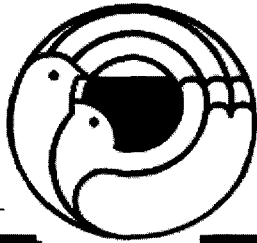


December
2012
Vol. 47 No. 8



Newsletter of **LEPOCO**
Lehigh-Pocono Committee of Concern

Hard to Believe??

Within the past few weeks, right here in Pennsylvania, we have had two inmates who have lived for years under a sentence of death only to come within a few days or hours of their scheduled "state sanctioned killing" and then be told that a reprieve was granted.

Terrance Williams was granted a stay of execution only a few days before his scheduled execution of October 3, because he was fortunate enough to have a hearing before a judge who was willing to question the account given by the Office of the Philadelphia District Attorney.

Hubert Michael was within hours of being executed on November 8, when the Supreme Court granted a stay. He had a mitigating claim of mental impairment for years, but what may turn out to be more important is that Pennsylvania uses a compounding pharmacy for its lethal concoction to execute and there was a legal concern raised about contamination with the recent meningitis outbreak. Hubert Michael may still be alive because we did not want to risk infecting him while killing him.

Meanwhile, the Pennsylvania legislature has authorized the creation of a bipartisan task force to study the death penalty in Pennsylvania (SR6) and to report their findings and recommendation. If we ignore for a moment the issue of people's lives being at stake, we might find that the cast of characters working at cross purposes, the grotesquely improbable situations and absurd rationalizations given for behavior, give capital punishment all the elements of a classic farce.

But this is not a play. Albert Camus famously said about the death penalty: "Capital Punishment is the most premeditated of murders to which no criminal's deed, no matter however calculated, can be compared. For there to be an equivalency, the Death Penalty would have to punish a criminal who had warned his victim of the date at which he would inflict a horrible death on him, and from that moment onward, had confined him at his mercy for months. Such a monster is not encountered in private life." If you can imagine such a "monster" then forcing his confined victim to play "Russian Roulette" over and over with a loaded revolver you may come close to beginning to understand how barbaric our current judicial system is as long as we keep the death penalty.

It is difficult to imagine a monster or tyrant more fickle and arbitrary than our current system of capital punishment in Pennsylvania. While our first reaction

may be to think that the only person affected by this uncertainty is the condemned, we need to remember that the family of the victim has been promised that the death penalty will bring final justice. More often than not, it just makes them feel even further victimized.

You can help to bring some rationality and humanity to Pennsylvania by telling your legislator that you find the idea of trying to execute someone while at the same time trying to determine whether the variety of problems with the current system justifies its elimination is an outrage, besides being just absurd.

- David Rose

An Occupy Update

This year LEPOCO's Bike/Walkathon raised money to help support LEPOCO as well as Occupy efforts on a national, regional, and local level. Between the time of deciding to make Occupy a co-beneficiary of this fundraiser and the actual event, energy within the Occupy movement had declined. But while most Occupy encampments disbanded and General Assembly attendance waned, the movement has lived on.

In New York and New Jersey, Occupy activists came together in the wake of Hurricane Sandy. "Occupy Sandy" (www.occupysandy.org) is a relief and recovery effort to distribute resources and volunteers to help

(continued on page 4)

Save the Date!

Saturday, March 16th, 2013

LEPOCO Annual Dinner

Featured Speaker:

Medea Benjamin

co-founder of Code Pink and Global Exchange

New location!

First Presbyterian Church,
Bethlehem

LEPOCO Steering Committee Nominations Sought

The election is (finally) over! What do you do now? Snuggle up with that Code Pink book you bought six months ago and finally have the time to read? Delete all that e-mail that's been accumulating? Download and listen to all those NPR *Living on Earth* podcasts that you missed? Well, these are all good choices, but here's a LOCAL option: consider joining the LEPOCO Steering Committee! Once a month we gather in the LEPOCO office, discuss the many facets of LEPOCO, and guide the organization according to the passion and power that is present and perchance perceived. Often during the month, we are asked to respond to a request that needs to be addressed before the next meeting. Based on our knowledge and desire, we can also be tasked with ad hoc work that occupies our time in between meetings.

We wouldn't do this work if we didn't love LEPOCO and didn't believe that working for peace is the best way to care for our fellow humans and our planet. Besides, being part of the Steering Committee gets you first dibs on tickets to fun stuff -- like the Inti-Illimani fundraiser concert that took place October 3. And, being on the Steering Committee puts the various activities of LEPOCO on your calendar -- where you meant to put them in the first place.

