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

Vietnam War Conference: *The Power of Protest*

On May 1 and 2, four LEPOCO members – Nancy Tate, Tom Stinnett, Luke Martin and myself – attended the national conference on “Vietnam: The Power of Protest,” a commemorative conference aimed at “Telling the Truth and Learning the Lessons” from the Vietnam war era while marking the 40th anniversary of the end of the war.

The conference was the creation of the Vietnam Peace Commemoration Committee, a group of activists whose aim is to counter the Pentagon’s recently launched ten-year-long propaganda campaign to (once again) sanitize public memory of the war. That campaign, which will cost almost \$15 million this year alone, asserts that it seeks to “provide the American public with historically accurate materials” that can be used in school curricula.

Needless to say the Pentagon’s program is a virtual whitewash of the horrific devastation wreaked by the United States over twenty years of military engagement in Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia. The Pentagon is presumably mindful that roughly 60% of the U.S. public has over a prolonged period believed the war to be “not a mistake” but “fundamentally wrong and immoral.”

The first of ten lessons offered by the committee reads, “The Vietnam peace movement must be remembered as having shaken our country to its foundations and for defending democracy against secrecy and bureaucratic tyranny. There are many in power today who want us to forget that the peace movement even existed. They are the same people who ... are urging more military involvement and war today.”

With several hundred people in attendance – most of whom were veterans of the antiwar movement – the conference got off to a very poignant and moving start on Friday evening with a program titled “Honoring the Elders.”

Nine young activists from today’s struggles (including LEPOCO’s annual dinner speaker Stephen Miles) introduced and reflected on the significant contributions of nine over-80 antiwar activists: Daniel Ellsberg, Cora Weiss, Staughton Lynd, David McReynolds, Marcus Raskin, Judith Lerner, Arthur Raskow, Dick Fernandez and George Regas. Each shared his or her thoughts on lessons for today’s struggles; in addition to acknowledging the formidable tasks we face, speakers urged activists to avoid the fragmentation and sectarianism that plagued social movements of the late 1960s.

The evening program also included a Bill Ehrhart poem reading, a stirring speech by Congresswoman Barbara Lee (the only member of Congress to vote against the resolution to launch the war in Iraq), and music by Peter Yarrow, Bethany Yarrow and Rufus Cappadocia.

Saturday began with a panel discussion examining the antiwar movement experience from the perspectives of Tom Hayden as antiwar activist, Wayne

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Peace Camp 2015 Needs Your Help



The 2015 Young People Making Peace Summer Day Camp (aka Peace Camp) is set for July 27-31, at First Presbyterian Church, Allentown. This very much beloved program has been organized by LEPOCO since 1990. We have a good group of volunteers planning to help this year, but camper registration is a little low. The lower registration and concerns about the new Pennsylvania state law mandating clearances for all adults working with children have caused some bumpiness in the planning process for this year’s camp. As this newsletter is being prepared the clearance issue is somewhat under control and we have decided Peace Camp will be great for the children able to attend even if a little smaller in size.

You can help by registering (or encouraging the registration of) any children you know who would like to attend Peace Camp this summer – your children, your grandchildren, neighborhood friends. Registration forms have arrived in at least two mailings this spring and the form is available at www.lepoco.org.

You can help by posting a Peace Camp flyer in a public space where children/parents may see it. (Colorful copies are available from LEPOCO.)

The Peace Camp Planning Committee is working hard to make sure Peace Camp 2015 is as much fun and as rewarding for young people as the previous 25 Peace Camps have been. We know the Peace Camp experience of non-competitive, cooperative, peace-and-justice-themed songs, stories, crafts, games and other activities remains important for Lehigh Valley children.

- Nancy Tate

From War to Peace

Moravian College held its first "From War To Peace" Conference on March 27. It was organized by the directors of Peace and Justice Studies at Moravian, Dr. Kelly Denton Borhaug and Dr. Daniel Jasper.

The Conference opened with a speech by Robert Meagher, on the weaknesses of the just war theory. Dr. Meagher implored the audience to "love veterans, but hate war." He pointed out that veterans are victims of war themselves -- the horrors of battle can kill their spirits and blacken their souls. His own older brother had been a soldier in Vietnam. As soon as the brother arrived in Saigon he threatened to shoot Robert in the knees if Robert was ever drafted into the military.

Meagher said some soldiers believe intensive desensitization to violence allows the government to plant a sort of "kill switch" in the minds of soldiers. In World War I, soldiers would not fire directly at the enemy, less than twenty percent would shoot to kill, even when under fire. Now the shoot-to-kill ratio is well above eighty percent. Meagher made his point clear: there is no such thing as a just war. War itself causes massive moral injury to veterans and citizens alike. He asked how can citizens be forced to commit atrocities overseas, and then come home and live normal lives as if nothing had even happened?

Following the keynote address, several student presentations were given, on wide ranging issues. The day ended with a panel discussion with the conference planners and Robert Meagher. They spoke about how it is nice for veterans to be remembered and honored, but the long lasting psychological damage of war cannot be undone. The men and women involved in war are forever changed, there is no perfect way to honor those who have been killed, or those who survived. A statue cannot heal a broken soul, or justify a war.

- Dylan Grubb

Lehigh Dialogue Center Awards

Nancy Tate, LEPOCO staff person, and Alan Jennings, CACLV Executive Director, were honored by the Lehigh Dialogue Center at its 12th Annual Friendship Dinner on April 29, at the Holiday Inn, Fogelsville. Based on the theme, "Peace Building During Turbulent Times," both leaders were recognized for their community justice work and asked to speak about it. Nancy and Alan were selected as local leaders who set a high standard for long-time service to issues of justice in the Lehigh Valley.

