

# Barrio de Langley Park

A Planning Newsletter Published by Action Langley Park

Issue Number 234, April 2012

## Why Are PGCPs Officials Not Filling Gaps Between Parents and Their Children's Schools?

Ask any school system official, and he or she will deny that there is an effort to separate parents from their children's schools. But that is the almost certainly unintended result of PGCPs actions, and the result is harm to the children. Hey: About one-third of Latino 9th graders graduate from a local high school!!! About 40% of 9th grade boys graduate from Suitland High School!!



Many of the children in the county school system come from families where the adults are not aware of their importance in their children's success. Indeed, some adults come from countries or localities where parent involvement is almost forbidden—and certainly discouraged. The adults may not be well-educated, at least in the ways that they can enhance their children's formal education.

They need help, and that's the reason there are—or should be—specialists in every county school (except those serving middle- and upper-middle class children) to help the parents to help their children. Help? Yes, help the parents to communicate with the teachers and the principal, help the parents on ways to get their children to do their homework, perhaps even help the parents to understand the importance of a high school diploma or a college degree. What about counselors? Not sufficient!

Our federal government knows: "Although breaking the language barrier between [standard] English speakers and those whose primary language is other than [standard] English constitutes a giant step towards increasing parent involvement in their children's education, building bridges with families of different cultures and backgrounds also deserves special attention if all families are to feel comfortable participating in school activities. In many schools, a home-school liaison can play a crucial role in reaching out to parents of different backgrounds and building trust between home and school." (<http://www2.ed.gov>)

"Parent involvement is critical in facilitating children's development and achievement and in preventing and remedying educational and developmental problems. Declining achievement scores, rising educational costs, and distrust of bureaucratic institutions are among the factors which have refocused attention on the rights, responsibilities, and impact of parents. Substantial evidence exists to show that children whose parents are involved in their schooling have significantly increased their academic achievement and cognitive development."

(Rhoda Becher, ERIC)

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## Planning for Langley Park Day 2012

**May 6**

Planning for the May 6th festival continued at the March 22nd meeting of Action Langley Park. There has been good progress, but there is still much to do to make sure that the event is a success both in what it has to offer and in the number of people who are attracted to it—and are offered better health, good entertainment, and more.

**Health Fair:** Many health professionals have volunteered for the event. Of course, there will be medical doctors, dentists, nurses, and a chiropractor. There will also be information specialists from TAYA, NIH, and elsewhere. Tests will range from HIV to oral health to hypertension.

**Performances:** As has been the tradition at the festival, there will be singers, dancers, and musicians throughout the afternoon.



**Testing!**

**Plus:** Children's activities, information from various government agencies and nonprofit organizations, food vendors, and more.

Still in the planning stage: Lawyers to inform, futbol players to demonstrate, safety demonstrations, banks, and more.

So be sure to circle May 6 on your calendar, and if you want to help out, let us know via email at the ALP address: [actionlangleypark@yahoo.com](mailto:actionlangleypark@yahoo.com).



**Dancing!**

## March 24

Óscar Arnulfo Romero y Galdámez of El Salvador was born on 15 August 1917 and assassinated by the regime's death squad on 24 March 1980. That was the day after he gave a sermon calling on the soldiers of El Salvador to obey God's higher order rather than the government leaders who were viciously murdering and otherwise violating the human rights of the citizens. Bishop Romero was considered to be "the Bishop of the poor." Alas, there is a shameful link to the United States; we gave billions of dollars to the country to support the regime's army and security forces.



# OPPORTUNITIES

## AND NON OPPORTUNITIES

### TEST FOR HIV

The organization "Identity" provides confidential HIV counseling and testing at no cost. Identity will be at Langley Park Day 2012 on May 6. In addition, the organization's regular walk-in testing hours are:

♦ Gaithersburg (414 East Diamond Ave. in Olde Town) Tuesday & Thursday, 2 - 6pm; Wednesday 2-7pm

♦ Takoma/Langley Park (7676 New Hampshire Ave., #411) Tuesday & Thursday, 2 - 6pm; Saturday, 12 - 3pm

Appointments can be scheduled outside of these times by calling 301-300-9978 in Gaithersburg, or 301-422-2398 in Takoma Park.

