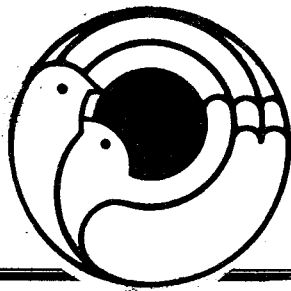


June-July
2006

vol.41 no.5



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

Scott Ritter & Ray McGovern To Speak Here!

On Friday, July 21st, at 7 pm, Scott Ritter and Ray McGovern will be speaking at the Unitarian Universalist Church of the Lehigh Valley, 424 Center St., Bethlehem. The title of their address will be, "The War in Iraq: How We Got In; How We Get Out; How We Stay Out of Iran."

Scott Ritter was the U.N.'s top weapons inspector in Iraq between 1991 and 1998. Before working for the UN he served as an officer in the US Marines and as a ballistic missiles adviser to General Schwarzkopf in the first Gulf War.

As the UN weapons inspection got underway after the 1991 Gulf War, Ritter believed his mission was to conclusively disarm Iraq, thus enabling the UN to lift its crippling sanctions. But Ritter came to realize that Washington was only ever interested in using inspections as a means to spy on Saddam's government and to effect "regime change," not disarmament.

When he and his team eventually learned there were no WMDs, they found that Washington did not want the information revealed, because it would derail the regime change agenda.

Ritter continues to speak out passionately. In his introduction to Ritter's 2005 book, *Iraq Confidential*, Seymour Hersh wrote, "Somehow, Scott never perceived, or wanted to perceive, that magic formula for

bureaucratic success in Washington -- never be the bearer of unpleasant facts. He is a Thomas à Becket in a world full of Bush administration yes-men."

Ray McGovern served as a CIA analyst for 27 years. From 1981 to 1985 he conducted daily briefings for Ronald Reagan's vice president, George Bush, the elder. Ray is on the steering group of Veteran Intelligence Professionals for Sanity, and is co-director of the Servant Leadership School, an outreach ministry in the inner city of Washington. He is featured in Robert Greenwald's *Uncovered* and John Pilger's *Breaking the Silence*.

On May 4th Ray McGovern received national attention when he brilliantly used an unexpected opportunity at an Atlanta meeting of the Southern Center for International Studies to grill Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld about the war in Iraq.

The program at the church is made possible by the coordinated efforts of Jeff Norman of US Tour of Duty, Jeanne Doyle of Democracy For America, the Lehigh Valley Peace Coalition and the Unitarian Church. To support this program and others undertaken by U.S. Tour of Duty there will be a \$10 donation requested at the door (no one turned away).

- Mike Lawton

Peace Campers Still Needed

Editor's Note: In advance of this year's Peace Camp we reprint the following article written by Melissa Ritter for Peace Camp 1997. It captures much of the spirit of the Peace Camp experience.

"The Earth is our Mother, we must take care of her. The Earth is our Mother, we must take care of her." The gymnasium is permeated by the sound of dozens of young voices enthusiastically singing. Around the room are murals of children from around the world - black, white and all nationalities represented by traced figures.

These were my first few moments of Peace Camp when I arrived two years ago as a teen helper. From the very first day I was hooked - and so were the young people! After a few more songs and an explanation of the days activities, we broke into groups of about 12, our classes for the week.

Before we even reached our classroom with its pint-sized tables and chairs, the children were becoming fast

friends. I found myself amazed by their quick adaptation to so new a situation. I realized then how easily we could expound upon their already strong foundation of being able to not only tolerate, but embrace the differences among themselves.

We spent the morning playing games, making puppets, and singing songs. Instead of lecturing about the virtues of peace, these values were inferred in activities and discussion which furthered our values.

The children enjoyed healthy snacks following an outdoor scavenger hunt. Time flew by, but before ending at noon, we reconvened with our fellow Peace Campers for a second sing-along. I found myself getting into the hand motions as much as the six-year-old in my lap! The day ended all too soon and I found myself excited to do it all again tomorrow.

If you need a registration form for Peace Camp this July 24-28, please call LEPOCO at 610-691-8730. The camp is for children who have completed kindergarten through 6th grade, ages 6-12. If you would like to volunteer to help at peace camp please call the same phone number.

JROTC Takes Off Again

In May, we learned from teacher Mary Rose-Shaffer that the Easton school board's Academics In Education committee would again consider a JROTC program at Easton high school. Following a June 8th presentation by Major Charles Taylor, senior JROTC instructor at Dieruff High School in Allentown, committee members voted unanimously to recommend applying for a JROTC program.

The full Board met on June 15, and several parents and Easton Area residents spoke against JROTC, including Bob Gumlock; Crafford Harris, who spoke for the Social Action Committee of the Unitarian Universalist Church of the Lehigh Valley; Anna Maria Marzullo; Susie Ravitz; Josh Sanborn, Professor of History at Lafayette; UCC minister John Snyder-Samuelson; and Peter Crownfield. Many of the points they made are listed below. Despite the strong case against JROTC, the Board voted 7-2 to initiate an application "to get a better idea of the real costs." Equally important, however, Board members said they would welcome a presentation on reasons why they should not add a JROTC program, and Oskar Castro of the American Friends Service Committee has agreed to speak at the Academics In Education committee meeting on September 14. The committee will then make another report to the full Board.

