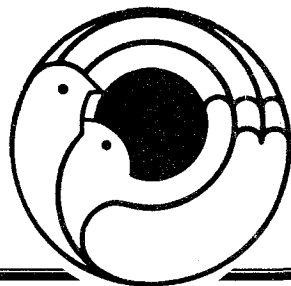


January  
2005

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Newsletter of **LEPOCO**

Lehigh-Pocono Committee of Concern

## The King Peace Witness



On Wednesday, January 19, at 7 pm, LEPOCO will hold what has now become an annual reading of the Martin Luther King speech delivered exactly one year before he was assassinated. This reading will be the main feature of a "Pre-Inaugural Peace Witness."

The address, "Declaration of Independence from the War in Vietnam," was given at Riverside Church in New York City on April 4, 1967. LEPOCO has held a public reading of the speech every January since 2000.

The program, organized by the Nuclear Abolition Sisters (a working group of LEPOCO), will be held in the Bethlehem's Town Hall (the rotunda building that can be entered between the Library and the main City Hall building off Church Street). It will also feature music by the LEPOCO Peace Singers and a presentation to honor the memory of Shirley Chisholm who died on New Year's Day 2005.

The King speech, read by local activists, comes alive for our present work as we hear it read aloud. One famous quote is representative of the insight held in King's words: "A nation that continues year after year to spend more money on military defense than on programs of social uplift is approaching spiritual death." We hope you can attend this important event.

- Nancy C. Tate

## Bill of Rights Defense Action In Bethlehem

With the election behind us and the threat of even greater erosion of civil liberties on the horizon, the Bill of Rights Defense Committee continues its effort to obtain a resolution from Bethlehem City Council protecting the civil liberties of the community. Nine Bethlehem residents attended the December 7, 2004, council meeting to press for a resolution that:

- directs all city officials and employees, including law enforcement officers, to protect the civil rights and liberties of Bethlehem and abide by the U.S. Constitu-

tion in circumstances in which it conflicts with the USA Patriot Act;

- opposes any measure that singles out individuals for scrutiny, investigation, or enforcement based on their race, ethnicity, beliefs or country of origin; and
- requests all Bethlehem libraries to review policies to ensure the privacy of library patrons.

Four states, 363 municipalities and numerous civic and religious organizations including the National League of Cities have passed similar resolutions. Evidence suggests that the FBI, aided by local police, is using Patriot Act powers to target human rights, environmental and anti-war groups with no connection to terrorism. LEPOCO members can help by:

- volunteering to circulate a petition;
- calling or writing Michael Schweder, president, Bethlehem City Council, 10 E. Church St., Bethlehem 18018; 610-865-7130;
- attending a city council meeting to express support for a resolution.

Contact Barbara Diamond 610-691-8269 or Peter Crownfield at LEPOCO for further information.

- Barbara Diamond

Save the Date!

**LEPOCO's Annual Dinner  
Saturday, March 5, 2005**

*Help open the celebration of LEPOCO's  
40<sup>th</sup> anniversary year!*

**Speakers:**

**Celeste Zappala**, a peace activist  
whose son was the 720<sup>th</sup> U.S. soldier  
killed in Iraq

**Bob McIlvaine**, from September 11<sup>th</sup>  
Families for Peaceful Tomorrows. His  
son was killed in the Twin Towers.  
and a member of Iraq Veterans

**Against the War.**

More information in future mailings.

# Michael Hoffman of Iraq Veterans Against the War, at Emmaus High School —

On Thursday, December 16, I was privileged to hear the story of a brave and eloquent young man, Michael Hoffman. A 1997 graduate of Emmaus High School, Michael admitted that he had had no clear direction to his life after high school, and after working in retail for a few years, finally listened to his friends and signed up for the military in 1999. He wanted the education that he'd heard the military gives -- as well as the benefits and pay. He wanted to be one of the best -- so he became a Marine. The Marines trained him for artillery -- he asked the audience at EMS if they knew of any local employers who desired a qualified employee who knew how to blow up things. No one responded to his query.

Michael was among the initial invasion force into Iraq in 2003. Interestingly, when asked why he was now able to be in the US when so many others are being called back to Iraq, he admitted that he already had been "stop-lossed;" he was set to exit the Marines in February 2003, but was instead deployed to Iraq. He served only two months as part of the invasion force, and then was sent home. Michael is now waiting for disability due to injuries he sustained in Iraq. Unfortunately, President Bush cut the number of personnel handling such requests and Michael continues to wait for his "benefits."

As to the status of the fighting force in Iraq, he gave numerous examples of how they are under-equipped and under-trained. In one particularly poignant example, he told the story of a young soldier who abandoned his post because he had no experience in firing the weapon he was asked to use. He said most of the fighting force does not understand why they are in Iraq and morale is very low.

He is not proud of his performance in Iraq nor of the U.S. military presence there. He was told (by a superior), point blank, before invading Iraq, that his unit was not there to help the Iraqis or to democratize the government; their sole purpose for invading Iraq was to get the oil. He believes fervently that the US military should leave Iraq, and that building a country is a job for civilians, not people that are trained to dehumanize the enemy.

In response to his beliefs, Michael was one of eight individuals to start Iraq Veterans Against the War <[www.ivaw.net](http://www.ivaw.net)> and he now lectures all over the world to help bring the troops home and stop the war. IVAW is a subgroup of Veterans for Peace and since its inception in July, has grown to over 200 members.

