



Annual Dinner - February 28: Stephen Miles on Winning Without War

Win Without War (WWW) is a national organization founded in 2002 in response to the war in Iraq and the disastrous administrative policies of that time. Today, the organization continues "to go on the offensive, challenging those on the right who use fear to build support for their failed policies while holding our leaders accountable." They are currently working "to bring our troops home from Afghanistan, rein in wasteful spending at the Pentagon, prevent a disastrous war with Iran, and protect and defend the rule of law in national security and foreign policy." (For more information on WWW see www.winwithoutwar.org.)

LEPOCO is very pleased that Stephen Miles, from Win Without War, will be our featured speaker at the Annual Dinner on Saturday, February 28. Stephen was raised in Bethlehem, the son of Julia and Don Miles, so we will be welcoming him home. He recalls LEPOCO dinners attended and lemonade served at Christmas City Fairs. Stephen will address the major issues of the day, namely the war in Iraq and Syria and the effort to avoid a war with Iran through diplomacy. In addition he will discuss this in the context of building a 21st century peace movement.

LEPOCO dinners offer a full evening of good food prepared from scratch by our talented cooks, lively entertainment featuring the LEPOCO Peace Singers, and memorable conviviality among friends dedicated to peace and justice.

The dinner will be served at Wesley United Methodist Church, 2540 Center Street, Bethlehem, starting with a social hour at 5 pm; tickets may be ordered in advance from the LEPOCO office. No dinner tickets will be sold at the door; program-only tickets will be available at the door. Dinner reservations by Tuesday, February 24, will be most helpful with planning. See coupon on this page to make your reservation.

- Janet Ney

UFPJ: Rise Again for Peace & Justice

A few weeks ago you received a mailer from LEPOCO that included the call: "Time for the Global Super Power for Peace & Justice to Rise Again!" It opened, "On February 15, 2003, the world said no to war. Over 20 million people in...cities around the world took to the streets to oppose the impending invasion and occupation of Iraq..." They were called a new superpower: *world public opinion*.

This national call from United for Peace and Justice (UFPJ) asks organizations to hold events commemorating key dates in the Spring of 2015. (If you did not see the earlier mailing from LEPOCO you can find more information at www.unitedforpeace.org.)

In response to this call, LEPOCO is tentatively planning a panel discussion on the evening of Thursday, **March 19**, the 12th anniversary of "*Shock and Awe*," and a day to remember the cost of war, past and present.

April 15 (a Wednesday) is Tax Day and LEPOCO will distribute the War Resisters League flyer "Where Your Income Tax Money Really Goes," at local post offices, as we have in many years past.

April 24 -26 we will join with organizing participation in the *Peace and Planet Mobilization for a Nuclear-Free, Just and Sustainable World*, international days of action in New York City and around the globe on the eve of the 2015 Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty (NPT) Review Conference at the United Nations. The nuclear-armed nations have not met their NPT disarmament obligations and are spending \$100 billion a year to maintain and modernize their nuclear arsenals. Visit www.peaceandplanet.org for more information.

LEPOCO Annual Dinner: Saturday, February 28, 2015

Wesley United Methodist Church
2540 Center St., Bethlehem

(Pre-dinner music at 5 pm; Dinner at 5:30 pm)

Enclosed is \$ _____. Please reserve ____ tickets for:

Name _____ Phone _____

____ Mail tickets to:

Address _____ Zip _____

____ Hold tickets at door.

*Dinner tickets by advance reservation only.
Program-only tickets available at the door.*

Annual Dinner Tickets:

\$35 - Regular Adult; \$75 - Special Supporter;
\$10 - Limited Income Adult / Child;
\$10 - Program-only, regular;
\$5 - Program-only, limited income

Return to: LEPOCO, 313 W. 4th St., Bethlehem, PA 18015
or call 610-691-8730 to make your reservation.

Race, Crime & Justice in L.V. –

The publication of Michelle Alexander's book, *The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Age of Color-blindness*, has brought much attention to race, crime, and justice across the U.S. and here in the Lehigh Valley.

On January 14, a public conversation held at the Bethlehem Area Public Library brought together Bethlehem police Chief Mark DiLuzio, Lehigh Director of Africana Studies, James Peterson, and Northampton Community College history professor, Sholomo Levy.

In light of the recent killings of unarmed black men by police officers, the panel took on a sense of urgency and tension was high. Dr. Peterson provided an overview of the justice system since the Reagan era including how the War on Drugs has disproportionately targeted people of color and how the privatization of prisons incentivizes keeping prisons full. He suggested that the U.S., and other countries, should consider drug use a public health issue rather than a crime. DiLuzio partially agreed, saying "the more we warehouse people, the more we're educating them in other crimes."

On a local level, the war on drugs often means targeting specific communities, a practice DiLuzio defended, saying "you're going to flood police where you have a large majority of your drug sales." Dr. Peterson was quick to respond that drug raids are happening disproportionately in communities of color, and that statistically it is just as likely that drug sales are happening in white communities as well.

The panelists agreed that the justice system was incarcerating too many people, and that decriminalizing minor drug offenses and other revisions to drug policy would be taking steps in the right direction. Peterson concluded by asking us to make a decision about what kind of nation we want to be, assess our unconscious biases, and educate ourselves about the system.

