The paragraphs following sum up a series of contemporary commentaries on many of the themes and urgent sub-topics on which Dialogue on Diversity has given over the energies and attention of three full decades. A busy Fall season has recently seen think tanks and advocacy groups (with which, in countless profusion, the waters of our capital town are teeming), each presenting its elaborately orchestrated discourse on matters of health, class and ethnic discriminations, and, most of all, the nagging concerns of entrepreneurship, education, and economics. Our Dialogue has been an avid observer, with its President, Ms. Caballero, and interested persons associated on our Board and in our informal coterie of shrewd advisors, all following the presentations of expert and interested (often both) discussants on the issues that we ourselves at the Dialogue will be tackling in the series of programs on tap for 2020. A few impressions of the currents of informed, often passionately propelled, thought are noted in the paragraphs to follow.

**WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT**

The Center for Workforce Development was the site of an all-day conference, held Tuesday, November 12th on the premises of the Reynolds Community College on East Parham [pronounced pair’m] Road in suburban Richmond, Virginia, hearing speakers on a cluster of related matters going to the numbers and quality of the labor force existing in the Commonwealth, the factors shaping the workforce and the optimum routes of preparation for an efficient and able body of operatives and craft professionals.

The civil society leadership figures and attending educational leaders were honored in the words of greeting leading off the day’s proceedings, delivered by Ms. Pamela Northam, part of the Commonwealth’s official family, and, following the seminar’s sessions, a discussion by Mr. Northam, the Governor of the Commonwealth of Virginia. Latinx conference reviewing the proper roles of governments at the state level, in particular in fostering within the community’s larger labor force an able and flexibly variegated quantum of skills and outlook, this in order that the state’s economy may be sufficiently agile, quick off the mark in adjusting to the restless changes that are inevitably encountered in the structure of demand, the quantity and volume of resources, the technologies of production, and the like. Our Northern Virginia contingent was headed by Dr. Sergio Rimola of Fairfax County. Also in attendance, Michele Zajur, Pres./CEO, Virginia Hispanic Chamber. The speaker’s lineup so constituted, the day’s agenda ticked off some of these principal factors, which are briefly discussed below.

The topic heading the agenda dealt with Higher Education, principally as it is targeted to Latino workers and potential workers. Affordable Housing is another facet of the human capital enterprise, adding as it may both the psychic energies and satisfaction that issue in pride of workmanship and liberty from some quantum of anxiety but also abating actual threats to bodily debility – again turning apprehension over the subtle moral subversion and fiscal calamity voiced in immemorial plaints of conservatives, into a rational, next to quantifiable boons to productivity and security with its own valid claim on public finances. Another consideration lies specifically in direct Health Care, or, as it is now to be called, Wellness, an evident capital investment of substantial value, if not amenable to immediate measurement.
Census — Where Non-citizens, Even the Undocumented, Have a Share in Governance

Still another factor weighing ominously on the cause of Latino and other minority gravity in the societal calculus of sound civic governance and social policy is the integrity of Census Counts. These are directly significant in that the number of representatives linked with any of the several minority parties’ ballot weight inevitably affects the coloration of policy in any number of directions. The census, which should be a sort of referee in the political contests, has ended, especially in recent years, being a weapon in tilting the plane of representation against disfavored population elements — particularly the growing specific gravity of the Latino and to some extent Asian populations. In every locality in the country, Virginia included, both the Bureau of the Census and interested civil society groups are turning up the heat to ensure a full and accurate count of persons in every nook and cranny of the U.S. Dialogue on Diversity has engaged as part of this effort, and is recruiting volunteers from our circle of friends and members to participate. We are particularly well situated for this task in that the sensitive point in achieving the proper Census count is to obtain a complete enumeration of each person present in any form in the U.S. — migrants, members of ethnic minorities, citizens and non-citizens, migrants of all classes, documented or not, and indeed all un-documented persons. The notorious inclusion of a citizenship question was a fairly transparent attempt, to cause numbers of these categories to shy away from the census takers — the result being under-representation in the House of Representatives, and diminished support under a number of government programs keyed to population as scaled to Census figures.

Opportunity America

We may note here a novel project undertaken by the Opportunity America organization, founded and ramrodded by Tamar Jacoby, an old friend of Dialogue on Diversity, appearing as a frequent speaker on immigration questions, and a recipient of our Dialogue’s Trailblazer Award in 2014. Her views, generally favoring a liberalized immigration system, are notably both pragmatic and humane. The project now being launched is a detailed questionnaire, directed mainly to migrants, among whom the Latino variety, in numbers, constitute the dominant segment of the target group, exploring experience, abilities, views on personal, civic, and ethical matters — all designed to sharpen the focus in formation of a realistic and effective policy toward full and genuinely productive employment and to a comfortable existence, citizen or not, within the U.S. borders. Again, our Dialogue is to have a part in circulating the questionnaire, joining in hopeful collaboration with Ms. Jacoby’s very promising efforts.

Blue Collar Professions — and Apprenticeship

In the classic professions — medicine and law, the clergy, not to mention architecture and even industrial and garment design — each of the professional bodies and their learned elders, holding sway over the precise qualifications and have established multi-year training regimens for aspiring members of the group, often obtaining statutory sanction for their standards. Accusations are rampant that these standards are deliberately contrived to limit access to the professions and thus to grant a certain oligopoly power to the happy few who are admitted. But in a class of “Trades” occupations (construction and other fields) in which a significant degree of skill is in play, the training goes forward in the matrix of the subject matter directly. The neophyte worker, first judged to have the “stuff” that the needed skills can be made of, is “apprenticed”, often with a notable degree of formality, to a mentor or panel of mentors, working in their midst, drawing some, if modest, pay, and learning by observation and by doing under supervision of the mentor. After a fixed period the apprentice “graduates” as a fully qualified operative. These systems are
useful and are benign in their operation but are nevertheless vulnerable to discrimination against women, minority ethnic applicants, and the like. It is at this point that the Department of Labor, especially its Women’s Bureau, begins to get interested. The friction begins when women in even small numbers, but especially when significant numbers begin to appear.

