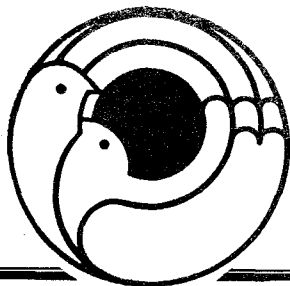


December  
2006

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

## Unexpected Problems

LEPOCO has been functioning with more handicaps than normal in the last month. We apologize for the results that have affected our members.

1) We mailed the last newsletter on November 7 and 8. Based on past experience we expected that most newsletters to the 180--, 181--, and 183-- zip codes would be delivered in one to two days. We started calling the post office on November 9 (and called daily for over a week) when not one of the newsletters we could track, from among those mailed on November 7, had been delivered. The post office said they were busy, but then they could not find our mailing. Well into the next week the manager at Lehigh Valley Post Office finally determined that inexperienced workers had sent our trays of newsletter for local zip codes to a regional processing facility by mistake. He was able to retrieve some of those trays and bring them back to the Lehigh Valley for sorting, and some of those were delivered late the second week! Some trays were obviously sorted at the regional facility because they were delivered as late as the last week of November and into early December. Indeed, we are not sure that all the November newsletters were ever delivered. We apologize. We hope the post office functions on their better model of efficiency in the future.

2) On November 17 our computer crashed. A local repair shop determined that we had lost our hard drive. We chose to have that hard drive replaced, to save some money and to limit our contributions to the computer waste stream. With the help of Tom Stinnett, we were able to get the computer going again and start reloading our data. We also had engaged a computer expert to help with retrieving that data, since the repair shop had been useless for that task.

Unfortunately, a week and a half later, on December 10, the hard drive crashed again. It was determined that a new computer was the only answer. No one seems sure whether the problems were virus driven, or were internal to the old computer. We are able to do this newsletter thanks to a retired computer that has come to the rescue. We have a long road to recovery ahead. We hope to be able to send e-mails again in January and get our financial records updated soon.

Again we apologize, but technology breakdowns can be especially damaging to our efforts these days. The LEPOCO Action Meeting of December 11, established a special fund to help with these unexpected expenses. If you would like to contribute, checks can be made out to LEPOCO, with "computer aid" written on the memo line, and mailed to LEPOCO Peace Center, 313 W. 4<sup>th</sup> St., Bethlehem, PA 18015. Thank you.

- Nancy C. Tate

## Let's Tell Congress: Bring the Troops Home!

United for Peace and Justice is organizing a massive march on Washington, D.C., for Saturday, January 27, 2007. It will call on Congress to take immediate action to end the war in Iraq.

LEPOCO and Lehigh Valley Peace Coalition have reserved a bus from the Lehigh Valley for the trip to D.C. on January 27<sup>th</sup>. The cost for a seat is \$35 regular or \$20 limited income (or whatever you can afford in between). Donations are welcomed from those who cannot go to DC, in January, to help cover the expenses for those who want to attend, but cannot afford the full fare. Please send your reservation to LEPOCO Peace Center, 313 W. 4<sup>th</sup> St., Bethlehem, PA 18015. If you need more information please call 610-691-8730.

In UFPJ's call they say, "The peace and justice movement helped make ending the war in Iraq the primary issue in this last election. The actions we take do make a difference... On Election Day people took individual action by voting. On January 27 we will take collective action, as we march, to make sure Congress understands the urgency of this moment.

### Save me a seat!

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_ e-mail \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_ Please reserve \_\_\_\_ seat(s) for me on the bus to the Jan. 27<sup>th</sup> March on Washington, DC, to Bring the Troops Home Now. I've enclosed a check for \$ \_\_\_\_\_ (\$35 each regular/\$20 each limited income)

\_\_\_\_ I cannot go to Washington, DC, but I would like to help make sure others are able to go. Enclosed is a donation of \$ \_\_\_\_\_.

Return to: LEPOCO, 313 W. 4<sup>th</sup> St., Bethlehem, PA 18015.



# Election Reflections



At his presentation at LEPOCO's Annual Dinner last March, Noam Chomsky said that despite the horrors going on in the world, the public opinion polls gave him hope. The great majority of people support values at odds with the Bush agenda.

Battered as we were by the bullying, mendacious politics of the time, this was probably cold comfort for many in the audience.

