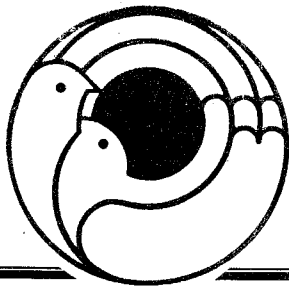


October
2005

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

Peace Community Leader from Colombia to Speak Here

We in the Lehigh Valley will have a special opportunity to hear from a member of a peace community in Colombia, Wednesday, October 19. Two appearances, at 4:10 pm at Lehigh University's Humanities Center (224 W. Packer Ave., south Bethlehem), and at 7:30 p.m. at First Presbyterian Church (Cedar Crest Blvd. & Tilghman St., Allentown) will feature Renato Areiza, a member of the peace community of San José de Apartadó. Sr. Areiza will update us on the progress of the peace movement in Colombia and the particular difficulties San José has been experiencing.

LEPOCO members and friends will remember San José de Apartadó as one of the dozens of small peace communities in Colombia and the one we have a connection with through the work of the Fellowship of Reconciliation there and Joe DeRaymond's dedication to their program of accompaniment in 2003. I also had the opportunity of visiting San José in 2003 as part of an FOR human rights delegation to Colombia. In addition, Joe returned to San José for a month this past winter during a crisis, and has continued his involvement as an active member of FOR's Colombia Peace Program Committee.

San José de Apartadó has had an especially hard time this year. Always threatened as they move among the armed factions of this war torn country, on Febru-

ary 21 eight members were tortured, murdered, and dismembered, including one of the leaders, Luis Eduardo Guerra. Along with Sr. Guerra were his son and companion, Dyanira Areiza; and a family of four, including children 4 and 1½. The massacre was carried out by the 17th Brigade, the military unit assigned to that region of Colombia. Deyanira Areiza was Renato Areiza's sister. The effect of this attack on the community has been profound.

International reaction to the massacre was great, in the United States so great that the State Department took a direct interest in it. Chiefly, it delayed human rights certification for Colombia to receive some of the immense amount of money the U.S. sends there. Although its human rights record remains abysmal, the State Department did OK Colombia's receiving this funding, timed with President Uribe's visit to President Bush this summer. Nonetheless, the delay of half a year was the first time the U.S. government paid so much attention to the issue of human rights in Colombia.

For further information about Renato Areiza's talks please call LEPOCO at 610-691-8730. If you are able to provide some refreshments for the First Presbyterian talk, contact Sheila Clever at 484-664-3948.

- Janet Goloub

Mass Demonstration At Ft. Benning

Today, we face an institutionalized system of war and structural violence brought to all corners of this earth by the United States. The Western Hemisphere Institute of Security Cooperation, formerly known as the School of the Americas (SOA/WHISC) is a small, even miniscule, part of this system of violence. Yet, despite the years of lives spent in prison, the pleas of churches, unions, and citizens to close this school that sponsors torturers and killers in the Americas, the politicians and military will not let it be closed.

This year, we have had not a whisper of success in our efforts to move United States policy in the Americas. CAFTA passed, military aid to Colombia was maintained, Cuba policy remained the same, the killing field of Haiti does not even make the news. Particularly hard to confront was the granting of human rights certification to Colombia in the face of the massacre in San José de Apartadó. Unfortunately, there is evidence that the certification has only emboldened the paramilitary killers of Colombia. On September

10, Luciano Enrique Romero Molina, President of SINALTRAINAL, a union that represents Coca Cola workers in Colombia, was kidnapped, tortured and murdered. Impunity reigns for United States trained and sponsored killers in Colombia, in Haiti, and in Iraq.

This November 19-20 at Fort Benning, there will be a mass demonstration of thousands once again to protest the existence of the SOA/WHISC. There is a call to bring thousands to the civil disobedience component of the demonstration. There will be a local contingent traveling to Fort Benning again this year. Please join us, and the thousands of others in this presence to demand that our politicians and military close this school of torture and begin a change in policy in the Americas, in the world. Contact the LEPOCO Office, or check out the website of School of Americas Watch, www.soaw.org.

- Joe DeRaymond

Nonviolence Training Builds Counter-Recruitment Team!

On Saturday, September 10th, twenty enthusiastic teens and adults gathered at the Lehigh Valley Friends Meeting House in Bethlehem. Representing twelve school districts in Pennsylvania, this diverse group of participants joined together to learn how to initiate and support counter-recruitment programs in their local high schools.

