

June-July
2016
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Newsletter of **LEPOCO**
Lehigh-Pocono Committee of Concern

PEACE CAMP! _____

It is amazing that Peace Camp has been bringing children together for 26 years. It becomes easy to believe when those of us who have been involved for much of that time see those who attended as children coming back as adult helpers and leaders. Some now even have children of their own.

Once again, Peace Camp will be held on the large campus of First Presbyterian Church in Allentown. The grounds are well suited to helping young people play active non-competitive games, take nature walks and investigate wildlife.

Peace Camp is offered this year from July 18th through July 22nd, from 9 a.m. to 12 noon, each day. Children are organized into age-similar groups named by color rather than grade. Young campers learn about men, women and children who have led lives of peace, or who have had experiences of peacemaking and active nonviolence. Peace Campers learn to converse in more peaceful ways, and explore ways to walk more lightly on the earth and in peace with other people and all the earth's creatures.

And of course, there is music. Chris Klump will lead the singing this year, and children will demand their favorites. Parents of campers report that these songs get sung all year round.

Please look around for children in your congregation, neighborhood or extended family who might enjoy an experience like Peace Camp, and pass along the flyer included in this newsletter, or call LEPOCO at 610-691-8730 for more information.

- Marcie Lightwood

Put On Your Marching Shoes

The Democratic National Convention is coming to Philadelphia, July 25-28, and with it a number of rallies and marches speaking out about various issues that are important to LEPOCO members and friends. The close location makes it an ideal time to find a bus, plan a carpool, and get down to Philly to take action. The following is information about some of the events. Call LEPOCO, 610-691-8730, for info. about carpools, etc.

Sunday, July 24, Noon

Philadelphia City Hall

March for a Clean Energy Revolution

Thousands will march for action to prevent climate catastrophe and present these demands directly to current and future policy makers: Ban fracking now; Keep fossil fuels in the ground; Stop dirty energy; Quickly and justly transition to 100% renewable energy. Convened by Pennsylvanians Against Fracking and Americans Against Fracking.

A bus will be leaving from Bethlehem. Email taramichelle75@gmail.com or call 267-428-1903. Text 'REVOLUTION' to 69866 for updates. For general information see www.cleanenergymarch.org.

July 25 - 28

Anti-War "Truth Displays"

The Brandywine Peace Community and others, are planning displays of mock drones with peace banners at strategic points throughout the city during the DNC. Tell the truth: Drone wars are the wars for which we are all responsible, especially the present government. Stop endless war. End the killing. Contact LEPOCO, 610-691-8730, to join a Lehigh Valley carpool.

Monday, July 25, 11 am

March on Democratic National Convention

Philadelphia City Hall

This march is organized by supporters of Bernie Sanders for president. From City Hall the march will make its way to the Wells Fargo Center using Broad Street. The demonstration will take place outside of Wells Fargo Center for the remainder of the day near FDR park. For more information, check out: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/MarchOnTheDNC/>

Monday, July 25, 3 pm

March for Our Lives

Philadelphia City Hall <southside>, marching south on Broad St.

Organized by the Poor People's Economic Human Rights Campaign, this march will be protesting the fact that the city will spend thousands of dollars to host the Democratic National Convention for millionaires and billionaires, yet the city fails to provide for its most vulnerable citizens. Join in demanding an end to unemployment, hunger and homelessness; money for education; affordable, accessible housing; living wages; and an end to the prison industrial complex. See www.march4ourlives2016.org for more info.

Struggling for Safety Continues

Early on Monday, May 16th, a busload of enthusiastic Lehigh Valley supporters of CeaseFirePA departed for Harrisburg for a statewide rally to demand action on legislation mandating background checks on all gun sales. A current loophole in Pennsylvania's law permits private sales of long guns (rifles, shotguns and assault-style weapons) without a background check. CeaseFirePA is leading Pennsylvanians United for Background Checks (PAUBC), a coalition of organizations working together to close this loophole

The Lehigh Valley had a very strong showing in Harrisburg. The rally itself was scheduled for midday, but our stalwart group was ready to spend a long day in the capitol visiting legislators to urge them to pass HB-1010 and SB-1049, which will remove the statutory language that exempted long-guns from background checks when it was passed in 1995. At that time, assault weapons were banned and long-guns were considered primarily for hunting and sports shooting. Today, crimes committed with long guns are increasing -- not surprising since prohibited people know they can obtain a long gun from private dealers without a background check. With the expiration of the assault weapon ban in 2004, suddenly these highly lethal weapons became vastly more available and easily obtainable without a background check.

The Capitol Rotunda filled with PAUBC supporters from all corners of the state. Estimates are that around 700 people attended the rally. This was a huge triumph and a clear message to legislators that we are a formidable force. The following day, in a seeming act of retaliation, the Senate Judiciary Committee put forward a bill to eliminate PICS, Pennsylvania's very effective background check system. A forceful response by our supporters in the days that followed led to the withdrawal of this bill, a clear sign that our voices are being heard in Harrisburg.

