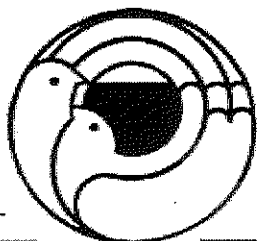


March
2020
Vol. 55 No. 2



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

Saturday, March 21: LEPOCO Annual Dinner

Friends and members of LEPOCO will gather once again at the Annual Dinner to reaffirm the hopes and actions of those who long for peace in the world. This joyful event will take place on March 21, at the Cathedral Church of the Nativity, 321 Wyandotte Street, Bethlehem. The evening will begin with a social hour at 6 pm, with dinner to be served at 6:30 pm.

In a festive atmosphere, a multitude of LEPOCO volunteers will offer a (mostly) homemade vegetarian meal, songs by the LEPOCO Peace Singers Chorus, news about the peace movement in the Lehigh Valley, and the completion of the election of next year's Steering Committee.

News about the relocation of the LEPOCO Peace Center office will provide an interesting new story in the history of the organization. Come hear how you can help with this major undertaking.

A highlight of the evening will be our featured guest: the much beloved singer/songwriter, storyteller, educator and cultural ambassador, Reggie Harris. He will present an inspiring message, "Keeping Our Eyes on the Prize: Holding on! Recommitting Ourselves to the Struggle."

Reggie Harris is a decades-long advocate for many of the issues that are important to LEPOCO members - peace, social justice, the environment... He is renowned for songs of joy, stories of hope, and a message of unity. Lehigh Valley fans know him through his performances at Godfrey Daniels and at Musikfest.

The dinner is a major fundraiser for LEPOCO and will include, as usual, an exciting raffle of artists' creations, handmade crafts, and other enticing prizes. (Please see the enclosed Art Raffle tickets that include a description of the prizes.) The peace boutique will be open with bumper stickers, cards, two-thirds world crafts, buttons, books, and more.

Make your reservation today by calling the Peace Center at 610-691-8730 or by email at lepoco@fast.net. Please see enclosed flyer to be used to make a reservation by mail or to share with others who might like to attend.

- Janet Ney



LEPOCO's Office Is Moving

It's official: LEPOCO's office is moving! We will be renting two large rooms from Rosemont Lutheran Church at 1705 West Broad Street, in west Bethlehem. The rooms are on the lower level of their "annex." We will have our own entrance from the Broad Street side of the building.

We are planning to move by May 15. This gives us time to prepare, while continuing with other work like getting ready for the Annual Dinner.

Moving will take work and money. We need you:

- To help prepare for the move
- To make an extra donation to LEPOCO for moving expenses

The preparation work includes sorting and purging (already begun!), the packing of boxes, and hauling (to recycling, to thrift stores, to discard) the things we are not taking with us to the new space. If you can help, please contact the LEPOCO office for details like when the next work hours are scheduled.

We have decided to hire someone to move the office equipment and furniture. That will cost money, as will the other effects of moving like new stationary and envelopes, installation for Internet and phone, installing a chair-lift to make the office accessible, and other to-be-determined items.

We will honor our previous landlord, Tony Casciano, for his and his parents' 35 years of support, at the Annual Dinner. There will be more events announced as the transition work continues.

- Margot Hillman



Save the Date!
The Annual LEPOCO Event
Biking & Walking for Peace
Saturday, May 23rd
Starting outside the new LEPOCO office
1705 W. Broad St., Bethlehem
Pledge sheets coming soon!
Call 610-691-8730 to make sure you get one.

LEPOCO Steering Committee Update & Election

LEPOCO's Steering Committee plans and provides leadership for the monthly Action Meetings, and thereby for the organization. The Action Meetings are held the second Monday of the month and are open to all members and friends. The Committee makes decisions between monthly meetings and handles finances, personnel, and other organizational issues. We are very grateful to these LEPOCO members who convene once a month to "strategize how to nonviolently build a sane and just world." They have been carrying an especially large load in recent months as the organization has been dealing with the location of the office.

