

Barrio de Langley Park

A Neighborhood Planning Newsletter Published by Action Langley Park
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Happy New Year 2012: May yours be filled with peace and love!

Redistricting State Districts For Senators and Delegates



In the area: "Minority growth in Washington's Maryland suburbs translates into more African American, Hispanic and Asian state lawmakers under a plan released [December 16] by Gov. Martin O'Malley's redistricting commission. African Americans would become a majority in two Prince George's County state Senate districts now held by white lawmakers. A combination of Hispanics, Asians and blacks would also make up 50% or more of two Montgomery County districts now held by white state senators." (*Washington Post*, 17 December 2011)

The big local news for those in the Langley Park area is the division of district 47 (which now has three delegates) into two sub-districts, 47A with two seats in a majority-Black area, and the other, 47B, with one seat in a majority Latino area. So there's a good chance that district 47B will be represented by a Latino.



The incumbent delegates are (in order of years of service) Doyle Niemann (top photo), Jolene Ivey (middle photo), and Michael Summers (bottom photo). Both Ivey and Summers are Black, so they might comfortably run for reelection in 47A. But what about Doyle Niemann, a thoughtful politician with good values. Will he try to run in 47A or 47B?

Who else will be running in these two new sub-districts? Will voters decide on the basis of race or performance? Let's hope achievement trumps ascription.

And let's hope that, whoever wins, there will be opposition to the devastation of the Langley Park neighborhood. Our delegates and senator can make a difference.

Elsewhere: In some areas of Maryland, redistricting has been an especially hot topic, and the matter was referred to the courts. The question raised by the petitioners was whether the African-American vote was diluted by the redistricting. And the result: In late December, the judges threw out the lawsuit challenging the congressional redistricting map, that is, they rejected the charge that the new district lines discriminate against African-Americans. So now the primaries in April will go forward.

MORE BUDGET CUTS +

The State of Maryland will for FY2013 have a deficit of approximately \$1 Billion (that is, \$1,000,000,000.00). No, it's not as much as the Federal budget—not by a long shot. But for a fairly small state, it is significant. And Prince George's County's estimated shortfall is \$100,000,000—and declining revenue means a worse economic situation may be ahead.

The legislature's fiscal chief said, "The governor has to find a billion dollars somewhere." Half of that has to carry over into the following years either through spending cuts or what he called "other mechanisms," which include raising revenues and shifting costs to county governments, such as teachers' pensions. (Source: *Maryland Reporter*, 16 December 2011)

Of course, managing the Federal deficit is causing the most harm. As but one example, help for the poor with home heating—home energy assistance—is being cut about 25%. And you guessed it: no compensating funding for blankets. "Funny how poor people are the ones, once again, targeted for a lesson in belt-tightening. As if they didn't already understand austerity all too well." (From the *Daily Kos*, 17 December 2011.)

COMPASSION

A study just published in the journal *Emotion* finds that individuals in middle and upper classes are less able to detect and respond to the distress signals of others. The results indicate that socioeconomic status correlates with level of empathy and compassion that people show in the face of emotionally charged situations.

"It's not that the upper classes are coldhearted," says the UC Berkeley lead author. "They may just not be as adept at recognizing the cues and signals of suffering because they haven't had to deal with as many obstacles in their lives. These latest results indicate that there's a culture of compassion and cooperation among lower-class individuals that may be born out of threats to their well-being."

Could this finding possibly explain why the Feds don't understand what it's like to be cold in the winter? Or county officials who take actions that have the impact of marginalizing the working class and poor residents of Langley Park and elsewhere? After all, how could a middle class planner or other county official understand the pain that may soon be inflicted upon the residents of the Langley Park area when the Sector Plan is implemented and the current tenants of the affordable housing (or small business spaces) are displaced? There are many other examples.



Be sure to check out the many BLP pages below on education and youth where there are articles on non-promotion, bullying, and more!

NEWS/NOTES/HAPPENINGS

UGLINESS

A PG County Commentator: Writing about the redistricting plan "on behalf of Fannie Lou Hamer Pac" (flh.pac@gmail.com), Radamase Cabrera states (17 December 2011): "Every White man 60 years of age and older who grew up in America was socialized to believe the following notions: (1) One can treat a Black Man any way one desires and if the negro gets sassy, he can be threatened with lynching or castration. (2) Any Black woman rich or poor, north or south is a free target of sexual desires of any White man. (3) Negroes are intellectually, spiritually and morally inferior to White people because of the curse of 'Ham' outlined in the King James Bible. Therefore, Steny Hoyer, Ben Cardin and Mike Miller who are all above 60 years of age suffer from the socialization process of believing they are superior to Black Men. ... I refuse to let my grandson grow up in this madness and suffer from Negro intellectual castration."



Phew. If there are problems with the redistricting plan, perhaps a more moderate approach would lead to a better outcome? Of course, Whites (and perhaps Blacks too) cannot always step back to make their observations.

Sheriff Arpaio of Arizona: That disgusting sheriff in Maricopa County, Arizona, has failed to investigate or conduct only the "sketchiest of inquiries" (phrase from *New York Times*, 10 December 2011) into hundreds of sex crimes, including many that involved molesting children. What a "nice guy". Thankfully, he's in trouble now.

LIVE HERE, WORK THERE

Among those PG County residents in the workforce, about six out of every ten work outside the county. That compares with the country's 24%. Clearly, the county functions as a "bedroom suburb." Should it change? Can it? Probably, if the needed upsurge in the county's economy is realized. So County Executive Rushern Baker's emphasis on economic development is in accord with the need. Betty Hewlett, who chairs the Planning Board: "We have to find something to generate the right kind of economic development in this county to stop us from being a bedroom county." Attracting Federal agencies to the county would help, but it's a drop in the bucket. Many industries must start up in - or move to - the county. The development in New Carrollton may help.