- Barbara Diamond

Editor's Note: We are all deeply saddened by the tragedy of the mass shooting in Orlando, Florida, that left 50 people dead on June 12th. This occurred after Barbara Diamond wrote the article above. Many generous acts of kindness and empathy followed that tragedy including local demonstrations and vigils, and the struggle for safety continues.

On Thursday, June 30, at 7 pm, Lehigh Valley Friends of CeaseFirePA will meet to hear from Terry Rumsey and Robin Lasersohn, of the DelCo United for Sensible Gun Policy, at Lehigh Valley Active Life, 1633 W. Elm St., Allentown (18102). For more info. contact Fritz Walker at 610-442-5104.

LEPOCO Staff Update

Living with too many activities, too many unexpected changes and not enough help to deal with myriad issues can be overwhelming. Along with the usual LEPOCO concerns Nancy Tate was doing a balancing act with the addition of several labor intensive activities relating to LEPOCO's 50th Anniversary. Finding

and keeping a second staff member had become challenging and worrisome. But, unexpectedly, Jasmin Maurer, previously unknown to LEPOCO, appeared with an impressive background working for Peace and Justice in the St. Louis area for six years. A graduate of Moravian College in 2008 she has returned to the Lehigh Valley and been hired as a part-time staff person beginning in June.

Upon her return Jasmin discovered LEPOCO and joined with LEPOCO members at anti-drone actions in Horsham, attended an Action Meeting to learn more about how LEPOCO works, and volunteered to help at LEPOCO events. Upon hearing that a staffing position was available she immediately applied. In St. Louis she worked for the Peace Economy Project from 2012 to 2015 managing lobbying efforts to cut military spending, co-founded Drone Free St. Louis, "led organizational efforts to connect wars abroad with racial justice fights at home," and worked with Young Activists United St. Louis, for several years. Her concerns, her activism and past work experience are a perfect fit with LEPOCO. We are delighted to have her become an integral part of the LEPOCO family.

Some readers will have noticed that the beloved Marcie Lightwood has also been working at LEPOCO this summer as a temporary staff person, taking leadership in getting us ready for Peace Camp in July. What a blessing.

And finally, many thanks to Amanda Zaniesienko who did so much for LEPOCO (especially for the work of the 50th Anniversary Planning Committee) from last summer through March 2016. We are very lucky that she will remain involved as a member of LEPOCO's Steering Committee.
- Susie Ravitz



Newsletter of LEPOCO
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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, Jasmin Mauer.

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, Jasmin Maurer (ex-officio), Janet Ney, Jim Orben, Susie Ravitz, Scott Slingerland, Tom Stinnett (co-treasurer), Nancy Tate (ex-officio), and Amanda Zaniesienko.

Popcorn & Politics

Friday, July 8th, 7 pm

“groundswell RISING: protecting our children's air & water”

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

This film about the natural gas extraction known as fracking shows how an industry rich with political connections managed to slip into a position of almost untouchable power and how at-risk communities have come together to fight back. It presents the myriad environmental and health concerns attendant to the growing use of fracking, with a concentration on the opposition by ordinary citizens besieged by well pads and pipelines. This presentation is in preparation for the March for a Clean Energy Revolution in Philadelphia on July 24.

Directed by Renard Cohen. 71 minutes. 2014.

Post-film discussion led by Mark Lichty, one of the film's Executive Producers.

Please bring a snack or beverage to share.

Friday, August 5th, 7 pm

“I Was Her Age”

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

This is a documentary about the 2015 voyage of eight Hibakusha (survivors of Hiroshima and Nagasaki) aboard the Peace Boat. They visited 25 cities for the 70th anniversary year of the atomic bombings. These Hibakusha were children at the time of the bombings and at their stops they met with families that included children who are now of similar ages. The hope is that learning about the experience of the Hibakusha would be a motivation for present day parents to protect their own children by working to prohibit and eradicate nuclear weapons.

Directed by Emma Baggott. 32 minutes. 2015.

Post-film discussion led by LEPOCO's Stop the Wars Committee.

Please bring a snack or beverage to share.

Book Club

The First Tuesday LEPOCO Book Club will meet on July 5th, at 6 pm, to discuss “The Road to Seneca Falls: Elizabeth Cady Stanton & the First Woman's Rights Convention,” by Judith Wellman. This account of the 1848 Convention challenges the reader to reflect on what it means to implement the belief that all men and women are created equal, both then and now.

The book group is now meeting at the Bethlehem Public Library, 11 West Church St., in the second floor Laros Room.

The group will take a break in August, and resume their discussions on September 6th, with the book, “The Most Good You Can Do,” by Peter Singer. On October 4th they will discuss, “This Is an Uprising: How Non-violent Revolt Is Shaping the Twenty-First Century,” by Mark Engler and Paul Engler; and “TransAtlantic,” by Colum McCann on November 1.