Two weeks later, on January 28, Michelle Alexander visited Lehigh University, continuing the discussion on mass incarceration and the disproportionate number of African Americans it affects. Using the powerful and sometimes difficult-to-read statistics offered in her book, Alexander spoke on how contemporary incarceration practices further racial inequality and widen the gap between people of color and other members of society. In short, today's justice system, Alexander said, is based on the idea that "some lives simply don't matter."

While the U.S.'s GDP and technological advancement may speak toward the wealth of our nation, Alexander challenges us to consider another way to assess progress, one that is measured on the scale of how we treat our most vulnerable and our prisoners. And this scale tells a different story of U.S. standing. Criminals and felons are legally barred from a fully human existence, as racially motivated incarceration has reinforced a caste system in our country.

In fact, Alexander said that more African Americans are banned from voting today than ever before in U.S.

history, even though we have Voting Rights laws. Furthermore, she pointed out that while the racial violence of the Jim Crow era is no longer protected, "the rate of police killings is nearly the same (about twice a week) as the killings of white vigilantes of an earlier generation."

With over two million people incarcerated today, Alexander considers the U.S. "the most punitive country in the world." Yet, despite the bleak statistics and terrible patterns Alexander outlined in her talk and details further in her book, she contends that "a breaking point has been reached."

Alexander calls for the "rebirth of a bold, radical justice," and a revolution in our values as a nation. However, since we have constructed a justice system where our livelihoods -- literally millions of jobs -- depend on mass incarceration, change will not come easily. But jobs built on millions of people cycling in and out of the criminal justice system is no way to sustain the nation. Instead, Alexander offers these six steps towards restoring a truly just justice system:

1. Tell the whole truth: we've created a system of legal biases in the U.S.
2. Make visible what is hidden in plain sight.
3. Build an underground railroad for people released from prison trying to rebuild their lives.
4. Accept that we are all criminals. We are not the "good guys" helping "bad guys."
5. Abolish mass incarceration. End the War on Drugs and shift to a public health model to treat the issue of drug abuse.
6. Shift from a punitive to restorative justice model.

- Adam Heidebrink-Bruno

Newsletter of LEPOCO

Lehigh-Pocono Committee of Concern

313 West Fourth Street

Bethlehem, PA 18015

phone: 610-691-8730

fax: 610-691-8904

website: www.lepoco.org

e-mail: lepoco@fast.net



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

Annual dues are:

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

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

Newsletter Staff: Tom Stinnett, Nancy Tate, Jeff Vitelli, Adam Heidebrink-Bruno.

Thanks to all the people who collate and prepare the newsletter for mailing each month.

LEPOCO Steering Committee: Terry Briscoe, Bridger Buller, Martha Christine, Janet Goloub, Adam Heidebrink-Bruno (ex-officio), Julius Iwantsch (co-treasurer), Monica McAghon, Dan Miller, Janet Ney, Mary Kay O'Donnell, Jim Orben, Susie Ravitz, Tom Stinnett (co-treasurer), Nancy Tate (ex-officio).

Popcorn & Politics

Friday, March 6th, 7:00 pm

"Girl Rising"

A Popcorn & Politics Film projected on the big screen at the LEPOCO Peace Center.

This documentary "tells the story of nine girls from different parts of the world who face arranged marriages, child slavery, and other heartbreaking injustices." It is a story about how education empowers women to break the cycle of oppression and discrimination they are born into. While each story varies in its particular details, collectively they describe a shared global struggle. Despite great challenges, these girls grow up strong and the film leaves its viewers with an uplifting message of hope and courage.

Directed by Richard E. Robbins. 101 minutes. 2013.

Please bring a snack or beverage to share.

Friday, April 3rd, 7:00 pm

"The Invisible War"

A Popcorn & Politics Film projected on the big screen at the LEPOCO Peace Center.

Only eight percent of military sexual assault cases are prosecuted. This documentary investigates the pervasiveness of rape and sexual assault crimes committed in the US military.

Focusing on heart-rending interviews with survivors, the film exposes a painful and under-reported story covered up by military commanders. The Invisible War "is a call for our civilian and military leadership to listen. And to act." The film has ushered in a wave of national dialogue, working to reform how the military conducts sexual assault investigations.

Directed by Kirby Dick. 93 minutes. 2012.

Please bring a snack or beverage to share.



Book Group

The First Tuesday LEPOCO Book Club will meet on the second Tuesday next month, March 10th, when they will discuss "*Howard Zinn: A Life on the Left*" by Martin Duberman. (The meeting was moved to the second Tuesday to allow attendance at Bill Moyers talk at Lehigh University on March 3.)

In "*A Life on the Left*," we learn anew about the life of Howard Zinn, the much beloved historian, author of "*The People's History of the United States*," and "*Marx in Soho*" (the play performed across the U.S. by former Lehigh Valley resident Bob Weick), and speaker for LEPOCO's Annual Dinner in 1990. Zinn's life of activism brings us repeated inspiration to be discussed over and over. The March Book Club is another opportunity for one of those discussions. Bill Bigelow of the Zinn Education Project recently wrote to mark five years since Zinn's death (1/27/15, www.commondreams.org), that we should count Howard Zinn among "the social justice heroes and teachers who offer proof that... ordinary people can change history."

