

Dear Councilman Campos, As you know, the county's planning office has created a plan that, when development money becomes available, will demolish many affordable apartments in Langley Park. ALP joins the residents of Langley Park in asking that you fight to stop the destruction.

# Barrio de Langley Park

A Neighborhood Planning Newsletter Published by Action Langley Park  
Issue 201, March 2011

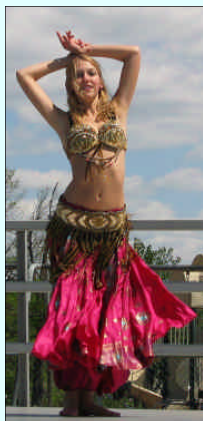
**It's Only One Month Away!**

## May 1

### Langley Park Day 2011

**Noon to 4 p.m.**

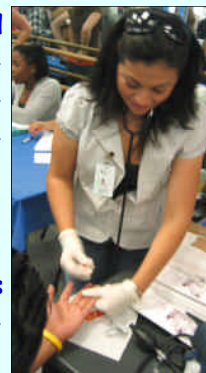
**At the Langley Park Community Center  
Rain or Shine!**



Again, this year, there will be a joyful celebration of the multicultural neighborhood community centered in Langley Park.

The residents of Langley Park come from all parts of the United States as well as Bolivia, China, Colombia, Dominican Republic, El Salvador, England, Ethiopia, France, Ghana, Guatemala, Guyana, Haiti, Honduras, India, Ireland, Italy, Jamaica, Lebanon, Mexico, Nicaragua, Nigeria, Pakistan, Russia, Scotland, Sierra Leone, Sudan, Sweden, Taiwan, Trinidad-Tobago, Vietnam, and even more countries!

At the festival, there will be music, song, dance, a major health fair, food and craft vendors, children's activities, information about agencies and companies, and more! The performers, health professionals, and others will be coming from various parts of our region.



Everything is free except vendor purchases.

The event is organized by the staffs of the Langley Park Community Center and Action Langley Park.

**IMPORTANT:** Be sure to come!

**IMPORTANT:** If you would like to contribute to the event, contact [actionlangley-park@yahoo.com](mailto:actionlangley-park@yahoo.com). The Community Center telephone is 301 445-4508.



## GOOD SCHOOLS, OTHER SCHOOLS

Superintendent Hite recently sent an email indicating that forty-five schools in the county have good achievement records. They have been recognized for student achievement through the Maryland State Department of Education's 2010 Maryland School Performance Recognition Program. The program honors schools for their performance on one or both of two statewide tests, MSA or HSA, and for improving the performance of special populations of students from 2009 to 2010. Only schools that made the so-called Adequate Yearly Progress for the 2009-2010 school year are eligible for the recognition.

Above Basic %	Reading		Math	
6th Grade-ALL	2008	2010	2008	2010
Adelphi	75	92	63	68
Cool Spring	88	83	84	90
Langley Park McC.	71	69	65	82
Mother Jones	72	77	72	73
Above Basic %	Reading		Math	
6th Grade-Latino/a	2008	2010	2008	2010
Adelphi	70	93	67	71
Cool Spring	91	84	91	90
Langley Park McC.	68	70	60	84
Mother Jones	70	80	74	76

In the Langley Park area, two schools have been recognized, Adelphi ES and Mother Jones ES. So let's check these plus Cool Spring ES and Langley Park ES to see the differences. The improvement from 2008 to 2010 for all students, counting reading and math, has been +22 for Adelphi and +6 for Mother Jones. By contrast, Cool Spring is +1 and Langley Park McCormick is +15. So the comparison doesn't shed much light. For Latino/a students, the changes have been Adelphi, +27; Cool Spring, -8; Langley Park McCormick, +26; and Mother Jones, +12. Again, it's not clear from these limited data why the two were awardees and the other two were not.

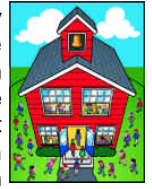
More import is the fact that for all students and for the Latino/a segment, the two year forward movement has been positive. This publication does not know whether that's due to improved teaching, better parent support, teaching to the test, or some other variable. But we do know that higher scores are probably better than otherwise. Of course, there is an argument in favor of more music, physical education, and other school elements that have been reduced or cut in recent years; let's hope the higher scores are not at the cost of the less measurable school experiences.

