LIBERTY

"In the decade since September 11, 2001, this country has comprehensively reduced civil liberties in the name of an expanded security state. The most recent example of this was the National Defense Authorization Act, signed Dec. 31, which allows for the indefinite detention of citizens. At what point does the reduction of individual rights in our country change how we define ourselves?"

"While each new national security power Washington has embraced was controversial when enacted, they are often discussed in isolation. But they don't operate in isolation. They form a mosaic of powers under which our country could be considered, at least in part, authoritarian. Americans often proclaim our nation as a symbol of freedom to the world while dismissing nations such as Cuba and China as categorically unfree. Yet, objectively, we may be only half right. Those countries do lack basic individual rights such as due process, placing them outside any reasonable definition of 'free,' but the United States now has much more in common with such regimes than anyone may like to admit."

*"Security/Liberty" continued on Page 6*

## REFORM COMES TO PGCPS

### High Schools To Offer Academies

As a part of "Secondary School Reform," Prince George's County Public Schools is redesigning its high schools. "Through the redesign, to enrich teaching and learning, each high school will focus on one or more themes that are related to certain career fields. PGCPS is pursuing this new vision to ensure that 100% of our graduates are college and workforce ready for the 21st century. [Is it "and" or "and/or"?] Secondary School Reform is the strategic implementation of that vision." Incoming 9th grade students will be able to participate in an academy if offered at his or her boundary high school. The chart below reflects the anticipated academy offerings at two Langley Park area high schools.

Cluster 2 is perhaps the most relevant to readers of this publication. High Point High School is getting Engineering/Science, Environmental Studies, and Military Science. Northwestern High School is getting Business/Finance and Law/Education/Public Service.

Cluster 2	Academies Offered	Implementation Year
Bladensburg	Hospitality & Tourism	2011-12
	Health & Biosciences	2012-13
	Graphic Design, Media, & Communication	2014-15
	Performing Arts	2016-17
High Point	Engineering & Science	2013-14
	Environmental Studies	2014-15
	Military Science	2015-16
Laurel	Global Studies	2012-13
	Architecture & Design	2013-14
	Transportation Technologies	2014-15
Northwestern	Information Technology	2016-17
	Business & Finance	2012-13
	Law, Education, & Public Service	2013-14

Questions arise. For example, what if a student at Northwestern HS wants to enter the Military Science program at High Point HS? May he or she do so?

Will the supply of seats satisfy the demand from students? What if 100 students want to study Environmental Studies at High Point? Will they be accommodated? If not, how will the selection of the privileged take place? What percentage of a student body will be accommodated by these programs: might they accommodate all of the students at a high school?

Be sure to turn to Page 5 for questions answered by PGCPS's Chief Academic Officer.

*"Reform" continued on Page 5*

# News & Notes

## PG COUNTY BUDGET

Prince George's County will likely to face a \$126 million deficit in the FY2013 budget, up from \$77 million in FY2012. And the global as well as national budgets are not in good shape. Hold tight: more tough times ahead. County Executive Baker: "We have tough choices that have to be made." So probably fewer teachers, fewer prompt road repairs, etc. But...

**More Cops:** The *Washington Examiner* (15 January 2012) reports that County Executive Baker "has pledged to add nearly 300 officers to the county's police department by the end of his first term. An average of 109 officers have left the county each year since 2009, according to police records, a number that allows the department only to maintain the status quo." Currently, there are 1,526 sworn officers; the county could use more given its various security challenges. There is reason to believe that officers are doing a good job. At least, that's the perspective from Langley Park.

In 2011, Maryland created eight times more private-sector jobs than Virginia. Hurray for our side!!

## VELEZ ► BREWER

There's another changing of the guard in the local police division. Hector Velez has been promoted to Deputy Chief and is now in command of the Bureau of Patrol (District stations I-VI), Special Operations Division, Community Services Division and the Professional Compliance Division). Phew! Seems like a lot of work. Taking his place is Major Robert Brewer, who has been transferred from District VI. ALP's impression is that Velez has been excellent in closing the police-residents gap. We hope that both officers will be at our March 22nd meeting.



## THE QUINCEAÑERO

Nadia Ocasio writes: "Teen Girls ages 14 to 15 years of age will have the opportunity to experience a unique program that teaches leadership skills, etiquette, community engagement, and possibly the only opportunity to celebrate their Quinceañero. We are looking for people to sponsor a teen. Some girls in the Langley Park/Hyattsville Area need sponsors and mentors. \$75.00 dollars is the cost of the 8 week program which concludes in one Quinceañero for 15 girls." The program is centered at the Langley Park Community Center. For more information, contact Ms. Ocasio at 301 408-4335.

