

April
2013

Vol. 48 No. 3



Newsletter of **LEPOCO**

Lehigh-Pocono Committee of Concern

Annual Dinner: One of the Best Ever



The wonderful LEPOCO Peace Chorus helped launch one of the best annual dinners ever. The food was superlative and the new venue had a very open and inviting ambiance. Kathryn Hoffman gave a vibrant introduction to the keynote speaker, Medea Benjamin, providing good background on Medea with an urgency and energy that prepared the room well for what was to follow.

In her talk, Benjamin focused on the deadly effects of drone warfare which are under the direction of the CIA. She noted that, despite the millions the U.S. sends in aid every year to Pakistan, three out of four Pakistani's think the U.S. is its enemy because of the presence of U.S. drones in its skies. Civilian deaths, including nearly 200 children under the age of 16, are attributed to these drones. The U.S., said Benjamin, is "now peppering drone bases" in, among other places, Africa, Saudi Arabia, Djibouti, and Niger. She questioned whether the children of these countries are any less precious than the children of the U.S. We are "planting the seeds of bitter blowback."

Ms. Benjamin quoted a study of international conflicts that found that 7% were resolved by military action, 43% were resolved by police action, and 45% were resolved by political diplomacy. Military solutions, she said, are not the answer. This drew spontaneous cheers and applause.

Benjamin noted that drone manufacturers -- the biggest exporters, Israel and the U.S. -- are pushing to lift current restrictions on the use of drones by September 2015. Over 75 countries already have drones; if further restrictions are lifted, Benjamin said, there will be 20 to 30 thousand drones in US airspace. We will become a "surveillance society."

On the hopeful side, Benjamin noted that a year ago drones had an 83% approval rating with the U.S. public but now, with attention growing in even mainstream media, the approval rating for the use of drones has dropped to the 50% range. While acknowledging some of the positive potential of this technology, Benjamin questioned their use to kill people(s) remotely and in the process to terrorize the general public. She emphasized the need for public outcry to get the drones out of the hands of the CIA so that their use could become transparent and monitored.

- Michael Lawton

Your Tax Dollars Arm the World

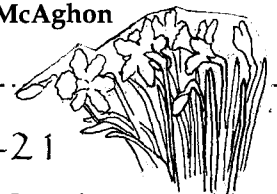


By April 15, most people obligingly pay their yearly federal taxes, though uneasily, because the U.S. government funds wars and gives military aid to numerous countries. As LEPOCO members, we annually leaflet Lehigh Valley post offices with the flyer produced by the War Resister's League in New York City.

This year, unlike every other year, people willing to leaflet and others who are interested in seeing new tax priorities, are invited to meet at Mimi Lang's house, 1526 Oakland St., Bethlehem, on Wednesday, April 10, at 6:30 pm.

We will discuss the pie-charts and graph information found on WRL's flyer. We will also explore ways to engage the public in discussion. We can reclaim our communities from the culture of militarism and work for tax reform, even as banks have been found guilty of housing foreclosures on nearly a thousand military members.

- Monica McAgnon



April 20-21

Saturday (11am-5pm) & Sunday (12-5pm)

Earth Days on the Greenway!

South Bethlehem

Music, Dance, Poetry, Displays, Speakers

LEPOCO will have a booth. Can you help staff it?

Call 610-691-8730 to volunteer.

Sponsored by

L.V. Sierra Club & L.V. Environmental Coalition

Those Nuns on the Bus

In February, a very engaging Sister Simone Campbell (remember Nuns on the Bus?) spoke at Northampton Community College. The objective of Nuns on the Bus was to push back against the Ryan budget and speak out about economic inequality in the U.S. The Vatican names the nuns "troublemakers" stating that their message of economic justice did not give enough time to other religious issues. Sister Simone found that this controversy gave the nuns the publicity and notoriety that they had been previously lacking.

Their alternative to other budgets, The Faith Budget, lays out priorities different from those of either President Obama or Rep. Paul Ryan. It was put together by a coalition of Jewish, Christian and Muslim leaders of 35 different denominations or faith groups. Its basic message is, "Act with mercy and justice by serving the common good, robustly funding support for poor and vulnerable people, both at home and abroad, and exercising proper care and keeping of the earth." (See www.faithfulbudget.org.) To achieve these means, she argued that there must be fairness in tax policies and that programs to assist the poor must be responsible. She cited the food stamp program which has the highest level of accountability and the lowest level of fraud and abuse.