We have not looked closely at the scores at Buck Lodge Middle School, although there appears to be steady progress for all students and Latino/a students.

At High Point High School, the scores are troubling. Looking at the 11th grade (enough time to have High Point's influence, but not in the final year when the student numbers thin out), the overall scores for algebra, biology, English, and government are in the 67%-76% range. For the Latino/a students, the range is 60%-66%. Both sets of scores are well below the state ranges, which are 83% to 89% for all students, and 75% to 84% for Latino/a students. Plus fights in the hallways! Let's hope the new High Point principal can make a difference.

## PGCPS: HOW TO SAVE MONEY And Save Teachers' & Parent Liaisons' Jobs

BLP just ran across a February speech by Lewis A. Robinson, Executive Director of the Prince George's County Educators' Association. In it, he suggested a score of cuts that might save the jobs of some teachers (and we would hope, parent liaisons). See below. (A few comments are in *italic*.) We wonder how many of the cuts have been put in place by the PGCPS leadership, and if some have, what are the benefits and costs of these changes. And we know that the school system's leaders will constantly review the situation, so further cuts and additions will be taking place.



- Close or consolidate schools regardless of which community they reside in. *If some nearby schools are under-enrolled, of course combine them.*

- Stop transporting students beyond their neighborhood school unless families pay a transportation fee. *What if there are special needs?*

- Increase the walking distance for students based on traffic patterns, pathways and crime statistics. *Walking is healthy, especially for a time when obesity is rampant among the young.*

- Close the district for no less than three weeks during the winter for an energy break. *If rescheduling school days saves winter heating bills, this should be done.*

- Choose academics over athletics and suspend the program until funding levels return. *Organized athletics can keep teenagers out of trouble. But for sure, keep physical education.*

- Suspend all extended day or year programs, get back to the core service *What about the young people who need the extra work? Let's not further marginalize them.*

- Close all buildings to outside use. *Schools should be centers for a neighborhood. If adults are familiar with the school, that helps the school children. So outside use is indirectly helpful to the school. Don't punish neighborhood adults.*

- Establish a fee structure for several services now provided for free or at a reduced rate. *If a family can pay, sure; but what about the many working class and poor families? At the least, there should be a sliding scale.*



- Work with the unions on developing a 4-day instructional week plan *Yes, the four-days-a-week school has been instituted in various parts of the country to save money. Maybe the county should make the move. But what about the many children who will have a full day for mischief while the parents work?*

- Re-examine all printing costs to include cutting paper payroll checks and report cards as a start. *Will the report cards be sent via email? What about parents without the needed technology?*

- Strengthen the identification and screening of non-resident students. *It's great that some non-resident students want to be in county schools. But of course, there should be some fee for the outsiders. But don't punish immigrant children.*

- Eliminate all field trips. *Field trips can be very enriching, very educational. Perhaps those without significant educational benefits should be cut.*

- Given our steady loss of students each year, you should develop a new bus routing system every year and check it at mid-year for accuracy. *Sure, adjust the routing. But why are students being lost? Answering that should be high on the system's agenda.*

- Place all building electrical demands on timers and use capital funds to switch over and upgrade all buildings to more efficient energy savings lighting. *Sure; that is prudent management.*

# NEWS & NOTES

## IN-STATE TUITION

"It's only just to treat them the same way we treat US citizen children in Maryland given that they are essentially held to the same regard in terms of paying taxes, in terms of abiding by the law." (Quoting Rose Lozano of CASA on a WMAL radio program.)

The Maryland Senate has passed the bill enabling undocumented young people to pay in-state tuition at community colleges, and if successful there, they can go on to four year colleges. Maybe after that, they will get Ph.D.s or M.D.s and solve some of the great problems facing the USA and the world.

But first, the Maryland Assembly has to pass the bill, and it has to be signed by the governor. The outcome in the Assembly is not certain. (Let your delegates know your preferences.)

## THE REDEVELOPMENT' HOAX

Columnist Thomas Sowell writes: "Development involves decisions made in the market by large numbers of people in the general population, in their own personal interests, while redevelopment involves taking decisions out of the hands of the population at large and putting the power to make those decisions in the hands of elites. ... Redevelopment imposes the supposedly superior wisdom and virtue of an elite on the rest of us. That is its ideological appeal to self-congratulatory elites. ... Redevelopment exports low-income people and imports high-income people."

high-income people—with no net addition or subtraction of either segment of the population in the country as a whole. The huge costs of redevelopment projects turn what would otherwise be a zero-sum process into a huge net loss for society as a whole. Between restrictions on development and the destruction of existing low-income housing by redevelopment, low-income and even moderate-income people are forced out by high housing costs. Often this process takes the form of ethnic cleansing." (Thanks to John Geron for sharing.) Sowell's remarks seem to apply directly to the Prince George's County's Takoma-Langley Sector Plan.

