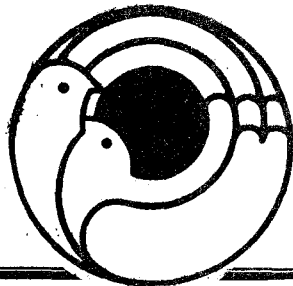


June -
July
2007

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

Its Not Over

Twenty-five years ago this month on June 12, 1982, the largest demonstration in U.S. history took place in Central Park, NYC. (LEPOCO took five busloads of local people to that important gathering.) It was the height of the anti-nuclear weapons movement and 1 million people marched on a beautiful, warm day for an end to the nuclear arms race.

Jonathan Schell writing in *The Nation* (July 2, 2007 issue) considers why the popular momentum against nuclear weapons and the effort to rid the world of this scourge was not maintained. He concludes that while no one can predict another June 12th or its equivalent, "That one is needed, is beyond argument."

We won't promise millions, but the Nuclear Abolition Sisters is offering us a chance to give public voice to our opposition to Bush's new crop of nuclear weapons and their productions facilities.

In the August season of Hiroshima and Nagasaki we will gather on Thursday, August 16, to reflect on the first use of nuclear weapons in 1945 (62 years ago) and call for a modern day end to their production and proliferation.

Those who can will meet at the Peace Pole in Rose Garden Park (8th Ave. and Union Blvd., Bethlehem), at 6:30 pm. From there we will walk through the streets of the city, banners and signs declaring that "The Nuclear Threat Is Not Over," and calling on people to oppose these weapons. We will arrive at the Tondabayashi Garden (next to the Bethlehem Public Library, on Church St.) in time for a 7:30 pm, program with music, readings, and a short film, "America's Dialogue," about nuclear weapons. Help maintain the opposition to nuclear weapons, needed as much as ever.

- Nancy C. Tate

A Nation Fleeing Itself

In the Americas, the flight from war and the violence of economies that starve nations is from south to north, from the impoverished nations of Central and South America to the powerful economies of the United States and Canada. This migration is viewed by many here, in the United States, as an invasion. In the popular media, it is portrayed as an influx of criminals, of terrorists and opportunists who are taking jobs from United States workers. Immigration from the South is seen as a crisis that necessitates walls, barbed wire, prisons, and military deployment to our borders.

In March, I joined four other Pennsylvania activists, Naed Smith and Linda Brindle of Harrisburg, and Sarah Snider and Tim Chadwick from the Lehigh Valley, on a delegation to El Salvador to examine the roots of this migration as seen from the South. We participated in the Center for Exchange and Solidarity (CIS) Rutilio Grande delegation. The impetus for this effort was to commemorate the 30th anniversary of the assassination of Rutilio Grande, the first priest to be murdered by death squads in El Salvador.

There are many threads to this story. We met with Salvadoran economists, sociologists, experts on emigration, priests involved in the social struggle, health care workers, union leaders, community leaders and citizens who have experienced in their lives the reality

of the war and the post-war period of the last decades. The impact of each of the various issues -- crime, CAFTA, remittances, dollarization, worker exploitation, the agricultural economy, the need for land reform, corruption, the drug trade, the lack of reconciliation after the war, impunity, the media, and the continuing role of the oligarchy as arbiters of the society -- is integral to an analysis of migration and El Salvador. However, I believe that U.S. policies since the 1980s have been the primary influence in the creation of a nation that is literally fleeing itself.

(continued on page 6)

Potluck & Politics

Sunday, July 1, 6:30 pm

El Salvador Delegation:

Searching for the Roots of Migration

Joe DeRaymond, Naed Smith,
Sarah Snider, Tim Chadwick

LEPOCO Peace Center

313 W. 4th St., south Bethlehem

Please bring some food to share.

Please see adjoining article for an introduction to the report that will be given at the P&P.

Call 610-691-8730 for more information.

YPT: Youth Discussing Issues That Matter to Them

The 4th annual Youth Peacemaker Training (YPT) was held at the Lehigh Valley Friends Meetinghouse on May 12th. YPT is a day-long event for high-school kids that is organized and run by high-school kids. There were about 22 high school students in attendance this year.

Our objective is to have everyone leave the training more informed of today's problems -- from the ones they face in school to the problems that affect the world around us. We also want everyone to leave feeling empowered and full of ideas and solutions. This year we spent the morning focusing on issues in schools.

To do this we did what we called the *ideal school* activity. We set up an imaginary town that needed to build a new high school because of a freak fire over the summer. The young activists participating in this activity then brainstormed everything they wanted in their new school. After brainstorming we were split into groups -- students, educators, high-income community, low-income community, and school board. These groups were then responsible for developing specific plans to present at the school board meeting where a final plan was to be made as a compromise to all groups. This exercise helped the participants get a feel for how difficult this process can be, and how hard it can be for some people to get their opinions heard. We then broke for a delicious home-cooked vegan meal that all of the facilitators contributed to.

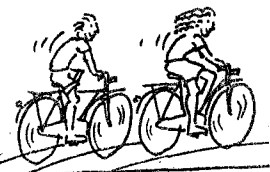
Since we focused on the school situations in the morning, the time after lunch was mostly for larger scale problems. There were two hour-long workshop sessions, with two workshops to choose from in each session, we had the choice of environmental topics, students' rights, discrimination in schools, and violence/nonviolence. All of the workshops provided new information and points of view that people were not used to hearing.

At the end of the day, we were very pleased with the event, which everyone seemed to enjoy a lot. It was a truly great experience to get high school students from around the Lehigh Valley together to discuss issues that really matter to us.

- Tim Morgan

Nonviolence is the constant awareness of the dignity and humanity of oneself and others. It seeks truth and justice. It renounces violence both in method and in attitude. It is a courageous acceptance of active love and goodwill as the instrument with which to overcome evil and transform both oneself and others. It is the willingness to undergo suffering, rather than inflict it. It excludes retaliation and flight.

