

April-May
2016

Vol. 51 No. 2



Newsletter of **LEPOCO**

Lehigh-Pocono Committee of Concern

May 19: Concert for Peace



Music has long played a significant role in the peace movement, and LEPOCO continues the tradition with, "A Concert for Peace" on Thursday, May 19.

This benefit is the latest event in the year-long celebration of LEPOCO's 50th anniversary, and will feature three outstanding musical performers.

Anne Hills (annehills.com) is a nationally renowned singer and songwriter. Tom Paxton wrote that she is "such an exquisite singer that it's understandable that people might be swept up in the pure beauty of her voice and thereby overlook her writing. That would be a mistake... She is quite simply one of my absolute favorite songwriters."

Steve Brosky (stevebrosky.com) is an Allentown native known as a performer (folk, jazz, blues and rock), vocalist, songwriter, author and bandleader. He will be appearing in a trio with long-time collaborators Jimmy Meyer and Suavek Zaniesienko.

Dave Fry (davefrymusic.com), folk troubadour and founder of Godfrey Daniels coffeehouse, has been a fixture in the Lehigh Valley music scene for decades. His repertoire ranges from silly kids' songs to folk classics.

The venue for this exciting event is the Charles Brown Ice House, 50 River St., Sand Island, Bethlehem. Doors open at 6:30 pm, and the show is slated to start at 7 pm. There is some parking outside the Ice House and more across the Sand Island Bridge at the City Fairgrounds.

Advance tickets are \$25 and are available:

By mail or in person at the LEPOCO Peace Center, 313 W. Fourth St, Bethlehem, 18015 (610-691-8730). Cash and checks accepted.

On-line at <https://go.active.calendar.com/lepoco> or follow the link from the LEPOCO web site, www.lepoco.org. Pay by credit card (secure server) or PayPal account. A small fee applies for the convenience.

Cash and check sales in person during regular hours at the following locations: Godfrey Daniels, 7 E. 4th St., Bethlehem (610-867-2390); Deja Brew Coffee House & Deli, 101 W. 4th St., Bethlehem (610-865-2739);

and, Nature's Way Market, 143 Northampton St., Easton (610-253-0940).

We also have a sponsor participation ticket available on-line or from the LEPOCO Peace Center for \$150. This will boost the fundraising aspect of the event and includes four admissions (invite some friends!) and recognition in the program.

Finally, limited-income tickets are available from the LEPOCO Peace Center only for \$5 to whatever you can afford. This offer is limited to LEPOCO members and must be purchased in advance.

All tickets at the door, even if you have made a reservation but not paid in advance, will be \$35.

So mark the date, get your tickets, and join a lot of LEPOCO friends for this thrilling evening of folk, blues and rock music.

- Steve Kraft

Peace Camp as Prevention



Many people think it makes a lot of sense to eat right and exercise, as opposed to waiting until "something goes wrong" with your body and then trying to fix it. The same situation of prevention being better than desperately searching for a cure holds true for peacemakers. That is why LEPOCO has offered Peace Camp each summer for 27 years.

We teach children the ways of peace in the hope that they will then choose to be part of local and world peacemaking as they grow older. The results can be seen immediately, in their classrooms, on teams and on playgrounds across the Lehigh Valley. Over more than a quarter of a century we've seen past Peace Campers coming back to help with Peace Camp itself and also going on into peacemaking careers and lifestyles.

Join the fun and extend peace in the world by volunteering at this year's Peace Camp, July 18 - 22, held at First Presbyterian Church, Allentown. This year adult volunteers will need child abuse clearances, but they're easy to get and we'll help you. Don't miss out on a very interactive week of fun and learning for kids in Kindergarten to kids in their 80s. Registration forms for campers and volunteer interest forms are both enclosed with this newsletter.

-Donna Hartmann

War Tax Resisters Meeting in PA

May 13-15 (Friday-Sunday), NWTRCC (National War Tax Resistance Coordinating Committee) will hold a national meeting in Lansdowne, PA, for war tax resisters, friends and supporters. There will be a "Poverty Reality Tour in a War Economy," taking participants into Philadelphia, led by the poor People's Economic Human Rights Campaign, reports and stories from tax season actions; a report from Jason Rawn who just returned from two months of networking with activists in Asia, including meeting with people on Jeju Island, Korea, and Okinawa, Japan; a workshop on WTR 101, for those new to war tax resistance; and other discussions and workshops. For more information or to sign up see www.nwtrcc.org/programsandevents.

Drones: A Tool of Assassination

Drones are in the news again and not because they are being grounded for their use in war crimes.

- The Horsham Air Guard Station, one of 12 drone command centers in the U.S., became operational on April 3. No drones are located at the base, but the staff at Horsham directs MX-9 Reaper drones on surveillance and strike missions in others parts of the world. A story in "The Intelligencer" (Doylestown), on April 7, announced the Center's launch, but did not indicate where the drones directed from the Horsham base are operating.

The article also reported on the regular peace vigils at Horsham that have been ongoing since the plans to open the drone command center were announced in March 2013. Bob Smith of the Brandywine Peace Community, organizers of the last Saturday of the month vigils, was quoted, "Our immediate goal is to stop the Horsham center. We haven't done that which is a tragedy." The demonstrations have brought attention to the "reality of drone warfare. Drone warfare is at the center of endless war policy causing thousands of unintended casualties."

The next peace vigil at Horsham will be Saturday, April 30. Details are on the back page of this newsletter. Please consider joining the Lehigh Valley delegation.

