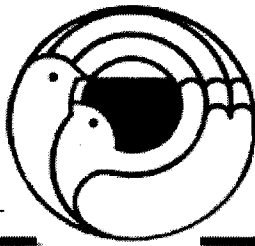


January
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Newsletter of **LEPOCO**

Lehigh-Pocono Committee of Concern

Remembering MLK: Bending the Arc of History Towards Justice —

LEPOCO's 15th annual remembrance of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s message of peace organized by the Stop the Wars Committee takes place on Saturday, January 17. The event includes a walk, readings, music by the LEPOCO Peace singers, and a talk by civil rights activist Phyllis Alexander.

The event will begin at 1:30 pm, at the Dr. King and Coretta Scott King Memorial Plaza in Allentown. From there, community members will walk together with banners and drums to St. Luke's Lutheran Church by way of the Lehigh County Prison. Those who prefer to not walk may join the group at St. Luke's by 2:30 pm.

Phyllis Alexander's talk is titled "2015: The Year of the Fierce Ally! Facing the Impact of White Supremacy." As the President of the National Coalition Building Institute (an international social justice organization) Alexander has been actively fighting for social change both locally and across the country. In light of the widespread demonstrations opposing systemic, discriminatory violence, Alexander's topic resonates with current conversations regarding race and justice.

This year's theme, "Bending the Arc of History Towards Justice," is based on a famous King quote where he said, "The arc of the moral universe is long but it bends towards justice," and serves as a dedication to peace and nonviolence. As the media continues to remind its viewers about the prevalence of violence committed by individuals, the police force, and our government, a recommitment to Dr. King's values is vital to maintain a peaceful community. We hope to see you there. (The event is free and open to the public.)

For those interested in attending: the Dr. King Memorial Plaza is located at the intersection of Union St., 4th St., and Martin Luther King Dr. in Allentown and St. Luke's Lutheran Church is at 417 N. 7th St.

Protest Drones in Harrisburg

Lehigh Valley peace folks have been part of the committed protests at the proposed Horsham drone war command center since 2013. While reports are saying that the drone command center could be fully operational in 2015, there has yet to be a single hearing conducted by state authorities on the drone war command center being established by the U.S. Air Force at the Horsham Air Guard Station.

Under the leadership of the Brandywine Peace Community and the Pennsylvania Interfaith Network Against Drone Warfare, people will take their questions and opposition to the drone command center to Governor Wolf's Inauguration in Harrisburg, on Tuesday, January 20, gathering at 10 am, at the Pine Street Presbyterian Church, 310 N. Third St., Harrisburg and walking to the east side of the Capitol Building for a demonstration that will feature a large drone replica display.

Please contact LEPOCO (610-691-8730) if you would like to join a car pool from the L.V. for this event.

Please note: Environmental groups are also rallying at the inauguration to urge Gov. Wolf to work to end fracking in Pennsylvania. Those participating in that effort will also meet at 10 am, but at Grace Methodist Church, 216 State St., Harrisburg.



Save the Date!

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)

Speaker: Stephen Miles

Formerly of Bethlehem

Now with Win Without War, Washington, DC

(Please see the back page of this newsletter to make your reservation. Dinner tickets by advance reservation only.

Program-only tickets available at the door.)

U.S. Tax Dollars Still Fund School for Killers

25 years of peaceful protests and nonviolent civil disobedience have failed to end our government's support of the notorious School of the Americas, renamed Western Hemisphere Institute for Security Cooperation.

Located at Fort Benning, in Columbus, Georgia, the school trains military personnel from Latin America who then return to their home countries in Central and South America. As members of their own government's armies, plus multiple paramilitary forces maintained for the protection of wealthy oligarchs, graduates of the Pentagon-run school continue to kill and oppress members of their local communities.

Poor campesinos, miners, union representatives, priests, nuns, and other religious leaders have been among the countless thousands of lives lost due to the actions of soldiers trained at SOA/WHINSEC.

