

# Barrio de Langley Park

A Neighborhood Planning Newsletter Published by Action Langley Park  
Issue # 235, April 2012

## BAKER TRANSFORMING LANGLEY PARK? Will This Be Gentrification + Displacement? Or Something Helpful, Positive?

From the County Executive's Office: "Prince George's County Executive Rushern L. Baker III announced his plan to unveil a new approach to helping communities in need reach their full potential, the Transforming Neighborhoods Initiative (TNI). The main objective is to improve key indicators in the targeted areas related to crime, economic development, education, healthcare and human services.

"As I traverse across this great County, from one end to the other, I have the opportunity to see so many facets of our communities. While all of them have their unique qualities and not to mention, the greatest citizens and residents, I recognize, that some of our neighborhoods are in jeopardy," said Baker. 'The Transforming Neighborhoods Initiative is a comprehensive and holistic approach to restoring some of our vulnerable communities through a variety of government services.'

"The overarching goal of the TNI is to achieve a thriving economy, great schools, safe neighborhoods and high quality healthcare by utilizing cross-governmental resources in target neighborhoods that have significant and unique needs. Six areas of the County have been identified:

East Riverdale/Bladensburg; Glassmanor; Hillcrest Heights/Marlow Heights; Kentland/Palmer Park; Suitland/Coral Hills; and... **Langley Park**

"Our overall strategy is to be proactive in these target areas while maintaining and improving service delivery outside of these areas. We will accomplish this by using cross governmental teams that will communicate and coordinate in a manner that will result in improved service delivery strategies. These improved strategies will be employed across the departments thus improving service delivery both in the high need areas and the lower need areas.

**Will it be the bulldozer OR money for tutoring, a clinic in the LPCC, parent liaisons, and more?**

"One of the many stand out features of this approach is the accountability and leadership component. Each of our four Deputy Chief Administrative Officers (DCAOs) and two Assistant DCAO's are assigned one of the six target neighborhoods to spearhead by applying their leadership skills to achieve measured improvements,' said Baker. 'At the end of the day, everyone deserves to live in an environment where they can experience a better quality of life. This initiative is designed to achieve that.'" Langley Park's "leader" is Better Hager Francis.

# 16 Days!!

- That's the number of days before Langley Park Day 2012 on Sunday, May 6th in and around the Langley Park Community Center.
- Be sure to come!
- Be sure to tell your family members, neighbors, friends, and maybe others!
- Let us know if you want to volunteer to work in the children's area, the health fair, or the performing stage.
- Contact : [actionlangleypark@yahoo.com](mailto:actionlangleypark@yahoo.com)

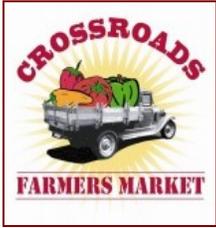


Dulce Matuz, an undocumented 27-year-old Arizonan, has been selected by *Time* magazine as one of the one hundred most influential people in the world! Wow! The publication calls her one of "the finest of her generation." She responds: "It's been overwhelming. I am happy and honored - but this recognition is not for me, but for all the undocumented students and youth who work with me." She has an engineering degree from Arizona State University, and now she is a realtor. "We are Americans, and Americans don't give up."

## NEWS AND NOTES

### LOCAL

#### FARMERS' MARKET



Again this year, beginning Wednesday, May 16th from 2:30 to 6:30 p.m., our Crossroads Farmers' Market will provide us with fruits and vegetables and eggs and more—plus freshly made pupusas. The market is in the same general location, 7676 New Hampshire Avenue, but it will be in the south (back) parking area rather than the east parking area. Great: we can purchase fresh healthy food and have a good time doing so.

#### HOUSING PRICES

The average prices of housing in DC and Northern Virginia are rising, but not in suburban Maryland. The median sale prices in these jurisdictions is \$398,500, \$335,000, and (alas) \$230,000. The only positives are (a) it is now cheaper to buy a house in the county—although the seller is probably losing money, and (b) the number of foreclosed houses is declining. Here are two examples of the current housing market, both in Langley Park: On the 8100 block of 17th Pace, the asking price is \$230,000. In 2006, it sold for \$399,900 (thus now it's 58% of its former value). On the 7955 block of Riggs Road, the asking price for the condo is \$79,900. It was purchased for \$137,000 in 2006 (also 58% of the former value). Dashed dreams. Cruel fate.

But if you really want a bargain, there's a nice-looking house for sale at \$29,000. It has three bedrooms, hardwood flooring, and more. But you have to move to Two Rivers, Wisconsin.

#### THE EDEN CENTER

Everyone should visit the Eden Center in Northern Virginia. It is a center of Vietnamese life with a dozen restaurants, a dozen or more other businesses, and in general a place where the local Vietnamese population can feel a bit at home. The business total is



about 120! The Eden Center Clock Tower is an exact replica of one in downtown Saigon. A home away from home is certainly a plus. It is what Central Americans had in Langley Park before the food vendors were forced out of business. Sad. Maybe some day county officials will realize that the feel of a home away from home is important. Star *Washington Post* reporter Luz Lazo on Eden Center is at [http://www.washingtonpost.com/local/trafficandcommuting/months-after-police-raid-eden-centers-vietnamese-community-worried-about-image/2012/03/30/gIQA5paTIS\\_story.html](http://www.washingtonpost.com/local/trafficandcommuting/months-after-police-raid-eden-centers-vietnamese-community-worried-about-image/2012/03/30/gIQA5paTIS_story.html).

The story is told that when what is now La Union was built, the owners had in mind creating a smaller version of the Eden Center. The name was International Mall. But the Vietnamese population in suburban Maryland is more working class and they are fewer in number. Bankruptcies! Change of focus!

