

Barrio de Langley Park

Neighborhood Planning Newsletter Published by Action Langley Park
Issue #238, May-June 2012

Celebration 2012

Mis Quince Años



The Night of May 19th, 2012

What a wonderful group of lovely young women entered into adulthood by celebrating quinceañeros—celebrating being fifteen years old! They did so on a Saturday night with the enthusiastic support of more than one hundred family members, friends, and special guests.

Congratulations to Veronica, Cabriella, Estephany, Tania, Jasmine, Maria, Lorena, Luzbet, Jacqueline, Lourdes, Natalee, Brenda, and Cynthia! They were beautiful and their gowns were spectacular. They were beautiful as they entered then danced the waltz. And their smiles warmed the night.

Organizing committee chair Lourdes Sulc and members of the committee including Nydia Ocasio, Alexandra Teaff, and six others did a great job. Thanks to the mentors and instructors who helped the young women prepare for this special day. Thanks to MNCPPC-PG and especially the staffs of the Langley Park and Vansville Community Centers. And thanks to the business and individual sponsors who made possible the space and gowns and food and balloons and more.

BLP does not have the room or the quality photos to present all thirteen young women's photographs. Hopefully, the photos we print here will provide the reader with a sense of the event.

More "Quince" on Page 2



ACTION LANGLEY PARK CALLS FOR FACILITIES! SPACES!

The Neighborhood Initiative afternoon meeting on 24 May 2012 explored ways to help the residents and business people of the Langley Park area. Documents were distributed calling for fixing poorly maintained buildings, replacing parking signs, adding police bicycle patrols, filling potholes, and much more. Let's hope big issues are tackled, for instance public facilities and public spaces.

Indoors

Langley Park is "blessed" with a small old schoolhouse built more than a half-century ago (now the Community Center) and a not-quite-as-old new schoolhouse built a bit less than a half-century ago. Both are far from adequate facilities for their current uses, and if Langley Park is to have the needed community facilities, something must be done. There are several options that were discussed at the ALP evening meeting on 24 May 2012:

1. Provide the neighborhood with the full use of the Community Center by removing administrative offices and the Senior Center. This would double the space for neighborhood residents.
2. Expand the current facilities, e.g., by adding a floor to the Community Center and/or connecting the two buildings to include multi-use rooms.
3. Purchase or lease La Union and convert it into a community facility with space for a clinic, job-training, local information, and much more.
4. Tear down the old buildings and construct a state-of-the-art school + community facility with a small outdoor space for neighborhood socializing and activities. This might be feasible if the resources of MNCPPC and PGCPs plus the Archdiocese were combined. (The Archdiocese had planned to fund the Mother Teresa Center where the Boys and Girls Club now stands, but this was blocked by new B&G Club leadership.)

Outdoors

Many of the people who live in and near Langley Park like to spend outdoor time in three ways:

1. Many people from Latin countries and elsewhere enjoy socializing and perhaps listening to performances in plazas. Alas, there is no plaza in the neighborhood. But there are at least two possibilities: using outdoor space around the Community Center or Elementary School; or developing a plaza at the north end of the Langley Park Plaza parking lot (just east of the police substation). A planning project a few years ago was developed for the latter option, and it will be shared with Neighborhood Initiative working group members.
2. The international sport loved in Latin countries and elsewhere is futbol—or what many in the USA call soccer. And yet there is currently no adequate soccer field in

"Facilities" continued on Page 3

IMMIGRATION AND THE CONSTITUTION

Anthony Gregory writes in the *Huffington Post* (18 May 2012): "Can we really embrace amnesty and open borders? Those who cherish the Constitution ought to. Despite what 'original intent' conservatives might want to believe, the federal government hardly regulated immigration at all until the blatantly racist Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882, and more generally with the Immigration Control Act of 1924, the culmination of years of protectionist and nativist agitation during the Progressive Era. The U.S. Constitution does not even explicitly grant plenary border control powers to Congress, although matters of citizenship are surely a constitutional function of the federal government. Barring immigrants from privileges of citizenship is one thing; criminalizing them for moving and simply being here is entirely different.



"Such states as Arizona and Alabama, on the other hand, have responded to illegal immigration by empowering police to demand people's papers if their skin is the wrong color. Surely the kind of society these policies portend is worse than anything immigrants themselves are capable of."