- The new film, Eye In the Sky, is playing at local theaters. The "thriller" gets good movie ratings, but those who mourn our use of drones as tools of assassination see the movie differently. They say the movie distorts the reality of targeted killings by armed drones. A flyer produced by KnowDrones.com states: "The premise that the American, British and Israeli targeted killing programs are operated on absolute certain identification of combatants and observe strict protocols avoiding civilian casualties is Hollywood reality. But the drone operations of the U.S. military and CIA are secret, and there is no generally recognized definition of 'civilian.' Our government uses the term 'militant' to mean: all military-age males -- in some cases as young

as 12 -- in a strike zone, unless there is 'explicit intelligence posthumously proving them innocent.

"...The Obama Administration has so far used drones in and bombed seven predominantly Muslim countries: Afghanistan, Pakistan, Yemen, Somalia, Libya, Iraq and Syria."

- On April 8th, "Democracy Now!" reported that Afghan officials had said that at least 17 civilians had been killed by U.S. drone strikes on April 7. The first strike hit the truck of a local elder en route to resolve a local land dispute -- killing the elder and 11 others. The second drone strike killed two people collecting the bodies of the twelve killed in the first strike. The third drone strike killed three more who had come to see what had happened.

- June 24-25, Pennsylvanians and others will gather for a conference, Faithful Witness In a Time of Endless War: Drone Warfare and God's Call to Peacemaking, at Christopher Dock High School, in Lansdale. Scheduled speakers include Ray McGovern, Medea Benjamin and Shane Claiborne.

Check out the LEPOCO website at www.lepoco.org for a Calendar of Events, Newsletter Archive, & More.

Sign up for LEPOCO e-mail weekly updates by calling 610-691-8730, or by writing to lepoco@fast.net. You can also sign up to receive the newsletter by email.



Newsletter of LEPOCO
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Annual dues are:

Regular Member	\$35
Limited Income Member	\$ 5
Household Membership	\$50
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, Amanda Zaniesienko.

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

LEPOCO Steering Committee: Olivia Arena-Miller, Terry Briscoe, Martha Christine, Julius Iwantsch (co-treasurer), Nancy Johnston, Dan Miller, Janet Ney, Jim Orben, Susie Ravitz, Scott Slingerland, Tom Stinnett (co-treasurer), Nancy Tate (ex-officio), and Amanda Zaniesienko.

Potluck/Popcorn & Politics

Sunday, May 1st, 6 pm

Troy E. Spier

"Protect People Not Borders: The Global Refugee Crisis"

A LEPOCO Potluck & Politics event at the
Lehigh Valley Friends Meetinghouse

4116 Bath Pike (Rt. 512), Bethlehem (18020), 1/2 mile north of Rt. 22

Troy Spier spent three months last fall as a volunteer humanitarian aid worker in the Republic of Macedonia and on Lesbos Island, Greece. He is continuing to work on resettlement-related issues now that he has returned to the U.S. and he is giving talks about the refugee crisis in Europe. Troy Spier, a Berks County native, is a second-year doctoral student in Linguistics at Tulane University who has been working as an adjunct instructor at Reading Area Community College this spring. Because he will be returning to New Orleans at the end of May, we are especially glad that he is able to report on his experiences at this P&P.

Please bring some food to share for the potluck dinner at 6:00 pm.

The presentation and discussion should begin shortly after 6:30 pm.

Friday, May 6th, 7 pm

Tangerines

A Popcorn & Politics Film projected on the big screen
at the LEPOCO Peace Center, 313 W. 4th St., (south) Bethlehem.

This film is the first Estonian movie ever nominated for a foreign-language Oscar. The film carries a pacifist message as it examines wartime realities and what it means to be human. It comes highly recommended by our post-film discussion leader, Kathryn Hoffman, and by Bob Smith of the Brandywine Peace Community. The movie is about the 1992 conflict between the former Soviet countries of Georgia and Abkhazia, and a nearby neutral Estonian community, whose residents mostly flee. But, an older carpenter and his worried friend stay behind in an attempt to salvage a bountiful tangerine crop. One reviewer describes the movie as "simply told -- though never simplistic."

Directed by Zaza Urushadze. 87 minutes. 2013.

Post-film discussion led by Kathryn Hoffman.

Please bring a snack or beverage to share.



Book Club

The First Tuesday LEPOCO Book Club will meet on May 3rd, to discuss Alexander Cockburn's, "Kill Chain: Drones & the Rise of High Tech Assassins." Reviewers say that "Kill Chain," is the essential history of drone warfare. It reveals how powerful interests turned the Pentagon from piloted aircraft and soldiers on the ground to killing by remote control and the devastating damage that has resulted from assassinations by remote control.

The book group meets at the Bethlehem Wegmans, just off Route 512, about 1/2 mile north of Route 22. Those joining the discussion can get food and/or drink on the first floor and join the meeting at the second floor table.

On June 7th, the group will discuss "Black Prophetic Fire," by Cornel West in dialogue with and edited by Christa Buschendorf.

For more information contact Mimi Lang at 610-866-2407.

Peace-A-Thon Coming Soon

Imagine that you can help create a better world by:

- ☀ Getting healthy exercise;
- ☀ Enjoying the great outdoors;
- ☀ Sharing pastries and fresh fruit;
- ☀ Taking a tai chi lesson;
- ☀ Meeting interesting people.

Well, you can stop dreaming. The Annual LEPOCO Peace-A-Thon is just around the corner and will provide you with all of the above benefits while giving you the opportunity to raise the money needed to keep LEPOCO moving forward.

Join us on Saturday, May 28th (Memorial Day weekend), when we gather around 8:30 am, at the Christmas City Fairgrounds to get ready to bike or walk for peace and justice. See the Peace-A-Thon brochure enclosed with this newsletter or call the LEPOCO office for information or to volunteer as a rider, walker, or staff.

- David Rose

Berta Cáceres ¡Presente!