But please, Mr. Baker and Ms. Hewlett: Don't destroy the Langley Park neighborhood as part of your economic development plan. Sure, some mixed use at (at, not near!) the crossroads of University Boulevard and New Hampshire Avenue would seem to be a positive (if arrangements are included to retain, without soaring rents, the small retail businesses). Please note: the area constitutes a neighborhood, a community, and its disruption would be very harmful to many residents and businesspeople. Keep the bulldozers away.

THE REAL 'ILLEGALS'

Some people refer to immigrants without papers as "illegal," and it is true that they have violated immigration regulations. We usually refer to such visa overstayers and others as "undocumented." But the real illegals are those who accept a position of public trust and then rip off the public. In that regard, county Delegate Tiffany

Alston has been indicted ... again. She is accused of using public funds to hire an employee for her private law firm. And she already has been indicted for using thousands of campaign dollars to pay for her wedding and another employee in her law office. Maybe she learned how to allocate money from Jack and Leslie Johnson?

Elsewhere, a conservative Mississippi mayor has admitted that he had the city pay for a wide range of personal expenses, including a visit to a sex store in Canada. That's the bulletin from Mississippi. But was the issue "paid for personal expenses" or "sex store"? And why Canada? Aren't there sex stores (whatever that means) in Mississippi?

Tick Tock: "U.S. District Judge Peter J. Messitte sentenced Amrik Singh Melhi, age 52, of Clarksville, Maryland, today to 46 months in prison followed by three years of supervised release for conspiracy to commit extortion under color of official right, arising from a scheme involving the transport and distribution of untaxed alcohol. Judge Messitte also entered an order that Melhi forfeit \$975,327.32 to the United States. ...

"According to his plea agreement, Amrik and his wife Ravinder Melhi owned and operated several businesses in Prince George's County, including Tick Tock Liquors. ... Amrik Melhi admits that he conspired with Prince George's County Executive Jack Johnson, Prince George's County Police officer Richard Delabrer and others to obstruct commerce by extortion. Specifically, Amrik Melhi agreed to pay Delabrer in return for official acts involving the transport and distribution of untaxed alcohol in Maryland and Virginia. Amrik also agreed to provide money, campaign donations and other things of value to Jack Johnson in exchange for official acts including obtaining licenses and permit inspections to conduct business in Prince George's County, and influencing legislation favorable to Melhi's liquor and restaurant businesses." (Note: The editor of BLP has purchased items from Tick Tock, but he always paid full-price and bribed no one.)

Politics: "Politics is a corrupt game. In order to be a politician, you have to be corrupt." (A county resident quoted in the *Sentinel*, 15 December 2011.) That is not true. Many politicians are not corrupt; but the few can dirty the many leading to citizen disenchantment with government (as has happened at the national level).

SECURE COMMUNITIES

Los Angeles Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa has written to California Governor Jerry Brown asking him to suspend California's participation in the Secure Communities immigration enforcement program. One reason he gave: "Community members with no criminal background are being deported and separated from their family." Of course, there are many more arguments to suspend the program, e.g., the gap it creates between residents (those with or without papers) and police officers. That gap hurts crime prevention as well as punishment.

HIRE A DAY LABORER!

There are day laborers with many skills: carpentry, elder care, baby sitting, lawn work, show shoveling, office work, and so much more. They need work to sustain themselves as well as to contribute to their heritage country



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EDUCATION & YOUTH

MARYLAND WINS

Maryland is one of nine states that will share \$500 million to improve early-education programs. "Investing in early learning is one of the smartest things we can do," said Education Secretary Arne Duncan. The focus is early education for those young people in disadvantaged households, neighborhoods. So some children in the Langley Park area may benefit. Good. Lots of early education is needed: K, Pre-K, and even Pre-pre-K.

HIGH PERFORMING TITLE 1 SCHOOLS

A "Title 1 school" means many of the children come from comparatively low income families. Alas, only one of the elementary schools serving children in the greater Langley Park area is considered to be a high performing

ture. They need a quality education. We need them to get a quality education: it's our future too!

TOWARDS CAREER EDUCATION

It appears to be becoming fashionable—and realistic: Career education! That is, complete high school or community college with skills and get a reasonably well paying job. No four years of college necessary!

Representatives from the Maryland State Department of Education are pushing for Career and Technology Education (CTE). It "prepares both youth and adults for a wide range of careers. These careers require varying levels of education- from high school and postsecondary certificates, to apprenticeships, or two- and four-year college degrees. Students add value to their overall education by completing CTE programs of study that provide opportunities to earn industry-recognized credentials and college credit while still in high school." (Source: www.marylandpublicschools.org)

PGCPS seems to be heading in the same direction. Of course, Bladensburg High School has offered technical tracks for some years. But maybe not too successfully. Now the greater emphasis may meet the needs of the area and also provide a good chance for a good job.

And with the B.A. degree? Maybe more income—maybe. But there are lots of English and History majors looking for jobs without good job/skill credentials.

TEACHER HOME VISITS

The expansion of a parent-involvement strategy in which teachers make scheduled visits to their students' homes promises to yield insights into how those visits might be used to improve outcomes for students and sustain engagement by parents in their children's academics. Such visits are crucial in schools where parent involvement is low. (Check the turnout at PTSA meetings as an indicator.) Over the past five years, funding has been increasing for new teacher home-visit projects. The evaluations of this contact emphasis are not yet in, but based upon the once-upon-a-time parent liaison work in Prince George's County, the evaluation results seem likely to be positive. Maybe this is an approach that should be incorporated into PGCPS practice. There are plenty of low-performing schools where efficacy tests can be conducted. (For more, go to *Education Week*, 22 December 2011)