Fast forward to eight months later, to the aftermath of the mid-term elections, in which Bush and his sociopathic agenda were, across the country, soundly repudiated, and one can more easily share Chomsky's reason for hope. One could be forgiven for even going euphoric, like the person who sent an e-mail saying, "Rick Santorum is gone! Praise Jesus and pass the wine!"

By November 9<sup>th</sup>, it was obvious that the people who answer the pollsters also got out and put their vote where their mouth was. In Montana, Jon Tester won a senatorial race against three-term incumbent Conrad Burns, a tried and true friend of the corporate elite. Tester ran on issues like raising the minimum wage to a livable level, providing health care for all, saving social security from the privatizers, and giving military control of Iraq to the Iraqis, and bringing the troops home.

Democrats added 300 legislative seats, and won control of both houses in 15 states, including, for the first time since 1874, New Hampshire. Carol Shear-Porter, a teacher, social worker, and staunch opponent of the Iraq war, upset the GOP's entrenched incumbent and became the first New Hampshire woman ever to go to Congress.

Jon Hall, one of the founders of the band *Orleans*, beat the GOP incumbent Congressman in the Hudson Valley of New York. He had the enthusiastic backing of labor, environmental, and anti-war groups. At the risk of sounding hyperbolic, if Jon Hall can get elected to Congress, we may be on the threshold of a revolution.

Voters in the 18-29 age bracket had the highest turnout in 20 years, up 4% this year from the 2002 mid-term elections. They favored Democrats 60% to 38%.

An informal sampling of LEPOCO members yielded these opinions of the election outcome: Joe DeRaymond thought it was "the minimum step necessary to maintain hope." He believes a significant speed bump has been thrown in front of rising fascism.

Tamara Nisic said, "This can only be a step in a positive direction," and Kathryn Hoffman exclaimed, "I'm astounded by the number of Democrats that won! I hope they'll earn their winning by following through on the war and human needs."

Joan Stolz said, "I'm broken-hearted that Dent won. He spent an absurd amount of money on negative ads. That money could have gone to the YMCA, Girl Scouts, Headstart. ...I'm glad we took over the Senate and House, and very happy that Nancy Pelosi won." Robert Daniels, II, said he is "cautiously optimistic. It's a step in the right direction, but we'll see if anything actually changes." Suzie Ravitz said she wished the Democrats had put more effort in Dertinger (their candidate for the U.S. House from the 15<sup>th</sup> Congressional District). She believes Rep. Dent (the one-term incumbent in that district) could probably have been beaten. (Dent spent in the neighborhood of \$1.2 million on his campaign, Dertinger had a budget of about \$67,000.) But, she feels a glimmer of hope. Overall, she was very happily surprised.

Greta Browne, herself a candidate for the 15<sup>th</sup> Congressional seat for the Green Party, said she was "pleased that the U.S. electorate moved the country in the direction of progressive issues, but I'm not sure it will make much of a difference. Bush's remaining two years could still be very destructive."

As they take on the monied interests, the newly elected forces of hope and change will need the full strength of the progressive community at their back.

- Mike Lawton

**A Short Note:** At the November 13<sup>th</sup> LEPOCO Action Meeting, an Open Letter to members of Congress, current and newly elected, was approved calling for immediate action to end the war in Iraq. A similar call has been issued by a collection of Pennsylvania peace organizations and addressed to Senator-elect Bob Casey. Both letters are available at the LEPOCO Office.

Newsletter of **LEPOCO**

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The LEPOCO Newsletter is published 10 times a year by the Lehigh-Pocono Committee of Concern, a non-violent, non-profit organization dedicated to peace in all forms.

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Household Membership . . . . .	\$30
Supporting Member . . . . .	\$50

Articles/news should be submitted by the third Wednesday of the month for use in the following month's newsletter.

Newsletter Staff: Ellen Buck, Peter Crownfield, Fran Dreisbach, Arlene Grow, Mike Lawton, Tom Lloyd, Bob Riggs, Tom Stinnett, Joan Stolz, Joan Stone, Nancy Tate, Marion Thorne, Jeff Vitelli, Hans Wuerth and Ursula Wuerth.

Thanks to all the people who staple, fold and label the newsletter each month.