She continued to argue that unless we lift everyone up our country cannot go forward. Reducing inequality increases the well-being of all of society. She referred to the findings of R. Wilkinson and K. Pickett in their book, *The Spirit Level: Why Greater Equality Makes Society Stronger*. The book makes it clear that the greater the income inequality of a country, the greater its social problems and the extent to which people trust each other drops. The U.S. has the highest level of income inequality and the most severe social problems such as high rates of mental illness, illegal drug use, murder, and incidences of diabetes.

Sister Simone Campbell continues to work on these problems as executive director of Network, a national Catholic social justice lobby (www.networklobby.org). Her background as a Catholic nun, sociology major, and lawyer make her a formidable speaker and actor for social justice.

- Diane Dilendik

Veterans For Peace Report

Sunday, March 17th, Lehigh Valley Veterans For Peace Chapter 152 participated in the annual Allentown St. Patrick's Day parade. As was the case with last year's march the group was joined by members of the Berks County V.F.P. chapter, whose participation was much appreciated. Response to the Veterans For Peace presence was quite positive as evinced by enthusiastic applause and a few salutes offered along the route of the march; while there was no perceived negative reaction to V.F.P.'s appearance in the parade.

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The group is considering holding an observation on Memorial Day similar to previous observances conducted on that occasion. Should this action be undertaken, further details will be forthcoming. Regular meetings of Lehigh Valley Veterans For Peace are held on the second Thursday of the month, at 6 pm, at the LEPOCO Peace Center.

- Paul Fichter

Annual Dinner Follow-Up Notes

1- Winners of the 2013 LEPOCO Art Raffle:

- Elaine Eckert - the oil painting by William DeRaymond.
- Tim Laidman - the Sommerville pottery.
- Karen Berry - tickets to "Next to Normal" at Civic Theatre.
- Janet Goloub - movie tickets to 19th Street Theatre.
- Diana Frank - assemblage by Morris Berman.
- Steve Gulick - wooden bowl by Lee Buck.
- Michelle Sheehan - afghan by Anna Reczek.
- Debbie Orben - quilt by Ellen Buck.

2- The talk by Medea Benjamin will be available soon on LEPOCO's YouTube page at www.lepoco.org. An interview with Medea Benjamin on C-SPAN's Q&A in early March can be viewed on-line at www.c-span.org, search for Medea Benjamin.

3- We were grateful for even the limited coverage of the event that came with calendar listings, a nice short story and photo in *The Express-Times* (along with a mention in a related story on the new Horsham drone center), and a letter to the editor by Diane Koch in *The Morning Call*.

Newsletter of LEPOCO

Lehigh-Pocono Committee of Concern

313 West Fourth Street

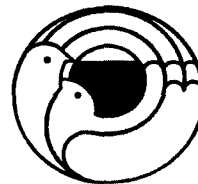
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The LEPOCO Newsletter is published eight times a year by the Lehigh-Pocono Committee of Concern, a nonviolent, non-profit organization dedicated to peace in all forms.

Annual dues are:

Regular Member	\$35
Limited Income Member	\$ 5
Household Membership	\$45
Supporting Member	\$75

Articles/news should be submitted to the address above for consideration for the next issue of the newsletter.

Newsletter Staff: robert Daniels II, Tom Stinnett, Nancy Tate, Jeff Vitelli.

Thanks to all the people who collate and prepare the newsletter for mailing each month.

LEPOCO Steering Committee: Sarah Andrew, Terry Briscoe, Martha Christine, Sheila Clever, robert Daniels II (ex-officio), Janet Goloub, Julius Iwantsch (co-treasurer), Monica McAgnon, Dan Miller, Janet Ney, Susie Ravitz, Stefan Rogers, Tom Stinnett (co-treasurer), Nancy Tate (ex-officio).

Popcorn & Politics

Sunday, April 14th, 2013, 6:00 pm

Dean Caivano:

"Sheep Won't Eat Men Here:

The Democratic Politics of the Peace Community of San José de Apartadó"

Potluck & Politics at the LEPOCO Peace Center.

Dean Caivano, graduate student at Lehigh University, spent his spring break visiting the Peace Community of San José de Apartadó, Colombia. He sees the community as a model for grassroots democracy. He will report on his findings from the trip and current news from the peace community. LEPOCO members have learned from the peace community through accompaniment and visits by several local people and from visits here by members of the peace community.

Please bring some food to share for the potluck dinner at 6:30 pm.

The presentation and discussion should begin shortly after 7 pm.

Friday, May 3rd, 2013, 7 pm

"Trigger: The Ripple Effects of Gun Violence"

A Popcorn & Politics Film projected on the big screen at the LEPOCO Peace Center.