The best people on the planet converge on 313 W. 4th Street once a month to strategize how to non-violently build a sane and just world. I can't think of a better way to spend my time -- with caring people who demonstrate respect for one another and model civil discourse. You can't find that on your TV!

So, join LEPOCO's Steering Committee so that you can more easily answer: What have you done to save the world today? Call the office if you can be a candidate.

- Sheila Clever

Do the Math: New York City, 11/16/12

It's simple math: we can burn 565 more gigatons of carbon dioxide and stay below 2°C of warming -- anything more than that risks catastrophe for life on earth. The problem is fossil fuel corporations now have 2,795 gigatons in their reserves, five times the safe amount. And they're planning to burn it all -- unless we rise up to stop them. Much of the reserve is still underground. Anticipated profits to the fossil fuel industries: \$20 trillion!

Josh Fox played his banjo and Johannes Kepler demonstrated his beautiful algorithms of nature in *Six Sides of a Snowflake*, all part of the "Do the Math Tour," a variety show for climate change activists. Bill McKibben and Naomi Klein took the stage to call for nonviolent, direct action against Exxon, BP, Shell, and other big oil, coal and gas companies, who make billions and never pay for the damage of extreme weather. The goal is to go solar, wind and geothermal quicker than lickety-split. No thank you to nuclear energy.

Bill explained that we can't change the mind of physics or just a policy here and there. The business plan of the fossil fuel industry is the problem. It is literally a war on the earth. The companies are threatened by our desire to preserve life on earth.

We have to unite against all fossil fuel industries by following the money and exposing the companies as social pariahs. Our goal is to freeze investment in fossil fuel. This is not a radical move. Companies who continue to change the chemical composition of the atmosphere are the radicals.

The conference concluded with a call to coordinate actions in many areas of the economy to divest shares in the fossil fuel industries. Bill McKibben, using the David and Goliath metaphor, advised us to remember that David won.

The Do the Math Tour visited 20 cities starting November 7th in Seattle and ending December 3rd in Salt Lake City. Go to www.350.org for a campus guide on the divestment campaign.

- Mimi Lang & Monica McAgnon

Amy Goodman, of Democracy Now!, wrote recently:

When those who are used to having the president's ear whisper their demands to him in the Oval Office, if he can't point out the window and say, "If I do as you ask, they will storm the Bastille," if there is no one out there, then he is in big trouble. That's when he agrees with you. What about when he doesn't?

The president of the United States is the most powerful person on Earth. But there is a force more powerful: People organized around this country, fighting for a more just, sustainable world. Now the real work begins.

Newsletter of LEPOCO

Lehigh-Pocono Committee of Concern

313 West Fourth Street

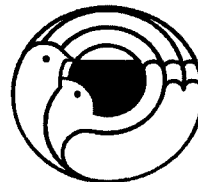
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The *LEPOCO Newsletter* is published eight times a year by the Lehigh-Pocono Committee of Concern, a nonviolent, non-profit organization dedicated to peace in all forms.

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, Addison Bross, Sheila Clever, robert Daniels II (ex-officio), Janet Goloub, Julius Iwantsch (co-treasurer), Janet Ney, Kelly Quain, Susie Ravitz, Stefan Rogers, Tom Stinnett (co-treasurer), Nancy Tate (ex-officio).

Popcorn & Politics

Friday, January 4th, 2013, 7 pm

"American Autumn"

A Popcorn & Politics Film projected on the big screen at the LEPOCO Peace Center. The first feature-length documentary on the Occupy movement is a fast-paced, fact-filled production that was filmed in New York, Boston, and Washington D.C., beginning in the earliest days of the movement. It features footage of numerous actions and comments from many of those involved, including interviews with and insight from Medea Benjamin, Margaret Flowers, Naomi Klein, Vlad Teichberg, Sgt. Shamar Thomas, Cornel West, and Kevin Zeese.

Directed by Dennis Trainor, Jr. 76 minutes. 2012.

Please bring a snack or beverage to share.

Friday, February 1st, 2013, 7 pm

"Freedom Riders"

A Popcorn & Politics Film projected on the big screen at the LEPOCO Peace Center. Documentary tells the story behind a courageous band of civil rights activists called Freedom Riders who in 1961 challenged segregation in the southern United States.