- Wally Nelson



Snake Witness

Neither rain, sleet, snow, nor a snake on the shoulder of the road can keep the Bikers/Walkers from their appointed rounds. Fortunately, the only one of these elements present on June 2nd was the snake, a sleek, handsome creature who watched in wary silence as a few of us bikers struggled up the hill into Free-mansburg. The weather was on the hot side, but sunny and clear.


Twenty-two bikers and eleven walkers, the best attendance for bikers in recent years, participated in this annual fundraiser. Those sponsoring the participants donated (or promised to donate) over \$2500. Half this money will be used to further LEPOCO's work, the other half split between Partners in Health in Haiti and the work of House of Grace Catholic Worker (Philadelphia) in Haiti. Partners in Health started a small community clinic in 1985, and now has a full-service hospital and multiple clinics in Haiti's Central Plateau. The House of Grace Catholic Worker is starting a clinic in a Port-au-Prince neighborhood near the parish of Fr. Jean Juste.

Thank you to all the participants and our generous sponsors. We make the path by walking (and riding). Thanks also to the snake - its dignified witness gave me the shot I needed to make it to the top of that hill.

- Michael Lawton

Newsletter of **LEPOCO**

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

Annual dues are:

Regular Member	\$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, Martha Christine, Peter Christine, 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: Addison Bross, Peter Christine, Robert Daniels II, Julius Iwantsch (co-treasurer), Holly Kent, Mike Lawton (ex-officio), Michelle Mecham, Janet Ney (co-reasurer), Sue Ravitz, Nancy Tate (ex-officio).

Popcorn & Politics

at the LEPOCO Peace Center

Friday, July 6, 7 pm

(1st Friday Film)

The Milagro Beanfield War

When a small town farmer diverts water from the land of a local real estate developer to irrigate his bean field, a tiny war between activists, lawyers, and politicians threatens to erupt. A loose and whimsical fable about community pride and social activism in the face of modern progress. 1988. Directed by Robert Redford. 118 minutes.

Please bring a snack or beverage to share.

Friday, August 3, 7 pm

(1st Friday Film)

A Face In the Crowd

Andy Griffith made his film debut as Lonesome Rhodes, a drifter with homespun charm whose meteoric rise to fame and political influence comes with a dark side. A scathing indictment of demagogues, a complicit media, and an all-too-eager-to-follow U.S. public. Also starring Patricia Neal and Walter Matthau. 1957. Directed by Elia Kazan. 125 minutes.

Please bring a snack or beverage to share.



2001: Margot Hillman

What makes Peace Camp different from dozens of other camps your children might attend? Peace Camp is based on the principles of peacemaking, nonviolence and social justice. For five mornings, campers and staff experience a community based on those principles.

2004: Anna Smith

As a former camper, and a first time group leader this year, it's been a great experience to go from making a tie-dye shirt to planning how to teach tie-dyeing. I'm really excited about spreading ideas of peace and justice to the next generation.

If you know a child who would like to attend Peace Camp please complete the enclosed registration form as soon as possible. If you would like to volunteer as a helper, contact LEPOCO at 610-691-8730 or this year's Peace Camp Convener, Donna Hartmann at 610-865-5204.



Sharing The Ground Truth

The Ground Truth has been hailed as "powerful" and "quietly unflinching." This film follows the lives of young U.S. soldiers as they experience recruitment and training, combat, homecoming, and the struggle to reintegrate with families and communities. The terrible conflict in Iraq is only a prelude to the challenging battles fought by these soldiers upon returning home as they face personal demons, an uncomprehending public, and an indifferent government. As their battles take shape, each soldier becomes a new kind of hero, bearing witness, giving support to other veterans, and learning to fearlessly wield the most powerful weapon of all -- the truth.

This very special film is directed by Patricia Foulkrod and lasts 78 minutes. The Lehigh Valley Peace Coalition believes it is 78 minutes well spent, even if one is left to flinch, shed a tear, or feel deep sorrow for what the war in Iraq has brought us. While the ramifications of the war are horrid for Iraq, her neighbors and the world, it is hoped that by viewing this film about the horrors being experienced by these young people (those who are presented as heroes repeatedly in the media, our schools and communities), more people can gain further impetus to act on their opposition to the war.

Do you know a church group, a community group, a school group, or a small group of friends who would like to view this film? Please call LEPOCO at 610-691-8730 or talk to any of the folks active in the Peace Coalition.

- Nancy C. Tate & robert Daniels II



Witnessing for Peace Camp

Here are some of the reasons people have given over the years for loving Peace Camp.

1998: Stephanie Nelson

Peace Camp welcomes all who want to come with open arms. It has been filled with little smiling faces and big smiling faces, little hugs and big hugs, little voices and big voices. And it is interspersed with middle voices - the voices of returning campers who are too old to camp, but don't want the fun to end.

2000: Cecilia Gilman

Ever since I can remember, Peace Camp has been the highlight of my summer. When summer just started to dull and those long days became boring, it was time once again for Peace Camp. Peace Camp brought new friends and excitement to those hot July days, along with knowledge of recycling, world issues and much more.

The Funny Fickle Turning Tides of Justice (???)

Should've known something was awry when after four or so hours in captivity my arresting officer led me to the police station gate and before officially setting me free shook my hand saying, "Thanks for doing what you're doing. We're with you. Keep it up."

Keep what up? Is this guy serious? I and 43 other like-hearted individuals had only a few hours ago been arrested for trying to draw attention to the war profiteering of big business by blocking traffic (foot and motor) on Wall Street in front of the New York Stock Exchange. It was mid-March, the start of the 5th year of the war in Iraq and we'd supposedly just committed a crime. Charged with "disorderly conduct" and now the cop that slapped the cuffs on is encouraging me to "keep it up"???

Peace Officer?

A month later and i'm in a New York City courtroom in front of a judge who has offered me and the majority of my co-defendants an A.C.D. (Adjournment with Contemplation for Dismissal); essentially a reprieve with no need to return to court, no fines, no jail time, no punishment.