This documentary draws upon conversations with lawmakers, emergency room chaplains and surgeons, survivors and victims' families, former ATF officials, police officers, community leaders and others to tell the story of how gun violence impacts individuals, communities, and society.

Directed by David Barnhart. 54 minutes.

Please bring a snack or beverage to share.

Friday, June 7th, 2013, 7 pm

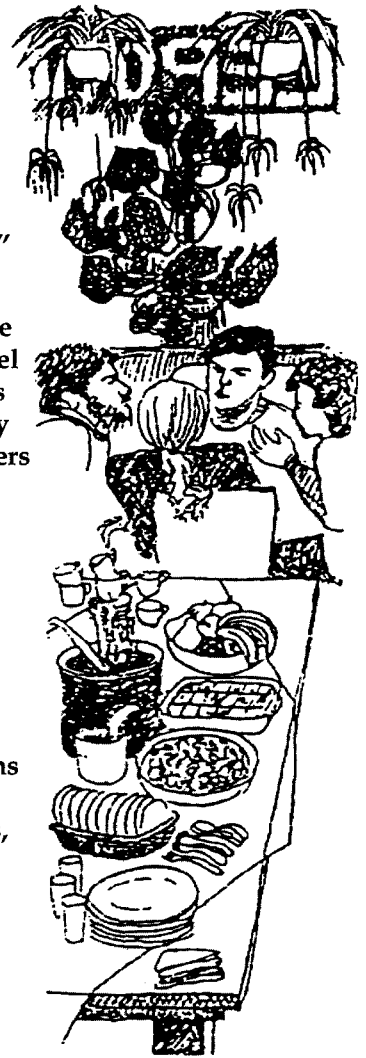
"5 Broken Cameras"

A Popcorn & Politics Film projected on the big screen at the LEPOCO Peace Center.

Academy Award-nominated documentary about a Palestinian farmer who chronicles his village's nonviolent resistance to the presence of encroaching Israeli settlers and military. As camera after camera gets shot or otherwise destroyed, the farmer continues filming.

Directed by Emad Burnat and Guy Davidi. 94 minutes.

Please bring a snack or beverage to share.



Enclosures -- There Are Two

With this newsletter in an envelope (a remedy for new post office requirements that will find the newsletter arriving in different formats from issue-to-issue) you are also receiving 1) flyers for Peace Camp registration and Peace Camp volunteers, and 2) a flyer for the June 1st Bike/Walkathon.

1 - The Bike/Walkathon planners are preparing another fun day for this annual event. It is not too early to make your plans for participation -- start the longer walks or bike rides to get in shape and line up an entourage of pledgers.

2 - We are eager for peace camper registrations to flow in and especially for all the volunteers needed (several dozen) to come forward as soon as possible. Peace Camp planning meetings take place on the fourth Wednesday of the month at 7 pm, at the Peace Center. New planners welcomed.

The LEPOCO Book Club

The First Tuesday Book Club will meet on May 7th, at Wegman's (off Route 512, north of Rt. 22). The meeting will start at 6 pm. You can get some food and/or drink and join the group in the upstairs dining area.

The book for May is *The View from Lazy Point; A Natural Year in an Unnatural World*, by Carl Safina. In this story, Carl Safina shows that nature and human dignity require each other. He follows the arc of the seasons from his home waters of eastern Long Island to far horizons of the globe.

All are welcome, LEPOCO members and not! One doesn't need to attend every month.

To learn more about the Book Club call Mimi Lang at 610-866-2407.

Two Local Talks on the Middle East

Gershon Baskin: February 14

Bringing Gilad Schalit Home: The Story of the Secret Back Channel Between Israel & Hamas

In a talk sponsored by J Street U, a new student organization on the campus, Gershon Baskin spoke at Muhlenberg College in February.

A long-time peacenik, Gershon Baskin became involved with the capture of Gilad Schalit a year before it happened. Baskin was alerted to the disappearance of his wife's cousin in 2005 and called a Palestinian friend to see what was going on. The discovery of the sad ending of the cousin prompted Baskin to swear that he would do whatever he could the next time someone was kidnapped.