Organized in 2004, the Lehigh Dialogue Center is a non-profit, non-political organization comprised of members of the Turkish community living in the greater Lehigh Valley. They promote understanding between American and Turkish cultures. Among the outreach events hosted by the Center are the public Iftar dinners which conclude a day of fasting for practicing Muslims during Ramadan. The Dialogue Center is part of the

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Gulen Movement, a transnational religious and social movement led by Fethulla Gulen, who promotes education through private schools and universities in 180 countries. Gulen lives in Saylorsburg in self-imposed exile from his native Turkey. The Center works to promote an understanding of Turkish and Muslim culture, dialogue between their communities and local residents, and the building of Muslim schools. To help local people learn about Turkish culture, the Center promotes and subsidizes educational trips to Turkey.

LEPOCO's peace "work" often leads to an understanding of other cultures, Nancy said. Through its opposition to the Vietnam War, LEPOCO members learned about Vietnamese farming villages, Buddhist monks, their poetry, and their 1945 Constitution. She said LEPOCO's opposition to nuclear warfare helped members learn about the *Hibakusha*, the Japanese who survived the bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki and subsequently built a strong peace movement in Japan. Similarly, when more than two dozen local activists visited Nicaragua in the 1980 and 1990s, they joined the ranks of citizen diplomats.

On a similar note, but closer to home, Alan made the case that people of means in the Lehigh Valley need to reach out and help poor and underprivileged residents. Through his CACLV work, Alan created both the Second Harvest Food Bank and the Sixth Street Shelter and helped many buy their first homes or start businesses.

A video about Peace Islands Institute, an arm of the Gulen Movement, was also shown.

- Karen Berry



Newsletter of LEPOCO

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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.

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

LEPOCO Steering Committee: Terry Briscoe, Bridger Buller, Martha Christine, Julius Iwantsch (co-treasurer), Dan Miller, Janet Ney, Mary Kay O'Donnell, Jim Orben, Susie Ravitz, Scott Slingerland, Tom Stinnett (co-treasurer), Nancy Tate (ex-officio), and Amanda Zaniesienko.

Popcorn & Politics

(After Steering Committee discussion it has been decided that to facilitate participation in the Friday night movies at LEPOCO, the films will be shown on the Second Friday in July and August. This will avoid conflicts with the Fourth of July weekend and our Hiroshima-Nagasaki observance on August 6, respectively.

When there is no early-in-the-month conflict, films will continue to be shown on the First Friday.)

Friday, July 10th, 7:00 pm

"Howard Zinn: You Can't Be Neutral on a Moving Train"

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

Way back in March 2007 we showed this classic documentary at a P&P, so it seemed time to again be inspired by the witness of this impressive historian, professor, author, activist. The LEPOCO book group recently read Martin Duberman's biography of Howard Zinn, so we hope some of the readers can join this viewing and discussion. From his experiences as a bombardier pilot in WW II, to his years as an inspirational professor at Spellman College and Boston University, to his A People's History of the United States (and other important writings), to his participation in demonstrations and civil disobedience, we can all learn from and rejoice in the life of Howard Zinn (1922-2010) as presented in "You Can't Be Neutral..."

Directed by Deb Ellis & Denis Mueller. Narrated by Matt Damon. 78 minutes. 2004.

Please bring a snack or beverage to share.

Friday, August 14th, 7:00 pm

"Nuclear Savage: The Islands of Secret Project 4.1"

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

The Nuclear Zero Lawsuits filed by the Marshall Island in April 2014 are among the most important disarmament efforts underway at this time. The suits, filed in the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals in the U.S. and at the International Court of Justice, are against the world's nine nuclear-armed nations for failing to comply with their international obligations to pursue negotiations for the worldwide elimination of nuclear weapons as promised in the 1968

Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty. To understand the basis for these important suits it is helpful to know about the U.S. nuclear weapons testing near Bikini and Enewetok atolls from 1946 to 1958. "Nuclear Savage" tells that story.

Directed by Adam Horowitz. 87 minutes. 2012.

Please bring a snack or beverage to share.



LEPOCO's Annual Hiroshima-Nagasaki Observance

Hiroshima-Nagasaki at 70
Embrace Peace / Nuclear Zero

Thursday, August 6

6:30 pm

Unitarian Universalist Church of the Lehigh Valley
424 Center St., Bethlehem

with a walk to the Tondabayashi Serenity Garden (weather permitting)

A Program of Remembrance, Reflection & Hope

With readings, calls to action, poems, and music.

Call 610-691-8730 for more information.

Organized by the Stop the Wars Committee of LEPOCO with special support from the Social Action Committee of the Unitarian Universalist Church of the Lehigh Valley.

LEPOCO's Fiftieth

LEPOCO will pass the 50-year mark in December 2015. A 50th Anniversary Committee is working hard to plan a series of exciting events/ programs/efforts to observe this important milestone and further our witness for peace and justice. If you would like to join the committee, please attend the next meeting at the Peace Center on Thursday, July 16, at 4:30 pm.

If you want to give words of encouragement to this committee, the most active members are Martha Christine, Kathryn Hoffman, Steve Kraft, Susie Ravitz, Mimi Lang, and Nancy Tate.