Originally shown as part of the "American Experience" series on PBS.

Directed by Stanley Nelson. 120 minutes. 2011.

Please bring a snack or beverage to share.



Cut the Military!

We all need to communicate in as many ways as possible our concern that military spending should be cut. That seems to be left out in many of the otherwise important concerns about saving programs like Social Security, Medicare, Medicaid, and other vital services; or in the message about making the rich pay their share in taxes.

Be sure to give at least those three messages. Below are important phone numbers. But postcards to these folks and letters to the editor are also important. Sign all the on-line petitions you can, but the phone calls and written communication will be more effective.

The White House: 202-456-1111

Senator Bob Casey: 202-224-6324 or 610-782-9470

Senator Pat Toomey: 202-224-4254 or 610-434-1444

Rep. Charlie Dent 202-225-6411 or 610-770-3490

or

Rep. Mike Fitzpatrick 202-225-4276 or 215-579-8102

Here are some back-up points re: Pentagon spending:

The Pentagon budget has doubled over the past ten years while domestic programs have taken trillion dollars in cuts. Two wars and tax cuts for the rich have driven up the deficit.

Here are some good web sites for further information: www.fcni.org/issues/checkbook/;
www.newprioritiesnetwork.org;

www.budget4allmass.org; www.chn.org/save4all/.

- Nancy C. Tate

The New Book Club

The First Tuesday Book Club will meet next in February. The new location: Wegman's (off Route 512, north of Rt. 22, in the Bethlehem area). Starting time is 6 pm, so grab a bite to eat or a drink and join us in the upstairs dining room.

We welcome members who we haven't seen for awhile and new members interested in the current selection. All are welcome, LEPOCO members and not. Our next three selections are below. Reviews can be found online. Reading selections are made by the group after much fun-filled discussion.
- Mimi Lang

February 5th Book: *The Fine Print: How Big Companies Use "Plain English" To Rob You Blind* by David Cay Johnston, shows "a gamut of ways in which big corporations...cheat ordinary people (as well as each other)."

March 5th Book: *Behind the Beautiful Forevers: Life, Death & Hope in a Mumbai Undercity* by Katherine Boo. In this book a bewildering age of global change and inequality is made human.

April 2nd Book: *The Race for What's Left: The Global Scramble for the World's Last Resources* by Michael Klare describes how corporate empires have decided to rip apart the planet in one last burst of profiteering.

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

VFP Fall Actions

The Berks County and Lehigh Valley chapters of Veterans For Peace cosponsored a dinner and talk at the Tipton America Legion Post dining hall on Sunday, October 21st. The speaker for the event was Thomas Drake, formerly a decorated U.S. Navy and Air Force veteran, CIA analyst, and senior executive with the National Security Agency. It was during his service with N.S.A. that he became involved with two programs to collect intelligence from new digital networks: "Thin Thread" and "Trailblazer." Mr. Drake came to favor Thin Thread due to its protection of citizen privacy while gathering data and its relatively lower cost. On the other hand he felt that Trailblazer violated Fourth Amendment guarantees, while dwarfing Thin Thread in expense. The N.S.A. ultimately opted for Trailblazer, although that program was eventually dropped, being cited by some as an expensive failure at a cost of more than one billion dollars.

In response to what he deemed questionable practices by the NSA, Mr. Drake voiced concern to his superiors, being careful to do so through proper channels. When that avenue failed to produce results he approached outside sources, also in a legal fashion. Governmental response to his actions took the form of criminal charges of willful retention of national defense information, obstruction of justice, and making a false statement, which constituted ten felony indictments punishable by up to thirty-five years in prison. On the eve of his trial the government dropped all charges against Mr. Drake substituting a misdemeanor plea of misusing a computer system for which he received a sentence of one year's probation.

Due to his experiences in these matters Mr. Drake has come to be of the opinion that speaking truth to today's America can be a dangerous act for the speaker and that freedom of thought is under attack by the government. Also, national security has become a state religion which President Obama has taken even beyond what former President Bush envisioned. Due to this heightened encroachment on constitutional freedoms, he stressed the need for greater citizen involvement and activity to maintain these rights. "We deserve the government we get," he said.