There was little time to contemplate this apparent good fortune because i had to pile into a car headed for Washington, D.C., with friends Mary, Bud, and June. A brief pilgrimage pit stop at the Knights of Columbus lodge parking lot in Catonsville, Maryland, took us off course for only a few minutes. It was a worthy detour to visit the spot where in 1968 nine people burned draft files with homemade napalm to protest the Viet Nam war.

The next morning i found myself inside U.S. District Court to support my friends as they were to defend themselves against "disorderly conduct" charges garnered for a January 11th, 2007, action. That day 89 individuals holding Habeas Corpus petitions (to be filed on behalf of Guantanamo detainees) and wearing orange "Shut Down Guantanamo/Stop Torture" t-shirts had been arrested in the atrium of this very courthouse. Officials in the court seemed quite surprised to see fifty or so defendants return for trial since on the day of the action in January most of those arrested refused to provide any identification and simply gave the name of a prisoner at Guantanamo. Released with Jane and John Doe citations none of the defendants were technically required to show up for court. Due to these unusual circumstances the government had to dismiss the case. They were unprepared to prosecute and sent us on our way, but not before each of us spoke the name of the detainee we represented aloud in the courtroom. Though not there in January, i assumed the name of Abdullah Mohammed Khan and gave voice to one who the United States government refuses to see or hear.

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A few days later and i was in my third courtroom in one week, this one being in Philadelphia for the trial of the "Declare Peace 14." Here pro bono attorneys Paul Hetznecker and Paul Messing skillfully argued against the triple misdemeanor charges of "defiant trespass," "criminal trespass," and "criminal conspiracy" with a prosecuting attorney who took a straightforward approach towards the case. The prosecution claimed that our presence in the building disrupted business in the building. The police had warned us to leave three times before arresting us. We refused to leave and therefore were given accommodations for the night in the infamous "Roundhouse" where white bread/cheese sandwiches are the chef's specialty. Our attorneys pointed out that our arrests took place in a public building during business hours and that the nature of the message we carried (a plea for peace of all things) and not our conduct was what brought on the arrests, "Had a group carrying bags of money to help then-Senator Rick Santorum's re-election campaign come that day the police would not have been called."

A motion for dismissal was granted for the conspiracy charge, but not trespassing. If he was granting dismissal for one charge, why not all? It didn't look good for the 14 until the judge unexpectedly said, "I still believe people in this country have the right to demonstrate in a peaceful, respectful way, as the defendants did. I find them not guilty."

"Surprised" is an understatement. Three apparent victories in one week. What's one to make of all this? Is the tide turning? Has there been a sea change? Perhaps, but the wars rage on. We're left to wonder what it will take until we finally see change. What's readily apparent is that the risk for those engaging in nonviolent civil disobedience/resistance in the United States is relatively low at this time and that maybe further engagement with those in power who control the purse strings funding wars of aggression is required. Nearly 3500 dead U.S. soldiers and anywhere between 60,000 and 600,000+ dead Iraqis to date. The numbers grow daily. Whether it be a sit-in or merely a visit to a Congressional representative's office, we must all step up our efforts to end the war in Iraq and all wars. How long can one's conscience afford silence? Or, to quote Kathy Kelly from her recent visit to the Lehigh Valley for LEPOCO's Annual Dinner, "What will rise you?"

-robert Daniels II

Weekly Peace Vigils

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

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

Easton: 10-11 am, Saturdays
Centre Square

Contact: Reggie Regrut, 908-859-5632

Please attend as often as you are able!

Nuclear Nugget for June-July

Resumption of Nuclear Weapons Testing? The United States has signed but not ratified the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT), which prohibits all nuclear explosive tests. Since 1992, the U.S. has observed a moratorium on nuclear testing. President Bush has said he will not ask the Senate to ratify the treaty and that the United States may even seek to resume nuclear testing.

The administration's Nuclear Posture Review calls for reducing the time required for the United States to resume nuclear weapons testing. Accordingly, Congress has approved funds to reduce this time from 2-3 years to 18 months. Moreover, if the U.S. decides to deploy newly designed nuclear weapons, these weapons would likely first undergo nuclear explosive testing.

87% of U.S. citizens think our country should participate in the CTBT.

Source: Union of Concerned Scientists.

would like to have a country where war is not necessary anymore. We're trying to change the culture of our country and trying to teach people that violence should only be a last resort. In President Bush's Iraq war, it was not used as a last resort."

The local VFW group will participate in a peace fair in Reading on July 14 and they are organizing for a booth at the Allentown Fair. For more information on joining the group or helping with any of these events, contact Louise Legun at 610-437-5314.

Iraq Summer Has Arrived ★

Dorothellia Mills and Aaron Swisher will be doing some intense organizing over the next two months in the 15th Congressional District as part of Iraq Summer and Americans Against the Escalation in Iraq. They are members of a team of 70 field workers stationed across the U.S., 11 of them are active in Pennsylvania. Their goal in this area is to move Rep. Charles Dent to a position in opposition to the war in Iraq. If you want more information contact Dorothellia at 202-485-1586 or Aaron at 202-210-2080. They need help with signs, committees and more.

People Petitioned

Representative Dent ★★

It was a slightly muggy June day. When Janet Ney took the first letter against the war in Iraq to Rep. Dent's Bethlehem office, she came out saying the office seemed to have no idea that at least a hundred people would be visiting them that day.

Indeed, on June 15, 140! people visited Rep. Dent's Bethlehem office with written messages opposing the war in Iraq. The steady flow of people throughout the day was an unusual occurrence in the normally sedate office. Besides bearing these messages some people became acquainted with an office that all constituents should know and visit regularly. The Lehigh Valley Peace Coalition organized this day-long activity against the war with flyers, e-mails and lots of phone calls. Thank you to all who participated. We will look forward to reports on responses received by the petitioners from Mr. Dent's office. Will Mr. Dent add his voice to those calling for peace?

Veterans Acting For Peace★

Lehigh Valley Veterans For Peace (VFP) marched in the Bethlehem Memorial Day Parade on May 28. They were greeted warmly by many of the people lining the parade route. They carried a VFP banner and another banner that said "Honor Veterans; No More Wars."