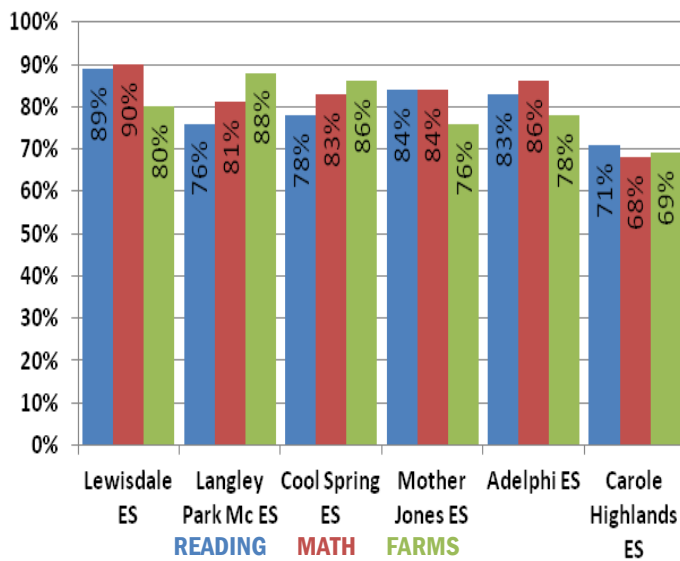
AMERICANIZATION: A NEGATIVE FOR YOUTH?

According to a very worrisome study in the December 2011 issue of *Archives of General Psychiatry*, the prevalence of conduct disorder (CD) symptoms increases across generations for Mexicans who migrate to the United States. "Our study shows that there is a large difference in risk for conduct disorder between Mexicans living in Mexico and people of Mexican descent living in the United States." There is an increase in risk occurring across generations within a migrating population, and it "strongly points to the influence of early childhood environmental factors in the United States."

Conduct disorder is characterized by persistent patterns of child or adolescent behavior involving aggression or other violations of age-appropriate norms that cause significant clinical impairment. Behaviors include bullying others, getting into fights, fighting with a weapon, cruelty to people or animals, stealing with confrontation, forced sex, property destruction, theft, and rule breaking.

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Reading, Math, and FARMS: Local Elementary Schools



Source: Characteristics of High-Performing Title 1 Schools in Prince George's County Public Schools, School Years 2008 to 2010

school. Lewisdale ES is the exception; it is high performing with an enrollment of 80% Latino/as and 80% qualifying for free or reduced cost meals (FARMS). At Langley Park McCormick, for instance, the FARMS figure is 87%—highest in the county. What makes the differences?

Teacher retention in high performing elementary schools is much greater than the non-high schools, and so is teacher certification. (Lewisdale is a certification exception; its percentage is low.) Teacher turnover clearly has an impact on educational quality. So, perhaps, has certification. Thus there may be a vicious circle.

Class size? It is smaller in low-performing schools!

Interestingly, Latino/as are 40% of high performing schools' enrollments, but 31% in low performing schools. A plus for Latino/as! The African-American pattern is the reverse, suggesting the severe economic and other stresses in some county neighborhoods.

The school system appears quite interested in the elements that lead to greater success in these Title 1 schools. Let's hope they find the "answer" soon and, despite the budget situation, can implement the "answers" quickly. These children will soon be the adults of our fu-

Be sure to go to Page 4 where non-promotions are discussed—plus the data.

NON-PROMOTIONS

ANOTHER CHALLENGE FOR FAMILIES AND SCHOOLS

Just because you're in the 9th grade doesn't mean you'll be in the 10th grade the following school year. Alas, the 9th grade poses great challenges for thousands of children. During the course of one's high school experience, the children of working class and poor immigrants in the Langley Park area (and probably in poor marginal neighborhoods elsewhere in the county) drop out at rate of close to 50%. And at least 7% of those who continue in school repeat at least one grade once. It's the same percent county-wide and for Latino/as. Males repeat more often than females (8.3% vs. 5.5%).

Middle schools do not, for too many children, prepare them for high school. Fewer than half of the 9th graders are proficient on eighth-grade reading and mathematics assessments; for females, over half scored proficient in reading but well under half did so in mathematics. The Latino/as were below the county average. Remarkably just a bit over one-quarter of them were proficient in math. And the proficiency scores for those with limited English proficiency (LEP) were horrifying: just over one in ten scored proficient in English (not surprising) and mathematics (surprising). The proficiency scores for repeating 9th graders were close to zero. Agh!! Should we take these children in our arms and tell them we'll give them knowledge, skills, and love? It's hard to think about their future, but in a nightmare they are drug-sellers or sex workers.

Even with some preparation, the absence of schooling during the summer often degrades what has been learned. So does repeated truancy. "Hey, let's skip this week for lots of booze and sex!" What will we do?

Dropouts and the non-promotions present great challenges for principals, teachers, counselors, and perhaps especially parent(s). "Maria: Should we talk with a teacher? He doesn't seem to be doing well in school?" Yes, yes, yes!

Maybe the high rates of dropouts and non-promotions should not be surprising given what we know about the educational challenges of living in a home where adults are not fluent in English (or at least standard English) and may not have had more than an elementary school education in their home country (or even in the USA). And of course the home often has health and economic and crowding challenges that the children face—and interfere with education.

What is to be done? Somehow, there must be a greater mentoring and tutoring effort on the part of all concerned. How about the college students in the area? Will they mentor and tutor? We cannot assume that another year in the 9th grade will fix the problem. There must be a great effort by all stakeholders—and that includes us. For the USA!

Which Young People Are Not Promoted to 10th Grade?