On Sunday, November 11, Lehigh Valley Veterans For Peace held what has become an annual Veteran's Day Vigil at the Bethlehem Rose Garden Park. As at previous events, representations of tombstones bearing the names and information of Pennsylvania veterans killed in the Afghan and Iraq conflicts were displayed. At eleven o'clock those present gathered to recognize the military and civilian deaths of all of America's wars, as well as the hope that such deaths will not be a part of future generations' experience. Individual flowers were placed into a bouquet, representing the dead of the past and the wish for the future. Lasting from ten to three o'clock the event drew much positive response

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from those passing by, both in vehicles and on foot.

The Lehigh Valley chapter of Veterans For Peace will not meet in December and January. Please join us at the February meeting.

- Paul Fichter

An Occupy Update

(Continued from page 1)

neighborhoods and people affected by the devastating storm. While a FEMA office had closed "due to weather" shortly following the storm, Occupy Sandy volunteers huddled in a storefront amidst the wreckage and provided food, water, and with the assistance of local churches, shelter to some of those bombarded by the hurricane. The efforts of those involved in Occupy Sandy garnered nationwide media attention and praise from the likes of Mayor Bloomberg, Governor Cuomo and the *New York Times*. For an interesting read about the hands-on work of Occupy Sandy, see Adam Jung's article "With Occupy Sandy Relief, Occupy Wall Street Becomes a Movement" at www.huffingtonpost.com. LEPOCO's Steering Committee agreed to make a contribution (\$200) to Occupy Sandy from the funds raised at the Bike/Walkathon.

The Steering Committee also decided to make a donation (\$250) to Occupy's "Rolling Jubilee Fund" (www.rollingjubilee.org). The fund is a Strike Debt initiative to raise awareness about predatory debt practices, debt resistance, and mutual aid. Debt is a tie that binds the 99%, from college graduates paying hundreds of dollars every month on student loans, to elderly homeowners underwater to the banks, to teachers and firefighters forced to take pay cuts because their cities are broke. Rolling Jubilee hopes to set the 99% free by entering the shadowy speculative market of debt buyers who acquire debt for pennies on the dollar and then turn around and try to collect the full amount from debtors. The Rolling Jubilee intervenes by anonymously buying debt cheaply, keeping it out of the hands of collectors, and then abolishing it -- a bailout of the 99% by the 99%. Nearly half a million dollars has been raised so far. That money will buy up an estimated \$10 million worth of debt. Strike Debt's "The Debt Resisters' Operations Manual" can be downloaded at www.strikedebt.org.

- robert Daniels II

Occupy Hurricane Sandy Relief Concert

Saturday, January 12th, 7:30 pm

The Washington Theatre, Washington, New Jersey

Tickets: \$10 at the door.

Cash donations, as well as donations of canned goods, cleaning products, and other nonperishable goods will be collected at the door.

Sponsored by Occupy the Arts and Occupy Easton.

Watch LEPOCO's e-mail updates for more information closer to the date of the event.

The Struggle Shared

*There are many times when we are powerless
to prevent injustice,
but there must never be a time
when we fail to protest.*

- Elie Wiesel

WALMART'S BLACKEST FRIDAY

- One Friday in October, 60 workers at a Los Angeles Walmart store walked off the job to protest low wages, unpaid overtime, and generally horrific working conditions. It was the first time in history that the retail giant had been struck. Within a week, Walmart workers in several stores from Dallas to Chicago had abandoned their posts to join picket-lines in the parking lots.

With the support of the United Food and Commercial Workers' Making Change at Walmart Campaign, the action has spread to other states. Organizers of OUR Walmart (Organization United for Respect) say strikes and demonstrations will spread, culminating in an unprecedented array of Black Friday disruptions. By the time you read this, Black Friday 2012, will be history, and perhaps the true significance of the Walmart strike will be reverberating.

Walmart, as the largest private employer in the world with 1.4 million workers in the United States alone, is leading the drive to the bottom economy. Most major retail chains that compete for customers with low prices pay relatively low wages to hourly workers. Walmart has set the standard. "In order to deal with competition from Walmart, other retail outlets have been forced into a reduction in wages and benefits across the board," says Ken Jacobs, of the Center for Labor Research and Education at the University of California, Berkeley.

The average U.S. household spends \$3500 annually at Walmart, and in 2006, the company represented 2.3% of our GDP. The company is so powerful that when a Walmart Supercenter comes to your town, the entire community's obesity rate increases.