Peace & Planet and NPT, 2015

2015 marks the 70th anniversary of the United States atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. It also marks 45 years since the first five nuclear powers agreed in Article VI of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) to undertake good faith negotiations for the elimination of their nuclear arsenals. From April 27 to May 22, the Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the NPT was held at the United Nations. The Review is held every five years to encourage more compliance with the original NPT which went into effect in 1970. The objective of the NPT is *"to prevent the spread of nuclear weapons and weapons technology, to promote cooperation in the peaceful uses of nuclear energy and to further the goal of achieving nuclear disarmament and general and complete disarmament."*

Seven eager LEPOCO members traveled to NYC on April 26th to participate in the rally: Peace & Planet Mobilization for a Nuclear Free, Peaceful, Just and Sustainable World. (The rally occurred the day before the opening of the NPT Review Conference.) 7500 people gathered with colorful posters and banners begging for a real difference in nuclear disarmament. In reality the objectives of complete disarmament have not been met as we see more countries acquiring nuclear weapons and the U.S. refurbishing our weapons to keep them current. In spite of President Obama's promise to seek a nuclear-free world, we do not find that happening.

Daniel Ellsberg kicked off the march from Union Square to the United Nations, reminding us that anyone at the gathering under the age of 70 has lived all of their lives under the threat of nuclear weapons. The crowd cheered and waved as we joined in an effort to wave good-bye to nuclear weapons. I found it a little discouraging to engage in the wave knowing that the reality is that we are actually not ridding the world of the nuclear threat. However, it was a warm and beautiful spring day and my spirit of discouragement was alleviated by the joyful participation of thousands of people from Japan who filled our hands with peace cranes at every turn. Japanese young people offered bright colors and creative banners and lively dancing. Japanese elders, some of them *hibakusha* (survivors of the atomic bombings), walked with dignified persistence. Some older women in soft pink *kinonos* were members of Code Pink.

One of the larger peace cranes handed to me said, "There is no excuse for nuclear weapons. From Japan, the only country to be hit by nuclear bombs."

- Mimi Lang

A Brotherly/Sisterly Award _____

On Monday, May 18, Susie Ravitz, Mimi Lang, Nancy Tate and Tom Stinnett, traveled to Wilkes-Barre, for the 22nd Annual Dinner of the Interfaith Resource Center for Peace & Justice, celebrating 27 years of their

local work for peace and justice. We got to visit with some of the faithful Wilkes-Barre activists who have attended many of LEPOCO's annual dinners, but we made the trip with the specific duty to accept the David Frey Community Service Award to LEPOCO from this our sister/brother organization. The award was presented "in recognition of an individual, or group, whose actions have contributed, either by direct support of the mission of the Peace and Justice Center, or by making a contribution to the wider community and to the civic or corporate cause of peace and justice."

The dinner, held at Wilkes University, featured good food, music, fellowship and a glimpse of the Center's work for peace and justice. Other awards were given at the dinner, clearly strengthening the Center's community ties. The Susan Merrill and Constance Kozel Award went to two community activists, Toni Mathis, of the Area Agency on Aging, and Peggy A. Felton, President of the Negro Women Civic League. The Student for Peace Award went to four students from St. Nicholas-St. Mary's School who have advocated for recognition of a Luzerne County educator in the 19th century, Ellen Webster Palmer, who was an advocate for young boys working in Pennsylvania's coal mines. The students had produced a play about Palmer's work.

In our acceptance remarks, Susie Ravitz talked briefly about LEPOCO's history, Mimi Lang read one of her many poems, "Give Peace A Chance, What's the Matter with That (A Tribute to LEPOCO & Dr. Seuss)," and Nancy Tate talked about our common bonds as Peace Centers, where peace seekers "can gather, learn together, and act together seeking to build the better world we all know is possible."

VFP Observes Memorial Day _____

On Memorial Day, the Lehigh Valley Chapter of Veterans for Peace (LV-VFP) gathered at 7 am, to set-up over 200 symbolic tombstones with the name and date of death for military service members from Pennsylvania who died in the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq. The tombstones and colorful wreaths were displayed in Cedar Beach Park at a busy intersection on Hamilton Blvd. This display has been at the park on Memorial Day for several years. About a dozen members and associates of LV-VFP helped with the effort -- it lasted until 4 pm. Hundreds of people saw the display as they drove by and many people stopped to read the names. Six veterans of these wars visited the display, including two who had been medics in Iraq. The two had known some of those named on the tombstones.

Veterans for Peace is always seeking new members and supporters. They meet regularly on the second Thursday of the month, immediately following the second Thursday Peace Vigil at Third & Wyandotte Sts., (south) Bethlehem. Their meetings are held at Perkins Restaurant, down the hill from the Vigil. Call Phil Reiss (610-282-8077) or Vince Stravino (610-868-6489) for more information.

Janet Goloub Will Be Missed

It was only days after Janet Goloub attended her last monthly LEPOCO Action Meeting on April 13 that we learned that her long struggle with cancer had taken a turn toward serious decline. Her participation in that meeting when her health was not near 100% was only one more example of her determination and constant acts of responsibility. It seems almost unreal to write about her struggle with cancer. One knows it took a determined effort on her part to overcome that cancer for 26 years with alternative treatments. But, one also knows that her LEPOCO friends (and her other friends) witnessed Janet's life, not as a struggle, but as vibrant, engaged, inspiring. She died on April 29. Janet was 77.

Of course she was dedicated to her children, Laura, now in Arizona, and Ivan, now in New York state, her grandchildren and her life partner, Martin Boksenbaum. But she was dedicated to so much more: she was a hiker (having completed the Appalachian Trail in the early 2000s, after several years of doing some sections each season); she supported other long-distance hikers with rides and was active in the Allentown Hiking Club; she served on committees in the Lehigh Valley Arts Council and worked for arts organizations; many know her as a classical music DJ and librarian at WDIY; she sang with three classical music choral groups.

She loved to travel and often did so with special purpose -- South Africa, a post-apartheid visit; Colombia, in a delegation to the Peace Community of San José de Apartadó; Haiti, as an election observer; post-communist Russia, having studied Russian in college -- to list a few from her long list of adventures. I joined her in 2009 for a road trip to the demonstration to Close the SOA in Georgia, the year when several of us joined Sarah Snider to remember Joe DeRaymond for his many trips to that demonstration, just months after his death.

