The Wages of Fear

It is clear, as an LA Times writer put it (18 June 2008), "The Bush administration has sharply ratcheted up prosecutions of illegal immigrants along the U.S.-Mexico border in the last year. The prosecutions are among the most visible steps in a larger effort that includes work-site raids, increased border patrols and the use of technology and fences." The ratcheting is also taking place nearby as Virginia jurisdictions pass anti-immigrant laws that at least to some observers appear to be hateful. In Frederick County, Maryland, the sheriff has been working with Federal officials "to identify and deport illegal immigrants" (Washington Post, 6 May 2008). And last Saturday, a score of hate-immigrants people showed up at the Casa de Maryland facility on University Blvd. to protest. (See the WJLA video: http://www.wjla.com/news/stories/0608/530162_video.html?ref=newsstory)

What impact has the ratcheting had on immigrant residents of Langley Park and its nearby neighborhoods? At a recent meeting of representatives of a variety of local servicing organizations, that question was raised. The clear answer was that there has been a significant increase of fear — of course among the undocumented, but also among green card holders and even citizens. (Profiling is a factor.)

What are the consequences of the fears? They are serious; for instance, residents are less inclined to report crimes or to go for needed health care. (A recent study of workplace injuries discovered that injuries of immigrants were significantly underreported.) Immigrants are also less likely to complain to apartment managers about a defect in their unit. As one observer put it, "People put up with absolutely ghastly living conditions and feel they can't complain in this security-conscious world." And parents avoid going to school to talk with teachers or counselors. There were even a few residents who reported that they did not attend Langley Park Day 2008 because they saw police officers at the site.

A local social worker suggested that an increasing number of immigrants feel that they are imprisoned. They stay in their apartment except when it's absolutely necessary to go out. Of course, this is a national situation. For instance, MSNBC reports from Washington state (6 June 2008): "Pedro Perez has not left Orcas Island in more than four months. Not for weekend trips with his family, not for cheaper groceries on the mainland, not for medical care—not for anything. He is afraid border agents will stop him and send him back to Mexico." In Virginia's Colonial Beach last year, a Cinco de Mayo festival was cancelled because many Latinos feared deportation if they showed up.

Hopefully, the new national administration and political leadership will be less inclined to practice the politics of paranoia. But a change won't take place without our voices.
SHORT TAKES

WORKERS’ RIGHTS LAW CLINIC

Unpaid wages? Employment discrimination? Other employment issues? Every Tuesday at 9 a.m. and every Thursday at 8 a.m., the Community Legal Services organization provides answers and other help with regard to employment issues. Legal experts will be on hand. There is a limit to the number of clients each day, so come early!

KIDS SWIM FREE

This summer, M-NCPPC’s popular FREE Youth ID Card allows free admission to any Department of Parks and Recreation pool in Prince George’s County to children and youth ages 6-17 on Fridays and Saturdays from 4 pm to closing. The program continues through Saturday, August 30. All M-NCPPPC pool policies remain in effect; children ages 6-14 require supervision by a paying adult while swimming, and ages 12-14 may swim on their own with advance authorization by a parent or guardian. The local pool is in Lane Manor Park. For information about the free ID or the programs, call 301-699. do it!

STILL CROSSING THE BORDER

According to recent research, the immigrant-want-to-be has a better than nine-in-ten chance of crossing into the USA via a port of entry using oral assertions and counterfeit identification, according to a new U.S. Government Accountability Office report. Wayne Cornelius, who heads a major UCSD research center focusing on immigration, states that the port of entry is “the most foolproof way of reducing the physical risk.”

“DEVELOPMENT”: CROSSROADS, FINAL REVIEW

The long first-stage planning process of giving stakeholders a chance to see what’s happening and even voice an opinion will come to an end on July 17 from 4 to 8 p.m. at the Langley Park Community Center. It is important for Langley Park’s residents and other neighborhood stakeholders to show up because some of the planning options being considered may be harmful. As but one example, it has been proposed to make University Blvd. adjacent to Langley Park one way, diverting the cars and trucks going the other way into a new highway cutting through the neighborhood! (See graphic.)