In addition to the poverty level wages and poor benefits, one of the issues in the strike is that workers are being required to work on Thanksgiving Day. By striking on Black Friday, the busiest shopping day of the year, the OUR Walmart workers are showing their class consciousness and their awareness of the power they hold in their employer's formula for success.

This strike calls attention to our nation's fixation on the pursuit of cheap plastic crap to stuff our holiday gift-boxes. For many years, and for many reasons, some of us have boycotted stores on Black Friday as a protest to rampant consumerism. We would hope that after this year's demonstrations, perhaps future Black Fridays will be occasions to celebrate worker solidarity. As one striker in Dallas put it, "If you change Walmart, if you change Corporate America, it can really better a lot of people's lives."

Sources: *AlterNet.org, The Nation, The Huffington Post.*

LOCAL BIODEFENSE CON-

TRACT - The September 2012 issue of this column featured an article about the Pentagon hype that cuts in military spending resulting from sequestration would result in deeper unemployment. We have further evidence that this is bunk, that DoD funds are flowing freely, right here in the Lehigh Valley.

DME Alliance, an engineering consulting firm in Allentown that specializes in design of advanced technology facilities, recently announced that they have been awarded a federal biodefense contract worth over \$2 million to assist the US Department of Defense's Joint Program Executive Office for Chemical and Biological Defense.

It is not clear how many jobs will be created, what kind of advanced technology facilities will be designed, where they will be constructed. And it begs the question of precisely what sort of chemical and/or biological materials the Department of Defense wants to manufacture, and dispose of, and whether such materials will pass through the Lehigh Valley bioregion en route to and from DME designed facility. Let's keep an eye on this project, folks.

DECARCERATE PA - Since his election as Governor of Pennsylvania, Tom Corbett has cut funding for education while raising millions of dollars for additional beds in existing prisons, and for the construction of three new prisons. In response a coalition of criminal justice reform groups has founded Decarcerate PA, an organization committed to creating a safe healthy future without prisons in Pennsylvania. The group's three-point platform calls for: "No new prisons, a decrease in the incarceration rate overall, and more community reinvestment."

Decarcerate PA and its member groups seek to make the public aware that the expansion of the state's prison system is at the expense of other priorities, like education, and simply strengthens the school-to-prison pipeline. The lead banner at a recent rally read: "\$100 million for 1000 prison beds = 365 classrooms closed."

An activist from Action United, one of the coalition member groups, said, "Instead of supporting our children to develop and thrive, Governor Corbett's budget sacrifices our children's futures before they are even given a chance. When we should be preparing them for graduation and positive contributions to our society, Corbett is putting them on a track to fill prison beds."

Source: "From the Frontlines," Bread & Roses Community Fund Newsletter.

- Jeff Vitelli

SOA Watch Vigil at the Gates : November 2012

Five of us from the Lehigh Valley (Sarah Snider, Judy Woodruff, Louise Legun, Tom Stinnett and myself) made the annual trek to Georgia for the November gathering at the gates of Ft. Benning, home of the infamous School of the Americas (renamed the Western Hemisphere Institute for Security Cooperation, WHINSEC). As always it was a weekend of inspiration, learning, and sharing. The weather was grand and the music from the vigil stage was also grand as emma's revolution, Charlie King, Colleen Kattau, and Joe Jencks, were among the excellent performers in the Musicians Collective for the weekend.

The Puppetistas presented dramatic pageants on both days of the vigil, and the most dramatic pageant was the funeral procession by the thousands in attendance on Sunday, carrying crosses or other symbols bearing the names of victims of violence committed by SOA graduates -- the crosses and symbols were laid at Ft. Benning's gate.

Guests from the Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Guatemala, Colombia, Costa Rica, Paraguay, Mexico and Honduras were among those speaking from the vigil stage and leading workshops on developments in their respective countries. Young people, nuns, and veterans were a significant presence among the thousands in attendance.

At a Saturday workshop, Father Melo, a Jesuit priest and radio host from Honduras, described Honduras, Guatemala and El Salvador, as a triangle with the greatest violence on the planet -- narco-trafficking, organized crime more powerful than the police, highest rates of criminality in history. He said Honduras is a state where the oligarchy has grown over the last 30 years with 205 super rich people (with fortunes above \$30 million), related in only 13 families. This is, not surprisingly, contrasted with serious poverty -- 2 million without jobs, young people fleeing for El Norte with no plans for returning, land concentrated in a few hands. Earlier this year a caravan of Honduran mothers of disappeared immigrants traveled for three weeks in Mexico looking for their children who had fled Honduras on the dangerous train rides to the north.