We encourage you to write letters to the editor and contact the Superintendent and individual board members with your questions and concerns about JROTC in Easton High School. Contact Peter Crownfield, Susie Ravitz, or Anna Maria Marzullo if you want to help.

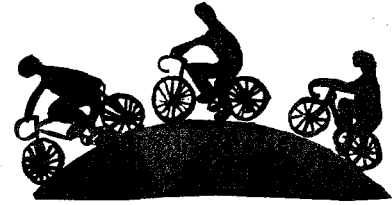
10 Reasons Not To Allow JROTC In Schools

- JROTC is expensive, forcing schools to raise taxes or cut important programs.
- JROTC texts distort history, glorifying the military and minimizing nonviolent approaches.
- JROTC claims to develop leadership, but stresses automatic obedience.
- JROTC teaches what the military embodies — that the use or threat of violence is the way to resolve conflicts.
- JROTC is part of the military, and military personnel have an appalling record of violence against women.
- JROTC instructors don't need any previous teaching experience, but are often paid more than certified professionals.
- JROTC supports discrimination and intolerance.
- JROTC does not prevent dropouts — in fact, it has a dropout problem: only a tiny percentage of students complete the full program.
- JROTC instructors provide their own guidance and career counseling for JROTC students, while other students have to deal with limited availability of counselors.
- JROTC is designed to support military recruitment,

and recruiters already have far too much access to students.

For more information on any of these issues, call the LEPOCO Peace Center at 610-691-8730.

- Peter Crownfield



Bike/Walkathon Sets Record

Thanks to the significant fund raising efforts of some new walkers and riders, the annual LEPOCO Bike/Walkathon on June 3rd will set a record in dollars raised for LEPOCO and our co-beneficiary, Pennsylvania Abolitionists United Against the Death Penalty. When the pledges are paid, we will, for the first time, raise a total of over \$3000!

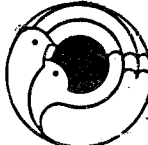
A special thank you to Walt Garvin, Patricia Dervish, and Janice Lovegrove for their great efforts in finding pledgers.

Thirty-two people rode and walked. Seven people helped staff checkpoints. The early morning on June 3rd was rainy, but by the time we set up for the Bike/Walkathon event, it had stopped raining. We were rained on once more before we finished walking and riding, but everyone survived and it was a rather pleasant day.

Thanks again to our sponsors and those who rode, walked, staffed a checkpoint or pledged! The Bike/Walkathon Committee will meet on July 5th to assign the special gifts we have from sponsors.

- Nancy C. Tate

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.

Annual dues are:

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, 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).

Bring the PA Guard Home

On June 21st in Allentown's City Council Chambers, eight residents of the city spoke to the Council urging them to introduce and pass a "BRING THE PA GUARD HOME" from Iraq resolution. At least three of the speakers were veterans. Other community members were present in support.

The resolution is a national effort, being introduced in towns and cities across the country. It has already been adopted by councils in York, Lansdowne and Philadelphia. It asks our national government, those serving in Congress, and state governors to do all in their power to get our state Guard units returned to their home communities, since they are needed here. Thus far in Iraq, Guard units have a 35% higher casualty rate than other troops; as of May 21, 2006, twenty-three PA Guard Members have died, and over 200 have been seriously wounded. The entire outline of the program and a package of materials are available at www.bringhometheguard.org.

If introduced and passed (both not sure things), Allentown would join dozens of others in states around the country where Guard units have been "absent with leave" to fight in and occupy Iraq. We know that Guard members and their families have suffered terribly, and did not sign on for overseas duty. Without their presence, local communities remain vulnerable if a disaster should strike.

Mike D'Amore, college teacher, LEPOCO member and first-term City Council Member, spoke for the resolution and had stated earlier that he will sponsor the Bring Our Guard Home Resolution, and will try to get allies for it among his fellow City Council Members. There are seven members of the council; two are needed to co-sponsor the resolution and a total of four must vote for it to achieve passage.

A special thank you to Jeff Brightbill, Louise Legun, Kathryn Hoffman, Eleanor Hay, Judy Woodruff, Arlene Grow, Roberta Meek, and Gene Siebert who spoke on June 21st. If you are a military veteran, Guard or former Guard member, or family member of someone serving there now, and would like to show your support for bringing the Guard home now, please call us at 610-770-1252, and leave a message. (Mike D'Amore, Kathryn Hoffman, and Jeff Brightbill are working on this project).

All Allentown residents are encouraged to contact members of council to urge their co-sponsorship and support for the Bring Out Guard Home Resolution. You can e-mail them at www.allentownpa.org/contact.asp or leave a message for them at the City Council Office by calling 610-437-7556. Besides Mike D'Amore the members of Allentown's Council are Martin Velazquez III, Julio Guridy, Tony Phillips, Lou Hershman, David Howells, Sr., and David Bausch.

One man spoke against the resolution on June 21st, but most of those attending Council that night were quite attentive to the statements of the eight.

Eleanor Hay movingly shared a youthful memory of her community providing silent accompaniment for veterans as they walked home after WWI.