Michael wanted everyone to know that he still feels he did the right thing in signing up for the military, and that he is still proud to be a Marine, but that

attacking a country, unprovoked, was not the right thing to do. There was a small cadre of young men at the talk who respectfully disagreed with Michael on the last point -- insisting that Michael was misinformed as to the presence of weapons of mass destruction in Iraq. Michael fielded all questions magnificently, saying that there had been weapons, Saddam had had a weapons program, but it was dismantled and handled by the UN by the UN weapons inspectors, and then pointed out that Saddam would not have gotten a weapons program in the first place if the US hadn't helped him get it.

Part of Michael's talk centered on his belief that the Vietnam War did not end because Nixon was a nice guy, or a peace advocate, but because Congress stopped funding the war. They stopped funding it because the people rose up and demanded that the war stop. He told us that we all need to stand on the street corners and make our voices heard, write to our Senators and Congressmen, and demand that the money being spent on the war in Iraq be spent on domestic issues and on benefits for those who have been fighting this war.

- Sheila Clever

## Some of the sad figures:

The U.S. death count in Iraq is rising by 70 or more each month.

The costs of the war in Iraq are escalating -- now at more than \$1 billion a week.

From "U.S. Strapped to Sustain Iraq Effort," by Robert Burns of The Associated Press, in *The Intelligencer*, Doylestown, 1/8/05.

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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Regular Member . . . . .	\$25
Limited Income Member . . . . .	\$ 5
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, Mike Lawton, Tom Lloyd, Bob Riggs, Brad Schultz, Tom Stinnett, 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: Ellen Buck, Peter Crownfield, Annie Hasz, Julius Iwantsch (co-treasurer), Mike Lawton (ex-officio), Janet Ney, Sue Ravitz, Reggie Regrut, Nancy Tate (ex-officio), and Marion Thorne (co-treas.).

## Ways to Protest the Inaugural

Sat., Jan. 15, 8 pm: Attend the *Anti-Inaugural Concert* by "Real West" (Mark Graham & Brandon Kwiatek) at Bethlehem Book Loft & Caffeine Café, 521 E. Fourth St., (3<sup>rd</sup> floor above Cantelmi's Hardware), Bethlehem.

Wed., Jan. 19, 7 pm: Attend *A Pre-Inaugural Peace Witness Honoring Martin Luther King, Jr.*, Bethlehem Town Hall (see p.1 for more info.).

Thurs., Jan. 20: Take bus or car to Washington, D.C., for protests there. Call Dorothy Reilly (610-779-3511) to learn about seats on bus(es) from Reading area.

Thurs., Jan 20: Join a national boycott of consuming as a protest of Iraq War. *Not One Damn Dime* is an e-mail campaign that has been flying around the internet. Unfortunately, we have no named sponsor or initiator.

Thurs., Jan 20, 4-5 pm: Join the weekly Peace Vigil at Third & Wyandotte Sts., south Bethlehem.

## Popcorn & Politics First Friday Film

On February 4, at 7 pm, we will show *Hearts & Minds*, Peter Davis' landmark documentary that won the 1974 Academy Award for Best Documentary. In the 1987 WRL *Films for Peace & Justice*, the writer says, "Interviews with Vietnamese people contrast sharply with those of U.S. policy-makers, including five presidents." The video jacket says the film is a powerfully affecting portrait of the disastrous effects of war.

Bring a snack or a beverage to share and view this important film. This program will be held at the LEPOCO Peace Center, 313 W. 4<sup>th</sup> St., south Bethlehem.

## Responses to the Tsunami

You are encouraged to support the aid groups listed in newspapers and elsewhere that are providing aid for victims of the tsunami tragedy. The following groups are especially appropriate from LEPOCO's experience: American Friends Service Committee, Church World Service, Doctors Without Borders, Habitat for Humanity, Oxfam America, U.S. Fund for UNICEF. If you need more information call LEPOCO.

We have also learned of two special requests.

1) Nonviolence International has been working in Aceh, Indonesia, through their Peace Education Project for five years. Their staff is entirely Acehnese nationals. They have established the Aceh Earthquake/Tsunami Relief Fund with an advisory board of Acehnese leaders. Donations can be sent to Nonviolence International, PO Box 39127, Friendship Station, Washington, DC 20016, with a notation about the fund.

2) Peace Brigades International (PBI) will reestablish their accompaniment in Aceh province through their Indonesia Project. They were forced to leave Aceh in 2003 when martial law was implemented. They had worked there for five years. They will resume protective accompaniment of human rights workers at the request of groups in Aceh by activating current and former PBI volunteers. They will also assess the need to provide trauma counseling. They will be working directly with local NGO's. For more information see [www.peacebrigades.org](http://www.peacebrigades.org). Donations can be sent to PBI/USA, 428 8<sup>th</sup> St. SE, 2<sup>nd</sup> Fl., Washington, DC 20003 with note for Aceh project.