**FACTOID:** The average monthly rent for a one bedroom apartment in Zip 20783 is \$1,111. Seems high. No wonder so many families struggle, share.

## NEWS AND NOTES

### NATIONAL

#### ANOTHER SUPREME COURT CASE

The Supreme Court "appointed" George W. Bush to the presidency, then it allowed unlimited money to pour into political campaigns in *Citizens United*. Now it is considering blocking the health law that will be helpful to many poor people, and soon the Court will hear arguments in *Arizona v. United States*, a dispute over the legality of the immigration law known as SB 1070. The case involves a range of important questions regarding the role that states may play in the enforcement of federal immigration law. The Court's decision will likely affect not only the future of SB 1070, but the fate of other state immigration laws being challenged in court and the odds of similar laws being passed around the country. The State of Maryland is opposing SB 1070 as is Congressional District 8's Chris van Hollen. But Prince George's County and its top officials have not registered their support. Neither, apparently, has CASA de Maryland. Why not? For a q&a about the SB 1070 case, go to <http://www.immigrationpolicy.org/sites/default/files/docs/Winograd%20-%20Supreme%20Court%20Q&A%20Guide%20040212.pdf>.

#### KILL, KILL

The Department of Homeland Security and its ICE office are getting an "indefinite delivery" of an "indefinite quantity" of .40 caliber ammunition from a defense contractor. U.S. agents will receive a maximum of 450 million rounds over five years. The high performance bullets are designed for law enforcement; the contractor says they offer "optimum penetration for terminal performance." This refers to the bullet's hollow-point tip that passes through bodies and other barriers and expands for a bigger impact without the rest of the bullet getting warped out of shape. Scary! Why?



#### NON-RICH DECLINE

According to an analysis of tax returns, the wealthy top 1% earners pocketed 93% of the gains in 2010. Fully 37% of the gains went to the top one-tenth of one percent. No one below the richest 10% saw any gain at all. The same pattern probably prevailed in 2011. Is that fair?

Most of those in the bottom 90% have lost ground. Their average adjusted gross income was \$29,840 in 2010. That's down \$127 from 2009, and down \$4,843 from 2000—all adjusted for inflation. Meanwhile, employer-provided benefits continue to decline among the bottom 90%. The share of people with health insurance from their employers dropped from 59.8% in 2007 to 55.3% in 2010. And the share of private-sector workers with retirement plans dropped from 42% in 2007 to 39.5% in 2010. Is that useful information for November voting?

#### NOT ALL LATINOS ARE ALIKE!

In an interview with Juan Williams, Florida Senator Marco Rubio explained that he doesn't support The Dream Act; that's the legislation supported by 90% of Latinos. His reason: it would encourage 'chain migration' and illegal immigration. He does support a way to legalize the super-students. Alas, few of us are super-students.



## NEWS AND NOTES

### IMMIGRATION/IMMIGRANTS

#### RELATIVE CAN STAY

New federal rules propose that undocumented immigrants who are immediate relatives of citizens could stay in the United States while applying for permanent residency. The Obama administration said late Friday that the move could affect as many as one million of an estimated 11 million immigrants living here without papers. Currently, undocumented immigrants must leave the country to apply for a legal visa, often leading to extended isolation from their families. The new proposal would allow an individual to remain the country as they applied for legal status. Once approved, applicants would be required to leave the U.S. briefly—approximately one week—to return to their native country and pick up their visa. The White House hopes to have the new procedures in place by the end of the year.

There was a public-comment period in January for the proposed policy. People can submit their input on USCIS at [regulations.gov](http://regulations.gov) through June 1.

#### SPACE IN 'JAILS'

A U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement official told a journalist that the agency only has enough space to hold about 10% of those suspected to be undocumented aliens that it processes. The other 'suspects' must be released because of a lack of beds in holding facilities. 'ICE only has 34,000 detention beds and over 300,000 individuals in removal proceedings,' said an ICE official who requested anonymity. The rest are given bonds or tracking devices, or simply released on their own recognition.



Where is the jail-building industry? Can't they continue their work so that the "horrible people" can be confined? Don't we want that industry to make more money?

#### RACISM IN ACTION

Perhaps most readers have heard about DC Councilman Marion Barry's seemingly racist remark. It's ugly, but in case you missed it, here's the text:

"We've got to do something about these Asians coming in, opening up businesses, those dirty shops. ... They ought to go. I'll just say that right now, you know. But we need African American businesspeople to be able to take their places, too." (Reported on WRC-TV)

Every so often, some of us think that perhaps racism is fading, but the heavy evidence is that the thought is unrealistic. One is reminded by the Barry comment of Spike Lee's film, *Do the Right Thing*. In the film, there seems to be a reasonably civil relationship among races, and then.... Very sad.

#### RESCHEDULING CASES

Officials at Homeland Security and Justice are developing a plan to suspend court proceedings for illegal aliens who have been detained in some large urban areas around the country. There was a six week pilot program in Baltimore and Denver to delay review of some cases. The rescheduling of cases for non-detained aliens enabled judges to focus on the cases of detained aliens. The pilot program is being expanded to several other urban areas; in May, the areas to be included are NY City and then LA and San Francisco.

"Immigration" continued on Page 4

## NEWS AND NOTES

### EDUCATION

#### OPERA

Our neighbors at the New Hampshire Estates Elementary School are using opera as a way to learn a wide variety of subjects; the children perform such jobs as electrician, composer, writer, makeup artist, and public relations. Check the *Washington Post* (31 March 2012) article at [http://www.washingtonpost.com/local/second-graders-who-created-an-opera-were-transformed-by-it/2012/03/29/gIQA9PquiS\\_story.html](http://www.washingtonpost.com/local/second-graders-who-created-an-opera-were-transformed-by-it/2012/03/29/gIQA9PquiS_story.html).