- Kathryn Hoffman & Nancy Tate

Potluck & Politics

Popcorn & Politics

at the LEPOCO Peace Center

Friday, July 7, 7 pm

Popcorn & Politics

1st Friday Film

"Bloody Sunday" (2002)

Paul Greengrass ("United 93") directs this dramatic recreation of the events of January 30, 1972, when a peaceful march for civil rights resulted in the deaths of fourteen protesters. The tragedy depicted in this Sundance Best Picture Audience Award winner marked a major negative turning point in the fortunes of Northern Ireland. This is a chilling illustration of what President Kennedy may have meant when he said, "Those who make peaceful evolution impossible, make violent revolution inevitable". 110 minutes.

Friday, August 4, 7 pm

Popcorn & Politics

1st Friday Film

"Radio Bikini"

In 1946, the U.S. government sent a large amount of film equipment to document nuclear testing on the Bikini Atoll. The intention was to create the "Gone With The Wind" of government propaganda films: a rousing illustration of the United States' mastery of atomic power, but things didn't turn out as planned and the film was never released. This documentary explores one of the most terrifying tragedies of the nuclear age while illustrating that humanities' wisdom often fails to keep pace with it's inventions. Sponsored by the Nuclear Abolition Sisters. 60 minutes. 1987.



Save the Date

Hiroshima - Nagasaki Observance

Sunday, August 6

Early Evening

Thousands March in Support of Cuba and Venezuela

A speaker at the "Hands Off Venezuela and Cuba" march and rally in Washington D.C. quoted 18th century liberator Simon Bolivar: "The United States appears to be destined by Providence to plague America with misery in the name of democracy." And the misery has continued, from the overthrows of democratically elected presidents in Guatemala and Chile to the dirty wars and death squads in Central America to the attempted coup, funded by the National Endowment for Democracy and sponsored by Bush administration officials, against Hugo Chavez in 2002 (*The Observer*, April 21, 2002). Recently Bush warned against the "erosion of democracy" in Venezuela and Bolivia, whose economic policies are not welcomed by U.S. corporations.

With this history in mind, approximately three thousand people marched through Washington on May 20th to demand an end to U.S. threats and subversion against the sovereign countries of Cuba and Venezuela. Joining them was a small Lehigh Valley contingent: Tim Chadwick, Curt Day, Ron Ford, Ken Moore, Jean Kim, Tania Otero, and Robert Daniels II.

The marchers assembled in Malcolm X Park to the sounds of an African band performing on a stage hung with banners in Spanish and English: *Manos fuera Cuba y Venezuela*; Free the Cuban Five; *Venezuela, Gracias por el Petroleo*; Close the SOA. After hearing speakers from many organizations and from as far away as Massachusetts, Florida, and Oregon, the marchers headed towards Lafayette Park, bearing signs and flags. As the march passed the Cuban Mission, the Mission workers stood outside in solidarity, clapping in time with the chants and waving to the marchers. At 2 pm, the march arrived at Lafayette Park, where the marchers rested on the grass while listening to more speakers, with the White House in the background.

Speakers emphasized the contributions Cuba and Venezuela are making to their own people and to the world: Cuba enjoys an adult literacy rate of 100% and sends highly trained doctors all over the world to staff clinics in impoverished nations, while Venezuela provides free and accessible education from basic literacy to university, free health clinics in working-class and poor neighborhoods, and subsidized markets selling basic necessities at 50% below market cost (see "Venezuela's Oil Wealth Funds Social Programs," *St. Petersburg Times*, May 8, 2005). Speakers also urged people to inform themselves about Cuba and Venezuela and to speak to friends, family, and co-workers about these countries' accomplishments, and about the Bush administration's recent attempts at destabilization, thus building the movement to defend Latin American sovereignty and independent development against a new round of U.S.-inflicted misery.

- Ken Moore

Visualizing the Human Cost of War: "Eyes Wide Open"

In mid-May my wife Carmen and I combined a trip to Arlington, Virginia, to attend our grandson's band and chorus concert with a visit to the American Friends Service Committee's "Eyes Wide Open" exhibit on the National Mall in Washington, DC.

Also called "Silence of the Dead, Voices of the Living," the event powerfully commemorated Iraqi war deaths using pairs of combat boots representing each member of the U.S. military who has died in Iraq. Attached to each pair of boots was a tag that listed the name and home address of the person represented.

Covering several acres of the mall, the graphic display also included hundreds of pairs of shoes symbolizing the 100,000 or more Iraqi citizens who have died because of the war. Many of the shoes had large tags attached showing photographs and brief biographies of the victims represented.

On Saturday a silent march with hundreds of military families, veterans, Iraqis and peace activists proceeded from the exhibit to the vicinity of the Capitol building.

After the march we listened to dramatic testimonies by many family members of those who are currently serving in Iraq or who gave their lives there. There were also moving statements by veterans who have returned from their tours of duty.

A silent outdoor worship service on the mall concluded the four-day event on Sunday.

A smaller Pennsylvania "Eyes Wide Open" exhibit has also traveled to Scranton and Lewisburg and other cities in our state. The larger exhibit will visit eight cities across the country this summer. For more information visit www.afsc.org.