Data for year 2011 are from the Maryland Department of Education. They were compiled 19 December 2011

From Grade	Latino / a	Native Am. & Ak Nat	Asian	Black or African-Am	Native HI/ Pac. Island	White /Euro	Two & + Races	Male	Female	All Students
01	102	2	1	121	1	12	1	142	98	240
02	23	1	1	87	0	4	3	75	44	119
03	16	0	2	42	0	0	1	42	19	61
04	8	0	1	28	0	1	2	28	12	40
05	3	0	0	11	0	0	1	10	5	15
06	4	0	0	16	0	0	0	13	7	20
07	9	1	0	71	0	4	0	56	29	85
08	16	1	1	62	0	9	0	66	23	89
09	785	15	51	2,751	6	88	16	2,289	1,423	3,712
10	420	8	21	1,407	1	41	2	1,140	760	1,900
11	245	9	18	885	1	28	3	707	482	1,189
12	216	7	11	758	0	20	3	625	390	1,015
K	127	1	2	121	0	14	2	162	105	267
Pre-K	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	2	0	2
Not Promoted	1,974	45	109	6,362	9	221	34	5,357	3,397	8,754
Total	27,173	522	3,724	86,955	206	5,450	2,216	64,628	61,618	126,246

NOTE1: Much thanks to PGCPSS Board member Amber Waller as well as staff member Duane Arbogast and others who made it possible for ALP to obtain the data and publish them in BLP. Maybe—just maybe—these data can lead to a reaction that will be beneficial to the young people who struggle and don't quite make it, and so they drop out of repeat.

NOTE2: A substantial number of students who do not meet the requirements for promotion to tenth grade may be repeating ninth grade for the second time.

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(ies). So in the new year, consider hiring a day worker. For information about day laborers, check out <http://hireadaylaborer.org/>; and for the local organization that facilitates connections between those who want to hire and those who want a job, go to <http://www.casademaryland.org/hire-workers-mainmenu-93>.

301 431-4177

From the CASA web site: "We have professional, honest, and reliable workers available daily for jobs involving moving, packing, transporting, and deep cleaning. Also we have experts in construction, carpentry, landscaping, housekeeping, painting, tiling, odd jobs, and more! We would love to provide workers for you or/and your business, whether you need someone on short notice for just one day, or if you're looking to fill a permanent or temporary position." CASA's contact telephone number is 301 431-4177.

POLITICAL PEOPLE

Reshern Baker: His staff lists his 2011 accomplishments at <http://cms.princegeorgescountymd.gov/ExecutiveNews/Lists/Executive%20News%20Baker%20Administration/DispForm.aspx?ID=501>.

Peter Shapiro: Former Prince George's County Councilman Peter Shapiro is planning to return to the political arena. Currently, he heads the nonprofit Chesapeake Center for Public Leadership. However, his eyes are on an at-large D.C. Council seat. For Shapiro on corruption, go to this web site: www.youtube.com/watch?v=BbvPx2eFERo&feature=share.

GATED NEIGHBORHOOD(S)

The news is that there will soon be a new development in the Mitchellville area: a gated retirement neighborhood. It is planned to include 210 residences (single-family homes, townhouses, and condominiums), a 10,000-square-foot clubhouse, and 400,000 square feet of commercial (office and retail) building space. Mitchellville is a middle- and upper-middle-class area in Prince George's County. But of course there are many poor and working class residents in the county. Are the gates-to-be designed to maintain the separation? Maybe Langley Park should be gated? That way, the prejudiced people can be kept out.

EB-5: WISE INVESTMENT OR PROSTITUTION?

Or maybe both? The EB-5 visa program, which Congress established in the early 1990s, grants legal status to foreigners who invest at least \$500,000 or \$1 million (depending on location) into a new American business and create at least ten new jobs for US workers. So our country is selling opportunity and/or pleasure. It may be a good sale, and presumably it is legal. But there is a bit of purple tinge to the transaction. Perhaps if Action Langley Park takes \$1,000,000 out of its bank account and sends it to the Feds to bring someone into the USA, that could be arranged too. We do have some potential immigrants in mind, so perhaps we should get started with making the fantasy million a reality.

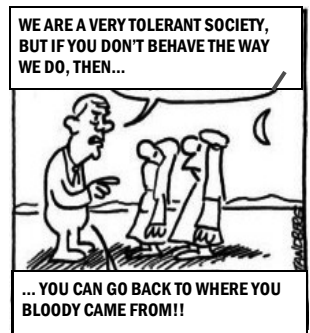
The number of foreign program applicants has nearly quadrupled in the last two years; in FY2011, the total is more than 3,800. Demand is growing so fast that the Federal government is working to improve the paperwork and investigations so that it's not swamped. Let's see: $3800 \times \$500,000 = \$1,940,000,000$. That's enough to pay for a few extra clerks!

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IMMIGRANT ASSIMILATION

The study of assimilation in recent years has led to a number of key findings. We report a few from "Comparing Immigrant Assimilation in North America" issued by the Manhattan Institute in May (and just discovered by ALP). In the research, civic, cultural, and economic assimilation were considered. A few comments from our local perspective have been added.

- The recession affected immigrants more strongly than natives. Some responded to economic difficulty by leaving the country where they had settled (the USA or elsewhere), while others almost certainly decided not to leave their native land in the first place.
- Discouraged immigrants tended to be among the least assimilated. Thus, although immigrants' economic progress has stalled, the departure of less assimilated migrants has produced statistical gains in average levels of cultural and civic assimilation. The more marginal, the less permanent.
- The assimilation of some groups progressed more than others. Immigrants from Mexico and two nearby Central American countries, El Salvador and Guatemala, are both poorly assimilated in an absolute sense and show few signs of progress over time. Living in an ethnic enclave may be an important explanatory factor. (Thus in Langley Park, one can continue to speak the native language—unless going to school; and heritage resources are available in grocery stores and elsewhere.) However, living in an ethnic enclave also provides comfort during the early years after arrival. There are heritage languages to speak, heritage foods to eat, heritage neighbors with whom to associate, and more. (For better or worse, county actions have attacked the comfort by taking away the heritage food trucks, the local Spanish-speaking public medical doctor, and of course threatening to destroy the enclave by demolishing the affordable apartments. Is this a short-term bad and a long-term good? Is the County Council playing God?)
- Upon arrival, the most recent immigrants are significantly more assimilated along cultural and civic lines than their counterparts of a decade ago. Perhaps this can be attributed to the globalization of communication. The immigrant can anticipate more realistically what is ahead.
- Recent immigrants with strong cultural differences from the mainstream are the ones most likely to have responded to the recession by leaving the country. "I'm an outsider, so I will leave."
- Two facets of Canadian immigration policy may help explain the rapid integration of foreigners into Canadian society. First, the path to citizenship in Canada is short and easily traveled. Foreigners face a three-year residency requirement (it is five for legal permanent residents in the United States and as many as twelve in some European countries), and the nation has taken a liberal stance toward dual citizenship since 1977. Second, Canadian immigration policy places a distinct emphasis on attracting skilled migrants. Thirty percent of foreign-born adults in Canada have college degrees, while the rate is 23% in the United States and 10% in Spain and Italy. The link between immigrants' level of education and their degree of assimilation is strong. For the USA, the spread of English, now the international language, is clearly a factor. ■



