

Barrio de Langley Park

A Neighborhood Planning Newsletter Published by Action Langley Park
Issue # 212, July-August 2011

GOOD NEWS

1. Good News about a Bad Person: Leslie Johnson has agreed to resign her County Council position this month. That's good news because we don't want a criminal on the council.

2. Good news about a Good Person: Police Chief Mark Magaw has been confirmed by the County Council, so the interim period has ended. Congratulations, Chief! You've been a friend of the residents and businesspeople in and around Langley Park, and we know that the friendship will continue.

The Sector Plan

Despite many appeals, the county planners and county council members have not yet moved to cancel or significantly modify the "sector plan" that calls for demolishing many affordable apartments in and near Langley Park. The bulldozers probably won't arrive tomorrow because it's not yet certain that there will be funds to build the light rail Purple Line. But the odds are that the Purple Line will get the go-ahead, and then developers will start looking at the affordable apartments that "only" house thousands of working class families.



But the issue is still alive. Maybe the new head of county planning will not grovel to developers and their supporters in government. Maybe she will call off the demolition crews. Otherwise, the photo (left) will be an accurate predictor of Langley Park's future.

Meeting: On July 8, there will be a relevant forum: Montgomery County Council President Valerie Ervin is hosting a "No Boundaries" forum on the Takoma/Langley Crossroads Sector Plan (or is it planS?) on the 8th from 9 a.m. until noon at—note the change of venue!!!—the Piney Branch Elementary School, 7510 Maple Ave. in Takoma Park. Prince George's County Executive Rushern Baker is scheduled to be among the speakers, so perhaps he can be reminded that bulldozing affordable apartments occupied by working class families is an awful way to treat people. Planning to attend? Then RSVP by calling 240 777-7960 or by email to councilmember.ervin@montgomerycountymd.gov. Need more information? Call 240 777-7957.

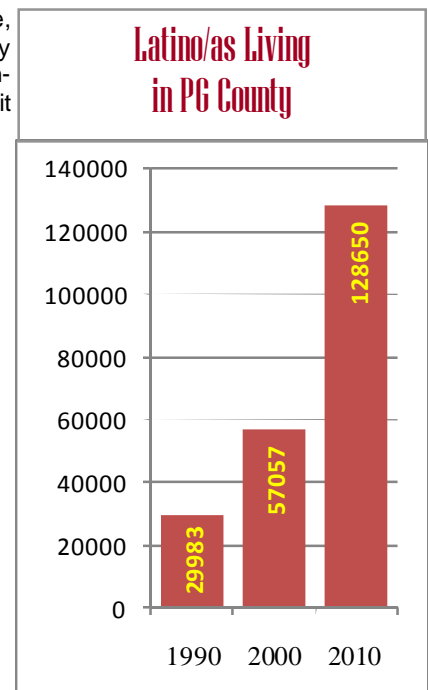
Takoma Park: The Planning Board staff would like to discuss their proposed draft Design Guidelines that will guide new mixed use development on the Takoma Park side of the Crossroads on Thursday, July 14; most likely 7 p.m. at the Takoma Recreation Center, 6315 New Hampshire Ave. The Montgomery County sector plan has been before the Montgomery County Planning Board. To hear some discussion on the subject, go to http://mncppc.granicus.com/MediaPlayer.php?view_id=2&clip_id=746 and move to 1 hour

"Sector Plan" continued on Page 3

Latino/a Population Soars In Prince George's County

Once upon a time, Prince George's County was heavily European-America. In the 1970s, it became heavily African-American. What's next? No one knows for sure, but it's interesting to note that the Latino/a population has soared over the past twenty years. The Latino/a percentage of the county population now is about 15%. The population about doubles every decade. See graphic (right).

It is not surprising, therefore, that Latinos are becoming more prominent in the public realm: Victor Ramirez as State Senator and Will Campos as County Councilman.



Latino/a Population's Increase in Urban USA

Hispanics now outnumber Blacks in major American cities; from 2000 to 2010, the Hispanic share of the population rose overall in the primary cities of the largest 100 metropolitan areas. Across all cities in 2010, 41% of residents were White, 26% were Hispanic, and 22% were Black. (See graphic.) Over half of America's cities are now majority non-white.

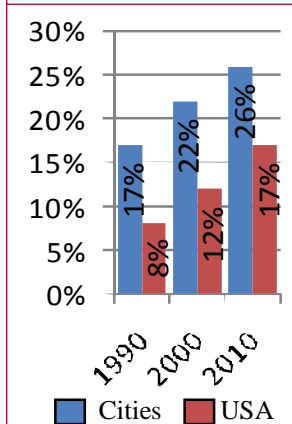
Of course, the largest country-heritage among Latinos is Mexico at 63%, followed by Puerto Rico at 9%, Cuba 3.5%, and Salvador 3.3%

In the suburbs, Whites are still in the majority—but their percentage is declining as their percentage is declining overall in the U.S.A. In Prince George's County, minorities constitute 81% of the population—up from 73% in 2000, and in neighboring Montgomery County, the minority figure is 42%—up from 35% in 2000. (What is a minority?)