"Berta Cáceres, a great Lenca woman from western Honduras, was assassinated early this morning." These were the words that Grahame Russell of Rights Action, chose to open a March 3rd, statement of mourning and tribute about Berta Cáceres, with whom Rights Action had worked for almost 20 years.

He answered the question of, "Who Killed Her?" in many ways including, "She was killed by all those people and economic and political institutions whose greed and interests she lived, stood and fought against... Berta was killed by corporations and investors who conceive of Honduras and the world - its forests and earth, its natural resources, its rivers, waters and air, its people and all life forms -- as exploitable and discard-able objects..."

But, he concludes, "Berta lived, stood and struggled for another world is necessary and possible."

Berta Cáceres was the recipient of the 2015 Goldman Environmental Prize. (Her acceptance speech is at www.youtube.com.) Here are some of her words from that speech, "Let us wake up, humankind! We're out of time. We must shake our conscience free of the rapacious capitalism, racism and patriarchy that will only assure our own self-destruction. The Gualcarque River has called upon us, as have other gravely threatened rivers. We must answer their call. Our Mother Earth, militarized, fenced-in, poisoned, a place where basic rights are systematically violated, demands that we take action. Let us build societies that are able to coexist in a dignified way, in a way that protects life."

The Friendship Office of the Americas wrote of her death, "For decades, Berta worked tirelessly for peace, justice and social change in Central America. She led efforts to close U.S. military bases, dismantle patriarchy and racism, and uplift women. She coordinated the Council of Popular and Indigenous Organizations of Honduras (COPINH) and galvanized an international effort to protect a watershed sacred to the Lenca people, threatened by the Agua Zarca Dam. Berta has been described as a *prophetic voice, a ray of moonlight, a woman who talked to the rivers - indomitable.*"

There have been protests since the murder of Berta Cáceres. Thousands gathered for her funeral in Honduras. On March 4, there was a "Justice for Berta Cáceres protest at the U.S. State Department. Women rallied to demand justice on International Women's Day, at the Honduras Mission to the United Nations, NYC. On March 10, an Open Letter was sent to Secretary of State John Kerry protesting her murder, signed by over 250 U.S. organizations (including LEPOCO). On March 14, SOA Watchers Nico Udu-Gama and Jack Dacks scaled railings outside the U.S. Agency for International Development to hang large banners that read, "Berta Cáceres ¡Presente!" and "USAID: Stop Funding Murder in Honduras." On March 16, two activists disrupted a meeting at the Council of the Americas,

Washington, DC, to tell U.S. Ambassador to Honduras, James Nealon, that he had "blood on his hands" due to the murder of Berta Cáceres and due to the U.S. role in Honduras during and after the 2009 military coup. Also, on March 16 over 60 members of Congress signed a "Dear Colleague" letter to the Secretary of State and the Secretary of the Treasury urging them "to address appalling levels of violence and extreme violations of civil rights in Honduras..." (unfortunately, none of our local representatives signed this letter.) On April 5, a vigil in honor of Berta Cáceres was held outside the World Bank where someone painted "Berta Lives" in red above the large World Bank wall letters.

Berta's family members have been speaking out in the U.S. seeking justice. On March 18, Berta's daughter, Bertha Zúniga Cáceres was interviewed on "Democracy Now!" along with a leader from COPINH. (See www.democracynow.org to view, listen to or read this interview.)

Another leader in COPINH, Nelson Garcia was murdered on March 15, shortly after Honduran riot police and bulldozers were sent to evict 150 indigenous people from their homes in Rio Chiquito where they had occupied ancestral land for two years in protest of the Agua Zarca Dam.

Environmental activist Gustavo Castro Soto was shot twice and left for dead at the Cáceres home the night that Berta was murdered. Honduran authorities finally allowed him to return to his home in Mexico on April 1, almost one month after he was injured. He had been held in Honduras while his life remained in danger and even as protests were filed from around the world urging his release.

Some of the companies financing the Agua Zarca Dam project have withdrawn their funding, at least temporarily, since the murders of Berta Cáceres and Nelson Garcia. Of course, activists around the world are demanding an end to this project.

Besides that demand, we can urge U.S. officials: to create an independent international investigation into the murder of Berta Cáceres, as requested by her family; to reconsider U.S. support for loans to projects in Honduras; and, to suspend all U.S. assistance to Honduran security forces.

We can also make donations to Rights Action, Box 50887, Washington, DC 20091-0887, with a memo for the Berta Cáceres Fund, to support Berta's family and COPINH as they work for justice in this case.

- Nancy Tate

Bad Trade Deals Kill Good Jobs

Town Hall Meeting on the TPP

(Trans-Pacific Partnership)

Monday, April 18, 6:30 pm

United Steelworkers Union Hall

53 E. Lehigh St., Bethlehem

Sponsors: United Steelworkers & PA Fair Trade Coalition

Creating Peace Conversions

We are building up a new world...;

Builders must be strong.

After forty years in service to her country, in the Army and at the State Department, Ann Wright said, "No," to the invasion of Iraq. She choked on all the lies -- "The political class is lying to us."

Ann Wright brought her powerful message, built on years of intimate knowledge of the military and the ways of government, to LEPOCO's 50th Anniversary



Photo by Susie Ravitz.

Ann Wright speaks at LEPOCO dinner at Wesley United Methodist Church in Bethlehem.

Dinner on March 12, 2016. With particular emphasis, she commended the work of peacemakers like the people in the audience and urged them to stay strong and keep working.

In a wide-ranging conversation, Ms. Wright noted dire statistics. In our years in Iraq, 500,000 Iraqi children died as a result of our blockade. Today, hundreds of thousands of people are fleeing Syria and yet, we have not pledged to receive them. "We've got room for a lot of people." She cited the drug habits of the United States that lead to drug-related violence, police brutality, mass incarceration, and drone warfare.