To study the prevalence of conduct disorder associated with migration from Mexico to the United States, the researchers assessed CD symptoms across four groups of people of Mexican heritage/origin with increasing levels of exposure to American culture: (a) nonimmigrant households in Mexico with no exposure to the United States, (b) Mexicans from migrant households who lived in Mexico until age 15, (c) children of Mexican migrants raised in the United States, and (d) Mexican-American children of U.S.-born parents. The risk of CD was lower in the general population of Mexico, higher in children of Mexican-born immigrants who were raised in the United States, and higher still in Mexican-American children of US-born parents. The increase is of larger magnitude for nonaggressive than for aggressive symptoms, consistent with the suggestion that nonaggressive symptoms are more strongly influenced by environmental factors than are aggressive symptoms. We all have work to do.

CLOSE THE SCHOOLS

Teenagers can be educated online!

Well, maybe. But there is a report by the Maryland Public Policy Institute entitled "Expanding Access for Online Learning Options for Maryland Students" about something that might be connected: online education.



There is this possible future: close all of the more traditional public schools, set up charter schools throughout the state, and have all of the teaching online. We can use the former school buildings to house the homeless. And the charter teachers can stay home but occasionally access their computer to do a bit of teaching—while engaged in housework.

A scene in one of Robert Altman's films comes to mind. A woman is talking on the telephone spewing a dollar-a-minute sex talk, while at the same time she is vacuuming her house. Maybe in the future PGCPs teachers can "teach" and vacuum her home at the same time.

The report states: "Maryland has taken the first steps in creating online learning opportunities for students. But much more needs to be done to ensure every student has access to a customized education that is flexible, through online learning, to best meet their needs. Notably, Maryland has close to the fewest students taking online classes out of the 31 states that have state-led or state-wide virtual schools...."

"While some 40 charter schools now operate throughout the state, the growth in charter schools in Maryland has not included the creation of online or virtual charter schools, as state law currently prohibits online charter schools from operating. A provision in Maryland charter school law that requires students to be physically present in school effectively excludes the creation of online charter schools."

Address of the report: http://mdpolicy.org/docLib/20111219_MarylandPolicyReport20115.pdf

BULLYING MAKES A DIFFERENCE

Victims of bullying can face a lifetime of psychological scars, but they also suffer academically—especially Black and Latino students. Researchers have found that

6 bullied students are more likely to miss school, fall behind, and eventually drop out. "Although academic achievement is largely influenced by family background and school characteristics, our study suggests that the experience of being bullied also influences students' grades. We find that bullying has implications for achievement regardless of racial and ethnic background, but seems to be especially detrimental for subsets of certain racial and ethnic groups." Furthermore: "Stereotypes about Black and Latino youth suggest that they perform poorly in school. High achieving blacks and Latinos who do not conform to these stereotypes may be especially vulnerable to the effect bullying has on grades." (The report was presented at the American Sociological Association meeting in August 2011.)

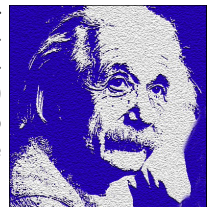
A few years ago, the ALP staff interviewed a sample of Black and Euro students in an elementary school. One Black boy commented, "Only faggots book it."

The Latino/a student may ask, "How can we get along? How can we avoid being bullied? How can we be more American?" The answer may be to conform to the school norms of behavior, and one of those norms might be not to "book it." Could that in part explain the poor test scores of Latinos in the Langley Park area?

IF WE CAN'T EDUCATE OURS, TAKE THEIRS

BRAIN = "Bringing and Retaining Accomplished Innovators for the Nation," the cute name for the legislation drafted by the House Judiciary Committee that in the future might enable immigrants and foreign students with advanced US degrees in mathematics and/or the science to live and work permanently in the United States.

During the 106th Congress (1999-2000), another BRAIN Act was introduced with a similar goal. It went nowhere. Maybe Congress will act differently this time, although with the goal of about 200 House of Representative members to block legislation that might make the President look good, a positive outcome is very uncertain. How sad.



We must wonder: Why are we so deficient in educating our native-born residents so that too few become leaders in mathematics and science? But immigrants? BRAIN? Of course, we are very grateful that immigrant scientists such as Albert Einstein have come to our shores. More should be welcome. ■

SLOTS FOR THE COUNTY?

Could slot machines in the county help to raise the money needed? Maybe yes. Should such "evil" be brought to the county? Well, it seems to be almost everywhere, so why not here? Maybe the "no" answer should be preferred because slots typically take from the working class and poor, not the rich, so it is regressive.