- Bob Riggs

Meeting Dent on Colombia

The June 5th meeting went very well. Mr. Dent and an assistant met with us at his Bethlehem office for an hour. Dave Benner, Herman Sagastume (a doctor who works as MAMA field director) and I attended. We watched together the entire DVD made from the video that we produced at our May 22, 2006, event.

Recall that on May 22nd, the date of the first appointment we had with Rep. Dent, he had to cancel because of a Justice Department visit to Allentown. (Editor's note: That was the visit by U.S. Attorney General Alberto Gonzalez.) Since we were all prepared, and some, like Emily, who left immediately for Morocco to work with refugees right after the meeting, wouldn't be able to meet later, and we weren't able to fully publicize the cancellation in time, we video-taped our concerns. Everyone who spoke came prepared to cover a different aspect of the Peace and Justice in Colombia topic. Greg Bowman told about his daughter Jenna's experiences in

(continued on page 8)

Joe DeRaymond & Prison

Joe DeRaymond continues to enjoy a full-paid scholarship to one of our nation's leading institutions. Well, maybe "enjoy" is not exactly the word. But he survives by helping his "classmates" learn to rudiments of duplicate bridge and chess, and he spends some time working in the vegetable garden, helping to make things grow in a deadening atmosphere. He started doing landscaping on May 30th.

Ever wonder why you never see any animal prisons? It's because homo sapiens is the apex of evolution. The "lower" animals' brains have not evolved enough to think up cages.

Joe tries to keep up with his reading when the feds will permit material to reach him through the mail. BUT, given the mentality of the joint keepers, any reading is considered suspect and always scrutinized for possible "terrorist" plots such as freedom and democracy.

Perhaps the best service Joe is doing for us all is answering questions raised by Philip Berrigan in another era of U.S. war crimes: "...how can the poor be free (a Movement objective) without sharing the legal jeopardy under which the poor must live (police over-kill, repressive courts, indescribable jails)? How can military politics be changed if one does not counter-balance the risk of young G.I.s who go to possible injury or death for overage death merchants? Above, all, how can the bloodshed in Southeast Asia possibly be stopped if one refuses to accept in some small way, the danger and death faced by the Vietnamese? In every instance, breaking the law, with the possible consequence of jail, does not begin to match the danger lived by those chewed up by domestic and foreign politics." (*Widen the Prison Gates*) Thank you Joe.

- Bernie Berg

Further Notes:

Joe DeRaymond's sentence is scheduled to end July 6th. Some of the others sentenced for "crossing the line" to close the U.S. Army's School of Assassins will be released around the same time while others, like Naed Smith, who has also been in Schuylkill Federal Prison, will remain in prison for many more weeks.

Tentatively, a **Welcome Home!** Party has been scheduled for Joe on Saturday afternoon, July 15, at 4 pm, at the home of Susie and Art Ravitz, in Easton. There will be a potluck meal and a chance for Joe to speak about his experiences and to take questions. Because it is tentative, please call LEPOCO at 610-691-8730 or Susie at 610-253-2522 to get final arrangements and directions.

Barbara Lloyd Nonviolent Resistance Fund

Participating in a nonviolent act of civil resistance/disobedience can be a liberating and empowering experience. To risk arrest by boldly confronting the agents of injustice can lead to spiritual awakening, philosophical realignment, and a whole heck of a lot of fun. The experience offers a privileged look at the in-

ner workings of systems, political and social. It is also an experience that comes with a price. From loss of work to the straining of personal relationships to possible incarceration, the costs to one who engages in such actions can be significant. Having a community of sister and brother peacemakers to rely on for emotional support can be of great comfort. Now, those wishing to engage in nonviolent actions can also look to LEPOCO for a modicum of financial support.

The LEPOCO Steering Committee and Action Meeting has started the Barbara Lloyd Nonviolent Resistance Fund. Culled from donations made in the memory of steadfast resister Barbara Lloyd, the Nonviolent Resistance Fund is meant to help defray the costs of legal procedures resulting from peaceful resistance actions. LEPOCO members apply for assistance by contacting a member of the Steering Committee or the LEPOCO Peace Center. A basic fifty dollar stipend per incident may be awarded. This modest offering is made in the hopes of alleviating some of one of the burdens that come with activities of this sort.

For those who cannot engage directly in civil resistance/disobedience, the Barbara Lloyd Nonviolent Resistance Fund offers an avenue for your support. Contributions can be made to this fund as a way of encouraging resisters to continue the struggle while reminding them that they go not into the wilderness of the empire alone.

- robert Daniels II & Ellen Buck

Dent Nine Update

Nine individuals were arrested and charged with Defiant Trespass on January 17, 2006, as they read the names of the Iraqi War dead in Congressperson Charles Dent's office in Bethlehem. The "Dent 9" received their trial date on June 15th, at their arraignment hearing in Lehigh County Courthouse. Besides the Nine, 20 people turned out in support early that morning.

A Pre-Trial Hearing was set for Monday, August 14, at 1:30 pm, at the Old Lehigh County Courthouse, Room 1B, 455 Hamilton Street, Allentown. The trial is scheduled to begin on Tuesday, August 22, at 9 am, at the same location. These dates may be changed.

The Nine are Susie Ravitz, Art Landis, Robert Daniels II, Tim Chadwick, Joe DeRaymond, Sarah Snider, Maria Weick, Bernie Berg, and Anna Maria Caldara.