Seems crazy, but it has been seriously proposed by a planner working on the project (who presumably is paid for this displacement-enhancing and neighborhood-destroying ideal!).

“DEVELOPMENT”: AFFORDABLE HOUSING

This will be the big battle in coming months and years. Residents have been pushed out of Adams-Morgan, Mt. Pleasant, Petworth, and perhaps in the future Langley Park. The business-political partnership must make sure that affordable housing doesn’t disappear from Langley Park and its surrounding areas, but the temptations of money can be strong—as others have been seduced in the past. Inclusionary zoning policies can create incentives for or require developers to reserve a share of units in new developments for affordable housing. The planners are pushing for transit-oriented development. Good! But TOD can combine with affordable housing to maintain and/or create great neighborhoods. People who care for working class residents must partner with them to maintain and create affordability. Of course, the battle for affordability is more than local. In the June 3 issue of the Village Voice, we read about the battle to “save barrios … from the ice-cold developers.”

USEFUL READINGS

DAY LABORERS: Mary Kendall calls BLP’s attention to a UCLA web site on day laborers: http://daylaborinfo.org/default.aspx. From the site’s opening paragraph: “The Day Labor Research Institute consults with cities and counties, law enforcement, business, community, nonprofit organizations, and day laborers themselves to find solutions that fit each community, and conducts academic research into topics related to day laborers.”

INTERNATIONAL CONNECTIONS: “A Stream From Ipala: When Guatemalans Leave Their Beloved Pueblo for A Better Life, the Route Most Often Leads to Langley Park” by David Montgomery, published in the Washington Post (9 June 2008), provides rich insights into international connections. It’s at http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2008/06/08/AR2008060802101_pf.html. A paragraph: “Someone needs to write an ode to Langley Park …. There’s a secondhand Ellis Island quality to the place. The indoor fountain next to the Western Union and the dollar store on the ground floor of the former [ToysRUs] … could stand in for the Statue of Liberty. Here is where many of the new immigrants proudly pose for snapshots to be sent back home, proof of having arrived.”

WILL THIS CONTINUE: Unequal Democracy by Larry Bartels concludes: “Under Democratic presidents, poor families did slightly better than rich families (at least in proportional terms), producing a modest net decrease in income inequality; under Republican presidents, rich families did vastly better than poorer families, producing a considerable net increase in income inequality.” So the answer is to get rich?

PGCPS GETTING NEW H.Q.

No one likes to work in a shabby building (although many of us do—and so do children in some shabby county schools). The Board of Education has just approved a $36 million expenditure for its new building—in the face of a $14 million cut in school funds and a negative recommendation by schools chief Deasy. Let’s hope the decision was wise!

TICK TOCK

The Tick Tock liquor store is apparently responding to the concerns of some local residents and others related to crime and disorder. According to a BLP informant, the business will install strong lights and surveillance cameras around the building. That should deter some people from crime and make other people feel safer.

EUROPEAN UNION GETS HARSH

The USA is not the only country trying to develop policies towards immigrants that meet political requirements as well as economic needs. At times, the USA acts harshly; and now the EU is moving in the harsh direction. Help: the people of color are coming! The EU, led by legislators from the right, just announced a policy that permits governments to hold undocu-

“Short Takes” continued on page 3
From the available data, it's clear that a major effort is needed, the demography of the USA will be very different by mid-century. Maybe that's why the “Be White, Speak English” advocates are so afraid.

**CONSERVATIVES FOR OPEN BORDERS!?**

“Amidst outrage over illegal immigration, some self-identified conservatives who see a bright side to open borders have been speaking up. ‘These are economic migrants,’ said Jason Riley, a member of the Wall Street Journal editorial board, speaking at the Cato Institute. ‘We have the jobs. They need the work. Let them come legally.’ Riley is one of several conservatives who dissent from the movement as a whole on the issue of illegal immigration. He argued that there are substantial economic motives for legalizing aliens and [he] referred to border control as "Soviet-style central planning." (From townhall.com.)

