

Barrie de Langley Park

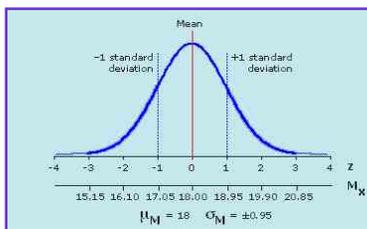
A Neighborhood Planning Newsletter Published by Action Langley Park
Issue #229, January-February 2012

WOW: SHARP WORDS ABOUT PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY!

"Prince George's County offers the greatest gap between the potential for development and redevelopment in the inner ring and market realities. High crime rates, inferior schools, rampant corruption and sheer ineptitude on the part of local officials have scared away many developers. Racism has been a factor as well."

That's a quote by a *Washington Post* (14 January 2011) columnist. Of course, there is some truth to the charges: crime rates are high compared with many sister suburban jurisdictions, the performance of school children is poor using the same comparisons, there was a married couple prominent in the county who have recently been convicted of serious corrupt practices. Of course, some workers in any governmental unit prove not to be very good, for instance, the planner who developed a plan to level a vibrant neighborhood. (She has since left county employment.) Maybe some cultural bias could be added.

But as anyone familiar with sampling knows, individual cases should not be used to portray the whole. Yes, there's crime, but it is not high given the large number of poor people who live in the county—and perhaps less than many other counties with similar demographic characteristics. Yes, many of the school children are not performing well, but it may well be that compared with systems having the same percentage of poor and immigrant children, the school system is doing quite well. Yes, there has been corruption, and the major criminals have been identified and are on their way to jail. But we don't give up on, say, Illinois, just because the governor tried to sell a U.S. Senate seat. And hopefully the Baker administration will make sure that such corruption does not take place again. Ineptitude happens everywhere from the White House to the University of Maryland and beyond. But most public workers in the county, the White House, and the university are far from inept.



[This is not the time or place to discuss how various forms of bias may have negatively impacted the Langley Park neighborhood. But as readers know from articles on the Sector Plan, the removal of the food microentrepreneurs, the attempt to convert a neighborhood school to something else, the occupation by bureaucrats of space in the neighborhood that should be used to serve area residents, and more, some form of bias appears to have been at work impacting Langley Park.]

Maybe the *Washington Post* should provide all of its columnists with a workshop on sampling theory. That might minimize the chance that a whole county would be denigrated just because there are some bad actors living and/or working there.

BRAZIL IS DOING IT!

So It's Our Turn!

The title of a World Bank report is *Achieving World-Class Education in Brazil* (2012) by Barbara Bruns and collaborators. "A six-year-old Brazilian child born today into the bottom quintile of the income distribution will complete more than twice as many years of schooling as her parents did." That's very good news, including the indicator that there is upward mobility in the country.

The country has had three goals: equalizing funding across regions, states, and municipalities; measuring the learning of all children on a common national yardstick; and protecting the educational opportunity of students from poor families.

When Lula da Silva became president in 2002, he expanded and strengthened these core policies. Coverage grew from 8.2 million students to 17.7 million seven years later, and cash transfers increased from 3.4 to 11.9 billion reais.



The dramatic increase in the educational levels of the less privileged children is slowly but surely reducing inequalities in the larger Brazilian population.

[The USA has a great challenge in equalizing because such a large percentage of funds for education are based on local property taxes. We are trying to institute more uniform standards, but "states rights" people often object. And we have a long way to go to enhance the education of children from poor families or children who have not been in an English-speaking country for a long time.]

With all these positives, Brazil must do better—and its leaders know it. The report's authors list four key challenges facing Brazilian education over the next decade.