Louise Legun, who organized the group, was quoted in *The Express Times*: "We are honoring the folks who gave their lives for our country, but we

UFPJ National Assembly★★

As this newsletter is being prepared Stephanie Garman has been representing LEPOCO at the United for Peace & Justice (UFPJ) 3rd National Assembly in Chicago, June 22-24. She was joining grassroots and national activists from across the U.S. as they met to set priorities for UFPJ. Among the expected speakers were, Tom Hayden, author of "Ending the War on Iraq," an Iraqi labor leader, the vice president of Gaza's Red Crescent, the president of the Vietnam Association of Victims of Agent Orange/Dioxin, and a parliamentarian from the UK who is a leader in the British anti-war movement.

We will look forward to Stephanie's reports at meetings and in the next newsletter.

Flash: One big decision from the Assembly is a call for a National Mobilization Day against the war on Iraq to be held across the U.S. on October 27.

SUPPORT LEPOCO!

- Enclosed are my yearly LEPOCO dues of \$____.
(\$25 individual; \$30 household; \$5 limited income)
 I am also enclosing an extra donation of \$____.
 I would like to support LEPOCO's work with a
__monthly/__quarterly pledge of \$____.
 I'm most interested in working on the following
issues: _____

NAME _____ PHONE # _____ e-mail _____

ADDRESS _____ CITY _____ ZIP _____
Return to: LEPOCO, 313 W. 4TH St., Bethlehem, PA 18015.

A Nation Fleeing Itself

(continued from page 1)

About 2 million Salvadorans, of a total population of 8 million, are living and working in the United States. In 2006, these émigrés sent over \$3 billion back to their families in El Salvador, the largest single cash influx into the Salvadoran economy. It is more than the coffee and maquila sectors combined.

In El Salvador, jobs are hard to find, and wages are very low. In the manufacturing sector, workers are paid \$160 a month for fulltime work. A family requires much more than that each month for survival. Further, the influx of dollars from the North has created an inflation of rents and commodities that means that a family needs access to these dollars to function in the economy.

So, every day, about 700 Salvadorans leave for the United States, an exodus fleeing a ravaged economy and society. It is a perilous and expensive journey. The going rate for a "coyote," or guide through Guatemala and Mexico is \$7000. This means that those who contract with these traders in humanity must sell their land, their belongings, and go into debt in their attempt to reach the riches of the North. As the borders have tightened and the trip becomes ever more difficult, more and more fail to reach the US. Everyday, busloads of captured refugees are forcibly returned from Mexico to San Salvador, delivered now into complete poverty, landless and in debt. Others, less fortunate, die en route. This predatory human trafficking spends lives and sucks millions of dollars a day from families, individuals and struggling communities.

It was appropriate that our delegation focused on commemorating and investigating the deaths of the martyrs Fr. Rutilio Grande and his friend Archbishop Oscar Romero. Rutilio's assassination triggered a sense of social commitment in the work of Romero. Romero's calls for social justice and for a nonviolent solution to the conflict in El Salvador brought him to prominence as a leader who might have been able to bring the nation together, or at least resolve the social conflicts without war. His cries for justice, however, led to his assassination in 1980 by ultra-right ideologues. He was killed by a death squad that was formed by Roberto D'Aubuisson and others who were building the ARENA (Alianza Republicana Nacionalista) political party that has ruled El Salvador.

ARENA is a party constructed out of a need to both provide cover for and take advantage politically of death squad tactics. Between 1979 and 1983, 40,000 Salvadorans were murdered, tortured, and disappeared by death squads formed in coordination with the ARENA party and with the consent and support of the United States government. No perpetrator has been brought to justice.

This is, in my opinion, the source of the migration of the last 20 years. It started as a flight from the vio-

lence of war and terror, and continues and accelerates in the ruins of the economy and society of the post-war years. The policies of terror the United States uses and supports in the Americas are the roots of the flight north.

It is chilling to re-examine the behavior of the United States in El Salvador in the eighties. In the name of an anti-communist "dirty war in the name of liberty", the lives of tens of thousands of students, labor leaders, and civilians were sacrificed, while the US supported the perpetrators with an average of a million dollars a day. The Reagan State Department routinely certified the human rights behavior of murderers and torturers. Reagan appointees and surrogates, including staffers John Carbaugh and Christopher Manion in the office of Jesse Helms, and Margo Carlisle of the office of Senator James McClure, maintained close contact with death squad leader Roberto D'Aubuisson. The very name of ARENA - *Alianza Republicana* - was based partly on the Republican Party of Ronald Reagan.

ARENA controls the Presidency and the economy of El Salvador. It has overseen the dollarization of the economy, the privatization of telecommunications, the ratification of CAFTA, and contributed an advisor to Paul Wolfowitz at the World Bank - Juan José Daboub. Within ARENA still exist the structures and personnel of the death squads, which function today with selective assassination and terror. The homicide figures in El Salvador are at epidemic levels, and reflect a society in an effective state of war, within which organized criminal elements can function with ease and impunity.

The flow of money from emigrees sending their remittances north to south suits this system well. It is a cash flow conducive to money laundering and skimming. In El Salvador, the proliferation of malls, fast food outlets, traffic jams, and drug trafficking is evidence of the distortion of a poor economy by the fast money of US dollars. Those left behind are simply acceptable casualties of the free market.

When our local communities rule that immigrants without papers are criminals, we are attacking people who have fled policies that the United States creates and supports. As Hazleton and Northampton County repress, other communities around the nation are offering sanctuary. The latter is an appropriate response to our fellow human beings who fight for their survival. I encourage your support for 1) an end to financial support for the Northampton County District Attorney, John Morganelli, a nationally known persecuter of immigrants, and 2) a positive effort to provide sanctuary for those who may suffer under the continuing repression of US policies.

- Joe DeRaymond

For more information on the Center for Exchange and Solidarity see www.cis-elsalvador.org. And, for more information on Fr. Rutilio Grande and the March delegation to El Salvador see www.lv-independent.org.