## Two Minutes for Peace Pledge

*Please join other local peace folks in taking at least two minutes each week to call the local offices of our Washington representatives. The Lehigh Valley Peace Coalition asks you to do this on a designated day each week from now until the war and occupation end in Iraq. We suggest this simple message, or some variant thereof (in your own words):*

*"End the war. End the occupation. Bring our troops home."*

*Call: Rep. Charles Dent 610-861-9734*

*Senator Arlen Specter 610-434-1444*

*Senator Rick Santorum 610-770-0142*

*(If you live outside the 15<sup>th</sup> Congressional District please call your representative instead of Rep. Dent.)*

*Sign the Two Minutes for Peace Pledge and return it to LEPOCO or any of the groups in the Peace Coalition. LEPOCO's address is 313 W. 4<sup>th</sup> St., Bethlehem, PA 18015. Be sure to keep your own record of the day you have chosen.*

*I will spend at least two minutes each week for peace by calling my representatives and urging them to end the war in Iraq. The day I choose is \_\_Monday, \_\_Tuesday, \_\_Wednesday, \_\_Thursday, \_\_Friday.*

Name

Phone Number

Home Address

e-mail address

# We Are the Leaders We Have Been Waiting For \_\_\_\_\_

Weary peace pilgrims who gathered at the end of a ten mile walk were treated to the oratorical gifts of The Rev. Bob Edgar, CEO of the National Council of Churches. Alternately prayerful then entertaining, thought-provoking and then comforting, Edgar talked about seeing Dr. Martin Luther King, about Vietnam, about his career in politics, and about his belief that summed up his speech, **WE ARE THE LEADERS WE HAVE BEEN WAITING FOR.**

Dr Edgar told of going to an interfaith peace-making conference in Aman, Jordan, where Jews, Christians, and Muslims gathered. Sunni and Shiite Muslim clerics, and the Rabbi of Paris were there, and Prince Assad took all of them to a Palestinian refugee camp in Jordan -- a small city of more than 100,000 people who have been there for 50 years. They were taken to schools where the children were amazed to see people from all over the world, some dressed in the unfamiliar costumes of clergy they had never before seen. It was difficult to see those children, because as Dr. Edgar said, "When I think of Iraq, I think of the children. More than one million have died because of the sanctions -- dead of poor sanitation, preventable diseases...because of a lack of Peace." How do we make a world safe for these children of Darfur, Philadelphia, Baghdad or the Palestinian refugee camp? **WE ARE THE LEADERS WE HAVE BEEN WAITING FOR.**

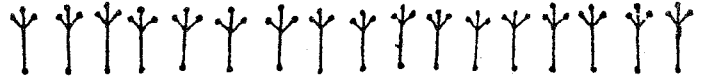
Rev. Edgar gave us a chilling timeline of world population growth and a now-familiar breakdown of the world's demographics simplified. If the world were a village of 100 people, those of us at the Peace Pilgrimage would find ourselves in the minority. Fifty-seven of the 100 of us would be Asian, eight African. Thirty of us would be white; 70 non-white. Thirty of us would be Christian; 70 would hold other faiths. Six of us would own half of the world's wealth, and all six would be from the United States. People of faith need the vision to address the problems resulting from these iniquities.

Praising the walkers for their vision and commitment, Edgar said, "If you want to walk fast, walk alone. If you want to walk far, walk together." He said that he wanted to be invited back in 2005 and see all of the bishops and religious leaders in our area come and walk in peace. If we want to get out of the death trap in Iraq, he said, we have to stand together and demand another way. People of faith and peacemakers must act together and speak up about horrors such as genocide. The Christmas Peace pilgrimage is symbolic, but it is not all we must do. He encouraged us to recommit to a lifestyle of nonviolence starting January 1, 2005.

Rev. Edgar refuted the belief that we are divided into Left and Right religiously and politically. There is a huge Middle Church, a large number of middle

U.S. citizens who do what the doctor tells them, do what the president tells them and generally want to do what is moral and good. How do we reach them? We need to keep preaching and teaching about the urgent issues of Peace, Poverty and Planet Earth. We must not be fooled, as Robert Kennedy said, by the belief that there is nothing one woman or one man can do. **WE ARE THE LEADERS WE HAVE BEEN WAITING FOR.**

- Marcie Lightwood



## Dr. Helen Caldicott Speaks In Quakertown \_\_\_\_\_

Dr. Helen Caldicott delivered a searing speech on the dangers of nuclear technology at Quakertown High School on November 21<sup>st</sup>, 2004. The event was sponsored by No Cobalt-4-Food of Milford Township, where dozens of Cobalt 60 rods are housed in a food irradiation facility, CFC Logistics.

Dr. Caldicott placed responsibility for the possible annihilation of life on earth with the Bush Administration and its policy of nuclear expansion, and with U.S. citizens, who consume more energy than anyone else worldwide. "As the U.S. is proceeding now, it is determining the fate of the entire planet," she stated.

The audience learned that all radiation is cumulative; that one in three people get cancer, and that the incubation period for cancer is 5-60 years. "That's how the nuclear industry gets away with what it does," she noted. Radioactive waste is routinely added to dental braces, hip replacement parts, and eating utensils, among other everyday items.

Meanwhile, the government has decided to build over 400 new nuclear power plants. "The 103 nuclear plants operating now are terrorist targets and must be closed," Dr. Caldicott declared. The cooling pools for each plant are 30 times more radioactive than the plant itself. Each reactor creates 500 pounds of plutonium waste per year; only 10 pounds of plutonium are necessary to make a nuclear weapon.