(1) Raising teacher quality—teaching has become a low-status profession that does not attract high academic performers. *[Seems close to home.]*

(2) Protecting early childhood development—Brazil has raised preschool enrollments from 49% to 81%, but it is striving for 100% with improved quality. *[Only about 60% of Latino/a young people are in pre-school.]*

(3) Building world-class secondary education—

"Infrastructure is deplorable, the schools lack the libraries, science labs, and computer and language facilities most OECD students enjoy; ... the curriculum is overloaded and oriented toward memorization"; and there is "a severe shortage of qualified math and science teachers." *[We have infrastructure*

In North Carolina, the Teaching Fellows Program pays top academic students to attend a public college, and in return they spend at least four years teaching in a public school.

problems as well. Many secondary schools do not, for instance, have first-rate science labs. And we are short in quality teachers in the math and science fields. As for memorization, that may have gained prominence in the

NEWS AND NOTES AND HAPPENINGS

THE SECTOR PLAN

As readers know, the local Sector Plan calls for the “redevelopment” of large residential and commercial areas of the Langley Park area, and therefore many families and small businesses will be forced out of their affordable apartment homes and commercial spaces. In an



interview some months ago, Councilman Will Campos said, “We have met countless times to modify the sector plan to promote housing affordability, make sure that the plan responds to the gentrification concerns. We modified the plan based on those meetings.” It is not

clear to the BLP editorial staff what changes have been made to retain residential and business affordability, and we know many residents and businesspeople who don’t know what protection from demolition and gentrification they will have when the plan is implemented. The protection must be that they can remain in their current affordable apartments and retail outlets. That’s why we hope that Council members can inform the concerned members of the community. The BLP pages are open to them.

Purple Line money: The \$2 billion is not in hand, but transportation officials are cautiously optimistic. About half of the money may come from the Federal government and half from state and local resources. Of course, money is tight at all levels. So we’ll wait and see. Note: the I-270 corridor may opt for rapid buses, not light rail.

Aren’t there plenty of affordable apartments and retail spaces? The simple answer is no. As Roger Lewis points out in his “Shaping the City” column, the production costs of retail housing have soared, the annual income of families seeking affordable housing has been flat for more than three decades (adjusting for inflation), and the percentage of total family income spent on housing has, accordingly, soared. Of course, in addition to affordability and availability, there is the issue of “community.” The Langley Park neighborhood is a community, and scattering its residents into somewhat affordable housing elsewhere would be to destroy the community.

Source of Campos quote: <http://carnegieatmerrill.blogspot.com/p/business.html>

BHUTANESE?! HERE?!

Yes, Prince George’s County includes immigrants from Latin America and the Caribbean, and increasingly from Africa. But there are also Asians, and not all of them are well-to-do. That includes some Bhutanese. *Washington Post* reporter Pamela Constable wrote a column about them a few weeks ago (18 December 2011); for readers interested in immigrants, several paragraphs are worth quoting:



Traditional Dress

“As traffic whizzed past them, a group of tiny Asian women in long bright skirts and plastic sandals walked single file along the edge of East-West Highway ... headed for the Megamart. Deomaya Dharjmer, 49, led the way, cheerfully determined to conquer her alien new world.

“Barely a year ago, she and her friends were living in bamboo and thatch huts in Nepal, waiting for someone to

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decide their fate. For 18 years, they had languished in crowded U.N. camps, where 100,000 mostly Hindu refugees of Nepalese descent had been driven from next-door Bhutan by a Buddhist regime.

“Now, these village women, whisked 10,000 miles west by international refugee agencies, are among about 300 Bhutanese starting life anew in an apartment complex in Prince George’s County.

“When they arrived, some as recently as two weeks ago, nothing seemed remotely familiar. The weather was colder. No one spoke their language. Unlike other refugee groups in the area, such as Ethiopians or Iraqis, there was no exile community to receive them and few who could translate for them. Tradition had taught the women to be shy and submissive. Here, they needed to be the opposite.”

There are quite a few immigrants from Central America and elsewhere who have faced somewhat similar challenges: language communication difficulties, strange weather, gender power shifts. But many of them make it, and their children become assimilated fairly quickly; by the third generation, many of the heritage traditions have faded—too many for those who cherish people who are enriched by multiple cultures. Welcome, Bhutanese!

UNAUTHORIZED IMMIGRANTS CONTRIBUTE

“Those darned illegal immigrants are ruining our economy, taking jobs from good people, and bringing in diseases.” And more. You’ve heard such charges. Well, here are a few counters from the Immigration Policy Center:

► Unauthorized immigrants comprised 5.2% of the U.S. workforce (or 8 million workers) in 2010, according to the Pew Hispanic Center.