LEPOCO Steering Committee: Dan Acker (co-treas.), Ellen Buck, Peter Christine, Peter Crownfield (ex-officio), Robert Daniels, Julius Iwantsch (co-treasurer), Holly Kent, Mike Lawton (ex-officio), Janet Ney, Susie Ravitz, and Nancy Tate (ex-officio).

# Popcorn & Politics

## Potluck & Politics

at the LEPOCO Peace Center

Friday, January 5, 7 pm

*Popcorn & Politics (1st Friday Film)*

### *Joyeux Noël*

(Merry Christmas)

*Joyeux Noël*, Academy Award nominee for Best Foreign Film, tells the true story of the WW I Christmas truce when Scottish, French, and German troops laid down their weapons and came out of the trenches for one night to band together in common humanity and forget the brutalities of war. Written and directed by Christian Carion. 160 min. In French, English and German, with English subtitles. Please bring a snack or beverage to share.

Sunday, January 21, 6 pm

*Potluck & Politics*

Reports From the Global South:

Observing Elections in  
Nicaragua & Venezuela

Joe DeRaymond, Sarah Snider,  
& Tim Chadwick

This Potluck & Politics program will feature three recent visitors to Latin America. Joe DeRaymond and Sarah Snider were part of a Witness For Peace delegation observing the early November elections in Nicaragua that returned Daniel Ortega to the presidency of that country. Tim Chadwick joined the New York City-based Albert Lovaro Bolivarian Circle in their delegation to observe Venezuela's early December election where Hugo Chavez was reelected president. These experienced activists will have much to report from their trips and will relate these two elections to some of the other changes being seen in Latin America. Please bring some food to share for the potluck dinner at 6 pm.

## Special Print Available

William Kelly, formerly of Bethlehem, now of Australia, is an internationally celebrated artist whose work has been dedicated to peacemaking and nonviolence. He has created works specifically for Kent State, Portadown and Belfast, Northern Ireland, Guernica, Spain, Tbilisi, Republic of Georgia, and Durban, South Africa, among other places where, he believes, there is a role for the artist as witness, commentator, healer and ambassador.

He is the editor of *Violence to Non-Violence... With Prints from the Peace Project*, (Harwood/Craftsman

House, 1994) and of *Art and Humanist Ideals: Contemporary Perspectives*, (Macmillan, 2003).

Kelly was, in April 2006, the recipient of the Courage of Conscience Award given by the Peace Abbey, Sherborne, Massachusetts. Past recipients include Mahatma Gandhi, Muhammad Ali, The Dalai Lama, Martin Luther King, Jr., and John Lennon.

Kelly has created a print for the benefit of LEPOCO and assigned the rights to LEPOCO. Prints are available at the office for a small donation.

- Lee & Ellen Buck



## Counterman Released

After having served over seventeen years in prison, many of them on Death Row, Dennis Counterman was released from Lehigh County Prison on October 18th. The story of how he lost his three children in a tragic house fire in Allentown, and was then found guilty of arson and sentenced to death is a tale that illuminates many of the problems with the death penalty, not the least of which is how close we came to having an innocent person killed in our name.

Dennis Counterman was released from prison with only the shirt on his back. He is in need of assistance to get started and live on his own. He is currently staying with his niece in Allentown and can use furniture and/or money to help get back on his feet again. Contributions can be made out to Dennis Counterman and sent to: Dennis Counterman; c/o James Moreno; Assistant Federal Defender; Capital Habeas Unit; Suite 545 West Curtis Building; 601 Walnut St.; Philadelphia, PA 19106.

For more information on the case of Dennis Counterman, LEPOCO member Joe DeRaymond has written an article that is posted at [www.counterpunch.org](http://www.counterpunch.org). If you have household items that you wish to donate, please call David Rose at 610-253-2577.

- David Rose

Editor's Note: As a gesture of support, members of the Lehigh Valley Committee Against State Killing are sending holiday cards to Dennis Counterman. If you would like to join this effort call LEPOCO for the mailing address.

### Weekly Peace Vigils

**Bethlehem:** 4-5 pm, Thursdays  
3rd & Wyandotte Sts., south Bethlehem  
Contact: Vince Stravino 610-216-8103

**Allentown:** Noon-1 pm, Fridays  
Federal Courthouse, 5th & Hamilton Sts,  
Contact: Rev. John Clint Fowler, 610-746-5013

**Easton:** 10-11 am, Saturdays  
Centre Square

Contact: Reggie Regrut, 908-859-5632  
*Please attend as often as you are able!*

## Sister Helen Prejean

### Converses with 200 \_\_\_\_\_

Sr. Helen Prejean, author of *Dead Man Walking* and *The Death of Innocents*, spoke on November 1 to an audience of about 200 people at Lehigh University. It wasn't a lecture so much as a chance, as she put it, to tell about some of her experiences and start a conversation about the death penalty.