With plans for a Star Wars missile program underway, and 30,000 nuclear weapons existing now, Dr. Caldicott called for a new ethic. "All of us are capable of great love, even those who do awful things and go to war," she emphasized. "We have the technology (wind and solar) and the money (now allocated for weapons) to abolish the nuclear age in five years. But we've got the wrong people in government. And we need a grass roots movement -- your church, your reading group, your children's schools -- to clamor for a nuclear-free world, NOW!"

Please join the Nuclear Policy Research Group to assist Dr. Caldicott in her vital work: see <[www.nuclearpolicy.org](http://www.nuclearpolicy.org)>.

- Anna Maria Caldara

# Honoring M.L. King and Learning From The Dream

The following are some of the events planned locally during January to honor the legacy of the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. This is not a complete list, but the sampling we were able to compile at this time. Please watch local newspapers for other events.

**Saturday, January 15, 7 pm:** *A Time to Break Silence.* Listen to a tape of a Martin Luther King, Jr. speech against the war in Vietnam. The Rest Stop, 37 Race St., Jim Thorpe. Call 570-325-2405 or 610-781-5612.

**Sunday, January 16, 7 pm:** *Citizen King*, a two-hour documentary covering the final years of Martin Luther King's life. Mauch Chunk Museum, 41 W. Broadway, Jim Thorpe. Call 570-325-2405 or 610-845-3950.

**Monday, January 17, 8-10 am:** *Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Holiday Breakfast Roundtable*, with guided small group discussions on race relations, Hauptert Union Bldg., Moravian College, Bethlehem. Make a reservation by calling the Bethlehem YWCA 610-867-4669 or Bethlehem NAACP 610-867-6945. Cost \$6.

**Monday, January 17:** Martin Luther King, Jr. Service Day, *Building the Beloved Community.* Register at 8:30 am for full day's program at St. Mark's Lutheran Church, Main St., Pennsburg. Call 610-845-3950 or 215-234-8679.

**Monday, January 17, Noon:** *Make War No More: Martin Luther King Day of Nonviolent Resistance to Lockheed Martin, the Iraq War's #1 Profiteer*, Lockheed Martin Mall & Goddard Blvd, Valley Forge (off Rt. 76 behind the King of Prussia Mall). Call 610-544-1818, the Brandywine Peace Community, for more information.

**Monday, January 17, 3 pm:** *Dr. Martin Luther King Day Program*, Greater Shiloh Church, 220 Brother Thomas Bright Ave., Easton. Speaker: Dr. William Scott, Professor of History & Africana Studies at Lehigh University. Call 610-252-5640.

**Wednesday, January 19, 7 pm:** *A Pre-Inaugural Peace Witness Honoring Martin Luther King Jr.*, Bethlehem Town Hall (the rotunda building at City Hall), Church St. The program will feature music, the traditional reading of King's speech, *A Declaration of Independence From the War In Vietnam*, and a time to remember Shirley Chisholm. Sponsored by LEPOCO and organized by the Nuclear Abolition Sisters Working Group. Call 610-691-8730.

**Thursday, January 20, 7:30 pm:** *Martin Luther King Program*, Egner Chapel, Muhlenberg College, Allentown. Speaker: Rev. Benjamin T. Hailey, Sr., of Union Baptist Church, on *At What Price, Peace?* Music by ACCO, A Chorus Celebrating Women.

**Wednesday, January 26, 5:30-7:30 pm:** *A Study Circle/Dialogue on Racism and Race Relations*, at Bethlehem YWCA, 22 W. Broad St., Bethlehem. Sponsored by the Alliance for Sustainable Communities. Call 610-838-7666 or 610-867-4669.

**Thursday, January 27, 11 am:** *Echoes of the Dream*, a video chronicling the 1963 March on Washington through the eyes of L.V. residents who were there, and panel discussion. Lipkin Theatre, Northampton Community College (NCC), Bethlehem.

**7 pm:** *For Colored Girls Who Have Considered Suicide When the Rainbow Is Enuf*, performed by NCC Theatre students, Lab Theatre, NCC. Call 610-861-5091 for tickets.

**Saturday, January 29, 6 pm:** *Following the Footsteps of the Dream*, a multimedia presentation with dance, music, dramatic readings, and an address by NCC President Dr. Arthur Scott. Performers include The Voices United gospel choir and string orchestra and students from the Lehigh Valley Charter School for the Performing Arts.

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## LEPOCO Honored by NAACP

I have rarely felt so welcomed and honored to represent LEPOCO as I was on November 21<sup>st</sup> at the Sheraton Jetport. The occasion was the Annual Banquet of the Bethlehem Chapter of the NAACP, and I sat at the head table, beside the Mayor of Bethlehem, in the room packed with nearly 100 members and supporters of three local chapters of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People.

LEPOCO and the YWCA received special recognition in the program. LEPOCO's award, which can be admired on the wall at the office, says, "This certificate is awarded to the LEPOCO Peace Center, for your efforts to stir the conscience of Lehigh Valley residents in pursuit of Peace by Nonviolence. Presented by the Bethlehem Branch of the NAACP, November 21, 2004."

The program for the evening, under the theme "Breaking down the Walls of Racism, Education and the Military," featured three speakers. Phyllis Alexander said that we need only one tool to tear down the walls. That tool is love. First we must learn to love ourselves, then, people most like us, then, everybody else. Dr. Wandalyn Enix spoke about the state of seg-

regation in our schools now, 50 years after "Brown vs. The Board of Education" mandated desegregation. Dr. James Jackson then spoke about the disproportionate burden that Black and other ethnic minority youth carry in our armed forces, and the need for young people to be told about more alternative routes out of poverty.

