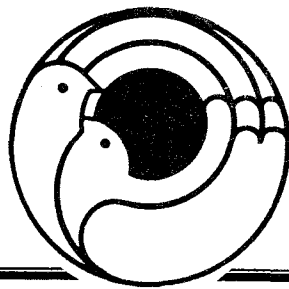


March-  
April  
2005

vol.40 no.3



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

## Witnessing for Peace on March 19<sup>th</sup>

On March 19<sup>th</sup> the Lehigh Valley Peace Coalition organized vigils and a rally to mark the two years since the war started in Iraq. "War Hurts Us All" was the theme.

In Allentown, at Muhlenburg College, students and community members witnessed together totaling 10 people; at the National Guard Armory the 26 vigilers included one man who sang and played his guitar; 13 people vigiled at Cedar Crest & Tilghman and five got lots of support on South 4<sup>th</sup> St.

In Bethlehem there were seven vigils. Ten students from Lehigh University's PSA gave leaflets to the lunchtime crowd. Moravian students carried a coffin representing those lost in war to the Elizabeth Ave. recruiting center to be joined by community members -- their numbers totaled 18. Pax Christi members and others totaled 17 at 8<sup>th</sup> Ave. & Broad St.; 15 stood with "War Hurts Children, Soldiers and the Economy" signs at Third & Wyandotte; 21 vigiled at Main & Broad, 15 stood in front of the Unitarian Church on Center St., and 20 got lots of truck and car responses at the Quaker Meetinghouse on Rt. 512. See the photo of folks in Easton's Centre Square on page 8. They could almost see the ten vigilers at the far end of the Free Bridge in Phillipsburg with a sign that read "War Is Not a Family Value."

15 vigilers in Pennsburg were visited by a reporter. Three vigiled with courage in remote New Tripoli, and four in Orefield. One woman held a solo walking vigil in Northampton. Nine stood at S. 4<sup>th</sup> St. in Bangor and nine in Quakertown. In Emmaus 13 vigiled at the Triangle, 16 stood at the fountain in Hellertown, 12 at Center Square in Nazareth. In Jim Thorpe 35 vigilers stood with signs on the Carbon County Courthouse steps while the names of Pennsylvanians killed in the war were read.

In all we numbered over 320 people vigiling for an end to the war in Iraq on March 19! Over 700 communities across the country held events for peace -- some attended by thousands, some by hundreds, others in the dozens.  
(continued on page 8)

## 2005 Annual Dinner

One-hundred-and-eighty of the finest from the Lehigh Valley and beyond gathered on Saturday, March 5<sup>th</sup>, for the LEPOCO annual dinner.

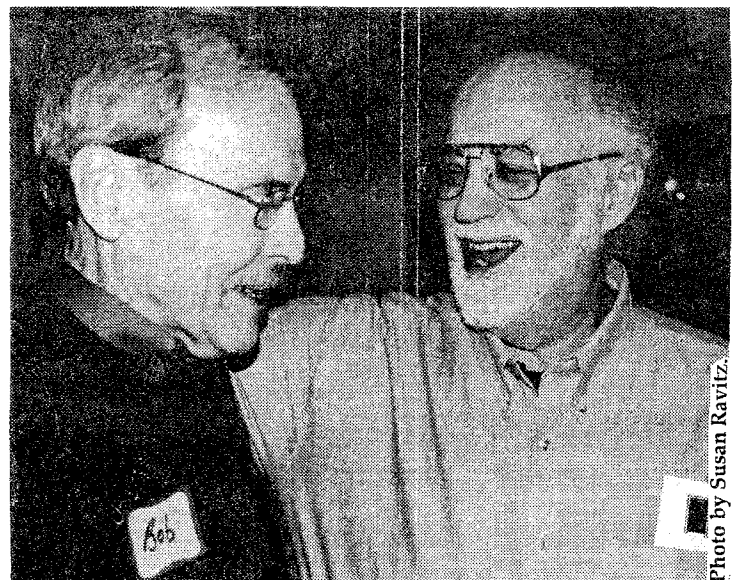
Early arrivals were treated to resonant, instrumental jazz by Daniel Hunter on guitar and Michael Lorenz on bass, and a stirring version of "Oh Sacred World Now Wounded," sung by the LEPOCO Peace Singers.

The dinner featured food from several different cultures. Everything was fresh, piquant, and organic whenever possible. My favorite dishes were the Olivada and Hummus with pita and the Black Bean & Sweet Potato Burritos. The annual dinner is, every year, a wonderful opportunity to get a taste of something from another orbit.

The dinner was followed by the art raffle, steering committee announcements, and bitterly sad news of murders in one of the Peace Communities in Colombia. Joe DeRaymond, who had returned the day before from Colombia, urged us to contact our elected representatives to demand a full and transparent investigation of the murders.

Mimi Lang, facilitator for the evening, then read her poem, "A 40-Year Reflection," an alphabetical, funny, and ennobling commentary on LEPOCO's 40 years of peace activism.

Guy Gray then introduced a video chronicling LEPOCO's involvement with local and national dissent against the Iraq war. It was produced by Jim  
(continued on page 2)



Two LEPOCO founders (Robert Thompson and Art Ravitz) greet each other at the dinner. Other founders present at the dinner were Bryn Hammarstrom, Sr., Susan Ravitz, and Fran Dreisbach.