#### STUDENTS ON SCHOOL BOARD

Three county students ran for the Board and were elected. Their ages: 18, 19, 20. Will they enrich the Board deliberations and decisions? There is some evidence to suggest that the answer is yes; in college committee meetings, for instance, the discussions are quite different depending upon whether students are present—without them, student concerns are much easier to discount. One of the newly elected board members is apparently a scarf-wearing female, thus her election is evidence of tolerance of diversity. Good luck to the three! (And of course to the whole board.)

#### LEP GIRLS AT BUCK LODGE MS

Female students in the 8th grade and with limited English proficiency are doing very poorly at Buck Lodge. In mathematics, 95% score in the "basic" (i.e., in the D and F ranges). And in reading, it's 94%. The scores are below, for instance, those of Nicholas Orem MS. Why are these young women doing so poorly?

#### MARYLAND MANDATORY SCHOOL: 16 17 18

Currently, all young people are required to stay in school until 16, but it is about to change to 17 and later to 18. There will be ways to get around the increase, e.g., if the young person is needed by the family to be in the workforce for economic reasons. That's a big escape hatch given the low income of many families in the county. But if the new regulation will keep a few students in school, that's a plus: a plus if the school really is giving the student a good education.

#### ALARM EARLY, DINNER LATE

PGCPS has decided to extend the school day for middle school students by forty minutes. There are many education experts who advocate longer school days (and summer school), but perhaps the decision was based more on busing than learning. Millions of dollars will be saved in busing because the middle school and high school students will share buses. It might well be that the older students can negatively influence the younger ones, but apparently that is not a consideration. Could older gang members be looking forward to more recruitment opportunities among the younger students? Let's hope not.

Maybe the extra forty minutes can be used to augment education positively. How about art, music, and dance?

Are teachers going to get a raise for the extra hours of work?



"Education" continued on Page 5

## ET CETERA

**IMMIGRANT EDUCATION:** Immigrants working in the USA are just as likely as the native born to have a college degree, but they are far more likely to lack a high school diploma, according to a report released in March by the Brookings Institution.

**ROMNEY'S IMMIGRATION PLANS:** Speaking at a Wisconsin town hall, candidate Mitt Romney said that President Obama had failed in his immigration reform and, if he is elected president, he would provide a "US visa" to anyone with an advanced college degree. So getting into the USA should be easy: just get a master's in engineering or a doctorate in high energy physics.

**Arizona: A model for the USA! ??**

Mr. Romney has previously said he would veto the DREAM Act, which provides a path to citizenship for undocumented young people going to college or serving in the military, and he has proposed a policy of 'self-deportation' where the undocumented residents are encouraged to leave the country. He supported the controversial and strict immigration law currently under challenge in Arizona, labeling it a 'model' for US immigration law.

**BIRTH RATES FOR WOMEN 10-19:** In the age categories 15-17 and 18-19, the birth rates for Latina teens are the highest among race/ethnic groups. The exception is the 10-14 year olds; the rate for non-Hispanic blacks in that category is slightly higher. In all teen categories, the rates have fallen slightly in recent years; and there has been a dramatic decline since 1991.

## SLOTS IN P.G.: MAYBE IN '15

"I am not a gambler. I make decisions based on research and data. When I decided to support the expansion of gaming to Prince George's County, I did so based on information and research. I saw an opportunity that would provide the best outcome for Prince George's and for Maryland." (Rushern Baker in the *Washington Post*)



This newsletter has, in recent issues, raised questions about locating slots and more in the county. It certainly might bring in more tax money, but it also might be quite harmful to those who become addicted to playing rather than working to bring food to the table and rent to the manager.

There is a lot of passion on both sides of the disagreement. One email writer: "When they were campaigning for wide open gambling in Atlantic City NJ, they dazzled the gullible with tales of an economic bonanza. A few years after the casinos opened, Atlantic City was a wasteland of crumbling neighborhoods surrounding a island of gambling venues and hotels. A handful of developers got very rich from the process. The people of Atlantic City were worse off for decades." [See the film *Atlantic City*.]

A friend of Action Langley Park recommends that those of us who might decide or influence the policy should see a documentary at this address: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RWi2Ip2bkVU&feature=youtu.be>. Check it out and then decide.

As we go to press, there is uncertainty about the outcome of gambling in Prince George's County. The Maryland Senate pushed a referendum on the proposed county casino, and there is some resistance to the casino bill in the House of Delegates. The legislature may limit the number of slot machines in the state to 16,000. (16,000!!!) What will happen? We will probably know very soon.

## BIG SWEEP

A few weeks ago over a six-day period, immigration agents arrested 3,168 immigrants, 53 in Maryland. Immigration reports that many had been convicted of crimes or had repeatedly violated immigration laws. People were arrested in all 50 states. Reportedly, those arrested include 1,477 immigrants who had served prison sentences for felonies and 1,063 immigrants with more than one criminal conviction. (Are these two numbers overlapping or additive? It makes a difference in terms of how many non-criminals were arrested.) Let's hope that those without such criminal records were accidentally captured have been released—or soon will be.

From a legal blogger: "Remember the golden rule, it is ok to deport an immigrant, so long as the T.V. cameras aren't rolling."

Note: Between January and June of 2011, immigration officials deported more than 46,400 people who said they were parents of children who were born in the USA and therefore citizens of the USA. The bust families program.