### JOBS

**Become a chemist:** Project SEED is an opportunity for economically disadvantaged high school students to do chemistry research for eight to ten weeks at the University of Memphis in a chemistry lab during the summer. Students receive a \$2,500 stipend. The program is supported by the American Chemical Society Project SEED Foundation. For application information: <http://www.chem.memphis.edu/SEED/materials.htm>. The deadline is April 27.



**Occupations with many openings:** medical assistant, dental assistant, pharmacy technician, medical records technician, and medical transcriptionist.

### BEWARE OF FOR-PROFIT EDUCATION SCAMS

There are many for-profit colleges that advertise and hustle by talking about the American dream. Study with us, an advertisement might announce while picturing a good looking actor, and you can have—well, lots of jobs that pay well. Alas, there are colleges that "too often saddle students with crippling debt while furnishing them valueless degrees." Often the charges are higher than in public institutions.

Our public institutions are typically cheaper and better, so consider, for instance, Prince George's Community College (301 322-0864), Montgomery College (240 567-5000), the University of Maryland at College Park (301 314-8385), and the University of Maryland University College (1800 888-8682). And there are private colleges that care for their students—not just money, e.g., Washington Adventist University in Takoma Park.

*"Parents" continued from Page 1*

So are school system officials providing that essential resource? Apparently not. Several years ago, they drastically reduced the number of so-called "parent liaisons" from over two hundred to under one hundred, and now the number has declined further. Are the school officials trying harm children from working class and poor families? Of course not. Ah unintended consequences: that is what their actions are contributing to. Just check the graduation rates of Latinos.

Superintendent Bill Hite and others: Reverse course before too much harm is done to our children. Use Title 1 or Title 3 money or find other ways to finance these essential liaisons between the school and the families. These children are part of our community's future—our country's future. They need your help.

Some relevant videos: [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=e4MFsnxs\\_bU](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=e4MFsnxs_bU);

# ARTS ON THE BLOCK

In December 2011, Arts on the Block received the exciting news that the organization was the recipient of a Challenge America-Fast Track Grant from the National Endowment for the Arts.

With this funding from the NEA, apprentices in the signature Pour Your ART Out workshop have already begun working with community residents, University of Maryland Landscape Architecture professors and students, artists and public art planners to create a design to transform a parking lot at Carroll Avenue Quebec Terrace (CAQT) apartments into an arts-infused plaza for community events.

This is part of a five year Master Plan for the CAQT community to improve the lives of residents through temporary and permanent art and design projects. In planning sessions with community members sponsored by AOB and partners in 2010, lighting and the lack of a community gathering place were among residents' top concerns. A temporary art project—the 2010 Festival of Light—brought these issues to the attention of the larger community.

On January 27, nine teenagers gathered at the Arts

on the Block studio for the first meeting of a three session, eight month program with five partners—Arts on the



Arts on the Block's wall at Piney Branch Rd. & New Hampshire Ave. The wall covering extends much further in both directions.

Block, the YMCA Youth and Family Services, Gandhi Brigade, Imagination Stage and Community Science—which will provide an arts-infused community service learning experience for middle school students living in the Carroll Avenue/Quebec Terrace and Nob Hill apartments. Funded by a TeamUp Grant from The Jim and Carol Trawick Foundation, this initiative is part of the ongoing commitment to the CAQT community from the partner organizations, and addresses the stated desire of the community to have on-site wrap-around care for middle school students in this working class neighborhood in Silver Spring (adjacent to Langley Park).

In the first session (January to March, 2012), teens have been trained in leadership, team building, youth development and arts skills (performing arts, visual arts, and media and advocacy) in order to work with professional artists/instructors and middle school students on Friday afternoons in the spring and at a camp in summer 2012. Middle school students will get a chance to sample all the artistic disciplines and then choose an area in which to specialize, culminating in a pop-up performance for the entire community in August with sets, performances and digital media documentation by campers and teen mentors. Want to learn more about this wonderful arts + youth program? Go to [www.artsontheblock.com](http://www.artsontheblock.com).