Photo by Susan Ravitz.

# 2005 Annual Dinner

(continued from page 1)

Schneider, beautifully capturing the anger, hope, rage and sardonic humor of our times. Jim died suddenly on February 4<sup>th</sup> -- the film's energy and searching intelligence was a powerful reminder of what we'd lost, and what we'd been blessed to have.

After a few more choice numbers by the Peace Singers, the speakers for the evening came to the podium.

Robert McIlvaine, who is on the steering committee of September 11<sup>th</sup> Families for Peaceful Tomorrows, and who lost his son Bobby at the World Trade Center on September 11<sup>th</sup>, spoke of his anger and pain. He realized that he needed to let go of his rage, but at the same time feared doing this because he knew it was fueling his drive to speak out against the deceitful imperialism that lay behind the 9/11 attacks.

He mentioned the 1953 military coup in Iran, organized by the CIA, which overthrew the democratically elected government of Prime Minister Mohammed Mossadegh. Iran's thriving democracy was crushed. Robert knew that Bobby's death was partly a result of "blowback" from this brutal manipulation of another country's destiny.

Celeste Zappalas's son, Sherwood Baker, was killed last year in Iraq. Since Sherwood's death she and her family have spoken out for the truth, and against this war, at every opportunity. She said that the curious thing is that it's the foreign media who are



Daniel Hunter and Michael Lorenz play some cool jazz as people gather for the dinner.

most interested in their story. They've talked to reporters from Britain, Italy, Ireland, France and Germany. On election day, they spoke with five different television stations in Japan. But somehow, the media in Philadelphia has lost interest in what they have to say. She said that this war is costing \$4.5 billion a month, and is bankrupting our future, yet U.S. citizens seems to be asleep.

Celeste said, "This war is a lie, a betrayal of the nobility of the armed services, of the promise of our

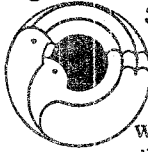
country." Despite her rage, she says she looks eagerly to the wisdom of prophets. She ended with a quote from Martin Luther King Jr.: "I'll stick with love. Hate is too great a burden to bear."

- Mike Lawton



Monica Sommerville and Xiomara Liceaga enjoy the drawing for Art Raffle prizes at the dinner. Winners were Laura Olson, Ruth Karpinsky, Mary Atiyeh, Patricio Barriga & Xiomara Liceaga, Laurie Spalholz and Maritza Alvarez. A special thank you to all of the artists (Kathy Delhagen, Monica Sommerville, Frank Sabatino, Lee Buck, Tomas Wolff, and Godfrey Daniels Coffeeshouse) and all who supported the art raffle by buying tickets.

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, Mike Lawton, Tom Lloyd, Bob Riggs, Brad Schultz, Tom Stinnett, Joan Stone, Nancy Tate, Marion Thorne, Jeff Vitelli, Hans Wuerth, and Ursula Wuerth.

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

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

## Peace Conference - April 9

On Saturday, April 9<sup>th</sup>, the members of the Unitarian Universalist Church of the Lehigh Valley are sponsoring another Peace Conference with featured speakers, workshops, a great lunch, and circle dancing.

Paul Loeb, author of *The Impossible Will Take a Little While: A Citizen's Guide to Hope in a Time of Fear* and *Soul of a Citizen*, will be the keynote speaker in the morning. Father John Dear will be the featured closing speaker. Fr. Dear, author of many books including, *Living Peace*, *Mohandas Gandhi: Essential Writings*, and *The Questions of Jesus*, is also a peace activist who has often risked jail to oppose war and injustice.

There will be activities for children and workshops for adults on topics ranging from Social Security to Global Warming to Militarism in Our Schools.

A donation of \$5 is requested for lunch (but certainly more would be welcomed). Volunteers are needed for various aspects of setting up, conference logistics, and clean up. Call Lynne Zippodt at 610-691-6353 if you can help. But most of all plan to attend this important gathering for local folks anxious to learn more about peacemaking in these challenging times.

### Popcorn & Politics

#### *First Friday Film*

7 pm

Friday, April 1, 2005

LEPOCO Peace Center

#### *Film: Mayors For Peace*

A film about the campaign for nuclear disarmament led by the mayors of Hiroshima and Nagasaki (see related story in "The Struggle Shared" on page 7), Please bring a snack or beverage to share.

## Youth Peace Conference

Another Youth Peace Conference is in the planning for late in April or early May. This is a great opportunity for young people of high school age to gather and share work and dreams for peace. Contact Peter Crownfield or Greg Bailey at LEPOCO for more information

## LEPOCO Theatre Party: *Working*

On Friday, April 22, LEPOCO has a block of tickets reserved for the play *Working* being performed at Northampton Community College in the Lipkin Theatre.

The play is a musical, based on the best-selling book of the same title, by Studs Terkel. The book consists of interviews with workers in the U.S. The musical explores the workday of those workers.