## DRUGS: WE'RE GUILTY

Many countries south of the USA are in crisis because of the drug gangs and cartels smoothing trade roots so that the drugs get to their consumers—most of whom live in our country. Just in Mexico, the fight against the cartels has cost close to 50,000 lives in the past few years. Most of the dead were not members of the gangs. The Guatemalan president commented: "Our region is seriously threatened by organized crime, but there is very little responsibility taken by the drug-consuming countries." He continued by asserting that the transit countries pay with "our blood, our fear, and our human sacrifice." The consumption of illicit drugs by Americans is paying for the deaths south of our border.



Of course, if we decriminalized drugs and provided medical help to consumers, much of the profit would go out of the trade; the result would be that many more people in Mexico, Guatemala, and elsewhere in the transit countries would live. That makes our leaders—and us—guilty.

News from *JAMA* (2012): "Occasional and low cumulative marijuana use was not associated with adverse effects on pulmonary function."

## IMMIGRATION & IMMIGRANTS

**1. Preferences re Level of Immigration:** A recent Gallup poll found a surprising "improvement" in preferences re immigration. The respondents were asked how satisfied they were with current immigration levels, and "only" 39% said they were very dissatisfied—and that is in the midst of a post-recession recession. A small proportion of that percentage, in the 2 to 3% range, were dissatisfied because they wanted immigration numbers to be increased! Four years ago, the very dissatisfied category received 45% of the preferences. So maybe there's a tiny decline in the proportion of Americans who have a deep prejudice against people who are different. And there may be positive news because the younger one is, the more likely he or she is satisfied with the current rate of immigration.

Source: <http://www.gallup.com/poll/152072/Americans-Immigration-Concerns>

**2. The State of the Union:** Here are a few passages from President Obama's State of the Union address: "Hundreds of thousands of talented, hardworking students in this country face [this] challenge: The fact that they aren't yet American citizens. Many were brought here as small children, are American through and through, yet they live every day with the threat of deportation. Others came more recently, to study business and science and engineering, but as soon as they get their degree, we send them home to invent new products and create new jobs somewhere else. That doesn't make sense.

"I believe as strongly as ever that we should take on illegal immigration. That's why my Administration has put more boots on the border than ever before. That's why there are fewer illegal crossings than when I took office.

"The opponents of action are out of excuses. We should be working on comprehensive immigration reform right now."

Alas, the anti-immigrant block in Congress will probably not approve any White House initiatives. Some administrative action is possible such as the discretionary deportation orders of some weeks ago. (Administering the orders is an issue.) But it will take a very changed Congress to provide us with comprehensive reform.

**3. Having Legal Counsel:** Many noncitizens are forced to navigate the immigration process without representation because they cannot afford an attorney. But even persons who can afford one, or are represented by a *pro bono* attorney, have at times faced severe restrictions on their representation. This is particularly troublesome given the significant power USCIS officers wield. For example, they decide whether a noncitizen is entitled to stay in the U.S. or not. The assistance of an attorney well versed in the complexities of immigration law can help safeguard the rights of these noncitizens and ensure just



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outcomes. By revising its guidelines, USCIS has responded to some of the most serious access concerns. For example, the new guidance provides that an attorney generally may sit next to his or her client during an interview, may be permitted to submit relevant documents to the USCIS officer, and may raise objections to inappropriate lines of questioning. To view the guidelines, see: *The Role of Private Attorneys and Other Representatives*; *Revisions to Adjudicator's Field Manual (AFM) Chapters 12 and 15*; *AFM Update AD11-42* (control/click to access).

#### 4. Recession Creates Struggling Immigrants: In

a newspaper we had not been familiar with, *Montgomery Voice* (November 2011), Clara H. Vaughn has written about the recession's impact. Here is her portion of the article. It typifies many stories that are told by people in the Langley Park area—and surely in many other parts of the country.

"A tenant, ... 68 years old, cleans houses two days a week, earning \$60 each week. Her son, 36, is the family's primary breadwinner, but has had trouble finding work since the recession hit. 'It's hard to reconcile our ideas of the U.S. with the reality,' translated Renato Mendoza, Montgomery County tenant organizer at Casa of Maryland, for the Latina tenant, who spoke on the condition of remaining anonymous. She, her son and her daughter-in-law moved to the United States 13 years ago to support their family in El Salvador. They planned to move back after they had earned enough money to build a house there. ...

"Her son lost a construction job he had worked since 1999 because of the economy's decline. He went a year and a half without work. The tenant used much of her savings to pay for food and rent, leaving little to send home to her family in El Salvador. ..."