**PLAY THE EMPLOYMENT ODDS!** People in the USA who have dropped out of high school have about one chance in 8 (12%) of being **un**employed. (That's also the figure for Latino/as; for Blacks it is a horrifying 25%.) With a high school diploma, the odds are about one in 12 (8%). With a bachelor's degree, only one in 25 (4%) is **un**employed. So play the odds!

## News & Notes: Local

### Police Team

The county's police team for District 1, which includes the Langley Park area, is now headed by Major Robert Brewer (pictured) and includes Captain Daniel Weishaar and Investigative Commander Charles "Bud" Duellley. These three were at the March 22 meeting of Action Langley Park. (Thanks, officers!) Their news was good: declines from year to year in most crime indicators. They report that the special effort in Langley Park last summer, which appears to have kept crime under control, will be repeated this coming summer.



**A TIP FROM THE POLICE MAJOR:** Whenever you leave your car, even just to pump gas, lock up and take your keys with you. Keys in cars often lead to car theft; open car doors often lead to theft of valuables.

Why the drop in crime: locally and nationally? And during economic hard times? One small piece of the puzzle is that many car thefts in and near Langley Park were committed by a group of teenagers. And many of them have been caught by our local police officers. But overall, criminologists are puzzled.

The Metro (bus and heavy rail) system is an exception to the steady decline in crime. Aggravated assault rose almost 50% from 2008 to 2010 but declined in 2011; larceny and robbery have a similar patterns. Explaining crime data is not easy!

### Langley Park in a New Legislative District?

Maybe. Creating a sub-district within legislative district 47 for an area that includes Langley Park as well as parts of Adelphi and Chillum would almost guarantee that a Latino or Latina would be elected. And it would make the loss of a seat by one of the current delegates to be highly likely. Such gerrymandering is common throughout the USA—dramatically in Maryland. Gerrymandering is likely to remove a Republican congressman in the coming November elections. But it's a distasteful practice based on profiling.

A *Gazette* article (23 March 2012) by star reporter Jeffrey Lyles includes these paragraphs:

"Del. Doyle Niemann (D-Dist. 47) of Mount Rainier said O'Malley's plan missed the mark because the district has always had diverse representation and he is concerned that singling out the Hispanic population could needlessly fuel the antagonism between different members of the community.

"You can see the tension that arises in some community meetings as people feel the pressure of change and the cultural divide," Niemann said. "[The redistricting] might be justified when you have a long history of discrimination but in our district that's never been the case."

Dear readers: Is this a good idea or not? Comments welcome.

### Bugs

The bedbug infestations in area apartments and houses seems to be worse than usual this year, perhaps because of the mild winter. We've had lots of students with itchy rashes, and at least one with a live bedbug crawling on his clothing in class. Bedbug bites on one



person are shown in the photo. Bedbugs are sometimes mistaken for roaches, which we also have a lot of—and mice.

What can be done? Are apartment managers responsible for dealing with infestations? If so, do they need to be forced to take action? (Thanks to a Hyattsville elementary school teacher for this contribution.)



### Northwestern HS (continued)

In the last issue of BLP, we wrote about the outside demonstration as well as the planned student demonstration. But the note did not include what the suspended students said were the goals of the demonstration. They certainly appear to be quite positive: increase teachers' pay, improve the quality of education, and solicit an apology to the Filipino teachers who are being thrown out of the county—and the USA—because of the either stupid or evil action on the part of county school system administrators. And in some circles, the planned demonstration was to take place during what some organizations designated National Student Day of Action. It's dangerous for outsiders to second-guess a principal what an alternative to suspension might be, but a school-wide meeting to talk about education and political action does come to mind.