I had a chance to circulate among tables, handed out a stack of LEPOCO Newsletters, and invited the assembled to help us celebrate LEPOCO'S 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary.

We have a golden opportunity with an invitation to participate in a roundtable discussion co-sponsored by the YWCA's Racial Justice Initiative, and the Bethlehem NAACP, to be held at Moravian College's Hauptert Union Building from 8-10 am on Monday, January 17<sup>th</sup> (Martin Luther King Holiday). The \$6 cost includes breakfast. To sign up or to get more information call Flordelisa Perez at the YWCA 610-867-4669.

Many thanks to Esther Lee, President of the Bethlehem Branch of the NCCAP, for organizing a fine banquet program and inviting us to be a part of it.

- Jeff Vitelli

# Report From Conference on Gandhian Nonviolence--

"Court suffering" is one of nine key lessons to be gleaned from the life of Mohandas K. Gandhi, according to Fr. John Dear, opening plenary speaker at the First Annual Gandhian Nonviolence Conference this past October 8th and 9th in Memphis, Tennessee. Rev. Dear's talk entitled, "Mahatma Gandhi and Wisdom on Nonviolence," was a direct challenge to the 250 souls assembled at the Christian Brothers University. He said, "None of us can do everything, but all of us can do something." This Jesuit priest has certainly been an "active" peace activist, having racked up over 75 arrests for civil disobedience actions over the years. He spoke of Gandhi as a human being like you and me, with faults and foibles. He reminded us that "Gandhi was not born 'Gandhi,' but became Gandhi" after many years of trial and error -- "Experiments with truth." Gandhi followed his belief in truth, love, and nonviolence to its logical conclusion, no matter how great the personal risk, leaving a monumentally large pair of wooden sandals to fill.

Arun Gandhi, grandson of the Mahatma (Great Soul) and founder/president of the M.K. Gandhi Institute for Nonviolence, led the enthusiastic standing ovation for Fr. Dear. During his soft spoken introduction, Mr. Gandhi equated nonviolence with a grain of wheat, saying that if you lock the grain up it withers and dies. Plant it and nourish it and it will grow and flourish. This, he says, is "the meaning of peace and active nonviolence."

Following the opening speakers the group met in one of four concurrent sessions, including workshops, panel discussions, and essay readings. Fellow LEPOCO member Ruth Karpinski and I attended a session on "Personal Nonviolence." Gerald Madison told his own moving story of "Recovering from Militarism." This Vietnam veteran broke down when he recalled the horrors of the battlefield. "I saw things no one should ever have to see." He described his transformation from soldier to peacemaker as "a pilgrimage from violence to wholeness."

Day two of the conference was held at Rhodes College and opened with founding director of Global Exchange, Medea Benjamin. Also co-founder of Code Pink, Ms. Benjamin dynamically spoke about the current political climate in a talk entitled, "How to Stop the Next War Now." She offered much advice and inspiration on how to stay positive in these troubling times. Having traveled to Iraq several times she told of her interactions with the real-life flesh and blood human beings in this war torn country.

At a session on militarism I met Lloyd Steffen, professor and chair of Religious Studies at Lehigh University. He presented an essay entitled "Gandhi's Nonviolent Resistance: A Justified Use of Force?" I thought it quite funny that I'd traveled over a thousand

miles to meet someone who lives "just down the road."

The closing plenary speaker was Dr. Michael Nojeim, author of the book, *Gandhi and King: The Power of Non-violent Resistance*. An interesting discussion that drew parallels between the two activist leaders was followed by a lively question and answer session. It is amazing to ponder the line of influence: Thoreau to Tolstoy to Gandhi to King to all of us.

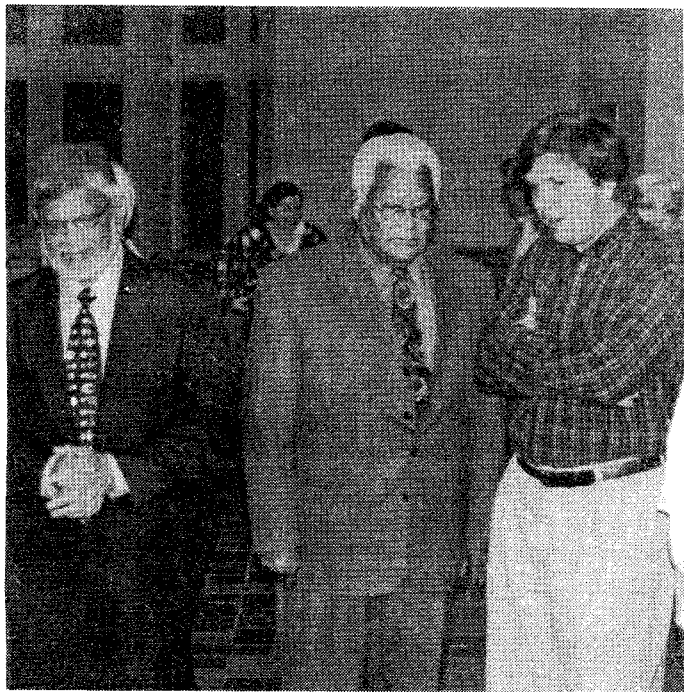
This discussion along with that of the featured keynote speaker Rev. James Lawson Jr. really tied the week together for Ruth and me. The week prior to the conference we traveled to various sites connected to the civil rights movement. We followed the path of Martin Luther King, Jr., from his birth home in Atlanta, Georgia to Selma, Montgomery, and Birmingham in Alabama to the Loraine Motel in downtown Memphis, where the civil rights leader was slain. It was quite a pilgrimage, and it continues still.