Over the next year, Baskin had opportunity to meet someone from Hamas and a friendship of sorts was formed. However, when a leader of Hamas called in July 2006 to see if there was something that could be done to relieve the fierce retaliation by Israel for the capture of Schalit, Baskin was surprised. "Your friend told me to call you." Thus began the backdoor conversations between Schalit's parents, Hamas, and various leaders in the Israeli government -- all filtered through Baskin. On most occasions, though, Baskin's efforts were not only, not appreciated, they were strongly hindered. In June 2007, the trips Baskin had been making to Gaza were curtailed; Gaza was declared an enemy territory by Israel and it became illegal for Israelis to travel there. And again in December 2008, Baskin's work was thwarted by Israel's Operation Cast Lead; Schalit was moved during this operation for his safety.

Despite all the setbacks, the disrespect he was given, and the seeming impossibility of the task, Baskin continued to pursue a peaceful conclusion and return Gilad Schalit to his parents, alive and well. Schalit's safe return became an international effort. Jimmy Carter became involved, a German negotiator was asked by the Israeli government to intervene, the Syrians also provided help. When all talk had stopped on the official channels in 2010, Baskin called everyone he could think of -- the Russians, the Norwegians, the Turks -- and finally, in October 2011, Gilad Schalit came home and kissed his parents. Two other soldiers captured at the same time were not so fortunate.

Gilad Schalit became a symbol during the time of his imprisonment. However, the lessons taught by Gershon Baskin of perseverance, insistence on non-violence, importance of relationships, and patience for a peaceful resolution, are things we rarely see lived out. He is indeed a symbol, for us, of what peacemaking is.

- Sheila Clever

Noam Chomsky: February 5

Prospects for Peace in the Middle East

Noam Chomsky, the world-renowned political critic and activist, visited Lehigh University in February.

Dr. Chomsky spoke for two hours to a packed audience that evening in Packard Auditorium. The lecture, entitled "Prospects for Peace in the Middle East," was largely disapproving of U.S. foreign policy toward Iran and Israel.

The scholar criticized our media's portrayal of Iran as the "greatest threat to world peace," stressing the fact that other Arab nations hardly perceive Iran as a threat. Chomsky believes that the best policy toward Iran is one of international diplomacy; however, the United States has refused to oblige. U.S. officials had canceled a conference in Helsinki last November -- which was intended to establish "nuclear-free zones" in the Middle East -- after learning that Iranian diplomats were planning to attend. According to Chomsky, the U.S. government's refusal to compromise on nuclear policies may eventually lead to war.

The lecture also focused on the ongoing Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Today, there is an international consensus on a settlement between Israel and Palestine: every major country strives for peace between these two nations, with the exception of the United States and Israel. "If the United States changed its policy, we could move to an international settlement that the whole world has wanted for thirty years," Chomsky said.

During his day at Lehigh, Chomsky also met with members of the campus community and held an informal question-and-answer session in Neville Auditorium. The political scholar discussed everything from the future of the Occupy movement to problems with the market-based capitalist system. He also stressed the growing socio-economic inequality in the United States.

"We have to decide what kind of society we want to live in," Chomsky said. "Do we want a society where 400 individuals hold more wealth than the poorest 180 million? Do we want a society where some people give orders, and others simply follow them?"

Political science graduate student Erika Peters said that she was pleasantly surprised with Chomsky's visit to Lehigh's campus. "Usually our student body is pretty apathetic, but a ton of people showed up to the lecture," Peters said. "I just hope that we can get more scholars like Chomsky to visit here in the future."

- Holly Fuhrman

Check out the LEPOCO website at www.lepoco.org

for a Calendar of Events, Newsletter Archive, Videos, & More.

Sign up for LEPOCO e-mail updates by calling 610-691-8730 or by writing to lepoco@fast.net.

Peace Pies



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- 1) Gabriel Zacarias works on the fruit trays for LEPOCO's Annual Dinner on March 16th...
- 2) ... while Bill Rosebrock prepares a green bean dish.
- 3) Jeff Vitelli leads the LEPOCO Peace Singers in a song.
- 4) Ursula Wuerth and Karen Bader pause to pose in the kitchen of First Presbyterian Church of Bethlehem.

- 5) Phyllis Hoffman tells a riveting tale to Ginny Booth and Laurie Spalholz as Mike Lawton peruses the program.
- 6) Friends from the local Occupy movement, Alyssa and Adam Santo, Matt McDonald and Nature Dave Gorczyński, share a table at LEPOCO's Annual Dinner.
- 7) Co-founder of Global Exchange and CODEPINK, Medea Benjamin speaks to the capacity crowd on "Building Peace in the Age of Drone Warfare."



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Photos by
Susie
Ravitz.