Sr. Prejean, a Catholic nun, told the audience that she wasn't always opposed to the death penalty, but over 20 years ago she had an awakening and realized that Jesus' teaching that "whatever you do to the least of these, you do to Me," should guide her actions. So, in 1982, she wrote a letter to Patrick Sonnier, a multiple killer on death row in Louisiana's Angola Prison. And thus began a lifelong commitment to end the death penalty.

She wound up serving as spiritual advisor to Sonnier and several other death-row inmates. As she learned to know them and care about them as people, she realized that "people are more than the worst thing they've ever done." When efforts to prevent their executions failed, she accompanied them on their final steps, offered what consolation and dignity she could, and watched as they were killed. She has also worked with victims' families, so she is well aware of their distress, too. "It was a lot easier," she said, "when I could say a few prayers and leave all the work to God."

The real question that we must ask is, "Do these criminals deserve to die after what they did?" For Sr. Prejean, the answer is a resounding No. She described a system that is much more likely to sentence a person to death if he or she is poor, mentally ill, or a person of color whose victim was white -- a system where erroneous eyewitness testimony and even deliberate concealment of evidence often result in innocent people being convicted and executed. And, she explained, a death sentence costs 2-3 times as much as life imprisonment, but despite the high cost studies show that the death penalty does not deter crime or reduce crime rates. In response to a question from the audience, Sr. Prejean said that "the alternative to death is life... We have to take the death penalty off the table."

Sr. Prejean explained that her personal experiences with death-row inmates convinced her that every human -- even someone who may be guilty of multiple murders and other heinous crimes -- deserves to be accorded dignity and respect. Under the present system "the horror of the original crime is matched by the horror of what the state is doing," she said. "If we don't speak, we are complicit, we are part of it."

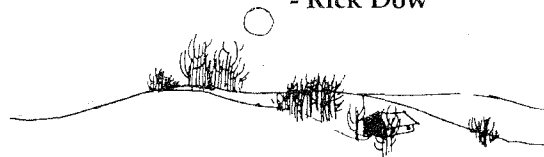
For more information or to find out how you can do your part to end the death penalty, contact the Lehigh Valley Committee Against State Killing by calling LEPOCO at 610-691-8730 or by talking with David Rose or Maria Weick.

- Peter Crownfield

## Peace Pilgrims in the 47<sup>th</sup> Year

So many people are so busy at this time of the year preparing for the Holidays. There is shopping to be done, visits to plan for, and special meals to prepare. Then there are all of the many other Holiday traditions like church bazaars, Nutcracker performances and Vespers to attend. There has been another seasonal tradition going on in the Lehigh Valley for the last 46 years: the annual Nazareth-to-Bethlehem Christmas Peace Pilgrimage. Over 150 participants joined in this wonderful way to mark the season on Saturday, December 9-- taking a day to step out of the rush of preparation. Thank you to all those who organize this event each year. We hope to have a longer report in the January Newsletter. The Pilgrimage website is [www.peacewalk.org](http://www.peacewalk.org) for plans for 2007 in the coming months.

- Rick Dow



## Colombia Exhibition Closes \_\_\_\_\_

November saw two special events connected to "Resistance Unarmed: Colombian Communities Building Alternatives to War," the photographic exhibition which featured San José de Apartadó, with which LEPOCO has developed a connection. On November 7, about 12 of us joined Janice Gallagher and Fedelma McKenna for a delightful lunch at The Quadrant in Easton. The two young women were cycling from Massachusetts to Washington, DC, to raise money for the FOR accompaniment project in Colombia. They will be on the accompaniment team in San José for the Fellowship of Reconciliation. Their energy and enthusiasm for this project will serve them well in Colombia. Janice left for San José on November 24, and Fedelma will go there in January.

Renata Rendon, who accompanied in San Jose in 2004-2005, came to Lehigh University, November 10 to talk about her experiences in Colombia. She was there when the Colombian army killed several people from the community in cold blood, an experience which colored her presentation and has deeply affected her life since. She currently works for Amnesty International in Washington, DC.