She was a stalwart member of LEPOCO for over three decades, serving on the Steering Committee, presenting Share the Wealth workshops, pushing forward the work of the Americas Solidarity Group (ASG), organizing Art Raffles, and much more. So there is no question that she will be missed, is indeed missed already.

Her family held two lovely gatherings honoring her memory -- a graveside service on May 3, (there was a green burial) and an afternoon of music and sharing on May 10, at the Rodale Room, Allentown Symphony Hall.

Martin Boksenbaum, Janet's life partner, is offering to help the ASG continue the important peace solidarity work with the Americas in Janet's memory. You are invited to do the same. The group will meet next on Friday, July 3, at 10 am, at the Peace Center.

The family encouraged donations to the following groups in Janet's memory: Alliance for Sustainable Communities; Lehigh Gap Nature Center; Lehigh Valley Arts Council; Mock Turtle Marionette Theatre; New Arts Program, Kutztown; Pennsylvania Sinfonia Orchestra; Touchstone Theatre; WDIY; Godfrey Daniels; LEPOCO.

- Nancy Tate

Remembering Ray Sommerville, A Master of Joy

Only days after Janet Goloub's death we learned that Ray Sommerville had died on April 22, also after a long battle with cancer. He was 59.

Many will remember Ray for his joyful spirit. He and Monica lived in the Lehigh Valley for over three decades, active in progressive and church circles, especially where those circles overlapped. Ray was involved with folk musicians through Godfrey Daniels, WDIY and various festivals; he did landscaping and carpentry; he worked for the art coop, Out of Our Hands; and he made a major commitment to the raising of his daughters, Heather and Amy. While he attended LEPOCO Steering Committee meetings it was not unusual for his daughters to be with him working on their homework or napping. Ray and Monica have been active supporters of LEPOCO for over 25 years. They moved their home and business (Sommerville Pottery) to the Finger Lakes area of New York several years ago, but often visited the Lehigh Valley. They have made regular (and very popular) contributions of pottery to LEPOCO's Art Raffle every year. A lively and touching memorial service was held for Ray in Bethlehem on May 9 -- a major theme being Ray's dedication, in the last few years of his life, to his new grandson, Bo.

- Nancy Tate

First Tuesday Book Group

The First Tuesday LEPOCO Book Club will meet on July 7th, when they will discuss "*The Reluctant Spy: My Secret Life in the CIA's War on Terror*," by John Keriakou (co-authored by Michael Ruby). Published in 2009, this book details his years in the CIA and the legal problems that developed after he talked about the CIA torture program with ABC News.

The Book Group will not meet in August. In September they will discuss "*Orphan Train: A Novel*," by Christina Baker Kline.

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.

Peace Pole to Be Replaced

The Peace Pole that LEPOCO placed in Rose Garden Park, Bethlehem, in 1993, has become weak. The Steering Committee has decided to purchase a new Peace Pole that will be placed at the same site with the assistance of the Bethlehem Parks Department. We hope to hold a dedication gathering for the new pole after it is planted. The languages (May peace prevail on earth.) on the new Pole will be English, Spanish, Lenni Lenape, Russian, Chinese, Arabic, Hebrew, and Japanese.

Vietnam War: *The Power of Protest*

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Smith as an antiwar veteran, and Ron Dellums reflecting connections with civil rights, and Pat Schroeder from the inside of Congress. An engaging collective conversation followed. (These four talks were aired on "Democracy Now!" on May 25, Memorial Day. You can view them at www.democracynow.org.)

Participants then selected one of fourteen "break-out" discussion sessions spanning a range of interests. The conference continued with afternoon "mini-plenaries" focusing on topics from "American Foreign Policy: From Then to Now," "Opposing our Country's Agenda: Activism in Social Change," and reflections on the personal impact of antiwar actions to the invasive role of government surveillance, the media and the war, and "Creating a Coalition." Panelists included a host of names familiar to activists from (and since) that era: Michael Klare, Phyllis Bennis, Dan Ellsberg, Todd Gitlin, Rosalio Munoz, David Harris, Mark Rudd, Susan Schnall, Liz Holtzman, Bernardine Dohrn, John Conyers, Frances Fitzgerald, Vivian Rothstein, Leslie Cagan, and Alan Canfora.

The closing plenary featured a thoughtful speech by Tom Hayden, who deftly pulled together the various strains of the conference while sharing his thoughts about the systemic challenges facing progressive activists today.

The conference then engaged in a boisterous march through Washington, D.C., streets to the MLK memorial where remarks by Julian Bond, Eleanor Holmes Norton, a rousing address by Margaret Prescod, and singing led by Holly Near highlighted the ceremony emceed by Danny Glover. We adjourned to a dinner of delicious Vietnamese, Laotian, and Cambodian food. A Vietnamese embassy official read a moving letter from Vietnam that lauded the efforts of the antiwar movement in solidarity with the people of Vietnam.

The closing program, emceed by Amy Goodman and Heather Booth, included rousing music by Holly Near, Emma's Revolution, David and Jack Morris as well as poetry readings. I think the others shared my feeling of warm reconnection with activists of old, the poignancy of reflecting on those who've passed on -- like Dave Dellinger, Howard Zinn, and William Sloan Coffin, among others -- as well as some hope in the vibrant presence of younger activists. It was good to come together.

- Ted Morgan

Tax Day 2015 _____

A lot of time has passed since the last LEPOCO Newsletter. That time included LEPOCO's day of leafletting at local post offices on April 15, Tax Day. Twenty people helped with this effort that included at least two hours each of leafletting at ten local post offices from Whitehall to Easton, Stroudsburg to Coopersburg, and in between. Over 1000 leaflets were distributed.