On April 7th, the book group will discuss "*Pay Any Price: Greed, Power, and Endless War*," by James Risen.

The group meets at the Bethlehem Wegmans (off Rt. 512, north of Rt. 22). The meeting starts at 6 pm. You can get some food and/or drink and join the group in the upstairs dining area. For more information contact Mimi Lang at 610-866-2407.

Climate Conference in Bethlehem: March 13-15

The Mid-Atlantic Regional Conference of Citizens' Climate Lobby (CCL) will take place from March 13-15, at Lehigh University. The multi-day event will bring hundreds of concerned citizens together from across the region.

The conference kicks off at 7 pm, Friday, March 13, at Neville Hall, on the Lehigh campus, with a free public performance by comic and LGBTQ Rights Activist Peterson Toscano. Toscano will use storytelling, and character-driven comedy to discuss climate justice, religion, and gender issues. Conference planners say that Toscano takes serious issues and humanizes them, helping his audience to laugh and think in fresh ways. (Free parking will be available on the lot at the corner of W. Packer and Brodhead.) LEPOCO is one of several local co-sponsors for the Friday program.

Registration is required to attend the Saturday and Sunday sessions of the conference, which is \$50 and due by March 8. The programming includes workshops, speakers like Dr. David Titley of Penn State, Joseph Robertson of CCL, Dr. Chris Borick of Muhlenberg College, and Josh Fox in a musical revue, "*A Solar Home Companion*." You can find out more and make your reservation by visiting: www.tinyurl.com/NORMA2015.

Statement Against PennEast Pipeline Presented to FERC

Below is a statement against the PennEast Pipeline written by Jim Orben on behalf of LEPOCO. It was presented on February 10, during the FERC (Federal Energy Regulatory Commission) Scoping hearing at Northampton Community College. Following the statement is information regarding how you can help prevent the PennEast Pipeline from cutting through our neighborhoods.

"The Steering Committee of the Lehigh-Pocono Committee of Concern (LEPOCO), in keeping with its history of working for peace and justice within the local community and beyond, has reviewed the PennEast Pipeline proposal and finds said pipeline and its construction inconsistent with LEPOCO's goals for a peaceful, just and safe environment here in the Lehigh Valley and in the wider community. It is the experience of our organization that it is impossible to achieve peace in oneself or in one's community unless there is both justice and safety.

"Where is the justice in the ability of a small group of wealthy corporations to force a project of this scope and magnitude on unwilling property owners and their neighbors for the profit of stockholders who live far from the effects of the project? Where is the safety, when a billion cubic feet of high-pressure natural gas flows through these unwilling communities each day with no concern for the effects of a rupture and fire that would create havoc? It was said in one information meeting, "If you smell gas, RUN LIKE HELL!" The irony in that warning is that the methane (natural gas) in the PennEast Pipeline has no color, no taste, and no odor; since the "smell" we associate with natural gas is added well after the gas has passed through high-pressure transmission pipelines like the PennEast.

"The safety of our water is threatened when the watersheds that supply our clean unpolluted drinking water are bisected by a 125 foot wide, cleared right-of-way chosen to exploit the undeveloped forests often found within their boundaries. Where is the justice when land that has been preserved as open-space with public money is chosen to be in the pipeline alignment?

"Safety and justice are concepts most often used to describe the situation when speaking of people, for it is people that have created both of these concepts. Safety and justice, as concepts, can be applied to other animals as well. The creatures that inhabit the wetlands, the forests and the other lands affected by the construction and continued existence of the PennEast Pipeline deserve to have the safety to live out their lives by the justice of the wild and their natures within an environment suited to their needs.

"So, does Lehigh-Pocono Committee of Concern, an organization that has been working for peace and justice for fifty years, have the need to weigh in on this scoping meeting? Yes we do; for there are many aspects of injustice and many instances of unsafety that join to create a

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great lack of peacefulness that only the denial of PennEast's application to build this pipeline can alleviate.

"Many of LEPOCO's 500 members live in close proximity to the proposed PennEast Pipeline's alignment, and many more get their water from the City of Bethlehem's Wild Creek Reservoir who's watershed is in the path of this project."

Two more FERC Scoping Hearings will be held -- one at 6 pm, Wednesday, February 25, at the West Trenton Ballroom in W. Trenton, NJ, and the other at 6 pm, Thursday, February 26, at The Grand Colonial restaurant & catering hall on Rt. 173 in W. Hampton, NJ, (near I-78).

Public commentary regarding the PennEast Pipeline is being collected until Friday, February 27. This means there is still time for your concerns to be heard and impact the final decision. To add a comment, visit: <http://www.ferc.gov/docs-filing/ecomment.asp> and reference docket PF 15-1-000 in your submission.

Alternatively, you can mail comments to:
Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) /
888 First Street, NE, Rm. 1A /
Washington, D.C. 20426 / Docket: PF 15-1-000

Concerned citizens are further encouraged to contact their elected officials and urge them to oppose the pipeline proposal and invite their friends, families, and neighbors to do the same.

The CCAP (Concerned Citizens Against the Pipeline) -- is the coalition behind the "Stop the PennEast Pipeline" initiative. Visit their website at www.stoppenneast.org for more information.