"Resistance Unarmed" was here through the auspices of Lehigh University's Art Galleries. The exhibition closed at the University Center on December 10. Thank you to the L.U. Art Galleries for bringing this beautiful and inspiring exhibition to the campus and to the Lehigh Valley.

- Janet Goloub

Editor's Note: Joe DeRaymond and Janet Goloub spoke about FOR's Colombia program for a small group at First Presbyterian Church, Allentown, on November 26. It was part of a four-part series at the church on Latin America.

# The Struggle Shared

*We are the soldiers of our community. But as soldiers, we don't look for security through weapons: We carry sticks... We're here to defend our communities, but not with lead. With traditional medicine, our sticks are mediating forces. We purify them with ceremonies. Then people see us as friends, not enemies. This protects us.*

- Indigenous Guard leader, "Building from the Inside Out: Peace Initiatives in War-Torn Colombia,"

## SPEAK SOFTLY AND CARRY A

POWERFUL STICK - In the creation myth of the Nasa people, indigenous of the deep mountains of northern Colombia, Cosmic Wisdom gave power to two orphans to defend the Nasa, and keep peace in their territory. To one, he gave an axe; to the other a slingshot. Bickering continued, so Cosmic Wisdom selected a visionary leader, who he named Spiritual Authority, and to whom he gave a wooden staff. Today, in war-torn Colombia, the warrior spirit of the Nasa is represented by the wooden staff, symbolic of the warrior's real weapons: the will, strength and authority to defend life. "At no time will we take up arms," say the Nasa. "Arms are symbols of death."

During the centuries of Spanish Colonialization, the Nasa non-violently asserted and maintained their authority. After independence they staged mass unarmed occupations of their traditional lands to defy landlords. And in the ongoing civil strife and increasing violence of the last century, the Nasa have remained at the forefront of creative nonviolent initiatives to strengthen the autonomy of Colombia's Indigenous Peoples.

Today, every Nasa village has ten Indigenous Guard members, men, women and youth, who, connected by a sophisticated communication network with Guards in neighboring villages, patrol the territories to keep out armed intruders. They always carry their sticks. Although hundreds of Nasa have been killed just in the last few years of the war, their nonviolent strategies have also saved hundreds of lives.

The United Nations Development Program awarded the Nasa

the Equator Prize in 2004, in recognition of their "courageous work to incorporate holistic strategies for natural and cultural preservation into daily life -- while in the midst of civil strife and violence."

## YOUNG PEOPLE MAKE PEACE

- In my work as a therapist, I teach people a ritual, scanning headlines of local newspapers for the stories that inspire hope, in order to rise above the despair they feel when they read the major news stories on most days. Two such stories, both about young people, have found their way to The Struggle Shared.

In September, as reported in *The Express-Times*, the touring choir of the Lehigh Valley Charter School for the Performing Arts, traveled to the United Nations in New York City to participate in the observance of the International Day of Global Ceasefire, Nonviolence and the Cultures of Peace. The event brought together 600 high school students from the U.S. and linked them via satellite to students in the Democratic Republic of Congo, Kosovo, and Liberia.

The 36-member Lehigh Valley choir performed "For Peace," by Jane Marshall and "Trail of Tears," by local folksinger, Jackie Tice.

On October 21<sup>st</sup>, a headline in *The Morning Call* read, "Little Ones For a Little Peace." The story, with heart-lifting photographs, portrayed a group of 100 kindergarten students in Allentown who marched on City Hall with signs and colorful hearts chanting "Stop the violence," and singing "Give Peace a Chance."

The students and their teachers were participating in the final day of the Week Without Violence in Allentown. During that week the city's 10<sup>th</sup> murder of the year oc-

curred and there were bomb threats necessitating the evacuation of schools. At City Hall, the young peace activists were met by Mayor Ed Pawlowski, who told them, "Ending violence is not, and cannot be a government program. It has to be a community effort."

## GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTABILITY PROJECT NEEDS

SUPPORT - Could we have ended the Vietnam War if Daniel Ellsberg had not leaked the Pentagon Papers? How much would we know about Israel's membership in the Nuclear Weapons Club if Mordechai Vanunu had not been our spy? We owe a tremendous debt of gratitude to the men and women who have dared to blow the whistle on government deceit, corporate corruption, and secret practices that have endangered human lives, ecological communities, and the future of the planet.