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LEPOCO Financial Report 2012

Revenues, Expenses and Changes in Fund Balance	2012
Membership Dues, Fund Appeals, Phonathon, Pledges	\$33,867.69
Investment Income	\$54.51
SERRV & Boutique Sales (net)	\$945.81
Annual Dinner (net)	\$2636.41
Art Raffle (net)	\$790.50
Bike/Walk-A-Thon (net)	\$880.84
Miscellaneous	\$47.85
Intillimani Concert	\$255.00
Drone Programs	\$41.00
Donations for LEPOCO Talks	\$100.00
Misc. Fundraising: (Guy & Greta Program, Bumpersticker, etc.)	\$125.00
Copier Use	\$58.89
Total Revenue	39,803.50
Salaries, Taxes & Benefits for Employees	\$29,681.50
Rent, Electric, Telephone	\$6373.15
Insurance (Fire, Liability & Worker's Comp)	\$1290.00
Internet Service Provider	\$504.00
Other Computer Expenses (Programs, E-Mail Server, Virus Protection, Web Site Hosting)	\$517.99
Printing & Postage (Newsletter, Bulk Mail Fee, Letterhead, etc.)	\$2270.59
P & P's (Popcorn&Politics, Potluck&Politics)	\$113.35
Fairs & Festivals (Pridefest, Earth Day, Marcellus Shale Conference, Buckingham Peace Fair)	\$95.00
Fund Appeals	\$787.89
Other Programs & Events (ML King, H-N, Tax Day, Biden visit, Tioga Delegation, Peace Singers, etc.)	\$377.51
Supplies (Office, Copier, Printer, Paper)	\$554.67
Repairs (Office, Copier, Risograph, Computer)	\$936.24
Misc. Office Expenses	\$186.26
Miscellaneous (Working Groups, Business Priv. Tax, Checks, Bank Charges)	\$465.92
Total Expenses	\$44,154.07
Excess or (Loss) for Year	(\$4350.57)
Fund Balances at the Beginning of the Year	\$11,835.10
Change in Investment Value	\$128.54
Fund Balance at the End of the Year	\$7,613.07

2012 Fund Balances	Beginning of Year	End of Year
Cash, Savings and Investments	\$17,123.10	\$12,820.64
Liabilities	\$5,288.00	\$5,207.57
Net Assets and Fund Balances	\$11,835.10	\$7,613.07

The Struggle Shared

Many of us in the faith community are realizing that it is inappropriate to bow our heads to thank God for our food without lifting our heads to hear from our neighbors whose labor brought that food to our table. Our prayers inspire us not only to be grateful, but to be just." - Brian McLeron, in op-ed to Huffington Post in support of Immokalee Fair Food Marchers.

IMMOKALEE WORKERS WALK AGAIN - In 2000, tomato pickers in Florida were routinely the poorest workers in the United States. Farm workers and their allies organized the Coalition of Immokalee Workers and waged a persistent nonviolent direct action campaign to secure basic rights, fair treatment and living wages. (See April 2011 *Struggle Shared*.) CIW began a Fair Food Program, and with effective organizing of consumers put pressure on the corporate food buyers to sign a Fair Food Agreement which has resulted in wage premiums and improved conditions in the fields of participating companies. The coalition has secured participation of Yum Brands, McDonald's, Burger King, Whole Foods Market, Bon Appetit Management Company, Compass Group, Aramark, Sodexo, Trader Joe's, and most recently, Chipotle. Retail food giant, Publix Supermarkets has so far refused to sign.

So on March 3rd, CIW members and their allies began a 200-mile March for Rights, Respect, and Fair Food, from the Jesus the Worker Catholic Church in Ft. Myers, Florida, to the headquarters of Publix Supermarkets, in Lakeland. One of the marchers was Cheryl Queen, vice president of the Compass Group food service, one of the companies who has signed the Fair Food Agreement. She told reporters, "I'm very proud to join this year's March for Rights, Respect and Fair Food. Since 2007, Compass Group has enjoyed a partnership with The Coalition, and the Fair Foods Standards Council that reflects the highest levels of ethical behavior, transparency and authenticity. The Coalition embodies passion, and integrity coupled with humility. That's what brings

about lasting change in a way that honors and recognizes everyone."

QUAKERTOWN RESIDENTS SAY "KEEP IT LOCAL" - The Quakertown Education Support Professionals Association (QESPA) has provided high quality cafeteria and custodial services to the community's school children employing local workers. In June QESPA's contract with the school district expires, and before sitting down with union leaders to negotiate a new contract, school board leaders have asked administrators to solicit proposals for food and custodial services from outside firms.