Nonprofit Ride Service for Lehigh Valley

For over a year, Independent Transportation Network (ITN) has been servicing seniors (60 and over) and visually impaired adults in the Valley. ITN provides rides in autos 24 hours a day, 365 days a year, using paid and volunteer drivers who are trained to ensure safety and comfort. Rides can be for any reason including: medical appointments, meetings, arts programs, or dinner and movie dates. Those who use the service pay approximately half the true cost of each ride.

Users can sign up for an annual membership (yearly fee) and set up a pre-paid account. There's no cash or tip at time of travel. ITN's community fundraising makes rides affordable. Book your ride ahead or share a ride and save money. "Door through door" service means help as needed with steps, packages, heavy doors, and walkers. Free eye care rides for all members and gift certificates are available for all occasions.

ITN Lehigh Valley is a 501(c)3 corporation with a goal of ensuring that seniors can remain independent, socially engaged, and maintain their quality of life beyond their driving years. Contact ITN at 610-419-1645 or at info@ITNLehighValley.org to learn more about riding or volunteering as a driver. Volunteers help keep the costs of the program down, which helps make this opportunity possible for many seniors. Ready to ride or volunteer?

- Diane Dilendik

Steering Committee Nominations

LEPOCO's Steering Committee plans and provides leadership for the Action Meetings, held the second Monday of the month (these meetings are open to all members and friends of the organization). The Committee makes decisions between monthly meetings and handles finances, personnel, and other organizational issues. The election for this year's Steering Committee will be completed at the Annual Dinner. (See balloting instructions below).

Terry Briscoe, Bridger Buller, Janet Goloub, Mary Kay O'Donnell, Jim Orben, and Tom Stinnett (co-treasurer) will continue serving their two-year Steering Committee terms that began in 2014. Thank you to Monica McAgnon for serving on the Steering Committee these past two years and for her continued participation in the Stop the Wars Committee; and to Janet Ney for many years of service on the Steering Committee and her ongoing leadership as convener of the Annual Dinner Planning Committee.

We are grateful to all these LEPOCO members who, as Sheila Clever once said, are the "best people on the planet" convening once a month at the Peace Center to "strategize how to nonviolently build a sane and just world." Here are the nominees for 2015. (Please note the line on the ballot below where you can indicate your interest or suggest others to serve in this capacity.)

Martha Christine of Bethlehem has been a member of LEPOCO for over 20 years, participating in many activities including participating with the Peace Singers for many years. An elementary school teacher she is also an active member of the Lehigh Valley Quaker Meeting, Bethlehem Backyards for Wildlife, and the L.V. Climate Lobby Group. She led the effort for Bethlehem to be certified as a Community Wildlife Habitat. She has served one term on LEPOCO's Steering Committee.

Julius Iwantsch of Bethlehem has been a LEPOCO member since the mid-1970s. He works as a design drafts-person, working mainly with municipal clients. His interests include U.S. military involvement, military service alternatives for young people, and bringing this country's reputation up to what it should be -- through change. He enjoys hiking, biking, skiing, and home renovations. He has been co-treasurer for over 12 years.

Dan Miller of Coopersburg has been a member of LEPOCO for over 20 years. Dan and his family have been mainstays of Peace Camp since the 1990s -- Dan and Ronnie Arena (his wife) as leaders and helpers, and their three young adult daughters were first campers and now are also leaders and helpers. In 1977, Dan co-founded the Perkiomen Valley Academy, a private day treatment program servicing Montgomery County young people and their families. He worked at this alternative school for disadvantaged and emotionally disturbed teenagers for 35 years. Dan is a beekeeper and has coached youth sports for over 20 years. This will be his second term on the Steering Committee.

Susie Ravitz of Easton was a founding member of LEPOCO and has been a faithful member of the Steering Committee for many terms. She is a mainstay of the Stop the Wars Committee (previously Nuclear Abolition Sisters). Her peace work has included participation in an Interfaith Peace Builders delegation to Israel/Palestine. Retired from her work at Valley Youth House and Art's Toy Manufacturing Company, she travels a lot to visit her children and grandchildren from California to Israel -- the youngest being twin granddaughters in Brooklyn.

Scott Slingerland of Easton has been involved in LEPOCO for about five years. He has been the bike route expert for the LEPOCO Bike/Walkathon (new name: Peaceathon) for several years and participated in other events. He works for the Coalition for Appropriate Transportation and teaches yoga with Shanthi Project at Northampton County Prison and for other underserved populations. He previously worked for 12 years as a combustion engineer for power plants, designing emission control systems. This will be his first term on the Steering Committee.

Amanda Zaniesienko of Bethlehem has been active in LEPOCO since 2004. She is an alto with the Peace Singers and has been a leader with Peace Camp for over a decade, during which time her two sons have been active participants. She grew up overseas, living in Saudi Arabia, South Korea, and England. With a degree in art education, she has contributed some of her work to the Art Raffle. She works for the Mayfair Festival of the Arts and Home Instead Senior Care. This will be her first term on the Steering Committee.