The group has several steady members, but more and new members are always welcome. For more information contact Mimi Lang at 610-866-2407 or LEPOCO at 610-691-8730.

Fairs & Festivals

The warm weather brings the opportunity for participation in fairs and festivals. Again this year Bethlehem's VegFest and Allentown's Pride in the Park will occur the same weekend, Saturday, August 20th and Sunday, 21st, respectively. If you can help staff a LEPOCO booth at these events (or at the Peace Fair in Buckingham, September 17), please call LEPOCO (610-691-8730) or email (lepoco@fast.net).

These events are a great opportunity to discuss peace and justice issues with our Lehigh Valley neighbors.

Help Us Find You

With all the means of communication available we still often come up short when we are trying to reach people about an important issue or event. If you have gone to cell phone only or changed your cell phone number, please let us know how to reach you. If you have changed your email address please let us know the new address so we can send you updates.



Book Review - *Why Torture Doesn't Work: The Neuroscience of Interrogation*, by Shane O'Mara (Harvard University Press)

Torture is both unethical and counterproductive because of its effects on foreign policy, as well as providing justification for those who torture U.S. citizens. This book does not address these issues. It is concerned with the practical matter of whether useful information can be obtained by means of torture (or "enhanced interrogation"). It makes it very clear that torture is ineffective.

Professor O'Mara is a neuroscientist who has studied all the evidence concerning torture: both scientific studies (which are rather limited because scientific studies must be done ethically) and reports from cases where torture has been used. It is very clear that torture destroys memory and impairs judgement. As a result, things that are revealed following torture are far more likely to be unreliable than not.

O'Mara studies in some detail the "ticking bomb" scenario. This is the idea that torture can be justified because it gets quick results so that lives can be saved when information is revealed that prevents an imminent attack. This argument proves to be quite false. Even the torturers estimate that it takes at least a month to extract information from a person who is tortured -- and independent estimates conclude that more than two months is more realistic. If anything, interrogation methods that avoid torture get results more quickly.

This is an important book which effectively demolishes all the justifications for torture. It should be required reading for all of those members of the military and security services as well as the politicians who recommend or acquiesce in the use of torture. Torture is unethical, but it is also useless.

Despite the importance of this book, I have mixed feelings about recommending to members of LEPOCO that they read it. The book has a formal and academic tone; it is rather tedious reading at times despite the importance of its message. Still, if you want to understand what is known about torture and its effectiveness, this is the place to go.

- Alwyn Eades

Remembering the Inspirers

I met Hedy Epstein when I was an AmeriCorps VISTA with PeaceJam in St. Louis, MO. I asked her to speak at an event that I was organizing. The event was one of the most unsuccessful programs that I've ever planned, but Hedy came and spoke about her experience as a Holocaust survivor and her commitment to justice for Palestinians to the high school and Maryville University students that had assembled. Her words moved everyone in the room. Even I had to pause from the chaos of running the event to listen.

I met Hedy again when I became the Director of the Peace Economy Project and started attending

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monthly Instead of War meetings. I remembered hoping that she wouldn't remember me from that poorly attended conference where I had her speak. She never mentioned it, and neither did I. Attending Instead of War meetings, I got to know Hedy better, though. At one meeting she announced that a military base across the river in Illinois had asked her to come speak, as a Holocaust survivor. The Instead of War coordinator, Colleen, asked if they knew what they were getting themselves into.

Hedy's last arrest was my first arrest. It happened at a protest in downtown St. Louis after the murder of Michael Brown, Jr. We were demanding a meeting with Missouri Governor Jay Nixon alongside other powerful women and men. It was also days after Hedy's 90th birthday, and we sang happy birthday to her on the way to the police station. It was a day I won't soon forget, still in the beginning of a movement unfolding. I watched Hedy use her voice to further the Black Lives Matter message in the days that followed as interview requests came in, wanting to speak to the 90-year-old Holocaust survivor who got arrested, but she made sure to turn the story back to the young black people of this country crying out for justice.

Hedy Epstein died on May 26th at age 91. Being able to work alongside Hedy was a privilege and an inspiration. She was critical, tenacious, and could always be depended upon to speak up for justice. I feel her loss greatly, but am also inspired by her example. Rest in power, Hedy Epstein.

- Jasmin Maurer

Father Daniel Berrigan died on April 30th, just days before his 95th birthday. There were many wonderful remembrances of his life: Mimi Lang's oped in *The Morning Call*, May 9th; a Memorial Day remembrance broadcast at www.democracynow.org; a remembrance by James Carroll in *The New Yorker*, May 2nd; and, "The Life and Death of Daniel Berrigan," by Rev. John Dear, at www.commondreams.org, May 1st. John Dear quotes Daniel Berrigan testimony from the trial for those who hammered on an unarmed nuclear weapon nosecone (including Dan Berrigan) in King of Prussia in 1980, "The only message I have to the world is: We are not allowed to kill innocent people. We are not allowed to be complicit in murder. We are not allowed to be silent while preparations for mass murder proceed in our name, with our money, secretly... It's terrible for me to live in a time where I have nothing to say to human beings except, 'Stop killing.' There are other beautiful things that I would love to be saying to people. There are other projects I could be very helpful at. And I can't do them. I cannot. Because everything is endangered. Everything is up for grabs. Ours is a kind of primitive situation, even though we would call ourselves sophisticated. Our plight is very primitive from a Christian point of view. We are back where we started. Thou shalt not kill; we are not allowed to kill. Everything today comes down to that - everything."

