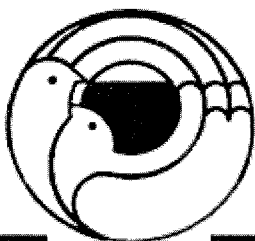


September - October
2009

Vol. 44 No. 5



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

The Pak-Afghan Dilemma

On Monday, October 19, at 7 pm, Dr. M. Ashraf Adeel will speak for a public forum on "The Pak-Afghan Dilemma," at First Presbyterian Church, Cedar Crest Blvd. and Tilghman Sts., Allentown.

Dr. Adeel is currently teaching in the Philosophy Department at Kutztown University. He has held a Professorship in Philosophy at the University of Peshawar (in the northwest of Pakistan near the Afghanistan border). He was the founding Vice Chancellor of Hazara University in Pakistan and served in higher education in various capacities for 30 years. In the 1980s he lived in the United States while working on his Ph.D. In 1999 he was a senior Visiting Fellow at Linacre College Oxford. He has been living in the United States since 2003, but visits Pakistan regularly, including a visit there this summer. He has worked for education reform in Pakistan and is concerned about the current developments in his country. He is a poet and a playwright, as well as a philosopher. He has lectured widely, led professional organization in Pakistan, and has been active as a writer for many years.

We are very fortunate to have Dr. Adeel to speak for us about the current situation in Pakistan and Afghanistan in the month when we pass the eight year mark in the war in Afghanistan. The program is being co-sponsored by LEPOCO, the Lehigh Valley Peace Coalition, and the Social Concerns Committee at First Presbyterian Church.

For information on other local, regional and national events about the anniversary of the start of the war in Afghanistan see pages three and seven.

Yard Sale: October 3

One can never tell what treasure might turn up at LEPOCO's annual yard sale. Sometimes it's a superb stereo system, sometimes beautiful clothing, sometimes collections of books too wonderful not to share, sometimes odd and mystifying bric-a-brac, sometimes just simple and useful stuff you've been looking for. But the point is, in order to find this stuff, *you gotta be there!*

The yard sale will take place Saturday, October 3rd, from 8:30 am to 1 pm, at the Forte Building (CACLV's home), 5th & William Sts., south Bethlehem. No rain date - this is indoors, in a spacious room.

To donate, (and your donations are needed!) please bring your crazy-practical-misunderstood-orphaned-deluxe-foolish-impulsive items, in good condition, to the LEPOCO office between noon and 5 pm, on Wednesday or Thursday, September 30th and October 1st, or to

the Forte Building on Friday, October 2nd, from 11 am and 3 pm. It's very helpful if you can price the items beforehand.

Also, we need volunteers to help with pre-sale sorting, to set up, to assist buyers, clean up, etc. Call the LEPOCO Office at 610-691-8730 if you can help.

If you can donate some baked goods, they are bought and devoured with the special delirium of hungry shoppers. There's nothing like homemade.

Come join us for this important fundraiser. You may even find a treasure or two.

- Mike Lawton

Health Care Discussions Continue

On Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday nights, September 29, 30 and October 1, LEPOCO's Ad Hoc Committee on the Economic Crisis is presenting programs in our three cities on the health care debate. The program will feature a video of the interview with Wendell Potter that was aired twice this summer on *Bill Moyers Journal*. Wendell Potter is a former chief of Corporate Communications for CIGNA, one of the large health insurance companies. He has become a whistle-blower of sorts, speaking out for health care reform that serves the public as compared to the present system of private insurers catering to the demands of Wall Street. Framing the hour-long video, Mimi Lang will lead discussion of the single-payer plan proposed for Pennsylvania. (See page 2 of this Newsletter for the report on the August forum held locally on this topic.)

On Tuesday, September 29, the program will be at the Bethlehem Public Library, 11 W. Church St., at 7 pm.

On Wednesday, September 30, the program will be at the Allentown Public Library, 12th & Hamilton Sts., at 7 pm.

And, on Thursday, October 1, the program will be at the Easton Public Library, 515 Church St., at 7 pm.

Please join these important public discussions and invite others to join us.

One-Payer Health Care Rally in Harrisburg

On Tuesday, October 20th, at 10 am, there will a Rally & Lobby Day for Pennsylvania Single-Payer Health Care, on the steps of the Capitol in Harrisburg. This is an important opportunity to support the Pennsylvania effort to help lead the nation to a civilized health care plan for all. The plan is contained in Pennsylvania House Bill 1660 and Senate Bill 400. Contact LEPOCO 610-691-8730 or lepoco@fast.net if you would like to car pool to Harrisburg for this event.

Advocating One-Payer Health Care

Why is our economy in such bad straits, and what part did our health care system play?

A Health Care Forum was sponsored by LEPOCO's Ad-Hoc Committee on the Economic Crisis on August 13th at the Northampton Community College Fowler Center, in south Bethlehem. A large group assembled to hear how our current health care system has contributed to the demise of USA manufacturing, loss of jobs, hardship for the middle class, the often underinsured working poor and, of course, the uninsured. The guest speaker was Walter Tsou, MD, graduate of the University of Pennsylvania and John Hopkins Medical School, member of Physicians for a National Health Program, and former Commissioner of Health for Philadelphia.

Dr. Tsou asked the audience, "How much do we spend on national health care and what is our national health program?" Our lack of knowledge was obvious by the guesses that were forthcoming. According to Doctor Tsou, \$2.5 trillion dollars is spent annually on health care and there is no "national health program."

Citing recent trends in Asia, Dr. Tsou compared health care costs in Taiwan with current costs in the US. "Taiwan spends 6% of their budget on health care while we in the USA spend 16%. Taiwan has universal health care, based on our own Medicare Plan, so all of their citizens have coverage. Although we spend 50% more than any country, we still have about 50 million uninsured and underinsured citizens. Amazingly, the World Health Organization places our country just above Slovakia in the health standings of our people. And we are the wealthiest country in the world!

Doctor Tsou then turned to the economic conditions in our country. Did we realize that more American cars are now being manufactured in Ontario, Canada, than in the state of Michigan? The continually rising cost of health insurance has impacted decisions to move work outside the U.S. Dr. Tsou also stated that 45% of bankruptcies are attributable to the high cost of health care for employees. Dr. Tsou concluded his speech by pointing out the necessity for citizen action on behalf of business, the jobless, the sick and the uninsured.

Also on the program was Chuck Pennacchio, PhD, and the Director of Healthcare for All Pennsylvania, a non-profit, non-partisan, all volunteer organization. Calling for a "civilized" healthcare system, Dr. Pennacchio presented information on HB-1660, "The Family and Business Health Security Act," now under consideration in the legislature in Harrisburg. This bill proposes single-payer health care that is publicly funded, privately delivered and free market based for all Pennsylvania citizens. The pooling of all people within the state would lower the premium for the majority and give the State bargaining power to include drug benefits. The bill allows for freedom to choose any physician/hospital, with no co-pays, no deductibles, and no caps. Dr. Pennacchio said, "HR-1600 includes dental, vision, mental health, long-term care, and primary care

coverage for all citizens. It also provides for education on proper nutrition to maintain a healthy body."