► Immigrants paid \$11.2 billion in state and local taxes in 2010, according to estimates prepared for the IPC by the Institute for Taxation and Economic Policy.

► If all unauthorized immigrants were removed from the United States, the country would lose \$551.6 billion in economic activity, \$245 billion in Gross Domestic Product (GDP), and approximately 2.8 million jobs, even accounting for adequate market adjustment time, according to a 2008 report by the Perryman Group.

► A 2010 report from the IPC and Center for American Progress estimates that deporting all unauthorized immigrants from the country and somehow “sealing the border” to future unauthorized immigration would reduce U.S. GDP by 1.46% annually—or \$2.6 trillion in lost GDP over 10 years. Moreover, the U.S. economy would shed large numbers of jobs.

SOCIAL JUSTICE

Yes, most of us want social justice. That implies human rights, decisions impacting us based upon achievement (our abilities) rather than ascription (our descriptors, e.g., skin color), greater equality of opportunity and perhaps outcome. Social justice yields political stability and many other benefits. So how does the USA stand? A report by OECD entitled “Social Justice in the OECD” places us in the bottom quartile along with Greece, Mexico, and Turkey. The greatest social justice can be found in Norway, Sweden, Iceland, and Denmark. (The cold must do some good!) The report is at http://www.sginetwork.org/pdf/SGI11_Social_Justice_OECD.pdf.

Relevant data: full-time male workers in the United States were making less in real (inflation-adjusted) dollars in 2009 than they were in 1969. (See graphic page 4.)

MORE ON EDUCATION

IMPROVING THE PRINCIPAL CORPS

The Wallace Foundation thinks that it has identified four key parts of a "principal pipeline" that can develop and ensure the success of a sufficient number of principals to meet district needs: rigorous job requirements, high-quality training, selective hiring, and on-the-job evaluation and support. And it puts its money where its thoughts are: Over the next five years, Wallace will give each of six districts serving many working class or poor students (Prince George's County is one of the districts!) \$7.5 to \$12.5 million to develop, hire and support new school principals. Hurray! Good school leadership clearly makes a difference! Congratulations, PGCPs. Of course, it must be noted that the county system already has some first-rate principals; but the more the merrier!

HIGH DROPOUT RATES

The two local high schools, High Point and Northwestern, experience a Latino/a dropout rate of more than 40%.* How can this be? What's going on? One view:

Experts say the dropout crisis stems from many factors—a perfect storm of educational disadvantage. Many families are poor and undocumented. Parents, many uneducated, often work long hours or in multiple jobs, leaving little time for involvement in their children's education. Some are further isolated from their children's school life because of language barriers or fear that contact with school officials may lead to deportation. Many of the young people need tutoring and/or mentoring, but such programs are unfortunately rare—certainly in the Langley Park area. (Mentoring and tutoring must be a priority of ALP and other area organizations.) Local role models of success are few; of course, there are many successful Latinos and Latinas in the area, but ALP is not aware of a major well-organized effort to expose the students to them. Many young undocumented immigrants say there is no point in staying in school because their lack of legal status limits their access to college and employment. Let's hope that Maryland's Dream Act is operative soon after its successful vote this coming November. Otherwise, we're wasting human capital. One student commented: "They just give up."

(This news item is a rewrite and reapplication of a long article, "In New York, Mexicans Lag in Education," *NY Times* 24 November 2011.)

One item not directly mentioned is difficulty in school-work in part related to language difficulties. It's not easy to become fluent in a language when one's only exposure to it is at school. Perhaps the school system should have immersion English for a year to get all the non-immigrant speakers up to speed.

The fear some parents have of going to their child's teacher or principal is understandable given the adults' cultural and linguistic background (teacher=authority, so don't challenge). That's why parent liaisons were so critical to immigrant (and other) children's education—and why they should not have been eliminated by the school system. (Some were rehired with different responsibilities.)

*BLP expects to have the exact figures shortly.

"Brazil" continued from Page 1

USA thanks to NCLB regulations.]

(4) Giving the federal level more influence over the 5,000 school systems—systems that vary in every quality measure by quite a bit. [That's opposed by many in the USA.