## (Some) HELPERS LISTED ONLINE

There's an online service for locating helpful programs in suburban Maryland and elsewhere in the state: The Maryland Community Services Locator. Go to <http://www.mdcsf.org> and search for whatever help is needed, e.g., adult education, conflict resolution, domestic violence programs, legal services, victim services, and much more. For instance, we entered 1500 Merrimac Drive as an address, specified searching within one mile, and then searched for health services. Here is the result:

- ▶ Community Clinic, 7676 New Hampshire Ave. #220, 301 431-2972
- ▶ Spanish Catholic Center, 1015 University Blvd., 301 431-3773
- ▶ Wellmobile: Wednesdays 9-3 at 8400 Carroll Ave.; Tuesdays 9 to 3 at 8901 Riggs Rd.; 866 228-9668
- ▶ CASA de Maryland, 734 University Blvd., 301 431-4185 is also listed, but no day or time is given.
- ▶ Walk-In Clinic at 1040 University Blvd., 301 445-7026; not listed
- ▶ Rainbow Pediatrics, 7676 New Hampshire Ave. #100, 031 244-5563; not listed
- ▶ The very important Washington Adventist Hospital is not listed; perhaps it's a bit more than one mile away at 7600 Carroll Ave., 301 891-7600. President Jere Stocks is a friend of Langley Park.



## ASSESSING COUNTY AGENCIES

That very strange and right-leaning publication, the *Washington Examiner*, comments on the recent assessment of county agencies: "Eighteen-year-olds can guard inmates at the county jail. The Board of Ethics is essentially defunct. The county's Health Department lacks a strategic plan." These are some of the findings in the transition-team report, an 185-page assessment of county agencies. More: "The county's Health Department, the transition team concluded, was 'unable to articulate an overall description of programs, challenges and a strategic plan for the upcoming year.'" That rings true based upon lots of feedback received by ALP. "Many agency materials were disjointed and outdated, leading to confusion regarding overall department structure and purpose." The newspaper article is located at <http://washingtonexaminer.com/local/maryland/2011/03/report-points-inefficiencies-pr-georges-county-government>.

## DEPUTIES ENTER HIGH POINT HS

Sheriff Melvin High has ordered sheriff's deputies into High Point High School; the assigned was triggered by violence at the school—violence that led to the principal being removed. There will be deputies at several other schools as well. Of course, deputies cannot be at every hallway. Are students exposed to conflict resolution programs? Sad.

## WE NEED MORE IMMIGRANTS!

Here's one important assessment. "Immigrants help fuel the U.S. economy, representing about one in every six workers. Because of accelerated immigration and slowing U.S. population growth, foreign-born workers accounted for almost half of labor force growth over the past 15 years. Public attention has focused mainly on the large number of low-skilled immigrant workers, but the number of high-skilled immigrants actually grew faster during the period. Highly educated immigrants filled critical jobs in the science, engineering, information technology and health care sectors as well as fostered innovation and created high-tech businesses. ...



"The U.S. immigration system ... has not kept up. Piecemeal fixes have turned current law into a web of outmoded, contradictory and inefficient quotas, rules and regulations. For example, the number of high-skilled immigrant workers admitted on temporary visas has doubled since 1996, but the number of employment-based permanent-residence visas, or "green cards," has remained the same. As a result, the wait for employment-based green cards extends more than a decade. It's not known how many high-skilled immigrants are turned away by the broken system, but the U.S. risks falling behind in the global race for talent if immigration laws are not reformed."

Source: Federal Reserve Bank of Dallas, <http://www.dallasfed.org/fed/annual/2010/ar10b.pdf>

## IMMIGRANT NATION

American Immigration LLC has launched a web site called Immigrant Nation. The address: <http://www.ilw.com/resources/immigrantnation.shtml>. The section was created "with the purpose of showcasing the hard work and positive contributions of immigrants, and how they have shaped and made the United States a stronger nation." There is a compilation of outstanding immigrants who have made a positive impact in the fields of arts, business, education, media, military, philanthropy, politics, science, sports and others." This will be a good addition to the immigration literature. [The parents of the editor of BLP were from Ireland and, a generation removed, from Russia—none of whom had "papers."]