The minority percentage will continue to rise for the foreseeable future thanks to the higher rate of fertility among minority populations.

(Sources: Brookings.edu; census.gov)

Latino Share of U.S. Population



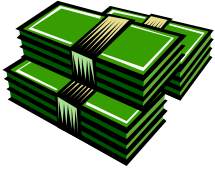
NEWS AND NOTES

2

FOUR CHEERS!

For Mary, Will, Mel, and Eric

A July 2 report: "Definitely, she needs to go," said council member Mary Lehman on July 1, joining County Executive Rushern Baker and council members William A. Campos, Mel Franklin, and Eric Olson in urging Johnson to resign immediately. A felon on the County Council? Maybe looking for a last payoff? Gads. So four cheers for Campos, Franklin, Lehman, and Olson. And let us boo the weak-willed or compromised other members of the council.



Could it be that the passive council members are all wearing bras stuffed with thousands of dollars in hundred dollar bills? Was one of the bras once upon a time Johnson's bra?

News Update: "Prince George's County Council member Leslie Johnson is submitting her resignation Tuesday morning, her attorney said. The resignation will be effective July 31, the last day before the August recess, said [her] attorney." So she wants one more month of pay. Has she not collaborated enough in taking public money and putting private money into her bra?

TRUE CITIZENSHIP, SHARED HUMANITY

Blogger Roger Algase (<http://www.ilw.com>) reminds us of the wisdom, from 2,000 years ago, of philosopher Seneca: "*Duas res publicas animo complectamur, alteram magnam et vere publicam, qua dii atque homines continentur, in qua non ad hunc angulum respicimus aut ad illum, sed terminos civitatis nostrae cum sole metimur; alteram, qui nos adscripsit condicio nascendi.*" Translation: "We should understand that there are two commonwealths. One of them is a vast and truly common state, containing both gods and men, in which we look neither to this corner of the earth nor that, but measure the boundaries of our citizenship by the path of the sun. The other is the one to which we have been assigned by an accident of birth." All humans are in the path of the sun, and they are our brothers and sisters. And yet some people think the location of our accident of birth is more important than our shared humanity.

IMMIGRATION: U.S.A. WASTES MINDS

"Having defended his dissertation on Spanish-language popular culture, 'Jorgé' received his Ph.D. in Hispanic studies this past spring. To reach this point, he has gone through astonishing hardships, which include beatings and imprisonment, not to mention the shame that comes with being illegal. He has endured all by focusing on achieving the highest academic degree. But now he may not be able to enjoy the fruits of his labor: No university I know of will offer him a full-time, permanent position. Jorge is a 'criminal' with a Ph.D. Is that what America stands for, education without reward? ... Have we dismantled not only the Dream Act, but also the American dream?" (Ilan Stavans in *Chronicle Review* 26 June 2011)

LABOR FORCE

The US labor force in 2010 included 130.2 million US-born workers and 24.4 million foreign-born workers, that is, foreign-born workers were 15.8% of the 154.6 million strong US labor force. About 45% of the foreign-born workers in the US labor force were naturalized US citizens, and half of all foreign-born workers were Hispanic. About 27% of foreign-born workers had not completed high school, compared to 5% of US-born workers. The median weekly earning of foreign-born workers was \$600 in 2010, while US-born workers had median weekly earnings of \$770. BLS first reported foreign-born workers in 1996, when there were 14.4 million, making them 10.8% of the

US labor force. The 23 million Latino/as employed or looking for work in 2010 were 15% of US workers. Their unemployment rate in 2010, 12.5%, was between that of whites, 8.7%, and Blacks, 16%.

IMMIGRATION: THE DEATH OF CIR

What killed Comprehensive Immigration Reform? Blogger Robert Algase has written an extended article on immigration history. Here is one paragraph: "Anyone who has doubts about that might also just as well have doubts about who killed Bin Laden. It was opposition to 'amnesty' that killed CIR—an avalanche of right wing anti-Mexican racism that one would have to go back more than a 100 years, to the time of the Chinese exclusion laws, to find a parallel for. This is why initially, not a single Senate Republican voted to cut off debate on the bill, and ultimately only a courageous few broke ranks with their party in order to do so." (<http://www.ilw.com/articles/2011.0525-algase.shtm>) Algase thinks that when the word "amnesty" is used, it should be in quotation marks because the CIR proposals do not include "amnesty."