A conference focusing on the growing demands of women to enter apprenticeships was presented at the Labor Department within the month by the Women’s Bureau. Ms. Caballero was the voice of our Dialogue in conversation with the speakers and other experts in this, often arcane and little noticed, question of women’s apprenticeships. A question of prime interest to economists was seemingly not brought into the foreground. That is: why an employer would undergo the expense of an apprentice system if the apprentice, once trained, can go elsewhere, being employed as a fully qualified professional tradesman-woman without the bother of training costs for the second employer. The answer may be that the apprenticeship period, permits low compensation while at once the apprentice is not a dead-weight drag simply, but is proving able to contribute at least something to the employer’s production. To the extent that this is a difficulty, and subject to legal constraints in a highly regulated labor market such as that in the U.S., there could be arrangements in which the apprentices would draw a regular wage during the apprenticeship period, but obligate themselves to repay the “education” costs (essentially a “college” loan) upon completion of the apprenticeship. Still another development might be a system of government subsidies for the training period, arguably expedient in a fluid society as an investment in Human Capital.

**Women in Science — The Program — The Awards**

Another program of interest playing out on the Washington scene is the Women in Science grants program and the associated yearly Awards Ceremony. These form the visible display of a massive grant program sponsored and conducted by the L’Oréal cosmetics company, targeting post-doctoral women achievers in the sciences, representing chosen corners of the much-vaunted STEM quartet of studies. The grants program, together with the awards and the acclaim for the much honored, but ever so rare species of women achievers in the sciences, sharpens its focus on the vulnerable swath of the women STEM population as they are busied in research after doctoral studies, but before a permanent professional home with is found. The public celebration of its activity, issuing in the annual gala Awards program — always well-attended by women either practitioners of STEM or admirers of STEM devotees! — is held in Washington, last year at the Embassy of France, this year, on November 1st, at the Carnegie Institution for Science in the central city. The program of grants is conducted throughout each year, and indeed, over a span of many years, The grants, as noted, are available only to women whose careers have advanced to the post-doctoral stage but remain short of a tenured academic appointment or a secure post in a scientific research institute.
Another manifestation of the lively concern for the lot of women in intellectual pursuits, and also in the elevated pragmatics of foreign policy, is the annual assembly of the review Foreign Policy, a top echelon publication on international relations, this year under the program title HER POWER. In day-long proceedings on October 15th, at the Organization of American States, Seventeenth Street and Constitution Avenue, a train of experts, laying out refined perspectives on essential foreign relations subjects, took up topics from “inclusive finance”, as a path to women’s economic Empowerment, to the techniques of leveraging a strong local initiative in the high-level disputations on the very directions of policy in the world-wide arena. Ann McDaniel, head of the Foreign Policy review, and Alejandra Moro, Executive for the O.A.S. Inter-American Commission of Women, led off the discussion.

A fascinating conversation on Fostering Mentorship for Women by Women, surfacing the notion of Mentorship Pipelines, included the remarkable Diane Marrero, a close collaborator and speaker at Dialogue on Diversity’s 2017 Entrepreneurship Conference, organizing a professional panel on journalism as truth and as profession. Rep. Barbara Lee, from the San José district in California (a Dialogue on Diversity’s Public Policy awardee in 2000) and Sen. Kirsten Gillibrand of New York, in a fruitful interplay of divergent reasoning, brought the considered views of the legislative branch into the discourse.

AN EVENING WITH CHARLES KAMASAKI

Charles Kamasaki, a recently retired, long-time executive with UNIDOS US and its sire the La Raza organization, is the writer of a weighty, highly regarded book on immigration in America, a subject that has been his special preoccupation for well over a score of years. He has, understandably given the urgency of the immigration policy problematic, and his matchless and highly thoughtful expertise in the premises, been the subject of innumerable television interviews and appearances at public forums in wide variety. Mr. Kamasaki writes, first, as a historian of the political processes engaged in the forging of immigration policies (or, as the case may be, falling short of a consensus on such knotty policy tangles) and at once as a historian of ideas and law, but, in the presence, indeed, of a general view favoring a defensibly humane system, the free arrival of migrants and their welcome to American society. He is not an ideologue. His argument is that a far less passionate state of mind in the legislators and others in the public world, the circles of power and publicity, would much heighten the probability of achieving a constellation of policies (totally congenial to no one) that would materially improve the situation relatively to that which nowadays cripples the state
of public discourse and blocks such initiatives as an advanced society is capable of. Dialogue on Diversity may note that its 2020 schedule will include a presentation by Ms. Tamar Jacoby (see above), a journalist and immigration theorist whose concepts and views have steered a notably rational course among the bluffly asserted extremes in the terms of debates.

You're Invited!!

Please join us for the 2019 Holiday Fair and Children's Gift Collection on Saturday, Dec. 7th at the Ronald Reagan Building & International Trade Center.

2019 HOLIDAY FAIR & CHILDREN'S GIFT COLLECTION

Saturday, December 7th, 2019
10:00am – 2:30pm
Ronald Reagan Building & International Trade Center, ITC Horizon Ballroom
1300 Pennsylvania Ave., N.W.
Washington D.C.

Register: www.dialogueondiversity.org/register

RSVP here for the 2019 Holiday Fair