The Jacob blog states: "The problems with gambling are well known: gambling addiction, increased alcoholism and bankruptcy, and the potential for increased crime and family problems. Treatment and response to these issues could cost [millions] annually, absorbing some of the revenue the state would gain through legalizing slots. ... These challenges all fall most heavily on the poor, both because they can least afford to gamble and because these taxes are very regressive. ..." ■



BAD STATES UPDATE

Alabama: Saying that Governor Robert Bentley was "in their prayers," leaders of Alabama's Catholic, Episcopal and Methodist churches sent a letter urging him to support efforts to repeal the state's immigration law (in Alabama, it is HB 56). Among those who signed were three bishops who had [called] the statute a violation of the Constitution as well as a burden on immigrants, law enforcement officers, and farmers. They might have added that HB 56 promotes racial/ethnic profiling, injects terror into the lives of residents, and probably will fracture families. Those who passed the law clearly do not read—or take into consideration—their Bible.

Arizona: Bye bye Arpaio. A federal judge has just forbidden Arizona's anti-immigrant sheriff Joe Arpaio from detaining undocumented immigrants just because they are in the USA. That is, he is charged with enforcing federal immigration law—a law which is the responsibility of the federal government. Arpaio is also charged with destroying documents, not pursuing sex exploitation cases, and more. Bye bye.

South Carolina: A judge has enjoined some of the state's anti-immigrant laws. One of the worse that was enjoined: requires police to try to determine the immigration status of any person under investigation or arrest whom the officer has "reasonable suspicion" to believe is in the country illegally." More profiling.

MAKING MONEY ON DETENTION



So that's the reason! Building detention buildings, incarcerating people, and then staffing the buildings' enforcers is good business in the United States and other countries, especially Britain and Australia. (The English language triumphs!?) Ah, hyper-capitalism!

From the *New York Times* (29 September 2011): "The ballooning of privatized detention has been accompanied by scathing inspection reports, lawsuits and the documentation of widespread abuse

and neglect, sometimes lethal. Human rights groups say detention has neither worked as a deterrent nor speed deportation, as governments contend, and some worry about the creation of a 'detention-industrial complex' ... "

For those who may not remember reading about the "military-industrial complex," it was the phrase used by President Eisenhower—a former four star general—to warn the country about a loss of democratic power. Here's what he said in 1961—and it is relevant today:

'In the councils of government, we must guard against the acquisition of unwarranted influence, whether sought or unsought, by the military-industrial complex. The potential for the disastrous rise of misplaced power exists and will persist. We must never let the weight of this combination endanger our liberties or democratic processes. ... Only an alert and knowledgeable citizenry can compel the proper meshing of the huge industrial and military machinery of defense with our peaceful methods and goals, so that security and liberty may prosper together.'

THE JOB OF POLICE OFFICER

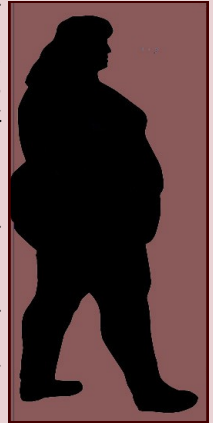
In 2010, there were 592 assaults on county police officers, and data for 2011 project that the total will be about the same. More than once a day an officer is assaulted?! We should be lucky that so many men and women want to be officers—especially those who join to do great good. ■

DANGER: SO EAT WELL & EXERCISE

According to recent research, obese Americans make less money than those who are of normal weight! The research reports that the average annual incomes for obese women were \$5,826 (2008 data) less for than the non-overweight, and for men the figure was \$4,772 (2004 data) less. Latinas who were obese earned \$6,618 (2004) less than normal-weight Latinas. Obese Latinos earned \$8,394 (2008) less than normal weight Latinos. Prejudice against fat and against high health insurance costs may be factors.

GW researchers report that the average annual costs of being obese were \$4,879 for a woman and \$2,646 for a man—including indirect costs such as lost productivity and direct expenses such as medical care.

These are high costs for eating food (often packaged) that is high on sodium and fat, the kind of food often purchased in vending machines or places such as Seven-Eleven. Residents in some neighborhoods may have an excuse because their areas are "food deserts"—that is, areas without grocery stores nearby that sell fresh fruits and vegetables. Fortunately, residents in the Langley Park have many fully-stocked grocery stores. Of course, they not only sell healthy food.



How does one know what's not healthy? Check out the labels of canned and other food; some of them are frighteningly high in what leads to being overweight or even obese. For instance, the label below indicates too much fat (23% of the daily max) and too much sodium (83% of the daily max). Want to lose weight or keep weight down? Then look for percentages in the single digits. Some foods to avoid:

- Fast food: cheeseburgers, fries, tacos, burritos, pizza, fried chicken, soups
- Ham, bacon, corned beef, hot dogs, sausage, salt pork
- Canned fish including salmon, tuna, sardines
- Pickles and foods that are "pickled"
- Salad dressing with salt (sodium)
- Sauces: Worcestershire sauce, soy sauce, tomato sauce, barbeque sauce
- Prepackaged and frozen foods: packaged mixes for sauces, noodles/ rice meals, pot pies
- Canned soups: except for low-sodium soups
- Cheese: all processed cheese and cheese spreads, including blue cheese and feta cheese
- Salted snacks: potato, tortilla, and corn chips, pretzels, salted nuts, popcorn, crackers

Don't worry. There are lots of good foods—foods that taste good and are healthy: fruits and vegetables! Chicken, tofu, and other protein sources (cooked in a healthy way)! Grains and starches such as rice (not white; darker rice such as brown or black is best), potatoes, bread (but not white bread that has had its good nutritional value removed), corn. Be careful choosing cereal; many are healthy but some are like candy.

Nutrition Facts	
Serving Size 1 package (454g)	
Amount Per Serving	
Calories 620	Calories from Fat 140
	% Daily Value*
Total Fat 15g	23%
Saturated Fat 4g	20%
Cholesterol 55mg	18%
Sodium 1990mg	83%
Total Carbohydrate 94g	31%
Dietary Fiber 4g	16%
Sugars 32g	
Protein 26g	
Vitamin A 15%	Vitamin C 8%
Calcium 16%	Iron 35%

*Percent Daily Values are based on a 2,000 calorie diet. Your daily values may be higher or lower based on your calorie needs.