**TRAFFIC CONGESTION**

According to a recently released report, the Washington DC area ranks fourth in amount of traffic congestion among the country’s urban areas. The areas that “defeated” us include (1) Los Angeles, (2) New York City, and (3) Chicago. So we’re in good company. If the researchers had gone to University Blvd. and New Hampshire Ave. on a weekend afternoon (or driven from Virginia to Maryland on a Friday afternoon), we surely would have come in first. But the solution is not building another highway through residential Langley Park. Rather, it’s much more public transportation.

**WHY NOT PROTECT WORKERS?**

At the annual meeting of the U.S. Conference of Mayors in Miami, Los Angeles Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa, Oakland Mayor Ron Dellums and Seattle Mayor Greg Nickels asked their fellow mayors to lobby the Federal government so that it reduces raids on businesses searching for illegal workers (which disrupts businesses and sometimes impairs local economies), and instead focuses on businesses that exploit immigrant and other workers, such as those that violate wage and safety laws. Might these three majors be joined by jurisdictional leaders in the Washington metro area?

**MAKING BABIES**

According to the CDC, the recent annual Latina birth rate was 83 babies per 1,000 women compared with 63 for African-Americans and 38 for European-Americans. All of these rates represent a significant drop since 1990. For instance, the African-American figure went from 113 to 63!

If we can safely project these rates into the future (a dangerous practice, to be sure), the demography of the USA will be very different by mid-century. Maybe that’s why the “Be White, Speak English” advocates are so afraid.

**COMPARATIVE BIRTHRATES**

Per 1,000 women

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Race</th>
<th>Birth Rate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
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<tr>
<td>Latina</td>
<td>83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black</td>
<td>63</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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**GRADUATING HIGH SCHOOL**

But Less Frequently

According to recent data published by Education Week (edweek.org), there is a fairly steady decline in graduation rates in Prince George’s County over the ten year 1995-2005 period, whereas in Maryland and overall in the USA, there has been an increase. (See graphic.)

So what? High school graduates earn higher annual incomes, commit fewer crimes, and have lower rates of substance abuse than those without a high school diploma. Of course, the causality of these relationships is in doubt. But encouraging students to stay in school is very unlikely to have a negative impact. (By encouraging is not meant saying, “Stay in school.”)

Rather, it means mounting the kinds of programs and offering the quality of classes that lead a young person to want to stay in school if at all possible.

Most of the dropping out appears to take place from the 9th to the 10th grades. For every 100 students in the 9th grade, only 80 are in the 10th grade, 69 in the 11th, 69 in the 12th, and 67 of them graduate. We do not have the figures for the 8th to 9th grade decline.

In one local school, High Point High School, the graduate rate is even lower. Tracking the figures for 9th grade enrollments, then 10th, 11th, and 12th, and then the number of graduates, most cohort groups studied drop below the 50% level. From the available data, it’s clear that a major effort must be targeted at 9th graders to make sure they have the skills and confidence to continue into the 10th grade. We should note that aggregating to the state level, the drop from 9th to 10th is less (100 to 88), at for the USA the drop is less still (100 to 90).

What is the explanation? Perhaps more low-preparation children have entered the county? Perhaps there has been a skimming of better performing students from public to private schools? Perhaps the disarray in public school leadership over the period has had an impact? Perhaps the system’s focus has not been sufficient at the 9th grade level? Other explanations? Hopefully, the current leadership is making the necessary corrections.

**Action Langley Park** is a non-profit 501c3 organization working with many partners to improve the quality of life for the residents of Langley Park and its nearby neighborhoods by means of information sharing, advocacy, and events offering health and other services. Its monthly meetings are open to residents and others. To contact ALP, send an email to actionlangleypark@yahoo.com.

**Barrio de Langley Park** is a publication of Action Langley Park with support from the Langley Park Project of the University of Maryland. It is published approximately 20 times a year. Suggestions and contributions welcome. Contact address: actionlangleypark@yahoo.com.
IS COUNTY IGNORING HEALTH?

There is an acutely health-underserved population in the Langley Park - Lewisdale part of Prince George's County. Our estimate is that a large percentage of the many immigrant residents in this area (probably over 50%) are not insured (note in the below graphic the lack of health insurance among Latinos throughout Maryland) and are economically marginal. Unfortunately, the county's main affordable health facility in Cheverly is too far away to be very helpful, especially with the high percentage of households that do not own an automobile.