A May Concert for Peace

Early on a Thursday evening in May. Gradually, 150 people converge on the Charles Brown Ice House in Bethlehem.

Who knows why they all came: Some probably wanted to see one of the performers on the bill. Some were invited by friends and did not know what to expect. For others, it may have been something to do on a slow weeknight. A number were probably there out of a sense of duty to support LEPOCO. Expectations were certainly mixed.

But what ensued over the next two hours at the Concert for Peace was an amazing outpouring of good will and musical talent.

Dave Fry, Godfrey Daniels founder and Lehigh Valley folk music icon, opened, followed by Bethlehem's own nationally known singer-songwriter Anne Hills ("I never realized she was so political," one listener commented).

After a break and a short lesson in LEPOCO history from Suzie Ravitz, we were entertained by the Steve Brosky Trio, with Suavek Zaniesienko on bass guitar (who contributed a verse of "Blowing in the Wind" in his native Polish), and guitar virtuoso Jimmy Meyer, who had aspiring musicians in the audience slack-jawed in awe of his playing. Dave and Anne joined the band for a rousing closing.

LEPOCO waited 50 years to do a concert like this, but it was an all-round success -- a thoroughly enjoyable evening that also raised over \$3,000 for peace work.

Heartfelt thanks to the volunteers and musicians who made this evening possible, with a special thank you to Steve Brosky for the last-minute loan of some sound equipment. But perhaps it is a measure of how special an event it was that Dave Fry thanked *us* for making him part of the concert.

- Steve Kraft

Peace Posters Getting Around _____

Thirty-three of the entries, including the six winners, from LEPOCO's 50th Anniversary Poster Contest, "Picture a World Without Violence," have been on display all over the Lehigh Valley since the awards ceremony in November, and there are two more displays to come. As this newsletter is being prepared they have just been installed in the gallery at Lehigh Valley Charter High School for the Arts, 321 E. Third St., Bethlehem. An Open House for the exhibit at the Charter School, will be held on Friday, July 1, 6-9 pm, as part of First Friday in south Bethlehem. The exhibit will remain at the Charter School until July 8.

From August 9-28, the exhibit will be at the Allentown Art Museum. The posters have also been displayed at the Allentown Public Library; First Presbyterian Church, Allentown; Northeast Middle School, Bethlehem; Harrison Morton Junior High School, Allentown, the Bethlehem Public Library; Northampton

Community College, south Bethlehem; Nurture Nature Center, Easton; and Wesley United Methodist Church, Bethlehem. Many words of thanks are owed the planning committee for all their hard work on this project.

The posters, created by local junior and senior high school students, address one of three themes -- "War Is Not the Answer," "Peace Takes Courage Too," "The Lehigh Valley Is No Place for Hate." If you have not seen a display of the posters yet, now is the time -- they are impressive and inspiring.

Walk & Peace Pole Dedication Planned for September 18 _____

Since 1982 the United Nations has observed an International Day of Peace on September 21st.

Since 2014 the Campaign for Nonviolence Action Week has been observed across the U.S. during the third week of September.

This year the 50th Anniversary Committee of LEPOCO is planning that the final event for our 50th Anniversary Year will take place on the first day of Nonviolence Action Week: Saturday, September 18. Save the date. Tentative plans are for a long peace walk ending with a dedication of the new Peace Pole in Rose Garden Park in Bethlehem. More information will follow. If you can help plan this event please contact LEPOCO at 610-691-8730.

Help Find Local Peace Poles _____

As we plan for the dedication of the new Peace Pole in Rose Garden Park, Bethlehem, we realize that there is no listing of the several (many?) Peace Poles that have taken root in the Lehigh Valley. If you know of the location of any of these Peace Poles please let LEPOCO know by email (lepoco@fast.net) or by phone 610-691-8730.

Drone Opposition Grows _____

In the last LEPOCO Newsletter we reported that the drone command center at the Horsham Air Guard Station (south of Doylestown on Route 611) has become operational. Shortly after that the LEPOCO Book Club discussed, "Kill Chain: Drones & the Rise of High Tech Assassins," by Alexander Cockburn. In that book we learned that drones do not work technically, kill many innocents, are used to assassinate "terrorist leaders" leading to more and often crueler "terrorist leaders," and are a great boon for military contractors - all too familiar information. As this newsletter is being prepared people will gather in Lansford for the "Faithful Witness in a Time of Endless War: Drone Warfare & God's Call to Peacemaking," where two drone resisters will be among the impressive list of speakers. The next newsletter will carry reports from that conference.