The training was facilitated by Margot Hillman and Jeff Vitelli, of LEPOCO, who started the day's events promptly at ten with a song Jeff wrote himself, encouraging the people to "wake up" and "rise up." Indeed, the lyrics foreshadowed the sentiment of the day: it's time to raise our voices against the deceptive tactics of military recruitment, and stand up to protect our nation's youth and their right to know alternative options to military service. During the course of the day, the training alternated between didactic sessions and participatory exercises in duos or trios. Posters decorated the walls, representing the participants' fears and feelings about doing counter-recruitment, and their brainstorming for how to effectively answer the hard questions that are often posed to counter-recruiters. *"Who do you think you are anyway? If we don't have an army, who's going to protect us from the terrorists?"*

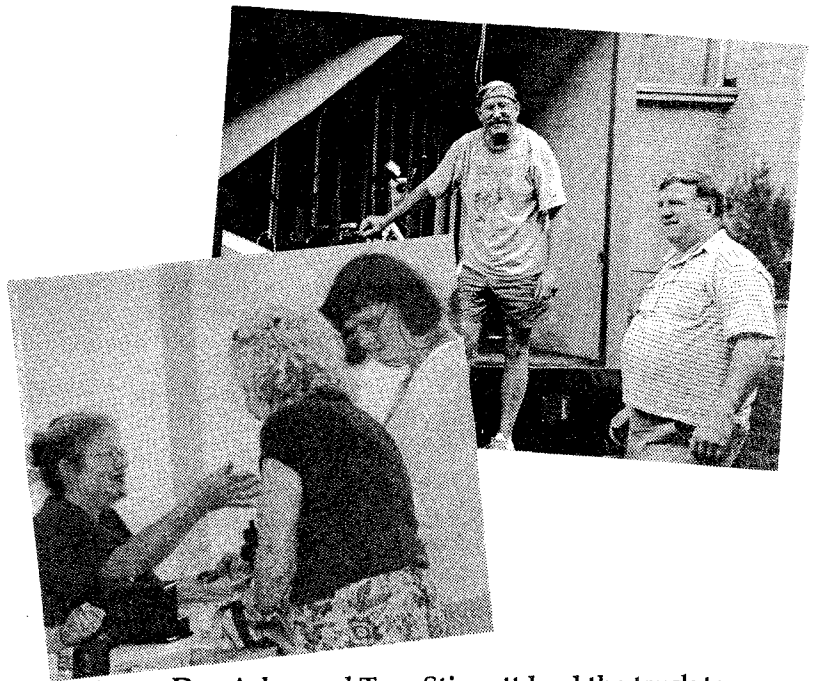
The apprehension associated with potentially hostile school administrators, and being misinterpreted or challenged by students and military families, was brought to life in a dynamic set of hassle lines. Scenarios for the hassle lines were synthesized from the participants' own fears, and challenged them to think on the spot, while remaining peaceful and attentive. While these lines brought the nervousness and uncertainty of counter-recruitment to life, they also helped lay those emotions to rest. The participants experienced the necessity of diffusing anger and finding a common ground with those who are in disagreement with them. A laundry list of facts and statistics will bridge no divide without an established relationship of understanding. As counter-recruiters, it is our job to help students, parents, and school administrators understand that knowing options and a nonviolent way of life are essential to education. However, we must also fulfill the role of peacemakers, building camaraderie and understanding with those around us in our everyday lives.

Special thanks to Peter Crownfield, LEPOCO's Youth & Militarism Staffperson, for his planning and coordinating efforts, and Hannae Pavlick, LEPOCO member and student at Liberty High School, for a superb vegan lunch!

- Sarah Weick

Ed. Note: Thanks also to Sarah Weick, home-schooled high school student, active in extracurricular programs at Palisades High School, who helped Peter with planning and coordination for the day.

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At top: Dan Acker and Tom Stinnett load the truck to carry away the leftovers from the Yard Sale.

At bottom: Kathryn Hoffman, Betty Compton and Laurie Spalholz chat at the Yard Sale check-out table. Photos by Susie Ravitz.

The Yard Sale was a great success, thanks to the many donations (including a wonderful collection of books from Suzanne Marshall) and the many volunteers who priced, sold and carried the "stuff." We grossed a little over \$1200. There are a few holdovers we would like to try to sell on e-bay. Is there anyone who has e-bay skills they are willing to share? Please call LEPOCO at 610-691-8730.

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 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, 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).

First Friday Film

Popcorn & Politics

November 4, 7:00 pm

Hidden In Plain Sight

This documentary about the SOA will open the month of the demonstration at Ft. Benning (described on page 1). The documentary presents many points of view to illuminate the turbulent reality of Latin American, including interviews with Noam Chomsky, Eduardo Galeano, Rep. Barbara Lee, Sister Dianna Ortiz and others. Please bring a snack or beverage to share and see this film that Amy Goodman described as "required viewing."

Annual Phonathon

The giving resulting from the fund appeal, which includes the Phonathon, is the lifeblood of our LEPOCO. And, we are now seeing expenses greater than income. Obviously we want to turn this around.

So:

1) Respond by gift or pledge to the fund appeal letter as soon as you can to save a call to you after late October when the Phonathon starts. If you wait for the call, please be ready with your gift amount (IRS deductible).

2) Volunteer to be a phoner (2-3 hour stints). People will receive your call warmly as they share your desire for peace in our troubled world. So the task is most rewarding.

Peace people like you and me HAVE made progress. Just look at the European Union, for example. Let us keep it up.

- Tom Lloyd

Death Penalty Talk

October 21-23 is Amnesty International's National Weekend of Faith In Action on the Death Penalty. As part of this week, The Rev. Dr. Lloyd Steffen will speak at Wesley United Methodist Church on "Executing Justice: The Moral Meaning of the Death Penalty." The program will be at 9 am in the church Library. The church is located at 2540 Center St., Bethlehem. The public is welcome to attend and participate in the discussion.