# Hiding In America

**For a child of illegal immigrants, life remains in the shadows**

*This article is reproduced from Willamette Week, 19 January 2011, with permission. The editor of BLP thinks the "case study" is typical of many of our hard-working and intelligent young immigrants. Cecilia Gomez is not the subject's real name. No other detail about her life has been altered, although some identifying information, like her native country, has been left out.*

In some ways, Cecilia Gomez lives the American dream. In her early 20s, she's risen to the ranks of manager at her job. She has the material trappings of a middle-class life: a car, a house, a cell phone with a sassy animal-print case and a wardrobe that looks like it jumped off the pages of an H&M catalog. Every few weeks, Gomez, who has long, black hair she wears straight and loose down her back, treats herself to a manicure. "The diva in me," she jokes. For Christmas, miniature holiday decorations in lacquered red and white polish dotted her nails.

At home in Southeast Portland, markers of her success hang on the walls: an elementary-school academic award with Bill Clinton's reproduced signature, a high-school diploma from Franklin High School, and a certificate from a Portland Community College technical-training program. But Gomez knows her dream could turn nightmarish in an instant. "All it takes is one call," Gomez says. Like 4% of the population of Oregon, Gomez is one of 150,000 people in the state who are undocumented immigrants. Call them illegal aliens. Call them law-breakers. Gomez calls herself an American.

More than a decade ago, when she was 9, Gomez traveled with her family to the U.S. on a temporary tourist visa to see Gomez's grandmother in California and visit Disneyland. But when they arrived in Portland about a week later to visit an uncle, Gomez's parents announced they weren't going back home. They'd planned to stay all along. It wasn't until much later that Gomez realized the significance of her parents' decision—that their choice to pursue better opportunities for their family had made her, in essence, an outlaw. "I realized it toward the end of middle school," she says. "Up until then I wasn't conscious of the situation; maybe because I didn't understand the issue."

By ninth grade, though, news coverage of beefed-up border security, immigration raids and deadlocked political debate started to draw her attention. "That's when you started to realize you have all these limitations, even though you feel like everyone else," she says.

As a young person in Oregon, Gomez wants many of the same things as her peers. She wants a good job, a nice boyfriend and more time to hang out with friends. She has aspirations of becoming a professional writer. As an undocumented immigrant, Gomez also worries about something most of her American-born friends can't fathom: being deported and returned to a country that is no longer home to most of her family. It's a fear that became reality last year for 400,000 people in the U.S., including 10,000 people in the Northwest. For Gomez, deportation may never come to pass. But that only makes her more uncomfortable. "It's kind of uncertain for me," she says. "It could go either way. It could change tomorrow. Or it could be another 10 years, and I could be here doing the same thing."

To understand Gomez's anxiety is to enter her world, one that is full of inconsistencies, limitations and, conversely, enough loopholes for Gomez to persist. Gomez says she finds it hard to believe the U.S. government doesn't actually want her to stay here. "There's always these little windows that they leave for you," she says. One of those windows closed in December, when the U.S. Senate blocked passage of the Development, Relief and Education for Alien Minors Act. The DREAM Act, which Sens. Ron Wyden and Jeff Merkley (both D-Ore.) supported, would have carved out a new path to citizenship for about 1.1 million undocumented immigrants brought to the U.S. as children before the age of 16. "We were very gratified that it didn't pass," says Jim Ludwick of the anti-illegal-immigrant group Oregonians for Immigration Reform.

Says Melissa Sarabia, a Portland State University student and advocate for the DREAM Act: "People are definitely not discouraged."

The focus will now turn to state capitals, where many are working to tighten the laws. In Salem this year, a number of new bills seek to make Oregon more like Arizona, which last April gave local law enforcement officials more power to enforce federal immigration rules. On Jan. 11, Rep. Kim Thatcher (R-Keizer) introduced a similar measure in Salem, House Bill 2802. "We don't want Oregon to become like Arizona, a place of bigotry and hate," says Francisco Lopez, director of CAUSA, an immigrants' rights coalition in Oregon. Gomez is prepared for that possibility. "It could very well happen that people could be OK with it, just like in Arizona," she says. But she's not prepared to leave Portland. "If you're more than a good citizen, why shouldn't you be allowed to stay?"