Election Ballot

At-Large Steering Committee Members (vote for five):

Martha Christine ____
(2-year term)

Dan Miller ____
(2-year term)

Susie Ravitz ____
(2-year term)

Scott Slingerland ____
(2-year term)

Amanda Zaniesienko ____
(2-year term)

Co-Treasurer (vote for one):

Julius Iwantsch ____
(2-year term)

*Please note here if you or anyone you know would be interested in serving on the Steering Committee:

This ballot can be cast at the Annual Dinner on Saturday, February 28, 2015, by 6:15 pm, or by mail to arrive at the LEPOCO Peace Center, 313 W. 4th St., Bethlehem, PA 18015, by Thursday, February 26, 2015.

Government Surveillance Past & Present

On November 11, some 70 people gathered in Lehigh's Packard Auditorium for an extraordinary program on "Why Citizens Sometimes Need to Break the Law: Exposing Government Surveillance in the 1960s and Today."

The evening began with a screening of Johanna Hamilton's film, "1971," about the citizen break-in to the FBI offices in Media, Pennsylvania, in which a group calling themselves the "Citizens Commission to Investigate the FBI" stole FBI files and subsequently released them to several media outlets and public officials. One reporter, Betty Medsger, and one newspaper, the Washington Post, published stories about the FBI's vast illegal campaign of surveillance, disinformation, and disruption that became known as COINTELPRO.

Following the powerful film, a most impressive panel discussion ensued focusing on both the 1971 events and government and corporate surveillance today. The panelists included John and Bonnie Raines, original participants in the break-in; Betty Medsger, the original reporter of the story and author of the 2014 book, *The Burglary: The Discovery of J. Edgar Hoover's Secret FBI*; and Hamilton, the film director.

The Raines' testimony was particularly moving since they were parents of three young children in 1971 and faced the possibility of a very long prison term. Conveying the depth of feeling and anxieties they experienced at the time, they both explained how they felt compelled to act when Haverford professor Bill Davidon suggested the break-in to them. John Raines spoke of how his participation in the earlier Freedom Rides and Freedom Summer put him on the path to resist the war in Vietnam.

All four speakers testified that we face a similar, if not more widespread, degree of government and corporate surveillance today, particularly via the NSA surveillance uncovered by Edward Snowden's revelations. An excellent conversation ensued ranging from questions about the original events to students' heartfelt questions about what they can do today. A Political Science graduate student, Hannah Rettoun commented, "It was such an inspiring experience hearing the story of these people who made such a bold move with such high stakes."

- Ted Morgan

Seeking Justice for Those in Prison

Last November 8, The Lehigh Conference of Churches (TLCC) sponsored a follow-up workshop to the very popular Heart of Justice workshop held in 2013. This year's event, held at St. John's UCC in Allentown, was entitled "Jesus in Prison" -- focusing on getting more information about hands-on activities to members

faith communities. The title of the workshop came from Matthew 25, that has Jesus saying if one welcomes a stranger, gives clothing to the naked, cares for the sick, or visits someone in prison, then that person is acting as though he is doing it for Jesus. The members of the Justice and Advocacy Committee of TLCC, in preparation for the workshop, discussed how faith communities do the first three requests quite well, but tending to those in prison is very rare.

The first plenary speaker, Rev. Neftali "Charles" Olmeda, leads the multi-ethnic Third Day Worship Center in Allentown. His talk focused on Matthew 25 and his work with youth -- getting them to graduate, giving them hope -- was infused with examples of how his church is working to keep its youth out of prison. His major gift to the listeners was to tell them that we don't pick and choose who to help -- someone is waiting for us and we are merely catalysts for change.

Although there were several incredibly interesting choices for breakout sessions, I chose to attend one led by Latif Matt and another led by Dr. Joyce Dougherty. Latif Matt coordinates re-entry of citizens to the community from Lehigh County Prison. He has a program where ordinary citizens can work with Latif and a returning citizen to make the transition easier. The program needs volunteers and is in its infancy, so a lot is needed to get it off and running.

Dr. Joyce Dougherty is the Executive Director of The Program for Women and Families. Her very intensive workshop made us think through situations -- what thoughts were going through our brain, what were we feeling, what attitudes and beliefs made us act? In this fashion, she equalized us to the women in prison and how The Program for Women transitions women to life after prison.

The talk by the second plenary speaker, Andrea James, was particularly inspiring for me. Ms. James, daughter and granddaughter to civil rights leaders, and a lawyer, had a wonderful middle-class life until the bottom fell out of the real estate market and she admitted to herself that her "shady" real estate transactions were illegal. She turned herself in and spent 24 months in the federal prison at Danbury, Connecticut. While in prison, the women there begged her to publicize the conditions under which they were living and to do something about the "justice" system that put them there.

In her book *Upper Bunkies Unite*, Ms. James describes some of the problems with prison life, but she emphasizes that the purpose of the book is to "increase dialogue about the war on drugs." In her talk on November 8, she pointed to the overuse of prisons and how children are left homeless and parentless when community members are removed to prisons. Neighborhoods quickly degenerate. In many ways, her talk echoed Michelle Alexander's book *The New Jim Crow*, with its emphasis on how prisons have become filled with people of color. (See story on page 2 of this Newsletter.) While in prison, Ms. James had the opportunity to

(continued on page 8)

The Struggle Shared

"I believe in both my right and my responsibility to work to create a world that doesn't glorify violence and war but where we seek different solutions to our common problems."