Counter Recruitment Talk

On Sunday, October 30th, Peter Crownfield will speak at the Lehigh Valley Friends Meeting on "Counter-Recruitment: What Parents and Students Can Do." The talk will be at 11 am at the meetinghouse, located on Rt. 512 about 1/2 mile north of Rt. 22. Call Rick Dow at 610-865-5204 for more information.

SOA Program

The Americas Solidarity Group is planning a program to highlight concerns about the School of the Americas on Sunday, November 6, at 6 pm, at the Lehigh Valley Friends Meeting (Rt. 512, about 1/2 mile north of Rt. 22). We will open with a potluck dinner (please bring some food to share). The program will consist of an informational talk on the opposition to the SOA and live music. Save the date. More information will come by postcard and e-mail.

Craft Fair

LEPOCO plans to sell third world crafts at the Wesley United Methodist Church Seventh Annual Craft Show on Saturday, November 12, 10 am to 3 pm. The crafts will be from A Greater Gift (formerly SERRV). If you can help staff the LEPOCO table please call 610-691-8730.



Meetings...Meetings...Meetings...

Some of the LEPOCO meetings planned in the coming weeks are:

Tuesday, October 18, 8:30 am: L.V. Committee Against State Killing meeting at LEPOCO.

Sunday, October 23, 7 pm: LEPOCO Peace Singers at the home of Barbara Wurth, Bethlehem. Call 610-691-8730 for directions.

Monday, October 24, 7:15 pm: Peace Camp Planning meeting for 2006 at LEPOCO.

Tuesday, October 25, 7 pm: L.V. Peace Coalition meeting at LEPOCO.

Wednesday, October 26: Phonathon calling begins at LEPOCO.

Wednesday, November 2, Noon: Fundraising Committee meeting at NAWAB, Bethlehem.

Monday, November 7, 7 pm: Steering Committee meeting at LEPOCO.

Wednesday, November 9, 7 pm: Youth & Militarism Committee meeting at LEPOCO.

Sunday, November 13, 7 pm: LEPOCO Peace Singers at the home of Tim and Lilly Hatcher-Morgan, Bethlehem. Call 610-691-8730 for directions.

Monday, November 14, 7 pm: Monthly LEPOCO Action Meeting, at the Office.

Two Green Thumbs Up

Utopia is defined as, "an ideally perfect place, especially in its social, political, and moral aspects." The 1st Annual Pennsylvania Renewable Energy & Sustainable Living Festival in Kempton on September 23rd and 24th was just that. It was hippie heaven, man! There was so much information it was mind-boggling, and only two days to absorb it all. I had to sort through my stack of 100% recycled unbleached biodegradable flyers just to keep it all straight.

Trying to sum up this festival in a few short paragraphs is impossible. There was so much to see and do, there is no way to do justice to anyone involved, especially when working our farm stand to boot. There was something for everyone. Hands-on workshops covered a variety of subjects including draft horses, veggie fuel car conversion, fermented foods, and even a green activism roundtable. Several tents and stages were set up outside for lectures, discussing every aspect of living a greener life. Livestock, batteries, wind turbines and permaculture were just a few. Bullfrog Films showed several great movies to further environmental awareness. Live bluegrass music enhanced the mood. Children had their own area, where they (and their parents) could participate in a play with Middle-Earth Studios, create with clay, draw chalk pictures on the tennis court, or bang on a swing-set frame with recycled metal objects for music making.

Inside the building were tables filled with information from political and environmental groups to eco-friendly companies and producers. A farmer's market was set up to help promote local farmers. The food stands were all filled with organic choices, and were served on biodegradable plastic-like plates and cups made from corn (who knew!?). Every trash area had four choices: paper trash, trash, compost, and recycling. If only every festival was like that!

The best thing about the whole experience was a great feeling of hope for the world. There are so many positive things going on, right here in our own backyard! We really can make a difference, no matter what that grumpy neighbor might say.

- Sara Ruch

Come Out of Empire

Thus the call to the 40 or so fortunate people of peace who gathered at Kirkridge to hear Daniel Berrigan and Liz McAlister on the beautiful weekend of September 16th! Ursula Wuerth, Robert Daniels II and Mimi Lang were the LEPOCO people attending the retreat.

Dan and Liz are present on this weekend as our friends and mentors. They spoke to us as their intimate associates as they shared their heartfelt explorations of biblical texts. They are able to find in the texts the directions to lead us along the difficult journey

away from US imperialism and from our own attachment to imperial trappings.

Liz began by exploring the events in the Hebrew Scriptures in which prominent figures are called to leave empire or the symbols of power are removed. Abraham is called to leave Ur and the tower of the ancients known as the ziggurat (a vertical symbol of power), Moses is called to leave Egypt, Joshua is called to bring down the walls of Jericho, the tower of Babel falls, Noah is called to build the ark to leave the city.