### Mis Quince Años Program 2012

This increasingly popular "becoming a woman" program at the Langley Park Community Center organized by Center Director Lourdes Sulc is attracting more families and adding more activities. The girls write personal bios, work on college applications, practicing speaking before an audience, learn about basic make-up, get dance and swimming lessons, take a mother-daughter trip to the Gala theater in DC, and much more—including the final event which this year is on the evening of May 19. Many sessions have attracted a reporter who will write about the program.



### What's Next for Will Campos?

County Councilman Campos has represented the county's District 2—which includes Langley Park—for almost six years. With term limits, he has a bit more than two years to go. But will he serve out his term? There must be a temptation to run for state delegate in the newly created 47B district—a district created so that it would have a Latino/a majority.



Would Campos as the 47B district delegate be a plus or not? Action Langley Park has worked with two of the current delegates, Doyle Niemann and Jolene Ivey, and they appear to be supportive of area needs. Campos? He disappointed residents by leading the council vote to approve the Sector Plan that threatens affordable apartments in Langley Park area. But maybe with a different lens, he would be more supportive of affordable housing (really affordable by the working class, that is, housing costing no more than 30% of income). These are hard times, so the working class needs more affordable housing, not less.

### High Point Scholarship

Nine students from High Point High School have re-

## News & Notes: Immigration

### Another anti-immigrant effort?

Barnesville, Garrett Park, Glen Echo, Martin's Additions, Somerset and our neighbor Takoma Park are being attacked by a delegate from Middle River. He has submitted a bill that would prohibit non-citizens from voting in local elections. But shouldn't residents who pay taxes be able to vote to help shape their jurisdiction's programs? It's probably just another attack aimed at immigrants. Just another ugly bigot.

### Another Immigration failure?

Los Angeles immigration agents are reviewing why a Honduran man who died in a prison fire in Honduras was sent back to his native country weeks after receiving a stay of deportation. Why didn't immigration authorities honor the stay?

The man was seeking asylum; he came to the U.S. in 2008 because gang members were trying to recruit him, his attorney said. He was ordered deported in 2010 when he missed a hearing in Immigration Court. After his client was arrested and detained, an attorney filed an emergency motion to reopen the case. That motion prompted an emergency stay. But the man was put on a plane to fly back to Honduras. Stupidity or evil or ...?

### Continuing "Catch-an-Immigrant"

In early March, the National Day Laborer Organizing Network and over eighty other civil and immigrant rights organizations sent a letter to the FBI demanding that it end its facilitation of ICE's Secure Communities deportation program. The first paragraph appears below. Alas, the letter probably won't be taken seriously.

"We, the undersigned, call on the Federal Bureau of Investigation to end its facilitation of the fundamentally flawed Secure Communities deportation program. We urge the FBI's Criminal Justice Information Services Advisory Policy Board to adopt [our alternative] proposal to mitigate the damage this program has done to public safety and community policing. The proposal would respect the wishes of states and localities that chose not to participate in 'Secure Communities' and would prevent the implementation of the program in jurisdictions with a documented pattern of civil rights abuses."

### Not Only Latinos and Latinas?

It may be hard for some people to believe, but there are many undocumented people in the USA who are not from south of the border! It is estimated that there are: from China 280,000; from the Philippines, 270,000; from India, 240,000; and from Korea, 230,000. So let us build a floating fence somewhere in the Pacific Ocean so that these terrible illegal people can be



kept out—and maybe the legal ones too because they are definitely taking jobs that Euro-Americans might otherwise have. For instance, there is a Chinese man who is President of the University of Maryland. Outrageous, even if he is doing a so-called good job. And do you know what strange foods they eat? And what new year's day

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ceived scholarships from the Riderwood Scholars Fund. Each student will receive \$6,000 for college, trade, or vocational certificate programs. They are: Nicholas Adjei, Jose Aguilar-Arevalo, Zubin Das, Sara-Ruth Gabriel, Jennifer Johnson, Handakina Lintiso, Nyakeh Minah, Selasi Ocloo, and Michael Young. The names are worth focusing on because it is clear that the students represent a rich diversity of ethnic backgrounds. Diversity provides great richness for the USA.