- Jody Williams, Nobel Peace Prize laureate, 1997

MINNESOTA WOLVES RESTORED TO ENDANGERED SPECIES STATUS

- On December 19, 2014, U.S. District Judge Beryl Howell reversed the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service decision of 2012, which had removed the grey wolf in the Great Lakes region from the Endangered Species list. Judge Howell's decision protects the grey wolf from being hunted in Michigan, Minnesota, and Wisconsin, at least for now.

According to Minnesota Public Radio (MPR), over 1,500 wolves had been killed since authorized hunting reopened in 2011. It took four attempts over nine years to remove the grey wolf from the endangered species list, each time proponents arguing that the species had recovered to a sustainable population.

Protests, led by the organization Howling for Wolves, emerged in response to the most recent annual wolf hunt. That hunt led to an over-killing of wolves. Despite this year's overhunting, a Minnesota Department of Natural Resources survey reports that wolf populations are on a rise, and with the reinstated protection, wolves will once again be safe in Minnesota.

(Sources: Jean C. Pearson, co-author; and MPR, "Great Lakes wolves ordered returned to endangered list.")

CONFRONTING WEALTH

DISPARITY IN THE L.V. - New research documents increasing wealth disparity in the Lehigh Valley. The report indicates that race and ethnicity impact educational achievement and accumulated assets. "The median income for white individuals living in the Allentown, Bethlehem, and Easton area is \$57,983 compared to \$41,616 for Black individuals and only \$35,747 for Latino individuals." Accordingly white individuals, on average, earn 40% more than Black individuals

and 62% more than Latinos. Similarly, while less than 10% of white residents in the area live in poverty, 26% of the Black population and 32% of the Latino population live in poverty.

This trend does not need to continue. The report proposes a number of recommendations to fight wealth disparity. In education, this includes ensuring low-income families have access to quality pre-k programs and demanding school districts train and provide resources necessary to educate Black and Latino students.



In asset accumulation, the report recommends supporting financial literacy initiatives, and raising the minimum wage to a family-sustaining living wage. To minimize disparities in opportunities to create wealth, home ownership laws and financial institution practices could be reformed.

The painful, honest information presented in the "Justice for All" report is frustrating to read, but such knowledge can also be empowering. It is a reminder that "our society is far more threatened when poverty and desperation lead to apathy and dependence than when it leads to anger and activism." Read the report

for a complete list of ways to get involved and get out there to join the struggle.

(Source: www.caclv.org, "Justice for All" Report.)

RISING CONCERN REGARDING NICARAGUA CANAL - Farmers, indigenous communities, and environmentalists were outraged as the Nicaraguan officials broke ground on a \$50 billion canal in December. While President Daniel Ortega boasts of the 50,000 new jobs created by this project, it does so with a devastating environmental and human cost.

The canal is planned to span 172 miles across the country, and will cut through the region's largest freshwater reservoir, Lake Nicaragua. It will uproot miles of rainforest and relocate at least 40 villages. Canal projects of this nature have been proposed and delayed periodically since the 1800s.

A deal has been made with the Chinese infrastructure development firm, HKND, granting this company a 50-year concession, which is then renewable for an additional 50 years. Reports conducted by HKND state the impact of the canal to be minimal; however, these documents have not been made available for public review.

In December, a protest against the project ended in at least 21 people injured and 33 arrests. According to *Aljazeera*, "police fired rubber-coated steel bullets and tear gas at hundreds of demonstrators forming a roadblock on the Pan-American Highway in El Tule, 260km from the capital, Managua."

The construction is to take five years, meaning that with enough resistance there may still be enough time to reconsider the project. Concerned citizens are encouraged to demand more transparency, independent assessment and deeper respect for indigenous and other disapproving perspectives.

(Sources: *Aljazeera*, "Nicaragua canal to break ground amid anger, skepticism," "Protest against Nicaragua canal turns violent," and *The Washington Post* "Why the Chinese-backed Nicaragua canal may be a disaster.")

- Adam Heidebrink-Bruno

Bits & Pieces

LEPOCO's annual late spring outdoor event is getting a new name. The **Peaceathon for Walkers & Bikers** will be held Sat., May 23. We found Memorial Day weekend to be such a good choice that we are going with it again this year. We hope you can join us as a walker, a biker, or a volunteer. Mark the date on your calendar!

The Winter 2014-2015 issue of the **Nukewatch Quarterly** is now available at the LEPOCO Peace Center. As usual it is packed with news and information on nuclear weapons, nuclear power, nuclear waste and nonviolent resistance. This issue has a special article on Fukushima and one on "Sophie Scholl and the White Rose." Pick up your copy at the office or at the Annual Dinner.

The Moravian College Payne Gallery on the south campus of the college in downtown Bethlehem, has an exhibit through March 6, "War, Peace Building & the Just Society." It features photographs from the first Iraq war by Barbara Alper, photographs taken by Moravian's own veterans of war, and a historical series of images from Bethlehem, Palestine. For hours and more info. call 610-861-1667.