He further explained that the State, which currently spends \$100 billion dollars on current programs, would save fifty billion dollars in part due to decreased administrative costs and also due to more equitable distribution of costs.

In referring to what has been happening in Washington on health care negotiations he said, "Congressman Kucinich has been able to get an amendment added to the House bill, HR-3200." The Labor and Education Committee passed it with the vote of twenty-five (14 Republicans and 11 Democrats). The amendment would allow states to move forward on single payer healthcare. Pennsylvania is the first and only state that had Republicans sign on to our one-payer bill, HR-1660, and we have a Governor who, three times, has publicly promised to sign the bill "if it comes to his desk."

In closing, Dr. Pennacchio stated that he was optimistic about passage of the bill and once it is passed by the legislature and signed by Governor Rendell, it will immediately become law. He urged the audience to tell their neighbors about the bill and to contact their representatives to voice support. More information is available on-line at www.healthcare4allpa.org.

- Ruth Livesay

(Editor's Note: You can watch the August 13 program, "A Civilized Forum on Civilized Health Care For All," at www.youtube.com/rhubarbdoom.)

Newsletter of LEPOCO

Lehigh-Pocono Committee of Concern

313 West Fourth Street

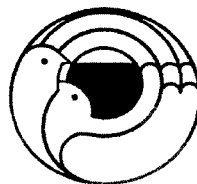
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The *LEPOCO Newsletter* is published 8 times a year by the Lehigh-Pocono Committee of Concern, a nonviolent, non-profit organization dedicated to peace in all forms.

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Regular Member	\$35
Limited Income Member	\$ 5
Household Membership	\$45
Supporting Member	\$75

Articles/news should be submitted to the address above for consideration for the next issue of the newsletter.

Newsletter Staff: robert Daniels II, Michelle Mecham, Bob Riggs, Tom Stinnett, Nancy Tate, Jeff Vitelli.

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

LEPOCO Steering Committee: Addison Bross, Peter Christine, robert Daniels II (ex-officio), Julius Iwantsch (co-treasurer), Ruth Karpinski, Mimi Lang, Michelle Mecham, Janet Ney, Susie Ravitz, Tom Stinnett (co-treasurer), Nancy Tate (ex-officio).

Popcorn/Potluck & Politics

Fridays, October 2nd & 9th, 7 pm: Rethink Afghanistan

Popcorn and Politics: A *First Friday Film* projected on the big screen at the LEPOCO Peace Center.

Documentary focusing on the key issues surrounding the U.S. war in Afghanistan, including the effects on women in the region, threats to neighboring Pakistan, and the financial and human costs of the conflict. Directed by Robert Greenwald. 70 minutes. 2009.

NOTE: Due to the importance and timeliness of the subject of this film, the same program will be offered twice on two consecutive Fridays.

Please bring a snack or beverage to share.

**Sunday, October 25th, 6 pm: Greta Browne & Maria Weick
"Personal & Political Reflections on Walking Experiences"**

Potluck & Politics at the LEPOCO Peace Center.

Local activists Greta Browne and Maria Weick both spent several months this year walking from the south to the north of this country - miles and miles of walking.

Greta walked from New Orleans to the Canadian border along Route 11, in A Climate Change Pilgrimage For the Grandchildren. She will share the wisdom of her experience -- often a solo meditation for the earth, but also a survey of the U.S. mindset on global warming from her diverse contacts and the 500-1000 cars that saw her and her "Walking for the Climate" t-shirt each day. (Besides media coverage en route there was a story the day her walk ended, August 29th. The *New York Times* ran a large story and photograph about her effort.)

Maria Weick walked the length of the Appalachian Trail with her oldest daughter, Beth. Besides the serious accomplishment of such a feat, she has quite interesting observations to share that put her walking experience in the context of her ongoing efforts as a peace and justice activist.

This will be a really special discussion.

Please bring some food to share for the potluck dinner at 6 pm. The presentation and discussion should begin around 6:30 pm.

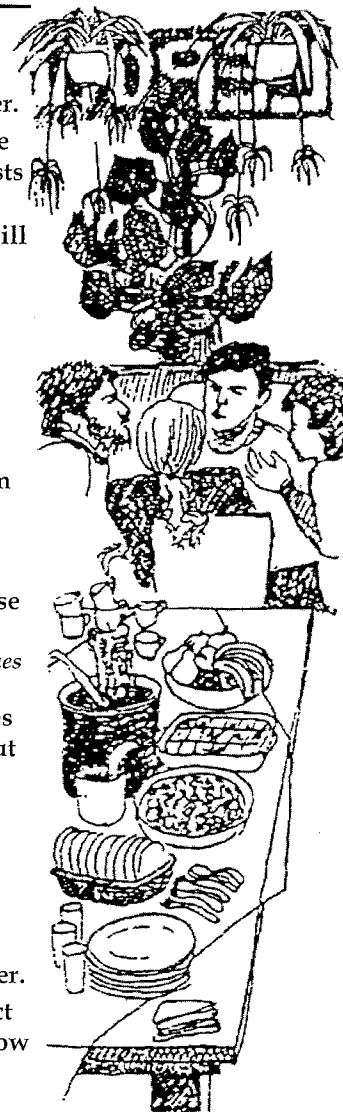
Friday, November 6th, 7 pm: Waltz with Bashir

Popcorn and Politics: A *First Friday Film* projected on the big screen at the LEPOCO Peace Center.

An Israeli film director interviews fellow veterans of the 1982 invasion of Lebanon to reconstruct his own recollections of the conflict. This is an innovative animated documentary that looks at how memories of the horrors of war are often sublimated.

In Hebrew with English subtitles. Directed by Ari Folman. 90 minutes. 2008.

Please bring a snack or beverage to share.



Teach-In on Troy Davis

On Thursday, October 15th, Amnesty International Group 347, the L. V. Committee Against State Killing, and the NAACP Easton Branch will present a Teach-In on Troy Davis, a man currently on death row in Georgia whose case has created international outrage. Despite seven of the nine witnesses in his case recanting or changing their story and no physical evidence linking Troy Davis to the crime, the State of Georgia is continuing efforts to put him to death. The teach-in will present the facts of the case, provide concrete actions that can be taken, and place the case in the broader context of problems with the death penalty throughout the United States. The teach-in will be at Trinity Episcopal Church, 234 Spring Garden St., Easton, from 7 to 9 pm.