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The response from the public was mostly positive, but some few postal employees questioned our presence. They were apparently not familiar with their own regulations that clearly allow for such activities.

The excellent pie chart flyer produced annually by the War Resisters League is full of information like a section of this year's flyer that describes the reality of the U.S. Nuclear Weapons Budget (2015-2024) totaling \$348 billion or \$95 million per day -- including tax dollars spent on new bombers, submarines, intercontinental ballistic missiles, and increased production of nuclear materials. The flyer notes how this reality of nuclear weapons build-up falls far short of the promise heard in 2009 when President Barak Obama won the Nobel Peace for his commitment to a world without nuclear weapons.

We still have over 100 of the pie-chart flyers. Please let us know if you would like some copies. Distributing these flyers is one small effort in making the "turn toward peace."

Thank you to the Tax Day leafletters: Monica McAghon, John Zachmann, Addison Bross, Tom Ulrich, Peter Christine, Nancy Tate, Sheila Clever, Susie Ravitz, Art Ravitz, Renate Brosky, Tom Stinnett, Barbara Diamond, Adam Heidebrink-Bruno, Vince Stravino, Virginia Schimmel, Mimi Lang, Terry Briscoe, Ed Liona, Dan Miller, and James Orben.

Staff Changes

LEPOCO is experiencing another transition. Our newest staff-person resigned unexpectedly in mid-April. At this time three people are working part-time at the Peace Center, Nancy Tate, Tim H. Morgan, and Amanda Zaniesienko. The Steering Committee is working to achieve some stability.

Peace-A-Thon

A sunny and pleasantly cool day provided perfect conditions for LEPOCO's annual Peace-A-Thon on May 23, the Saturday of Memorial Day weekend. Seventeen riders, thirteen walkers, and seven volunteer staff participated in the event which has been held in one format or another for over 30 years. This year we rode and walked in celebration of Jim Orben's birthday and using the birthday theme Jim was able to collect the most pledges for the event -- over \$375 -- from his friends including many local Quakers. Also of note, Bob Riggs completed the bike route only days before his 87th birthday.

The generous pledges raised by riders and walkers totaled \$2311 (only around \$150 of that total is yet to be paid). Thank you to all who participated and donated.

The Peace-A-Thon Planning Committee set the date for the 2016 event as May 28. If you would like to help with planning for next year, please contact LEPOCO.

Witnessing for Peace In Times of War

The Wisdom of Phyllis Bennis

On June 11th CODEPINK.org published the following analysis by Phyllis Bennis, Director of the New Internationalism Project at the Institute for Policy Studies in Washington, DC.

"Almost nine months after President Obama admitted that 'we don't have a strategy yet' to challenge the Islamic State (ISIS) -- and just days after he said he still had 'no complete Iraq strategy' -- the non-strategy suddenly has a name: *escalation*." The Obama administration is sending additional troops to Iraq and building "a new U.S. military base in restive Anbar province to house them -- and potentially many more..."

"Already, we've seen that the U.S. arming of the anti-ISIS forces has ended up strengthening ISIS. On June 2, news broke that the Iraq military had managed to lose 2300 armored Humvees, at least 40 M1A1 tanks, 74,000 machine guns, and 52 or more howitzers, mainly to the Islamic State..."

"While Obama has often said 'there is no military solution' to the ISIS crisis, the U.S. strategy has relied almost solely on military action. Here are some more effective non-military steps the U.S. could take:

- 1) Freeze the bank accounts of ISIS funders.
- 2) Negotiate partnerships with villages where oil pipelines run to cut ISIS oil revenues.
- 3) Work with partners in Europe and Turkey to stem the flow of Western recruits.
- 4) In Syria, convene rebel groups, the regime, civil society activist, and regional players like Turkey, Iraq, Russia and the Gulf States to restart negotiations for a political solution to the war.
- 5) In Iraq, condition all further assistance on the development of a more inclusive political order that protects the country's minorities.
- 6) Link nuclear negotiations with Iran to a pledge from Tehran to rein in the Iranian-backed militias most likely to sow sectarian discord in Iraq.
- 7) Dramatically increase support for the United Nations' badly underfunded humanitarian assistance programs for both Syrian and Iraqi refugees..."

Please share these real solutions in your messages to The White House (202-456-1111), to your members of Congress, and to your friends and family.

Kathy Kelly & the Afghan Peace Volunteers

Kathy Kelly of Creative Voices for Nonviolence (CVN) has recently been in prison in the U.S. for non-violently opposing drone murders -- people killed in far-off lands by bombs fired from drones piloted in the U.S. CVN has worked with Afghan Peace Volunteers (APVs) in Afghanistan for many years. So in early June, Kathy Kelly was out of prison and back in Afghanistan visiting the Peace Volunteers. Here are some quotes from her report published June 9, by CommonDreams.org.

"Last night, they (the APVs) told us about the jarring and frightening events that marked the past few months of their lives in Kabul..." -- "bomb explosions, nearby, awakened them..., thieves had ransacked their home..., a notorious warlord's statement condemning a human rights demonstration in which...community members had participated..., a young woman, an Islamic scholar named Fakhunda, was falsely accused in a street argument of desecrating the Koran, after which, to the roared approval of a frenzied mob of perhaps two thousand men, members of the crowd, with apparent police collusion, beat her to death. Our young friends quietly sort through their emotions in the face of inescapable and often overwhelming violence..."