### More Recipients: Organizations

United Way gave funds this year to a number of organizations relevant to the Langley Park area. To name a few: Ayuda, CASA de Maryland, Latin American Youth Center, Planned Parenthood of Metropolitan Washington, and the Spanish Catholic Center.

### Casino Near By

It may be that there will be a \$1B casino a short Beltway ride from the Langley Park area. In 30 minutes and a bundle of money in your pocket, you can have a full hour of joy and pain depending on the spin of the wheel or throw of the dice. If a person loses all of his money and can't pay for groceries or the rent, it's comforting to know that some of the money that will flow to the county can be used for emergency food and perhaps a shelter.

### Need High Test Scores? Manipulate Data!

The *Atlanta Journal-Constitution* has uncovered a national scandal: schools or school systems manipulating test data so that they look good! Let no child be left behind! Want to be rewarded as a principal? Manipulate the students' scores upward so that the progress is dramatic!

Baltimore was one of the cities studied and flagged as suspicious. Here's the report: "From 2006 through 2009, suspicious changes in 228 classes; 116 would be expected. After district began aggressively investigating cheating, fewer classes flagged, and those were mostly for decreases. ... From 2008 to 2010, investigators found evidence that educators at three elementary schools changed students' answers on state achievement tests." Sixteen other schools are considered worrisome.

Maryland's suburban schools did not reach the "worrisome" level. We all hope that any improvement will be the result of students' increasing command of the subjects rather than staff command of data. He only got a 50? Well, surely he should be at the 70 level—so let's do it. Manipulation-for-survival must tempt some.

~~50~~  
70

### Transparency!

**For County Council Members:** The Maryland Senate has expanded Senator Jamie B. Raskin's bill that would require online posting of the financial disclosure forms of state officials also to apply to county officials. Commented one senator: "I see no reason why we should exempt the counties and their officials from the requirement." Yes, all public officials who are involved in making decisions concerning the expenditure of money or the regulations that might have a monetary impact on others. (It would be too crude to call it the Jack Johnson rule.) Of course, we believe that PG County council members are honest and above board—with a few historic exceptions.

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## AROUND MARYLAND

### East Baltimore

Mary Kendall, a friend of Langley Park, informs us that there is a mural project designed to uplift an area of East Baltimore. "In Operation Oliver, veterans use military experience and skills to revitalize Oliver, an area known for vacant homes and crime, and as one of the filming locations of HBO's *The Wire*. The veterans use military experience and skills to help community members organize everything from landscaping to crime-watch for the neighborhood." Fund-raising is taking place. Check it out at <https://givecorps.com/projects/74-veteran-artist-program-paint-a-mural-in-east-baltimore>—and be sure to see the video that's towards the bottom of that page.

### State Income Tax Rates

The Maryland legislature is currently proposing and battling over rates. Currently, all salaries are taxed even though one's income is, say, \$5,000 for the year—which has a tax rate of 4.75%. Why tax the poorest of the poor? The current tax rate for those who make \$500,000 is 5.50%, and the proposal is to raise that to 5.75%. How about a little help for the poor? Raise the taxes of the big earners to at least 6% and eliminate taxes for those who make, say, under \$20,000 a year. The more you have, the more you can help! We are all in one large community.

### Legislation

The Maryland House of Delegates defeated a bill to raise hunting license cost from \$24 to \$40. Perhaps the NRA was involved. When will the interpretation of US Constitution's Second Amendment be reconsidered?

### More College Grads Needed in Maryland

About 45% of Maryland's residents have at the least a two-year college degree. But a new estimate indicates that about 66% of the new Maryland jobs will call for some higher education—two or four or more years. That's the estimate of a Lumina Foundation report. Let's get to work! (Source: <http://www.luminafoundation.org>)

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they celebrate?? They must be anti-American!