The Struggle Shared

*Emancipate yourself from mental slavery
None but yourselves can free our minds...*

*Won't you help me sing
These songs of freedom
They're all I've ever had,
Redemption songs...*

- "Redemption Song," by Bob Marley

DALAI LAMA TO RECEIVE CONGRESSIONAL MEDAL OF HONOR

- In October 2007, the United States Congress will award our nation's highest civilian honor to Tibet's Dalai Lama, for his lifelong efforts to promote religious harmony, nonviolence, an end to human rights abuses around the world, and his tireless peaceful diplomacy with the Chinese Government to return traditional Buddhist culture and authority to Tibet. More than two-thirds of Congress from both sides of the aisle voted to honor the Dalai Lama.

In March the House Foreign Affairs Committee held hearings on the status of negotiations between the Chinese Government and representatives of Tibet's Government in exile. Among others, testimony was heard from Lodi Gyari, special envoy to the Dalai Lama and Richard Gere, Chair of the International Campaign for Tibet.

As the Chinese prepare to host the 2008 Olympics in Beijing, the Dalai Lama and the Campaign for Tibet are taking full advantage of the spotlight to press the Chinese to reach a diplomatic settlement of the issues of Tibetan Autonomy, and speed the return of the Dalai Lama to the home from which he has been exiled since the Tibetan Uprising of 1959.

In the next few months his steadfast commitment to peace will be more visible in the U.S. than at any time since he was awarded the Nobel Peace prize in 1989. He recently embarked on a speaking tour of dozens of cities from coast to coast, terminating in events in New York City, Washington, DC, Atlanta, Georgia, and Bloomington, Indiana,

around the Congressional Medal of Honor award in October. (The Dalai Lama is scheduled to visit Lehigh University for six days in July 2008. Arrangements are being made by the Chaplain's Office.)

Now is the time to be in the presence of one of the most profound and inspiring peacemakers of our time. For more information contact the International Campaign for Tibet, 1825 Jefferson Place, NW, Washington, DC 20036 or see www.dalailamadc.org.

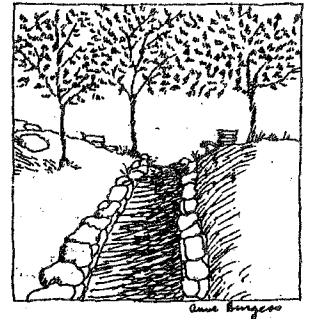
CESAR CHAVEZ PARK - Our elected representatives seem to be unusually generous of late in honoring peace heroes. In January legislation was introduced in Congress that would authorize the Department of the Interior to study sites significant in the life of United Farm Workers Union leader, Cesar Chavez.

Born near Yuma, Arizona, growing up in migrant camps, eventually founding the United Farm Workers Union in California, and campaigning against harmful pesticides and unfair labor practices, he led the grape and lettuce boycotts of the 1970s and 80s. He led the Union until his death in 1993.

Hilda Solis (D-CA), original sponsor of the House bill, said "Cesar Chavez's courageous life inspires me daily to continue the fight for environmental justice, so our children and their families have a healthier future... As Latinos, the environment is such a large part of our culture. To have the National Park Service trace landmarks significant to his life is a very fitting honor to Chavez and the greatest way to make Latinos feel at one with the Park Service."

Similar legislation has been introduced in previous sessions of Congress, but it is more likely that it actually may reach the President's desk this time around, with the shift in the political landscape. Despite the Park Service's aim to represent our national heritage fully, there is not, to date, a park unit dedicated to a contemporary Latino.

Source: National Parks Magazine



PEACE PICNIC IN THE PARK

- This past April 28th, the Allentown Armory Activists retreated from their usual weekly vigil site in the city for a day of frivolity and good food at Cedar Beach Park. For this second annual picnic, about 50 people showed up over the course of the day, played music, read anti-war poems, painted kids faces, and ate and ate, and ate, burgers, hotdogs, as well as vegetarian fare, most of it prepared by "Chef Jeff" (no relation).

The day ended with a short stroll up the knoll to the intersection of Hamilton and Ott Streets, where 15 to 20 people rallied with signs and hand-held banners, while a small knot of people tethered a large weather balloon and a cluster of multicolored smaller helium-filled balloons, which held aloft, perhaps a hundred feet above the intersection, a 33-foot IMPEACH banner. Now that's high visibility!

The Activists are planning their next picnic for July 14th - Bastille Day: "Liberte, Egalite, Franternite..." and all that. So plan to emancipate yourself, break free from whatever prison confines you, and come enjoy a peace picnic near Allentown's South Mountain Reservoir.

- Jeff Vitelli

The Fastest Growing Refugee Crisis in the World

May 19 Monica McAghon and Nancy Tate attended the American Friends Service Committee (AFSC) Symposium on Iraqi Refugees in Philadelphia.

According to Mary Trotochaud and Rick McDowell, two of the presenters, when the refugee crisis did not develop as the U.S. invasion of Iraq began in 2003, many of the international aid agencies that had set up to meet that expected crisis, left the area. Now, most of those agencies have not returned even though the Iraqi refugee crisis has grown dramatically since 2005. It is estimated that there are now 2 million Iraqi refugees outside their country, mostly in Syria and Jordan, and 2 million refugees inside the country. A million more are expected by the end of 2007. This is in a country of about 25 million. Speakers at the symposium said this is a crisis like none other since the Palestinian refugee crisis of 1948.

The U.S. has done very little to help Iraqi refugees. Only 400 Iraqi refugees were allowed into the U.S. in the last three years. U.S. assistance to the governments hosting refugees has been meager. Even the United Nations has failed to respond with appropriate urgency.

Some media attention is being focused on the refugees. Two articles of note are: "The Exodus," in *The New York Times Magazine* of May 13 and "Exodus: The Flight of Millions From Iraq Threatens the Entire Region," in *The Nation*, of June 11.

Stopping the war has to be our first priority and that is the action that will do the most to help the refugees, but there also must be efforts to address this humanitarian crisis and tell the story of the refugees. This is also the story of the horrible impact of the war in Iraq.

While opening the symposium Peter Lems of AFSC said that before the war started the peace movement was international, but now too many think only of the costs to the U.S. and not of the costs to the Iraqis. We have the legal and moral responsibility for what has happened to them.