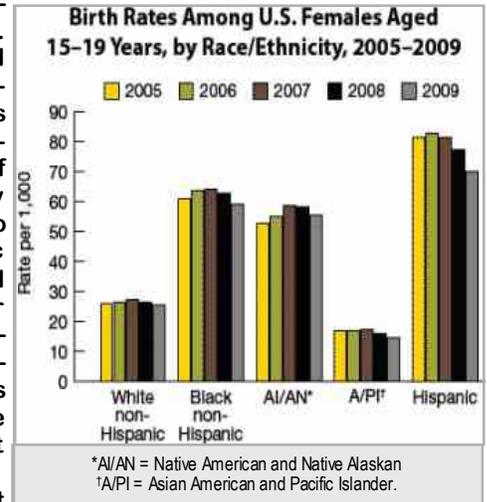
**5. Ha Ha to Alabama:** Alabama's crackdown on illegal immigrants, perhaps the toughest in the USA, has cost the state's economy an estimated \$10.8 billion, according to a U. of Alabama economist. The Alabama law requires police to detain anyone an officer suspects of being in the country without papers. *Don't speak English well? Hum. Skin brown but not dark? Hum.* If the stopped person cannot produce proper documentation, off she or he goes to the brig until ICE arrives. The economic estimate is that about 80,000 jobs were vacated by immigrants fleeing the crackdown or protesting the state's actions. (*Reuters*, 1 February 2012)

**6. More Cruelty?** The Rights Working Group reports (1 February 2012): "Imagine calling the police to report a crime and finding yourself instead handcuffed and detained. This is what happened to long-time DC resident Jai Shankar after he called the DC police to report his stolen camera. Instead of finding the help he needed, Jai was racially profiled, arrested, and detained for six months" by ICE! His arrest was a violation by the DC metropolitan police of the Mayor's Executive Order of non-inquiry into immigration status. No charges were brought against Jai. Currently, he is out of detention; however, his fears are based on the fact that he can be deported any day.

### YOUTH & EDUCATION

**1. Pregnancy Chances:** In 2009, a total of 409,840 infants were born to 15–19 year olds, for a live birth rate of 39.1 per 1,000 women in this age group. Nearly two-thirds of births to women younger than age 18 and more than half of those among 18–19 year olds are unin-

tended. A more recent report indicates that many teens who had unintended pregnancies said they didn't think they could become pregnant. That's a sad degree of ignorance, and it's in part the responsibility of our secondary schools to teach basic anatomy and biology and/or sex ed. Seemingly, the statistic indicates that schools are not doing that job well.



As the chart indicates, birth rates among Latinas have dropped over the 2005–2009 period—more than other groups of females. The fewer the teen pregnancies, the more difficult life will be for most of the mothers. Let's hope more young women wait.

**2. Homeless School Children:** The cruel impact of the recession and the post-recession is felt in many places—including the schools. The *Baltimore Sun* (21 January 2012) reports that Maryland's homeless children population has significantly increased in the past few years. "The number of homeless students in Maryland has more than doubled in the past five years, rising from 6,721 to 14,117 last school year, according to the Maryland State Department of Education. ...

"'Schools are the most stable place they can be,' said Barbara Duffield, policy director for the National Association for the Education of Homeless Children and Youth. 'The role schools have to play in responding to youth homelessness is really important.'"



According to a DC-metro regional compellation, in 2011 there were 773 homeless people—including 126 children—in Prince George's County (72 were unsheltered). That's a lower figure than DC, Montgomery County, and Fairfax County. The change in homelessness over the past five years was –34%, by far the best record among the area's jurisdictions. Still, there are homeless children in the county, and school staff members must go out of their way to help these children stabilize their lives.

There's a good study of homelessness in the region by our COG. The web address is <http://www.mwcog.org/uploads/pub-documents/p15eXlo20110512131909.pdf>

**3. School Lunches:** Three cheers for the revised guidelines that will include more nutritious meals with lots of fruit and vegetables, and whole grains. Maybe we can even get rid of the soda machines.

**4a. Funding College—PG:** Prince George's College has arranged to bring to all interested a "television channel" (web channel?) to help prospective students find financial support. The address is <http://pgcc.financialaidtv.com/>. It's a very helpful source for any college or college-bound student. The material is

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provided by Career America, and it is available from PGCC as well as Kaplan and many other institutions. The information is not institution-specific. It seems to be helpful to use and a useful source of information for coping with college finances, but it appears not to be a resource promoted by some of the leading public and private universities. Maybe that's because they have strong financial aid units? Check it out! And thanks to PGCC for adding to the institutions that offer the material.

**4b. Funding College—MoCo:** On Sunday, February 12 (2 to 4 p.m.), there's a free event to help students and families complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA), a form required to apply for financial aid for college. Students and family members can talk to experts, get an explanation of the application document, and receive more financial aid information. Visit this website: [VisitCollegeGoalSundayMD.org](http://VisitCollegeGoalSundayMD.org); it has a list of forms and financial records one should bring to the event. Location: the Charlene R. Nunley Student Services Center of Montgomery College, 7625 Fenton St., Takoma Park. For information, contact Wendy Maldonado via telephone at 1-877 642-4709 or via email at this web address: [twendy.maldonado@montgomerycollege.edu](mailto:twendy.maldonado@montgomerycollege.edu). Spanish interpreters will be available. To register, visit the website [CollegeGoalSundayMD.org](http://CollegeGoalSundayMD.org).