## TO NOTIFY FAMILY

Members of a group of pro-immigrant rights activists are working to develop a Smartphone application that will help immigrants (perhaps others too) notify friends, family and their attorney if they are detained, e.g., during a traffic stop. The app will allow the users to send a message when law enforcement moves in or when they are facing an emergency situation that puts their safety or civil rights at risk. The goal is to have the software in operation this summer. Seems to be a due process and civil rights contribution.

## RIGHTS ABUSES ALONG THE BORDER?

U.S. immigration and border-enforcement policies have precipitated a litany of human-rights abuses along the U.S.-Mexico border, from the needless deaths of border-crossers to inhumane conditions in immigration detention to the racial profiling of entire Latino and indigenous communities. That was the principal finding of the human rights groups which presented testimony at a recent hearing of the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR). It was also the main conclusion of a recent report by Amnesty International. Both the hearing and the report underscore the urgent need for the U.S. government to abide by the human rights treaties to which it is a signatory.

Amnesty International has prepared a report entitled *In Hostile Terrain: Human Rights Violations in Immigration Enforcement in the U.S. Southwest*. It is available at <http://www.amnestyusa.org/research/reports/usa-in-hostile-terrain-human-rights-violations-in-immigration-enforcement-in-the-us-southwest>.

## SEIU

This labor organization that represents millions of workers nationwide and more than 100,000 in Alabama, has lodged a complaint with the International Labor Organization of the United Nations urging it to press our federal government to move on immigration reform. Some people think that there is a conflict between immigrants and labor. Maybe not!

## "SECURE" COMMUNITIES

"ICE has mutated [Secure Communities] into an over-reaching dragnet." (Quoting Sarahi Uribe of National Day Labor Organizing Network) Probably millions of people are living in fear—citizens and others. It's cruel.

## IS OUR DEMOCRACY IN JEOPARDY?

Below are some of the points Les Leopold makes in a long and detailed article.<sup>1</sup> (They are cut significantly below.) Some of the commentary seems a bit strong, but maybe not. At least, the article can and should be a source of lively discussion. Do you agree with Mr. Leopold about money's influence on politics? About the state of our infrastructure? What relevance is there to the challenges facing the residents and small businesspeople in the Langley Park area?

### Money and Politics

Our democracy is supposedly rooted in the idea of one person, one vote. But the introduction of big money into politics distorts, and perhaps, destroys that ideal. Unlike most advanced democracies, we have failed to eliminate the destructive impacts of money on politics. The costs of our campaigns are rapidly rising. The Citizens United Supreme Court decision further accelerated this trend so that now there are virtually no limits on how much billionaires can spend on their preferred candidates. ... The obvious result is that all candidates from a local council to the president spend most of their time [seeking] money, not legislating. [It is hard to] get elected without kissing the oligarchs' rings.

### Skewed Distribution of Income

Sometimes we forget that money in politics wouldn't matter if our income distribution wasn't so lopsided. Ever since the Greeks invented democracy, there has been a question about the relationship between political and economic democracy. Is it possible to have political democracy if the income distribution is severely skewed? Of course, you don't need to have full equality of income to have a viable democracy. But does there come a point when a skewed distribution of income makes [problematic a true functioning] democracy? If we're not already there, we may be getting close. As the chart shows (see inset, right), we lead the world when it comes to our income gap. And as the other graphic reveals, the gap keeps growing.

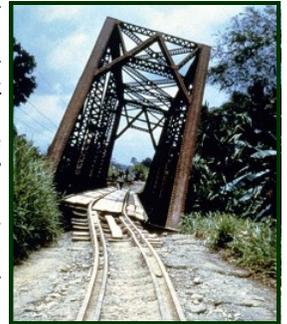
Country	Ratio of CEO Compensation To Average Employee Compensation in 2000 <sup>2</sup>
Japan	10:1
Germany	11:1
Sweden	14:1
New Zealand	16:1
France	16:1
Spain	18:1
Italy	19:1
Canada	21:1
Australia	22:1
Netherlands	22:1
Britain	25:1
Mexico	45:1
Argentina	48:1
South Africa	51:1
U.S.	365:1

### Tax Breaks for the Super-Rich

You know the oligarchy is rolling along when it wins enormous tax breaks during good times and bad, under Democrats and Republicans. This shows up in two important ways. First, we see a decline in the top marginal tax rate from 91% during the Eisenhower years down to 35% today. But what matters even more is the 15% marginal rate on capital gains and similar kinds of income. That's how Mitt Romney gets to pay only 13.9% of his massive income in taxes. The effective tax rate on the rich (after all deductions) has been plummeting no matter which party holds office. ...

### Crumbling Social and Physical Infrastructure

When you're a financial oligarch, you [might] live in your gated community, you send your kids to private schools, you go to your own expensive healthcare providers, and [might even] travel on your private jet ... [You probably don't have the basis of understanding what Michael Harrington's once labeled The Other America. How can you: it is out of your orbit.] They may have no interest in funding public education. (In fact, the very profitable student loan market depends on rising education costs.) You would think that business leaders would want an educated workforce. But the real oligarchs don't care. They can get their workers from anywhere in the world.



What about the decay of our roads, bridges and public transportation? Doesn't business need that too? Productive enterprises do, but the financial elites [may not because they rely] almost entirely on a privately controlled electronic infrastructure. Cracked bridges don't matter.