"A...Physicians for Social Responsibility report calculated that since 2001 in Iraq and Afghanistan, U.S. wars have killed at least 1.3 million... civilians. The report chides U.S. political elites for attributing ongoing violence in Afghanistan and Iraq to various types of internecine conflicts 'as if the resurgence and brutality of such conflicts is unrelated to the destabilization caused by decades of military intervention...'

"Yet these young people (in APVs) steadfastly respond to their own traumas not by seeking revenge but by finding ways to help people in Kabul whose circumstances are worse than theirs, particularly 750,000 Afghans living...in squalid refugee camps.

"The APVs are running an alternative school for street kids in Kabul. Little children who are the main breadwinners for their families find no time to learn... when spending more than eight hours daily working in the streets of Kabul..."

APVs now have 80 street children enrolled in their every-Friday school, and hope for 100 children soon.

Other Witnesses

+++ The Vatican officially recognized the state of Palestine in a new treaty finalized on May 13... +++ Rep. Matt Cartwright was among 151 members of the House of Representatives who signed a letter in May that endorses the framework agreement between the P5+1 countries and Iran, urges negotiations be given time and space to succeed, and warns against war with Iran...

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Monthly Peace Vigil

4:30 - 5:30 pm; Second Thursdays

July 9th & August 13th & September 10

Our wars continue & expand. Please help witness for peace.

3rd & Wyandotte Sts., (south) Bethlehem
(at south end of Hill-to-Hill Bridge)

Contact: Vince Stravino 610-216-8103

LEPOCO Financial Report 2014

Revenues, Expenses and Changes in Fund Balance	2014
Membership Dues, Fund Appeals, Pledges	\$30,689.69
Boutique & SERRV Sales (net)	\$498.72
Annual Dinner (net)	\$3,324.87
Specail Gift	\$80,000.00
Art Raffle (net)	\$844.00
Bike-Walk-A-Thon (net)	\$2,108.39
Yard Sale (net)	\$560.03
Dividends and Interest	\$113.88
Fran Dreisbach Birthday Party	\$3243.82
10,000 Villages Community Shopping Event	\$295.97
Popcorn & Politics Movies	\$47.08
Copier Donations	\$16.47
Miscellaneous	\$58.04
Total Revenue	\$121,800.96
Contributions to Others (Ads for NAACP & Peace Center)	\$60.00
Salaries, Taxes & Benefits to Employees	\$24,691.25
Rent, Electric, Telephone	\$5,898.62
Insurance (Fire, Liability & Worker's Comp)	\$1,215.00
Internet Service Provider	\$600.00
Other Computer Fees (Domain Fees, E-Mail, Virus Protection, Software)	\$206.63
Paypal Fees	\$62.33
Printing and Postage (Newsletter, Bulk Mail Fee, etc.)	\$2,973.53
P&P's (Potluck & Politics)	\$169.47
Fairs & Festivals (Pridefest, Earth Day, Vegfest, Buckingham Peace Fair)	\$126.01
Fund Appeals	\$430.16
Other Program & Events (ML King, H-N, Tax Day, Peace Singers, etc)	\$189.97
Supplies (Office, Copier, Printer, Paper)	\$1,125.94
Repairs (Office, Risograph, Copier & Computer)	\$1,277.45
Misc. Office Expenses (Mowing Grass, Washing Windows)	\$148.00
Miscellaneous (Working Groups, etc.)	\$23.31
Total Expenses	\$39,197.67
Excess or (Loss) for Year	\$82,603.29
Fund Balances at the Beginning of the Year	\$8,940.20
Change in Investment Value	\$481.51
Fund Balance at the End of the Year	\$92,025.00

2014 Fund Balances	Beginning of Year	End of Year
Cash, Savings and Investments	\$13,738.98	\$98,188.22
Liabilities	\$4,798.78	\$6,163.22
Net Assets and Fund Balances	\$8,940.20	\$92,025.00

Witness for Peace in Times of War

Women Peacemakers Cross DMZ

On May 24th, International Women's Day for Peace & Disarmament, a 30-women peace delegation (from 15 countries) crossed the Demilitarized Zone dividing North and South Korea. Dressed in white and wearing rainbow-colored scarves, they had wanted to cross on foot, but authorities would not allow it. Organizer Christine Ahn, a Korean-American peace activist, said the crossing was a success and a "historic event" despite the crossing being made by bus. The delegation which included Gloria Steinem, two Nobel Peace laureates (Mairead Maguire of Northern Ireland and Leymah Gbowee of Liberia), and three leaders from CODEPINK, met with women on both sides of the border and called for replacing the 62-year-old Korean War Armistice Agreement with a Peace Accord.

Transform Now Plowshares Released

After two years in prison, the three peace activists known as the Transform Now Plowshares were released from prison in mid-May, after their convictions were overturned. The three, Sister Megan Rice, now 85, Vietnam veteran Michael Walli, and carpenter Greg Boertje-Obed, broke into the Y-12 nuclear facility in Oak Ridge, Tennessee, on July 28, 2012, cutting through four security fences before splashing human blood on the walls of the nuclear facility and spray-painting messages like "Woe to an Empire of Blood."

Sister Megan Rice, Michael Walli and their attorney, Bill Quigley, were interviewed on Democracy Now.org on May 19.

Close Drone Relay Station

A campaign is underway urging the government of Germany to order the closure of the U.S. drone satellite relay station at Ramstein Air Base, a station that is central to U.S. drone attacks globally. The U.S. campaign is part of an effort launched by anti-drone war organizers in Germany who are rallying around the court case of Faisal bin Ali Jaber (opened on May 27). Ali Jaber lost family members in 2012 to a U.S. drone attack. The suit seeks to force the German government to close the Ramstein relay station under a provision of German law that

allows people to seek redress if they have suffered harm from activities generated on German soil, in this case drone execution without due process.