**5. Year-Round School?** PGSPS Superintendent Bill Hite is reported to want some schools to have year-round calendars, and he asked the county's delegation at Annapolis to support legislation that will provide the necessary authority. The delegation voted 19 to 2 in favor of the measure, but of course additional approval is needed. There are some schools in the county where student performance (judged by low scores and high dropout rates) is very disappointing. Providing students with a summer option might make a difference. Of course, a summer program is not free, so budget limitations might delay the implication of this step.

**6. Local High School Problems:** According to official enrollment and completion records for the local high schools, at High Point HS only 49.8% of the students who entered the 9th grade received a diploma in Spring 2011. And at Northwestern HS, the comparable figure was 54.2%. These are percentages that surely ring alarm bells among PGSPS officials and students' parents. Let's hope that the percentages will begin to rise now that two new principals are in charge of these schools.

## CASINOS

It seems likely that Prince George's County will get some slot palaces or perhaps full-blown casinos. Power Senator Mike Miller is behind the effort. The likely locations are Rosecroft Raceway and National Harbor. So the residents of the county can gamble what money they may have in the hope (against the odds) that they will be winners, perhaps winning a jackpot that will elevate them (at least temporarily) from their humdrum existence. Good luck! But the odds are that the money is going down the drain (and into the casino operator's pocket).

From an email received by BLP: "Under current law, casino operators in Maryland may keep 33% of proceeds, one of the lowest shares in the nation. Miller said he would like to see that percentage increased but would not say how high. Others familiar with the bill suggested the operator percentage could be around 40%." There goes a lot of the money being gambled.

But does anyone realize that playing the slots leads to a self-imposed tax? We can save a lot of trouble if we all write a check for, say, \$100, pay to the state of Maryland, and send it to the Comptroller. Writing a check is faster than spending hours pushing coins into slots. Either way, checks or slots, the county might get enough money to fund a portion of a new hospital's cost.

**FLASH:** Donna Edwards says 'no' to slots: In an opinion piece in the *Washington Post* (29 January 2012), Congresswoman Donna Edwards (almost certain to represent the Langley Park area after the next election) argues that there are many social ills linked to gambling. So for her, 'no' to slots.



## COUNTY PLANNERS AGAIN OVERRULE

Local preferences don't seem to carry much weight

Of course, it was outrageous that county planners developed a plan that will lead to the displacement of thousands of residence and scores of small businesses in the Langley Park area—very much against the will of the residents and businesspeople. (It was also outrageous for the County Council to okay the plan, presumably without studying it.)

Now the planners have done it again. The county Planning Board approved a large complex in the center of College Park that was opposed by many in College Park representatives as well as officials of the University of Maryland (which is in College Park). Well, they are consistent in inflicting their will upon people despite objections.

Are we living in an autocracy? Can't targeted people have influence in what we hope is still a democracy?

## IF YOU GET MORE, GIVE MORE (TAXES)

About 450,000 Maryland households that earn more than \$100,000 per year will see their state and local income taxes go up a bit next year if the legislature approves Governor O'Malley's budget. To balance a \$35.8 billion state budget, he wants to cap tax deductions and phase out exemptions for high earners. O'Malley said the average family of four making \$150,000 a year would pay \$191 more in state and local income taxes. Well, if the state has been kind to a household, perhaps the household should be kind to the struggling state.

## BAG TAX

DC has it, MoCo has it, and maybe before too long Prince George's County will have it: the bag tax. Why tax bags? To discourage the proliferation of bags (and especially the bad ones made of plastic) thrown on the side of the road and/or into the Anacostia River. DC officials report that the improper disposal of plastic bags has dropped significantly since their regulation was passed. So how about PG County adding to the fight against the improper disposal—that is, pollution? And the county makes a bit of money from those people who require a bag at the grocery store.



Plastic bags ready to pollute

**INTERESTING FACT: 176 foreign-born Langley Park residents have graduate or professional degrees. (2010 census)**

And what about teachers? It is not easy to find well-qualified teachers in Environmental Studies, Information Technology, Engineering and Science, and so forth. We know that math/science is an area of concern because of the lack of teachers; so how will big gaps be filled? (Will there be sufficient money to steal (or liberate) some teachers from Howard and Montgomery Counties?)

What will the substance of the various academies be? There is one hint that is disturbing. One of the academies is devoted to "Hospitality and Tourism." That's good. Presumably there will be a lot of economics, psychology, administrative science, and so forth. But no: the elements mentioned include barbering, cosmetology, culinary arts, and ProStart (featuring restaurant and foodservice). It may be good for preparing barbers and beauty-shop specialists, but hopefully that involvement won't take time away from English, civics, mathematics, and science.