Repairing our infrastructure is a multi-trillion dollar task. In the U.S., infrastructure is usually silent and forgotten -- until the power goes off, the ATM stops working or a neighborhood is consumed by fire. ... After a catastrophe, questions fly: How could this happen? Why wasn't the equipment upgraded? What if things keep falling apart?"<sup>3</sup>

1. With a few softening modifications and some images. Article source: [http://www.alternet.org/story/154884/10\\_ways\\_our\\_democracy\\_is\\_crumbling\\_around\\_us?](http://www.alternet.org/story/154884/10_ways_our_democracy_is_crumbling_around_us?)

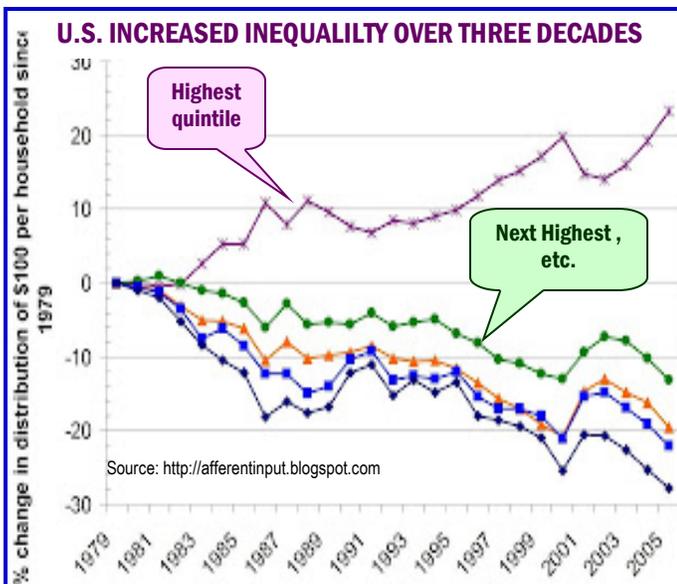
2. Source: M. Hennigan, "Executive Pay & Inequality in the Winner-take-all Society," *Finfacts Ireland*, August 7, 2005. Other sources: 325:1, 475:1.

3. Quote from <http://knowledge.wharton.upenn.edu/article.cfm?articleid=2627>

"Education" continued from Page 3

### FULLY READY FOR KINDERGARTEN?

Data in the *Washington Examiner* (1 April 2012) show the percentage of children who are assessed as "fully ready" to begin kindergarten. The composite figure is 77% for Prince George's County children, 81% for Montgomery County, and 83% for all of Maryland. So suburban Maryland is behind the state!? There are seven measures of readiness, and PG children are slightly behind their sister county's children in four. But they are ahead on scientific thinking and social studies, and tied on arts. Hum: does that mean the county should take advantage of this excellence by pushing some interdisciplinary work, e.g., science of the arts or the sociology of the arts, starting with kindergarten and in the following years? Let's take advantage of these strengths!



## THE CALVERT TRACK: SOME PARALLELS TO LANGLEY PARK?

Comments by Joseph Grikis of College Park\*

Mr. Grikis welcomes the end of the stagnation along Route 1. He especially likes the East Campus project at the University of Maryland (on the east side of Route 1) because "it represents smart growth, encourages pedestrian activity and leverages existing infrastructure." But he doesn't like the plans for the Calvert Tract in Riverdale Park because a considerable amount of new infrastructure is required, and for its success there must be heavy auto traffic—an estimated 20,000 weekday vehicle trips in an already congested area.

The Calvert Tract is currently undeveloped, Mr. Grikis points out, with lots of mature trees, and it is zoned for single-family housing. What's the future? Two million square feet of commercial and retail space plus multi-unit housing. Lots of people in a relatively small space leading to overload on schools and other facilities.

That's funny: the situation describes what has been imposed, in planning, for the Langley Park area. And the same objections pertain: hyper-density and stresses on infrastructure and schools. In addition, the deeply flawed plan for the Langley Park area calls for bulldozing affordable apartments that house perhaps 10,000 residents.

\*The full article appears in the Gazette (5 April 2012), <http://www.gazette.net/article/20120405/OPINION/704059818/1014/right-and-wrong-developments-for-route-1&template=gazette>.

## ET CETERA

**UNDEREMPLOYMENT:** The two painters, men perhaps in their 30s, were working in a Sears store painting a wall. A conversation revealed that they were from West Africa. One man was a bank manager in his home country, and the other had earned a Ph.D. in Switzerland in Agronomy. Both had been in the USA a few years.

They are two among many who take a significant step down the socioeconomic ladder to be in the USA. But their education and talent are being underused; they are underemployed.

Of course, there are hundreds of thousands of underemployed immigrants (and perhaps millions of natives in the same situation). There is the doctor who drives a taxicab, the lawyer who sells clothes at Penney's, and so many more. What a sad underuse of ability.

**SCARY:** Here's a scary AP dispatch: "Hardened in the streets and prisons of California and deported in the 1990s to the Central American countries where they were born, the members of the Mara Salvatrucha street gang swiftly grew into a force of heavily tattooed young men carrying out kidnappings, murder and extortion. Now, Guatemalan authorities say, they have begun to see new and disturbing evidence of an alliance between the Maras and another of the most feared criminal organizations in Latin America ... the Zetas, the brutal Mexican paramilitary drug cartel that has seized control of large parts of rural northern Guatemala in its campaign for mastery of drug-trafficking routes from South America to the United States." Do gang members wear a shirt announcing "American Trained"?



## Trabajadoras

### Challenges & Conditions of Latina Workers in the USA

Our title is copied from a just-out report by the Labor Council for Latin American Advancement. From the Forward: "The challenges are numerous but combining this report with our Trabajadoras campaign marks the beginning of a continued commitment to meet the needs of the Latina community with education, unionization and civic participation. As it has for generations, the union contract and the ballot box can uplift workers, provide access to greater opportunities and help us build a prosperous future for our children." And some findings:

♦"Low-wage jobs and a lack of stable financial opportunities have placed Latina women in a very vulnerable economic position where they experience one of the highest poverty rates of women in the labor force at 12.1%.