She described a trip that she took, with 29 other women, to North Korea; they learned that the people of North Korea want peace. But, in South Korea, it is dangerous to speak for peace.

With so many flash points in the world, groups like LEPOCO need to stay strong. "We are making progress." She has travelled with people like LEPOCO's members who speak out and work for peace, challenging those in authority and spreading truth.

In other events of the evening, dinner attendees viewed both a slide show and a movie highlighting LEPOCO's rich history. Mimi Lang, Evan Hoffman, and Annette Carpien energized the audience with Mimi's poem -- "Oh LEPOCO you're so fine, you're so fine." A delicious meal began the evening and the LEPOCO

Peace Singers brought both humor and inspiration through their excellent music.

- Janet Ney

*Oh LEPOCO you're so fine, you're so fine
You blow my mind. Hey LEPOCO!*

We began in 65
The war in Nam exploding
A group of us couldn't take it
The U.S. self-imploding

We talked to schools and clubs
And figured out our mojo
We protested against war
And thus was born LEPOCO...

Counseling resisters
I Ain't Marchin' Any More
We say no to drafting
Keep my sons out of that war

Organizing, writing
We were more than antiwar
Civil rights and Martin
Nonviolence to the core...

Nukes took up the headlines
We cried out in alarm
Women Strike for Peace
The U.S. must disarm...



Photo by Susie Ravitz.

Annette Carpien, Mimi Lang, & Evan Hoffman celebrate their performance of "Hey LEPOCO!"

Solidarity forever
Peace & justice is our stance
Gaze at where we've been together
Come raise your voice and dance (continued on page 6)

So thank you to LEPOCO
 The newsletter and calling
 The years of keeping at it
 No matter how appalling
 So thank you to LEPOCO
 For 50 years of giving
 A place for peaceful protest
 For keeping justice living.

- Evan Hoffman & Mimi Lang, 3/12/16.



Photo by Susie Ravitz.

Many volunteers make the dinner happen and many enjoy the wonderful fare. Here we see Addison Bross, Margot Hillman, Terry Briscoe, Sylvia Briscoe, Bill Rosebrock, Ron Brown, and others.

- Other Meaningful Notes from the Evening -

"Listening to the words of this song (Phil Ochs' "Power & Glory") makes me think of how a teacher -- or parent -- or anyone who has a child in their life who's special to them, must feel when that child has every advantage and ability and should be getting straight A's, but instead brings home C's, D's, and even F's. That, I think, describes how Phil and I both feel about our talented and able country. It should only be getting A's and we care enough not to let it slog through life in a sub-par manner."

- Donna Hartmann introducing the Peace Singers.

"The song 'Stand by Me' comes to me. You have stood by me, especially through Sanctuary City, Sanctuary, Haiti, Central America... and so much more relentless, hopeful LEPOCO. Spirit of peace shine forth.

- Note from Alice Rader along with a photo collection.

"We want you to know that we are longingly thinking of you all and wishing you an especially joyous dinner... I just finished reading the newsletter and am always amazed how interesting, well-written and comprehensive it is! There are so many hardworking members with peace on their minds. It's a treasure that we sorely miss. Good wishes for many more years!"

- Ursula & Hans Wuerth writing from North Carolina.

Early in the life of LEPOCO a debate was scheduled on New Years' Eve at Saint John's Lutheran Church in downtown Easton. John Oliver Nelson and I, two of the founding members of LEPOCO, spoke in favor of pacifism while the minister of the church, a chaplain in the U.S. Marine Corps, and his assistant, spoke against it. The primary issue of course, was the Vietnam War which began in 1965.

The minister moved to a church in Washington shortly afterwards, and about five years later returned to Easton for a visit. In 1968, following the assassination of Martin Luther King on April 4, the church became the headquarters of ProJeCt of Easton, of which I was again a founding member and still a supporter. I cannot remember the name of the minister, but we talked over coffee and he told me he had changed his opinions and was now a pacifist. Keep on as you Work for Peace and Justice.

- Howard Gallup, who wrote that he could not be with us at the dinner, but he wanted to be in touch.

Three memory messages were shared in the Annual Dinner program, including Howard Gallup's. We will share the others in future newsletters. We also invite other submissions of short humorous or serious memories/stories to be shared in future newsletter.

- Art Raffle Prize Winners -

Martin Boksenbaum won Lee Buck's hand-turned wooden bowl.

Roseanne Amano won Will Christine's oil painting.

Ed Liona won Anna Reczek's hand-crocheted afghan.

Linda Laubach won the quilt made by Ellen Buck, Romaine Laury and Lois Kruger Walters.

Debbie Orben won the wheel-thrown bowls from Monica Sommerville of Sommerville Studios.

Mimi Lang won Amanda Zaniesienko's acrylic painting.

Dick Thompson won Ronnie Arena's silk-tie braided mat.

Mary J. Hill won Carol Baylor's artisan potholders.

Sam Steffen won the gift certificate to Jenny's Quali.

Donna Hartmann won the tie-dyed bag and "This Land Is Your Land" illustrated book, both from the Woody Guthrie Center, and donated by Alice Rader.



The beautiful and delicious cake served at the Dinner.

Nuclear Resources at LEPOCO

About 20 copies of a booklet: 10 Lessons from Fukushima: Reducing risks and protecting communities from nuclear disaster, and past and current copies of Nukewatch Quarterly are available, FREE, or for a small donation, at the LEPOCO Peace Center. It's a good idea to read up on the nuclear issue.

Seven top Nuclear Regulatory Commission experts warn of critical dangers at aging nuclear plants. Citizens in contaminated communities of St. Louis need cleanup of radioactive nuclear waste left over from the Manhattan Project. Nearby, an underground fire at a landfill dump is dangerously close to radioactive materials. North of New York City, two cracking reactors at Indian Point leak tritium, causing significant water pollution. Exelon Corporation's Limerick Nuclear Plant Emergency Plan offers bus routes away from the plant and shelters in Montgomery and Chester County schools. Limerick is 40 miles and 1 hour away from the Lehigh Valley. These are some of the issues covered in the "Nukewatch Quarterly."