DETENTION AND CHEER

Forty children gathered this past week to sing Christmas carols for those held at the immigration Metropolitan Detention Center in downtown LA, hoping to bring some joy and hope in the detainees' uncertain situation. "We want to give them a little bit of cheer, hope and wish them the best," said the founder of the group, Maqueos Music Academy, which performed outside of the immigration jail. The Academy is made up of youngsters ages 5 and up, many of them sons and daughters of immigrants from Oaxaca.

IMMIGRATION NEWS

KNOW YOUR RIGHTS!

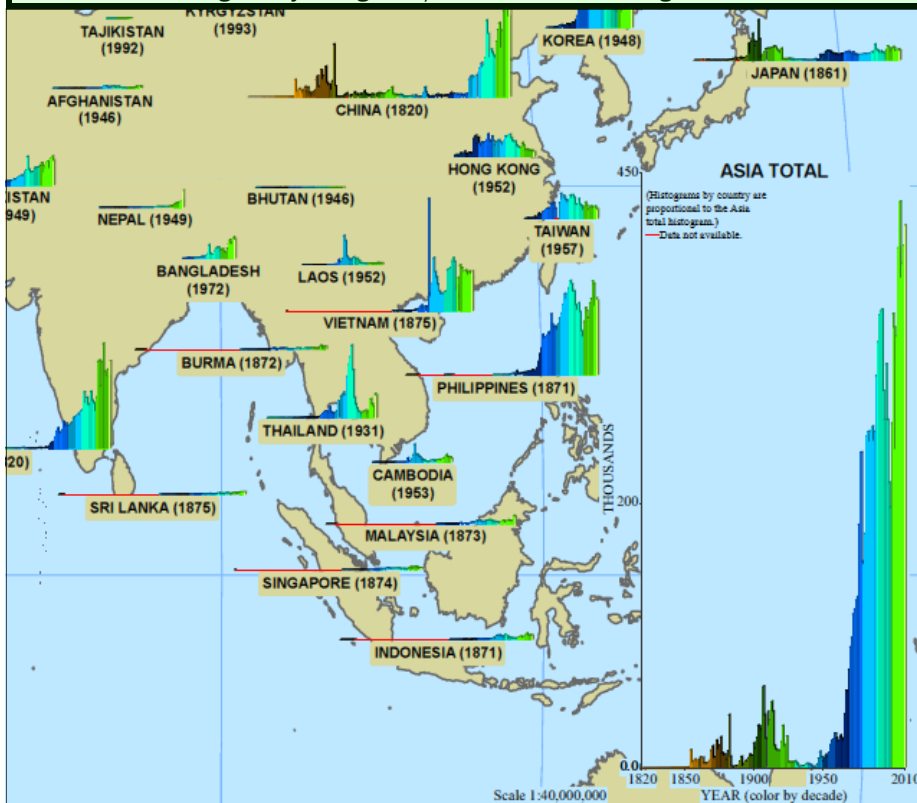
There's a PDF on this subject that provides very useful guidance for those who may be subjected to immigration raids or other attacks on one's USA status. Go to this address and click on the PDF tab:

http://www.immigrationadvocates.org/nonprofit/library/item.191101-Know_Your_Rights_Flyer_illustrated_Cas_a_de_Maryland_DWN_and_NIPNLG

CALIFORNIA'S 'COPA'

The California Opportunity and Prosperity Act (COPA) strives to integrated "qualified unauthorized residents" into California's economy and society. It directs California's Governor to petition the President and other federal agencies to provide relief and or exemptions from federal immigration enforcement actions against COPA members and their families, and to decriminalize employment of COPA members. It's a state-level comprehensive immigration law. Information: <http://www.caopportunity.com>.

The USA was made great by immigrants, and it will continue in greatness if we oldtimers let immigrants continue to support the greatness.



WHERE ARE WE FROM?

There are millions of immigrants living in the United States, and of course that has been the case during most of the country's history.

But there has been an enormous change in the countries from which the immigrants have come. The maps on this page are taken from a Homeland Security document (okay, okay: some good is done by that federal department). They vividly display the changes in legal migration—from Europe in the earlier years to Asia and Latin America in more recent years.

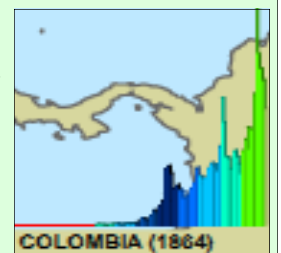
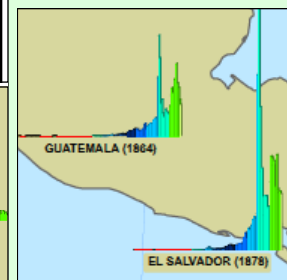
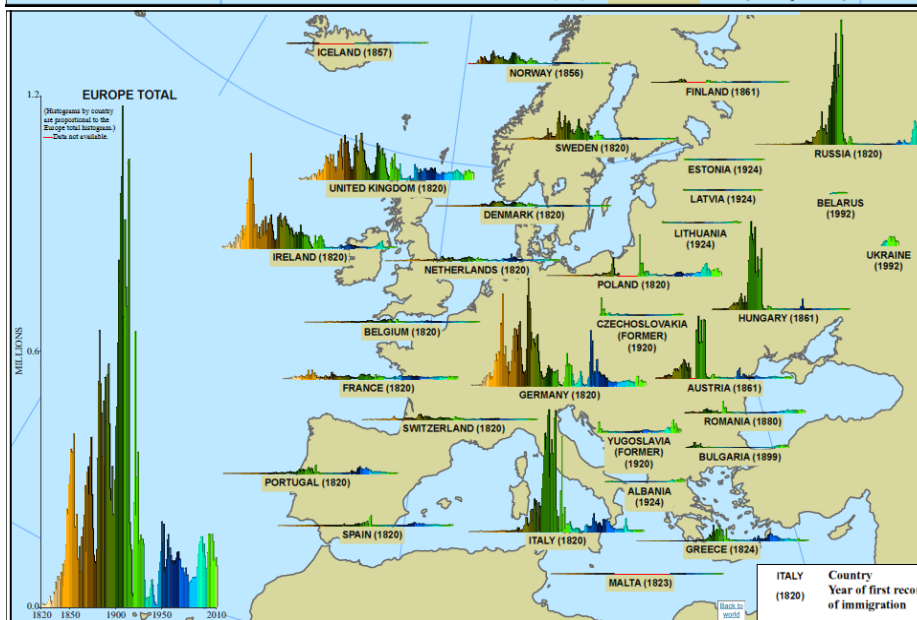
The bottom map is of Europe. It shows the great surge of immigration in the first decade of the 20th Century from the UK, Italy, Russia, and other countries. The German surge came a little bit earlier.