On February 28th, 175 residents packed the meeting of the Quakertown Community School Board, presenting petitions with 1500 taxpayer signatures, requesting that the Board abandon plans to outsource about 100 jobs. Currently, 80% of those cafeteria, maintenance, secretarial and custodial jobs represented by the QESPA union, are held by workers who pay taxes in Quakertown. "Why would we want strangers in our schools, and why would we want our tax dollars going to outsiders?" asked one cafeteria worker. Other residents made reference to the school shooting at Sandy Hook Elementary School, and urged consideration of the psychological impact of removing so many familiar faces from the schools. "If outsourcing is approved," another employee said, "the district will have destroyed the community in our schools," and should change the name of the Board, removing the word "Community."

Bob Smith, President of the School Board said, "At this point I don't have any comment because we

are in negotiations with the Union. The contract is up in June and as part of that we need to look at all our options. We asked for proposals. Nothing has been bid. Nothing is decided. It's very early on."

"BELOW REGULATORY CONCERN" REINCARNATES - In the 1980's the Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) adopted a policy it called "Below Regulatory Concern" (BRC) that would have allowed about 30% of the nation's low-level radioactive waste to be treated as normal garbage, and dumped in landfills, burned in incinerators, and even recycled into consumer products. Recognizing that there is no safe level of radioactive exposure, the Nuclear Information and Resource Service (NIRS) launched one of the most intensive campaigns it has ever done, and grassroots activists succeeded in getting anti-BRC resolutions signed by hundreds of towns, cities and counties. Fifteen states eventually banned BRC contaminants from their borders. Congressional hearings were held, and in 1992 Congress overturned the BRC policy.

The NRC and Department of Energy have both attempted to deregulate radioactively contaminated metals. They had been forced to "suspend the idea indefinitely" after outpourings of public concern in 2000.

The Department of Energy has now announced again that it is considering a plan to allow metal contaminated in nuclear weapons facilities to be recycled, mixed with clean recycled metal, and allowed to turn up in consumer products from silverware to baby toys. The National Academy of Sciences now acknowledges that there is no safe level of radioactive exposure, that women are more vulnerable to radiation than men, and that children are more vulnerable than adults. More than ever before, we now know that nothing radioactive is "Below Regulatory Concern." Let the DOE know that they are not "Above Regulatory Concern," that we will regulate them with Public Concern.

- Jeff Vitelli

Bits & Pieces

⊕ In early March we got word from **Don MacRae's** family that he had died suddenly. He was 78. One friend at his memorial service described him as a "viking," attempting to convey his impressive presence physically, mentally, and socially. His career included 20 years as a Metallurgist at Bethlehem Steel, but LEPOCO friends may remember more about his activism with the ACLU, with young people in south Bethlehem, and in recent years, his intense interest in Latin America. He joined solidarity delegations and developed friendships in Mexico after repeated visits. Don was a long-time supporter of LEPOCO.

⊕ Northampton Community College held their **Third Annual Peace & Justice Conference**, March 26-27, featuring an address by and workshops led by Charles Eisenstein, with his inspiring message about stepping away from the consumerist model that drives our society and too much of the world. It is heartening to see the college persist with this conference, bringing such a valuable speaker who carried a message that young people (and many adults) seemed eager to hear.

⊕ In February, Iraq War vet/anti-war activist and subject of Phil Donahue's documentary, **Body of War, Tomas Young**, announced he is ending his nine year losing battle against unbearable chronic pain. The pain is due to the injuries he sustained just five days after his deployment to Iraq that left him paralyzed from the chest down. You can sign a petition of support to Tomas Young at signon.org (search for Tomas Young at the petition section). Also at that site are links to a March 21st interview with Tomas on *Democracy Now!* and to the letter Tomas wrote to George Bush and Dick Cheney.

⊕ Just as those questioning drones are preparing for a month of protest at the sites where drones are researched, manufactured, and flown, the U.S. Air Force announced a new "ground-control station of the MQ-9 Reaper

"drones" to be opened at Horsham (at the base formerly known as Willow Grove) as early as October 1, 2013. If established this center will pilot drones flying in Afghanistan and elsewhere. Local newspapers carried long stories quoting local, state and federal officials lauding this development. Regional peace organizations have begun discussion of the appropriate response. Your suggestions would be most welcome. The Annual Dinner talk about "Building Peace in the Age of Drone Warfare" is now even more relevant.

⊕ In **Philadelphia** as part of the April Days of Action to Protest Drone Killing and Surveillance, there will be a **Drone Death Walk** at noon, Sat., April 6, starting at 34th & Walnut, outside University of Pennsylvania, where drone research is underway. At 1 pm, there will be a kite-flying for peace in a field where test drones have been flown.