On Sunday morning those gathered at the vigil said, "No Mas, No More," to the 460 political assassinations in Honduras since the 2009 coup; to the "War on Drugs" in Mexico where 60,000 have been killed in the last six years; and, to those who led an "express coup" in Paraguay in 2012. We were called to convert that day's symbolic march to a permanent march of resistance to empire, to become guarantors of the future, declaring justice and sowing peace.

One man crossed the line, climbing and crossing the fence around Ft. Benning. Nashua Chantal, age 60, of Americus, Georgia, faces a possible six-month prison sentence. His court hearing will be in January.

I was glad to be able to join a picket line for current farm workers struggling for justice in this year in

which a National Monument was dedicated to Cesar Chavez and the United Farm Workers in Keene, California. On Sunday, the Coalition of Immokalee Workers, longtime participants in the SOA Watch Vigils, picketed a Publix grocery store near Ft. Benning. This was part of their campaign to organize for dignity and better wages for Florida's tomato farm workers. Their energy, dedication, and focused organizing has gained significant agreements for this group with Whole Foods, McDonalds, and nine other leading food corporations. The UFW workers were mostly Mexican-American; the Immokalee workers are Latino, Haitian and Mayan immigrants to the U.S.

So SOA Watch continues the long struggle to close this real and symbolic source of U.S.-sponsored violence in Latin America. Six countries have said no to the SOA -- two of them in 2012. SOA Watch will march again in Washington, DC, April 8-10. Until then you can learn more at www.soaw.org and you can join LEPOCO's Americas Solidarity Group that is working on peace issues concerning our southerly neighbors.

- Nancy Tate

While an Emergency International Delegation traveled to Gaza in late November, local peace activists (Kathryn Hoffman and Addison Bross) organized an emergency delegation to meet with Rep. Charlie Dent. The nine people in attendance on December 2nd expressed their deep concerns about the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and the urgent need for the U.S. to take more serious steps for peace.

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.

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.

Bits & Pieces

⊕ Over 150 people participated in the 53rd Annual Nazareth-to-Bethlehem **Christmas Peace Pilgrimage** on Dec. 8th. This important witness for peace took place on a mild, but damp day. Thank you to the Planning Committee, all the churches who hosted rest stops, those who cooked the meal, and all who walked the ten-mile route -- whether from the Lehigh Valley or from out-of-town or out-of-state.

⊕ The Eastern District and Franconia Mennonite Conferences will hold their Annual **Winter Peace Retreat**, Feb. 8-10 at Spruce Lake Retreat, Canadensis, PA. The Rev. Kelly Denton-Borhaug, Ph.D., of Moravian College, will be the featured speaker on the topic, "How Did War Get to Be Religious? Supporting Christian Peace-Builders in U.S. War Culture." The cost for the weekend is \$165 for adults, with lower rates for young people. The registration deadline is Jan. 18. For more info. see www.peaceretreat.ppj.org or call Carolyn Boyd at 610-489-9084.

⊕ Congratulations to those who have worked hard to get **petition signatures so Allentown voters will get a chance to decide whether the city will privatize its water and sewer plants.** Those circulating petitions got twice as many signatures as the 2000 required in the city's Home Rule Charter. The petition campaign was announced on Oct. 25th, and the 4000 signatures were turned in on Nov. 25th. The group circulating petitions has many concerns about finances, safety, local control, and the environment around the Allentown city administration's plans to sell or lease the city's water. The petitioners face immediate concerns as the administration pushes ahead with plans to take a water and sewer lease contract before the City Council soon. For more info. see www.waterallentown.org.

⊕ Anyone traveling to Pittsburgh before January 6, can visit a photography exhibit, "**Marcellus Shale Documentary Project**," at the Pittsburgh

Filmmakers Galleries, 477 Melwood Ave., in the Oakland section of the city. The 50 photographs (the work of six photographers) in the exhibit flesh out the environmental, social and economic impact of natural-gas drilling in Pennsylvania. In one photograph Mimi Lang, of Bethlehem, is the activist standing in the State Capitol in "the lobbyist & activist on sidelines of protest in Harrisburg, PA." For more info. call 412-681-5449.