Let's hope that when the program is fully implemented, enough marginal students will find a course of study that is sufficiently interested to keep the boy or girl in school and be more positive about the future.

**BLP QUESTIONS ANSWERED BY...**

**DUANE ARBAGAST**

Dr. Arbogast is the School System's Chief Academic Officer. His office's primary responsibility is "to support the school system's mission by providing system-wide leadership and coordination for the instructional programs of Prince George's County Public Schools, as well as providing instructional resources and technical assistance."



The editorial team of Barrio de Langley Park is delighted that Dr. Arbogast was able to respond to the questions that have come to our attention. His responses are in red, below. Hopefully, he will be able to attend an ALP meeting in the not too distant future.

**QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS**

▶ What if a student at (say) Northwestern HS wants to enter the Military Science program at High Point HS? May he or she do so?

Currently, students will only be permitted to attend an academy if it is offered at their boundary high school. Transportation will be provided to their boundary school as usual. While the Office of Student Records & Transfers will not grant transfers (into overcapacity schools) on the basis of academic programs, transfers requests into under-enrolled schools are permitted during the transfer period (until May 23th this year). [Almost] all of the schools in the northern part of the district are over capacity. However, as Secondary School Reform moves forward, a more open enrollment may be considered.

▶ What is a sequential program of instruction?

[It] is a sequence of courses leading to and necessary to a specific academic preparation excluding Enrichment and Specialty Programs (ESP), Technical Academy Programs, QUEST, AVID or any specialized school-based programs. Athletic activities and extra curricular activities are not considered sequential instructional programs.

▶ Will the supply of seats satisfy the demands from students? For instance, what if 100 students want to study Environmental Studies at

High Point? Will they be accommodated? If not, how will the selection of the privileged take place?

Thus far, we've been able to accommodate all students interested in the program at their boundary school. Once a program reaches capacity (capacity varies by program of study), it is contemplated that a lottery process would be instituted.

Perhaps the capacity can be raised to meet the demand.

▶ What percentage of a student body will be accommodated by these programs: might they accommodate all of the students at a high school?

We believe all students will eventually be enrolled in an academy track. Yes, upon full implementation, all high school students will be enrolled in an Academy.

Perhaps some students will be "forced" into less desirable tracks.

▶ What about teachers? It is not easy to find well-qualified teachers in Environmental Studies, Information Technology, Engineering and Science, and so forth. We know that math/science is an area of concern because of the lack of teachers; so how will big gaps be filled?

The district recruits hard to fill positions. Right now, foreign language and special education are the hardest to fill. We find many candidates in the areas you describe through alternative certification routes like Teach for America. In addition, several staff members from Human Resources serve on the SSR Strategy Team. Academy Staffing is a regular agenda item. The SSR team notifies HR of which positions will be needed for the following school year so that early recruiting can be conducted for hard to fill positions.

Nationally, there is a heavy demand for well-educated people in math and science; it may not be so easy to fill these slots. Good luck!

▶ What will be the substance of the various academies? For instance, one of the academies is devoted to "Hospitality and Tourism." That's good. Presumably there will be a lot of economics, psychology, administrative science, and so forth. But no: the elements mentioned include barbering, cosmetology, culinary arts, and ProStart (featuring restaurant and food service). It may be good for preparing barbers and beauty-shop specialists, but hopefully that involvement won't take time away from English, civics, mathematics, and science. So maybe the question is whether some of the academies will be a bit light on academics.

Culinary arts and cosmetology are part of Hospitality and Tourism, but we actually predict that barbering will not have the available positions in the near future. All of the Career Academies (including Hospitality & Tourism) are aligned to college entrance standards. In addition to taking four to six courses related to their interest area, academy students are required to take a fourth year of mathematics, two years of a world language, and complete a structured internship/experiential learning opportunity. These standards go beyond the high school graduation requirements, but are imperative to ensuring that our students are prepared to apply and be admitted to institutions of higher education.

Hopefully "higher education" doesn't include barbercollegeonline.com. ■

**WHERE DOES OUR STATE MONEY GO?\***

- 37%: Elementary & Secondary Education
- 10%: Higher Education
- 26%: Health
- 11%: Public safety
- 16%: Other

\*Proposed FY2013 Maryland budget



"Security/Liberty" continued from Page 1

This editorial is by Jonathan Turley and was published in the *Washington Post* (15 January 2012). Below are a few of the points raised in the article to make the case that our freedoms are being squeezed. Of course, someone might say, "I'm not worried. I'm a loyal American." But what if a few people accuse you of being a latent terrorist and report their views to the CIA? Might then the

**"It can't happen here." Maybe that's right. But can we be sure? Does anyone remember the lives that were ruined by Senator Joe McCarthy and his followers in the 1950s?**

CIA activate some of these powers? And what if we elect for president someone who begins to have a bit of paranoia? It could happen, and with terrible effects. Note:

President Obama has claimed, as President George W. Bush did before him, the right to order the killing of any citizen considered a terrorist or an abettor of terrorism.