DRIVERS' LICENCES

BLP just discovered Bruce Schneier's thoughtful comments in the *Detroit Free Press* (7 February 2008): "We are a much more secure nation if we issue driver's licenses and/or state IDs to every resident who applies, regardless of immigration status. Issuing them doesn't make us any less secure, and refusing puts us at risk. The state driver's license databases are the only comprehensive databases of



U.S. residents. They're more complete, and contain more information—including photographs and, in some cases, fingerprints—than the IRS database, the Social Security database, or state birth certificate databases. As such, they are an invaluable police tool—for investigating crimes, tracking down suspects, and proving guilt. Removing the [millions of] illegal immigrants from these databases would only make law enforcement harder. Of course, the unlicensed won't pack up and leave. They will drive without licenses, increasing insurance premiums for everyone." That is, knee-jerk license bans are harmful to all of us.

JEOPARDIZED SOCIAL SERVICES

Maryland's state's social services offices are nearly 1,100 employees and \$50 million short of what is needed to meet demand, according to the Maryland Budget and Tax Policy Institute. So the resources available decline while the demand increases. This doesn't hurt the wealthier members of our society, but it inflicts cruel choices on those who are marginal—including many immigrants. Tragic. (Source: *MarylandReporter.com*.)

Institute Director Neil Bergsman said that his group has looked at the staffing levels of social services offices for years. But at the beginning of this year, after the economy started improving and the University of Baltimore's Schaefer Center for Public Policy released some numbers on caseloads and staffing levels for assistance programs, Bergsman felt the institute should take a close look at it. He found the numbers staggering. By the institute's calculations, the state needs 640 more case managers and 241 more clerks, along with 94 more supervisors. Many of these missing employees would work for the state in local offices, and they are most likely to work for the Department of Human Resources. As employee numbers went down, the economy drove the need for assistance programs up. "Human Resources have received a double hit," Bergsman said. "They were losing positions while their work-

load was going up. ...Social Services is definitely in the running for the department that was hit the worst in the recession."

COUNTY NOMINATIONS

County Executive Rushern Baker has nominated M. Andree Green as Acting County Attorney. Baker: "Prince George's County residents will be well served by M. Andree Green as Acting County Attorney. Ms. Green has an impeccable record over the last decade of her work with the Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission. She is a talented and intelligent attorney as well as a dedicated legal advocate for Prince George's County tax payers and their fiscal and quality of life interests." Ms. Green will serve as the County's lead attorney and will be the Acting Director of the Prince George's County Office of Law. The Council must approve her appointment.

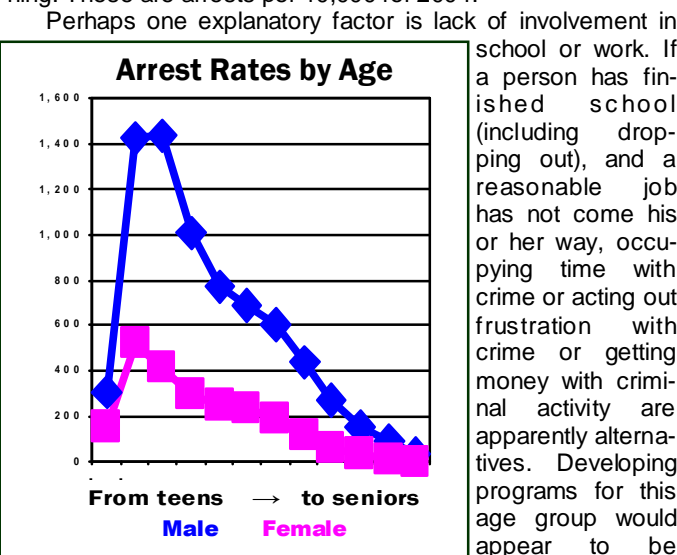
A blogger writes: "Andree Green comes from Wayne Curry's old zoning law firm ... and spent the last 10 years as MNCPPC attorney—more or less helping the developers' lawyers make their case to the Planning Board. If you ever sat in the Planning Board, you would have thought she was hired by the developers. Not saying she isn't a good attorney, just that she's another Wayne Curry, pro-development appointment. On MNCPPC, she worked under Betty Hewlett—the new appointee for Planning Board Chair who was the previous Planning Board Chair (appointed by Wayne Curry). Funny how everyone expects things to change under Baker when we are just reliving the 1990's and the Curry Administration, trying to find more ways to help developers bring low quality development. What has changed—other than no one's been indicted yet?"

Another blogger: "People are being strategically position to support easy approval of development projects in the county. From placements on Park and Planning to zoning positions and Metro Board positive. Their vote is already accounted for!"