There is an organization that was founded to protect whistleblowers from retaliation. The Government Accountability Project (GAP) defends and supports brave people who want to tell the truth to the public.

One case in point is Dr. David Graham, who, as a scientist with the Food and Drug Administration, discovered the dangers of Vioxx. With the support of the GAP, Dr. Graham testified in public that Vioxx increases the risk of heart attacks and sudden death by 500%, and revealed that the FDA had tried to cover it up.

The Government Accountability Project is working with insiders in the food industry to expose dangerous meat-handling practices, with former government officials with evidence of how the Council on Environmental Quality was hiding findings on the human impact on climate change, and on many other fronts.

To support whistleblowers, contact the Government Accountability Project at 1612 "K" St., NW, Suite 1100, Washington, DC 20006. Their website is [www.whistleblower.org](http://www.whistleblower.org).

- Jeff Vitelli

## Fort Benning -- At Last

Everyone has a reason to come here to the now annual November demonstrations to close the U.S. Army School of the Americas (renamed WHINSEC, Western Hemisphere Institute for Security Cooperation, but also nicknamed the School of Assassins). The demonstrations are held just outside the gates of Fort Benning, in Georgia, where the school is located. Curiosity was not mine. I already knew about the legions of hell beyond the gates.

In July of 2001 I went to my first Church of the Brethren Conference. I elected to hear Father Roy Bourgeois speak at an insight session. I could not believe what I was hearing. I had to know more so I bought three videos and a paperback about the SOA. How could this be happening in our country? I talked to my minister about this -- what else was going on that I didn't know about? Rev. Jeff Rill suggested that I go to the LEPOCO Office in Bethlehem. I did find my answers.

It has taken me five years to get to Fort Benning. My granddaughter, Britany, had gone down last year with a group from American Univesity. I promised her I would go this year too. Sister Suzanne and her bus group organized from Scranton made this possible. Also, robert Daniels II gave me a ride to Harrisburg where we boarded the bus.

I had spoken to my cousin, Paul Sharrer, about the SOA. He lives in Mississippi and had never heard about it. He and his wife said they would meet me in Columbus, Georgia. He uses a walker, but is stubborn and was not going to miss this. He is a survivor of Iwo Jima in WW II. He thanked me time and again for telling him about this demonstration so he could be there. I know he will tell others in Mississippi about the need to close the SOA.

The big day was Sunday, November 19 -- crosses were being handed out. The name on my cross was Therese, age 7. She had been murdered by the SOA graduates. I walked with a group of 1000 grandmothers in the procession to the gates of Ft. Benning. After each name of a SOA victim was announced we would raise our cross and say, "Presente." When I got to the gate I placed Therese's cross on the gate. I glanced at the towering trees and the sky above and wondered if she was at peace. Did she somehow know we cared?

We headed back to the bus to leave for home at 1 pm, Sunday.

I had trouble sorting out how I felt -- outraged, with the schools' continuation and also spent physically. Some of the group on the bus come every year. Today 13 people have crossed the line and were arrested (like Joe DeRaymond last year).

What will it take to close the school? If Congress won't close it; WE MUST!!!

- Arlene Grow

## Seeking a Just Foreign Policy in Iraq & Iran

About 60 people, dedicated in their attempts to fathom the confusion of U.S. policies toward these two evil-empired countries, spent the afternoon of Saturday, November 11, listening to speakers who shared their experiences of U.S. foreign policy.

Dahlia Wasfi, a young medical doctor of Jewish and Iraqi heritage, spoke of her first visit since the 2003 war to her father's family in Basra. The visit turned her into a political activist to tell the truth about what is happening in Iraq. She feels that the U.S. war is not a war on terror, but a war for oil. Her description of shock and awe in Basra as equivalent to shock and awe in Yonkers helped us to understand the desperation of her family. She wished that "never again" would apply to Iraq too.

She offered the following statistics related to Iraq since 1991:

- Infant mortality -- increased 600%;
- Childhood leukemia -- increased 300%;
- 90% of children's deaths are related to diarrhea and respiratory infections (treatable diseases);
- 270,000 children have no immunizations.