A new study finds more than 80 percent of the world's known coal reserves and about half of gas reserves must remain unburned in order to avoid the most catastrophic impacts of climate change. The report published in the journal "Nature" outlines specific limits, saying 92 percent of the U.S. coal supplies, most Canadian tar sands oil, and all oil and gas in the Arctic are "unburnable" if the world is to keep an increase in global temperatures below the agreed-upon cap of 2 degrees Celsius.

Source: www.democracynow.org, 1/12/15.

On the day of the inauguration of Pennsylvania's **new governor, Tom Wolf**, a hearty group of peace activists -- about 15 in number -- took their mes-

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sage of protest about the proposed Horsham drone war command center to the grounds of the state Capitol and delivered a letter to the office of the governor as dignitaries gathered to celebrate the inauguration. The letter calls on the governor to initiate hearings on the Pennsylvania drone war command center at Horsham based on his position as head of the Pennsylvania National Guard and Air National Guard. There have been no hearings about the Horsham drone command center. The letter pointed to the seriousness of the proposed center, "**From Horsham, computer-piloted MQ-9 Reaper drones** -- remote-controlled UAVs (Unmanned Aerial Vehicles) -- would launch through satellites in space deadly Hellfire missiles against human beings thousands of miles away in Pakistan, Afghanistan, Yemen, Somalia, Iraq, Syria, and elsewhere. Drone strikes have killed thousands of civilians,..."

If you want to join the monthly protests at Horsham they will resume on Sat., March 28, noon-2pm. Contact LEPOCO about transportation.

On Feb. 27, the Social Action Committee of the Unitarian Universalist Church of the Lehigh Valley's **Fourth Friday Film** series will show "The Wisdom to Survive: Climate Change, Capitalism, & Community," and on March 27, "Park Avenue: Money, Power, and the American Dream." Films are shown at the UU Church, 424 Center St., Bethlehem, at 7:15 pm.

The **14th Annual Walk for a New Spring** will take place March 13-April 26, with routes starting in Leverett,

MA, and Washington, DC, both ending in New York City, on the occasion of the 2015 Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty Convention meeting at the United Nations. On April 27 talks at this meeting will continue regarding the banning and elimination of more than 17,000 nuclear warheads worldwide. The New England Peace Pagoda and the Walk for a New Spring join "activists and concerned citizens from around the world in demanding honest and forthright dialog from world leaders in meeting the demands of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty."

Seeking Justice

(continued from page 6)

read many books and she became familiar with a Native American concept that heals brokenness through justice. She founded Families for Justice as Healing to help heal the broken neighborhood where she lives -- one house, one block, one neighborhood at a time.

Inspired by Andrea James' efforts to write model legislation, a small group of those in attendance at the workshop formed the Prison Legislative Justice Committee. We've met three times -- about once a month -- and are focused on legislation in Pennsylvania. Our immediate focus has narrowed to working to end juvenile life in prison and to reduce certain drug offenses from felonies to misdemeanors. Our partners in these endeavors are the Pennsylvania Council of Churches and PICO. We welcome others. If you have an interest in joining this group, please contact Sheila Clever through LEPOCO.

- Sheila Clever

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 interested in the following issues: _____.

Name _____ Phone # _____ e-mail _____
Address _____ City _____ Zip _____

Return to: LEPOCO Peace Center, 313 W. 4TH St., Bethlehem, PA 18015, **or**
Donate through PayPal by going to the "membership" page at www.lepoco.org.

Bits & Pieces

Over 300 people attended the **Raise the Wage PA 2015** kickoff event in Harrisburg on Monday, Feb. 9. Nearly a dozen state representatives spoke in support of legislation raising the wage to at least \$10.10 an hour. If passed, the new minimum wage would increase the wages of 1.1 million people working in Pennsylvania. To continue these efforts, we are asked to make appointments with and visit local legislative offices the week of March 9. For more info. contact Janet Ney at 484-893-1106 or see www.raisethe wagepa.org.

Fast Track legislation for free trade agreements including the mammoth TPP (Trans-Pacific Partnership) is expected to be voted on in the U.S. House of Representatives soon. If passed this would allow free trade agreements to be made without congressional debate and with no amendments. When this Fast Track legislation is proposed, you are encouraged to contact your representatives urging them to oppose the bill. Contact Phila Back at 610-334-5563 or at phila_back@verizon.net. for more info.

Carmen Riggs will turn 85 in March and Bob Riggs is planning a (non-surprise) party for her at the L.V. Friends Meetinghouse (Rt. 512 about ½ mile north of Rt. 22) on Sat., March 7, at 6 pm. You are invited. Please RSVP by March 1 to either 610-867-1244 or carmenriggs@gmail.com.

March 4-5, Dr. John Tirman, researcher, author, and Exec. Dir. of the Center for International Studies, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, will speak on "**The Deaths of Others: The Fate of Civilians & Their Cultures in America's Wars**," at the Elizabethtown Church of the Brethren (7 pm, on 3/4/15) and at Franklin & Marshall College, Lancaster (7:30 pm, on 3/5/15). For more info. see www.lancasterinterchurchpeacewitness.org.