Rev. Lawson first met Martin Luther King in 1957. They soon joined forces to realize their dream of starting a nonviolent mass movement for civil rights. Rev. Lawson was president of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference for 14 years and is still very involved in peace and justice work in California. King once labeled Lawson "the leading nonviolence theorist in the world".

A fine, fiery speaker, Rev. Lawson clearly showed the Gandhi influence when he echoed the words of the Mahatma: "We must be the change we wish to see in the world".

The Second Annual Gandhian Conference has already been scheduled for October 7- 8, 2005. For more information please see [www.gandhiinstitute.org](http://www.gandhiinstitute.org).

- robert Daniels II



In this photo, taken by Robert Daniels at the conference, you see (from left to right) speakers, Arun Gandhi, James Lawson Jr., and John Dear.

# The Struggle Shared

*Our lives begin to end the day we become silent about things that matter.*

- Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

## IN PURSUIT OF TOLERANCE AT PALISADES HIGH SCHOOL -

LEPOCO and SECO (Social and Environmental Change Organization) activist Annie Hasz was recently involved in organizing a Diversity Day at Palisades High School. A similar event had been pulled off successfully two years ago, with the administration's support, and it appeared that Diversity Day II would be held as planned on December 1<sup>st</sup>. Then, on November 31<sup>st</sup>, the principal cancelled Diversity Day.

The agenda was to feature three presenters: Mohamed Bugaighis, past president of the Muslim Association of the Lehigh Valley, speaking on the Muslim Community; Marlene Pray, of Planned Parenthood, on Gay and Lesbian Issues; and Patti Price, Senior Director for the Northeast Region of CARE, on the Crisis in Sudan. In her press release, Annie said that the purpose was to "inspire, enlighten and educate" students. Some people apparently read this language as "indoctrinate," and the principal's office was flooded with phone calls, and even promises to protest the event.

The organizers went back to the drawing board, met with the principal and obtained clarification of the purpose for the day. Diversity Day has been rescheduled for January 18, the day after the official King Holiday, with the original cast of presenters. Following the program for students, the program will be repeated as an evening community event. The public forum will be held at 6:30 pm, on January 18, at Palisades High School, located south of Hellertown on Route 412.

VANUNU ARRESTED AGAIN, AND AGAIN - *The Morning Call* reported on November 11<sup>th</sup> that heavily armed Israeli police commandos stormed the compound of St. George's Anglican Cathedral in

Jerusalem, arrested Mordechai Vanunu, and confiscated his computer and papers. After being placed under house arrest for much of November for violating restrictions on giving interviews, Vanunu was arrested again on Christmas Eve. He was traveling from Jerusalem to Bethlehem, to attend services at the Church of the Nativity, when the car in which he was a passenger was stopped and searched. This time, the only contraband seized was a Santa Claus hat. Nonetheless, he was arrested for defying the ban on his traveling outside Israel, and once again placed under house arrest.

Mordechai Vanunu was released by Israeli authorities in April 2004, after serving 18 years in prison for disclosing to the international press information about Israel's nuclear weapons program. Although he has been out of prison, the extent of his freedom is limited by the Israeli government's restrictions. While he has sanctuary on the grounds of St. St. George's, he must get permission to travel beyond the church grounds. He is banned from going to the West Bank and Gaza, and banned from leaving Israel. He must have permission to talk to any foreigners. Vanunu says, "They want to punish me again... I don't have any more secrets. I can't invent new secrets. Remember the secrets told are now 19 or 20 years old."

## THE CRIME IS IN THE NAME? -

In October one local activist had a first-hand brush with the USA PATRIOT Act. On his return from a trip to Scotland, Mohamed Bugaighis heard his name called out upon landing at Philadelphia International Airport. He was taken by authorities into an office where he was questioned. Appar-

ently he was flagged because his name drew suspicion.

"It's the same name I've had for 67 years, and I don't think it should be criminal to have the name of Mohamed... I think the Patriot Act is an unpatriotic act. It is very unlike America to have this kind of thing where civil liberties are eroded."

Mohamed Bugaighis lives in Bethlehem, is retired from his position as professor of mathematics at Moravian College, is past president of the Muslim Association of the Lehigh Valley, and is a frequent spokesperson in the local community. Many LEPOCO members have joined him at local peace demonstrations and on buses to national demonstrations against the war in Iraq.

## CALLING FOR FAIR ELECTIONS -

As a dozen local activists, led by Elizabeth Brensinger, held signs in a cold rain outside the Lehigh County Court House on January 6<sup>th</sup>, (Democracy Depends on Fair Elections and Reject Ohio's Tainted Votes, among the signs) the U.S. House and Senate held a debate about our electoral system. Unlike the 2000 election there was one senator courageous enough to call for that debate: Senator Barbara Boxer. Congresswoman Stephanie Tubbs Jones led objections in the House. You can thank them by calling Rep. Jones at 202-225-7032 and Sen. Boxer at 202-224-3553.