In the booklet on Fukushima, Lesson #1 is: Don't be fooled by the "safety myth." A lesson from Fukushima and Chernobyl proved that evacuation of people (and pets) from a ten-mile radius from a nuclear disaster is problematic. The wind that carries radiation does not stop at ten miles, and people beyond the ten-mile radius will want to flee, too. Citizens with radiation detectors at designated radiation measurement posts will be overwhelmed, and stocks of iodine preparation won't be sufficient to protect all citizens against contamination and long term effects. There will be multiple crises.

Lesson #5: People have a right to comprehensive health surveys. We need disclosure about food safety, vegetables, and radioactive damage to dairy cows and other livestock, which the government and the food businesses may be loath to do. Producers of food and consumers need a safety monitoring process.

In Washington State, the U.S. Navy is suing Kitsap County, who want the release of Emergency Response Plans in advance of a disaster at the nuclear naval base and strategic nuclear weapons facility. That's a report by Ground Zero, published in the Spring issue of "Nukewatch Quarterly." You want to know, don't you? But the Navy's position is that you don't need to know. It's good to read up on the nuclear issue.

Lesson #7 from Fukushima: There is a need for long term monitoring and treatment of nuclear plant workers. How do we decontaminate workers and others, housing, and the environment? What about radioactive waste? As the Fukushima publication committee says, it's like having a house with no toilets. Tanks, barrels or dumps underground all over the world won't be stable forever. The Limerick Nuclear Plant has 1143 metric tons of high level nuclear waste in pools and casks 20 feet above groundwater on the Schuylkill River, 40 miles from Philadelphia. What will we do?

Lessons #8, #9, and #10: After a nuclear disaster, people's daily lives, schools and communities have to be

rebuilt. We need rights and relief laws with full participation by those affected. Are we preparing?

The good news is that global wind power and solar capacity is catching up to nuclear energy. But nuclear reactors and weapons are still with us. Many details are in "10 Lessons from Fukushima" and "Nukewatch Quarterly," available at LEPOCO. Additional information is at www.nirs.org. NIRS (Nuclear Information & Resource Service) started a campaign #NuclearIsDirty in March.

- Monica McAgnon

Some news on Nuclear Weapons

Keiko Oguro, who was an 8-year-old schoolgirl when the U.S. dropped an atomic bomb on Hiroshima in August 1945, is among those urging President Obama to visit Hiroshima when he is in Japan for the G7 summit in May. No sitting U.S. president has visited Hiroshima since the U.S., under President Harry Truman, leveled the city with a nuclear weapon. Oguro is quoted as saying, "President Obama should come here and see for himself. He and other leaders would realize that nuclear weapons are not about making allies and enemies, but about joining hands and fighting this evil together."

Secretary of State John Kerry became the highest ranking U.S. official to visit Hiroshima when he visited there in early April.

In March the International Court of Justice held hearings on the nuclear disarmament cases brought by the Republic of the Marshall Islands (RMI) against India, Pakistan and the United Kingdom. This was the first contentious case on nuclear disarmament ever heard at the Court. The other six nuclear armed states have decided that there is no need for them to respond to the Marshall Islands' Applications in this case (originally filed April 24, 2014).

Tony de Brum, Co-Agent of the Marshall Islands and former Foreign Minister of the RMI, has an amazing ability to bring human reality into a legal setting. He said on March 7, at the ICJ, "Yesterday was a beautiful morning here in The Hague that featured a picture-perfect snowfall. As a tropical State, the Marshall Islands has experienced "snow" on one memorable and devastating occasion, the 1954 Bravo test of a thermonuclear bomb that was one-thousand times the strength of the Hiroshima bomb. When that explosion occurred, there were many people, including children, who were a far distance from the bomb, on our atolls which, according to leading scientists and assurances, were predicted to be entirely safe. In reality, within 5 hours of the explosion, it began to rain radioactive fall-out at Rongelap. Within hours, the atoll was covered with a fine, white, powdered-like substance. No one knew it was radioactive fallout. The children thought it was snow. And the children played in the snow. And they ate it."

(Source: The Nuclear Age Peace Foundation, Santa Barbara, California.)

LEPOCO Financial Report 2015

Revenues, Expenses and Changes in Fund Balance	2015
Membership Dues, Fund Appeals, Pledges	\$31,377.96
Boutique & SERRV Sales (net)	\$794.25
Annual Dinner (net)	\$3,354.80
Art Raffle (net)	\$536.25
Bike-Walk-A-Thon (net)	\$2,219.71
Veterans for Peace Donation	\$100.00
Dividends and Interest	\$40.30
In Memory of Janet Goloub	\$210.00
Veg Fest & Climate Change Lobby	\$287.40
Popcorn & Politics Movies (\$79.99 for new screen)	(\$88.56)
Copier Donations	\$30.00
Miscellaneous	\$21.51
Total Revenue	\$38,883.62
Contributions to Others (Ads NAACP, Peace Pilgrimage, etc)	\$135.00
Salaries, Taxes & Benefits to Employees	\$26,024.06
Rent, Electric, Telephone	\$5,559.73
Insurance (Fire, Liability & Worker's Comp)	\$1,203.00
WTR Life Fund (Contributions to NWTRCC and returns)	\$821.79
Internet Service Provider	\$600.00
Other Computer Fees (Domain Fees, E-Mail, Virus, Software)	\$275.00
Paypal Fees	\$86.97
Printing and Postage (Newsletter, Bulk Mail Fee, etc.)	\$3,262.66
P&P's (Potluck & Politics)	\$159.60
Fairs & Festivals (Pridefest, Earth Day, Buckingham Fair)	\$109.50
Fund Appeals	\$872.05
Other Program & Events (ML King, H-N, Tax Day, Endless War, Peace & Planet, etc)	\$481.65
Supplies (Office, Copier, Printer, Paper)	\$2,154.63
Repairs (Office, Risograph, Copier & Computer)	\$736.78
Misc. Office Expenses (Mowing Grass, Washing Windows)	\$125.69
Miscellaneous (Working Groups, etc.)	\$12.11
FOR Peace Presence contribution	\$1,023.00
New Computer & Monitor	\$657.18
New Copier Lease	\$462.37
50 th Anniversary Expenses	\$1,615.14
New Peace Pole	\$370.79
Total Expenses	\$46,748.68
Excess or (Loss) for Year	(\$4,974.50)
Fund Balances at the Beginning of the Year	\$93,702.77
Change in Investment Value	(\$3,066.43)
Fund Balance at the End of the Year	\$82,761.28