The pre-play reception will be held at Mimi Lang's home in Bethlehem, at 5:30 pm. The play begins at 7 pm. A donation of \$15 covers a donation for the play and for the LEPOCO reception. Call 610-691-8730 to reserve your place at the reception and in the LEPOCO group at the play.

### Tax Day 2005

#### Friday, April 15

Help leaflet at a local post office with the classic War Resisters League flyer. This flyer has the real pie chart showing how much of our tax dollar goes to the military.

Please call 610-691-8730 to sign up for a time and place on Friday, April 15.

## Get Your Peace Tax Return for 2004

As a taxpayer you can find the "Peace Tax Return" for 2004 at [www.nwtrcc.org](http://www.nwtrcc.org). The Peace Tax Return is a means to protest the spending of federal tax dollars for war, especially the war in Iraq. It provides two options, either of which may be sent to the IRS or an elected official. The first option is for people who will be paying their taxes, but want to make a protest. The second option is for those who will be refusing to pay some or all of their federal income taxes, despite the possible consequences from the IRS. A third part of the form can be returned to the National War Tax Resistance Coordinating Committee, a 22-year-old coalition of groups who provide information about war tax resistance and support for those who refuse to pay some or all of federal income and excise taxes because those taxes help pay for war. Returning this part to NWTRCC (even anonymously) will help them measure the extent of the protest.

Besides the web address you can contact NWTRCC at PO Box 150553, Brooklyn, NY 11215 or call 800-269-7464, for more information or if you send a stamped self-addressed envelope they will send you a copy of the Peace Tax Return form.

### Weekly Peace Vigils

*Bethlehem*

4-5 pm, Thursdays

3<sup>rd</sup> & Wyandotte Sts., south Bethlehem

Contact: Maria Weick 610-346-8793

*Allentown*

Noon-1 pm, Fridays

Federal Courthouse, 5<sup>th</sup> & Hamilton Sts,

Contact: Rev. John Clint Fowler, 610-746-5013

*Easton*

10-11 am, Saturdays

Centre Square

Contact: Reggie Regrut, 908-859-5632

*Please attend as often as you are able!*

# Taking the Anti-War Movement to a New Level —

Where can you meet Vietnam and Iraqi veterans against the war in Iraq, hip-hop artists, African American civil rights activists, anti-war protestors and anarchists, military families against war, family members of 9-11 victims, anti-globalization activists, Native American activists, human rights activists fighting the repression and torture under the Patriot Act, green and communist party members, all at the same time? Where can you experience the spirit and passion of building a diverse coalition of voices for peace, stressing inclusion of gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender people? Where can you find this group creating common ground focusing efforts nationally to end the unwarranted U.S. occupation of Iraq?

At the Second National Assembly of United for Peace and Justice in St. Louis, Missouri, held February 19-21, Robert Daniels and I met just such a group of diverse people. We had the honor of representing LEPOCO and the Lehigh Valley Peace Coalition as voting delegates. In addition, I represented Pride of the Greater Lehigh Valley.

The diversity of voices was clear as we discussed and debated the strategic framework by which the Steering Committee would prioritize the future efforts of United for Peace and Justice. Since its formation in October 2002, UFPJ has grown to include over 1000 organizations and groups. At this second meeting, hundreds of organizations from 36 states and numerous countries were represented in the over 450 attendees.

The primary focus of this three day assembly was to vote on proposals submitted by member organizations and elect a new Steering Committee with diversity to include youth, race and gender. The proposals were discussed at length in plenary and breakout meetings. The ultimate objective was to set priorities for the activities and actions of UFPJ National.

All of the Level #1 proposals dealt with the primary strategic focus for UFPJ: ending the war in and occupation of Iraq. Out of nine Level #1 proposals, six were accepted by two-thirds of the assemblage. They are grassroots education programs, activities opposing the use of national guard troops in Iraq, efforts to mobilize the religious community, educational work highlighting the costs of the war, legislative initiatives and a mass mobilization planned for September 10<sup>th</sup>.

In addition, we voted on Level #2 proposals that highlighted secondary issues in the fight against U.S. global empire. Among the issues considered were activities concerning Israel's occupation of Palestine, U.S. intervention in Haiti, nuclear proliferation, anti-Patriot Act work, anti-capitalist globalization efforts, and human rights work. These secondary proposals would be led by UFPJ member organizations, with the national organization lending support.

There were panel discussions that included lively presentations about building community, diversity,  
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coalition building, artistic representation, and anti-globalization issues. We were entertained by poet Suheir Hammad, singer/percussionist Tiye Giruad, and a troupe of dancers performing "Collateral Damage."

The highlight of the weekend was a trip to St. Louis University to hear Angela Davis and Danny Glover speak at a Black History Month event. Damu Smith of Black Voices for Peace moderated their dialogue. The discussion of American Empire in a context of racism and gender dominance was powerful and moving.

Ossie Davis, the great actor and human rights and peace activist, died in early February and we certainly felt his spirit among us throughout the weekend. A candle was lit in his memory as we opened the assembly and it shown brightly throughout our discussions.

For more information on the specific proposals and the newly elected steering committee, see [www.unitedforpeace.org](http://www.unitedforpeace.org).