Let's hope the bloggers are wrong, and that Ms. Green has become more sensitive to the negative aspects of some development. For instance, let's hope she doesn't like a plan for development that bulldozes the affordable apartments of thousands of families.

WHO ARE THE BAD GUYS AND GALS?

BLP has recently run across a study of arrests categorized by gender and age. Not surprisingly, the late teens and early twenties are the peak periods for committing crimes. Here are data for Maryland prepared by the state's Department of Planning. These are arrests per 10,000 for 2004.



called for.

The positive view: Our society is ageing, so crime should drop given the lack of criminal behavior by seniors.

Locally: We're into July now. In our police District 1 (it includes the Langley Park area), there were 110 violent crimes in July 2009 and 111 in 2010. Let's hope that this month the violent crime total will dip to under 100. At least in the Langley Park area, there should be a downward slope because the area is targeted by the county for a special security emphasis. That means more police officers and other service personnel.

TAXI CABS

A year ago, the County Council voted to increase the number of medallions—thus creating more micro-entrepreneurs while reducing the quasi-monopoly of the big cab companies. The hopeful micro-entrepreneurs were mostly immigrants. But now, the council reversed its position by legislation introduced by Will Campos. The big companies were represented by former County Exec Wayne Curry. So once again **BIG GUYS** defeated the small ones. ■

BUCK LODGE MIDDLE SCHOOL

There is cause to worry about the performance of students in the 6th through 8th grades at Buck Lodge M.S. The below table has been compiled from state testing data. Each percent-

Reading	6th Grade	7th Grade	8th Grade
African-Amer Male	71%	78%	65%
Latino Male	57%	74%	66%
African-Amer Female	80%	82%	70%
Latina Female	80%	75%	64%

Mathematics	6th Grade	7th Grade	8th Grade
African-Amer Male	86%	65%	34%
Latino Male	57%	61%	47%
African-Amer Female	87%	51%	51%
Latina Female	80%	68%	40%

age indicates the students in that category who received "advanced" or "proficient" scores. The third category, "basic," is the lowest and indicates failure or very close to it.

It is clear that the general trend from 6th to 8th grades is downward. Why is this happening? BLP doesn't know. But it is clear that some investigation is called for. ■

"Sector Plan" continued from Page 1

28 minutes into the session. In the plan, there is a lot of emphasis on being pedestrian friendly.

And public art is in the plan: "It is important that art themes be incorporated to help 'brand' or give identity to the Takoma Langley Crossroads area. Public art may take the form of public sculpture, wall murals, and movies on walls."

Public Art in Langley Park: The Langley Park area certainly can use public art. The wall at Piney Branch Road and New Hampshire Avenue is a plus. Let's have more! (The photo is of temporary art in front of the Langley Park Community Center a few years ago. But it was—alas—removed.) ■



A QUIZ

Below are three photographs of buildings in Langley Park. Do you know exactly where they are?



WHO, WHAT, AND WHEN

BARRIO DE LANGLEY PARK

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

For information about Action Langley Park, a nonprofit 501c3 organization, email actionlangleypark@yahoo.com.

CALENDAR

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.

Wednesdays—the Farmers' Market on the 7676 New Hampshire Avenue space operates from 2:30 to 6:30 p.m. Lots of fresh fruit, vegetables, and more—even music!

July 16—Free Community Dinner & Food Distribution at the St. Michael and All Angels Church, 8501 New Hampshire Ave. in upper Langley Park. From 5 to 6:30 p.m. This is a regular event; it takes place every third Saturday of the month. For information, call 301 434-4646.

July 21—Action Langley Park meets at 7 p.m. in the Langley Park Community Center. The main agenda item will be planning ALP's work for the coming year. (Date tentative)

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

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

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

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 checking vision, HIV status, blood pressure, and much more; vendors; and agency and nonprofit organization representatives such as from the County Council.

PHOTO CONTEST



Youths ages 8 to 18 are encouraged to participate in the county's "Picturing Prince George's" photo contest this month. This countywide photo competition invites young people to use their creativity and a camera to portray an interesting, unique, and compelling story about Prince George's County. The contest is open for submissions until 22 July 2011. Submissions must be received by 11:59 p.m. on the 22nd; they should be emailed to the contest at photocontest@innovateprincegeorges.org. The top prize: \$100.00!!

Entrants to the contest should include a one sentence description of his or her photo along with name, address, age, phone number, and (if applicable) summer camp site.

Entrants may use his/her submission for other purposes. If the photo is about the Langley Park area, please also send it to actionlangleypark@yahoo.com and we will consider publishing it in Barrio de Langley Park.