Reagan

The writer quotes Ronald Reagan: "I think the time has come that the United States and... our neighbor to our South should have a better understanding and relationship than we've ever had... Rather than... talking about putting up a fence, why don't we work out some recognition of our mutual problems, make it possible for them to come here legally with a work permit... and open the border both ways..."

And: "I believe in the idea of amnesty for those who have put down roots and lived here even though some time back they may have entered illegally."

Bush and Luger

As for George W. Bush: "The problem has to be solved. We have... made illegal some kinds of labor I'd like to see legal... We're creating a whole society of really honorable, decent, family-loving people who are in violation of the law... These are good people, strong people."

The Grand Old Party (the GOP - the Republicans) is now dead. Proof? Ask Senator Richard Luger. And the new party, the T-Party, has substituted itself. We will miss Senator Luger, and we miss former senators Rockefeller and Dole and Spector and others who understood the requisites of democracy.

More "Quince"



After the very young girls entered carrying flowers, more of the young women in the spotlight entered the main room. Then there were speeches of praise and inspiration, dancing, dinner, and more dancing. A very good celebration. Welcome, new adults!

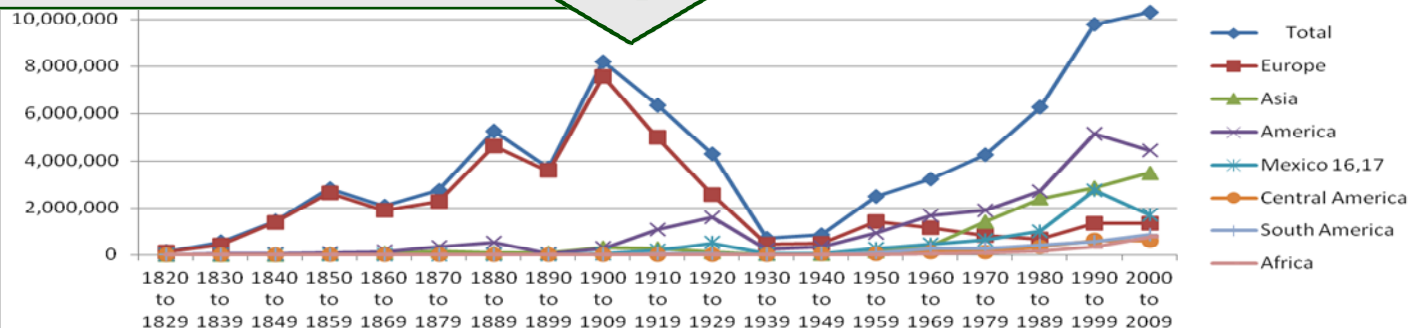


NOTES

- ◆The event was covered by the *Washington Post* and other media. The *Post* article should be out about now.
- ◆Want to say "thanks" to the supporting restaurants? Then have a meal or slice of cake at Leyla's Café, La Flor de Mayo Bakery, Pollo Oro, and La Chiquita.

PERSONS OBTAINING LEGAL PERMANENT RESIDENT STATUS BY REGION AND LAST REGIONAL RESIDENCE: FISCAL YEARS 1820 TO 2009. IMMIGRATION HAS CHANGED FROM ALMOST ALL EUROPEANS TO AMERICAS IN THE LEAD (MAJORITY FROM MEXICO) AND A STEADY RISE FROM ASIA. WONDERFUL DIVERSITY!

The Changing of the USA

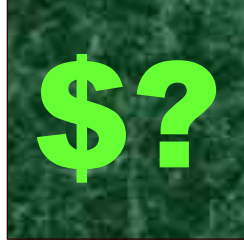


The Purple Line

Where's the Money?

The May 20th headline in the *Washington Post* sent a chill through many advocates of the Purple Line: "Purple Line funding uncertain with failure of Maryland gas tax hike". So it's the Suburban Maryland light-rail line and/or the Baltimore light-rail line or neither.

From the *Post*: "The General Assembly's recent rejection of the governor's proposed gas tax hike makes it increasingly likely that the state will have to choose to build one of the lines before the other, state and local transportation officials say. With no new tax revenue dedicated to transportation, finding the money for even one of the light-rail lines will be difficult, the officials say."