A defense committee for the Nine is being formed to support them in raising the issues of their case. Please call Carmen and Bob Riggs at 610-867-1244 if you would like to help with this effort.

Supporters can mail photo postcards of the group (a second printing should make them available soon at LEPOCO) to Rep. Charles Dent urging him to take a stand against the war in Iraq. Addresses are 701 W. Broad St., Suite 201, Bethlehem, PA 18018 or 502 Cannon House Office Bldg., Washington, DC 20515.

- Anna Maria Caldara

The Resurrection of the Religious Left

After the 2004 Presidential election Michael Feingold of the *Village Voice* wrote: "This is the election in which American Christianity destroyed itself. Today the church is no longer a religion but a tacky political lobby."

Perhaps it was in response to impressions like Mr. Feingold's that Cornel West, Sister Joan Chittister, and Rabbi Michael Lerner co-founded the Network of Spiritual Progressives (NSP), "an alternative to the Religious Right (and a new direction for the Left)." Their mission is threefold: 1. To change the Bottom Line in America. Instead of institutions and social practices being judged efficient, rational, and productive to the extent that they maximize money and power, they would be judged according to how socially responsible they are, and to the extent that they promote caring, kindness, and generosity. 2. Challenge the misuse of religion, God, and spirit by the Religious Right. The NSP provides a voice for many religious and spiritual people who know that the Religious Right does not speak for them. 3. Challenge the religio-phobia and hostility towards spiritual concerns found in some sectors of liberal culture.

May 17-20, the NSP held its first east coast meeting in Washington, D.C. (an inaugural conference was held on the west coast in July 2005). Over 1200 activists filled the All Souls Unitarian Church over the course of the conference's four days.

Using Rabbi Lerner's book *The Left Hand of God* as a blueprint, an eight plank progressive agenda was drawn up. Called "The Spiritual Covenant with America," attendees spent the first day reviewing the ideas contained within and readying themselves for the over 400 Congressional meetings scheduled for the next day.

After words of encouragement from noted author Taylor Branch (*At Canaan's Edge: America in the King Years*) Tania Otero and I joined 26 other Pennsylvanians for a visit to Rick Santorum's office. While the group at large was not able to personally engage the Senator, a smaller contingent did corner him in the hallway and pressed him on the Iraq war. Meanwhile, the rest of us promoted the planks of the Spiritual Covenant to his aides. We were politely received.

Before returning to the conference we gathered at Lafayette Park for a "pray-in for peace." There, representatives of various faiths unified to speak with one voice calling for an end to the war in Iraq. Speakers included Ahrar Ahmad, Tony Campolo, Norma Chavez, John Dear, Bob Edgar, Osagyefo Sekou, Jim Wallis, Arthur Waskow, and Ken Butigan of Pace' Bene' (who announced the commencement of the Declaration of Peace campaign). Medea Benjamin of Code Pink and Cindy Sheehan led the crowd to the White House where a petition with 40,000 signatures and the message, "Don't Bomb Iran," was left.

(continued on page 8)

Activists: Relax

After an exhausting week of vigils, conferences, lectures, documentaries, and marches I found myself elaborating another long to-do list for the following week. I included writing articles for the local newspapers, research on counter-recruitment techniques, find a job (or two), and more vigils. I closed my eyes to remember what else I wanted to do and I could not remember. At first all that came to mind was noise, a collage of images and voices from the seminar in Washington, DC, on spiritual activism, a Jewish song and the voice of my mother saying to slow down.

She is not such a great example of "slowing down," but that is precisely the reason to follow her advice. This restless woman was involved in the Sandinista Revolution in Nicaragua and the government that followed during the 1980s. Then she fought against the repression of that same system, cooperating with NGOs and the UN, while raising her three children. Often she would end up in the hospital due to exhaustion. She learned the lesson the hard way.

In front of the White House during a pray-in for peace, I heard a wise woman, singing, "Leave your burdens by the riverside," her message was that on many occasions peace activist try to do too much. We worry for every injustice in the world and burden ourselves with so much that the weight brings us to our knees. So it is better to put some of our burdens by the riverside, so we can walk straight again.

In this light I want to recognize the effort of all my fellow peacemakers, and remind you to take time to relax and meditate. Retire to a quiet place, close your eyes, let your mind go, and hear only your breathing. I invite you to pet your dog, your cat, hug your children or your partner - then embrace yourself. Another idea is to attend an artistic performance, to bring the joy of beauty to fill your soul with inspiration.

It was in this spirit that I attended a great show at Lehigh University on May 20th. *Shanti: A Journey of Peace*, an Indian musical and dancing performance with a strong message of nonviolence. Shanti is a Sanskrit word that represents "recognition of the oneness of the Universe, the interconnectedness of all things." A full orchestra and large chorus (which included LEPOCO's Jeff Vitelli) (see related notes in *the struggle shared*) treated our ears while dancers and projected photographs dazzled our eyes. I came searching for relaxation, and left with an enormous feeling of hope -- hope and certainty that it is possible to create a world where different cultures and religions can coexist.

On our walk back home, my partner started brainstorming and dreaming about that world, and how we have to work really hard to see it become a reality. Yes, but in order to do that we also have to take care of ourselves, and practice the love we so much dream about in our own homes. Like Gandhi said: "Be the change you wish to see in the world."