♦More than one-third (36%) of Latinas in the U.S. have less than a high school education. Latinas who have graduated from high school, however, are more likely than their male counterparts to pursue post-secondary degrees.

♦Unemployment rates for Latinas more than doubled between 2007 and 2010 from 6.1% to 12.3%.

The full report is at [http://www.lclaa.org/images/pdf/Trabajadoras\\_Report.pdf?ml=5&mlt=system&tmpl=component](http://www.lclaa.org/images/pdf/Trabajadoras_Report.pdf?ml=5&mlt=system&tmpl=component)

Trabajadoras\_Report.pdf?ml=5&mlt=system&tmpl=component

## ET CETERA

**AAUW RANKS GENDER GAPS IN STATES:** The American Association of University Women has issued a report on the average earnings of men and women in the states and DC, and calculated the women's per cent of the men's earnings. Maryland comes out well.

The highest earnings ratio is for DC, 91%, followed by Vermont and California at 84% and Nevada, New York, and Maryland at 83%. Those backward people in Virginia scored only 79%. Want to go to places where women are quite unequal in the job market? Try Wyoming, 64%; Louisiana, 67%; and Utah, 67%. Data source and text at : [advocacy@aauw.org](mailto:advocacy@aauw.org).

**HUD'S LANGUAGES:** The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development now has the HUD Language Line, a telephone language service pilot that will offer live, one-on-one interpretation services in more than 175 languages. It's accessible throughout the country. When a non-English-speaking person contacts HUD, the staffer who takes the call will then contact the Language Line and speak with a live operator, who will connect the caller and HUD staff person with an interpreter who speaks the caller's language.

**HEALTH RANKINGS:** The organization [countyhealthrankings.org](http://countyhealthrankings.org) ranks counties in the USA on a variety of health indicators. Among Maryland counties, PG is 14th for morbidity and 17th for mortality. The usefulness of these rankings? Don't know. We do know that the Langley Park area is underserved.

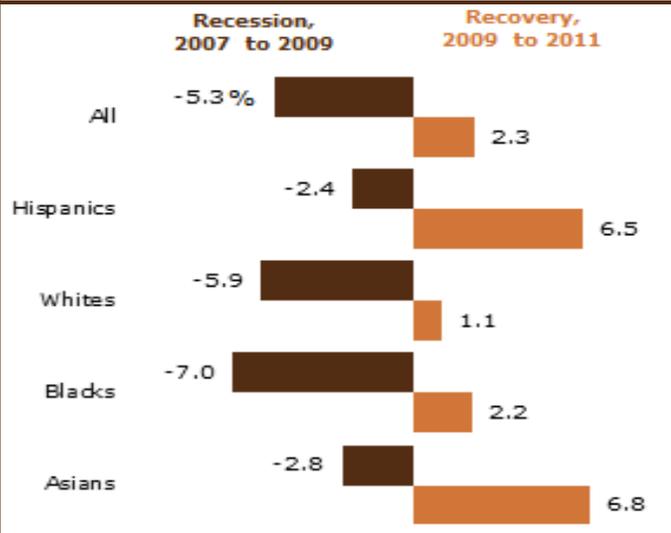
**SERVICES OF COVENANT PLACE:** This organization now offers Drug and Alcohol Services in addition to our Anger/Aggression Management, Domestic Violence, and Responsible Fatherhood Parenting Programs. Covenant Place is a Maryland State Certified and Court Approved provider. For more information, call 301 577-7307. Web site: [www.alphaprojectmd.org](http://www.alphaprojectmd.org).



## LATINO/AS & ASIANS RECOVER BETTER

Percent Change in Employment in Recession & Recovery

The Pew Hispanic Center has looked at the job loses and gains during and after the Great Recession, and it is clear that there are differences among groups. Hit hardest by the recession were Euros and Blacks, and they also have recovered the more modestly. Surprise: The least impacted by the recession were Latino/as, and they have had a strong recovery. Perhaps some of the Latino/a recovery strength is due to sampling. Many undocumented immigrants are not easily counted.



There are other surprises in the Pew report. Foreign-born workers were not hit as hard as native born workers, and their recovery has been more substantial.

One possible explanation for the ethnic/racial differences as well as the foreign/native difference is age. Latino/as and Asians are on average younger than Euros and Blacks, and the foreign-born are on average younger than the native-born.

Gender is also a factor: men's employment decline was much greater during the recession, and yet they bounced back more substantially (3.5%) than did females (0.9%). Is women's employment more discretionary?

Source: <http://www.pewhispanic.org/2012/03/21/the-demographics-of-the-jobs-recovery/>

## OPPORTUNITY

### FOR MIDDLE SCHOOL STUDENTS

**Young Scholars Discovery** "welcomes rising eighth and ninth grade middle school students to an extraordinary learning opportunity at the University of Maryland. For



two challenging weeks, Discovery nurtures academically talented students who share similar interests, abilities, and goals. Discovery scholars explore new ideas, acquire skills and knowledge, and learn about career opportunities.

Innovative faculty provide dynamic instruction and encourage interactive problem solving. This summer, discover, explore, grow, and learn about university life at Maryland with Young Scholars Discovery!" For information, go to this web address:

<http://www.oes.umd.edu/index.php?slab=young-scholars-discovery>.