The first ever **LV Vanguard / LV Bartering Community Social Justice**

Summit will begin at 2 pm, Sun., March 22 at The Banana Factory. The event will promote grassroots activism, community involvement, and social justice through bartering local, home-made arts, crafts, and goods; presentations on social justice, capitalism, and dissent; and poetry readings from past, present, and future Vanguard resident poets. For more info. see the online journal, www.lehighvalleyvanguard.org or www.facebook.com/groups/lvbarter. You can also call Adam Heidebrink-Bruno at 507-360-9888.

Veteran broadcast journalist **Bill Moyers** will speak at Lehigh University at 8 pm, Tues., March 3, at Baker Hall, Zoellner Arts Center. Moyer, former White House press secretary under Lyndon B. Johnson, has been the host of several public affairs programs, including "Moyers' & Company," where he spotlighted issues such as economic inequality, the influence of money in politics, climate change, activism and social justice.

On Jan. 17, **over 60 people** gathered in Allentown **in remembrance of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.** A peace walk brought participants from the King Memorial to the Lehigh County Prison, where we reflected on those who died in prison, and to St. Luke's Lutheran Church, where we listened to a **talk by Phyllis Alexander**. She spoke honestly to the largely white community, whom Alexander called

on to be "fierce allies." She asked us to be willing to be uncomfortable, to speak up to other white folks, to watch for signs of internalized inferiority and to call attention to it, and -- most importantly -- to do something, big or small, to dismantle systemic racism. The program was organized by the Stop the Wars (STWs) committee of LEPOCO.

Thurs., March 26, Northampton Community College will hold their 5th Annual **Peace & Justice Conference** in Kopecek Hall. **Peter Yarrow** of the 1960s folk music trio, Peter, Paul & Mary will be the keynote speaker. The event will run 9 am to 3 pm.

On Fri., March 27, 8:30 am to 5 pm, Moravian College will hold a **War & Peace Building Conference**: The Power of Narrative & Dialogue to Build a Just Society. Robert Meagher, Professor of Humanities at Hampshire College and author of "Killing from the Inside Out: Moral Injury and Just War," will be the featured speaker. The call for the conference says "Community-level truthful reflection on the meaning of the recent U.S. wars remains elusive. We invite the Lehigh Valley to become partners and interlocutors in a process of learning and healing." The conference is free, but advance registration is required at www.lvaic.org by March 15.

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

Sunday, February 22, 7 pm: **LEPOCO Peace Singers** rehearse at the home of Barbara Wurth, Bethlehem.

Wednesday, March 4, 12 pm: **Stop the Wars Committee Meeting** (formerly Nuclear Abolition Sisters) at The Olive Branch restaurant, south Bethlehem.

Wednesday, March 4, 3:30 pm: **Peaceathon for Walkers and Bikers Planning Meeting** at the LEPOCO Peace Center.

Thursday, March 5, 3:30 pm: **L.V. Committee Against State Killing (LV-CASK) Meeting** at the LEPOCO Peace Center.

Friday, March 6, 1 pm: **Peace Camp Planning Committee Work Meeting** at the LEPOCO Peace Center.

Mondays, March 9 & April 13, 7 pm: **LEPOCO Monthly Action Meeting** at the LEPOCO Peace Center. All members & friends are welcome at this business meeting where the organization's activities are reviewed and set.

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

If you want more information about the Americas Solidarity Group, Newsletter Planning Group meetings, L.V. Veterans for Peace, or any of the meetings listed above, please call LEPOCO at 610-691-8730.

For a regularly updated calendar of events and meetings, please see www.lepoco.org.



LEPOCO

Lehigh-Pocono Committee of Concern

313 W. Fourth St., Bethlehem, PA 18015
610-691-8730 lepoco@fast.net
Fax: 610-691-8904 www.lepoco.org

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Bits & Pieces

Stand Up & Speak Out!

Saturdays

March 28 & April 25

12 Noon

Protest Horsham Drone Command Center
(Outside Horsham Air National Guard Station,
Easton & County Line Roads, Horsham, PA)

10:45 am: Carpool from Lehigh Valley

(From Hellertown Park & Ride, Silvēx Rd.
near intersection of Rt. 412 & I-78)

Call 610-691-8730.

Popcorn and Politics: "Girl Rising"

Friday, March 6, 7:00 pm

(see page 3)

Monthly Peace Vigil

4:30 - 5:30 pm; Second Thursdays

March 12th & April 9th

*Our wars continue and expand.
Please help witness for peace.*

3rd & Wyandotte Sts., Bethlehem

Contact: Vince Stravino 610-216-8103 /
Tom Ulrich 610-882-1136

March 13-15 Regional Climate Conference

at Lehigh University (see Page 3 for more details)

LEPOCO ANNUAL DINNER:

Saturday, February 28

(Pre-dinner music at 5 pm; Dinner at 5:30 pm)

Enclosed is \$_____. Please reserve _____ tickets for:

Name _____

Phone _____

____ Mail tickets to:

Address _____

Zip _____

____ Hold tickets at door.

*Dinner tickets by advance reservation only.
Program-only tickets available at the door.*

Annual Dinner Tickets:

\$35 - Regular Adult; \$75 - Special Supporter;

\$10 - Limited Income Adult / Child;

\$10 - Program-only, regular;

\$5 - Program-only, limited income

Return to: LEPOCO, 313 W. 4th St., Bethlehem, PA 18015