Liz spoke of the need to explore our own inner grasping for empire and for the ways we support empire in the U.S. today. She recommended we consider the call to move away from the centripetal forces, that is, the government, the church, and the corporations, which pull us to the center. Her suggestion was that we embrace a centrifugal force, moving away from dominance to a community of diversity, endurance and active, public resistance.

Dan Berrigan, looking healthy and wise in his 84th year, spoke from the text of his new book about empire. He identified the relationships between brothers in the Hebrew Scriptures as the beginnings of war and the early longings for empire. Cain killed Abel, Isaac betrayed Esau, and Joseph's brothers sold him into slavery. The biblical figures symbolize the efforts of humans throughout history to be greater than God. Our efforts continue in our current striving for world domination. Dan's advice to us in relation to people in power: Pray for them. Resist them.

- Mimi Lang

Ed. Note: For more information about retreats at Kirkridge near Bangor, call 610-588-1793.

Special Events:

War Resisters League

2nd Annual Organizing Network Gathering
Asheville, North Carolina
November 11-13

Join peace activists from across the U.S. to strengthen ties with each other, to share visions, skills and resources, and to enhance the spirit and strength of nonviolence in our peace work.

Contact: Simon Harak 415-282-6580;

Cicada Brocaw 828-277-0758; Jim Haber 415-282-6580
or Jim at wrlwest@riseup.net.

3 Workshops on Nonviolent Communication

Facilitated by Duke Duchscherer

1. Friday, October 28, 6:30-9 pm, \$10

"Introductory Workshop in
Communicating With Compassion"

2. Saturday, October 29, 9 am-4:30 pm, \$85

"Transforming Anger With Compassion
For Self and Others"

3. Sunday, October 30, Noon-6 pm, \$85

"Building Harmonious Relationships

Based on Compassion and Mutual Cooperation"

All at St. John's UCC, 257 W. Walnut St., Kutztown, PA

Organized by Matt Sicher 610-641-0015.

God Erupting on 9/24

When LEPOCO's three busses pulled into the huge Greenbelt Metro station, capable of holding 400 busses, there were only a few other vehicles in the lot. But when we got into the Metro, we joined a teeming river of humanity, headed to the Rally to End the War on the National Mall. As we disembarked downtown and came back up to street level, thousands were converging from all directions, and when we reached the assembling march, it was obvious there were hundreds of thousands present. Estimates since have been between 100,000 (absurdly low) and 600,000.

Several times during the march, which completely encircled the White House, the chant "This is what democracy looks like!" swept through the crowd, and one couldn't escape the thought that this was, quite literally, true. It seemed like everybody was there, from seniors in wheelchairs to grandparents with their grandchildren to couples with their toddlers to teens and twenty-somethings in love and rebellion (how could

told the Bush administration to get out of Iraq, to stop squandering our sons and daughters and national wealth on the sociopathic pursuit of power and empire.

On our L.V. busses were seasoned activists, but also many attending a national rally for the first time, or the first time in a long time. Our contingent reflected the phenomenon of the larger event: there was the resolve of long-time peace activists, and also the startling, energizing presence of many, many new faces.

The next day, in a moving presentation in a tent set up near the Washington Monument, Rabbi Arthur Waskow said, "The demonstration yesterday was God erupting in the American people!" Cornel West spoke of how U.S. foreign policy echoed the disasters of Rome, Britain, and the Ottoman Empire. "The condition of truth is to allow suffering to speak," he said, "and in solidarity with all the invisible ones, all the suffering, some of us are going to get arrested tomorrow."

On Monday, nearly 400 people (including Cornel West, Arthur Waskow, Cindy Sheehan, and eight

(continued on page 6)



Photo on left is by Susie Ravitz. Photo on right is by Susie's friend with Susie's camera.

On the left Don Hunt wears his mother's (Anna Hunt was LEPOCO's first staffperson who died in 2000) hat covered with political buttons, reminding us of her wonderful, determined peace witness. On the right Susie Ravitz holds one of the eighteen, tall pink signs designed by Mike Lawton to help keep the Lehigh Valley delegation together with a message. The other side said, "LEPOCO, Lehigh Valley, Pennsylvania."

love not rebel against this hate-mongering administration?) to veterans of WWII and Vietnam and Iraq to centrists to Marxists to socialists to anarchists to humanists to pagans to the vaguely or radically disaffected, to all those struggling to keep an open heart in these vicious and fearful times. For those willing to see it, the U.S. showed its hand on September 24th, and

Mourn the Dead Heal the Wounded Stop the War

Possibly before you receive this newsletter and most certainly soon after you receive it, another sad milestone will pass in the war in Iraq - 2000 U.S. troops will have been killed. We want to join people across the country in marking this sad event. Plans are still developing, but so far plans include a gathering the night after this milestone has been passed from 6:30-8:30 for a vigil, probably in Bethlehem. The city center plaza has been requested, but no approval has been received. There is also consideration of having 2000 candle luminaries be part of this gathering.

If you can help with planning and preparation please contact LEPOCO (610-691-8730). To be sure you are informed of the final plans, contact LEPOCO to make sure you are on an e-mail or calling list.