On June 11, 5000 people protested the use of the U.S. air base at Ramstein, Germany, in the U.S.-led drone war.

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 Monday, April 18th, this year's Tax Day, a dozen LEPOCO activists spent about 20 hours, handing out over 1000 copies of the FY-2017 version of "Where Your Income Tax Money Really Goes," at six local post offices -- approaching people entering to mail their tax returns. Just one point from the flyer (that is still available at LEPOCO if you want one or more copies - a good discussion starter with friends or in groups): "The U.S. is #1 in worldwide arms sales, fueling a cycle of conflicts, deaths, refugees, profits, more conflicts, etc."

◆◆◆ On April 22, Susie Ravitz and Tom Stinnett took the traveling LEPOCO information table to Lehigh University's Earth Day, including a special addition of colorful and witty "Extinction Is Forever" condoms from the Center for Biological Diversity. "Can't refrain? Remember the whooping crane," was just one of the condom packaging slogans that advocate for reproductive rights to help curb the crowding of wildlife by the seven billion people on the planet.

◆◆◆ On April 23, LEPOCO joined local environmental group presentations at the Sustainable Living Expo at Palisades High School. It was a lively and informative gathering with citizen groups, sustainable energy vendors, and local watershed organizations participating - all organized by Citizens Concerned About the Pipeline in northern Bucks County.

◆◆◆ Anna Maria Caldara reports that on May 21, the March Against Monsanto gathered 30 people in Stroudsburg to carry signs and distribute flyers, all to "educate the public about the reckless poisoning of our food supply by the agricultural biotech giant Monsanto, at the consent of our government, in the name of pro-profit." This action was one of the many that took place in 400 cities on six continents.

◆◆◆ LEPOCO held its annual Peace-A-Thon on Saturday, May 28th. Despite the hot weather, over 25 participants came out for the day. Scott Slingerland led everyone through some morning stretches before bikers and walkers took to the D&L Canal Towpath for a 16-mile bike ride or a six-mile walk along the Lehigh River and Bethlehem's Greenway.

The event is one part exercise, one part camaraderie, and another part fundraiser, this year bringing in over \$1500 to help LEPOCO programming. The overall tone of the day was definitely one of enthusiasm and fun, even with the sweltering heat. We'd like to thank everyone who joined us this year and donated to the Peace-A-Thon's success!

Jim Orben, Martha Christine, Diane Dilendik,

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Julius Iwantsch, Scott Slingerland, and John Smith, were the recipients of the gifts provided by Peace-A-Thon sponsors (Aardvark Sports Shop, Bethlehem, Bethlehem Bicycle Cooperative; Genesis Bicycles, Easton; Nature's Way Market, Easton; The Old Library Shop, Bethlehem; Quadrant Book Mart, Easton; Tom Ardizzone Tai Chi, Bethlehem; and Valley Preferred Cycling Center, Trexlertown).

◆◆◆ On Memorial Day, May 30, the Lehigh Valley Chapter of Veterans For Peace, set up their recurring display of tombstone representations that name all the people from Pennsylvania who have been killed in the ongoing wars in Iraq and Afghanistan (and there were new Pennsylvania deaths in the past year). VFP presents the display every Memorial Day and Veterans Day -- the former at Cedar Beach Park in Allentown, the latter at Rose Garden Park in Bethlehem. People visit for reflection and quiet conversation about our losses.

◆◆◆ In early June a year-long citizen campaign led to Nestle abandoning its plan to take as much as 200,000 gallons a day from natural springs and a tributary of the Buckwha Creek in Eldred Township, Monroe County, to be marketed under the Deer Park brand. One participant in opposing the water extraction project said, "The hard work and perseverance of people coming together sacrificing their time, money, energy and special skills..." brought the project to a halt.

◆◆◆ On June 11, Kara Bender led a Critical Cultural Competency Workshop in Allentown for over 40 people. This was the first workshop held locally by Crossroads Antiracism Organizing & Training. For more info. see www.crossroadsantiracism.org.

◆◆◆ Six Bethlehem residents and one person from Allentown filed an appeal about the 626-spot garage planned by the Bethlehem Parking Authority in support of a development project at Third and New Sts. Their appeal argues that the garage will not pay for itself and binds future mayors and city officials to raise fines and parking rates for a garage that is not needed and primarily benefits one development. (*The Morning Call*, June 2, 2016.)

◆◆◆◆

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.

Hiroshima, Can We Hear You?