- Tim Chadwick



## Highlights of 2004 —

**January** - Joe De Raymond returned from living with a Peace Community in San Jose de Apartado in Colombia working with Fellowship of Reconciliation. The Nuclear Abolition Sisters arranged a reading of one of Dr. Martin Luther King's anti-Vietnam War speeches. On Jan. 10<sup>th</sup> five young adult LEPOCO members co-facilitated a social workshop for the Unitarian Universalist Regional Youth Conference.

**February** - Over 100 people joined a Walking Vigil for Peace, Feb.14, in Allentown. Ursula Wurth and Mimi Lang joined a Kirkridge Pilgrimage to Guatemala that included helping to build a school in the Mayan village of Caseria Paraichy.

**March** - LEPOCO members joined the memorial procession from Dover, Delaware, to Washington, DC, a Trail of Mourning and Truth. A vigil was held outside state Rep. T.J. Rooney's office in Bethlehem as part of Moratorium on the Death Penalty Week. The Lehigh Valley Peace Coalition organized buses to NYC to attend "The World Still Says No to War" protest. Faculty of Muhlenberg College unanimously passed a resolution against the Patriot Act. John Zachmann traveled to Washington, DC, to lobby legislators against the School of Americas. The Students for Social Change Club at Palisades High School hosted a Patriot Act Forum. On March 15<sup>th</sup>, Phillipsburg, NJ, passed a resolution against the Patriot Act.

**April** - In Bethlehem, Women in Black held a vigil for peace supporting Mordachai Vanunu's release from prison in Israel. Tax day leafleting took place at local post offices to promote conversion of tax \$s from war to humane programs. Leafletters Susie Ravitz and

(continued on page 6)

# Will U.S. Help Protect Peace Communities?

As many of you know Joe DeRaymond spent six months as a volunteer with the Fellowship of Reconciliation (FOR) in Colombia in 2003. He was working with the Peace Community of San José de Apartadó. Joe was there again as a volunteer with FOR for the month of February. Less than 24 hours after he returned to the U.S. he reported to LEPOCO's Annual Dinner about a massacre that took place in San José. A written report by Joe on this event appeared in the March 15<sup>th</sup> *Morning Call*. That report is excerpted here.

"On Feb. 21, eight people of San José were killed in a brutal massacre in the hills on the eastern edge of the community. One of them, Luis Eduardo Guerra, was a founding member of the community. He was beaten and tortured along with his 11-year-old son Deiner, and his partner Deyaneira Areiza. Their dismembered bodies were left lying in the forest for days, while the local prosecutor delayed in their recovery and in investigating the crime scene. The family of Alfonso Bolívar also was massacred in their home -- Alfonso, his wife Sandra Milena Muñoz, and their children Natalia Andrea Tuberquia, 4 years old, and Santiago Tuberquia Muñoz, 18 months. Another person was caught up in the murders by chance, Alejandro Pérez. They were killed with garrotes and machetes and the bodies of the adults were left in pieces, buried in a shallow grave. The local prosecutor exhumed the bodies four days after the murders.

"This crime against humanity occurred despite the rulings by the Inter-American Court to Human Rights instructing the Colombian government to protect the Peace Community. It occurred at a time when the Colombian Army, with various units of the 17<sup>th</sup> Brigade and the 11<sup>th</sup> Brigade, exercised significant control over the entire region. There was combat in the region from Feb. 20 to 22. I saw an attack helicopter firing rockets and shooting machine guns at this time. There were numerous over flights of other helicopters. Despite this control, the response by the prosecutor to the crimes was sluggish, at best.

Members of the community, accompanied by FOR and Peace Brigades International volunteers, as well as a volunteer from the local Pastoral Social of the Catholic Church waited at the crime scene for two nights for the prosecutor to take control of the bodies of Luis Eduardo, Deiner, and Deyaneira. The circumstances surrounding the crime and its immediate aftermath led *El Tiempo*, the largest daily newspaper of Colombia, to call for a full and complete investigation in its lead editorial on March 3: 'It Cannot Stay Like This.'

"A successful investigation and trial would be a significant development, for not one of the crimes committed against the peace community has ever been brought to justice." (146 community members have been killed or "disappeared" in the last eight years.) "Luis Eduardo had met with government officials at the

highest levels, including the vice president. He was known in Europe and the United States as an advocate of nonviolent resistance. I did not meet him in 2003, because he had been threatened with death and had to leave the region for an extensive period between 2002 and 2004. He had been targeted for death, and the state could not or would not protect him or his family. We now must seek justice, and struggle for more effective protection for the civilians of this community, and in all of Colombia.

"Acts of this nature poison all humanity, poison all our lives. This massacre was committed against a non-violent community, protected by rulings of an international court. It happens at a time when the United States is in the process of approving \$579 million in military aid for next year to Colombia. Soon, Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice must certify the human rights record of the Colombian military in order to release \$35 million of this money.

"Until a complete and transparent investigation of this crime has been carried out, no money should be issued to the Colombian military by any government concerned about human rights."