A Program About the Refugee Crisis--

"Forced From Home: Global Refugees Land in the Lehigh Valley," is a program that will be held Thursday, September 24, at 7 pm, in Rm. 101, of the Rauch

Business Center, Lehigh University, Bethlehem. Organized by The Global Union and Lawyers Without Borders at Lehigh, along with the L. V. Peace Coalition and Catholic Charities, the program will feature Addison Bross speaking on the refugee crises resulting from the Iraq and Afghanistan wars, presentations about local refugee support efforts, and an informal discussion with local refugees from countries like Somalia, Iraq, Sudan, and Burma. The program is free and open to the public. For more information contact Bill Hunter at the Global Union, 610-758-4505.

David Rovics in Concert

Wednesday, September 23, 6:30 pm

Wingate Hotel, 4325 Hamilton Blvd., Allentown

\$16 admission (1/2 price for the unemployed)

Organized by Veterans For Peace, Lehigh Valley Chapter

www.davidrovics.com

"...the peace poet and troubadour for our time" - Cindy Sheehan

Calling All Earthlings! Calling All Earthlings!

Those of us concerned about the environment (and who isn't?) can often feel as though our effort is a solitary one. We use less, recycle the stuff we use, and, as discussed last month, do things like switch away from bottled water. But, we often ask, where are "our people"? How can we raise awareness of this important issue?

Well, my fellow Earthlings, an exciting day is fast approaching. A day of action, all around the world, that promises to bring much needed attention to this most pressing of issues. The International Day of Climate Action will be held on October 24, 2009. The website www.350.org gives all the details of this important date. The number 350 refers to the highest possible parts per million (ppm) of carbon dioxide in the air that can sustain life as we know it (as of August 2009 we are already at 390 ppm and rising fast). This number is also the rallying cry of the movement. Events such as festivals and rallies are planned across the globe, revolving around the number 350, all with the goal of gaining the attention of international leaders who will be meeting in Copenhagen in December 2009.

Each community is asked to organize an event on this important day. Locally on that Saturday (10/24) there will be a Climate Walk from Allentown to Bethlehem (leaving 5th & Hamilton Sts. at 9 am, and ending around Noon at the Wildflower Café). Contact Greta Brown at 610-865-9050 or at www.climatewalk.homestead.com for more information. After lunch at the Wildflower, you can join the Alliance for Sustainable Communities at a World Café discussion (from 1-4 pm, at the Fowler Center, Northampton Community College, south Bethlehem). See their website, www.sustainlv.org, for more information.

- Michelle Mecham

NNOMY Conference

For those of you who are unfamiliar with NNOMY it is the National Network Opposing the Militarization of Youth. This July 17-19, they organized the National Counter Recruitment & Demilitarization Conference (NCRD) held at Chicago's Roosevelt University. There was a great turnout with around 200 people, about half of them were youth. Members of the Ya-Ya Network (New York City), CodePink, Project YANO (Youth & Non-Military Opportunities of San Diego), Peace Action, and AFSC (American Friends Service Committee), to name a few, were all in attendance. The main focus of the conference was the military presence in our schools and communities and how we can change it.

A panel discussion was held Friday night with Arlene Inouye of CAMS (Coalition for Alternatives to Militarism In Our Schools, Pasadena), Pauline Lipman (University of Illinois professor), Rick Jahnkow of Project YANO, Tyler Zabel (Iraq Veterans Against The War member who received conscientious objector status), Denise Ferrusquia (recent high school graduate whose father is in Afghanistan) and Nancy Cruz (UCLA student and Project YANO member). Saturday was full of workshops -- about 30 different ones, broken into four sessions so that deciding which ones to attend was tough. I went with "Race, Class & Culture & Counter Recruitment," "College Recruitment," "Camouflaged: Investigation of How the U.S. Military Affects You and Your Community," and "Women & the Military." All four were great and really informative, but "Women & the Military," stuck with me the most. It was shocking and extremely emotional to hear firsthand accounts of the sexual violence experienced by female soldiers. Documents from some of the workshops are available at www.nnomy.org.

Sunday focused on what the next steps are. We discussed new resources and projects that are needed along with current ones that need updating. The conference was an awesome experience and a great success.

- Kelly Quain

Veterans For Peace



On its July 25th radio program on WDIY, Veterans For Peace (VFP) offered a different format and an expanded one-hour presentation. During the first half Louise Legun, chapter coordinator, conducted a telephone interview with Ridgley Brown, a member of Military Families Speak Out, whose son spent a tour of duty in Iraq and is currently deployed to Afghanistan. While his son is committed to participation in the United States' military policies overseas, Mr. Brown, who considers himself "pro-defense," does not view our presence in these countries as necessary to the defense of the U.S. He spoke of the difficulties in a father/son relationship involving a difference of belief in an issue of such magnitude. The ensuing half-hour of the program consisted of local VFP members Bernie Berg and this writer, joining Ms. Legun in the studio for a panel discussion and responding to incoming telephone calls.