⊕ Also, as part of the April Days of Action to Protest Drone Killing and Surveillance the Upstate New York Coalition to Ground the Drones & End the Wars will hold a three-day conference, April 26-28, "**Resisting Drones, Global War & Empire: A Convergence to Action!**" It will be three days for networking, learning, sharing, and building a national movement. It will end with a Rally & Demonstration at Hancock Air Base on April 28. This is the base where six groups have been arrested as they attempted to deliver a citizens' indictment of war crimes to the Hancock chain of command. The last "Gandhian Wave" (as they call their protests) was October 25, 2012. Seven-

teen were arrested. For more info. call 315-308-0048. To pre-register call 315-472-5478.

⊕ Copies of the Spring 2013 issue of "**Nukewatch Quarterly**" are available at LEPOCO. It includes articles about Fukushima, nuclear resisters in India, and the U.S. military's nuclear pollution and more.

⊕ On Feb. 26, LEPOCO folks supported the **Pull the Pork from the Pentagon** demonstration outside Sen. Toomey's office in Allentown. The group organized by Penn Action delivered thousands of petitions to the senator calling for national priorities that protect social programs and make significant cuts in military spending. There were Pull the Pork actions all across the country under the Jobs Not War banner.

⊕ On the 10th anniversary of the U.S. invasion of Iraq, a campaign has been launched to support the **Right to Heal** for Iraqis and U.S. military veterans led by the Organization of Women's Freedom in Iraq and Iraq Veterans Against the War. You can learn more about this effort at www.righttoheal.org.

⊕ In late February opposition to the **Tennessee Pipeline** that will carry Marcellus Shale gas across the Delaware River, included a march by 100 people in Milford, Penna., a tree sitting and state forest gate lock down, all attempting to block the removal of trees along the pipeline's route. If you would like to learn more about these efforts see www.NoTennesseePipeline.blogspot.com.

Support LEPOCO!

____ Enclosed are my yearly LEPOCO dues of \$ _____.
(\$35 individual; \$45 hh; \$75 supporter; \$5 lim. income)

____ I am also enclosing an extra donation of \$ _____.

____ I would like to support LEPOCO's work with a ____ monthly /
____ quarterly pledge of \$ _____.

____ I'm interested in the following issues: _____.

Name _____ Phone # _____ e-mail _____

Address _____ City _____ Zip _____

Return to: LEPOCO Peace Center, 313 W. 4th St., Bethlehem, PA 18015.

or
Donate through PayPal by going to the "memberships" page at www.lepoco.org

Bits & Pieces

☪ Lehigh County Conference of Churches Justice & Advocacy Committee and Bread for the World will hold their annual program with speakers and workshops on food and hunger issues. **"A Place at the Table"** will take place Sat., April 27, 8:30 am - 3 pm, at 1st Presbyterian Church, Allentown. Participants will be encouraged to organize (in churches or other groups) an Offering of Letters to protect programs for hungry and poor people. A light breakfast and lunch will be provided. A \$5 donation is suggested. (Students and low income folks are free.) For more info. or to pre-register contact LCCC at 610-433-6421 or see www.bread.pjir.org.

☪ **Richard Liroff**, the Executive Director of the Investor Environmental Health Network (and son-in-law of Bob & Carmen Riggs) will speak on "Shale Gas Development: Black, White, or Many Shades of Gray? A Shareholder Activist's Perspective," on Sat., April 20, 5-6:30 pm, at the Lehigh Valley Monthly Meeting House (on Rt. 512, ½ mile north of Rt. 22). The talk will be followed by a light supper and discussion. Call 610-866-2407 for more info. No pre-registration is necessary.

☪ March 24-30, **Witness Against Torture**, held a Hungering for Justice fast to denounce the torture and indefinite detention of the men being held at the U.S. military prison at Guantánamo. Over 100 of those men have been fasting, some for over a month, because they have lost hope after 11 years of detention. Of the 166 men still held there, 86 have been "cleared for release" by U.S. authorities, more than four years after Pres. Obama promised to close the prison. Instead of closing the prison, in January the Administration closed the State Department office charged with shutting down Guantánamo and repatriating and resettling released detainees.

Witness Against Torture is continuing this solidarity effort as a "rolling fast" for the duration of the hunger

strike at Guantánamo. You can sign up to participate at www.witness-torture.org. Participants are asked to fast for 24 hours, write a letter to a man at Guantánamo (text and addresses are supplied), and make three phone calls to government officials (numbers and talking points are provided).