The symbolism was powerful, in early April Secretary of State John Kerry became the highest-ranking U.S. official to visit Hiroshima. By mid-May, President Obama had also visited Hiroshima, touring the A-bomb museum in the Peace Park, meeting with *hibakusha*, and giving an "emotional, rhetorically-soaring anti-war speech" that included these words: "...The scientific revolution that led to the splitting of an atom requires a moral revolution, as well. That is why we come to this place. We stand here, in the middle of this city, and force ourselves to imagine the moment the bomb fell... Memory of the morning of August 6, 1945, must never fade. That memory allows us to fight complacency. It fuels our moral imagination. It allows us to change." (President Obama's full speech at Hiroshima can be read at www.wagingpeace.org/president-obama-speech-in-hiroshima.)

United for Peace & Justice wrote after the visit, "President Obama pulled off a magnificent symbolic act as the first sitting U.S. President to visit Hiroshima..." But, tragically his words "are contradicted by his dismal record on nuclear disarmament... His administration...has laid the groundwork to spend \$1 trillion, over three decades, to upgrade the U.S. nuclear arsenal..." And, "aggressive policies toward Russia and China are fueling growing tensions between nuclear-armed giants."

We can still urge actions by President Obama over the next six months to cancel the \$1 trillion modernization of the U.S. nuclear arsenal (and meet human needs instead); to initiate a process to eliminate nuclear weapons as required by the 1970 Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty; to dramatically reduce the U.S. nuclear arsenal and urge Russia to do the same.

The Stop the Wars Committee of LEPOCO is now planning for our annual Hiroshima-Nagasaki observance in early August. If you would like to be part of that planning, please contact LEPOCO, 610-691-8730.

REMEMBER HIROSHIMA AT OLYMPICS

The opening ceremony of the 2016 Olympic Games in Brazil, will be at 8 pm, on August 5th. In Japan, it will be 8 am, on the 6th. At 8:15 am, in Japan, the people of Hiroshima will observe one minute of silence in memory of the victims of the atomic bombing of their city 71 years ago. In 1945, 70,000 people were killed in Hiroshima immediately and 140,000 had died by the end of that year.

The current Mayor of Hiroshima, Kazumi Matsui, has asked the President of the International Olympic Committee to honor the peace-building mission of the Olympics by observing one minute of silence at the opening of the Games, to remember all the victims of nuclear weapons and all kinds of violence in the world today. The Mayor did this at the request of the *hibakusha* and on behalf of the Mayors of Peace Association. You can sign a petition to support this effort by searching online for "petition to remember Hiroshima at Olympics."

Protecting People Facing the Barriers of Borders

Troy Spier, a second-year doctoral student in Linguistics at Tulane University, educated LEPOCO members and friends on the importance of courage and humanity at a May 1st, Potluck & Politics program held at Lehigh Valley Friends Meetinghouse.

Arriving in Macedonia on a Fulbright Fellowship last summer, Troy Spier quickly began volunteering to help the refugees passing through Macedonia at that time, after their journey across the Aegean Sea and through Greece -- this, even while he was fulfilling his Fulbright Fellowship duties as a teacher. Unfortunately, he was forced by U.S. officials to resign his Fulbright Fellowship and leave Macedonia because he was assisting refugees. But, he had been so moved by his work with refugees, that he raised enough money to return to Lesvos Island and Macedonia, again assisting refugees for two more months. Since his humanitarian work ended in Europe last fall Troy Spier was teaching in his native Berks County and speaking about the refugee crisis that he had witnessed.

This summer he is at the Critical Languages Institute in Arizona improving his Farsi so he can "continue with refugee resettlement efforts in the U.S." as he continues his doctoral studies. We received the following message from Troy in early June, "At the LEPOCO talk, we were able to raise approximately four hundred dollars. The camp in Idomeni, Greece, has since been closed, and all refugees have been transferred to nearby military camps. The funding we raised was given to one of my trusted colleagues, Crystallynn Steed Brown, an American volunteer who worked with me in the Moria Detention Center, and it is being spent on basic necessities while asylum requests are processed and either accepted or rejected..."

"As you mentioned, we've received word that many more ships have been capsizing recently with disastrous ramifications. Additionally, there has been speculation that the European Union-Turkey deal is currently in limbo amid reports that refugees have been continually forced back to the war zones from which they came. The rest of the Balkan Route is still closed, but I've been told specifically from contacts in Serbia that asylum requests are being processed relatively quickly. On the other hand, we've had families detained in Skopje, the capital city of the Republic of Macedonia, after crossing the border, having believed it was open. The situation is still incredibly critical, particularly for the most vulnerable members of these camps, despite not seeing the same numbers that were attested while the Balkan Route was open."

Note: A report about Troy Spier's talk on May 1, appeared in *The Press*, Bethlehem, June 22nd edition. Written by Ed Courier, it can be read online by searching for "Troy Spier, Bethlehem Press."

Bits & Pieces

⊕ October 7-10 (Fri.-Mon.), 2016, SOA Watch is taking their yearly convergence to the U.S./Mexico border at Nogales, Mexico and Nogales, Arizona. This change from Ft. Benning, Georgia, comes after much discussion, and because refugees fleeing violence, especially in Central America, are being branded as criminals when the violence they flee is all-too-often the result of militaristic U.S. policies in the region. At the same time anti-immigrant rhetoric poisons too much of our public discourse. As SOA Watch says, "As politicians build walls, we must build bridges."