### Economic Benefits of Comprehensive Immigration Reform

Author: Raúl Hinojosa-Ojeda (UCLA)

"The U.S. government has attempted for more than two decades to put a stop to unauthorized immigration from and through Mexico by implementing 'enforcement-only' measures along the U.S.-Mexico border and at work sites across the country. These measures have failed to end unauthorized immigration and have placed downward pressure on wages in a broad swath of industries. Comprehensive immigration reform that legalizes currently unauthorized immigrants and creates flexible legal limits on future immigration in the context of full labor rights would help American workers and the U.S. economy. However, the federal government's current policy is to step up its enforcement-only strategy without creating a path to legalization for the millions of undocumented immigrants currently living in the country. [The] evidence is that comprehensive reform would raise the 'wage floor' for the entire U.S. economy...."

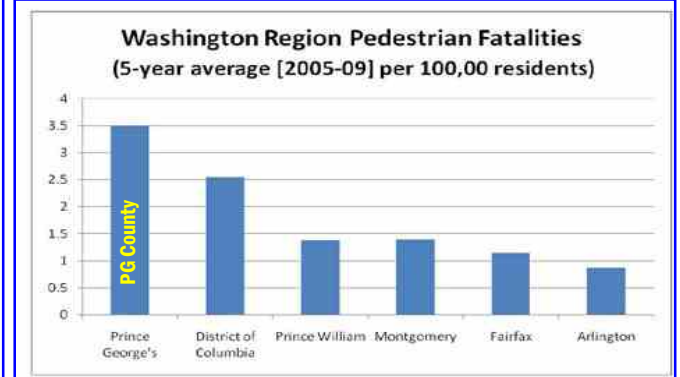
Source: <http://www.cato.org/pubs/journal/cj32n1/cj32n1-12.pdf>. This paper is being presented at a Cato Institute conference in DC on April 26.

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But openness will help to remove any doubts.

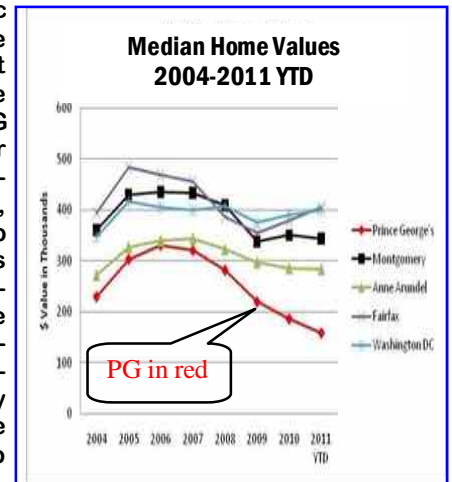
**With Available Statistics:** PG County has taken a useful step towards openness. It has created CountyStat that will, when at full speed, provide internet users with much useful information at the county and local levels.

Below are two examples of what's available at this much too-long web address: <http://princegeorgescountymd.gov/Government/AgencyIndex/countystat/graph-chart-map-gallery.asp>. The compara-



tive pedestrian fatalities graphic raises the question: why so many fatalities in the, and what can be done about them? The graphic

on median home values shows not only that home values in PG County are lower than in neighboring jurisdictions, but that a sharp decline in values continues although the neighboring counties see a steady-  
ing of values. Why so low? Why the continued sharp decline?



There are many other interesting and provocative graphics. One more example: there is a map of the county showing by zip code the rate of foreclosures. And alas, 20783 is among the areas with the highest rate.

CountyStat can be a very valuable tool. Keep it up: more and more valuable information. Thanks, PG!

Note: These graphics are larger and more detailed in the original. The PG in red and the PG County label have been added for clarity.

### Affordable Housing

There is a lack of quality affordable housing in suburban Maryland. As readers know, the Sector Plan enables developers to bulldoze many affordable apartments in and around Langley Park. What an evil way to gain a hoped-for increase in property values! But let's assume that the planners and council members who developed and approved the plan were careless or incompetent rather than evil. If so, here's a recommendation: participation in the affordable housing conference that will take place on May 7th at the Bethesda North Marriott Conference Center. For more information, go to [www.affordablehousingconference.org](http://www.affordablehousingconference.org).

# PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY Teaming with MONTGOMERY COUNTY Re Langley Park/Long Branch

Earlier this year, there was an exchange of messages between Montgomery County Executive Ike Leggett and Prince George's County Executive Rushern Baker. The goal: to enhance coordination between the counties and the City of Takoma Park in working to improve the quality of life in the target Langley Park/Long Branch area. The cooperation probably won't create positive changes in the near future; such changes take time.

If members of the working group to be formed have the residents and businesspeople in mind, over time there is a good chance that positive change will take place. After all, improvements can be made in health services, education of children and adults, safety, apartment house maintenance, job workshops, and more.

It might also be possible to dispel negative stereotypes of the area. For instance, residential mobility is not especially high in the area, and the area is not crime infested.

Everyone keep your fingers crossed!

### Ike Leggett to Rushern Baker

Dear County Executive Baker:

Along our common border, we share diverse communities which enrich the lives of thousands of people. Yet amid these successful communities, a few very complex challenges exist. Poverty and its related social impacts has been an intractable and complex challenge for families in the Langley Park + Long Branch area for two decades. The area's changing demographics, constant mobility and the lingering recession have made it very difficult for thousands of individuals and families who live there to work their way out of poverty.

The challenges facing this area and its people are exacerbated by a lack of community leadership, inadequate social, health and educational resources, inadequate community-based non profit service providers, and the multiple jurisdictions which have responsibilities in or immediately near this transient region (Prince Georges County, Montgomery County, City of Takoma Park, and the State of Maryland). This later challenge, I believe, has contributed significantly to the inability of many well-intentioned efforts initiated over the last 20 years to effectively address problems in Langley Park/Long Branch area.

You and I have spoken of the need for greater cooperation among jurisdictions in addressing complex regional problems more effectively. I hope that you will agree that many of the socio-economic issues challenging the people in Langley Park/Long Branch can be more effectively addressed if the major political jurisdic-



tions involved work more closely together to identify common goals and strategies. I propose that Prince Georges and Montgomery Counties together with the City of Takoma Park undertake a new collaborative effort to promote family achievement and economic opportunity for the people who live in Langley Park/Long Branch. This new collaboration will be based upon a multi-jurisdictional shared vision and strategy, enduring commitments, clearly measurable outcomes for families, and transparent stakeholder participation and accountability.

[Signed]

### Rushern Baker to Ike Leggett

Dear County Executive Leggett:

Thank you for your correspondence and invitation to join you in a collaborative effort to address some of the complex challenges in our common border community of Langley Park. I absolutely agree with your assessment of the economic, social, health and other problems that are affecting our residents and citizens in this area and welcome the opportunity to participate in a new initiative to address these challenges.

I am designating Brad Frame, Deputy Chief of Staff, to represent my administration in this initiative. His familiarity with the area's diversity, socio-economic issues and community resources will be advantageous to the working group and the positive outcomes we anticipate.



This is an important opportunity to work together in partnership. I look forward to our mutual and collective success on behalf of the citizens and residents we represent. Thank you for your visionary leadership.

[Signed]

## ET CETERA

### College Exploratory Visits

There's a useful article about visiting and choosing a college in the Post. Go to [http://www.washingtonpost.com/lifestyle/travel/college-visits-dont-have-to-be-cookie-cutter/2012/03/15/g1QA8IQ7VS\\_story.html](http://www.washingtonpost.com/lifestyle/travel/college-visits-dont-have-to-be-cookie-cutter/2012/03/15/g1QA8IQ7VS_story.html).

### Getting Away with Lying

A new computer lie detection method tracks eye movements, and it correctly detects deceit more than 80% of the time. What a useful tool during a political campaign!

### Bag Fee in PG

Apparently, there will be no bag fee in the county in the foreseeable future. What a shame; in other jurisdictions, the fee has cut down on waste and pollution. Even the PG delegation's chairperson opposed the fee. Gads, is the T-Party invading the county? Sad.

### Gambling

The Maryland Senate has voted in favor of a casino at National Harbor. There are still more steps, but it looks as if we'll be losing our money there before too long. But pay the rent and buy groceries first.