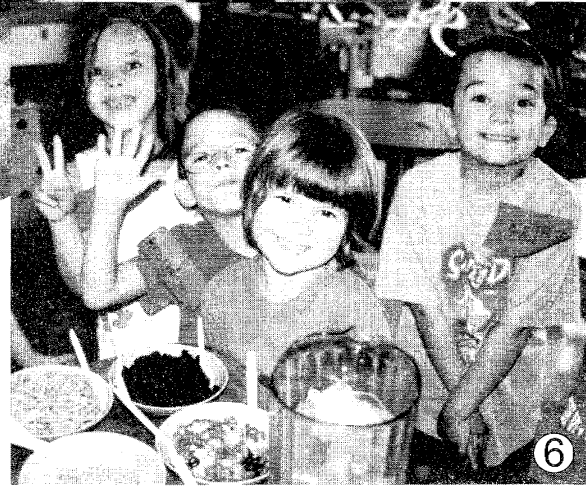
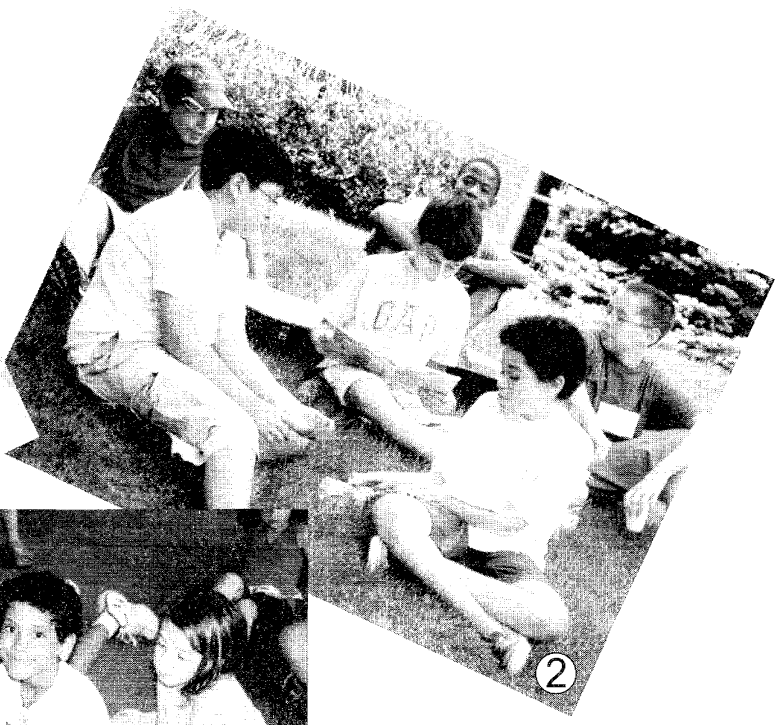
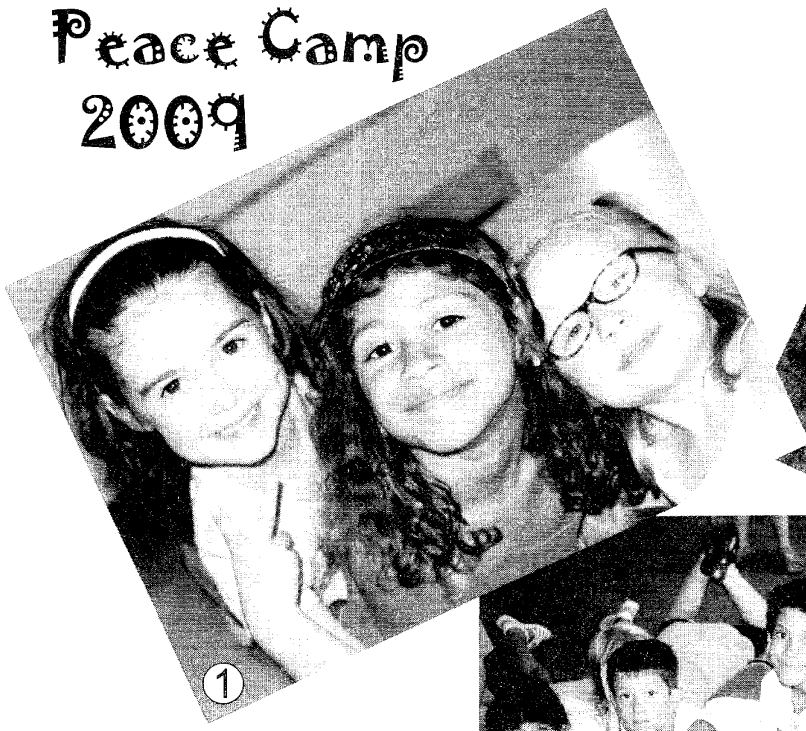
There was a VFP presence at Musikfest as members passed out information during the festival in the "free speech zone." The leaflets dealt with the costs of the U.S. international military interventions to the peoples of Iraq, Afghanistan, and the U.S. On Saturday, August 1, over 1000 pamphlets were handed out.

The Annual Veterans For Peace National Convention was held at the University of Maryland campus August 8-9. Attending from the Lehigh Valley Chapter were Louise Legun, Judy Woodruff, Phil Reiss, Ellen Bell, Victor Madeson, Vince Stravino, and Patrick Roxberry. Contacts with other chapters were established and workshops such as local chapter building were attended.

A planned upcoming event for Chapter 152 will be staffing an information booth at the Coopersburg Days Festival on September 19, from 10 am to 5 pm.

- Paul Fichter

Peace Camp 2009



All photographs by Susie Ravitz.

These pictures show some of the happy and involved faces of Peace Campers 2009, at the July 27-31 camp. 1) Girls in the Purple Group flash the peace sign. 2) Boys in the Rose Group discuss a book with teen helper, Noah Root. 3) Children in the Yellow Group look up from their study of group co-leader, Dan Miller's, bees. 4) Children in the Green Group are involved in an outside game. 5) Boys in the Orange Group pose for the camp photographer. 6) Children in the Red Group get ready for one of the interesting and tasty snacks planned by Janice Kay. Please see the next page for a written report on Peace Camp by volunteer Jessica Jacob.

The Inspiration of Peace Camp

The hall's echo with the sound of shoes as they hit the cold floor. Already voices can be heard coming from inside the gym, but they are nothing compared to what is to come. Situating yourself at your table, you wait for the young faces to come and join you.

Soon the sound of running feet and laughter can be heard. Voices like bells spring up all around you filling the air with joy. Children from all walks of life gather in this gym. They gather to bring peace into this world. Some faces are bright and outgoing, while others are hesitant, but they are all here coming together and bonding for the week.

Voices fill the air as we all sing together. The sound builds and fills your soul with joy. These children, some more fortunate than others, have a way of making the most down trodden person happy. They share unconditionally with each other, even though they do not realize it. They bring us all hope and joy.

That's what being a volunteer at peace camp is all about. The children inspire life, love, hope, and peace, in all of us and us, the same in them. To me peace camp is all about helping one another, a lesson we all need to be reminded of. And as their smiling faces each bound into the hall each day, many are different faces than the ones you saw they day before. Being a volunteer here gives you feelings that words cannot describe. It can only be seen in the smile of a child, heard in their warm laughter, and felt by their kind touch. It is that feeling that keeps us all coming back, ready once again to help, feel, and grow.

- Jessica Jacob

Check out the LEPOCO website

at www.lepoco.org for a

Calendar of Events, Newsletter Archive, Videos, & More.

Sign up for LEPOCO e-mail updates

by calling 610-691-8730 or by writing to lepoco@fast.net.

LEPOCO Constitution Business

The Constitution of LEPOCO requires that any proposed amendments be published in this Newsletter and, subsequently, be approved at two successive Action Meetings. The amendment must be proposed by at least seven members.

At the August 10th Action meeting, an amendment was proposed for publication by the seven members present.

Article IV - Officers - is to be amended.

Paragraph 2a would change the single position of Treasurer to two Co-treasurers.

Paragraph 2b would be changed from calling for six Steering Committee Members-at-Large to "no fewer than six, no more than 10."

Paragraph 3 would be changed to allow for half of the members of the Steering Committee to be elected in

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even-numbered years.

The amendments will be discussed at the October 12th and November 9th meetings. Anyone having concerns about the changes is urged to attend one of these meetings.

- Janet Ney for LEPOCO Steering Committee

A Theater Party in the Making —

Michael Moore's new film, "Capitalism: A Love Story," is making the rounds at festivals and is being described as "brilliant" in a *Guardian/UK* headline. It should be in area theaters in early October. Though we don't have the dates or the location yet, we are primed to set a LEPOCO Theater Party when those particulars become available. So let us know (by e-mail, phone or note) if you want to be included.

Meanwhile, consider these enticing words by Mark Weisbrot of the center for Economic and Policy Research. "But Moore has bigger targets in his sights: he is questioning whether the whole incentive structure, moral values and political economy of American capitalism is fit for human beings."