A county health official has stated that a health needs assessment should be conducted in the county sometime in the future. However, numerous medical professionals and others have reported that the area has a great health-services need—and the need is ... NOW.

A significant study was conducted in neighboring Montgomery County as part of the Latino Health Initiative led by Sonia Mora. Perhaps county officials should go to the report's website, http://www.lhiinfo.org/english/docs/LHI_blueprint2008_2012.pdf. That site has enough information so that Prince George's Health Department can act ... NOW.

The report states: “Regardless of their citizenship or immigration status, Latinos are increasingly becoming targets of hatred and violence due to anti-immigrant sentiments. Latinos—both foreign- and native-born—are being negatively affected via inadequate access to public health and medical care services, as well as with the stress of societal disdain and uncertainty. Recommendations ... must take into account the repercussions of the current immigration crisis and to the extent possible, ensure that artificial distinctions of immigration status do not influence the provision of services needed to improve the physical and mental health of Latinos...."

Yes, access is deficient for Latinos, even in Montgomery County. The report notes four elements of access: lack of health insurance; lack of culturally and linguistically competent services; eligibility issues (lack of understanding of eligibility requirements); and unavailability of adequate transportation, limited hours of operation, continuity of care. The situation for Latinos in Prince George's County is almost certainly worse.

County health officials should not forget the Deamonte Driver dental tragedy that took place last year. We don't want this tragedy repeated in various health areas of need: dentistry, pregnancy, diabetes, and more.

Reports from health professionals, including those who have provided services at the health events organized in Langley Park (Health Check and Langley Park Day), indicate that hypertension, kidney disease, overweight/nutrition, and deficient vision are high on the list of presenting problems among Latinos in Langley Park and throughout suburban Maryland. No need to do more studies!

Another serious area of health deficiency is prenatal care. It is clear that in Prince George's County, far too few pregnant women in the first trimester are being checked, and the deficiency especially applies to Latinos (see graphic in next column). One possible consequence is that Latino infant mortality in the county is 122% of the state figure. Alas, county Latinos have many other healthy deficiencies.

The important Adventist Health Care's Center on Health Disparities report in 2007 concludes that it is essential to devote more resources to the health and health services deficiencies of minorities. Have county officials read the report? Perhaps not. (It's on line.)

The county should act with urgency to provide at the minimum a medical doctor, a dentist, and a registered nurse each to work a minimum of 20 hours a week in the area, perhaps housed in the county's space at the top floor of 1401 University Boulevard. The county should also explore cooperative arrangements with the “Health and Wellness Village” to be created where the Washington Adventist Hospital is currently located. We don't want the county to be responsible for permanent health problems or even death. We hope county officials don't want to be responsible either. Let's see what they do.

INTTEGRATING IMMIGRANTS

“For the Benefit of All” is the title of a report issued by the Illinois Coalition for Immigrant and Refugee Rights (icirr.org) to guide stakeholders in helping to integrate immigrants into the US society. The report, available at www.immigrantintegration.org, includes a set of “guiding principles”; here are six of them:

- Adequate language services should be provided to the limited-English-proficient (LEP) population to encourage and accelerate immigrant and refugee integration.
- Meaningful access to state services should be afforded to all residents, including the LEP population, from all agencies and organizations providing services on behalf of the state.
- State staff should have a proficient level of cultural and linguistic competence and will be provided continued access to comprehensive cultural and linguistic competence training.
- All vital documents should be language-accessible to all LEP individuals.
- Outreach to immigrant and refugee communities is recognized as essential to responsible government.
- Agency policy decisions affecting immigrants and refugees should be informed by population, demographic, and language data.

The principles lead to recommendations; here are three of them:

- The State should advance a financial literacy campaign to offer ... residents, especially immigrants, the tools they need to buy homes and stay in them.
- The ... police should encourage local communities to craft policies restricting police inquiries regarding immigration status.
- The State should fund and implement a micro-lending program to increase access to capital for small business owners.

Maryland local and state officials: Check this web sight out!