- Nancy Tate

Strategizing for Peace

Dr. Lisa Schirch, from Eastern Mennonite University's Center for Justice and Peacebuilding in Harrisonburg, Virginia, spoke on May 20, about "Strategies for Peace in Iraq and the World." About 70 people attended the forum at Rockhill Mennonite Community Activity Center.

In the teachings of Dr. Lisa Schirch, peacebuilding is a verb full of adventure, drama, and creativity. And learning how to build peace has taken her not

only to Iraq and around the world, but also to West Point Military Academy and to the Joint Forces Command - not the usual pacifist approach.

"The failures in Iraq have caused many people in the military to begin losing their faith in firepower and become interested in thinking about a different way of building security," Schirch notes. "The military academies are introducing courses on conflict resolution."

In her experience in Iraq with Mennonite Central Committee, Schirch found that the community development projects - digging wells, sharing water, starting small businesses - were natural peacebuilding events. "Sunni, Shiite, and Kurdish people came together as they worked out how to build the well and how to share the water," she noted. "And the development projects created jobs for young men in villages where the unemployment rate had soared to 50-70 percent."

As she was preparing to leave, Iraqi's came to her and said, "It was wonderful that you came here to teach us about peacebuilding with MCC, but what are you doing about U.S. foreign policy at home?" According to Schirch, she's heard that a hundred times before while working in various places around the world

Her response to this question is to spend about two days each week in Washington, D.C., meeting with many different groups and individuals, members of Congress, and military personnel. She supports a national security strategy of development, diplomacy and defense, and questions that we currently spend \$1 billion a week on the Iraq War while spending only .5 percent of the national budget on international development assistance, much of that serving to bolster U.S. interests.

Dr. Schirch's visit was sponsored by Franconia Mennonite Conference's Peace & Justice Committee, Upper Bucks Coalition for Peace Action, Pennridge Ministerial Association, and Perkasio Mennonite Church.

- Mary Lou Cummings



Susie Ravitz will speak about her participation in the Interfaith Peacebuilders Delegation to Israel and Palestine, Evaluating 40 Years of Occupation on **Sunday, July 22, at 9 am**, at the Unitarian Universalist Church of the Lehigh Valley, 424 Center St., Bethlehem. This is the coffee hour before the regular service at the church.

Global Warming Activism in the Lehigh Valley

When visible light from the sun falls on the earth it absorbs some of the light and reradiates it as infrared light (heat). The earth's atmosphere contains several gasses (CO2 is the most common) that allow the visible light to reach the earth, but prevent the heat from leaving, like the glass in a greenhouse. If it weren't for the greenhouse effect, Earth would be unlivable.

Ever since the industrial revolution, humans have been putting more CO2 into the atmosphere. In addition to burning wood, releasing carbon that was captured by trees under 100 years ago, people began burning fossil fuels. This releases carbon that was captured over millions of years. By putting that CO2 back into the atmosphere, we are changing the climate. This change is unpredictable. Some effects feed off each other: ice normally reflects light; as ice melts, less light is reflected, and the heating gets faster, which means the ice melts faster... Global Warming is happening now. We need to act now.

After Bush refused to sign the Kyoto Protocol, the mayor of Seattle decided to create a city version of the Protocol - the Mayor's Climate Protection Agreement. A dedicated group of Lehigh Valley activists convinced the mayors of Allentown, Bethlehem and Easton to sign the CPA (they were the first mayors to do so in Pennsylvania). The group changed the wording of the Agreement so that various other forms of

local government could sign. Both county executives, the BASD school board, and the borough of Fountain Hill have all adopted some form of the CPA.

Bethlehem City Councilwoman, Karen Dolan, who was instrumental in getting the mayors to sign the CPA, organized an Environmental Advisory Council for Bethlehem. This council will work with City Council to help it make wise decisions that affect the environment. Also it will make sure the city follows through on the CPA.

To observe the National Climate Action Day (April 14), the South Side Third St. merchants sponsored a rally near Clothesline Organics. In addition to a band shell with live music, local organizations and businesses committed to climate protection provided information. The overall message of the rally was: "Step It Up, Congress - Cut Carbon Dioxide Emissions by 80% before 2050." Booths recommended simple actions to stop global warming: ride your bike, buy organic clothing, eat local foods, etc. LEPOCO's table invited people to send postcards to elected officials urging a transfer of the billions spent on war to projects that produce safe, clean energy.

This is a sampling of what the Lehigh Valley is doing to fight global warming. For more information on how to get involved, check out the Alliance for Sustainable Communities website: www.sustainlv.org.
- Peter Christine

Frances Goldin Spoke in Support of Mumia Abu-Jamal

What a great treat it was to listen to Frances Goldin speak at the Potluck & Politics event on April 27! Those of us who had the good fortune to be there were completely charmed and delighted by this wise and humble woman of 83 years.

To look at her - a tall, slender woman in her purple T-shirt claiming, "Remarkable Older Woman," with her slightly purple matching bangs -- was a clue to what she shared with us. Frances told the interesting story of her struggles to become a literary agent representing revolutionary and progressive books or "books intended to change the world" on the Lower East Side of Manhattan. She is the literary agent for Mumia Abu-Jamal and has published all seven of his books with the eighth due to be available soon. She is also a member of his legal defense team.

I have been aware of some of the issues related to Mumia Abu-Jamal's struggles to gain his freedom, but it has not been on the "front-burner" of my interest in peace and justice causes. After hearing Ms. Goldin's convincing explanation of his persecution by the Philadelphia Police Department and the criminal justice system, I am on board as a true Mumia supporter and outraged that this good man has been treated thusly.

Mumia Abu-Jamal has been in prison in Pennsylvania since 1981 for the murder of a Philadelphia Police

Officer. This includes almost 20 years on death row. Pennsylvania is seeking to reinstate the order to execute Abu-Jamal. The death penalty was overturned by a judge in 2001. He is in prison in Waynesboro in western Pennsylvania, far from his Philadelphia home.