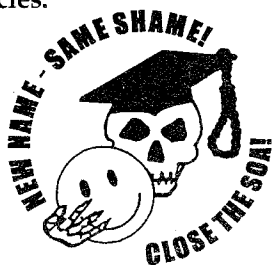
It is important to encourage our own representatives to take action toward serious election reform. You can review a ten point Voter Bill of Rights at <[www.Nov3.US](http://www.Nov3.US)>

- Jeff Vitelli

# Huge Increase In Size of November SOA/WHINSEC Protest at Ft. Benning

It was the 15<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Fr. Roy Bourgeois' lonely vigil at the gates of Ft. Benning, Georgia, commemorating the El Salvador Jesuits' slaying by military officers trained at the School of the Americas. What a difference 15 years has made: this time, November 21, 2004, there were 16,000 of us from throughout the western hemisphere -- a more than 50 percent increase in the number of attendees over the previous year's demonstration.

No longer focused only on demands for closing the "School of Assassins," the SOA Watch movement has evolved into a powerful force for change in the way the United States government conducts its military and foreign policies.



Congressman Jim McGovern, sponsor of HR-1258, has pledged to bring the school to a vote in the House of Representatives by spring 2005. Coming within 10 votes of closing the school three years ago, it was the House which defeated the effort. However, that was enough of a jolt to the Pentagon to force the closing of the School of the Americas, which reopened the next day with its new name: Western Hemisphere Institute for Security Cooperation. (New name, same shame.)

Fifteen people crossed onto Ft. Benning on Sunday and were arrested in acts of nonviolent civil disobedience. They took action despite knowing they likely faced 3-6 months in federal prison plus large fines. They joined the ranks of more than 170 prisoners of conscience who have served a total of 85 years for their acts of civil disobedience in protest of our government's continued operation of the school at Ft. Benning. "Prison will not deter us," said Elizabeth Nadeau, 27, who was among those arrested. "We will be here until we close the school and change the foreign policy that it represents."

Speaker after speaker, including Martin Sheen, Susan Sarandon and George Wendt and others, repeatedly stressed the fact that the school is not an aberration of U.S. foreign policy, but a clear demonstration of it. A point also made over and over was that war cannot stop terrorism; war is terrorism.

Efforts are underway to organize local SOA Watch groups in 12 regions of the U.S. Contact the LEPOCO Office if you would like to be involved.

- Bob & Carmen Riggs



## Post-Election Discussion: II

LEPOCO's post-election dialogue continued December 9<sup>th</sup> among a small gathering of dedicated individuals. Greta Browne shared her perspective as a veteran of several political campaigns. This fall, motivated by the necessity of introducing discussion on peace, justice, and the environment, she ran as the Green Party candidate for Pennsylvania's 15<sup>th</sup> congressional district seat in Congress. However, all candidates for this office, except Republican Charles Dent, were routinely disregarded by mainstream media outlets. Case in point: near the end of the race Browne officially endorsed the Democrats' candidate, Joe Driscoll, and he, in turn, held a press conference to back local Green candidates (who had no democratic opponents) and made statements in support of instant run-off voting and environmental initiatives. Unfortunately the press neglected to attend. Greta Browne will continue to work for media and voting reform because the world needs candidates from outside the two-party system who bring fresh, creative ideas to the stale political script.

Azeen Keramati returned home to Allentown after getting her master's degree in social work in New York City and described how she connected meaningfully with her neighborhood for the first time through her involvement with ACT, America Coming Together. The staff at ACT's Allentown office averaged 19 years of age and worked to reach out to an ignored Latino community. They found many people who wished to be involved civically, but lacked the opportunity. Union organization of health care workers and others is beginning in the Lehigh Valley in follow-up to ACT's efforts, and Keramati hopes the momentum of the ACT campaign can continue in their work.

Marsha Eichelberger of Allentown's Sixth Street Shelter for Women was an organizer with the Lehigh Valley Interfaith Mobilization 2004. The group brought dynamic speaker the Rev. Dr. James Forbes of New York City's Riverside Church to Packer Chapel at Lehigh University for a community "Gathering for Justice." She spoke of the personal transformation she experienced as she connected the dictates of her faith with the reality of personal and community action against poverty. "Faith without works is dead," indeed!

- Annie Hasz



# Bits & Pieces

☪ The Allentown Chapter of the NAACP will hold Tribute to a King, a program featuring civil rights attorney Thomas N. Todd, Mon., Jan. 17, at 11 am, at St. James A.M.E. Zion Church, 4<sup>th</sup> & Union Sts., Allentown. A light lunch follows. Call 610-780-9903 for more info.

☪ Impossible to Forget: The Nazi Camps Fifty Years Later, a powerful exhibition of 88 photographs by English photographer Michael Kenna will be at the James Michener Museum, Doylestown through April 10. Call 215-340-9800.

☪ Columbia Theological Seminary in Decatur, Georgia, and other groups, are sponsoring Working for a Just Peace in Palestine & Israel: In Word and Deed A Conference for Peacemakers, Feb. 4-5, at the Seminary. Israeli, Palestinian, and U.S. peacemakers will speak. Call 404-586-0460, x21 for more info.