- Tania Otero

The Struggle Shared

Peace and Joy forever...
May all be blessed with boundless joy!
May all be free from needless fears!
In this world of Harmony,
May Peace and Joy prevail!
Shanti Shanti Shantihi

- From the Finale of *Shanti: A Journey of Peace*,
by Kanniks Kannikeswaran

SHANTI - Early in 2006 the LEPOCO Peace Singers received an invitation through Arati Shah-Yukich, to join the Indian Community in rehearsing for a production of a piece called *Shanti*. Shanti is peace, I knew. As a peace singer, my interest was peaked.

So in mid-February, there I was in an auditorium with 80-some Indians (Bengalis, Gujaratis, Tamilnads) in their colorful saris and Punjabis. I was welcomed as the first voice of the Western Chorus.

Several weeks later, I received a score of the entire piece and I began to meet other non-Indian singers.

Shanti: A Journey of Peace is a composition including 20 songs, rooted in classical Indian ragas, with western classical and modern pop influences. It is composed for Indian choir, Western choir, Indian orchestra (sitar or sarod, tambour, reena, tabla) and 20 piece chamber orchestra, and choreography for a 20-plus member classical Indian dance troupe.

For the performance on May 20th, the Lehigh Valley Shanti Community was joined by a dozen voices from the Martin Luther King Coalition Chorale, of Cincinnati, Ohio, who had recently sung in the second production of *Shanti* in that city.

Standing backstage on May 20th with my new friends awaiting our cue to file into our places, I realized that many of us had never sung on stage before, let alone at a venue as imposing as Zoellner Center for the Arts. Then the tambour droned, and a hundred voices intoned, "Om, Om, Om," and *Shanti*," and the dancers took the stage, and I was lost in the musical odyssey, and two hours lat-

er we were singing the finale. Hopefully a CD of the Lehigh Valley production of *Shanti: a Journey of Peace* will be forthcoming.

COSTING OUT STUDY LOOKS AT ALLENTOWN SCHOOLS - Partly in response to the mandates of the "No Child Left Behind Act" and the standards based reform movement nationally to ensure that all students have the resources available to obtain a decent education, communities in 38 states across the U.S. have done "Costing Out" analyses of funding sources, demographics, how students compare with norms, etc., to determine what children need to succeed.

A group of business and community leaders in Allentown took it upon themselves (as the Allentown Education 2010 Committee) to commission and fund a local study. The report, released in February, concludes that the district's ability to educate its students is so greatly impeded that an additional \$30 million a year is needed to close the per student funding gap between Allentown and other districts across the county and state.

Among the factors that put Allentown so far behind its neighbors, are its low tax base, double the number of economically disadvantaged students, and four times the number of English language learners (compared to the state average). As a result of such an inadequate resource base, the district has a high student - teacher ratio, high teacher turn-over, less support services, deteriorating facilities, a shortage of textbooks, outmoded technology, and a need for training for teachers.

The cost of doing nothing, predicts the report, will be increasing

drop-out rates, with the attendant social and economic problems, out-migration of students to other districts, as families seek better educations for their children, and serious economic decline as employers look elsewhere for a skilled labor force.

To learn more about the costing out study and what you can do to enter the conversation, contact Good Schools Pennsylvania at info@good-schoolspa.org, or call 866-720-4086.

HALF-HOUR FOR HAITI - Winnie Tyler wrote to share information about something we can do for Haiti in a few minutes per week - or a few minutes whenever we find the time.

The U.S.-based Institute for Justice and Democracy in Haiti (IJDH) works to defend political prisoners from abuse and unjust detention. Every week the IJDH sends out "Half-Hour for Haiti Action Alerts." The action selected is usually a letter to be written to a government official in Haiti on behalf of a prisoner, but some weeks it's a different project such as signing a petition or writing to a prisoner.

The week of April 4 we were asked to write on behalf of Bob Moliere, a second-hand mattress salesman and grassroots Lavalas activist who helped organize peaceful demonstrations for the return of democracy until he was arrested illegally in April 2005. While in prison for a year he has been beaten and tortured, and his business has failed, making things very difficult for his wife and two young children.

Sample letters in English and French were offered and we were asked to send the same or a similar letter in either language either by regular mail to Haiti or by fax or e-mail to the IJDH.

The Action Alert of April 25 announced in its update, "Bob Moliere is out!" What an incentive to keep responding to the alerts every week!

For more information see www.ijdh.org. To receive the Haiti Action Alerts, send an e-mail to info@ijdh.org.

- Jeff Vitelli

Meeting Dent on Colombia

(continued from page 4)

Colombia, and his own trip there. Anna reviewed the 60-year history of the conflict, and discussed the pros and cons of Plan Colombia. I made a case for alternative approaches to the drug problems, as did my patient who is having trouble getting treatment for his addiction. Jason covered aerial spraying issues, and drew on his visit to Colombia. Emily shared concerns regarding the militarization of the War on Drugs from her last year's experience in Bolivia. I shared the story of Pastor Oscar Muñoz, and his extended family as a concrete example of what so many thousands in the country are facing. We pled the cause for the Peace Communities, and decried the scandalous idea of supporting the Colombian government even after the DAS fiasco, which we shared in detail. And we prayed the Litany for Colombia, placing rocks around the candle symbolizing the dead at San Jose de Apartadó.