So the significant decline in gas tax revenue (decline because of the inflation over the past twenty years when the tax was last raised) will not be compensated by some tax increase, and Maryland—as well as the USA—will continue its infrastructure decline because repairs are not made and new infrastructure needed because of population increases (and pollution increases) will not be built. Oh well, the federal government will come to the rescue. Oh really: with the harmful cutting taking place in most budget sectors?

Politics at the state and national levels appear to be making jurisdictions less competitive internationally. We may all pay the price. Should we all learn Mandarin?

"Facilities" continued from Page 1

Langley Park. There was a marginally adequate one behind the elementary school, but that has been destroyed by installing some play equipment. The play equipment should be removed, and the area should be redeveloped as an adequate soccer field.



Outdoor Market in Mexico City

3. Outdoor markets are for fruits, vegetables, household goods, and more. They can be found in most Latin neighborhoods. Currently, there is a Wednesday afternoon market, Crossroads Farmers' Market, at the north edge of Takoma Park; it is convenient for residents of Langley Park. There is need and demand for more. Indeed, the Neighborhood Initiative identified as a goal "Identify potential 'open air' market sites."

There are such sites in the Langley Park Plaza parking lot and in the parking spaces of the elementary school and community center. Perhaps the Crossroads people would consider opening a second site, and to what is currently offered could be added some household goods and clothing.

ALP thinks the Neighborhood Initiative is off to a good start, but to be successful in ways the residents and businesspeople can understand and appreciate, some major moving and shaking must be done.

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE → DEATH

Yes, domestic violence can lead to death. Too often. The deaths led to the county to form a Domestic Violence Fatality Review Team in 2007. What have they concluded over the past five years? Here is a very small portion of a recent report.*

Law enforcement officers are usually the first responders to calls for service that involve domestic violence. All too often, however, the call for service identifies some other problem as the reason for the call, such as trespass or harassment, rather than domestic violence. It is imperative, therefore, that law enforcement officers investigate and properly identify the underlying domestic violence problem in order to respond appropriately. In order to do this, law enforcement officers need specialized training to identify domestic violence situations, interviewing alleged victims and perpetrators, and collecting evidence for possible prosecution.



Effective interventions include active investigation of the domestic violence, providing referrals to victims of community resources and services, and arrest where appropriate. Similarly, prosecution of domestic violence crimes that results in any "intrusive" consequence for the perpetrator, such as jail, a work release sentence, enhanced probation supervision, or a requirement for the perpetrator to attend an abuser intervention program, results in decreased domestic violence recidivism. Consequently, the burden rests on first responders to identify domestic violence crimes accurately and to collect evidence that best insures successful prosecutions.

There's too much domestic violence in the Langley Park area. Let's implement the good ideas.

*The full report is now available at <http://www.hruth.org/files/library/FRTReportandRecommendations2012.pdf>

Housing and Schools: The Big Gap

"Nationwide, the average low-income student attends a school that scores at the 42nd percentile on state exams, while the average middle/high-income student attends a school that scores at the 61st percentile on state exams. This *school* test-score gap is even wider between black and Latino students and white students. There is increasingly strong evidence ... that low-income students benefit from attending higher-scoring schools."

"Across the 100 largest metropolitan areas, housing costs an average of 2.4 times as much, or nearly \$11,000 more per year, near a high-scoring public school than near a low-scoring public school. This *housing cost gap* reflects that home values are \$205,000 higher on average in the neighborhoods of high-scoring versus low-scoring schools. Near high-scoring schools, typical homes have 1.5 additional rooms and the share of housing units that are rented is roughly 30 percentage points lower than in neighborhoods near low-scoring schools." (<http://www.brookings.edu>) Did anyone think that wealth was not a factor in housing options and school performance? Is zoning a culprit?

NEWS AND NOTES

THE DANGERS OF OBESITY

According to the Center for Disease Control, 39.1% of Latino adults are considered obese, defined as having a body mass index (BMI) of 30 or greater based on height and weight. The CDC's recommended BMI for healthy living is between 18 and 25. Obesity is also an epidemic among Latino children, with 14.8% of Latino infants being overweight. The Latino



obesity issue is so pressing in the United States that First Lady Michelle Obama has incorporated efforts into her existing *Let's Move!* campaign by ensuring Spanish-language outreach of the campaign. "The Hispanic community faces unique challenges," says Mrs. Obama. "While one in three kids in America is overweight or obese, we know that in [the] Hispanic community, it's nearly two in five." Two in five!!!