At the LEPOCO dinner a letter was circulated asking our local congressperson to support that complete and transparent investigation. It has been delivered to him and to the other important officials. We urge you to send faxes, letters and make phone calls to Congress and other officials listed below. Some of the specific requests you can make are: 1) that the U.S. government call on Colombia to respect all civilians and to implement protection of the Peace Community per the Inter-American Court of Human Rights; 2) that the U.S. government withhold the certification of the military required for receiving U.S. assistance; 3) that the Colombian government identify the army units to and otherwise aid civilian investigators of these killings; 4) that a U.S. Embassy representative visit and meet with the Peace Community of San José de Apartadó; and 5) that U.S. aid under Plan Colombia be suspended.

Please contact the following: your Congressperson and Senators; Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice with copies to Michael Kozak, Acting Assistance Secretary for Democracy, Human Rights and Labor; Roger Noriega, Assistance Secretary of State for Western Hemispheric Affairs; and R. Nicholas Burns, Under Secretary for Political Affairs (send state department letters to U.S. State Department, 2201 "C" St. NW, Washington, DC 20520).

Save the Date

Annual LEPOCO

Bike/Walkathon

Saturday, June 4, 2005

Ride or walk to benefit LEPOCO and  
Iraq Veterans Against the War

# Highlights of 2004

(continued from page 4)

Reggie Regrut were arrested and charged with defiant trespass at the Palmer Post Office. Joe DeRaymond spoke at the Unitarian Church about his six months in Colombia and his experiences as an election observer in El Salvador. Sarah Andrew and others organized the first LEPOCO Youth Peacemaker Training.

**May** - Lehigh University faculty approved a resolution to protect academic freedom and civil liberties in the face of the Patriot Act. A walking Vigil for Peace happened in Easton with John Grant of Veterans for Peace as a guest speaker.

**June** - The hearing for the Tax Day Two, Susie Ravitz and Reggie Regrut, was rescheduled several times. Sarah Andrew and Marc Rittle journeyed to Washington, DC, to participate in an anti-draft lobby day and the Conference of the Center for Conscience and War. Readers of the LEPOCO Newsletter were asked to write to representatives regarding PA Senate Bill 305, which would connect obtaining a PA drivers license with registration for the Selective Service. Herbert Michael, who was scheduled to be executed in Pennsylvania on June 1<sup>st</sup>, was given a temporary stay of execution. PA Abolitionists suggested people continue to write to Mr. Michael expressing hope and support. LEPOCO had a booth at the Pride Festival in Allentown. Peace Camp training for helpers and leaders took place at the Red Cross Offices. LEPOCO members donned bright green shirts printed with "Stop the War" and strolled around May Fair in Allentown. The Bike/Walk-A-Thon was a success with 38 participants and \$2,650 raised for LEPOCO, CUNA and FOR.

**July** - Send-off potluck dinner held for Janet Goloub who was going to Colombia with an FOR delegation. Peace Camp was a success! Sarah Andrews left the post as Youth and Militarism Coordinator at LEPOCO to attend law school. A send-off party for Sarah was also a thank you to Angela Heverling who was also heading to law school after serving ably on the LEPOCO Steering Committee and the Peace Camp Planning Committee. Joe DeRaymond and Bernie O'Hare created a temporary radio show on WGPA discussing issues such as the war in Iraq, anti-death penalty points of view, and arguments against the Patriot Act with many guest speakers who are members of LEPOCO.

**August** - LEPOCO young people arranged a coffee house gathering to raise money for LEPOCO. The annual Hiroshima-Nagasaki program was held in the Tondabayashi Garden in Bethlehem. LEPOCO supported a bus to take 55 Lehigh Valley protestors to NYC to join a gathering of 500,000 people in "The World Says No to the Bush Agenda" march.

**September** - Janet Goloub reported on her participation in the delegation visiting Colombia's Peace  
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Communities in articles in the newsletter and at public discussions. Nancy Tate and Janet Goloub presented the "Growing Divide" economic workshop for Marywood College students at Allentown College. 30 people gathered in Center Square, Easton, to commemorate the fact that 1,000 U.S. soldiers had been killed in the war in Iraq. People also gathered at Lehigh University.

**October** - LEPOCO members attended the National Memorial Procession "For All Those Wounded and Killed in Iraq" from Arlington Cemetery to the White House. LEPOCO continued visiting high schools to counter military recruiters and teach students about nonviolent, nonmilitary options in their search for education, job training, and careers. Peter Crownfield agreed to fill the position of Youth and Militarism Coordinator until a permanent staff person can be recruited. LEPOCO had a theater party at the home of Kathryn Hoffman and Jim Schneider before the play "Marx in Soho" performed by Bob Weick. LEPOCO held its annual yard sale in the Community Room at the Forte Building in Bethlehem. The LEPOCO Singers performed outside Packer Chapel at Lehigh University to greet people as they gathered to hear the Rev. Dr. James Forbes speak on, "A Call for a Just America."

**November** - Popcorn & Politics revived with snacks and discussion on the movie, "The Boys of Sudan." 1,000 people signed the "Iraq Is a Hornets Nest" ad in *The Morning Call*, initiated and paid for by Dan Poresky. Peter Crownfield had an article published in local and Philadelphia newspapers concerning the No Child Left Behind requirement that secondary schools give student information to military recruiters. LEPOCO members attended the Fort Benning protest against the notorious School of Americas. The Bethlehem Chapter of the NAACP honored LEPOCO for efforts to stir the conscience of Lehigh Valley residents for pursuits of peace by nonviolence at their Annual Freedom Fund Banquet.