Yes, the USA must raise teacher quality. Of course, there are many great teachers, and some of them teach the children of the Langley Park area. But

for many first-rate college graduates, the pay is less than is available elsewhere. Wouldn't it be wonderful if a first-rate economist/mathematician could not easily decide between working on Wall Street and working in a secondary school classroom?!

The USA also must increase the proportion of children in pre-school programs. The brain is so flexible at the earlier ages that opportunities for development must be offered—especially to children whose parents have not achieved a quality education. Preschool is vital to closing the achievement gap. What the country needs is a figure at or close to 100%.

And here's a bitter pill: the goal of sending every child to school "ready to learn" was endorsed by Congress in the 1994 "Goals 2000: Educate America Act". Seventeen years later, the goal of "every" has still not been achieved. Less than half of Latino 4-year-olds are in pre-school. That is criminal!!!

LANGLEY PARK RESIDENTS NEED MORE EDUCATION

(25 years old & up)	LP	MD
High School Grad:	37%	88%
Bachelor's or more:	8%	35%

Charles Blow: "Sometimes I push back on my heels, look at this country, and wonder aloud, 'What on earth are we doing?' We have a growing crisis among the nation's children, yet our policies ignore that reality at best and exacerbate it at worst." NYT 27Aug11

IMMIGRANT YOUTH ACHIEVEMENT AWARD

The American Immigration Council works to combat negative stereotypes of immigrants by holding up exemplary youth in our communities as examples of the positives. The Immigrant Youth Achievement Award recognizes a young immigrant in the USA whose accomplishments are the embodiment of the immigrant spirit and show a commitment to making a positive impact in their community or the world around them. A nominee should be 14 to 25 years old and an immigrant to the USA. The accomplishments of the honoree should have made a positive impact in his or her community or beyond. And the honoree must be willing and available to travel (at AIC's expense) to Washington, DC for the awards ceremony on March 29, 2012. Want to nominate someone? If so, send the nominee's name, address, age, immigration history, and how long they have been living in the USA to Megan Hess at mhess@immcouncil.org. Include a synopsis of contributions and achievements. A nomination must be received by 5pm EST on February 1, 2012. Address: American Immigration Council, 1331 G Street, NW, Suite 200, Washington, DC 20005-3141. Council telephone: 202-507-7500

IT'S COLD OUTSIDE !

Yes, 25F degrees does seem cold, and the nighttime temperature in parts of Maryland has reached that uncomfortable level. But some of us feel reticent to complain: There are, for example, parts of northern Canada that have nighttime degrees reaching -20F to -30F. So we really have "warm" weather by comparison. No justification for complaining! (Darn!)

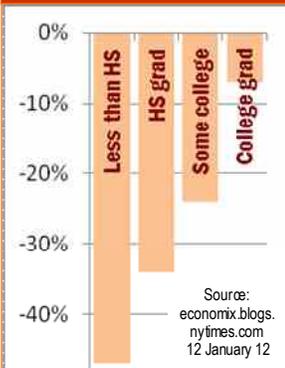


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So as the old song goes, "The rich get richer and the poor get poorer. Ain't we got fun."

Charles Blow of the *New York Times* (29 October 2012) comments:

Change in Median Earnings of American Men, 1969-2009
(By education, controlling for inflation)



"We are slowly – and painfully – being forced to realize that we are no longer the America of our imaginations. ...

"We sold ourselves a pipe dream that everyone could get rich and no one would get hurt – a pipe dream that exploded like a pipe bomb when the already-rich grabbed for all the gold; when they used their fortunes to influence government and gain favors and protection; when everyone else was left to scrounge around their ankles in hopes that a few coins would fall.

"We have not taken care of the least among us. We have allowed a

revolting level of income inequality to develop. We have watched as millions of our fellow countrymen have fallen into poverty. And we have done a poor job of educating our children and now threaten to leave them a country that is a shell of its former self. We should be ashamed."

So we're not working hard enough for our fellow men and women, for instance, to reduce child poverty and educate the children of the working class and poor. After all, there are thousands of Langley Park residents and millions of Americans in poverty; and the dropout rates of working class and poor Blacks and Latinos are frightful.