Under the law signed in December, terrorism suspects are to be held by the military; the president also has the authority indefinitely to detain citizens accused of terrorism.

The government continues to claim the right to strip citizens of legal protections based on its sole discretion.

The president now decides whether a person will receive a trial in the federal courts or in a military tribunal, a system that has been ridiculed around the world for lacking basic due process protections. Bush claimed this authority in 2001, and Obama has continued the practice.

The president may now order warrantless surveillance, including a new capability to force companies and organizations to turn over information on citizens' finances, communications and associations. Bush acquired this sweeping power under the Patriot Act in 2001, and in 2011, Obama extended the power to include searches of everything from business documents to library records.

The government now routinely uses secret evidence to detain individuals and employs secret evidence in federal and military courts. It also forces the dismissal of cases against the United States by simply filing declarations that the cases would make the government reveal classified information that would harm national security.

The world clamored for prosecutions of those responsible for waterboarding terrorism suspects during the Bush administration, but the Obama administration said in 2009 that it would not allow CIA employees to be investigated or prosecuted for such actions. This gutted not just treaty obligations but the Nuremberg principles of international law.

Like the Bush administration, the Obama administration has successfully pushed for immunity for companies that assist in warrantless surveillance of citizens, blocking the ability of citizens to challenge the violation of privacy.

The government now has the ability to transfer both citizens and noncitizens to another country under a system known as extraordinary rendition, which has been denounced as using other countries, such as Syria, Saudi Arabia, Egypt and Pakistan, to torture suspects.

The Post article is at [http://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/is-the-united-states-still-the-land-of-the-free/2012/01/04/gIQAvcD1wP\\_story\\_2.html](http://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/is-the-united-states-still-the-land-of-the-free/2012/01/04/gIQAvcD1wP_story_2.html)

**Maricopa's Sheriff Joe Arpaio: "They are Mexicans, so they are wetbacks, so they are terrorists. Lock them away for a long time in pink pants."**



**"No, no. I didn't say 'bomb, bomb'; I said 'boom, boom' booming along with the drum in that rock band. Please get me out of Pakistan."**

## LATINO/AS WORST OFF FROM ECONOMIC DOWNTURN

That's the headline (paraphrased) of a new Pew Hispanic Center report released 26 January 2012. From the report:

"A majority of Latinos (54%) believe that the economic downturn that began in 2007 has been harder on them than on other groups in America. Large shares report that they or someone in their household has been out of work in the past year (59%); that their personal finances are in 'only fair' or 'poor' shape (75%); that they canceled or delayed a major purchase in the past year (49%); or that they are underwater on their mortgage (28% of Latino homeowners)."

Here are a few specifics from the report:

♦Household wealth: From 2005 to 2009, median household wealth (all assets minus all debt) among Latinos fell by 66%, compared with a drop of 53% among blacks and 16% among whites.

♦Unemployment: According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, the unemployment rate among Latinos in December 2011 was 11.0%, up from 6.3% at the start of the Great Recession in December 2007 (and up from 5.7% back in 2000). Over the same period, the national unemployment rate increased from 5.0% to 8.5%.

Here are Census-based unemployment data that are surprising: native born Latino unemployment is higher (12.1% in 2011) than for the foreign born (10.0%). Probably the foreign born are less likely to seek unemployment safety-net help and/or to respond to an interviewer—and that the real foreign born unemployment figure is much higher. [We guesstimate that unemployment in Langley Park is well over 25%.]

♦Poverty: Between 2006 and 2010, the poverty rate among Latinos increased nearly six percentage points—more than any other group—from 20.6% to 26.6%. (Probably the figure is higher for reasons indicated above.) By contrast, poverty rates among whites increased from 8.2% to 9.9%. And among blacks, poverty rates increased from 24.3% to 27.4%. The differences among groups are presumably a reflection of formal education.

The economy has cut deep for some. For instance, almost two of five Latinos report that they have cut the size of their meals—or skipped meals—because there wasn't enough money for food, and about the same ratio of respondents had trouble getting or paying for medical care for their family. Cutting back on food! Cutting back on health care! That's scary.

Despite being hard hit, Latinos are most more optimistic about the future than the general population. For instance, 67% of the Latino respondents thought their financial situation would improve over the coming year compared the general population's 58%; and 66% of Latinos thought their children would be better off than they were compared with 48% for the general population.