**December** - The Annual Peace Pilgrimage was held with Bob Edgar as the speaker on "The Patriotism of Peacemaking." Annie Hasz, Sarah Weick and other young people continued to organize SECO, Social and Environmental Change Organization. LEPOCO held post-election discussions about constructive results from the recent election efforts. Women in Black held a walking vigil in Bethlehem to "Remember the Children in Iraq." LEPOCO newsletter readers were encouraged to call their local representatives once a week asking them to stop the war and withdraw the troops from Iraq. Throughout the year peace vigils took place weekly arranged by Greta Browne and Guy Gray, and then Maria Weick, in Bethlehem; by the Rev. Dr. John Clint Fowler in Allentown, and by Susie Ravitz and Monica McAgthon, and then Reggie Regrut, in Easton.

- Ellen Buck

# The Struggle Shared

*We (African Americans) shall not put up with any hysterical raving that urges us to make war on anyone. Our will to fight for peace is strong. We shall not make war on the Soviet Union.*

- Paul Robeson

speaking at the World Peace Congress in Paris, 1949

## PAUL ROBESON CONFERENCE AT LAFAYETTE

- Paul Robeson was arguably one of the most talented figures in U.S. history. He is also one of the most maligned, and misunderstood. As a scholar, athlete, concert artist, Shakespearean actor, and always an outspoken activist against racism and war, he spent years in exile from the United States, but not without first leaving his impact on the nascent Civil Rights Movement of his time.

Between April 7<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup>, Lafayette College is hosting a conference, "Paul Robeson: His History and Development As an Intellectual." Over the three days highlights will include keynote speeches by Paul Robeson, Jr., who served as personal aide to his father for 20 years, and Randall Robinson, author and founder and former president of TransAfrica. There are 13 plenary sessions scheduled with scores of scholarly presentations, three film festivals spanning Robeson's career as a screen actor, spoken work performances, a celebration of Robeson's "Here I Stand," featuring a performance by Lafayette's Concert Choir and several community choruses and dance ensembles. The final event, "A Robeson Portrait," will feature Staff Sergeant Alvy Powell of the U.S. Army Chorus, singing some of Robeson's works, to mark the 107<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Robeson's birth.

The conference will inaugurate a series of events at Lafayette on the history of civil rights and civil liberties. It is open to the community, free of charge, and promises "to engage the life of a Paul Robeson... who explored in another time and context some of the same personal and national identity questions that are prominently at issue today." It promises to deepen the national

and international discussion on "American" identity, human interdependency, and our shared responsibilities to security and advancing civil society. For a complete schedule, contact Lafayette's public relations office, or [www.lafayette.edu](http://www.lafayette.edu).

MORE ANNIVERSARIES - In the spirit of celebrating LEPOCO's own 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary year, several other milestones are marking significant anniversaries in the next month or so.

March 24 marks the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the assassination of Archbishop Romero in El Salvador as he was conducting Easter Mass. Oscar Romero remains a poignant symbol of hope, faith and liberation theology for millions of people in Central America and around the world. Voices on the Border, the organization with whom I traveled to San Salvador in 1989, is sponsoring a delegation to visit some of the partner communities in El Salvador, during the week of March 31-April 7. What a great way to begin to grasp the daily struggles and triumphs of the people who have endured such oppression, poverty and war, and still live the spirit of Oscar Romero. Cost of the trip is \$675 plus airfare. Contact Tanya Snyder for more info. at 202-529-2912 or see [www.voices@vofb.org](http://www.voices@vofb.org).

April 30 is the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the final airlift of U.S. troops out of Saigon and the reunification of North and South Vietnam. On at least one occasion LEPOCO honored this date with a poetry reading by Bill Ehrhart (poet laureate of Vietnam Veterans). I would like to see an informal poetry reading by LEPOCO poets who have lived through these times. If you're interested in reading or hearing some

anti-war poetry at such a gathering give me a call at 610-868-6614.

SAYING NO TO NUKES AGAIN - In August 2005 we will observe 60 years since the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. The people of Japan, and those two cities in particular, have been among the strongest advocates for nuclear disarmament.

Continuing that tradition the mayors of Hiroshima and Nagasaki have founded Mayors for Peace. They now have 611 member cities and they have invited other mayors and citizens to join them in New York City in early May to pressure the governments of the world to take real steps toward nuclear disarmament. The occasion for their gathering is the Seventh Review Conference for the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty to be held at the United Nations, May 1-4.

Our mayors are invited to attend special mayors gatherings around this conference.

We all are invited to support walkers passing through the Lehigh Valley, April 22-26, en route from the nuclear facilities at Oak Ridge, Tennessee, to the NPT gathering in NYC. People can walk with the International Peace Walkers on those days or talk with them at community potlucks in the evenings.

April 29-30, the Global Network Against Weapons and Nuclear Power in Space, will hold a conference on "Full Spectrum Resistance: An International Space Organizing Conference," in NYC. Call 207-729-0517 or see [www.space4peace.org](http://www.space4peace.org) for more information.