American Friends Service Committee and United for Peace and Justice are among the national groups calling for local actions the day after the 2000th casualty is reported. As we remember the U.S. citizens killed, we will also remember the tens of thousands of Iraqis, civilians and combatants, children, men, women and elderly who have been killed. We will call on Congress to take action to stop the deaths in Iraq by stopping the dollars that fund the war. A pro-peace majority in this country supports such action.

Finally, some local people are talking about a local civil disobedience action against the war. If you are interested, please contact LEPOCO to be kept informed.

God Erupting on 9/24

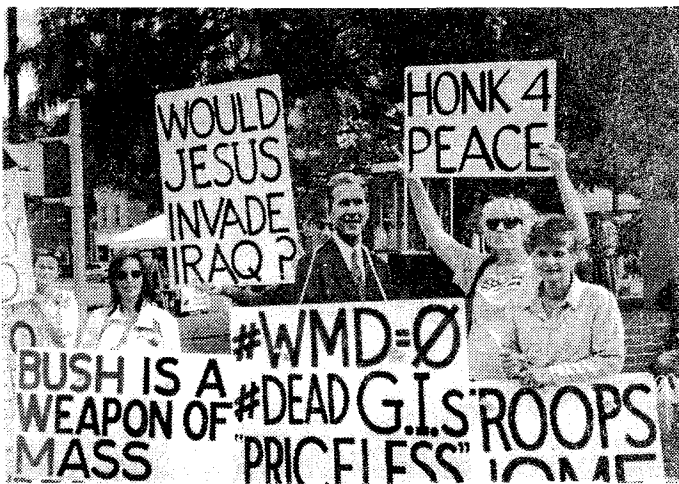
(continued from page 5)

LEPOCO members) sat in front of the White House awaiting a requested audience with the Administration. Park Service police made the arrest and people were taken by bus and paddy wagon to the Anacostia section of the city. Slowly, very slowly, they unloaded the vehicles, fingerprinting and processing us through a facility obviously not designed for this kind of volume. The bus I was on got processed through about 2 a.m. Tuesday, and there were still another 100 or more to go. We were given citations for "parading without a permit," which carries a fine of \$50 plus \$25 court costs. The women (Anna Maria Caldara, Virginia Cassel, Eileen O'Donnell, and Nancy Tate) have a court date of November 16th, the men (Tim Chadwick, Robert Daniels, Joe DeRaymond, and myself) December 21st.

Also, while this act of civil disobedience was unfolding, Kathryn Hoffmann took a petition, signed by 120 people on the Saturday busses, to the offices of Arlen Specter, Rick Santorum, and Charlie Dent. The petition called for the withdrawal of troops from Iraq, rebuilding their destroyed cities and communities, dealing with the devastation of depleted uranium, and restoring and improving veterans benefits.

The whole experience was exhilarating and enervating. When I got back home I was shocked to see the paucity of coverage of the event. Many times I've seen the shot of Cindy Sheehan, smiling, being carried off by Park Police, but the breadth and depth of the event is missing. Consciously or not, the major media is colluding with this administration, trying to manufacture a reality at odds with what's really happening.

- Mike Lawton



Saturday vigilers at Centre Square, Easton, extended their presence on September 24th, in solidarity with the Washington, DC, demonstration. Apologies for not having the names of the women to the left of George Bush(?). To his right are Pat Hampton and Monica McAgnon. The signs are the uniformly readable creations of Reggie Regrut, the vigil convener.

In Allentown Lynn Hanna organized an amazing peace vigil for Saturday afternoon, September 24th, on Hamilton St. near Cedar Beach, attended by over 60 people. It was covered in *The Morning Call* with a photograph. We know this was repeated across the U.S. The opposition to this war is deep.

Other Words About the War

With the September 22nd report that three Pennsylvania guard members had been killed in Iraq the previous day makes a new campaign seem even more important. Some Pennsylvania peace activists, with leadership from the Delaware County Wage Peace & Justice, have initiated the Campaign to Bring Home the PA National Guard from Iraq. Pennsylvania has the largest Guard Iraq contingent of any state, having a severe impact on PA Guard's readiness to assist in natural disasters at home and impacting many communities where Guard members serve as first responders (police, firefighters, EMT personnel, etc.) in civilian life. A resolution being circulated by the Campaign calls on Governor Rendell to pursue and exhaust every avenue in his power to see that the Pennsylvania National Guard is brought home from Iraq without delay and calls on the Governor and the State Legislature to urge Pennsylvania's Congressional delegation to vote for legislation that would require the President to develop and implement a plan for the withdrawal of U.S. armed forces from Iraq.

Each of the Iraqi children killed by the United States was our child. Each of the prisoners tortured in Abu Ghraib was our comrade. Each of their screams was ours. When they were humiliated, we were humiliated. The U.S. soldiers fighting in Iraq - mostly volunteers in a poverty draft from small towns and poor urban neighborhoods - are victims just as much as the Iraqis of the same horrendous process, which asks them to die for a victory that will never be theirs.

- Arundhati Roy

"Tide? Or Ivory Snow? Public Power in the Age of Empire"

Weekly Peace Vigils

Bethlehem: 4:30-5:30 pm, Thursdays
3rd & Wyandotte Sts.