2014 Fund Balances	Beginning of Year	End of Year
Cash, Savings and Investments	\$98,188.22	\$88,970.76
Liabilities	\$4,485.45	\$6,199.48
Net Assets and Fund Balances	\$93,702.77	\$82,771.28

Showing Up... for Local Activism

The following are brief reports about some of the local activism for peace and justice since the last newsletter.

◆◆◆ On March 19th, a Rally for Peace in Burundi was held in downtown Allentown. All the speakers at the Cedar Crest College Amnesty International Rally called for speaking out against atrocities in the small African country of Burundi. The rally was held at the Allentown Holiday Inn at 9th and Hamilton, and attendees streamed down Hamilton in the twilight hour to cheer for peace in Burundi. The country has been in turmoil since President Nkurunziza ran for and won a third, but illegal, term last spring.

In the aftermath, more than 240,000 people have fled Burundi, a country a little bigger than Maryland. .

Nickson Ogutu, a Cedar Crest student and head of its newly established Amnesty International club, said, "If we don't do something, we might lose a generation of Burundian people."

Millicent Otieno, executive director of Local Capacities for Peace International, said, "We're not here to blame, but we're here to stand firm and call it what it is. This killing must stop." Millicent has worked in neighboring Kenya and is now pursuing graduate work in the US.

Flora Terah, a Kenya human rights activist and author now living in Canada, said, "We need to start action right now in Allentown. Our voices can be heard. Let us not leave Burundi alone. The death of one woman's child is one too many."

Bruce Knotts, co-chair of an NGO UN Committee on Human Rights, said the latest information is that 3,000 people have been killed in Burundi.

- Karen Berry

◆◆◆ In March several letters to *The Morning Call* advocated for the "Saving of the Sycamores" on Route 222 in Trexlertown. One writer said, "The towering sycamores...are spectacular. The traffic may be heavy, but driving under the sycamores makes that stretch calming and beautiful. They are friendly sentries in a chaotic world."

◆◆◆ On March 25th, a large group watched the new film, "Fix It: Healthcare at the Tipping Point," at the Fourth Friday Film Series at the UU Church, Bethlehem. The film is being used as a discussion and organizing tool to help bring about a single-payer health care system in Pennsylvania and the U.S. It carries a powerful message about the economics of our health care system. A DVD of the film is available at LEPOCO or you can watch it online at fixithehealthcare.com.

◆◆◆ On March 31st, southside Bethlehem residents spoke out to their City Council in "skepticism and disgust" about plans to build a high-rise parking deck in

the historic district off New St., next to the much appreciated Greenway. Concerns ranged from traffic jams as a result of the garage, to the permanent closing of a portion of a street, to the inappropriate nature of the garage in a historic district.

◆◆◆ On April 2nd Tom Ulrich, Kathryn Hoffman, and Bryant and Maggie Brown, made the trip to Philadelphia to be among the several hundred people that gathered near the Liberty Bell in a send-off of walkers beginning the Democracy Spring 140-mile, 10-day walk to Washington, DC. As readers probably know by now, in DC, the walkers and hundreds of others began sit-ins at The Capitol on April 11th, calling on Congress to get the money out of our politics, to end the gerrymandering of congressional districts, and to protect and expand voting rights. Well over 500 have been arrested.

◆◆◆ On April 3rd well over 50 people attended a program organized by the local Alliance for Sustainable Communities, at the UU Church of the Lehigh Valley, in Bethlehem, where Thomas Linzey of the Community Environmental Legal Defense Fund spoke about, "Time for a Pennsylvania Revolt: Communities Taking on Corporations & the State of Pennsylvania." Attendees were enthusiastic about the program describing it as informative and energizing.

◆◆◆ On April 4th, the Bethlehem NAACP sponsored a gathering of lamentation on the 48th anniversary of the death of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. It was a cold day, but over 30 people attended. City officials, Lehigh University faculty and staff, and NAACP leaders were among the speakers. Mimi Lang spoke for LEPOCO, leading a call-and-response appreciation for the witness of Dr. King.

◆◆◆ On April 7th, dozens of LEPOCO members were among the capacity audience at Zoellner Aud., Lehigh University treated to the riveting, inspiring, challenging talk by Dr. Cornel West on "Race & Class in America: From the Voting Rights Act to Black Lives Matter."

◆◆◆◆

Support LEPOCO!

____ Enclosed are my yearly LEPOCO dues of \$ _____.
(\$35 individual; \$45 hh; \$75 supporter; \$10 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 these 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 www.lepoco.org.