Through the years SOA Watch, the movement begun and led by Fr. Roy Bourgeois, has rallied protesters and vigilers to the gates of Fort Benning during the weekend before Thanksgiving. Though defrocked by his Catholic order for endorsing the ordination of women religious, Roy Bougeois and the courageous staff of SOA Watch persist in upholding the rights of victims of the murders and assaults carried out by SOA graduates.

During the weekend of November 21-23, Bob and Carmen Riggs were present for the annual SOA Watch events in Columbus. In addition to the activities at the gates of Fort Benning, there was a protest march at the Stewart federal detention center at Lumpkin, GA, where undocumented persons attempting to immigrate to the U.S. are held before deportation. Five nonviolent protesters were arrested for ignoring orders to disperse.

Some 60 workshops, organized both by SOA Watch and allied groups such as Peace Action, NUKEWATCH, Witness for Peace, Pax Christi, Honduras Solidarity Network, Plowshares Support, Veterans for Peace, CISPES (Committee in Solidarity with the People of El Salvador), TASSC (Torture Abolition Survivors and Support Coalition) and others, were held on Friday and Saturday at the convention center in downtown Columbus.

Many workshops offered training for peace activists, information about various areas and programs, and testimony by victims and survivors of abuse by SOA/WHINSEC graduates. English translation was provided for non-bilingual hearers.

As always, during the Sunday vigil and procession before the Fort Benning gates, the names of adults and children killed by soldiers trained at the notorious school were announced, followed by the chanting of "Presente!" by those assembled.

Following the solemn Sunday events, police officers were asked for an estimate of the number of those in attendance; the reply was, "Somewhere more than a thousand." In previous years the estimates were near

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20,000. For more information about the SOA Watch consult www.soaw.org.

- Bob Riggs

CUBA!!

As this newsletter was being prepared we held a LEPOCO Potluck & Politics program on January 11, where David Sommers reported on a Moravian Church delegation to Cuba last summer. Though the P&P was scheduled before President Obama made his surprise announcement on December 17, about the significant changes in U.S.-Cuba policy, those changes weighed heavily in our discussion.

The day of Pres. Obama's announcement the Latin America Work Group (LAWG) in Washington, D.C., acknowledged all the work that had been undertaken over the years in hopes for such a breakthrough in U.S.-Cuba relations. (I think of the Rev. Lucius Walker, 1930-2010, and his 21 Pastors for Peace Caravans carrying humanitarian aid to Cuba challenging the U.S. economic blockade of the island nation.) LAWG asked people to call the White House (202-456-1414) and praise the Obama Administration for this historic change in U.S.-Cuba policy, and urge them to "continue on the path towards normalized relations between the two nations."

If you would like to visit Cuba at this exciting time, Witness For Peace has delegations planned in 2015. They include: May 23-June 3, "Whole-istic Cuba;" and June 10-20, "Cuba: Education Delegation." For more information see www.witnessforpeace.org or call 202-547-6112.

Newsletter of LEPOCO

Lehigh-Pocono Committee of Concern

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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 McAgdon, Dan Miller, Janet Ney, Mary Kay O'Donnell, Jim Orben, Susie Ravitz, Tom Stinnett (co-treasurer), Nancy Tate (ex-officio).

Popcorn & Politics

Friday, February 6th, 7:00 pm

"Gasland Part II"

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

In June of 2013, Academy Award-nominated director Josh Fox visited Bethlehem to screen the sequel to his 2010 film by the same title. Nearly two years later, the fight against fracking continues, reinvigorated by the recent no fracking victory in New York. This film documents the harm caused by the fracking industry and serves as a timely reminder to issues affecting us right here in Pennsylvania and across the country.

Directed by Josh Fox. 107 minutes. 2013.

Please bring a snack or beverage to share.

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.