Mr. Dent expressed appreciation for our presentation, and said that it had supplied him with valuable information on many of the issues. We left him with a notebook full of reprints, resources, web sites, and two DVDs -- the one was ours, and the other was from the www.peaceincolombia.org website. He did comment that his source of information was the State Department, as he picked up on Jason's suggestion to look for alternative perspectives.

We asked him for specific help: to vote against Plan Colombia, as it stands, to sign onto the House resolution to Acknowledge the Peacemakers in Colombia, and to oppose the State Department certification of the improved human rights record of the military, especially in light of the recent publicized abuses. He gave us the cards of his two aides who would be our contacts in Washington, and invited us to have further communication with them. (They are Peter M. Richards, and Collin Long.)

The vote on aid to Colombia is coming up soon, and there is a new option to take \$30 million out of aerial spraying to put into refugee and other humanitarian work around the world, sponsored by Rep. James McGovern, I believe.

Blessings to all, Priscilla Benner

Editor's Note: This most interesting e-mail message came our way via Bob Walden. We print it, with only slight editing and with Priscilla Benner's permission. We apologize that we do not know the full names of everyone mentioned. This tells a very encouraging story of serious local peace efforts by Mennonites and their friends for the people of Colombia. Thank you Priscilla and friends.

Editor's Note II: The vote on McGovern's amendment to the Foreign Operations Appropriations Bill failed, 174 for to 229 against (29 not voting), on June 9th. Rep. Charles Dent voted against the amendment. We hope there will be other opportunities. Will our local representative be able to stand with the poor people of Colombia?

The Resurrection of the Religious Left

(continued from page 6)

In the evenings we were entertained by the powerful performances of Emma's Revolution, Michael Franti of Spearhead, and Holly Near who sang a song challenging the listeners to "cultivate fascination instead of fear." Jonathan Granoff, president of the Global Security Institute piggy-backed on Ms. Near's sentiments when he said, "Our culture needs to change from one of self-love to one of selfless love. Separate yourself from that which separates you from humanity."

In her opening speech Sister Joan Chittister cited Saint Francis of Assisi who is quoted as having said, "Always preach the gospel...Sometimes use words." Well, after such a lengthy, long-winded weekend (there were 120 speakers and presenters) the Network of Spiritual Progressives has a lot of work lot of work to do. The preaching has been done. For this movement to be successful it will take a lot of action. Interested members of faith communities or those who consider themselves "spiritual, but not religious" can investigate further at www.spiritualprogressives.org, www.tikkun.org, and www.declarationofpeace.org.

- robert Daniels II

Voting Integrity Campaign

A massive movement is underway to ensure the integrity of our elections -- to guarantee that every vote is recorded, counted, and reported accurately...with proof. The Coalition for Voting Integrity (CVI), based in Bucks County, is taking a lead role in this effort.

At two recent CVI-sponsored events our eyes were opened to the magnitude of the problems inherent in the use of the new electronic voting machines. On April 19th, Dr. Daniel Lepresti, a noted computer expert, told an audience at Lehigh University that e-voting machines can easily be hacked without any evidence of tampering. On June 3rd in New Hope, Mark Crispen Miller talked about the threat to our democracy if ordinary citizens do not act to demand election reform as he introduced his latest book, *Foiled Again: How the Right Stole the 2004 Election and Why They'll Steal the Next One Too (Unless We Stop Them)*.

CVI wants to get voter-verified paper ballot legislation passed in Pennsylvania. Can you help get signatures on a petition calling for the immediate passage of Pennsylvania HB- 2000 and SB-977 in order to mandate paper ballots? Contact CVI at www.coalitionforvotingintegrity.org to download petitions and obtain yard signs, Save Our Vote buttons, and a free 18-min. DVD video. Locally, contact Judy Woodruff and Louise Legun at 610-437-5314 for more information. The LEPOCO Peace Center has petitions.

- Louise Legun & Judy Woodruff

Bits & Pieces

⊕ An Inconvenient Truth! the film featuring Al Gore on the dangers of global warming will be shown at the Nineteenth Street Theatre, July 15-22, and at the neighboring venue, Theatre514, July 24-29. The recent flooding, which is thought to have occurred at least in part due to global warming, makes this showing even more important.

⊕ Lehigh Valley Beyond Oil led a street presence at 3rd & New Sts., in Bethlehem, on June 28th, as part of Oil Independence Day. This is another way to encourage less overdevelopment in the Lehigh Valley, thus less flooding. They meet regularly on Wednesday evenings. For more information see beyondoil@sustain.lv.org.

⊕ The American Civil Liberties Union is sponsoring a town hall meeting on the abuse of executive power at 7 pm, July 13, in the conference room of the Hampton Inn, 7471 Keebler Way, Allentown. Speakers will be Matt Bowles, field organizer for the national ACLU legislative office and Malcolm J. Gross, Esq., of Allentown. For more information call 215-592-1513, x123 or e-mail jlevy@aclupa.org.