## UNDOCUMENTED WORKERS HURT THE AUTHORIZED BY ABOUT \$56 A YEAR

Federal Reserve researcher Julie Hotchkiss has studied with some precision the impact of undocumented workers on salaries. In the state of Georgia, she finds that the annual impact is about \$56 a year. That's a loss, but not the significant one that is asserted (often without evidence) by the anti-folks.

"What may be a surprise," writes Hotchkiss, "is there are two sectors in which workers actually earn a premium ... if their employers hire undocumented workers." Those industry sectors are retail trade, where documented laborers could earn \$36 more per year, and leisure and hospitality, where the premium effect is about \$156 per year. How can that be? One thought is that language skills are especially important in these sectors. Her video on this matter is at <http://www2.timesdispatch.com/business/2012/apr/11/unauthorized-immigrants-and-the-us-eco-13560-vi-36570>.

## LEARN ENGLISH! AND/OR SPANISH! AND/OR FRENCH! AND/OR MANDERIN AND/OR ET CETERA!

In the *New York Times* (17 March 2012), Yudhijit Bhattacharjee writes: "Speaking two languages rather than just one has obvious practical benefits in an increasingly globalized world. But in recent years, scientists have begun to show that the advantages of bilingualism are even more fundamental than being able to converse with a wider range of people. Being bilingual, it turns out, makes you smarter. It can have a profound effect on your brain, improving cognitive skills not related to language and even shielding against dementia in old age. ...

"There is ample evidence that in a bilingual's brain both language systems are active even when he is using only one language, thus creating situations in which one system obstructs the other. But this interference, researchers are finding out, isn't so much a handicap as a blessing in disguise. It forces the brain to resolve internal conflict, giving the mind a workout that strengthens its cognitive muscles. Bilinguals, for instance, seem to be more adept than monolinguals at solving certain kinds of mental puzzles."

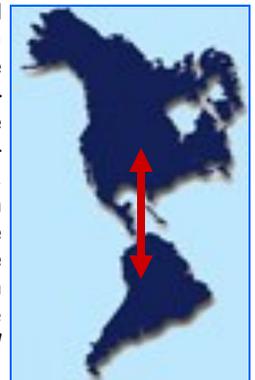
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## OPPORTUNITY

### FOR ENTREPRENEURS WITH "ETHNIC LINKS" TO LATIN AMERICAN COUNTRIES

President Obama just announced that more than \$250 million in grants and loan guarantees will be available for "diaspora entrepreneurs"—made in part through the Overseas Private Investment Corporation—as part of the program. "A lot of the countries of the region are on the rise," he said. "They've got more money to spend and we want them spending money on American-made goods." For more information, go to <http://www.opic.gov>.



## LUCKY TO LIVE IN SAFE LANGLEY PARK

The headlines shocked: five murders and seven others wounded after a bloody weekend in the county. Saddest of the murders might be the 83-year-old grandparent shot to death by her 32-year-old granddaughter in District Heights. The other weekend violence was in Landover, Capitol Heights, Hyattsville, Lewisdale, Suitland, Temple Hills, Accokeek, and Hillcrest Heights.



Reading the weekly crime reports (issued before the weekend shootings) makes one realize that Langley Park is comparatively safe. For instance, in Police District 1: Assault, 6700 block New Hampshire Ave., 4:46 p.m.; Assault, 5800

block Riggs Road, 8:28 p.m.; Assault with a weapon, 8300 block Rosette Lane, 8:04 p.m.; Assault, 5200 block 85th Ave., 4:46 p.m.; Assault, 8600 block Baltimore Ave., 2:37 a.m.; Assault, 3000 block Hospital Drive, 1:30 p.m.

From January 1 through March this year, none of the murders committed in the county was located in our neighborhood.

One email writer states: "High homicide rate ... many under-achieving public K-12 schools ... high home foreclosure rates ... disintegrating family structures and supports ... etc. But, according to slots and gambling supporters, lobbyists, county and state politicians and other snake-oil salespersons, we have no need to worry because making Prince George's a Gambling Mecca will solve most - or many - of these problems. Really?"

No murders and no assaults in Langley Park! So tell your friends who live in such dangerous areas as Adelphi, College Park, Takoma Park, and Lewisdale to move quickly to the safety of Langley Park. Of course, we're half kidding: There is some crime in Langley Park. But the situation is certainly not as grim as the picture some paranoid commentators draw of the neighborhood. Reputations are hard to reverse, alas.

Of course, participants in Action Langley Park do care about happenings throughout the county. And the murders deserve special caring. What have our high schools done to make young people aware of alternatives to violence, including murder? Do all high schools have conflict resolution classes and workshops? If not, that might be a good step forward.

### Who Cares? So What?

We should care! For instance, violence has been associated with school performance—and school performance now points to problems when the young people become adults and move into positions that may well impact us.

In a new book published late last year, *Whither Opportunity?*, there is this statement: "There are many ways that rising inequality is undermining the ability of schools to provide children with an equal chance at academic and economic success."

In one of the book's chapters, Sociologist David Harding found that high levels of neighborhood violence

*"Lucky" continued in next column*

## THROWBACK

So Senator Rubio and former governor Romney support a bill that would allow some young undocumented men and women to stay in the USA legally but without an opportunity to gain citizenship. That's nice. But didn't we have such an arrangement a century and a half ago: Work in the USA legally but without a chance to participate in our democratic process as a citizen? Wasn't it called slavery? And there were indentured servants too. Perhaps Rubio and Romney were trying to demonstrate their knowledge of history.