New Staff on Board

LEPOCO has a new staffperson, Adam Heidebrink-Bruno. He started at the office on January 5th, and will be at work most weekdays (except Thursdays). Adam H-B is fairly new to Bethlehem, having moved here in August. He worked with Americorps in Tacoma, Washington, 2013-2014, after graduating from Minnesota State University Moorhead. Adam came to Bethlehem with his wife Sarah Heidebrink-Bruno, as she works towards a doctorate in English Literature and Social Justice at Lehigh University. Adam brings great enthusiasm and skills, technical and organizing, that will serve LEPOCO well. Please give him a warm welcome when you meet him at events or when he answers your next phone call to the Peace Center.

Book Group

The First Tuesday LEPOCO Book Club will meet on February 3rd. The book for discussion will be "In the Heart of the Sea: The Tragedy of the Whaleship Essex," by Nathaniel Philbrick. Published in 2000 this book is about the loss of a whaleship from Nantucket in the Pacific Ocean in 1820, after it was attacked by a sperm whale.

The book for the March 6th discussion will be "Howard Zinn: A Life on the Left" by Martin Duberman and on April 7th, "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.

Michelle Alexander

Civil rights lawyer, legal scholar, author of "The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness"
Lehigh University MLK Celebration

Wednesday, January 28, 7 pm

Baker Hall, Zoellner Arts Center, south Bethlehem

An Interfaith Conference on Drone Warfare, will be held January 23-25, at Princeton Theological Seminary, in Princeton, New Jersey, hosted by the Peace Action Education Fund. Over a dozen speakers from the religious community, human rights organizations and peace groups will address questions like, "Why is the use of lethal drones an urgent moral issue now?" The fee ranges from \$75 to \$300 for the weekend (regular/student, housing/commuter). If you are interested in attending this impressive conference and financial assistance would help make that possible, please contact LEPOCO. For more information see www.peacecoalition.org.

Remembering Newtown _____

On Sunday, December 14th, I attended a memorial program in honor of all those lives that have been cut short as a result of gun violence. In particular, we were paying tribute to the 20 children and six adults who were slaughtered in December 2012 at the Sandy Hook Elementary School, in Connecticut.

At 4 pm, the program started at Easton's Center Square with opening remarks by Easton's Mayor Sal Panto. We then passed out peace candles and marched up Northampton Street and Walnut Ave., to the Easton Community Center. More than 100 people attended the program at the community center organized by Fritz Walker of CeaseFirePA. Young people from the Easton area were included in the program. There were inspirational songs and poems performed by these local teenagers.

As with last year's memorial program, Linda Kasic spoke about her horrible experience with gun violence. In August, 2013, Linda was gravely wounded by a gunman who killed three adults, including Linda's husband, at a Ross Township Supervisor's Meeting. Her speech was eloquent and moving. She moved me to tears, as she did last year. Pastor Phil Davis from the Greater Shiloh Church of Easton gave the closing remarks.

I left with a profound sense of melancholy, realizing that these events will not be the last. Maybe, there is something more we can do?

- Dan Miller

Peace Pilgrimage, 2014 _____

Good weather and/or good luck accompanied the walkers on the fifty-fifth Annual Nazareth-to-Bethlehem Peace Pilgrimage on December 13th. Over 100 eager pilgrims gathered in Nazareth to begin the trek to Bethlehem carrying stars as a reminder that we were witnessing to an effort to make peace on our troubled earth a possibility. People took several hours out of their busy lives on a Saturday two weeks before Christmas to make a statement that said, "We have the time. It is important to be here."

Several churches along the route offered respite plus apples and cocoa and candles to hold as we walked into Bethlehem. New candles holders in bright colors, called Fran-cans in honor of Fran Dreisbach who helped to found the Peace Pilgrimage, were provided along with the original version of holders. LEPOCO and Pax Christi offered delicious hot soups at the simple supper at the Christ UCC Church where the walk ended.

Our dynamic and exciting speaker was Rev. Gregory J. Edwards, Senior Pastor of Resurrected Life Community Church in Allentown, and CEO of the Resurrected Community Development Corporation (RCDC). RCDC programs include the Campaign for Change, a grassroots organizing initiative to address racial and ethnic disparities in Allentown's educational

and economic systems, and The James Lawson Freedom School which was launched this summer in partnership with the Children's Defense Fund

Rev. Edwards asked the question, "Do you got good religion?" He explained that a place that allows the killing and imprisonment of black men cannot have good religion, that we need to "cross over the road" (like the Good Samaritan) to rid ourselves of the cognitive dissonance that has many believing that equality exists. He encouraged us to: Examine our theology, Reconstruct our history and Critique our public policies.