Other Witnesses

+++ In February, the first-ever TV commercial about drone murders was aired showing some of the uncensored truth about drone attacks. It ran for one week on cable channels in Las Vegas, NV, in the area of the Creech AFB drone control center. See www.knowdrones.com... +++ Drone pilots are burning out from the demands of the job and the Air Force is cutting back on drone flights. See Morning Call 6/18/15 and NYT 6/16/15... +++ The families of an anti-al-Qaeda cleric and a police officer killed by a U.S. drone strike in Yemen have filed a lawsuit asking a U.S. court to acknowledge their deaths were "unlawful." The lawsuit seeks to clear the victims' names, not obtain monetary damages... +++ The small group that gathered at LEPOCO on June 5th, to view *Unmanned: America's Drone Wars*, a documentary investigating the impact of U.S. drone strikes in Pakistan, felt this film should be seen by more people. LEPOCO has a copy that can be loaned to individuals or groups for viewing. Call 610-691-8730.

Stop the FERCuS

In late May, Beyond Extreme Energy, a national coalition, took their "Stop the FERCuS" campaign to the headquarters of the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC), Washington, DC, for more than a week. Clowns, puppets, silent vigils, a 18-foot-high metal tripod blocking traffic, a mini-occupy, and a 50-foot banner all helped disturb business as usual at the agency responsible for so much of the build-up in "fracked" natural gas infrastructure in the U.S. -- much of the gas headed for the export market. The person atop the metal tripod said, "FERC is an industry-dominated rubber stamp on behalf of the Federal Government (approving) any energy project, no matter how dangerous."

People participated from many states where this infrastructure is destroying or threatening to destroy so much that people hold dear, including New Jersey and Pennsylvania. Tom Stinnett and I (Nancy Tate) joined the final day of action. We were especially impressed with the beautiful 50-foot banner. You can see pictures of the banner at Beyond Extreme Energy on Facebook.com. Here are the inspiring words that are on the banner.

The United States of Fracking. We are united with the Dine and Hopi whose ancestors, land and ancient buildings are threatened by earthquakes.

We are united by pipelines and poisons -- by the feeling we are losing everything.

We are united with Minnesota and Wisconsin, where frack sand mining fills the air with toxic silica dust.

We are united with parents in Butler, PA, whose kids go to school next to frack waste containment ponds. We are united

(continued on page 10)

9 LEPOCO Newsletter / June 2015

Stand Up & Speak Out!

June 27 & July 25 & August 29

Saturdays, 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, Silvex Rd, near intersection of Rt. 412 & I-78)

Call 610-691-8730

Bits & Pieces

☺ On May 7th, **Robert Jay Lifton**, the American psychiatrist, was interviewed on Democracy Now! He spoke with wisdom about climate change, the death penalty, and torture. He recently wrote comparing the nuclear freeze movement of the 1980s with the climate justice movement of today: "People came to feel that it was deeply wrong, perhaps evil, to engage in nuclear war, and are coming to an awareness that it is deeply wrong, perhaps evil, to destroy our habitat and create a legacy of suffering for our children and grandchildren." You can watch the inspiring interview with Robert Jay Lifton at www.democracynow.org.

☺ At least one local municipality has **stopped plans to build a warehouse**. Lower Nazareth struck down Liberty Property Trust's plans to build twin warehouses along Route 191. This, while so few municipalities find the courage and creativity to even question the massive loss of open space to these behemoth warehouse buildings, not to mention the hazards of the increased tractor trailer traffic they bring. Go Lower Nazareth!

☺ A recent letter to *The Morning Call* by a Bethlehem Township resident urged his township commissioners to also find courage and prevent a development that will destroy the beautiful **Green Pond** and the habitat it provides for so many migratory birds. You can learn more at savegreenpond.org.

☺ Northampton Generating Co. has asked state regulators to significantly **increase the limit on the amount of lead it can emit** into the atmosphere. The company's power plant is located in Northampton, on the border with Allen Township. It

burns primarily waste coal. A public hearing will be held by the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection regarding this request on Tuesday, June 30, at 6 pm, at the Northampton Community Center, 1601 Laubach Ave., Northampton. The Clean Air Council encourages all area residents to attend this hearing since the lead pollution will affect "everyone in the region." They also state that lead pollution, and other heavy metals, are "significantly associated with autism spectrum disorder." For more information contact Russell Zerbo at the Clean Air Council, 215-567-4004 x130.

☺ **Jane Fonda** published a letter in *TIME* saying that Shell Oil's use of the melting Arctic as an opportunity for profit is "obscene."

Five "Grannies" (the oldest 92) said "sHELL No!" to Shell Oil's Polar Pioneer moored at the Seattle Port, and blocked entrances to the port on June 9. They were arrested after several hours of a successful blockade.

And, "**kayaktivists**" surrounded the Polar Pioneer in their kayaks in the Seattle Port. Everyone pointed to the fact that leading scientists have said that Arctic oil must be kept in the ground if we want to avoid the worst of catastrophic climate change.

Please call the White House (202-456-1111) and urge President Obama to refuse Shell Oil's plans to drill in the Arctic.

The United States of Fracking

(continued from page 9)

with West Virginia, where waste is dumped into creeks that feed rivers that supply drinking water.

We are united with 9-11 first responders who moved to Minisink to heal their lungs, only to find air polluted by a compressor station.

We are united with the stars that can no longer be seen because of blinding light of gas flares; and, with animals losing their habitat.

We are united with New York State where an explosive pipeline will pass dangerously close to Indian Point nuclear power plant.

We are united with California, where fracking does not stop, in spite of drought.

We are united with Port Ambrose, Cove Point, Coos Bay, where liquefied natural gas terminals are imposed through scamming our democracy -- and may explode.