While an estimated 150,000 illegal immigrants live in this state, Gomez is part of a smaller cohort. She is one of an estimated 40,000 young people in Oregon who came to the United States illegally as children, according to estimates from CAUSA. In essence, they had no choice in the matter. These children attend Oregon public schools, learn English and, in some cases, forget their native homes. "They are Americans as far as you and I can see," says Brent Renison, an immigration lawyer in Portland. "They just don't have a paper to show it." Gomez's transition from a teeming Latin American metropolis to a rainy city in the Pacific Northwest was easy at first. Her family moved in with a relative in Portland. She enrolled in a nearby public elementary school, which requires no proof of citizenship. (A 1982 ruling from the U.S. Supreme Court protects the rights of undocumented children to attend public schools until the 12th grade.) And she worked feverishly to blend in. "That was our No. 1 goal," Gomez says. "You have to fit in." It helped that television in Latin America is so Americanized. Nickelodeon programs, for example, streamed across the television screen in Gomez's native country, dubbed in Spanish. "It was kind of easy for me to come here and adapt," Gomez says. "It was just learning the language. A lot of the culture I had already been familiar with."

Her homeroom teacher in Portland, a fan of *Harry Potter*, would read to her students for 30 minutes a day. "I remember sitting there watching her mouth carefully, seeing how she pronounced everything and telling myself, 'I have to learn to say those words,'" Gomez says. "I had no idea what she was saying. It was 30 minutes that I was blank, but I would hear sounds and mimic them."

About a year after her family moved to Portland, a relative who is a citizen helped them buy a modest house. At Franklin High, Gomez was an active and social



"Hiding" continued on Page 5

"Hiding" continued  
from Page 4

student. She played varsity sports and participated in school plays. The school was a safe haven, the only place outside her parents' house where Gomez felt comfortable divulging her secret to adults. As a result, a few teachers at Franklin were aware of Gomez's predicament, which was common at the school. And they encouraged her to excel academically. "We took it really personally," says Osvaldo Garcia-Contreras, a former math teacher at Franklin. "All these kids who worked so hard, they tasted the freedom."

Once high school ended, Gomez entered a world where it mattered far more that she didn't have a valid Social Security number, the key piece of documentation for proving that you are an American and for getting a job and enrolling in college. That meant Gomez had two choices. She could get a fake number or go without one. Gomez chose the former option (getting a fake Social Security card is remarkably easy), but she's exceedingly careful about when she uses it.

Representatives of Oregon's largest public universities are careful to say they comply with the rules of the Oregon University System, which does allow undocumented students to enroll in Oregon colleges. (There's no federal law barring that.) However, those students must pay the tuition charged to international students, which is typically about three times the tuition that in-state students pay. "If we know the student is undocumented," says David McDonald, associate provost at Western Oregon University, "they're charged at that higher level." In practice, Portland State University appears to have looser requirements when it comes to establishing residency. However, a university spokesman denies this, writing in an email that PSU "would not intentionally allow undocumented students, or any other non-resident student, the in-state tuition benefit if they would not meet the residency test." PSU President Wim Wiewel is nonetheless an outspoken advocate for the DREAM Act, which would give states the power to charge undocumented students in-state tuition. "PSU is here to serve these students," he said at a September press conference. "We want these students, and we want them to be able to get in at a price they can afford."

But even the in-state tuition of \$7,000 a year at PSU was prohibitive to Gomez because, without a valid Social Security number, she can't apply for federal student loans. Instead, she enrolled at the less-expensive Portland Community College, which also enrolls undocumented students. The community college does not require a Social Security number unless a student seeks financial aid. All the while, Gomez has worked, in part to pay for classes but also to support her parents as well. This spring, when members of another class of students from Franklin graduate from college with bachelor's degrees, she'll still have too few credits to qualify as a college sophomore. To get a job at a fast-food restaurant, Gomez used her fake Social Security number. Her employer either didn't double-check her number or didn't care that it wasn't a match to her name. Giving it to the restaurant was a risk, but it was one she felt worth taking.