# TRIM is hot!!

SB 848: "Authorizing a county governing body, for a specified purpose and under specified circumstances, to set a property tax rate that is higher than the rate authorized under the county's charter or to collect more property tax revenues than are authorized under the county's charter, notwithstanding any provision of the county charter that places limits on the county's property tax rate or revenues; etc."

SB 740: "Authorizing the county council of a charter county to set a property tax rate higher than authorized by a county charter or to collect more property tax revenues than authorized under the county charter under specified circumstances for the sole purpose of funding education; requiring a charter county to appropriate to the local board of education specified revenues and prohibiting a charter county from reducing specified funding to the local board of education under specified circumstances; etc."

Prince George's County's TRIM county charter amendment prevents the County Council from raising taxes above a specific limit a year without voter approval. The Maryland Senate bills SB848 and SB740 if passed would empower county governments to increase the tax rate with (740) or without (848) specified use. Are these bills good or bad? Responsible county legislators would have the flexibility to adjust taxes to essential needs—in general or only for education. Of course, irresponsible legislators might do otherwise.

One internet comment: "In the senate, all eight Prince George's County senators voted FOR this dishonestly titled, ant-democratic tax bill. In my opinion, whatever spin or rationalizations they may invent, they deserve our contempt and future opposition."

And another: "For those who have lived with TRIM over the decades and understood its covert intent to starve a growing majority-black county of adequate services, this is about to be a glorious day, Shortly, the Governor will sign away the 34 year-old TRIM cap into the trash bin of history and there isn't anything the odd collection of conservatives ... can do about it. So much for this third rail of local politics."

And a last one: "The thing about TRIM is that PGC already pays the highest income tax rate in the State and one of the highest property tax rates in the State. When a County pays the highest income tax rate in Maryland and one of the highest property taxes in the State already and the services are amongst the worst in the State, if not the worst, you can imagine that citizens would not want to be taxed a penny more."

The current rates appear in the appended table (above). The real property tax is not the highest in the state. For instance, Baltimore City's is 2.268 and Baltimore County's is 1.1. For income tax, 0.032 is the highest rate in the state—in a statewide tie. Maybe when gaming and other additions to the county are in place, the real property tax can be lowered.



County Real Prop Tax Rates Per \$100 Assess	
PGCo	0.960
HowCo	1.014
MoCo	0.713
County Income Tax Rates	
PGCo	.032
HowCo	.032
MoCo	.032

## 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 [actionlangley-park@yahoo.com](mailto:actionlangley-park@yahoo.com).

**Now until May 5—A Thousand and One Faces of Mexico:** Masks from the Collection of Ruth D. Lechuga. At the Mexican Cultural Institute, 2829 16 St., DC. Open Monday -Friday 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. Some of the masks are pictured above.

**March 31—Bunny Eggstravaganza** from 11 a.m. until 1 p.m., featuring the Blue Sky Puppet Theatre. (See photo.) Fee for residents: \$2.

**April 2 - 6—Spring Break Camp**, Monday through Friday from 9 a.m. until 4:30 p.m. Arts, crafts, games, sports, swimming, and more. Ages 5-12. Cost for county residents: \$100, but there's a sliding scale.

**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 21—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.

**April 26—Community Literacy Event** at the Judy Hoyer Family Learning Center. The focus is children five years old and younger. There will be story telling, movement activities, hands on science, and more. From 3 to 6:30 p.m., 8909 Riggs Road. Everyone welcome!

**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 26—Cato Institute** conference on "Is Immigration Good for America?" Go to <http://www.cato.org/event.php?eventid=8798> for information.

**April 28—Orientación Legal Gratuita:** Hyattsville Public Library (6530 Adelphi Road), 1 to 3 p.m. Regístrese Llamando al 301 952-4840.

**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. Details are available online at: <http://www.usasciencefestival.org>.

**May 3, 4, 5—Physics is Phun**, in the physics department, University of Maryland: 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.)

**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!! If you'd like to contribute to this event, including interpretation, face painting, clowning, giving advice as a nurse, etc., please contact ALP at [actionlangley-park@yahoo.com](mailto:actionlangley-park@yahoo.com).