Evening for Peace & Nonviolence

On Friday, October 2, at 6 pm, People Building Bridges of Allentown and the Mexican Cultural Association of the Lehigh Valley are planning a celebration on the occasion of the United Nations International Day of Non-Violence (also Gandhi's birthday). Also on this day the World March for Peace and Nonviolence will begin in New Zealand, passing through 100 countries, 300 cities and every continent, and ending on January 2, 2010, in Punta de Vacas, Argentina (see www.marcha-mundial.org or www.worldmarchusa.net).

The local celebration will feature speeches, cultural acts, conversation and refreshments, at the Weed & Seed Center, 10 Pump Place, Allentown (off Front St., between Gordon & Liberty). All those wanting a world of peace and nonviolence are invited to attend. Call Marcos Urbina at 484-358-8514 for more information.

Weekly / Monthly Peace Vigils

Our wars continue.

Can you join the much-needed witnessing for peace?

Bethlehem:

4:30-5:30 pm, Second 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 C. Fowler 746-5013

Easton:

10-11 am, Saturdays
Centre Square
Contact: Reggie Regrut 908-859-5632

"Living With War" Exhibit at Muhlenberg Starting October 7

"Judith Ross: Living With War," an exhibit of black and white images by the local and internationally honored artist, will be at Muhlenberg College's Martin Art Gallery in the Center for the Arts, Allentown, October 7 through November 7. The exhibit toured Europe in 2008-2009, and includes photographs made over the past twenty years, examining people who have been involved with war and its ramifications, from visitors to the Vietnam Memorial in Washington, to soldiers departing for Iraq during the first Gulf War, to protestors of the current Iraq War. Many local peace activists are among those photographed in the "Protest the War" series, some having been photographed when the "Eyes Wide Open" exhibit was on the lawn at Muhlenberg College in the fall of 2006.

There will be an opening reception on Wednesday, October 7 (the anniversary of the start of the war in Afghanistan), from 4:30 - 6:30 pm, and Judith Ross will give an Artist Talk on Wednesday, October 14, at 4:30 pm. The public is invited to both free events.

Protesting the War in Afghanistan at Eight Years

News accounts tell us the number of U.S. troops fighting in Afghanistan is rising, while the Generals are asking that even more troops be sent to that country. Not surprisingly, the number of U.S. troop deaths is also rising, making August 2009 the deadliest month, so far in this war. And as drones and other U.S. and NATO attacks kill and maim Afghan civilians, tolerance for our occupation declines. U.S. public support for this war has also declined significantly in the polls. October 7, marks eight years of war in Afghanistan.

There are many actions planned by national, regional and local groups focusing on this war during October. Elsewhere in this newsletter we announced a talk on "The Pak-Afghan Dilemma," for October 19 (see page 1) and the two screenings of *Rethink Afghanistan* on October 2 and 9 (see page 3).

The War Resisters League, the National Campaign for Nonviolent Resistance and others invite us to join them on Monday, October 5, for Direct Action at the White House Against Continued War & Torture. There will be local participants, so please call LEPOCO (610-691-8730) if you would like to join this important witness. Participants will need to be in Washington, DC, on October 4, for a preparatory meeting.

On Saturday, October 17, a March & Rally for Peace will begin outside Philadelphia's City Hall at 11 am. The march will end with a rally at Independence Mall. Again, there will be carpools from the Lehigh Valley. Please call LEPOCO if you can join this protest.

Please see the Peace Vigil schedule on page 6, make your own sign for ending the war in Afghanistan, and join one of these important vigils.

Finally, look up the articles by Moravian College professor Gary Olson, that appeared in *The Express-Times* on September 13 ("U.S. Involvement in Afghanistan All About Oil,") and at www.commondreams.org on September 14 ("Afghanistan: 'Necessary' War for Empire").

Joe Volk of the Friends Committee on National Legislation is quoted in the September 14 issue of *The Nation*, "Of course, the answer is not to just stop the war fighting and do nothing. The answer is to stop the war fighting, deny the terrorists their cosmic battle and shift into a law enforcement mode through international cooperation, development, and diplomacy."

- Nancy Tate

G-20 Summit & Peoples' Gatherings in Pittsburgh

The leaders of the world's dominant economies will meet in Pittsburgh September 24-25. There will be an entire week of activities for peace and justice surrounding these two days of meetings starting with a march and an interfaith witness on Sunday, September 20. On Wednesday, September 23, from 9 am to 3 pm, there will be discussion about the G-20 and the impact of decisions made on human rights; a panel on G-20 policies including Joseph Stiglitz, the Nobel Laureate economist; and a Rally for Clean Energy Jobs with musicians and speakers. On Thursday, September 24 there will be a People's Tribunal where economic development priorities of the G-20 will be put on trial with testimony from experts and people who have experienced the devastation caused by G-20 policies. On Friday, September 25, there will be a People's March for Money for Human Needs, Not for Wars and Occupations. These are just some of the programs. See www.g20media.org for more information. Contact LEPOCO if you would like to car pool.



Glen Beck and the State Theater

Glen Beck is scheduled to appear at The State Theatre in Easton, on January 9, 2010. Many, including the Easton branch of the NAACP, are questioning the wisdom of having this man who is becoming evermore inflammatory in his often hate-filled rhetoric. The most quoted example is his statement in late July that President Barack Obama is a "racist" with a "deep-seated hatred for white people." Reggie Regrut of Phillipsburg has initiated a Glen Beck Unwelcoming Committee. He is urging people to contact the State Theatre by letter or e-mail with your concern that, as Reggie writes, "...the State Theatre should not profit financially from such irresponsible, unpatriotic, incendiary, unfounded and unsubstantiated accusations." You can contact Reggie at 908-859-5632 or at mregrut@yahoo.com.

Honduras Coup: Who's Hypocritical?

As the coup regime in Honduras continues to cling to power, attacks on Hondurans' human rights continue to mount. Meanwhile, the U.S. response remains sluggish and two-faced. In late July, the State Department finally revoked the diplomatic visas of four coup-plotters. But just one week later, the same State Department sent a contradictory letter to Senator Lugar. After "energetically condemning" the coup against Honduran President Zelaya, **the letter incredibly named Zelaya, not the coup-plotters, as responsible for his own ouster.** The U.S. response to the coup should not be a matter of supporting or rejecting the actions of Zelaya; it's a matter of supporting or rejecting the flagrant usurpation of Hondurans' right to exercise their democratic will. The illegitimate coup merits clear, consistent condemnation from the U.S., not the schizophrenic response seen thus far...

Last month, while attending a summit in Mexico, **President Obama called groups like Witness For Peace "hypocritical" for levying such critiques.** He stated, "The same critics who say that the United States has not intervened enough in Honduras are the same people who say that we're always intervening and the Yankees need to get out of Latin America."

It appears our message has been distorted. Let it be clear: calling for the U.S. to cease support for a coup regime is not calling for the U.S. to "intervene." Indeed, quite the opposite. Maintaining U.S. support for an unelected coup regime would constitute true intervention in Hondurans' sovereign affairs. We are calling on the U.S. to not so intervene.