LEGALIZING UNDOCUMENTED WORKERS

A coalition of California lawmakers and ranchers is trying to build support for a state bill that would grant work permits to thousands of undocumented immigrants already working in the state. Phil Martin, a UC Davis economist, predicted that if the measure becomes law, and if the U.S. Supreme Court upholds Arizona's tough law, the measure would probably pass judicial review as a states' rights issue. "If the Supreme Court says states can make some of their own policies—if it upholds that—I would expect you would see not just the enforcement stuff, but this kind of law as well." Hum: Now that Sudan has divided, maybe the anti-immigrant Confederacy (plus Arizona) can be reawakened and the residual USA can be immigrant-friendly again.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Our beloved Congressmen and Congresswomen, despite such local members as Donna Edwards and Chris Van Hollen, seem to be going insane. It just voted to cut the budget for the Census such that the American Community Survey and the Economic Census will not be able to continue, and the House Judiciary Committee voted to strip key provisions of the Violence Against Women Act. Seemingly, the no-nothings and anti-women representatives are in charge. Anyone scared about the future?

DON'T DRIVE AND TEXT



The AT&T DriveMode is an app(lication) that auto-responds to any incoming texts with a message that says it will reply when it is safe. It silences incoming text noises and sends calls to voicemail storage, minimizing the temptation to respond. The company's goal is to

send a simple message to anyone who considers texting while driving: it can wait. Let's use it and tell teens they must use it.

GUN REGISTRY

Those convicted of gun-related crimes may think twice before committing them again, as Prince George's County officials are looking to create a gun offender registry to track convicts and potentially hamper gun violence. The County Council is considered a proposal that calls for convicted gun offenders to be registered in a database so authorities can easily track their whereabouts. (*Gazette*, 17 May 2012) Good.

CUT SERVICES SEVERELY

One emailer writes: "Remember in November 2012 and 2014: Many of our legislators will be up for reelection in the next two years. That's why they did the tax increases this year; they think we will forget. In 2014, God willing, I'll be standing on highways with signs to remind the voters where they live." The writer apparently thinks that government services don't need to be funded. Don't fix the roads, don't provide health care for the poor. Don't worry if class sizes in schools soar. And of course don't feel that you're part of a community where the haves help the have-nots. Do unto others....

GET A FREE CARBON MONOXIDE ALARM

A PG Fire Department spokesperson reports that a hotline has been set up for residents to call for an alarm that detects dangerous levels of carbon monoxide. Call 301-864-7233 or buy one. It might save a life.

TEACHERS' PAY

A starting teacher in Prince George's County makes about \$1,300 less than she would in Montgomery County. Does that lead to a brain drain? It's hard to imagine a job change for just over \$1k. Maybe. But our interviews with principals and teachers leads us to believe that it is a combination of money, resources for the school and classroom, and the degree of challenges posed by many of the students. It is a lot easier to teach students whose parents know how to support their children in school than those who keep their distance from the schools and their children's homework. So a broader view of teacher migration is surely called for—and counteraction continued.

LEGAL REPRESENTATION

According to a new report by the American Immigration Council's Immigration Policy Center, nearly half of all immigrants in removal proceedings during 2011 were without legal representation. This includes immigrants with compelling circumstances as well as those in categories identified by ICE as "low priority" for enforcement. The system is not working! Was it intended to work?

"Unlike immigrants who have legal representation, *pro se* immigrants* do not have access to information specifically directed at them explaining the exercise of prosecutorial discretion, how to obtain it, or what it means." This compounds the serious problem that most *pro se* immigrants do not have access to information about what relief might be available to them. "Moreover, whether or not they are aware of possible options for relief, they may be unaware of the implications of either accepting or foregoing an offer of prosecutorial discretion from ICE. Underlying all of these deficiencies is a fundamental inequity: immigrants who cannot hire or find scarce *pro bono* attorneys are not entitled to government-provided representation in a deportation process that has devastating consequences, including separation from family for decades or forever." (Joan Friedland, *Falling Through the Cracks*, 2012) So much for fairness.

Get on that boat!



**Pro se* legal representation means advocating on one's own behalf before a court, rather than being represented by a lawyer. This often occurs with immigrants who do not know their options. And of course self-representation is usually not well informed.