FEWER CENTRAL AMERICANS HEADING NORTH

There has been a dramatic drop in the number of Central Americans trying to pass through Mexico and into the USA. Back in 2005, the number was close to one-half million, but now the estimates are that the number is just over 100,000. The gangs of Mexico preying on the travelers is one factor, another is the greater difficulty of crossing into the USA thanks to the higher costs of coyotes and the increase in fencing and guards, But perhaps the most significant factor is the poor job opportunity at the destination thanks to our post-recession recession. Construction and agricultural work have been very hard hit in the current economy.

YOUR DARK SKIN NEIGHBOR DIDN'T SMILE AT YOU?! CALL THE TIP LINE!

Immigration and Customs Enforcement's public tip lines are said to have become valuable sources of investigative leads, according to an agency release this month. The agency said a tip called in to the line helped to close several important gang-related cases. ICE's Homeland Security Investigations Tip Line (866) DHS-2-ICE (866-347-2423) received nearly 172,500 tips in 2011. On the receiving end of the calls is a team of special agents, researchers, and law enforcement officers. The public can provide information about a wide variety of criminal activity, e.g., terrorism, drug smuggling, money laundering, and human trafficking to import/export violations, child exploitation, document and benefit Fraud, gang-related crimes, intellectual property rights violations, worksite enforcement, et cetera. And so...

"Hello. Is this ICE? Yes, I have a neighbor who was very unfriendly to me. I don't speak Spanish, but I do un-

derstand 'hola,' but he said nothing. Now I don't want you to think that I'm prejudiced against people with brown skin. No way! But I do want people to be friendly. So please check him out."

KNOWN BY YOUR FRIENDS?

On Martin Luther King Day, Mitt Romney in South Carolina campaigned with Kris Kobach, the author of Arizona's and Alabama's immigration laws! He attacked Newt Gingrich and Rick Perry for their "softer" immigration stances. Huntsman is right: there is much too much ugliness in the nominating campaign. "Ladies and gentlemen: vote for me because I hate immigrants and want them to be thrown into the Gulf of Mexico." No one said that, but maybe some people thought that. Sad.

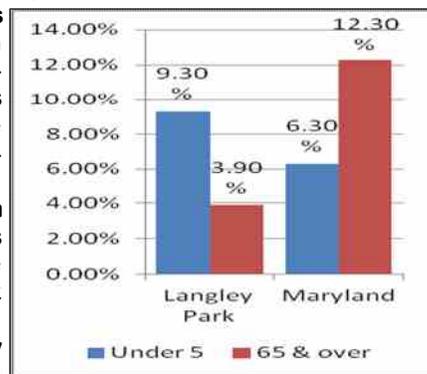
OUR HEALTH CARE SYSTEM IS INSANE!

A member of the BLP editorial team went to a local orthopedist to get a second opinion. The doctor talked with the patent for about eight minutes, and that included manipulating a leg three times. He also took a few minutes to look at x-rays taken elsewhere. Then he wrote a prescription and a brief report. So what was the charge for the second opinion that took about ten to fifteen minutes? \$468! Insurance will cover most of it, but \$468! What kind of an insane health care system do we have? Apparently, it's a system enabling insurance officials and medical specialists to become very rich. And apparently, it's only for people who can afford an expensive insurance policy. In a recent HHS study, 1% of the population accounted for 20% of total health care expenditures.

YOUTHFUL LANGLEY PARK

Walking the streets of Langley Park, it's obvious that the population is young. And if one looks into the Senior Center that is (unfortunately!) in the Community Center building, it's rare to find anyone from the neighborhood in the group.

Note: The term "unfortunately" is used because the Senior Center not only takes up room in the Community Center that could



be used for neighborhood residents, but its leadership appears not to be sufficiently supportive of programs it does not run.

MURDER!

Well, murders. Last year, there were 97 murders in Prince George's County, up slightly from 93 in 2010. That's compared with 109 murders last year in DC, down from 132. The PG change is statistically insignificant; even in a "stable" situation, there is always some variation. The good news is that in the DC metro area, the number of homicides fell. The PG numbers are high compared with other suburban areas, undoubtedly because of the push due to gentrification in DC. Hopefully, the PG government will provide all needed security support in the hotspots of the county. And yes, welcome from DC.