While the U.S. delays and equivocates, **Hondurans are suffering a level of repression not seen since the death squads of the 1980s.** One week after the coup, the military fired 160 rounds of live ammo into a nonviolent crowd, killing a teenager. Since then, the coup regime has overseen nine politically-motivated murders, countless military attacks on peaceful protesters, the arbitrary arrest of over 1300 people, and the systematic military occupation and shutdown of most independent media outlets.

Yet, such repression has failed to silence Honduran social movements. Indeed, those movements are actually gaining strength, according to the on-the-ground sources. Ceaseless road blockades have prevented business as usual since the day the coup usurped power. Hondurans' social movements are calling on us to act in solidarity with their efforts to restore democracy and dignity to their country.

- From the Fall 2009 Newsletter of Witness for Peace Mid-Atlantic

Fair & Festivals

As we are working hard to get this newsletter out as we are also preparing for two festivals where LEPOCO will have a presence this year. September 18-20 we will be at the Pennsylvania Renewable Energy & 8 LEPOCO Newsletter / September-October 2009

Sustainable Living Festival in Kempton. This is the fifth year of this impressively ambitious festival with workshops, booths, speakers and music.

On Saturday, September 19, we will have booth at the new Celebration of Gifts on Market St, (between Center and New Sts.) and the LEPOCO Peace Singers will perform at 11 am. If you get this in time and attend either of these festivals please stop by to help at the LEPOCO booth or just to say, "Hello."

The next weekend, we will be at the 10th Peace Fair at Buckingham Friends Meeting near Lahaska, 10:30 am to 4 pm. Jim Fine will speak at this year's fair at 1 pm on "Israelis and Palestinians for Peace vs. Israelis and Palestinians Against Peace: How Can the U.S. Tip the Balance?" If you would like to help staff this booth please call LEPOCO at 610-691-8730.

Meeting with Rep. Dent

On Tuesday, August 11, five people representing the Americas Solidarity Group met with Rep. Charles Dent at his Bethlehem office. We had five items to discuss with him, and a 1/2-hour appointment. Attending were Bob Riggs, Chris Spohn, Nancy Tate, Yisol Yanez, and me.

Colombia. Plan Colombia is being shelved, so Congress hasn't the power over human rights funding it once had. National focus now is on the five military bases the U.S. is developing in Colombia. We asked Rep. Dent to keep in mind the serious threat to friendly relations these bases will be as South America develops a unity of independence from the U.S.

SOA/WHINSEC. We continued our ongoing reminder to the Congressman that the School of the Americas has produced many monsters once they returned to their own countries, and that the U.S. should not be spending tax dollars on such a program.

Honduras. Our longest discussion was about Honduras. While Rep. Dent agreed that the coup was illegal and inappropriate, he seemed to find equal importance in Pres. Zelaya's shortcomings. However, reading the Delahunt-McGovern resolution condemning the coup, he approved of the item stating Costa Rican Pres. Arias's continuing mediation. This gave us tentative optimism.

Immigration. The LEPOCO Statement on Immigration was given to the Congressman, along with one on the urgency of the situation Pennsylvania in light of the murder of a Latino in Shenandoah.

Health care reform. Not Latin American affairs, but important enough to bring up with our Congressman, we brought his attention to Wendell Potter, a former executive of a huge insurance company, who recently has been speaking out about the realities of how insurance companies act against the interests of everyday people.

Although we had a 1/2-hour appointment, we had the benefit of speaking with Rep. Dent for nearly 45 minutes.

- Janet Goloub

The Struggle Shared

*Silence, they say, is the voice of complicity.
But silence is impossible. Silence screams.
Silence is a message, just as doing nothing is an act.
Let who you are ring out and resonate in every word and deed...*
- Leonard Peltier, from *In the Spirit of Crazy Horse*.

LEONARD PELTIER: 33 YEARS, 215 DAYS, AND COUNTING - On

August 21st, Leonard Peltier was denied parole by the U.S. Parole Board. His hearing on July 28th was attended by one of his attorneys who presented never before seen documentation, the chairwoman of the Turtle Mountain Band of Chippewa, who told the parole board that Leonard could have a job, and a place to live on the Band's reservation. Peter Matthiessen, author of *In the Spirit of Crazy Horse*, the definitive biography of Peltier, also spoke eloquently in favor of his release. The FBI presented the same-old-same old. Leonard himself spoke with the parole board for an hour and a half, answering questions about his case, his beliefs, and his life in prison over 33 plus years. Outside, hundreds of his supporters gathered in the sweltering heat to present their appeals for his release on parole.

Leonard Peltier was an American Indian Movement leader who responded in 1975 to a call to come to the defense of the traditional Lakota people of the Pine Ridge reservation who were under assault at the time by U.S. Government-sponsored goons. When the FBI raided a ranch there was a shoot-out in which an Indian and two agents were killed. Peltier was eventually arrested, extradited from Canada, tried and convicted for the deaths of the agents. Despite many irregularities in the trial, including 10,500 pages of documentation that the FBI has concealed from admission to court records in numerous appeals for retrial, he remains a political prisoner.

Peltier was nominated in April of this year for the Nobel Peace Prize, for the sixth year in a row, for his persistent work on behalf of traditional native peoples. Throughout his incarceration he has produced exquisite paintings, many of them donated to raise funds for shelters, schools and reservation projects. His book of pri-

son writings, *My Life Is My Sundance*, is hailed as "a flaming arrow aimed at the circled wagons of American Injustice," by his editor, and South Africa's Archbishop Desmond Tutu has said the book is "an eloquent *cri de coer* of Native Americans for redress, and to be regarded as human beings with inalienable rights to be guaranteed by the U.S. Constitution."

Leonard Peltier will not be eligible for parole again until July of 2024 when he will be 79 years old. This travesty of justice should not be allowed to go on that long. Among the final misdeeds of both the Clinton and Bush presidencies was their denial of executive clemency for Leonard Peltier, at the behest of the FBI. You can write a letter to President Obama urging him to reverse this terrible legacy.

MIKE BOEHM REVISITS THE VALLEY - Faithful readers will remember Mike Boehm from his visit

in the Spring of 2007 (see April 2007 "The Struggle Shared") when he met with a few LEPOCO members and others at the home of Anna Maria Caldara and Brian Carroll in Bangor. Mike is a veteran of the Vietnam War who made his first post-war trip to Vietnam in 1992 with a delegation of Vietnam War veterans seeking reconciliation. As part of his personal journey to heal from the wounds of war and the PTSD symptoms he suffered, Mike played his violin at a memorial in My Lai and his music became the thematic structure of a prize-winning documentary film, "The Sound of the Violin at My Lai," produced for the 30th anniversary of the massacre.

Since 1992, Mike has travelled to Vietnam 23 times, and through his work with the Madison Quakers, Inc., has raised over \$800,000 for numerous people-to-people projects in Vietnam: medical clinics, schools, loans for women to start businesses, compass-

sion houses for victims of agent orange, and the My Lai Peace Park.