As his literary agent, Frances makes the long trip by bus every three months to spend time with him. She stays for several days, sleeping overnight in the welcoming space provided by the Bruderhof Community. She also provides him with the four to five books he reads every week. He has used many of the books in his efforts to educate himself and to write with expertise of his intimate knowledge of the criminal justice system or non-justice system.

To say that Francis is passionate about the defense of Mumia is a weak explanation of the sacrifices and efforts she has made to assist him. Her eloquent telling of her relationship with him was touching and heart felt. Frances encouraged us to support Mumia by traveling to the US Court of Appeals in Philadelphia for a hearing on his case on May 17th. Robert R. Bryan, the lead counsel for Mumia, will present an oral argument for Mumia's case. He and his associate counsel, Professor Judith Ritter are hoping to win a new and fair trial

(continued on page 10)

Bits & Pieces

☪ Brandywine Peace Community is sponsoring a **Declare Peace Parade** on Tues., July 3, in Olde City Philadelphia. At 5 pm, there will be a gathering in front of Historic Christ Church, 2nd & Market Sts., and at 6 pm, the Parade will begin, ending 1.8 miles later at the Federal Bldg., 6th & Market Sts. This will be a loud, joyous and visual outcry for peace, justice and democracy! Participants are invited to bring banners, drums, noisemakers, etc. Call 610-544-1818 for more info.

☪ Thank you to the 20+ people who distributed War Resisters League pie chart leaflets to last-minute tax return filers at local post offices on **Tax Day**, April 17. The leaflet displays how the largest percentage of our federal tax dollars go to the military. If you have not seen this flyer, copies are available at LEPOCO. A report on the interesting experiences of Bob Riggs and Peter Christine at one local post office is part of the April/May issue of *The Bethlehem Regurgitator*. Paper copies are available at LEPOCO or it can be read on-line at bethlehemregurgitator.bravehost.com.

☪ The June and July issues of *The Hightower Lowdown* clearly spell out the **hazards of privatization** and the corporate take-over of government. The July issue is full of reasons why selling the Pennsylvania Turnpike is not a good idea. For more info. contact *The Hightower Lowdown* at PO Box 20596, NY, NY 10011.

☪ **Craig Eisendrath**, author of "Bush League Diplomacy and the just published "War In Heaven: The Arms Race in Outer Space" (co-authored with Helen Caldicott) will speak for the Brandywine Peace Community Monthly Potluck Supper & Program on Sun., July 8, at 4:30 pm, at University Lutheran Church, 3637 Chestnut St., Philadelphia. His topic will be,

"Stumbling Into the Future: The Prospects for Nuclear Disarmament and Non-Proliferation." For more info. call Brandywine at 610-544-1818.

☪ LEPOCO plans to have a booth at the **Pride in the Park Festival**, scheduled for a later time this year, Sun., Aug. 19. If you can help with preparations and staffing of that booth please call 610-691-8730.

☪ March 31st seems like a long time ago, but if you attended the LEPOCO Annual Dinner that evening and possibly wore and **tan woman's all-weather coat**, could you check to see if you have the right coat. A man who wore a slightly larger tan man's all-weather coat that evening did not have his coat at the end of the evening, but the woman's coat was left behind unclaimed. It would be nice to get the correct coats to their respective homes. Call 610-691-8730 if you think you have the coat.

☪ This is my resignation letter as the "face" of the American (sic) anti-war movement. This is not the "Checkers" moment, because I will never give up trying to help people in the world who are harmed by the empire of the good old US of A, but I am finished working in, or outside of this system. This system forcefully resists being helped and eats up the people who try to help it. I am getting out before it totally consumes me or any more people that I love and the rest of my resources.

- from **Cindy Sheehan's** statement of 5/29/07

☪ The LEPOCO Office has a copy of "Frequently Asked Questions: Iraq & the Iraq War" by **Raed Jarrar**, Iraq consultant, AFSC Middle East Peacebuilding Program. It is short and quite informative. Contact LEPOCO for a copy or see www.afsc.org/iraq.

☪ If you support the **impeachment** of Pres. George Bush and Vice Pres. Dick Cheney, you can call House Speaker Nancy Pelosi at 202-225-0100 to register your sentiments, or send a fax to 202-225-8259.

☪ Michael Moore's new movie **Sicko** will play for three weeks at the 19th Street Theatre in Allentown starting July 1st. (Two weeks on the big screen and one week on the smaller screen across the street.) An ad for LEPOCO will run for the first two weeks, so watch

for it while you sit and wait for the movie to start.

☪ Kirkridge's schedule is just full of peace and justice programs in the next few months. Please take advantage of these wonderful opportunities for retreat and renewal, available so close by.

Colman McCarthy and **Christa Tinari** will lead a retreat on "Teach Peace - The Art of Peace Education, July 27-29.

Janet Chisholm and **Addison Brass** will lead a "Nonviolence Training - Creating a Culture of Peace," Aug. 16-19.

Daniel Berrigan, SJ, and **Elizabeth McAlister** will lead a retreat on "Walking With Sorrow: Suffering Servant Songs," Sept. 14-16.

Eliane Geren will facilitate a workshop on "Nonviolent Communication," Sept. 21-23.

Hossein Alizadeh will lead a program on "Iran: Unveiling the Mystery," Oct. 12-14.

And there are more as the months proceed. Contact Kirkridge at 610-588-1793 or www.kirkridge.org for more info. or to register.

☪ On Sat., July 7, the Unity Center for Spiritual Living will sponsor a **H.O.P.E. (Helping Ourselves Protect the Environment) Concert** from 3-10 pm at the Forte Bldg., 1337 E. 5th St., south Bethlehem. There will be activities for children and music by Daria, world music, Jackie Tice, American Indian recording artist, and others. This concert is a local effort to support the Live Earth Concerts being endorsed by Al Gore to raise awareness of global warming. Call 610-844-7906 or 484-892-4120 for more info.

Francis Goldin Spoke

(Cont. from page 9)

for **Mr. Abu-Jamal**. Their goal is for their client to be free. If the appeal is unsuccessful, all will be lost and Mumia will be executed.