### UNEMPLOYMENT (January 2012)

Euros, 7.4%  
16-19 year olds, 2.11%  
Blacks, 13.6%  
16-19 year olds, 38.5%  
Latino/as, 10.5%  
16-19 year olds, 24.9%

### LANGLEY PARK POVERTY RATE (2010 Census data)

Under 18 = 24%  
18-64 = 20%  
Latino/a = 22%  
Foreign born = 20%

## GETTING ON THE BWI FLIGHT?

Starting sometime in March 2012, there will be direct flights by Island Travel & Tours from BWI to Havana, Cuba. These are "charter" flights, and among those eligible to fly are academics, journalists, religious leaders, cultural groups, and other organizations that can claim they are going not just to be tourists.

Pictured: The Malacaen in Havana.  
Photo W. Hanna



## IT'S VERY COLD WATER !!!



Northwestern High School English Teacher Jason Cook, with students and co-workers, took the polar bear plunge into the Chesapeake Bay on 27 January 2012. Please, Jason, don't freeze to death. We need you at Langley Park Day on May 6! Well, the brave Northwestern people are plunging to support the Maryland Special Olympics. Want to contribute? go to <http://CoolSchools.kintera.org/jcook>.

## PREJUDICE!

Latinos in East Haven, Connecticut delivered hundreds of tacos to the town's mayor last week, two days after he made a flippant, derogatory comment about them while discussing alleged police discrimination and violence. In the wake of those allegations, Mayor Joseph Maturo Jr. was asked what he would do to reach out to the Latino community. "I might have tacos when I go home, I'm not quite sure yet." Sick!



## DREAM CANDIDATES BEING DEPORTED

"President Obama should not be commended for his pandering lip-service as more times than not his deportation review program is not preventing the removal of individuals with extensive family ties and an absence of criminal records. ... The facts are that DREAMers continue to be deported daily by this President."

Source: Matthew Kolken, [blogs.ilw.com](http://blogs.ilw.com)



## BE HEALTHY!

1. A recent study reveals that more than 30% of people living in socially disadvantaged areas reported having arthritis—as opposed to 18.5% in wealthier areas. "Our next steps will be to find out why there is a link to arthritis and place. One of the factors may be that if the environment is not conducive to physical activity, then people are less likely to be active." (From *Arthritis Care & Research*.)



2. Children whose mothers nurture them have brains with a larger hippocampus—a region vital for learning and memory. "This study is the first that actually shows an anatomical change in the brain, which really provides validation for the very large body of early childhood development literature that had been highlighting the importance of early parenting and nurturing. Having a hippocampus that's almost 10% larger just provides concrete evidence of nurturing's powerful effect." (From <http://news-info.wustl.edu/>)

"Absurd" continued from Page 1

laws. Judge Learned Hand wrote in (an) early immigration case that deportation decisions cannot be made a "sport of chance." That's what the decisions too often are now.

Of course, Congress should pass a comprehensive immigration reform bill. And of course, its members won't—at least until the fearful and the hateful are removed from Congress.

The Court opinion is available at <http://www.supremecourt.gov/opinions/11pdf/10-694.pdf>

## ONLY ONE OUT OF SIX?! = ABSURDLY FEW

The "sport of chance" seems to be played in many places. As reported in BLP 229 and a few other publications (e.g., the *Washington Post*), only about one in six detained immigrants were released under the new triage strategy. Strange: five-sixth were deemed appropriate to deport even though many of them did not have a criminal record. A surprise. What's up? Apparently, the denials are because ICE officials thought the detained individuals didn't have "substantial ties" to the USA.

Let's pretend: "Do you have two parents in the USA? So you don't! And you don't speak correct English! That shows you have no connections to this country! Out you go, stupid wetback." Seems that a dangerous subjective judgment might be why only one out of six detainees are allowed to continue (for a time) in the country.

## PLEASE BE CAREFUL

At the University of Maryland at approximately 2:40 a.m., a female student was walking to her residence when she noticed someone following her. She swiped her card and pressed the handicap door button to enter—at which time the male suspect followed her into the building. The suspect assaulted the student by grabbing her around her shoulders. The suspect then quickly fled from the area. So it can happen anywhere.

Please consider the following safety precautions (most suggested by the campus police but surely can be applied elsewhere). The Langley Park area is a great place to live, but it is not crime free.



- If you feel you are being followed, contact the police immediately. Prevent people from tailgating into the building by ensuring the door closes as soon as possible after you enter. Frivolous use of the handicap button allows a greater opportunity for tailgating to occur
- Program 911 into your personal mobile phone.
- Trust your instincts. They are a natural gift that tells you when something is wrong.
- Be ready to take protective action if necessary. This could be something as simple as crossing the street and entering a populated area.
- Stay alert and attuned to people and circumstances around you - electronic devices that block your hearing or split your attention make it difficult for you to remain vigilant.
- Report suspicious activity/people to the police immediately to 911.
- Be aware of suspicious vehicles - vehicles with their headlights off or that slow down near you may pose a potential threat. Move away from the vehicles, quickly move to a populated area and provide an accurate description of the vehicle to police.
- Avoid isolation. After dark, walk with others and use well-lit paths.
- Pretend to be talking on your telephone as you walk (Of course, you really can be talking.)
- Don't carry your name, address or car license on your key ring.