Dan Pearson, a member of the Catholic Worker movement, arrived at the event with the brightly-painted bus of the Wheels of Justice Tour. Dan spent three months in Syria, recently, learning Arabic. He showed photographs from his time spent this past summer with the Israeli Committee Against Home Demolitions on a re-building project in Palestine.

Rostam Pourzal is an Iranian who works for the U.S. Campaign Against Sanctions and Military Intervention in Iran. He feels that both Iran and the U.S. resist change. He described a U.S. that wants more and better everything to achieve world domination by stealing resources from whatever country has them. He described an Iran where "the worst is over." He spoke of Iran's education system with more than two million university students, 60% of whom are women. Thousands of students are studying English and want to make Iran a modern technological Islamic country.

Rostam relayed the history of the U.S. pressuring the Shah of Iran to have nuclear reactors and over 30 years later, insisting that they get rid of nuclear reactors. He says there is no indication that Iran has plans for nuclear weapons. He feels the reason the U.S. is interfering with the sovereign nation of Iran is to control the energy (oil) that is supplied to China, the rival superpower in a new Cold War.

These speakers visited Bethlehem as part of the Tour for a Just Foreign Policy that had been touring the northeast U.S. over the past two weeks. For more information see [www.justforeignpolicy.org](http://www.justforeignpolicy.org).

- Mimi Lang



# Bits & Pieces

🕒 Congratulations to Peter Christine. The Express-Times recently wrote about his newsletter "The Bethlehem Regurgitator," (published on-line at [bethlehemregurgitator.bravehost.com](http://bethlehemregurgitator.bravehost.com) and also in some few hard copies) and gave him one of their weekly "Trophies" on Nov. 11.

🕒 Some of LEPOCO Steering Committee members stand for election every two years. In March we will complete the election of two at-large members of the Steering Committee and two people to fill the co-treasurers positions. If you are interested in either position, please contact LEPOCO or Janet Ney and Holly Kent, recently appointed as a Nominating Committee duo.

🕒 The Planning Committee for LEPOCO's Annual Dinner will meet in January. Can you help with their work? The dinner is set for Sat., March 31. Our speaker will be Kathy Kelly, widely known and respected for her work with Voices In the Wilderness and other creative nonviolent witnessing. More about the dinner and Kathy Kelly in future newsletters.

🕒 On Jan. 11, the fifth anniversary of the first prisoners being brought to Guantánamo, there will be an International Day to Shut Down Guantánamo, with events in Washington, DC, and others in local communities. At the December LEPOCO Action Meeting it was decided to take this concern to the weekly Thursday vigil on that date, 4-5 pm, 3<sup>rd</sup> & Wyandotte Sts. S. Bethlehem.

🕒 Thanks to the organizing efforts of Reggie Regrut the weekly Saturday vigil in Easton Center Square held a special program on Sat., Nov. 11, Veterans' Day, honoring the memory of the Pennsylvania troops killed in Iraq and calling for an end to the war. The vigil was the focus of a story in The Morning Call of Sun., Nov. 12.

🕒 On Wed., Jan. 24, a conference entitled Building a Regional Good System: Supporting Farmers Families, Communities, and the Environment will be held at the Unitarian Universalist Church of the Lehigh Valley, 424 Center St., Bethlehem, from 6 to 9:30 pm. Speakers will address the importance of a local food economy, food and health issues, responding to peack oil and global warm-

ing, buy local campaigns, the current status of local farm production, and choosing to farm in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. This program and follow-up sessions will generate action proposals to be presented at the Penn State Cooperative Extension's Lehigh Valley Ag Summit on March 14. The public is invited! To reserve a place for a complimentary light dinner of soup and accompaniments showcasing regional foods, contact Steve Hoog at 610-410-5975 or livingpotentials@yahoo.com. This event is a project of Land & Water Lehigh Valley.

🕒 Available at the Peace Center:

1) Calendars from the Syracuse Cultural Workers, \$12.95; 2) War Resisters League calendars, "Screenpeace: An Antiwar Film Festival" with foreword by John Sayles, \$12.95; 3) Copies of the FCNL Newsletter, "Iraq: Which Way Up From Failure?"

🕒 Joe DeRaymond is planning a delegation from eastern Pennsylvania to El Salvador, March 8-16, to examine the causes of migration. We will print more next month. In the meantime contact Joe at 610-419-4656 for more info.