Bits & Pieces

☯ Congratulations to the Bradbury-Sullivan LGBT Community Center on the opening of their new facility at 522 W. Maple St., Allentown. Their first educational event will be Wednesday, **April 20**, at 7 pm, with **Ryan Thoreson** of Human Rights Watch speaking on "Safe Schools & Human Rights for LGBT Youth." Ryan Thoreson holds a degree from Yale Law School and a doctorate in anthropology from the University of Oxford. He is the author of "Transnational LGBT Activism: Working for Sexual Rights Worldwide." For more information call 610-347-9988 or see www.bradburysullivancenter.org.

☯ The Alliance for Sustainable Communities-Lehigh Valley will open their Transitions U program with a four sessions course on "ISIS & the War on Terror." The course will be led by **Faramarz Farbod**, of the political science faculty at Moravian College. **Faramarz Farbod** is a frequent speaker for LEPOCO and other groups.

The course is free, but attendance is necessary for all meetings, 6-8 pm on Thursdays -- April 21, May 5, May 29, and June 2. The class will be held in the PPHAC Building, Room 301, Moravian College. The required books are "Islamophobia & the Politics of Empire" by Deepa Kumar and "Understanding ISIS & the New Global War on Terror" by Phyllis Bennis.

There will be a second four-session course starting June 16 with the theme, "U.S. Foreign Policy: Iran & Israel-Palestine Question." This will also be led by **Faramarz Farbod**.

For more information contact **Martin Boksenbaum** at 610-767-1287.

☯ On Saturday, **April 23**, (Earth Day Weekend) 10 am-4pm, there will be a **Sustainable Living Expo** at Palisades High School, 35 Church Hill Rd., **Kintnersville**. The event will feature vendors committed to healthy, sustainable living practices, speakers, and food. The money raised from food sales will

will go toward the outreach efforts of **PEACE-Youth**, the primary organizing group for this event. For more information, contact **Kathy Gentner** at 267-884-2388.

☯ **Bruce Wilson** wrote recently that he was surveying the parking lot outside the LEPOCO Annual Dinner and saw a lot of hybrid cars. "I look at hybrid cars as an indicator of people's desire and action to make a difference on climate change. Fortunately there are easy changes we can make to effect climate change. **Energy improvements to existing buildings** are among the most important things we can all do for climate change!

The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change's Fifth Assessment Report (AR5), focused on buildings because buildings account for a 40% share of the global energy use and greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions. A focus on energy improvements to existing buildings can be as simple as air sealing and adding insulation. In my work as a contractor I have lowered the heating bills of a previously un-insulated house by close to 80%. The homeowner is most impressed by the improved comfort of the house.

One very serious thing we can do locally about climate change is to find an energy auditor, have an audit, and follow the resulting recommendations." You read more from **Bruce Wilson** on this subject in his article in the 2015 Sustainable Lehigh Valley journal, "Energy Improvements to Existing Buildings." Copies are available at LEPOCO.

☯ On **May 2nd**, at 12:30 pm, there will be a "Rally for Fair Education Fund-

ing," at the State Capitol, Harrisburg. For more information contact the Education Law Center, in Philadelphia, at 215-238-6970.

☯ The Pentagon occupies 6000 bases in the U.S. and 1000 bases in 150 foreign countries. The Pentagon has admitted to burning 350,000 barrels of oil a day and that doesn't include oil burned by contractors and weapons suppliers. Yet, despite having the planet's single largest carbon footprint, the Pentagon has been granted a unique exemption from reducing -- or even reporting -- its pollution. The U.S. won this "prize" during the 1998 Kyoto Protocol negotiations (COP4) after the Pentagon insisted on a "national security provision" that would place its operations beyond global scrutiny or control... In the U.S. we are told there is no money to create a national emergency program to jump start a sustainable transition. Few, if any, politicians are willing to call out the elephant in the middle of the room -- the Pentagon which today rakes in 54% of every federal discretionary tax dollar (National Priorities Project).

- From "Bring on the 'Natural Guard'"
by **Bruce Gagnon**

The Innocent

*What a swirl our story is,
carry us always back
to the absence of what we now
are surprised to discover we
once had, whose existence we know
by the news of its death, which we,
its murderers, would willingly
have prevented (we say, too
late) had we only known.*

- **Wendell Berry**

LEPOCO Job Opening:

Part-time or Full-Time position with a strong commitment to peace, justice and nonviolence and a desire to work towards ending war as a means of solving conflicts between nations. Responsibilities include collaborating with other staff, the steering committee and sister organizations in organizing activities such as vigils, demonstrations, Peace Camp, tables at fair and festivals, the annual dinner, etc. The candidate must possess the ability to write emails, essays for the newsletter, flyers, and have a reasonably high degree of computer competence. The applicant may also be expected to speak on LEPOCO's behalf at workshop and conferences. The position will share responsibilities for general office work including phoning, attending meetings, filing, etc. Please contact a member of the LEPOCO Hiring Committee if you are interested: **Susie Ravitz**, **Terry Briscoe**, or **Dan Miller**.

Bits & Pieces

⊕ On Saturday, April 23, 8:30 am-3:30 pm, the **Lehigh Conference of Churches** in partnership with **Bread for the World** will hold their spring advocacy event at First Presbyterian Church, Tilghman St. & Cedar Crest Blvd., Allentown. Under the theme, **"Survive & Thrive,"** the event will provide resources for responding to hunger -- especially maternal and child nutrition -- and strengthening our local food system. Speakers will include Margaret Tran of Bread for the World. For more info. see bread.ppjr.org or call the LCC office at 610-433-6421.

⊕ Clarence "Safwat" Davis will speak about **"43 Years in Prison: A Story of Prosecutorial Misconduct!"** on Thursday, April 21, at 4:10 pm, in Neville III, Lehigh University, Bethlehem. Clarence Davis was convicted of first-degree murder in 1972. In 2008 evidence was uncovered that led to a judge vacating Davis' sentence. This is an opportunity to hear his story. For more information contact the Dialogue Center (Chaplain's Office) at Lehigh University.