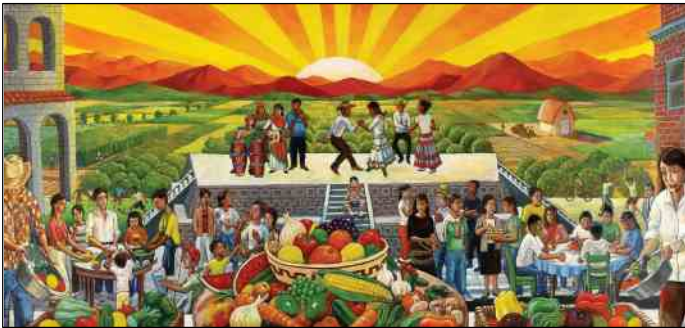
A MURAL FOR LANGLEY PARK?

There are too many blank uninteresting walls in Langley Park. (And elsewhere!) Especially disappointing is the large blank wall in the Langley Park Plaza facing west. (Inside among other businesses is a large furniture store—and above it is a large empty third floor.)



How about locating a mural there? Yes, it does cost money, but surely it would increase the value of the mall and add something of pride to the neighborhood. (Langley Park Day was launched to enhance local pride while offering entertainment and services.) Maybe the new Neighborhood Initiative would like to help with fund-raising.

Displayed here are two colorful Latino-themed murals that are in California. Something similar in Langley Park? Let's not let California be ahead of Maryland, of Langley Park!



And while we're working to create an even better international neighborhood, how about creating a mini-plaza in front of the mural-to-be? It might have a small performance stand, benches, greenery, and other elements that make residents feel that they have been cut off from one of their dual identities. A plan for a plaza-like area adjacent to the police sub-station was developed by a team of University of Maryland researchers. Maybe the Neighborhood Initiative team should revisit that plan.

WHAT AND WHEN



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

May 30: The Crossroads Farmers Market continues its weekly provision of good things to eat (at the market or after taking them home) while the music plays on. The market is near the southwest corner of University Blvd. and New Hampshire Avenue—



in the back parking lot of 7676 New Hampshire Avenue.

June 3: The Colours 20th Anniversary Party at Old Bowie Town Grill. This event is being postponed out of respect for the loss of a former Colours student Anastacia Smith on 18 May in a car accident.

June 16: 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.

August 7: National Night Out. In Langley Park, the Community Center is planning an indoor afternoon [not quite night!] event with a focus on children—including a film and ice cream. Some good bilingual police officers are likely to join the fun. Lourdes is the host.

November 10: Health Check at the LP Community Center. There will be a wide range of health screenings plus information and counseling. Is your heart okay? Are you carrying HIV? How's your lung strength? Any problems with oral health? (See two dentists at work in the photo.) Et cetera!



Stop the Invasion! They Are Coming! They Are Here! Help!!

It may be that "stop the invasion" is foremost in the minds of many judges, including those who sit on the Supreme Court. And with that in mind, would it be a surprise if the courts ruled against the human rights of immigrants, with or without documents? Keith Cunningham Parmeter has studied this issue, and his report (*Fordham Law Review*, v. 79 no. 9, 2012) is fascinating and worrisome.

"Metaphors tell the story of immigration law. Throughout its immigration jurisprudence, the U.S. Supreme Court has employed rich metaphoric language to describe immigrants attacking nations and aliens flooding communities. This Article applies research in cognitive linguistics to critically evaluate the metaphoric construction of immigrants in the law. Three conceptual metaphors dominate legal texts: IMMIGRANTS ARE ALIENS, IMMIGRATION IS A FLOOD, and IMMIGRATION IS AN INVASION. In order to gauge the prevalence of these metaphors, the [author] engages in a textual analysis of modern Supreme Court opinions and presents original empirical data on the incidence of alienage terminology in federal court decisions. [E.g., 'Alien' (88%), 'Immigrant' (12%) The [report] explains how immigration metaphors influence not only judicial outcomes, but also social discourse and the broader debate over immigration reform. ...

"The [author] concludes by proposing an oppositional metaphoric framework based on the concepts of migration and economic sanctuary. These metaphors describe immigration in terms of movement, work, and community, in contrast to existing legal metaphors that describe immigration in terms of danger, attack, and criminality. Thus, while today's immigration metaphors signify a loss of economic security and cultural hegemony, the proposed terms emphasize immigrants' economic contributions and potential for social belonging." Let's watch our language!