She now works for two franchises of the same chain, clocking 70 hours a week. That doesn't entitle her to overtime pay, since she technically has two employers. "She never has time for school," her best friend says. "She never has time for friends. She sleeps for six hours a day at the most, and that's split up into two three-hour blocks." Gomez does pay taxes. But she doesn't use her Social Security number on her forms, because she believes that the IRS and the Oregon Department of Revenue (unlike her employer) would check and determine that it was phony. Instead, she fills out her taxes using an individual taxpayer identification number, or ITIN. The irony is that only taxpayers who don't have Social Security numbers would use an ITIN. "If they were to investigate," says Gomez, "they would be able to find out." Yet no authorities have ever followed up; a spokesman for the IRS in Seattle says his agency does not police immigration law. "The mandate of the IRS is to enforce the tax law of the United States," says Richard Panick, a spokesman for the IRS. And in the meantime, Gomez believes her verifiable record of having paid taxes year after year with an ITIN could actually help her should immigration officials consider her for citizenship.



"Me and my family try to live as best we can, do everything the right way as much as we can," she says.

Gomez also takes care how and when to share her secret with friends. For example, her best friend, Kiera, had no idea Gomez was undocumented until years after their friendship developed. Gomez would try to broach the topic of illegal immigration to gauge her friend's response to the controversy. "I didn't know how she'd take it, so I'd bring up the subject every now and then and say, 'What do you think about that?'" Gomez says.

Then one day it became impossible for Gomez to maintain the lie. It was spring 2008, before the Democratic primary. Kiera wanted to know whether Gomez planned to vote for Barack Obama or Hillary Clinton. But when Gomez told Kiera she couldn't vote, Kiera got upset. "Why?" she demanded to know from Gomez, "It's so important to vote!" When Gomez finally revealed the reason, she said she felt relieved. Since 2008, Oregon has required a Social Security number to get a driver's license. But Washington remains one of three states in the country that still doesn't require proof of legal status to get an ID card. Rather than risk detection by using fake documentation to try to get a license in Oregon, Gomez used an uncle's address in Washington to get a license there. Gomez drives as little as possible and with extreme care, because she doesn't want to be stopped. She has her fake address in Washington memorized just in case an officer quizzes her. But she fears getting pulled over and being asked questions she can't answer truthfully, such as, "Why are your plates from Oregon and your license from Washington?"

If living clandestinely in this country involves a certain amount of deception, it also involves a great deal of avoidance. Gomez lives at home because she worries about submitting an application to a landlord who may want her Social Security number. "The safest place for me is with my parents," she says. "If we fall, we fall together."

She doesn't fly because she doesn't like passing through security checkpoints. If she were caught, she could be detained by immigration officials.

Dating is problematic because she wouldn't want to fall in love with someone who has his own immigration problems. "It would be hard to think about a future," she says. If the young man were a U.S. citizen, she wouldn't want him to think her love stemmed from a need for a green card; immigrants who marry citizens jump to the front of the immigration line. "If I get married," she says, "it's going to be for love and not anything else." The anxieties and inconveniences that Gomez endures raise a question: Wouldn't it just be easier to be back home? Gomez says Portland is home. "There are a lot of people who've done this for years and years," she says. "They've built a family. Their children grow up."

But if her life in Portland suddenly ended, knowing English alone would help her succeed elsewhere in the world, she says. "This is better than the life I would have had back home if I would have never left," she says. "Much better."

She still pins her hope on legislation like the DREAM Act, which would give immigrant students access to some federal loans as well as legal status after two years of college or military service. Passage would transform Gomez. "My life will start when that happens," Gomez says.

*Those who vote against the DREAM Act are engaged in an act of cruelty to a fellow human being. —BH*

**THE FEDERAL BUDGET = Sad**  
**THE MARYLAND BUDGET = Sad**



## THE COUNTY BUDGET

According to preliminary information reviewed by the transition team, Prince George's County faces an anticipated shortfall of \$77 million in FY2012 and a shortfall of more than \$100 million in FY2013. The primary reason is the sharp decline in residential property values. Now what?

**Hearing:** Prince George's County Council's Budget Hearing will take place at the county Administration Building in Upper Marlboro on Tuesday, April 26, from 6:30 till 8:30 p.m. Interested in letting council members know what you think they should do? Then phone the Clerk of the Council at 301-952-3600 to register to speak—for a maximum of three minutes.