Joyce Ravitz of Easton and New York City and Art Ravitz of Easton were able to join the hundreds who rallied in support of Mumia outside the courthouse on May 17.

- Mimia Lang

Bits & Pieces

☪ Reading, Pennsylvania, will host the Annual Meeting of the National Green Party from July 12-15, including a Sat. night (July 14) event at the Sovereign Arts Center where Ralph Nader will address Greens and the general public, speaking about Ballot Access issues in Pennsylvania. Numerous workshops will be open to the public on Thurs. and Fri. An 18-hour workshop on Dismantling Racism is also available to those that can make the time commitment. Please go to www.gpanc.org for complete details. Locally, call Greta Browne or Guy Gray at 610-865-9050 for more info.

☪ Shepherdstown, West Virginia, at Shepherd University, is the site of a the month-long Contemporary American Theater Festival, July 6-29. During that festival My Name Is Rachel Corrie is one of featured plays. It will be performed over a dozen times. Shepherdstown is near Martinsburg, W. Va., on the Potomac, west of Washington, DC. Rachel Corrie is the young peace activist killed by Israeli bulldozers in March 2003 (the same week the U.S. invaded Iraq) while she was trying to stop the demolition of a Palestinian home. Call 800-999-2283 or see www.catf.org for more info.

☪ The Allentown Branch of the NAACP will hold their 65th Annual Freedom Fund and Awards Banquet on Sat., July 21, at 5:30 pm, at the Days Inn & Conference Center, Allentown. The keynote speaker will be Eddie Brown, Founder, President and CEO of Brown Capital Management Company. Tickets are \$40. Call 610-780-9903 for more info.

☪ The following is contact info. for the Peace Picnic described in the struggle shared on page 7 of this newsletter, see: www.myspace.com/armoryactivists.

☪ The news from the casualties of war is not good.

In the 10 days ending June 23 more than 90 civilians in Afghanistan have been killed by airstrikes and artillery fire from NATO and U.S.-led troops according to the country's President Hamid Karzai. So far this year 211 civilians have been killed in these attacks. Karzai said, "You don't fight a terrorist by firing a field gun 24 miles away into a target. That's definitely, surely bound to cause civilian casualties." (BBC News 6/23/07 and *The Morning Call* 6/24/07)

As the number of injuries sustained by U.S. troops in Iraq mounts (there were 52,933 according to *The Morning Call* 6/24/07), a report in *The Morning Call* (5/31/07) says that even those who have lost limbs are being sent back to active duty, a few even to combat.

According to *The Hightower Low-down* (June 2007) 917 people working for U.S. private contractors in Iraq have been killed in the war and 12,000 have been wounded in battle or on the job. An AP story of 2/24/07 said nearly 800 civilians working under contract to the Pentagon have been killed and more than

3300 have been hurt doing jobs normally handled by the U.S. military.

☪ Witness For Peace is sponsoring a delegation Contrasting Political Systems in Venezuela and Colombia for Oct. 20-Nov. 1, 2007. Application and deposit of \$150 are due ASAP, with final payment due by 9/1/07. The price for the 12-day delegation is \$1500 plus round trip airfare from the U.S. For more info. contact Gail Phares at 919-848-3936.

Save The Date:

Sat., Sept 15 - LEPOCO Peace Picnic
Sept. 22-23 - Pennsylvania

Renewable Energy Festival,
Kempton

Sat., Sept. 29 - Friends Peace Fair in
Lahaska

Sat., Oct. 6 - LEPOCO Yard Sale



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

Thurs., June 28, 7 pm: Lehigh Valley Peace Coalition Meeting at LEPOCO Peace Center.

Fri., June 29, 10 pm: Peace Camp Planning Committee meeting at LEPOCO Peace Center.

Mon., July 2, 67 pm: Bike/Walkathon Planning Committee follow-up meeting at LEPOCO Peace Center.

Mon., July 2, 7 pm: LEPOCO Steering Committee meeting at the Peace Center.

Mon., July 9, 7 pm: LEPOCO Monthly Action Meeting at Peace Center. All members and friends welcome at this monthly business meeting where the activities of all committees and working groups are reviewed.

Tues., July 10, 7:30 pm: Americas Solidarity Group meeting at the Peace Center.

Wed., July 11, Noon: LEPOCO Fundraising Committee meeting at NAWAB Restaurant, south Bethlehem. This committee is looking for new people to help with their work. Call 610-691-8730 if you have questions or just attend the meeting.

Thurs., July 12, 7 pm: Veterans for Peace meeting at the LEPOCO Peace Center.

Tues., July 17, 5:30 pm: Nuclear Abolition Sisters meeting at Olive Branch Restaurant on Broadway, south Bethlehem.

Attention Peace Singers: Please call the LEPOCO Office at 610-691-8730 to help schedule rehearsals this summer so we can sing at the H-N program in August. The following Sundays are possibilities: July 8, July 15, July 29, August 5, August 12. Thanks!

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



LEPOCO

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Meetings...

**Young People
Making Peace
Summer Day Camp
July 23-27, 9 am - Noon**
(See registration form enclosed
and article on page 3)

**Hiroshima - Nagasaki
Remembering and Acting
Thursday, August 16**
6:30 pm: Meet at Peace Pole
Rose Garden Park, 8th Ave., & Union Blvd., Bethlehem
for Peace Walk to
7:30 pm: Program at
Tondabayashi Serenity Garden
next to Bethlehem Public Library, Church St.
See page 1.

**Publuck & Politics
Sun., July 1,
6:30 pm**
*El Salvador Delegation:
Searching for the
Roots of Migration*
Joe DeRaymond, Ned Smith,
Sarah Snider, Tim Chadwick
LEPOCO Peace Center
Please bring some food
to share.
See pages 1 & 6.

**Popcorn & Politics
(1st Friday Films)
LEPOCO Peace Center**
Fri., July 6, 7 pm
*The Milagro
Beanfield War*
Fri., Aug. 3, 7 pm
A Face In the Crowd
Please bring a snack or
beverage to share.
See page 3.