⊕ Lehigh Valley Friends of Cease-FirePA is organizing a bus to transport Lehigh Valley folks to a Rally in support of House Bill 1010 and Senate Bill 1049. The bills would require background checks for all gun sales in Pennsylvania. The rally in the Capitol Rotunda will be held Monday, May 16, starting at 12:30 pm. The bus departs at 8:30 am from Springhouse Rd., Allentown, returning at 4:30 pm. Cost: \$25. You can order tickets from Barbara Diamond, 425 Center St., Bethlehem 18018 (checks payable to "LVF-CFPA"). For more information call 610-442-5104 or see the groups Facebook page.

⊕ "Written Off," is an article by Dale Maharidge, published in the March 21, 2016, issue of *The Nation*. The article does an excellent job of describing how veteran newspaper journalists are a dying breed and how that's bad for journalism and democra-

cy. In 2009 alone 105 newsrooms were closed.

⊕ Sunday and Monday, April 24 and 25, **Stories that Shaped a Nation**, will hold events in Allentown featuring U.S. Congresswoman Yvette Clark and Nikki Giovanni, the world-renowned African-American poet.

⊕ In 2014, 46 fossil fuel pipelines were proposed or approved at the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC), sparking opposition from communities across the U.S. facing eminent domain for private gain, worried about spills and leaks, and opposed to resources squandered on climate-killing infrastructure. By 2015 FERC had approved or considered 84 additional pipelines.

Filmmaker Josh Fox said recently, "Everyone I know is fighting a pipeline or a compressor station or a power plant that is in front of FERC for approval. It is clear to me that FERC has to be the most destructive agency in the U.S. right now."

For these reasons and more the **Rubber Stamp Rebellion** is planning a week of action at FERC in Washington, DC, **May 15-22**. Initiated by **Beyond Extreme Energy (BXE)** the Rebellion is calling for no new permits, no pipelines, no liquefied natural gas.

For more information see www.beyondextremeenergy.org.

⊕ Be sure to read **"Global Warming's Terrifying New Chemistry: Our Leaders Thought Fracking Would Save Our Climate. They Were Wrong. Very Wrong."** by Bill McKibben in *The Nation*, April 11/16, 2016.

⊕ In March, the Syracuse Cultural Workers Peace Calendar carried a special acknowledgement of the 100th anniversary year of the first woman being elected to the U.S. Congress, **Jeannette Rankin**, (1880-1973). She fought for national woman suffrage, protective labor laws and peace. She voted alone against U.S. entry into WW II and in 1968 led the Rankin Brigade (5000 strong) against the Vietnam War.

⊕ **Rep. Hank Johnson**, from Georgia recently organized a letter to the U.S. State Department, signed by 10 fellow lawmakers including Senator Patrick Leahy, urging the State Dept. to investigate "gross violations of human rights" by Israel and Egypt, and to take appropriate action under the law if they determine that the reports of human rights violations should trigger the Leahy Law.

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

Wednesday, April 20, 5:30 pm: LEPOCO 50th Anniversary Planning Committee meeting at LEPOCO Peace Center.

Wednesday, April 27, 11:30 am: Stop the Wars Committee meeting at the Anatolian Kitchen, 3016 Linden St., Bethlehem.

Wednesday, May 4, 7 pm: Peace Camp Planning Committee meeting at LEPOCO Peace Center. A Peace Camp mailing prep meeting will be held Wednesday, May 11, 9 am-Noon.

Fridays, May 6 & June 3, 11 am: Americas Solidarity Group meeting at the LEPOCO Peace Center, Bethlehem.

Mondays, May 9 & June 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.

Tuesday, May 10, 5-8 pm: LEPOCO Peaceathon Planning Committee meeting and calling night, at the LEPOCO Peace Center. The Peace-a-thon is our annual biking and walking event that will take place on Saturday, May 28.

Tuesday, June 14, 3:30 pm: L.V. Committee Against State Killing (LV-CASK) Meeting at the LEPOCO Peace Center.

Please join in the meetings and work of these groups as you are able. If you want more information about the meetings of the LEPOCO Peace Singers, Newsletter Planning Group, L.V. Veterans For Peace, Annual Dinner 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.



LEPOCO

Lehigh-Pocono Committee of Concern

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See Inside:

Page 1

Concert for Peace
Peace Camp

Page 2

WTR Conference
Drones: No!

Page 3

P & Ps
Book Group
Peace-a-thon

Page 4

Berta Cáceres

Pages 5 & 6

Annual Dinner

Page 7

Nuclear Resources

Page 8

2015 Financial
Report

Page 9

Showing Up

Pages 10 & 11

Bits & Pieces
Meetings...

Stand Up & Speak Out!

Saturdays

April 30 & May 28

12 Noon - 2 pm

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)

Monthly Peace Vigil

4 - 5 pm; Second Thursdays

May 12th & June 9th

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

3rd & Wyandotte Sts.,
(south) Bethlehem

Contact: Vince Stravino 610-216-8103 or
LEPOCO 610-691-8730

Tax Day 2016

Monday, April 18

Volunteers needed to help distribute the
informative "Where Your Income Tax Money
Really Goes" flyer at Lehigh Valley Post
Offices and elsewhere.

You can also distribute flyers to any group with
whom you meet -- community, educational,
religious, support.

Please call LEPOCO to request flyers and/or
sign up for a time.

Here is one important quote from the flyer:
*"The biggest contribution the United States can
make to combating terrorism worldwide is to abandon
the war paradigm and extricate itself from the wars
that have served as such an
effective recruiting device for new terrorists."*

- Matthew Evangelista,
Costs of War Project