☪ Sadly, the Inter-American Court of Human Rights, denied the petition of Lori Berenson in December. Now 35-year-old Berenson will have to serve the remainder of her 20-year sentence. This was the first time the Court reversed a decision by the Inter-American Commission, which declared in April of 2002 that Lori's trial did not meet international standards and that her rights must be fully restored. Lori Berenson was convicted in 1995 of collaborating with the Peruvian rebel group, the Tupac Amaru Revolutionary Move-

ment. At the time of her arrest she was writing articles for two U.S. magazines. For more information on her case see <www.freelori.org>.

☪ A delegation of Families for Peace including family members who have lost loved ones in Iraq, those who lost loved ones on September 11<sup>th</sup>, 2001, and medical doctors delivered humanitarian aid for refugees from Fallujah, Iraq, to Jordan in December. The 12-person delegation held a candlelight vigil at UN headquarters in Amman on New Year's Eve and on January 1<sup>st</sup> they held another vigil on the Iraq/Jordanian border.

☪ United For Peace & Justice will hold their National Assembly in St. Louis, Missouri, February 19-21. See <www.unitedforpeace.org> for more info. If you would be interested in attending to represent L.V. peace organizations call 610-691-8730.

☪ Anne Felker had an enlightening op-ed in The Morning Call on Jan. 2, titled "Meet the New Eco-Terrorists: Us." Read it on-line or call LEPOCO for a copy.

☪ Joe DeRaymond is presenting programs about the war in Iraq on Mondays, Jan. 17 and 24, 4-5 pm, on WGPA radio, 1100 AM.

☪ *For the last fiscal reporting period, Lockheed Martin announced that its revenues rose by 41% with an astounding \$8.4 billion in profits for the quarterly period alone. Lockheed Martin... is by far the (Iraq) war's chief profiteer.*

- Letter from Brandywine Peace Community, December 2004

☪ Lisa Hoffman and Annette Rainville of the Scripps Howard News Service have reported... that nearly 900 U.S. children have lost a parent to the war in Iraq. (That represents 18 large school buses full of children.) More than 40 fathers died without seeing their babies... Six female soldiers who died in the war left a total of 10 children.

☪ *It's easy to believe that the world is being caught up in an escalating spiral of terrorism and war. That's*

*what allows George Bush to say, "You're either with us or with the terrorists." But that's a spurious choice. Terrorism is only the privatization of war. Terrorists are the free marketers of war. They believe that the legitimate use of violence is not the sole prerogative of the state.*

*It is mendacious to make moral distinction between the unspeakable brutality of terrorism and the indiscriminate carnage of war and occupation. Both kinds of violence are unacceptable. We cannot support one and condemn the other.*

- Arundhati Roy, *Sydney Morning Herald*, 11/3/04

☪ *Let's get this straight. The Republicans do not want to fix Social Security, they want to kill it. Period. They don't want to "partially privatize" Social Security, they want to end it. What they want is a private pension system like the one their pointy-headed heroes at the University of Chicago dreamed up for Chile, the poster child of why we should not do this.*

- Molly Ivins, *The Express Times*, 1/7/05

## SUPPORT LEPOCO!

Enclosed are my yearly LEPOCO dues of \$ \_\_\_\_  
( \$25 individual; \$30 household; \$5 limited income)  
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### Weekly Peace Vigils

#### Bethlehem

4-5 pm, Thursdays

3<sup>rd</sup> & Wyandotte Sts., south Bethlehem  
Contact: Maria Weick 610-346-8793

#### Allentown

Noon-1 pm, Fridays

Federal Courthouse, 5<sup>th</sup> & 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!



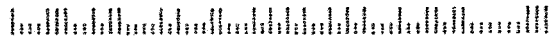
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7 pm 16 Peace Singers meet at Barbara Wurth's	Martin Luther 17 King, Jr. Day (see p.5)  4-5 pm Joe DeRaymond on Iraq War WGPA 1100 AM	6:30 pm 18 Diversity Day Program, Palisades High School (see p.7)	7 pm 19 Pre-Inaugural Peace Witness Honoring M.L. King, Jr., Bethlehem (see p.1)	Inauguration 20 Protests (see p.3)	21	22	
7 pm 23 Peace Singers meet at Barbara Wurth's	4-5 pm 24 Joe DeRaymond presents program on Iraq War on WGPA 1100 AM	7 pm 25 L.V. Peace Coalition Meeting at LEPOCO	26	7:30 pm 27 Americas Solidarity Group Meeting at LEPOCO	28	Odetta 29 performing at Godfrey Daniel's Coffeehouse, Bethlehem	
	31	AFRICAN AMERICAN HISTORY MONTH begins	7:30 pm 2 Lehigh Valley Committee Against State Killing Meeting at LEPOCO	3	7 pm 4 First Friday Popcorn & Politics: "Hearts & Minds" at LEPOCO (see p.3)	5	
6	6 pm 7 Web Site Consultation at LEPOCO 7 pm LEPOCO Steering Committee	6:30 pm 8 Bike/Walkathon Planning Meeting at LEPOCO	CHINESE NEW YEAR ASH WEDNESDAY	9	MUHARRAM (Islamic New Year)	10	6-8 pm 12 Teen Summit & Diversity Celebration, Liberty High School

# January