We are united with everyone who wants a safe permanent job and a real home, not temporary employment and residence in a "man-camp" in the Dakotas.

We are united with heroes arrested for speaking out against fracking. We are united with generations of those oppressed.

The Federal Energy Rubber Stamp Commission: FERC, is united with the oil and gas industry. FERC is supposed to protect us. They protect industry.

But if we unite against oil and gas, we can be united by the air, the water, the land we share.

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 1963, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. spoke at the funeral service for three of the children killed in the bombing at the Sixteenth Street Baptist Church in Birmingham, Alabama. As usual his words were eloquent and powerful. One sentence is particularly meaningful in light of the murders at Emanuel African Methodist Episcopal Church, in Charleston, South Carolina: "They (the children that died) say to us that we must be concerned not merely about who murdered them, but about the system, the way of life, the philosophy which produced the murders."

☪ The 2015 booklet, "Sustainable Lehigh Valley," produced by the Alliance for Sustainable Communities is now available at LEPOCO. The free annual publication is a directory of organizations and businesses that promote sustainable communities.

☪ LEPOCO will be participating in at least two festivals in August – the VegFest, Sat., August 22, in Bethlehem, and the Pride in the Park Festival on Sun., August 23, in Allentown. If you can help staff a booth for LEPOCO at either event, please call 610-691-8730.

☪ The Rodale Institute is sponsoring two Organic Farmers Markets in Allentown, both on Saturdays through October 31. They will be held 10 am- 2 pm at St. Luke's Evangelical Church, 417 N. 7th St., and 8 am-Noon, at the YM/YWCA, 425 S. 15th St., For more information see www.rodaleinstitute.org.

☪ In the midst of repeated votes around Fast Track legislation for the Trans Pacific Partnership (TPP) trade agreement, a coalition of national organizations delivered 2 million petition signatures! to Capitol

Hill in early June calling on elected officials to reject Fast Track and the TPP.

☪ Mennonite Central Committee staff and partners are seeking 15 participants for a week-long learning tour in Pennsylvania focused on the **challenges and complexities of the U.S. criminal justice system.** The tour will run Sept. 20-26, at a cost of \$440/person, covering on-site transportation, meals, lodging, and educational materials. For more information contact Chantelle Todman Moore at 267-358-8208.

☪ In the last newsletter we resurrected a name from the past, Todd Garcia, on the Annual Dinner photo page, when the correct name should have been **Todd Carpien**, pictured as a member of the Peace Singers. Apologies to both Todd's.

☪ **George Motsay** of Upper Merion Township writes regular letters to the editor worthy of our attention. In a recent letter he sought mercy for Sgt. Bowe Bergdahl who faces possible court-martial for his actions while in the U.S. Army in Afghanistan. George Motsay wrote that Bowe Bergdahl "needs help, not harm."

☪ Some Pennsylvania legislators are frustrated with Gov. Wolf for his action halting executions in this state until the state can verify that it has a reliable process. That frustration led to a House Judiciary Committee Hearing on the issue on June 11. **David Rose and Lloyd Steffen** traveled to Harrisburg, hoping they would be able to speak. They were unable to speak, but did submit statements of concern about the death penalty to the Judiciary Committee.

☪ "Destroying What Remains," is an article by Dahr Jamail, published May 21st at Truth-out.org. The article describes U.S. Navy war games underway in the Gulf of Alaska this summer amid protests from local communities concerned about environmental damage. The Navy's live bombing runs will detonate tens of thousands of pounds of toxic munitions and use active sonar in one of the most pristine places left on Earth. The region that will be affected includes critical habitat for all five wild Alaskan salmon species and 377 other species of marine life. Dahr Jamail was also interviewed on Democracy Now! on June 16.

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

Thursday, July 2, 9:30 am: **Stop the Wars Committee Meeting** (formerly Nuclear Abolition Sisters) at the home of Susie Ravitz in Easton. Call 610-253-2522 for directions.

Friday, July 3, 10 am: **Americas Solidarity Group** meeting at LEPOCO Peace Center, Bethlehem.

Monday, July 7, 11 am: **L.V. Committee Against State Killing (LV-CASK) Meeting** at the LEPOCO Peace Center.

Thursdays, July 9 and August 13, 6 pm: **L.V. Veterans For Peace Meeting** at Perkins Restaurant, 3rd & Brodhead, south Bethlehem. Call Phil Reiss 610-282-8077 for more info.

Mondays, July 13 and August 10, 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 meetings of the Peace Camp Planning Committee, LEPOCO Peace Singers, Newsletter Planning Group, Peace-A-Thon Planning Committee, or more information about 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.



Lehigh-Pocono Committee of Concern

313 W. Fourth St., Bethlehem, PA 18015
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Remembering Janet Goloub
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Bits & Pieces

Stand Up & Speak Out!

Saturdays

June 27 & July 25 & August 29

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, Silvex Rd.
near intersection of Rt. 412 & I-78)

Call 610-691-8730.

Peace Camp! Peace Camp!

July 27-31, 2015

"Young People Making Peace
Summer Day Camp"

(see page 1)

Monthly Peace Vigil

4:30 - 5:30 pm; Second Thursdays

July 9th & August 13th

Our wars continue and expand.

Please help witness for peace.

3rd & Wyandotte Sts., Bethlehem

Contact: Vince Stravino 610-216-8103

Hiroshima-Nagasaki at 70
Embrace Peace / Nuclear Zero

Thursday, August 6, 6:30 pm

Unitarian Universalist Church
of the Lehigh Valley

424 Center St., Bethlehem

with a walk to the Tondabayashi Serenity Garden
(weather permitting)

A Program of Remembrance,
Reflection & Hope

(see page 3)