**Plan:** Reportedly, County Executive Rushern Baker has developed a \$2.7B spending plan that will offer modest increases for schools, police and firefighting plus a \$50 million program to stimulate economic development. Baker said "he would offset spending increases and reduce the county's \$77 million budget deficit for fiscal 2012 by forcing across-the-board cuts for most agencies and continuing a wage freeze for the county's 6,000 employees." So employees other than those in the favored agencies will pay for those favored? How about demanding that no county employee make more than \$100k? Well, it's a tight budget situation; clearly, no solution is win-win, and someone has to judge the priorities. Baker has been elected, and that's his job.

**State:** The State legislature's House and Senate budget committees are wrestling with the school funding issue. Prince George's County will, according to the formula in place, lost about \$23M state funds for education. Needless to say, county representatives are more than unhappy about the cut. Note: The formula considers enrollment numbers and county wealth; PG County has lost public school teachers and added wealth. Voila: a negative result.

### BUDGET'S IMPACT: TEACHERS

President Obama: "In South Korea, teachers are known as 'nation builders,' and I think it's time we treated our teachers with the same level of respect." Alas, we sure aren't South Korea.

In many Maryland jurisdictions, some teachers will be fired because of the budget shortages. That's a frightening prospect given the need for more teachers, not fewer ones. But if cuts are to take place, who should be let go: the worst teachers or the youngest teachers - that is, should the decision be made on the basis of merit or seniority? Merit makes sense, but the problem is that there are many ways to judge merit, and there is no settled consensual way to make the judgment. The result is that we may lose some very good teachers.

Of course, the vast majority of teachers in Prince George's County and elsewhere are good, hard-working people. And yet, teachers and other public employees are being dumped on in several Midwest states and elsewhere. Sad! We need to encourage the best and brightest people to be public servants in schools, police stations, and elsewhere, and yet the current actions and mood will discourage public service.

### BUDGET'S IMPACT: THE REST OF US

Whether one lives in Prince George's County, another Maryland county, or in other parts of the USA, the tight budgets are likely to take away some of the once-upon-a-time benefits. We will have to get used to pot holes not being filled in a timely fashion (a gain for auto repair shops!), perhaps a cut in garbage collection, a reduction of funds for health care programs, fewer social workers, and more. At least for a few years, the level of living for the working and middle class will decline. Let's hope for an upturn before too many years pass.

## 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 [actionlangleypark@yahoo.com](mailto:actionlangleypark@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; graphics specialist, Jessy Weiss.) It appears irregularly, but approximately every two weeks. Submissions and suggestions are welcome at [actionlangleypark@yahoo.com](mailto:actionlangleypark@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 [actionlangleypark@yahoo.com](mailto:actionlangleypark@yahoo.com).



**March 23—Metro stations and the developers:** integrating the needs of local residents and businesses with development. 7 to 8:30 p.m. at 2300 Oxon Run Dr., Temple Hills.

**April 16—Free Community Dinner and Food Distribution** at the St. Michael and All Angels Church, 8501 New Hampshire Ave. This is a monthly event; it takes place every third Saturday of the month, e.g., May 21 and June 18.

**April 21—Action Langley Park** holds its regular bi-monthly open meeting in the Langley Park Community Center, 7-8:30 p.m. Everyone is welcome! (It's the third Thursday in April because a meeting the usual second Thursday might interfere with last-minute tax preparation!)

One key agenda item will be the schools, and our special guest will be School Board member Amber Waller. Among other items on the agenda will be planning ALP's future; another will be Langley Park Day.

**April 30—Maryland Day** at the University of MD, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. A big deal, but of course the festival in Langley Park the very next day is even better!

**May 1—Langley Park Day**, noon-4 p.m., the Langley Park Community Center, 1500 Merrimac Dr. Everyone welcome!

**PART-TIME BILINGUAL JOB:** The College Park Youth Service Center has a part-time job to help manage the center in the afternoon hours. The Center is looking for a college student with experience with children and English-Spanish bilingual fluency. Interested? Contact Cheryl Moran via email at [Cheryl.moran@pgparks.com](mailto:Cheryl.moran@pgparks.com) and include a résumé.



**PART-TIME TENNIS JOB:** The Dept. of Parks & Recreation in PG County is looking for Tennis Coaches for its Quickstart Summer Program for children ages 6 to 10. Dates: Mondays and Wednesdays June 13 - August 13. The salary is \$15 an hour. If interested, contact Tarik Brown at [tarik.brown@pgparks.com](mailto:tarik.brown@pgparks.com) or 301-408-4329.