# WHAT AND WHEN

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 [actionlangleypark@yahoo.com](mailto:actionlangleypark@yahoo.com).

**LPCC Children's Programs**—Continuing programs at the Langley Park Community Center include tutoring for 6-12 year olds and poetry for 8-13 year olds. Check offerings—and costs—at 301 445-4508.

**February 4—Midwinter Folk Festival**, noon to 10 p.m. at the Takoma Park Middle School. Lots of great music, song, and dance.

**February 7—Learn about the new school budget**, 6:30 p.m. in the Northwestern High School cafeteria. The Student Based Budget Community presentation is in Spanish (interpretation into English as necessary). The focus is on the budget process—"for information sharing only." (That is, audience members can't change it.)

**February 8—Paola Ricaurte Quijano**, a visiting researcher at the University of Maryland, will speak on "Mexican activism and the Internet: The Case of the Movimiento 5 de Junio," 3:30 p.m. in the Francis Scott Key Building's room 2120. She is a faculty member at Monterey Tech in Mexico City.

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

**February 18—Free legal advice about family law issues**, 1-3 p.m. at Langley Park Community Center. Call for information or to register: 301 952-4840.

**February 18—Ella Fitzgerald Live**, a film as part of the Montpelier Film Series—6 p.m. followed by dinner. To see the film only is \$10; for film plus dinner, it is \$25. Then on March 2 at 8 p.m., saxophonist David Sanchez, born in Puerto Rico, will perform. \$25. The Montpelier Mansion is at 9650 Muirkirk Road, Laurel. Information: 301 377-7817.

**March 1—Youth Job Fair**, 3-6 p.m. for youths 16 to 21 at McGill Training Center, 8452 Zimborski Ave., Fort Meade. Its not close, but the trip might be worth it.

**March 8 & more—Physics is Phun**, in the physics department, University of Maryland: March 8, 9, 10: Color; May 3, 4, 5: Great Physics Demonstrations. From 7:30 to 8:30 p.m. Information: 301 405.5994. Get young people to these events! Interest them in science! (Science really is fun—and phun.)

**March 18—Free cancer screening** at Washington Adventist Hospital. For information, call 301 891-7600.

**March 22—Action Langley Park** meets at 7 p.m. at the Langley Park Community Center. Be there! Invited special guests include leaders from the School System and the Police Department.

**April 21—Maryland Day**, 9 a.m. - 6 p.m. at the University of Maryland in College Park. Lots to see and do!! And it's all free. Bring high school students so that they become more comfortable being on a university campus.

**April 26—Art and the Purple Line**, an art event at The Morris & Gwendolyn Cafritz Foundation Arts Center, 930 King Street on the Takoma Park/Silver Spring Campus of Montgomery College. Time TBA. It won't all be purple on purple!

**April 28-29—Science and Engineering Festival**: "Our mission is to re-invigorate the interest of our nation's youth in science, technology, engineering and math by presenting the most compelling, exciting, educational and entertaining science gatherings in the USA." It's free! In DC. Information is available at: <http://www.usasciencefestival.org>.

**May 6—Langley Park Day 2012** from noon to 4 p.m. at the Langley Park Community Center. There will be music and dance performances; a major health fair; food and craft vendors; children's art and game activities; face painting, and more. On Cinco de Mayo weekend!!

**DO YOU SING? DO YOU DANCE? DO YOU PLAY A MUSICAL INSTRUMENT? ARE YOU A NURSE? A MEDICAL DOCTOR? A CLOWN? A SPECIALISTS IN CHILDREN'S GAMES? A VENDOR OF AUTHENTIC CRAFTS? A VENDOR OF AUTHENTIC FOODS? A GOOD BILINGUAL HOST? For any of these and more, contact ALP at [actionlangleypark@yahoo.com](mailto:actionlangleypark@yahoo.com) to be a key part of Langley Park Day 2012!**



## A SECURE COMMUNITIES UPDATE

"After months of fighting to keep internal ICE memos regarding the Secure Communities program secret, the Obama administration finally complied with a court order and released key agency communications regarding the program in late December in connection with *NDLON v. ICE*. The rights groups litigating the case, NDLON, The Center for Constitutional Rights and the Cardozo Law School's Immigrant Justice Clinic, sought the so-called 'mandatory memo' to learn how ICE justifies forcing Secure Communities on states and localities. However, the documents reveal that the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) has no clear legal mandate to do so." (Rights Working Group, January-February 2012)