⊕ February 9-16, the Fellowship of Reconciliation and two other groups are organizing a **Community Leader Delegation to Ciudad Juárez, Mexico, and El Paso, Texas.** Ciudad Juárez has been called the "epicenter of pain," in the "drug war," but murder rates have declined significantly, offering a window to visit and understand a city that has experienced more than ten thousand murders in the last six years. This delegation is an unequalled opportunity for community leaders from around the U.S. to learn first-hand about the violence in Juárez, its causes and human impacts, and be inspired by what they are doing about it. Pastors, journalists, and activists, who will use this experience in their own communities are urged to partici-

pate. Cost: \$675: plus transportation to El Paso. For more info. see www.forusa.org the "Delegations" sections.

⊕ On November 20th, "more than 100 retired steelworkers, activists, educators and others gathered...to rally against deed restrictions" demanded by the Sands casino at the SteelStacks. The restrictions prohibit union organizing and talking offensively about the casino. Signs like "**Don't Gamble Away Our Free Speech**," were held and speakers called "the restrictions illegal and a strike at the memory of everyone who toiled there." Contact the United Steelworkers 2599 for more info. (Source: *The Morning Call*, 11/21/12.)

⊕ There seems to be a never-ending trail of conflict and environmental destruction around hydraulic fracturing for natural gas. *The Morning Call* carried a long story on Nov. 22nd about the disruption and destruction in Wisconsin that is resulting from **the mining of industrial sand, used in the fracking process.** One farmer who turned down an offer for a mine on his property said, "When I was a kid, we spent all our time in those hills... There's got to be a better ways than this."

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

Mondays, December 10 & January 14, 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.

Friday, December 14, 1 pm: Newsletter Planning Committee Meeting at LEPOCO Peace Center.

Tuesday, December 18, 3:30 pm: Nuclear Abolition Sisters meeting at LEPOCO Peace Center.

Sunday, January 6, 7 pm: LEPOCO Peace Singers rehearsal at home of Bob & Carmen Riggs, Bethlehem.

Sunday, January 13, 7 pm: LEPOCO Peace Singers rehearsal at home of Nancy Johnston, Easton.

Monday, January 14, 12:15 pm: Americas Solidarity Group meeting at LEPOCO Peace Center.

Tuesday, January 15, 3:30 pm: LEPOCO Bike/Walkathon Planning Meeting at the Peace Center.

Sunday, January 20, 7 pm: LEPOCO Peace Singers rehearsal at home of Barbara & Al Wurth, Bethlehem.

Please join in the meetings and work of these groups as you are able.

If you want more information about any of these meetings;

or if you want to know the next meeting of the Committee Against State Killing, Peace Camp Planning Committee, or the Annual Dinner Planning Committee, please call LEPOCO at 610-691-8730.

For a regularly updated calendar of events and meetings please see www.lepoco.org.



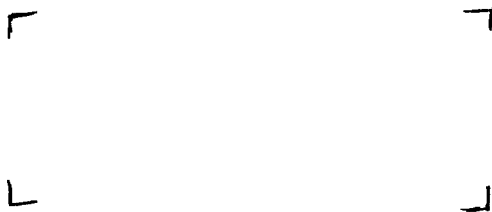
LEPOCO

Lehigh-Pocono Committee of Concern

313 W. Fourth St., Bethlehem, PA 18015
610-691-8730 lepoco@fast.net
Fax: 610-691-8904 www.lepoco.org

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Death Penalty
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Struggle Shared

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Close SOA

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Bits & Pieces
Meetings...

Monthly Peace Vigil

Our wars continue. Please help witness for peace.

4:00-5:00 pm

Second Thursdays: December 13 & January 10

3rd & Wyandotte Sts., Bethlehem

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



Holiday Gifts

SERRV crafts & food;

Peace Boutique buttons, stickers, cards;

Holiday cards & 2013 Calendars

Available at LEPOCO during normal
office hours until December 21st.

Call 610-691-8730 for more info.

Popcorn & Politics
First Friday Film

American Autumn

Documentary on the Occupy movement.

Friday, January 4th, 7 pm

LEPOCO Peace Center

(See page 3 for more info.)

Cut the War Profiteers
& Oil Oligarchs!

Protect Programs for the People
(Social Security, Medicare, Medicaid,
Education, Unemployment, Clean Energy,
Health Care)!

Tax the Richest, the Plutocrats,
the Wall St. Gamblers,
the Monopoly Corporations!

(See page 3 for more info.)