As with the large November demonstrations in Georgia, this convergence will include workshops and events featuring art, music, and resistance. Here activities will occur on both sides of the border. LEPOCO has endorsed this important gathering and we hope some activists from the Lehigh Valley will be able to participate. Call LEPOCO 610-691-8730, to talk about local plans and see www.soa-watch.org for more information.

⊕ The Keep the Hives Alive Tour took place June 13-23, in five states, including Pennsylvania, and was organized by beekeepers, farmers, farmworkers, scientists and advocates to occur during National Pollinator Week. One participant said, "By harming pollinators like bees and butterflies, and natural pest control agents like birds and beneficial insects, pesticides are sabotaging the very organisms on which farmers depend. For more information see www.KeepHivesAlive.org.

⊕ On the day the FARC guerrillas and the Colombian government signed a bilateral ceasefire in June, the FOR Peace Presence, based in Colombia, began a multimedia campaign, "Longing for Peace," to capture "the hopes, dreams, and humanity of the Colombian people in their struggle for peace."

The Colombian Peace Agreement will end 50 years of armed conflict, and the film, photography and writing in "Longing for Peace" will help us understand what peace means to people in their everyday lives. You can view "Longing for Peace," at www.peacepresence.org/longing-for-peace-anhelando-la-paz. A particularly beautiful piece in this document is "A-Z's of Peace."

⊕ On June 15 many of you participated in a call-in to the Honduran Embassy in Washington, DC, seeking an independent investigation by the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights into the murder of Berta Cáceres, the internationally honored environmental and human rights activist. We were also seeking the cancellation of the Agua Zarca Hydroelectric Project in Rio Blanco, which Berta Cáceres and her organization, COPINH, want to stop. Our call-in coincided with demonstrations at Honduran consulates and embassies.

We had mixed success as we made our calls -- some people spoke to a person at the embassy, some people only heard a phone ring and ring, some people sent a written message when they did not get an answer. Thank you to everyone who participated.

On June 21, the *Guardian* reported that U.S.-trained special forces units within the Honduran military are operating an assassination program targeting social justice and environmental activists with "elimination." A whistleblower says Berta Cáceres was at the top of the list and the whistleblower told the *Guardian* that he is "100 percent certain that Berta Cáceres was killed by the army."

On June 14, Rep. Hank Johnson of Georgia introduced the **Berta Cáceres Human Rights in Honduras Act**, HR-5474, with six co-sponsors. The legislation would suspend all U.S. military aid to Honduras until the country addresses its gross human rights violations. Our job is to convince our local representatives to co-sponsor this legislation. Please contact your member of Congress and urge them to do so.

In April 2015, Berta Cáceres said, "In order to fight the onslaught of dams, mines and other privatization of all of our natural resources, we need international solidarity. When we receive your solidarity, we feel sur-

rounded by your energy, your hope, your conviction that together we can construct societies with dignity, with life, with rebellion, with justice and, above all, with joy."

⊕ The Alliance for Sustainable Communities-Lehigh Valley will be continuing their **Transitions U Politics of the Middle East** program with "U.S. Foreign Policy: Iran & Israel-Palestine Question." This course is led by Faramarz Farbod, of the political science faculty at Moravian College.

The course is free and part of a four-part series to be held on Wednesdays from 6-8 pm, on July 6, July 20, and August 3. (The first meeting was held June 29, but do not let failure to have attended the first session stop you from jumping in!) The class will be held at Moravian College PPHAC (Priscilla Payne Hurd Academic Complex), Room 301. The required books for this series are "Israeli Apartheid" by Ben White and "The Coup" by Evrand Abrahamian.

This is the second course held this summer under the leadership of Faramarz Farboud, the previous being "ISIS & the War on Terror." For more information contact Martin Boksenbaum at 610-767-1287.

⊕ In April, Claude AnShin Thomas, a Vietnam veteran and a Zen Buddhist monk, spoke at Moravian College as the College's Ninth Peace and Justice Scholar in Residence. His topic was "Watering the Seeds of Peace: Facing Inequality, Violence and War." A substantive report on that talk appeared in *The Press*, Bethlehem, on June 22, 2016. You can read it by searching: Claude AnShin Thomas, Bethlehem Press.



Bits & Pieces

Ⓐ Pastor Salomon Obed, the principal founder of COTEDEMI, a grassroots-organized business cooperative located in Jimaní, near the Haitian/Dominican border, and Caitlin Stilin-Rooney, the group's co-founder, spoke at the LEPOCO Peace Center about "Protecting Refugee Rights in the Dominican Republic," on May 31. Obed talked about their work, these past three years, developing a business cooperative for Haitian women now living in abject poverty on the Dominican side of the border with Haiti. The women had been displaced by the 2010 earth-quake. The cooperative facilitates business training, financial planning, and the accumulation of money to secure the documentation needed for the women to live and work safely in their new country.