**December's  
Nuclear Nugget**

The nuclear deal, recently approved by the U.S. Senate, with India, is yet one more aspect of the Bush Administration's wildly incoherent policies on nuclear weapons proliferation; we invade Iraq over phantom nuclear weapons, threaten Iran with military attacks for processing uranium, wink at Israel's nuclear arsenal, give barely a slap on the wrist to Pakistan's veritable nuclear Wal-Mart, and now reward India for building nuclear weapons and refusing to sign nuclear treaties.

Source: Kevin Martin of Peace Action, [www.Peace-Action.org](http://www.Peace-Action.org)



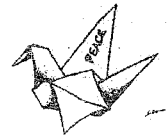
This creative project may take on any form you wish: poem, video, drawing, essay, photo, work of fiction, ect. Performance art such as dance or music expression may also be submitted by arrangement

1st Place: \$100

2nd Place: \$75

3rd Place: \$50

& many more prizes



**For High School Students**

Deadline: January 16, 2007  
Submit to: LEPOCO Peace Center  
313 N 4th Street Bethlehem, PA 18015  
Or Email Submissions to [lepocofast.net](mailto:lepocofast.net)  
Questions? Contact Stephanie Garman  
610-737-2249

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## MEETINGS... MEETINGS... MEETINGS... MEETINGS... ETC.

Tues., Jan. 2, 7 pm: LEPOCO Steering Committee Meeting at Peace Center.

Wed., Jan. 3, Noon: Fundraising Committee meeting over lunch at NAWAB Restaurant, S. Bethlehem.

Wed., Jan. 3, 6:30 pm: Nuclear Abolition Sisters meeting over dinner at Olive Branch Restaurant, S. Bethlehem.

Thurs, Jan. 4, 7 pm: Lehigh Valley Peace Coalition meeting at Peace Center.

Sun., Jan. 7, Afternoon: Phonathon Calling, final session, for and at LEPOCO. Can you help?

Sun., Jan. 7, 7 pm: LEPOCO Peace Singers at Ken Moore's home, Bethlehem. Call 610-691-8730 for directions.

Mon., Jan. 8, 7 pm: LEPOCO Monthly Action Meeting at Peace Center. All members and friends welcome!

Tues., Jan. 9, 8:30 am: Lehigh Valley Committee Against State Killing meeting at Peace Center.

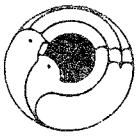
Wed., Jan. 17, 7 pm: Youth & Anti-Militarism Committee meeting at Humanities Center, Lehigh University, S. Bethlehem.

Wed., Jan. 17, 7 pm: Peace Camp Planning Meeting at Peace Center.

Mon., Jan. 22, 12:15 pm: Americas Solidarity Group meeting at Peace Center.

Wed., Jan. 24, 6 pm: First planning meeting for 2007 Bike-Walkathon Committee Peace Center.

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



**LEPOCO**

Lehigh-Pocono Committee of Concern  
313 W. Fourth St., Bethlehem, PA 18015  
(610) 691-8730

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*Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.*

*The Peace Witness*

**Friday, January 12, 2007**

**7:00 pm**

**The Rotunda**

**Bethlehem City Hall**

**Church Street, Bethlehem**

This is the now annual reading of Dr. King's "Declaration of Independence from the War in Vietnam." There will also be music and participants are invited to bring their favorite short quote from Dr. King or Coretta Scott King to share. A section of the program will bring attention to M.L. King's witness against nuclear weapons.

The "Declaration of Independence" will be read by over a dozen people and we are still recruiting those readers. Please call 610-691-8730 if you would like to read a section of the speech. We hope you can attend and be inspired again by the words of this great prophet of justice and peace.

**Save the Date**

Fri., Jan. 5, 7 pm: Popcorn & Politics with *Joyeux Noël* at LEPOCO (see p. 3)

Thur., Jan. 11, 4-5 pm: Weekly Vigil at 3<sup>rd</sup> & Wyandotte, S. Bethlehem, focus on "International Day to Shut Down Guantánamo" (see p. 7)

Tues., Jan. 16: Deadline for Peace Art Expression Contest for high school students (see p. 7)

Sun., Jan. 21, 6 pm: Potluck & Politics, Joe DeRaymond, Sarah Snider & Tim Chadwick on Elections in Nicaragua & Venezuela (see p. 3)

Sat., Jan. 27: Bus to March on D.C. to "Bring the Troops Home!" (see p. 1)