Several listeners were inspired to explore participation in the Freedom School effort.

- Mimi Lang

LEPOCO Steering Committee Needs

The yearly election of half of LEPOCO's Steering Committee is completed at our Annual Dinner. (This year the dinner will be held on February 28.) We are seeking people who would be interested in serving in a position on the Steering Committee for two years, which means being part of the monthly Action Meeting for the organization and participating in some ad hoc decision making between the meetings, usually facilitated by email. The at-large members of the Steering Committee number ten (we can have as few as six members based on LEPOCO's by-laws, but it is preferred to keep ten members to help get all of the Steering Committee work accomplished.) If you are interested in taking on this work (or want to suggest another person for the job) please call LEPOCO at 610-691-8730.

The Christmas Truce of 1914 _____

The stories of the December 1914 Christmas Truce give us the surprising, but maybe not so surprising, news of humanitarian kindness breaking out in the midst of war. S. Brian Willson, a Vietnam veteran and long-time peace activist wrote about this phenomenon in December as we marked the 100th anniversary of the Christmas Truce. You can read his excellent piece at www.popularresistance.org/the-importance-of-the-december-1914-christmas-truce/. Especially heartening was "Christmas Truce Centennial," that appeared in the December 25 (Christmas Day) issue of "The Morning Call." Like Brian Willson, the author of this piece, Adam Hochschild, points to the multiple Christmas truces created by soldiers in 1914, and to the other acts of war resistance during WWI. Hochschild's piece can be read at www.tomdisparch.com.

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 or to receive your copy of the newsletter by e-mail, by calling 610-691-8730, or by writing to lepoco@fast.net.

Diplomacy Works -- Prevent a Nuclear-Armed Iran

When FCNL, the Friends Committee on National Legislation**, met for its annual meeting and lobby day last November, the U.S. and Iran were engaged in sustained and high-level diplomacy for the first time in 30 years, advancing a multi-year agreement to guard against a nuclear-armed Iran. The "ask" we made of our elected officials seemed a simple one: "Will you make a public statement supporting diplomacy with Iran as the best way to guard against a nuclear-armed Iran and another war?" However, reluctance from the Republican Party to give *any* victory to the Obama Administration and reluctance throughout Congress to cross AIPAC, the American Israeli Public Affairs Committee lobby, are formidable opponents to these negotiations.

The FCNL delegation included 400 folks from 42 states (including eight in the Lehigh Valley Friends Meeting delegation). We met for a full day of briefings on the issue before meeting with our elected officials the following day. Some of the take-aways for me were:

- *We need a Diplomatic Success Story, both for the immediate situation in Iran and as a model for the bigger picture of U.S. Foreign Policy.* Failed negotiations with North Korea and severe, long-lasting sanctions have only driven that nuclear war machine further underground with devastating results for both international security and for the people of North Korea. We desperately need a different model for engaging "the enemy" in the Middle East, especially in Syria.

- *Negotiations are a step by step process; overloading the negotiations table with too many issues leads to collapse.* U.S. negotiators are rightfully concerned about Iran's past compliance record, about human rights abuses there, and about harsh statements regarding Israel, however, the issue on the table right now is nuclear weapons. The IAEA, International Atomic Energy Agency, is confident in its current ability to verify compliance. We are only on square one here, but at least we are on a square.

What did we hear from our Pennsylvania Representatives when we posed our "ask"? Senator Toomey is a firm NO and Rep. Dent has not responded, in effect a NO. Senator Casey did issue a very guarded YES, not committing to suspending sanctions.