Contact: Maria Weick 610-346-8793
(Note: the time is slightly changed!)

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

And

4-6 pm

PA National Guard Armory, 15th & Allen Sts.

Easton: 10-11 am, Saturdays
Centre Square

Contact: Reggie Regrut, 908-859-5632

Please attend as often as you are able!

The Struggle Shared

When I give food to the poor they call me a saint.

When I ask why the poor have no food they call me a communist.

- Dom Halder Camara

RESPONDING TO DISASTER

CLOSE TO HOME - The federal government's negligent response to the victims of Hurricane Katrina, the calls by some officials, including former House Majority Leader Tom DeLay, for local governments to assume more responsibility, and discussion at the LEPOCO Action Meeting of September 12, resulted in LEPOCO writing a letter to Rep. Charles Dent, who serves on the House Homeland Security Committee.

The letter requests that he support an independent investigation of the Federal Government's response to Katrina, set up meetings between himself and local officials, including the public, to clarify the respective responsibilities of local, state, and federal officials in the event of a crisis in the Lehigh Valley. And, finally, in his position on the Homeland Security Committee, that he use the oversight function of the Committee to ensure that corporations like Haliburton are not able to reap billion dollar profits from the hurricane disaster, as they have from the war in Iraq.

In part, the letter says, "It is unfortunate that we have spent tens of billions of dollars on homeland security, but now, the U.S. has the pity of the world in its pathetic inability to take care of its own people after Katrina struck. It is crucial that you (and others in Congress) address the security of your constituency by rectifying this situation."

Copies of the letter were also sent to county and city officials and to the print media. A copy is available at LEPOCO. If you are interested in monitoring Dent's response, and being part of ensuing discussions about the many related issues, call the office at 610-691-8730.

SLOW RESPONSE TO DISASTER VICTIMS/QUICK RESPONSE TO

PROFITEERS - Hurricane Katrina came ashore on Sunday, August 28th. The levees in New Orleans collapsed on Monday night, inundating the city, and creating horrifying images of people stranded on rooftops for all the world to see on their TV screens. Concurrently, Pres. Bush spent several days vacationing at his Texas ranch and speaking at political fundraisers.

When he finally got back to the Oval Office, one of the first things he did was to sign an executive order allowing federal contractors to pay less than the prevailing wage in areas affected by the disaster.

By invoking "a national emergency" Bush told Congress that he is permitted to suspend the requirement of the 1931 Davis-Bacon Act under which construction workers on federal projects, such as highways and bridges, must be paid at least the prevailing wage of the area where work is being conducted.

Bush's action drew rebuke from some of organized labor's best allies on Capitol Hill. Rep. George Miller, D-CA, said, "The Administration is using the devastation of Hurricane Katrina to cut the wages of people desperately trying to rebuild their lives and their communities. President Bush should immediately realize the colossal mistake he has made in signing this order, and rescind it and ensure that America puts its people back to work in the wake of Katrina at wages that will get them and their families back on their feet."

Senator Edward Kennedy and other progressives have proposed a New Deal type of formula, with public works projects modeled after the Tennessee Valley Authority, or the WPA under Franklin D. Roosevelt, that would stimulate local and national economies with rebuilding projects funded by federal dollars.

Instead, Bush has shown callous disregard for the needs of workers, and hurricane victims, while by-passing all normal bidding for federal contracts, awarding them to his corporate buddies, and paving the way for corporations to exploit the very victims of the disaster while they walk away with billions in profits.

Source: money.cnn.com, 9/8/05

PA CAMPAIGN FOR MINIMUM WAGE

- The Community Action Committee of the Lehigh Valley (CACLV) has been working with a statewide coalition of groups spearheaded by the Philadelphia Unemployment Project to get our lawmakers to raise the minimum wage in Pennsylvania.

There are three relevant bills, which had been allowed to die because of inaction by the leadership in both houses of the legislature. The coalition has won reintroduction and sponsorship for all three bills. They are yet to be assigned new numbers. Former HB-216 would raise the minimum wage to \$6.15 per hour, with no Cost of Living Adjustment (COLA) provision. Former HB-257 would set it at \$7.15 per hour with a COLA clause, and former SB-369 would increase minimum wage to \$7.00 per hour without a COLA.

A rally and a day of lobbying are planned for Tuesday, October 18, from 8 am to 4:30 pm, in Harrisburg. CACLV is organizing a busload of people to represent the Lehigh Valley. Following the morning rally, the contingents will be divided up into teams to approach targeted representatives and senators. About half of our local legislators are supportive, and most of the rest are on the fence. The barrier to passing a new minimum wage law in Pennsylvania is, as stated, the leadership of the state legislature.

There is no cost for the bus to Harrisburg. Call CACLV's Second Harvest Food Bank and set aside the date of October 18. Make your reservation with Jessica Dreistadt at 610-434-0875.

- Jeff Vitelli

The Crisis In Haiti

On September 10, a number of Philadelphia-area peace and justice groups sponsored an all-day conference for activists on the "Crisis in Haiti."