E-VERIFY

About 300,000 of the 2.2 million US employers with five or more employees were enrolled in E-Verify in Fall

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2011. That's the system that enables an employer to check a database to see (purportedly) if the job applicant has the right to work in the USA. The Federal government is pushing to have all such employers linked to and using E-Verify by 2013. Few officials seem to be concerned about the questionable validity of the data base. Perhaps the five-plus cutoff means more people will be working in companies with four or fewer employees. Small start-ups are in the horizon!

NATIVE AMERICANS FOOTBALL TEAM

Reportedly, the PG government is trying to lure the area's professional football team to move its training and office facilities to the county. That would probably bring a bit of badly needed money to the county. But wait: the team's name, "Red - - - -," is almost as negative a term to many Native Americans as the so-called "N word" is to African-Americans and "Wetbacks" to Americans of Mexican heritage. So maybe the PG folks should insist on a name change as part of the deal. Washington Blacks? (Most of the players are African-Americans.) But don't host a team with a name equivalent to the "N word." Maybe a boycott until there is a change? Alas, no: these days, entertainment is more important than principle.



IMMIGRANT ENCLAVES AND CRIME

There is conflicting evidence on the consequences of immigrant neighborhood segregation for individual outcomes. A recent report on the situation in England explores the correlation with crime. "Controlling for a rich set of observables, we find that crime is substantially lower in those neighborhoods with sizeable immigrant population shares." The authors suggest that "individuals who locate in enclaves are just as likely ex-ante to commit crime as others, but that subsequent social interactions generate a dependence between individual crime participation decisions and the actions of others in the neighborhood." Good non-criminal neighbors make a difference! Langley Park often has a higher rate of crime than other areas in the county of about the same size. However, Langley Park is very dense with a population of more than 20,000 people per square mile. So the area is not crime-ridden on a per capita basis.

IBERO-AMERICAN FILM SHOWCASE 2012

Coming to Washington, DC: Lots of Spanish-language (with English translation) feature films from Argentina, Brazil, Guatemala, Venezuela, Uruguay, and elsewhere—all free! The first program was on January 19th. The film "Maestra/Teacher" is from Cuba and will be screened on February 9th (Venezuelan Embassy). It is about the 1961 Cuban Literacy Campaign, two years after the Revolution, when 100,000 young people were recruited to go to the countryside to teach peasants how to read and write. Within one year, these teachers, the majority of them young women and teenage girls, taught 707,000 Cubans to read and write, eradicating illiteracy, according to UNESCO standards, in one of the most successful literacy campaigns ever in the world. For showcase information, go to the following address: <https://www.facebook.com/IberoAmericaCulturaDC>.



DISCRETION IN DEPORTATION

Who is not priority?

The Groundrules: The unlawful immigrants to be considered non-priority cases for removal are: Members in good standing of the Coast Guard or Armed Forces of the United States, honorably discharged veterans of the Coast Guard or Armed Forces of the United States, or the spouse or children of such a member or veteran; children who have been in the United States for more than five years, and are either in school or have successfully completed high school (or its equivalent); who came to the United States under the age of sixteen, have been in the United States for more than five years, have completed high school (or its equivalent), and are now pursuing or has successfully completed higher education in the United States; those over the age of sixty-five who have been present in the United States for more than ten years; victims of domestic violence in the United States, human trafficking to the United States; or of any other serious crime in the United States; those who have been lawful permanent residents for ten years or more and have a single, minor conviction for a non-violent offense; those who suffer from a serious mental or physical condition that would require significant medical or detention resources; or those who have very long-term presence in the United States, have an immediate family member who is a United States citizen, and have established compelling ties and made compelling contributions to the United States. When the Government decides to apply prosecutorial discretion the undocumented immigrant does not obtain legal status in the USA. The removal proceedings are not terminated but administratively closed. This means that any of the parties (ICE or the Respondent) could ask the court for the continuation of the removal proceedings later on. The advantage for the immigrants granted prosecutorial discretion, besides that the deportation process is stopped indefinitely, is the option for obtaining an employment authorization document. [That's not easy.]