Where do we go from here? The negotiations have been extended past the November 2014 deadline until the middle of this year. If the Administration and the international community are able to get a deal for ongoing verification it will be imperative that Congress supports that deal with a lifting of sanctions. *Let us not give up on the idea of government. Let us continue to demand a U.S. Foreign Policy that is more about our own national security and the well-being of peoples around the globe than it is about partisan politics.*

**The Friends Committee on National Legislation is a Quaker Lobby on Capitol Hill. You can learn more at

www.fcnl.org about our general work, and follow blog posts by our staffer Kate Gould on Middle East issues.

Now is an important time to call your senators urging that no further sanctions be imposed on Iran -- Let Diplomacy Work! (Unfortunately, Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell (R-KY) has already announced plans for a Senate vote to impose new sanctions on Iran.) There is more information available at www.fcnl.org or at www.winwithoutwar.org.

- Mary Lou Hatcher

Jim and Debbie Fine Report on ISIS in the Kurdish Area of Iraq

At a special LEPOCO Potlucks & Politics program at the L.V. Friends Meeting on November 14th, Jim and Debbie Fine gave us a very interesting and informative presentation on problems in the Middle East. Their talk was on, "Why It Will Be Hard for the U.S. to Contain and Weaken, Let Alone Destroy the Islamic State."

Jim and Debbie are education and relief workers with the Mennonite Central Committee and just returned from four years in Erbil, Iraq, the semi-autonomous Kurdish area of Iraq. As an aside, they pointed out that the Kurds are the largest ethnic group, about 30 million, without their own country. Erbil, the capital city of Kurdistan was a peaceful, crime free, oil rich area for the most part, but is changing with the advent of ISIS (Islamic State of Iraq and Syria) war. ISIS aims to establish a "pure" Islamic state based on a fanatical interpretation of Islam.

The ISIS army received a big boost with the capture of Mosul, a city of over 1 million people 55 miles from Erbil. The city fell without firing a shot when the Iraq army fled. ISIS received a huge cache of US weapons left behind by Iraq army. ISIS went from being a sort of ragtag army to the best equipped in the region. It is not really clear why the Iraq army fled, but the army is mostly Shiites while Mosul is Sunnis territory. Also, Nouri al-Maliki, Iraq's Prime Minister until this past August, was a very unpopular leader who didn't inspire army to fight. The response to ISIS has been U.S.-led coalition air war with some help from Kurdish ground fighters plus training of future ground force. The situation is currently a huge mess with about 1.3 million people displaced across Iraq.

Debbie Fine put a human face on their story by telling us of a couple families who became their friends and who have been driven out of a nearby mostly Christian village to become part of the refugee population. Both families have young men studying for the priesthood. The refugees are leaving the country or finding shelter throughout Iraq, many staying on church properties.

Their major point was that there is no military solution possible to the current ISIS crisis which is essentially a religious, ideological war. A diplomatic, economic solution needs to be developed among all the players.

(continued on page 6)

Bits & Pieces

☮ Opponents of the expansion of a natural gas compressor station in Forks Township, near Easton, led by the Concerned Citizens of Forks Township, are inviting the community to join them in **rallying against this expansion on Saturday, Jan. 24, at Noon**, at the facility on Klein Rd. In December the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission approved the Columbia Gas project at the Forks Township compressor station that would more than quadruple the horsepower of the compressor station. Neighbors and opponents of the project are concerned about safety, noise pollution, and the adverse impact on air quality. This is one of several hazardous gas pipeline projects underway in Pennsylvania as the natural industry races to get Marcellus gas to overseas markets with only slight concern for the impact on the environment and residents of Pennsylvania and New Jersey.

☮ CIS (the Centro de Intercambio y Solidaridad) is inviting international peace activists to join their **Election Observer Delegation to El Salvador, Feb. 23-March 3**. Their election delegations have been critical in maintaining the credibility of the democratic process in this country following the war there that ended with the 1992 Peace Accords. Lehigh Valley folks have participated in several of the election delegations in the past. The in-country cost is \$725 that covers delegation organization and support, food and housing. Applications are due by Jan. 24. For more information see www.cis@el-salvador.org.