The top map is of a large portion of Asia. From Asia, the immigration surge has especially been great during the last decade and a bit before. The surge from China and India has been especially dramatic.

The surge from Central America was

greatest from the mid-1980s to the mid-1990s thanks to the brutal civil conflicts there. The two heritage countries most represented in Langley Park (Guatemala and El Salvador) contributed most to USA's human capital.

The surge from South America has been greatest over the past two decades—the most dramatic increase has been from Columbia. Mexico's great surge was in the middle 1990s. The Caribbean has had moderately high out-migration throughout the post WW2 period. Africa has surged recently—but modestly by comparison.



A Report from the Trenches

What is going on in some of the non-elite secondary schools of Prince George's County—and elsewhere? We know that many principals and teachers are aware of the challenges and try to do their best to focus on academics and the education of young people. But how do students experience their secondary-level schooling? Can they overcome? We can, fortunately, report on one local student's experiences—hopefully they are not representative of many area schools.

"When I was in middle school, I attended [a school] in an old building with broken bathrooms, broken gym benches and not enough important school materials. For example, textbooks: there were not enough textbooks for every student; there was only a classroom set that sometimes was not enough. There were not enough funds to purchase more books in order for each student to have a textbook to take home and do homework.

"This could be one of the many reasons why students in less wealthy areas are not doing so well in school. Aside from the lack of important school materials, there is also the issue of gangs. In middle school it seems like the Hispanic gangs did not get along with African American gangs. And so there were fights almost every day in the cafeteria, bathrooms and hallways. I remember going in the bathroom and seeing a group of girls beating on another girl and a teacher trying separate them.

"These were the same students who were skipping class leaving the school premises. Leaving the school was easy for students mainly because many doors were unsupervised. There were not enough staff for the amount of students who were in the school; it was overcrowded and maybe it was just too much for them to handle.

"As I went from middle school to high school, the same issues continued but now gang violence was much worse. It felt to me that the crime rate ... had increased maybe because it was starting to hit close to home. I lost a close childhood friend and a high school friend due to gang violence, being at the wrong place at the wrong time took two dear friends from my life.

"There were other students in my high school class who didn't get to graduate with me mainly because they didn't make it to the age of 17. Maybe if there would have been more programs in my schools that could of kept students off of the streets or motivate them, my memories of middle and high school experiences would be different."

GROWING IMPORTANCE OF LATINO/AS

For a cute video on this subject with interesting data and ideas, check out "The New American Reality" at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jDrwHODJcc>. The video is from Univision.

FREE TELEPHONE

SafeLink Wireless, a new service provided by cell phone company TracFone Wireless, was approved last month to begin offering free prepaid cell-phone service to income-strapped Maryland residents as part of the FCC Lifeline program. Under the program, TracFone offers prepaid cell phones to low-income households. Under the Lifeline program, the discount households receive for land-line phone service is around \$13 per month. TracFone converts that amount into about 64 minutes of airtime monthly for each SafeLink user. Information: <https://www.safelinkwireless.com/Safelink/>

WHAT AND WHEN: 2012

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.

The Foreclosure Prevention Project is open Mondays through Fridays 9 a.m. to 12 noon. Free; offered by Community Legal Services. The intake line is 301.864.8186.

January 5 & more—Physics is Fun—in the physics department, University of Maryland: January 5, 6, 7: The Atom; March 8, 9, 10: Color; May 3, 4, 5: Great Physics Demonstrations. From 7:30 to 8:30 p.m. Information: 301.405.5994. Get young people to these events!

January 10—LPCC Children's Programs. It's the start date for 2012 programs at the Center, including tutoring for 6-12 year olds and poetry for 8-13 year olds. Check offerings—and costs—at 301 445-4508.

January 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.

February 4—Midwinter Folk Festival, noon to 10 p.m. at the Takoma Park Middle School.

March 22—Action Langley Park meets at 7 p.m. at the Langley Park Community Center. Be there!

April 21—Maryland Day, 9 a.m.-6 p.m. at the University of Maryland in College Park. Lots to see and do!!

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

May 6—Langley Park Day 2012 from noon to 4 p.m. at the Langley Park Community Center. There will be music and dance performances; a major health fair checking vision, HIV status, blood pressure, and more; food and craft vendors; children's art and games; face painting, and more.



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 as an element of the university's community outreach. The Editor is Bill Hanna, who is a university professor and also Executive Secretary of Action Langley Park.

BLP appears irregularly, but approximately every two weeks. Submissions and suggestions are welcome at actionlangley-park@yahoo.com. Back issues of BLP will soon be available on the web.

BLP is read in the United States, Canada, and Mexico! Maybe elsewhere too! If you have friends or associates elsewhere in Maryland or the USA or elsewhere who are interested in immigration issues, please pass BLP along or let us add the person to one of our email lists.

For information about Action Langley Park, a non-profit 501c3 organization, email actionlangley-park@yahoo.com.