The reality of life in Haiti, woven through all the presentations, was summarized by Angela Berryman of American Friends Service Committee, as conference facilitator: hundreds arrested and detained arbitrarily, education, health care and other services dismantled, thousands internally displaced, democracy advocates under attack, violence daily, a political, economic and human rights crisis of immense proportions.

Eugenia Charles, one of the 100,000 political refugees after the first coup against Pres. Jean Bertrand Aristide and now Executive Director of Fondasyon Mapou promoting sustainable development in Haiti, said that since the second coup against Aristide on February 29, 2004, 11,000 have been killed and Cité Soleil is under siege. Bombs were dropped on this crowded slum on July 6. The U.S., France and Canada are cooperating in the oppression in Haiti, hoping to crush the progress of the majority of Haitians since 1986. Charles said that after Aristide's first inauguration in 1991, "Haiti was clean for the first time."

Bill Quigley, lawyer, evacuee from Charity Hospital in New Orleans, and visitor to Haiti ten times in the last year, spoke about his accompaniment of Fr. Gerard Jean-Juste, currently imprisoned without charges, bail, or an appearance before a magistrate. Fr. Jean-Juste is considered the most dangerous man in Haiti by the authorities because he won't shut up about the horrible injustices Haitians are suffering.

According to Frantz Latour, coordinator of the Committee for the Return of Democracy in Haiti, France, the U.S. and Canada are determined to hold elections scheduled for November, even if only small numbers of people participate. He said Haiti's real leaders are in exile or imprisoned (or in hiding), prime among them Aristide, living in South Africa, and Jean-Juste in prison. Credible elections in Haiti would require the release of political prisoners, an end to impunity for all the murders and human rights abuses, an end to the killing, and a return of exiles.

A most troubling development is that one of the U.S.-backed groups, Haiti Democracy Project, believes Haiti needs to be ruled by the U.S., Canada, and France and documents have been drafted to facilitate that by putting Haiti under United Nations trusteeship for 20 to 45 years.

Some web sites were suggested for following developments in Haiti and to learn of suggested actions. Among them: www.ijdh.org and www.haiti_reborn.org. A new edition of Paul Farmer's book, *The Uses of Haiti* was highly recommended. Please join the Americas Solidarity Group as we struggle to find local responses to this "Crisis in Haiti."

- Nancy C. Tate

More Words About the War

"From bad to worse," is a common phrase Iraqis use when describing what is happening in Iraq... I mostly hear from Iraqis that the presence of American military has lowered their quality of life, and set back their progress in building a peaceful and democratic society. Even from those who say it is necessary for the U.S. military to remain longer in Iraq to prevent greater factional fighting or civil war, we hear despair. They speak of the snail's-pace progress in repairing infrastructure, the growing humanitarian crisis, the depressed economic system, and the lack of basic security... Countless Iraqis try to keep hope alive by working with organizations that foster unity, human rights and local democratic activity. They worry, however, that all the sacrifices and hardships they have endured will not lead them to a freer and safer life.

- Peggy Gish, Christian Peacemaker Teams, www.cpt.org.

While approving tens of billions for war, the U.S. continues to divert funds from rebuilding Iraq. Over \$4 billion has now been diverted from funds allocated by Congress for electricity, water and sewage projects and is being spent on the Iraqi Army and police forces. One result - 68 of the 81 water projects to be financed by Iraq's Public Works Ministry are now canceled.

- Newsletter from Voices in the Wilderness, May 5, 2005

The real problem is not too much multiculturalism but too little. If the diversity now ghettoized on the margins of Western societies - geographically and psychologically - were truly allowed to migrate to the centers, it might infuse public life in the West with a powerful new humanism. If we had deeply multiethnic societies, rather than shallow multicultural ones, it would be much more difficult for politicians to sign deportation orders sending Algerian asylum-seekers to torture, or to wage wars in which only the invaders' dead are counted. A society that truly lived its values of equality and human rights, at home and abroad, would have another benefit too. It would rob terrorists of what has always been their greatest recruitment tool: our racism.

- Naomi Klein, *The Nation*, Aug. 29/Sept. 5, 2005

The tab is rapidly rising. Bush's latest request of \$61 billion for Iraq puts the total tally at \$210 billion --- and climbing by \$5 billion a month... The Bushites are financing their war by borrowing, mostly from central banks in China, Japan, and Europe. This shoves the financial day of reckoning to our children and grandchildren, who'll have to pony up their tax money when the debt comes due in 20 years or so.

Neither the Democrats nor the Republicans have the honesty to call for a war tax on, say, oil corporations, which are wallowing in windfall profits bloated by \$60-a-barrel oil. Far from asking these elites to pay a dime, members of both parties have acted disgracefully, shoveling more tax cuts at oil companies...

- *The Hightower Lowdown*, Sept. 2005

Bits & Pieces

LEPOCO is working on upgrading our technology. We could use four 32-128 mb or larger USB memory sticks. Call the office if you can help out.