☮ **Former Honduran President Mel Zelaya**, who was ousted in the 2009 SOA-graduate-led coup in Honduras, spoke in a recent interview about conditions in Honduras today: *"Honduras is a military base, it is the United States who loans us Hondurans some territory to live; the United States dominates absolutely everything and since the coup d'etat they were given the economy and security*

policy. The economic policy is through international institutions like the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the World Bank and the Military Police are the security policy through the Pentagon and Southern Command. Listen, in Honduras civil society has disappeared, companies don't say anything, the church doesn't say anything, they are restricted or are partners in the destruction and disarticulation of our society." Source: SOA Watch.

☮ The Social Action Committee of the Unitarian Universalist Church of the Lehigh Valley has announced their **Fourth Friday Film Series for 2015**, organized around the theme, "Putting People, Planet & Peace Above Profit." The series will open Jan. 23, with "I AM," a life-affirming film that looks at world problems and what we can do to fix them." On Feb. 27, they will screen, "The Wisdom to Survive: Climate Change, Capitalism, & Community." The films are shown at the UU Church, 424 Center St., Bethlehem, at 7:15 pm.

☮ On Thurs., Jan. 22, at 7 pm, **Gary Warren**, Board Member of the Bethlehem Food Co-op, will speak about, **"The Bethlehem Food Co-op: Who We Are, What We Are Doing, and Where We Are Going,"** for a meeting of the L.V. Chapter of the Weston A. Price Foundation, at the United Steelworkers Hall, Bethlehem. Doors open at 6:30 pm. For more info. call Martin Boksenbaum at 610-767-1287.

☮ The **14th Annual Walk for a New Spring** will take place March 13-April 26, with routes starting in Leverett, Massachusetts, 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 leader in meeting the demands of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty." They point to the fact the U.S. is spending more than \$30 Billion yearly to maintain our nuclear arsenal, which we must never use, while 1 in 30 children in the U.S. are homeless.

☮ For an especially insightful discussion of the complexity of issues around the horrific attacks in Paris in early January please see Amy Goodman's interview with Jeremy Scahill on **"Democracy Now!"** on Jan. 12.

Jim and Debbie Fine Report – (continued from page 5)

This must include every country in the Middle East, including particularly Iran and Saudi Arabia as well as the U.S., Europe and Russia. We need to address the sectarian strife within Iraq and Syrian civil war and, of course, the Israeli-Palestinian situation is always in play. The non-war path is difficult, but the only hope of bringing peace to the area.

- Terry Briscoe

Support LEPOCO!

___ Enclosed are my yearly LEPOCO dues of \$ _____
(\$35 individual; \$45 hh; \$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

⊕ In late September 2014, the City of Allentown announced that the **contract for the controversial Delta Thermo Energy waste-to-energy facility had been terminated.** Mayor Ed Pawlowski said it was a financing issue, not a problem with the company's technology that "killed the deal." However, Allentown City Councilwoman Jeanette Eichenwald, who voted against the Delta Thermo Energy project, said their "proposed technology was unproven and environmentally unsafe." She was not surprised that investors could not be found.

Source: *The Morning Call*, 10/1/14.

⊕ **Raise the Wage PA** is working to increase Pennsylvania's minimum wage to at least \$10.10 an hour. They will hold their 2015 kickoff event in Harrisburg on Tues., Jan. 27, at Noon at Historic Grace United Methodist Church, 216 State St. For more info. call 215-557-0822.

⊕ *The Morning Call* published an excellent op-ed by **Gary Olson**, "American People Must Demand That U.S. End Torture," on Fri., Dec. 26. It closes, "Torture and other crimes against humanity won't end until the American people demand that the global empire be dismantled and we reclaim our democracy. The whole world is watching."

⊕ It is always helpful to see silver linings to the many clouds that hang over our world. Medea Benmjamin helps us see some of those silver linings in "10 Good Things About the Year 2014," published at www.commondreams.org on Dec. 30.