## ET CETERA

**VISITING DIFFICULTIES:** A Bollywood star comments after being delayed by immigration officials at a New York airport when he was heading to Yale U. to lecture: "Whenever I start feeling too arrogant about myself, I always make a trip to America. The immigration guys kick the star out of stardom." In fact, many scholars and artists from other countries have either had visa issuance long delayed or other difficulties such as experienced by the Bollywood star. Not too long ago, a festival planned for Brownsville, Texas, was damaged by long visa delays. It's about time that our government works to help foreign scholars and artists, not to make the visit difficult.



**SAN DIEGO ACTIVISM:** An outcropping of the Occupy San Diego movement called "Ocupenmos El Barrio" recently held a march in support of immigrant workers and immigration reform. A release: "President Obama's continued attack on the immigrant community has led to over 400,000 deportations in 2011 alone, thus resulting in the separation of families and promotion of harsh and discriminatory laws in Arizona, Alabama, Georgia and other states. We call for an end to a climate of fear and scapegoating of immigrant communities." (Source, *The San Diego Union-Tribune*, 13 April 2012) Is Obama trying to prove he's a tough guy? That doesn't seem to help.

*"Lucky" continued from previous column*

may have a detrimental effect on high school graduation rates. (Probably both violence and fear of violence are factors.) He reports that living in neighborhoods with high rates of violence was associated with significantly lower chances of graduation regardless of family structure, income, and language spoken in the household.

David Kirk and Robert Sampson, in another chapter, show that teacher commitment, parental involvement, and student achievement in schools in high-crime neighborhoods all tend to be low. So we should find ways to enhance teacher commitment. (Special bonuses? Extra help?) As for parent involvement, having skilled parent liaisons in all schools drawing from low-income neighborhoods—immigrant and otherwise—is an obvious step to be taken by school systems—clearly including PGCPs.



HOT TIPS FROM THE DESK OF

## SENATOR VICTOR RAMIREZ

### The Community Foundation for Prince George's County Civic Leadership Awards

Senator Ramirez reports that he is one of five (5) people honored at the Civic Leadership Awards Dinner held by The Community Foundation for Prince George's County in early April. The dinner also raised money for The Community Foundation so it can continue to support non-profits in the area. Congratulations, Victor!



### Student Transfer Deadline

URGENT! Parents of students attending a Prince George's County Public School have until April 20, 2012 to submit a student transfer request for the 2012-2013 school year. To find the necessary request forms and more information on schools eligible to receive transfer students, go to <http://www1.pgcps.org/studentrecordsandtransfers/>.

### Sign up for Senate Scholarship!

URGENT! Do you know a high school senior or a college student from our community that is enrolled in a Maryland institute of higher education? Let them know they may be eligible for a Maryland State Senatorial Scholarship. The student must be a District 47 resident and attend or expect to attend a college or university in Maryland in the fall of 2012. Scholarships can be used for either undergraduate or graduate study. Access the application and instructions here: [http://www.victoramirez.com/objects/pdf/2012\\_Application.pdf](http://www.victoramirez.com/objects/pdf/2012_Application.pdf). The application and all supporting documents are due on April 27, 2012.

Thanks, Victor.

## Homes in Prince George's County Have Lost 52% of Their Value since the Peak in 2006



According to a report in the *Washington Post* (4 March 2012), fully 52% of county homeowners in January of this year were "below water," that is, they owed more on their house than the house was worth. Prince George's County leads the state in foreclosures. The median sale price in the county went from \$330k in 2006 to \$160k at the end of last year.

Driving around the county provides plenty of evidence of the challenge: the foreclosure and for sale signs are in many neighborhoods. Let's hope for change!

## OPPORTUNITY WITH CASA

CASA de Maryland is a host site for Public Allies (see <http://www.publicallies.org/site/c.liKUL3PNLvF/b.5106423/k.BD7E/Home.htm>), and is actively recruiting bilingual candidates. "Folks can apply directly to the program or feel free to contact Elizabeth Alex directly at [ealex@casamd.org](mailto:ealex@casamd.org) for more information about the program in general and CASA's position specifically. This is a great program for folks who may be interested in working in a non-profit or government services environment, and also an excellent year of skill building and networking." Check it out!

## 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 [actionlangleypark@yahoo.com](mailto:actionlangleypark@yahoo.com).

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

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

**April 21—Kids World Cinema** at the Mexican Cultural Institute, 2-4 p.m. 2829 16th St. NW. 202 728-1628.

**April 21—Free Community Dinner & Food Distribution** at St. Michael and All Angels Church, 8501 New Hampshire Ave. in upper Langley Park. From 5 to 6:30 p.m. This is a regular event on the third Saturday of the month. For information, call 301 434-4646.

**April 21—First time homebuyer class** taught by SEED. \$49 in advance. For information, call 240-206-6704 or email [whalljr@seedinc.org](mailto:whalljr@seedinc.org).

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

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

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

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

**April 28-29—Science and Engineering Festival:** "Our mission is to re-invigorate the interest of our nation's youth in science, technology, engineering and math." It's free! In DC. Details at: <http://www.usasciencefestival.org>.

**May 3, 4, 5—Physics is Phun**, in the physics department, University of Maryland: Great Physics Demonstrations. 7:30-8:30 p.m. Information: 301 405.5994.

**May 5—Arts on the Block** open house, noon to 4 p.m. at 11501 Georgia Ave., Suite 104. Artwork and more.

**May 6—Langley Park Day 2012** from noon to 4 p.m. at the Langley Park Community Center. There will be music

and dance performances; a major health fair; food and craft vendors; children's art and game activities; face painting, and more. On Cinco de Mayo weekend!! If you'd like to contribute to this event, including interpretation, face painting, clowning, giving advice as a nurse, etc., please contact ALP at [actionlangleypark@yahoo.com](mailto:actionlangleypark@yahoo.com).