Mike will be in the Lehigh Valley on November 10th and 11th. He will speak and show slides about his work at Lafayette College, Hope UCC in Allentown, and St. Peter's Evangelical Lutheran Church in Pen Argyl. Mike is a multi-talented and engaging speaker, and the occasion of his presence among us promises to be an unforgettable encounter with a remarkable human being. Watch this newsletter for more detailed information.

GERARD JEAN-JUSTE: PRESENTE - Revolutionary Haitian Priest Gerard Jean-Juste died in Miami on May 27 of complications from chronic respiratory problems and a recent stroke.

Whether in prison, in his parish church in Port-au-Prince, or lying down in his clerical robes on the streets of Miami to obstruct the deportation of Haitian refugees, Pere Jean-Juste preached Liberation Theology, the revolutionary proposition that every single person is entitled to a life of human dignity. In an article published on www.commondreams.org on May 31st, Pere Jean-Juste's good friend and frequent attorney, Bill Quigley wrote: "Jean-Juste was literally a holy terror to the unelected powers of Haiti, and the elected, but unaccountable powers in the U.S. When (he) began to speak, to preach, really about justice for the poor and the wrongfully imprisoned, restless crowds drew silent. Listening to him preach was like feeling the air change before a thunderstorm sweeps in. He slowly raised his arms. He spread his powerful hands to punctuate his intensifying words. Minutes passed as the Bible, the Declaration of Human Rights, and today's news were interspersed. Justice for the poor. Freedom for those in prison. Comfort for those who mourn. The thunder was rolling now. Crowds were cheering now. Human Rights for everyone. Justice for Haiti. Justice for Haiti. Justice for Haiti."

Yes, another booming voice for people's liberation is gone from the earth, but, like Romero of El Salvador, his thunder will resonate in the spirit of the Haitian people until they are free.

- Jeff Vitelli

Bits & Pieces

☪ On **Hiroshima Day**, August 6, thirteen LEPOO activists leafleted and vigiled in the free speech zone at Musikfest, in Bethlehem. The almost 2000 leaflets distributed, called on us to Remember Hiroshima! Raise Sunflowers of Disarmament! and Reject Nuclear Weapons!

☪ **Environmental advocates** are opposing an evolving deal to end Pennsylvania's budget stalemate because of potential funding cuts for public-land protection and leasing of more state forest land for gas drilling. Conservation groups say the forests will suffer, as will recreational opportunities, if it passes, and gas-drilling companies that profit from the potentially lucrative Marcellus Shale gas formation will escape unscathed. More than 20 conservation groups, including the Sierra Club, wrote in a letter to legislators, that hikers would see more drilling sites and roads carving up the forests and damaging wildlife habitat, while fewer forest rangers and maintenance crews would be available to protect facilities. They argue that instead of leasing land for drilling while natural gas prices are low, the Legislature should impose a tax on gas extraction to help prop up the budget and shoulder the cost of conservation and environmental protection.

Source: *The Intelligencer*, Doylestown, 9/15/09

☪ **Lisa Sullivan**, SOA Watch Latin America Coordinator, will speak on "Closing the School of the Americas: In

Congress and in Country After Country," on Tues., **Sept. 22**, at 7 pm, in the Main Lounge, McKay Campus Center, Princeton Theological Seminary. Lisa Sullivan has worked for 32 years in Latin America, 23 of them in Venezuela. She has been key in getting the Latin American presidents to withdraw their troops from the SOA. For more information about her talk contact Bill Strong at 609-430-2245.

☪ Mike Lawton, Jeff Vitelli, Mimi Lang, Tom Stinnett and Nancy Tate joined the Sept. 6 **Steelworkers Union Labor Day Parade** in Bethlehem. It was a festive acknowledgement of the importance of unions in the lives of workers in the U.S. The day before *The Morning Call* carried two excellent articles about workers and those who have struggled and are struggling to make their lives better: "Mother Jones - More Than a Magazine," by Rt. Rev. Paul V. Marshall of the Episcopal Diocese, and "Labor Day Comes at Critical Point for Working Families," by William M. George, president of Pennsylvania AFL-CIO.

☪ Susie Ravitz and Becky Irwin are interested in starting a **progressive book discussion group** to read and discuss interesting novels and other books with LEPOCO friends. Would you like to join such a group? If so, please contact Susie at 610-253-2522.

☪ According to the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI), **world military expenditure** increased by 45 percent, in real terms, and has been rising every year during the last 10-year period. In 2008, it reached 1.46 trillion dollars, representing 2.4 percent of world gross domestic product (GDP). Its level is now higher than during the latest Cold War peak in the 1980s.

☪ The 10 biggest military spenders last year were: the United States (607 billion dollars), China (84.9 billion), France (65.7 billion), Britain (65.3 billion), Russia (58.6 billion), Germany (46.8 billion), Japan (46.3 billion), Italy (40.6 billion), Saudi Arabia (38.2 billion) and India (30.0 billion). U.S. spending accounts for 41.5 percent of world military spending in 2008.

☪ The economic downturn of the last year has affected many organizations in the nonprofit sector. The LEPOCO Peace Center is no exception. **Funds are running** particularly low at this time of year and I'm writing to make a special plea to our supporters and those of you who have let payment of your membership dues lag a little. As is evidenced by the resulting recession, fighting wars costs a lot of money. The fighting (nonviolently, of course) of the fighting of wars (what we humbly attempt to do here at LEPOCO) also costs a little bit of money as well. Please, if you can spare an extra something at this time, why not fill out the coupon below and drop a check in the mail today? I don't like to take on this hat-in-hand Chicken Little "The bombs are falling! The bombs are falling!" role, but I'm sad to say that without your financial contributions, this 44 year-old voice for peace in the region (LEPOCO, the organization. Not me, I'm 37.) could falter. Thanks for your consideration. - robert Daniels II

Support LEPOCO!

- Enclosed are my yearly LEPOCO dues of \$_____. (\$35 individual; \$45 hb; \$75 supporter; \$5 lim. 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 Peace Center, 313 W. 4TH St., Bethlehem, PA 18015.

Events at Kirkridge

Retreat & Study Center, near Bangor:

November 6-8: "Love Force - The Peacemaker's Way" with Richard Deatz.

November 13-15: "Making Activism Smarter & Thriving Personally" with George Lakey.

December 2-6: "Creating a Culture of Peace: Training of Trainers" with Janet Chisholm and T. Michael Rock.

For more information see www.kirkridge.org or call 610-588-1793.

Bits & Pieces

☪ Has all the violence and injustice in the world got you down? Feeling HOPEless about Obama's escalation in Afghanistan? Wishing LEPOCO would CHANGE its focus regarding certain issues? Well, don't just sit at home all grumbly and bitter. Join the Steering Committee of LEPOCO and have your voice heard! Help steer your favorite peace and justice organization with as little as one meeting a month. Responsibilities include occasional note-taking and facilitation, but don't let that scare you off. Serving on LEPOCO's Steering Committee is rewarding and worthwhile. Every two-year commitment comes with free cookies. Act now! Call 610-691-8730 for more details on how you can get more involved. Operators are standing by.