⊕ Among the many local observances for the **Martin Luther King Holiday** on Mon., Jan. 19, the Bethlehem NAACP is holding a program under the theme, "Why Race Matters." The program, co-sponsored by the Bethlehem YWCA, will be held at 1 pm at the Northeast Middle School, 1170 Fernwood St., Bethlehem. The program will feature a play, dance, poetry and

discussion of "Racism and Its Effect on Society."

The Bethlehem NAACP will hold their 70th Annual Freedom Fund Banquet at The Meadows in Hellertown on Sun., Feb. 22, at 3 pm. The keynote speaker will be Jerome Hatfield, Region II Administrator, FEMA, on the theme, "Born Suspect... Ensuring Equality for All." Cost: \$40. For reservations call 610-866-2078 or 610-865-9379.

⊕ **February 13-15, 2015**, the Eastern District Conference and the Franconia Mennonite Conference will hold their **Winter Peace Retreat** at Spruce Lake Retreat in Canadensis, PA. "Powerful Beyond Measure: An Honest Conversation About Power, Peace & Transformation," will be the theme explored by leaders, Steve Kriss and Jenifer Eriksen Morales. The cost for adults: \$186. For more info. see www.peaceretreat.pppjr.org. Registration deadline: Jan. 23.

⊕ The Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) has scheduled five "**public listening sessions**" regarding the proposed **PennEast Pipeline**. They will be collecting testimony that will influence the

environmental impact statement on the pipeline.

Maya van Rossum, the Delaware Riverkeeper indicates the important of these listening sessions: "The environmental impacts are very significant, very serious... We have seen uniformly in pipeline projects FERC not fully considering the impact."

The FERC Penn East Meetings are: Tues., Jan. 27, 6 pm, College of New Jersey, Ewing; Wed., Jan. 28, 6 pm, Bucks County Community College, Newtown; Tues., Feb. 10, 6 pm, Northampton Community College, Bethlehem; Wed., Feb. 11, 6 pm, Penn's Peak, Jim Thorpe; Thurs., Feb. 12, 6 pm, Best Western Conference Center, Wilkes-Barre.

Source: *The Morning Call*, 1/14/15.

⊕ 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**," in Lancaster, at Franklin & Marshall College and at the Lancaster Church of the Brethren. For more info. see www.lancasterinterchurchpeacewitness.org.

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

Thursday, January 22, 3:30 pm: **L.V. Committee Against State Killing** meeting at LEPOCO Peace Center.

Sunday, January 25, 7 pm: **LEPOCO Peace Singers** rehearse at the home of Bob & Carmen Riggs, LEPOCO, Bethlehem. **Rehearsals will be held every Sunday evening in February**, preparing for the Annual Dinner. Please contact LEPOCO for other specifics.

Monday, January 26, 6:30 pm: **Peace Camp Planning Committee** meeting and work night at LEPOCO Peace Center. The Committee will also hold a meeting and work night on **Monday, February 16, at 6:30 pm.**

Saturday, February 7, 5 pm: **Annual Dinner Planning Committee** will hold their cook-off dinner for committee members and lead cooks. Location to be announced.

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

Wednesday, February 11, Noon: **Stop the Wars Committee** (formerly Nuclear Abolition Sisters) meeting at Olive Branch Restaurant, Bethlehem.

Thursday, February 12, 6:15 pm: **L.V. Veterans For Peace Meeting**, Perkins Restaurant, south Bethlehem. Call Phil Reiss 610-282-8077 for more info.

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 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

Address Service Requested

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MLK Peace Event
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Bits & Pieces
Meetings...

Remembering ML King

"Bending the Arc of History Toward Justice"

Saturday, January 17, 2015

Speaker: Phyllis Alexander

Walk begins at 1:30 pm in Allentown.

(See page 1 for details.)

Tuesday, January 20, 10 am

"Protest the Pennsylvania Drone

War Command Center" at

Gov. Tom Wolf's Inauguration

(Car pooling from the L.V.)

(see Page 1)

Monthly Peace Vigil

4 - 5 pm; Second Thursdays

February 12th

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

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

(See page 1 for more details.)