☪ On March 27th, at a local meeting about Gov. Corbett's proposed 2013-2014 budget, **Alan Jennings**, of the Community Action Committee of the Lehigh Valley said "state officials are clueless of real people's problems... He said the state has provided very little to help regular people but has bent over backward to assist corporations and the rich. The state loses out on \$3.2 billion in annual revenues because of corporate tax cuts and Corbett is working to create more, including a sales tax exemption on private jets, Jennings said. 'Can you imagine Gandhi...arguing for cutting sales taxes on private jets while ignoring the need for hunger relief?'"

(Source: The Express Times, 3/29/13.)

☪ The **Lehigh Valley Restorative Zone Initiative** is holding Community Information Sessions about their work this spring. Last school year Bethlehem's two high schools had success in reducing disciplinary issues and in improving school climate after

their staff undertook training in "restorative practices." Allentown's two high schools have undertaken a similar effort this school year. There is hope that this effort can expand into other work with young people. The school districts are working with the International Institute for Restorative Practices (IIRP) Graduate School in developing their programs. Community Information Sessions will be held, Fridays, April 26 and May 24, 8:30-10 am each day, at the IIRP offices, 544 Main St., Bethlehem. Please RSVP to 610-807-9221.

☪ To celebrate the opening of the new **Bethlehem Bicycle Cooperative** (BBC) at 1935 W. Broad St., Bethlehem, CAT-Coalition for Appropriate Transportation is offering a FREE bicycle helmet (or helmet fitting if your child has a helmet) to any child under 10 years of age who visit the BBC with a parent/guardian and a bicycle before the end of May. The bike will be checked by a professional mechanic and the child plus parent will receive a one-hour basic bicycle education class. All this is FREE to CAT or BBC members, for non-members a one-day guest pass if just \$5/child or \$10 for an entire family. For more info. call 610-954-5744.

MEETINGS...MEETINGS...MEETINGS...MEETINGS...ETC.

Sunday, April 7, 7 pm: Peace Singers rehearse at home of Marcie Lightwood & Rick Weaver.

Mondays, April 8 & May 13, 7 pm: LEPOCO Monthly Action Meeting at the Peace Center. All members & friends are welcome at this business meeting where the organization's activities are reviewed.

Tuesday, April 9, 3:30 pm: Lehigh Valley Committee Against State Killing meeting at Peace Center.

Wednesday, April 10, 5:30 pm: Nuclear Abolition Sisters meeting at Mimi Lang's home, Bethlehem.

Thursdays, April 11 & May 9, 6 pm: Lehigh Valley Chapter of Veterans for Peace meeting with pizza at LEPOCO Peace Center.

Monday, April 22, 12:15 pm: Americas Solidarity Group meeting at LEPOCO Peace Center.

Wednesdays, April 24 & May 22, 7 pm: Peace Camp 2013 Planning Committee meetings at LEPOCO Peace Center.

Thursday, May 16, 3 pm: Bike-Walkathon Planning Committee working meeting at Peace Center.

Please join in the meetings and work of these groups as you are able. If you want more information the Newsletter Planning Meeting or about any of the meetings listed above, please call LEPOCO at 610-691-8730. For a regularly updated calendar of events and meetings please see www.lepoco.org.



LEPOCO

Lehigh-Pocono Committee of Concern

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Bits & Pieces
Meetings...

Monthly Peace Vigil

Our wars continue. Please help witness for peace.

4:30-5:30 pm

Second Thursdays: April 11 & May 9

3rd & Wyandotte Sts., Bethlehem

Contact: Vince Stravino 610-216-8103 / Tom Ulrich 610-882-1136

April 20-21

Saturday (11am-5pm) & Sunday (12-5pm)

Earth Days on the Greenway!

(see page 1 for more info.)

LEPOCO's Annual Bike/Walk-a-thon

Saturday, June 1, 2013

(Brochure enclosed.)

Tax Day: April 15

Help distribute *Where Your Income Tax Money
Really Goes* flyers at local post offices.
Sign up now to help! Call 610-691-8730 to set
your place and time.

Wed. April 10, 6:30 pm

Tax Day Leafletting Preparation Discussion

1526 Oakland St., Bethlehem

Call 610-691-8730 for more info./directions.

(See page 1 for more info.)

Bill McKibben

Environmental Activist & Author

Tuesday, April 9th

4:15 pm

Zoellner Arts Center, Baker Hall
Lehigh University, south Bethlehem

Free & Open to the Public

(No tickets required.)

Call 610-758-3039 for more info.