On May 1<sup>st</sup> peace advocates from around the world will march in NYC in support of the NPT and real nuclear disarmament. Let LEPOCO know if you are interested in collective transportation from the Lehigh Valley to this march and rally.

- Jeff Vitelli

# Witnessing for Peace on March 19<sup>th</sup>

(continued from page 1)

At the rally held at Wesley United Methodist Church around 200 of the vigilers and others came together to build solidarity in our witness for peace. Many of those present shared their most pressing concerns about the war. Three invited speakers gave prepared remarks.

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Some of the 26 people who vigiled on March 19<sup>th</sup> in Centre Square, Easton. Many of these very visible signs were made by Reggie Regrut. Photo by Reggie Regrut.

## Colombian Civil Society Leaders Speak in Bally

Two Colombian leaders brought to Berks County on February 20<sup>th</sup> told their vivid stories of women, children, pastors, a church and a vast community of conscience struggling to stand for peace in the midst of their nation's on-going violence. They were on a tour organized by the U.S. Office on Colombia, a D.C.-based advocacy effort.

Jenny Neme is co-director of Justapaz, a Colombian Mennonite justice and peace organization based in Bogotá. This ministry is a leading justice and peace initiative in a vibrant civil society seeking democratic ways to address the roots of violence.

Dr. Isabel M. Ortiz Pérez directs the Foundation for Women and the Future in Bucaramanga (Fundación Mujer y Futuro). The organization provides a voice calling for the ending of violence against women, and assists women in rebuilding their lives after suffering from violence of many kinds.

Translating and organizing the tour was Jess Hunter of Washington, D.C., assistant director of the U.S. Office on Colombia. He became acquainted with Neme during his time as director of the Witness for Peace program in Colombia. Assisting with translation was Janna Bowman, formerly of the Bally congregation, now serving as regional Colombia-issues support director for Witness for Peace.

The women shared their stories in a Sunday School class, gave extended greetings from the Colombian church to the Bally congregation, and shared more personally in the weekly "prayers for peace" gathering at 7 p.m.

Neme described the several roles of Justapaz: in supporting congregations which choose the risky status of becoming "sanctuaries of peace," i.e. to provide basic humanitarian assistance to anyone who comes,

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usually displaced families fleeing violence from the military forces of the left or right. Justapaz also stands with congregations when their pastors are assassinated, assisting them in grieving and deciding how to move on; and working within the broader Protestant and Catholic church community to foster greater investment in the social dimension of proclaiming "the whole gospel of Christ."

Justapaz is a faith community representative in civil society coalitions addressing military recruitment of youth, conscientious objection to military service and pressing for non-military solutions to violence.

Leaders of Justapaz work hard to find hope and keep faith after four decades of violence. Neme encouraged the Bally prayer group to continue its two-year effort, citing the rise of a weekly prayer group for peace in Bogotá. The Wednesday lunch-time event started slowly more than three years ago, but now sees more than 90 people gathering for a simple meal and spiritual intercession for God's mercy and guidance for peacemakers and those who suffer.

Pérez said her group has had some success in highlighting violence of men against their partners. That provocative claim for justice meets with less resistance than when women who have suffered at the hands of a military group begin to call for justice and accountability.

The tour took the women to Lancaster, Huntington and Westmoreland counties in Pennsylvania to speak with congregations, service clubs and the home offices of US House members, then on to Connecticut for similar engagements.

For information on the Sunday evening prayer group in Bally, contact Ellen and Greg Bowman at (610) 845-2436. For more information on these organizations see: [www.justapaz.org](http://www.justapaz.org), [www.funmujer.org](http://www.funmujer.org), and [www.witnessforpeace.org](http://www.witnessforpeace.org).

- Greg Bowman



# Bits & Pieces

⊕ On Mon., April 11, at 8 pm, U.S. Rep. Jesse Jackson, Jr., will speak on "Protecting the Right to Vote in the U.S." in Packard Lab Aud., at Lehigh Univ.

⊕ A three-day retreat on Creating & Sustaining Communities of Peace, will be held in Doylestown, April 29-May 1. Christa Tinari of the FOR National Council is organizing the retreat that has been developed by the Fellowship of Reconciliation. The cost is \$115 and registration is limited to 30 people. For a copy of the brochure contact LEPOCO or call Christa at 609-397-7290.

⊕ Anna Adams will speak on "Hidden from History: The Latino Community of the Lehigh Valley," on Tues., March 29, at 3 pm, at Penn State Lehigh Valley Atrium. Call 610-285-5113 for more info.

⊕ Students at Lafayette College are planning a series of luncheon programs focusing on peace issues and a peace conference, all in April. The programs are part of their effort to

build support for a peace studies program at Lafayette College. Contact Danielle Pallaci at [pollacid@lafayette.edu](mailto:pollacid@lafayette.edu) for more information.

⊕ Muhlenberg College is hosting their second annual Conference on Social Justice and Social Research, March 31-April 1. Students from area colleges present their research papers on that broad topic. An opening concert on March 31 will be dedicated to the memory of Jim Schneider because of his contributions to building this conference.