⊕ Aug. 4-5, the Blue Mountain Zendo, based at the UUCLV, will host a Homeless Zen Peacemaker Retreat led by Rev. Genro Gauntt, followed by an Inside Zendo Workshop on Aug 5th, 11 am-3 pm, both at UUCLV, 424 Center St., Bethlehem. Cost: \$85 for full session/\$50 for just the workshop. For more info. call 610-866-7652

⊕ Thank you to all the folks who staffed a LEPOCO table at the Pride Festival on June 17th: Ellen Buck, Robert Daniels, Sharon Mills, Charyn Ayoub, Kathryn Hoffman, Martha Christine, Nils Hovik, Lise Carlson, Fran Dreisbach, Marion Dawson, Verna Rapp Uthman,

Steven Peckham, John Zachmann. It was a great day for talking with new and interested people in Allentown.

⊕ We note with sadness the death of David Frew on June 20th. David was a faithful peace camper for many years and a helper at peace camp in recent summers. His death at 17 was a surprise to all who knew and loved him. It was heartening to know that many at the Unitarian Church in Bethlehem had been supportive of David in his teen years, especially since the death of his mother a few years ago. A memorial service, attended by many of David's high school friends, was held at the Unitarian Church on June 23rd. David was to have entered Kutztown University this fall.

⊕ You are encouraged to start saving those wonderful donations for the LEPOCO Yard Sale on September 16th.

⊕ The LEPOCO Fundraising Committee is planning a LEPOCO picnic for the fall. If you would be interested in helping with these plans please call the Peace Center.

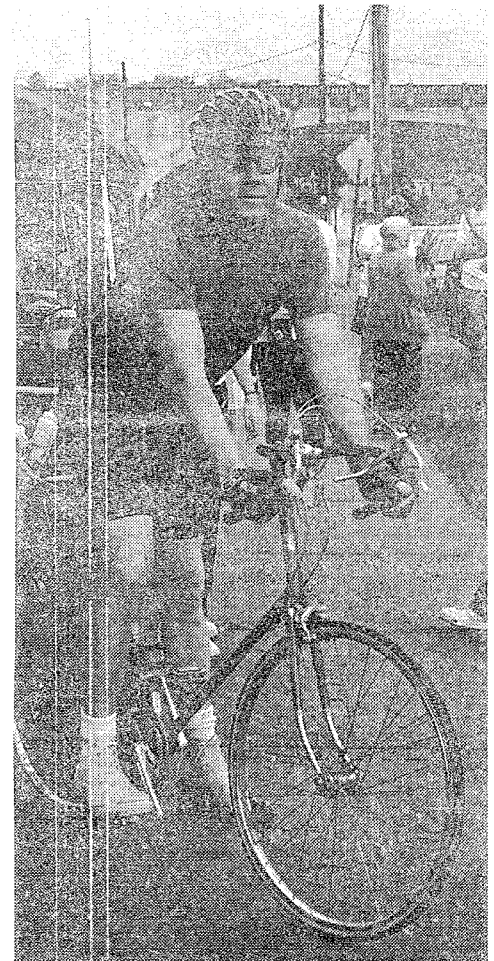
⊕ Thanks to the organizing work of Kathryn Hoffman, six LEPOCO members attended the annual reading of the Declaration of Independence at the Liberty Bell Church in Allentown on July 2nd wearing their "Stop the War" t-shirts. Several supportive conversations were held with others in attendance.

⊕ Dominick Buscemi wrote an excellent article on health care reform for *The Express Times* on June 26th. He wrote in support of SB1085 and HB272 in the Pennsylvania legislature that would provide comprehensive health coverage. You can contact him at buscemi@ptd.net.

⊕ It is important for everyone to read the article Was the 2004 Election Stolen? by Robert F. Kennedy, Jr., in the June 1st issue of *Rolling Stone Magazine*. It is a comprehensive review of the many problems with that election. See page 8 of the newsletter for related information.

⊕ Pax Christi USA will hold their 2006 national conference in Pitts-

burgh, at Duquesne University, July 28-30. The theme: "God's People Can Wait No Longer: Twenty Years Since Economic Justice for All," commemorating the 20th anniversary of the U.S. bishops' pastoral, "Economic Justice for All."



Walt Garvin sits ready to begin the LEPOCO Bike/Walkathon on June 3rd in Bethlehem. This excellent photo is by Ruth Grady of *The Bethlehem Press*.



LEPOCO

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**Young People Making Peace
Summer Day Camp**

July 24-28, 2006 9 am -Noon Daily

Paths to Peace :
Music, Games, Stories, Crafts, Learning and Friendship
For young people ages 5-12
who have completed kindergarten to 6th grade
There is still time to register.
See page 1 for more info. or call 610-691-8730 for a form.



Scott Ritter - former UN weapons inspector
Ray McGovern - former CIA analyst

Friday, July 21, 7 pm

Unitarian Unitarian Church of the Lehigh Valley
\$10 donation (no one turned away)

***The War in Iraq: How We Got In;
How We Get Out: How We Stay Out of Iran***

See page 1 for more information.

Weekly Peace Vigils

Bethlehem:
4-5:30 pm, Thursdays
3rd & Wyandotte Sts.
Contact:
Curt Day 610-865-9838 or
Vince Stravino 610-868-6489

Allentown:
Noon-1pm, 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!*