☪ Grateful appreciation to all the volunteers who've helped staff LEPOCO booths at the many **fairs and festivals** over the summer. Thanks to helpers like you, LEPOCO's message of justice and peace was spread at Pride in the Park in Allentown on Aug. 16, and at the Community Expo at Lehigh University on Aug. 24.

☪ On a rainy Friday in August a baker's dozen or so of Lehigh Valley Vets For Peace and supporters donned "STOP THE WAR" t-shirts and vigiled on the Fullerton Avenue overpass of Route 22. The captive rush hour audience of weary motorists was overwhelmingly positive to the demonstrators. Perhaps the most inspiring support came from the caravan of tan military HUMVEEs that passed. Three of five offered enthusiastic horn honks and upturned thumbs to the bridge peaceniks. The next demo is scheduled for Fri., Sept. 25th, between 4:30 and 6 pm. Call Louise Legun at 610-437-5314 for t-shirts additional details.

☪ The second major demonstration against the **Army Experience Center** at the Franklin Mills Mall in Philadelphia took place Sept. 12. Three carloads of activists from the Lehigh Valley area made the journey to join the

coalition of over 30 groups that organized the event. Attendees came from as far as Washington, DC, and New York City to boldly declare, "War is Not a Game!" New Jersey Peace Action's Rev. Robert Moore and former *New York Times* war correspondent and best selling author, Chris Hedges (*War is a Force that Gives Us Meaning*) spoke to the crowd assembled outside the mall, before marching inside for an hour-long demonstration. For all intents and purposes the Center was closed for the day. A recent AP article indicated that closure could become permanent. It appears that the Army will be scrapping plans to spread this program to other malls and that the future of the Center at Franklin Mills "is in doubt." Perhaps, the military is feeling the heat of outraged activists who've shone a light on this sanitized war arcade that teaches teenagers to kill. Visit www.youtube.com/rhubarbdoom for video of Chris Hedges speech, as well as other demonstration footage. The campaign to Close the Army Experience Center shall continue. See www.shutdowntheaec.net for updates.

☪ In observance of the United Nations **International Peace Day** LEPOCO is showing the 2004 documentary film *Peace One Day* about the efforts of one man to persuade the global community to support a ceasefire, a day of nonviolence, worldwide.

The film will be shown at 7 pm, on Mon., Sept. 21, at the LEPOCO Peace Center.

☪ On Sat., Sept. 26, 8:30 am to 3 pm, there will be a conference on **Homelessness: Voices of Hope** at St. John's UCC, 36 S. Sixth St., Allentown. Sponsored by the Lehigh County Conference of Churches Justice & Advocacy Committee, the program will include workshops, a panel discussion and a keynote speaker, Paul Lucia of the Presbyterian Committee on the Self-Development of People. For more information call the LCCC office at 610-433-6421.

☪ The **Peace and Justice Committee** of two area Mennonite conferences will hold their Fall Gathering on "Seeking Peace: A Conversation to Encourage Congregational Justice & Peace Education and Action," on Sat., Oct. 10, 8:30 am to Noon, at the Franconia Mennonite Church, Telford. For more information call Robert Walden at 610-861-0653.

☪ Thank you to the parents and citizens of Bethlehem who protested the cuts in the Bethlehem School District programs on Aug. 23rd. Rev. Bill Lentz charged the school board with "financial incompetency, cultural and racial insensitivity, and moral bankruptcy."

- *The Morning Call*, 8/24/09

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

Wed., Sept. 23, 6 pm: **Nuclear Abolition Sisters** meeting at the Olive Branch Restaurant, 355 Broadway, south Bethlehem.

Sundays, Sept. 27 & Oct. 18 & Nov. 1, 7 pm: **LEPOCO Peace Singers** rehearse at the homes of Bob Riggs, Barb Wurth and Marcie Lightwood, respectively.

Tues., Sept. 29, 9 am: **Lehigh Valley Committee Against State Killing** meeting at the LEPOCO Peace Center.

Thursdays, Oct. 8 & Nov. 12, 7 pm: **Lehigh Valley Chapter of Veterans for Peace** meeting at the LEPOCO Peace Center.

Mondays, Oct. 12 & Nov. 9, 7 pm: **LEPOCO Monthly Action Meeting** at the LEPOCO Peace Center. All members and friends are welcome at this monthly business meeting where the organization's activities are reviewed.

Tues., Oct. 13, 2 pm: **Fundraising Committee** meeting at the LEPOCO Peace Center.

Tues., Oct. 13, 7 pm: **Ad Hoc Committee on the Economic Crisis** meeting at Mimi Lang's home, Bethlehem. Call 610-691-8730 for directions.

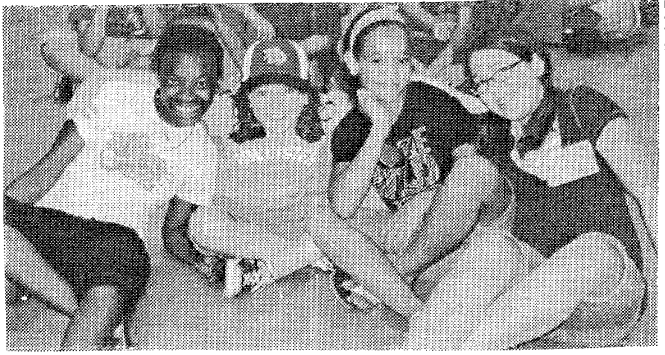
Please join in the meetings and work of these groups as you are able. If you want more information about any of these meetings; or if you want to know the next meeting of the Lehigh Valley Peace Coalition, the Newsletter Planning Committee, the Youth & Militarism Truth in Recruiting Committee, or the Association of Students Advocating Peace: please call the Peace Center at 610-691-8730. For a regularly updated calendar of events and a schedule of meetings please see www.lepoco.org.

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**"The Pak-
 Afghan
 Dilemma"**

Dr. M. Ashraf Adeel
 Monday, October 19
 7 pm
 1st Presbyterian Church
 Allentown
 (See page 1 for more info.)



Campers and teen helpers enjoy the gathering that closes the morning at Peace Camp. See more photos and a short story on pages 5 & 6 inside.

LEPOCO Yard Sale
Saturday, October 3
 Forte Building, South Bethlehem
 Donations & Volunteers needed!
 (See page 1 for more info.)

Health Care Discussions with
Wendell Potter (on video) & Mimi Lang
 Tues., Sept. 29, 7 pm, Bethlehem Area
 Public Library
 Wed., Sept. 30, 7 pm, Allentown
 Public Library
 Thurs., Oct. 1, 7 pm, Easton Area
 Public Library
 (See page 1 for more details.)