⊕ A committee working on a 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary video about LEPOCO is seeking photos for their effort. If you have especially good photos from LEPOCO activities over the past 40 years please send them to Mike Lawton's attention at LEPOCO with clear instructions on how they should be returned to you.

⊕ Arun Gandhi will give a public lecture at Lehigh Univ. on Wed., April 20, at 7:30 pm, in Packard lab Aud. Arun Gandhi is the grandson of M.K. Gandhi and is head of the Memphis-based Gandhi Institute for Nonviolence.

⊕ The Pocono Progressives is sponsoring a showing of Weapons of Mass Deception at noon on Sat., April 2, at the Pocono Cinema in E.

Stroudsburg. A discussion with Dan Schechter, the producer of the film, will follow the showing.

⊕ The public hearing for the L.V. Planning Commission's Comprehensive Plan will be held Thurs., March 31, at 6:30 pm, at the LVPC Conf. Rm., 961 Marcon Blvd., Suite 310, Allentown. Written comments can be sent to Michael Kaiser, Ex. Dir., L.V. Planning Comm. at [mnk@lvpc.org](mailto:mnk@lvpc.org), 610-264-2616(fax), or same address as above with zip of 18109-9397.

⊕ The LEPOCO office currently has available copies of a children's story, The Little Hedgehog, written and illustrated by Patrick Walden, a young LEPOCO member of Bethlehem. It is a delightful story, in English and French, about a young hedgehog prince who goes in search of battle and finds some poor mice to "conquer," but instead of conquering them, he ends up helping them and realizing that peace, not violence, is the way to go. Please stop by LEPOCO to purchase a copy or contact Patrick directly.



## Witnessing for Peace on March 19<sup>th</sup>

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Addison Bross spoke of the abyss in which our country's leaders have plunged us since September 11, 2001. While we may feel fear and anger in response to their troubling actions, Addison called for our compassion toward the victims of our leaders' policies, and toward our leaders themselves. Such compassion may enable us to exit the abyss and just possibly help us find a new vision of peace and justice for our land.

Faramarz Farbod spoke of how the methods of our invasion/occupation in Iraq are the very means that will destroy our efforts there. The first evidence of this is that the oil supply system has not been privatized as planned by the Bush administration.

Faramarz spoke of what the U.S. did: We did enhance terrorism by abetting anger and hopelessness thus creating more terrorists. Through the war we did undertake terrorist acts (killing innocent people to achieve political objectives). We did grossly underestimate war expenses. He also spoke of the "did-nots:" We did not provide for political or economic recovery. We did not have an exit strategy. We did not spread democracy in the region, but actually weakened democracy there and here at home.

Rev. Em Finney recognized our continued sense of sorrow by her repetition of the biblical words, "Oh come and mourn with me awhile." She gave us permission to dwell on the sadness and shame that we share as peacemakers in a country at war. She urged us to follow another biblical expression and "turn our mourning into dancing" by: speaking truth to power, voting against war with our tax dollars, asking questions of all elected officials and wearing black because "war takes the color out of our lives."

We danced for peace in our hearts and for our neighbors as we vigiled and rallied on March 19<sup>th</sup>.

The Lehigh Valley Peace Coalition will meet on Wednesday, March 30, at the LEPOCO Peace Center. All are welcome who want to plan actions to end this war.

- Mimi Lang & Nancy Tate



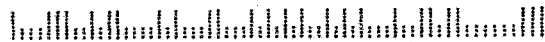
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Bits & Pieces

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
27	28	29	30	31	1	2
	1979 Nuclear power plant accident at Three Mile Island near Harrisburg, PA		7 pm Lehigh Valley Peace Coalition Meeting at Peace Center	3 pm Peace Camp Planning Meeting at Red Cross Offices	5 pm Nuclear Abolition Sisters Mtg. at Olive Bra. 7 pm Popcorn & Politics (see p.3&7)	
7 pm Peace Singers rehearse at Donna Hartmann's home	7 pm LEPOCO Steering Committee Meeting		12:30 pm Peace Camp Planning Mtg. at Red Cross 6:30 pm Bike/Walkathon Planning Mtg.	Noon Americas Solidarity Group Meeting April 7-9 Paul Robeson Conference at Lafayette Col		9:30 am-4 pm Peace Conference, Unitarian Church, Bethlehem (see p.3)
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
	7 pm LEPOCO Monthly Action Mtg., All members & friends welcome at Peace Center	8:30 am L.V. Committee Against State Killing Mtg. Noon Fundraising Comm. Meeting at Nawab		1986 U.S. bombs Libya.	War Tax Resistance Day	
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
1961 U.S. launches the Bay of Pigs invasion of Cuba		1943 Jews in Warsaw, Poland, revolt against Nazi tyranny	7:30 pm Arun Gandhi speaking at Lehigh Univ., Packard Lab Aud.		EARTH DAY 5:30 pm LEPOCO theater party for "Working" (see p.3)	1993 Cesar Chavez United Farm Workers leader and pacifist, dies

All meetings and events listed above will be held at the  
LEPOCO Peace Center (313 West 4<sup>th</sup> St., southside  
Bethlehem), unless noted otherwise