Oct. 6 through Nov. 4, Northampton Community College is hosting an interactive exhibit commemorating the 25th anniversary of the imprisonment of Oscar López Rivera and Carlos Alberto Torres. The exhibit, Not Enough Space, features local artists, Rafael Cañizares and Cynthia Rodriguez. The exhibit is displayed at the College Center Bldg., Laub Lounge.

In conjunction with the exhibit, on Thurs., Oct. 27, at 11 am, there will be a lecture by Rafael Cancel Miranda at the College Center. For more info. call Teresa Donate at 610-861-5337 or Issis Vela at 610-332-6166. The exhibit is sponsored by Northampton Community College's Hispanic Caucus and the College Life Committee.

On Thurs., Nov. 10, Moravian Seminary is holding a Peacemaking Symposium. David R. Smock, PhD, director of the Religion and Peacemaking Initiative of the United States Institute of Peace, will be at Moravian Theological Seminary as the featured speaker. At 3 pm he will lead a simulation exercise: "The Case of 'Palmyra'" and at 7 pm he will lecture on "Religion and Conflict: Cause and Effect, or Problem and Solution?" Both programs are free and open to the public. They will be held at the Bahnson Center, 60 W. Locust, Bethlehem.

LEPOCO has changed its e-mail address. Please direct your e-mail to lepoco@fast.net.

Planning for Peace Camp 2006 will begin on Mon., Oct. 24, at 7:15 pm at the Peace Center. All those who want to help make this important program continue next year are

urged to attend. Call 610-691-8730 if you have questions.

While many LEPOCO folks were marching in D.C. or vigiling in Easton or Allentown, another energetic crew was staffing a boutique table at the Buckingham Friends Meeting Peace Fair. It was another success as buttons and bumper stickers were purchased by many.

The Third Thursday Film Series opens Oct. 20th at the Mauch Chunk Museum & Cultural Center in Jim Thorpe with "The Thin Red Line." Future offerings include "Gandhi," "The Battle of Algiers" and "The Corporation." For more info. call 610-781-5612. The center is located at 41 W. Broadway in Jim Thorpe and films will be shown upstairs at 7 pm. Robert Daniels is a prime organizer for this series.

"What I think the White House does not yet understand - and some of my colleagues - the dam has broke on this policy," Hagel said. "The longer we stay there, the more similarities (to Vietnam) are going to come together."

- Sen. Chuck Hagel, of Nebraska, *The Intelligencer*, 8/22/05

An excellent op-ed by Ted Morgan, "Katrina Makes the Invisible Poor Very Visible Again," appeared in *The Morning Call* on Sept. 14. If you would like to see a copy contact LEPOCO.

The Allentown Human Relations Commission will hold their 28th Annual Dinner on Thurs., Oct. 18, at

6:30 pm at the Allentown Crowne Plaza. Cost is \$40.

Awards will be given to Salisa Lynn Berrien of Students Striving Together for Excellence, Dianne Kareha, chaplain at Luther Crest, Alan Jennings, executive director of the Community Action Committee of the Lehigh Valley, and Larry Williams, executive director of the Municipal Opera Company. The organization award will go to Theatre Outlet.


Bob Weick is touring again this school year with Marx In Soho. Many colleges, and others, have appreciated this excellent production of the play by Howard Zinn, including those who attended a LEPOCO theatre party and a production at a private home in Bangor that benefited LEPOCO. If your group or school would like more info. contact Bob at 610-346-8793.

Project Child is sponsoring a Parenting Education Summit on Fri., Oct. 21, at 1st Presbyterian Church, Cedar Crest & Tilghman, Allentown. Three sessions will address Home Safety, School & Community Safety, and Child Abuse & Victimization Prevention. The fee of \$25 includes lunch. Call 610-419-4500 for more info.

The 46th Annual Nazareth to Bethlehem Christmas Peace Pilgrimage will be Sat., Dec. 10. Save the date and watch for the brochure enclosed with the next newsletter.

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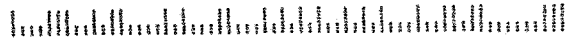
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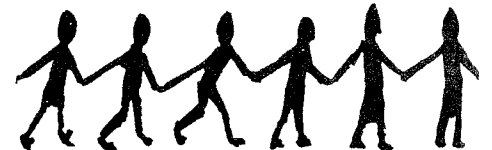
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Bits & Pieces

Renato Areiza
from Peace Community of
San José de Apartadó
Speaking twice on
Wednesday, Oct. 19
1) at **4:00 pm**
Humanities Center
224 W. Packer Ave., Lehigh University,
south Bethlehem
2) at **7:30 pm**
1st Presbyterian Church
Cedar Crest Blvd., & Tilghman St.,
Allentown
(See page 1 for more info.)



Close the SOA/WHISC!

- 1) *Hidden In Plain Sight*
1st Friday Film/Popcorn & Politics
November 4, 7 pm
LEPOCO Peace Center
- 2) Talk, Music & Potluck
Dinner on SOA
Friends Meetinghouse
Rt. 512, Bethlehem
- 3) Mass Demonstration
Ft. Benning, Georgia
November 19-20
(See Pages 1 & 3)



Mourn the Dead
Heal the Wounded
End the War

(see page 5)