Source: http://papers.ssm.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=1981013

An Early Test: The Federal government ordered a review of 7,900 deportation cases in Denver—essentially an early test of separating immigrants who appear to be bad guys (and some women) versus the others. The result was that 1,300 immigrants were declared no security risk and will be allowed to stay in the USA, but without any legal status. The estimate is that about 40,000 of the 300,000 people in to-be-deported status nationally will be found innocent of a crime and thus their deportation orders will be suspended. That's nice. Well, maybe. Well, not nice. Because those thousands of people who will not be deported will not have any legal status in the USA, and so they cannot legally get a driver's license, cannot legally get a job, et cetera. They are here in limbo.

A Case: Here's a "stay" case from the *NY Times* (20 January 2012) about "a student from Mexico whose parents had brought him to Colorado when he was 9. The student, ... now 21, was put in deportation proceedings after a traffic officer pulled him over for a burned-out license plate light. ... [He] met the standard for prosecutorial discretion in several ways: his parents are legal residents, and his three brothers are American citizens. His application for residency is stalled He graduated from high school and wants to go to college—to study automotive engineering to design energy-efficient cars ..."

SLOTS AND/OR A HOSPITAL?

Some commentators wonder if slots are needed in the county to support the construction and maintenance of a new hospital to replace the seemingly failed Prince George's Hospital Center (pictured).

"Prince George's County officials are confident they can fund their \$200 million portion of the cost for a new regional medical center with or without slot machines. The fate



of the proposed teaching hospital, which officials say is critical for the county to replace the struggling Prince George's County Hospital Center in Cheverly, has been linked to the need for revenue from slots to pay the \$600 million cost to build it. But County Executive Rushern Baker said Wednesday a new hospital can come to the county regardless of gambling revenue." (*Washington Examiner*, 11 January 2012)



Well, the hundreds of millions of dollars have to come from somewhere, so why not take it from the working class and the poor. (Personal observation suggests that most slots players, at least in Las Vegas, are in the working class.) And there's a nice circularity to the arrangement: the working class men and women who gamble their money away may well need to be hospitalized—perhaps related to the consequences of their slots addiction. Their place at the slots could be taken by middle class players who, thanks to the slots, are likely over time to become working-class.

The unfortunately losers don't realize how the odds favor losing. If the return is at an 85% rate, then for every dollar played, the return is 85¢. The small paybacks are calculated to keep the player hopefully playing on.

Those who don't play the slots and are economically more comfortable thanks to not playing will be able to use the new hospital facilities. That's probably a regressive change: having less leads to contributing more.

The county needs a good hospital, and making it a teaching hospital is a plus. Let's hope that construction of the new hospital begins soon—perhaps this year, and let's hope that the funding doesn't exploit the working class slot players. Let's also hope that Mr. Baker was accurately quoted, in which case: Go, Baker, Go!

WHAT VALUES GUIDE VOTING?

There are lots of conversations these days about whom to support in various upcoming primary and general elections.



That's good. But what should be the focus? There's a pretty strong argument that the preferred candidate should be the person who will be best leading the county, state, or nation. The arguments that (s)he, e.g., is a nice person or looks like me or is a member of one's church is not focusing on merit, and merit is what the county, state, and nation need now. Lots of it!

WHAT AND WHEN

Here we list upcoming ALP activities and other events that come to our attention. Have an event to list? If so, send information well in advance to actionlangley-park@yahoo.com.

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

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.

January 25—Fatherhood Factory: January 25th from 5:30 to 7:30 p.m. at the Langley Park Community Center. Be a better father! Call 410 379-3426 for information.

January 26—Where & How Should PG Grow? A presentation/discussion at the CSC Building (7900 Harkins Rd.) in Lanham, 6:30-8 p.m. See this site for information: <http://csg.citizen-networks.org/site/Calendar?id=101561&view=Detail&scid=1022>

January 28—Conversation on Latino Families and other topics. At Northwestern High School 10 a.m. to noon.

January 31—PGC PTA meeting at Largo High School, 6:30 p.m. The PGCPs Chief Financial Officer and the the Chief Academic Officer have been invited.

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

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

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

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

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

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

April 26—Art and the Purple Line, an art event at The Morris & Gwendolyn Cafritz Foundation Arts Center, 930 King Street on the Takoma Park/Silver Spring Campus of Montgomery College. Time TBA.

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

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