At this time, the Haitian women are preyed upon by a corrupt system that pads its own pockets by siphoning off the little money the women manage to acquire. Obed and Stilin-Rooney also discussed the difficult history Haitians who have migrated to the Dominican Republic have had.

Obed is pastor of his own Christian Ministry of Faith and Love (MICFA), and is, as well, a program director, social entrepreneur, and community organizer. Stilin-Rooney grew up in Bethlehem and participated at that time in LEPOCO activities. All told, 15 people attended the presentation and participated in the good discussion that emerged. Held as a Transitions U - LEPOCO Americas Solidarity Group presentation on Latin America, it was the first of what will be an irregularly held Transitions U series of LEPOCO presentations on Latin America.

- Martin Boksenbaum

Ⓐ As people reflected on the life of Muhammad Ali, *The Nation* (July 4/11, 2016) printed one of the best quotes. It is from a letter Ali wrote to the magazine in 1978 after Carey McWilliams, editor, wrote that Muhammad Ali should run for Congress. After writing that he was

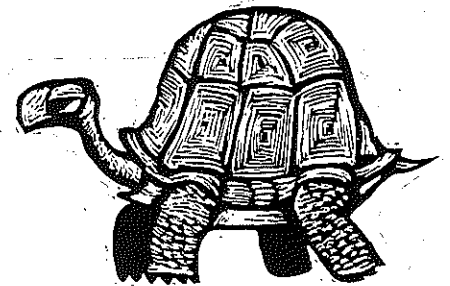
"extremely flattered by your appraisal of me," he added, "I ain't interested in politics. I mean like running for office. I'm a world man. My fellow man is not just an American and my race is the human race. I'm shook up when I see a child that is going hungry or a mother who is without medical attention. These are the things I'm interested in. And of course peace. Peace for all men and all nations at all times."

Ⓐ LEPOCO was among the 130 organizations that endorsed a statement initiated by North Carolina WARN calling for an investigation of the methane leakage cover-up. It reads, "We...call on the EPA Office of Inspector General to expedite an investigation into the allegations regarding scientific fraud in the underreporting of methane leakage from the natural gas industry... Frontline communities impacted by methane emissions are counting on the EPA to effectively regulate the natural gas industry. In order to protect public health and safety and to avoid catastrophic climate change, we urge you to do all in your power to reduce methane emissions. The urgency of this situation is conveyed thusly by Dr. Robert Horwarth of Cornell University: "The climate responds very quickly to methane, so if we reduce our methane emissions from shale gas now, we will slow the rate of global warming..."

in fact, that is the only way to avoid irreversible harm to the climate.

Ⓐ On May 21, Sam's Ride for Peace, led by 91-year-old Veterans For Peace member Sam Winstead, arrived in Washington, DC, after an eight-day ride from Raleigh, NC. The ride ended at the Swords Into Plowshares Bell Tower, erected on the Washington Mall, May 19-30, by VFP member Roger Ehrlich. Over those two weeks the Ride and the Tower reached out to thousands with the message that Peace Is Possible.

Ⓐ On May 15, Ron Bolza wrote to *The Morning Call*, "The animal rights people can talk of the problems of fur coats and elephants doing tricks, which is good. However, no one ever brings out the question of what happens to all the little animals when bulldozers clear ground when apartments or warehouses are built. Also, where do all the deer or bears go? I've never heard this question asked. And I ask: Does anyone care?"



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

Tuesday, June 28, 10 am: Stop the Wars Committee meeting at Tierra de Fuego restaurant, 612 Northampton St., Easton.

Fridays, July 1 & August 5, 11 am: Americas Solidarity Group meeting at the LEPOCO Peace Center, Bethlehem.

Wednesday, July 6, 7 pm: Peace Camp Planning Committee meeting at LEPOCO Peace Center. The final planning meeting will be Thursday, July 14, at 7 pm.

Mondays, July 11 & August 8, 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.

Thursday, October 6, 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 50th Anniversary Planning Committee, LEPOCO Peace Singers, Newsletter Planning Group, L.V. Veterans For Peace, Annual Dinner Planning Committee, Peaceathon 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, see www.lepoco.org.



Lehigh-Pocono Committee of Concern

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Bits & Pieces
Meetings...

Young People Making Peace Summer Day Camp

July 18-22, 2016

For children ages 5-14 who have completed kindergarten to 8th grade
Five mornings of stories, songs, games, crafts & learning activities related
to the broad topic of peace & justice.

(For more information see page 1 and enclosed flyer.)

Monthly Peace Vigil

4:30 - 5:30 pm

(Second Thursdays)

July 14th & August 11th

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

3rd & Wyandotte Sts., Bethlehem

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

Stand Up & Speak Out!

Saturdays

July 30 & August 27

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