The election for the Steering Committee will be completed at the Annual Dinner. The names of the nominees for the 2020-2022 term appear on page 4 along with the ballot and voting instructions.

Carol & Mick Baylor, Christine Loch, Dan Miller, Margot Hillman, and Julius Iwantsch (co-treasurer) will continue serving their two-year Steering Committee terms that began in 2019.

A special thank you goes to Terry Briscoe, Jim Orben, and Stefan Rogers who will each not be seeking another term on the Steering Committee. Terry, Jim and Stefan have each served several terms on the Steering Committee and have made their special contributions to LEPOCO's work.

Finally, because our at-large Steering Committee members can number as low as six and as high as ten, we will be one shy of a full complement with this election. If you would be interested in serving on the Steering Committee or if you know someone that would be a promising new member for the committee, please talk to one of the Steering Committee members. And don't forget to support those who take on this responsibility by casting your ballot.

The Doomsday Clock: Threats from Nuclear War & Climate Change

(continued from page 3)

"Fr. Olafsson's Secrets of Survival": Don't complain; Celebrate small joys; Choose to be noble; Cling to your source of strength.

Sisters Ardeth and Carol left us with a list of what we can do to prevent nuclear war:

- Join the movement. Sign up with the International Campaign to Abolish Weapons (ICAN) at www.ican.org.
- Listen to the stories of those who survived nuclear weapons.
- Pressure elected officials (at all levels of government) to support the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons. Thirty-five cities in the U.S.

(including Philadelphia) and three states (including New Jersey) have passed resolutions supporting ICAN.

• Participate in Don't Bank on the Bomb Campaign www.dontbankonthebomb.com. Help stop investment in nuclear weapons.

• Speak Up!

LEPOCO members of the Stop the Wars Committee continue their work to support these activities. We are determined to SPEAK UP!

- Mimi Lang

Some ways You Can Speak Up:

Join monthly Second Thursday Peace Vigil,

4:30 pm, (March 12 & April 9)

Third & Wyandotte Sts., Bethlehem!

Attend Meetings of Stop the Wars Committee!

Next Meeting: Tuesday, March 31, 11:30 am.

Join Tax Day (Wednesday, April 15) Leafletting to

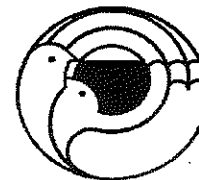
Cut Military Spending, at local Post Offices!

Join LEPOCO delegation to World Conference & Rally

to Abolish Nuclear Weapons; Resist and Reverse the Climate Crisis; For Social & Economic Justice! April 24-26, NYC

Join the local delegation to Mass Poor People's

Assembly & Moral March on Washington, DC, June 20,
organized by the Poor People's Campaign!



Newsletter of LEPOCO

Lehigh-Pocono Committee of Concern

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

Annual dues are:

Regular Member	\$35
Limited Income Member	\$10
Household Membership	\$45
Supporting Member	\$75

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

Newsletter Staff: Tom Stinnett, Nancy Tate, Amanda Zaniesienko, Carol Baylor, Janet Ney, Rick Dow.

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

LEPOCO Steering Committee: Carol Baylor, Mick Baylor, Terry Briscoe, Sharlee DiMenichi, Margot Hillman, Julius Iwantsch (co-treasurer), Nancy Johnston, Christine Loch, Dan Miller, Janet Ney, Jim Orben, Stefan Rogers, Tom Stinnett (co-treasurer), Nancy Tate (ex-officio), and Amanda Zaniesienko (ex-officio).

New Nukes & the Normalization of Nuclear Warfare

With little fanfare or public protest, late last year the U.S. military quietly deployed the first new nuclear weapons since the end of the Cold War. The submarine *Tennessee* left its Kings Bay Naval Submarine Base in Georgia armed with a new warhead on some of its Trident missiles. The military describes this W76-2 warhead as a "low-yield" weapon, meaning, in the jargon of nuclear war planners, it has roughly one-third the power of the bombs we dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki, Japan, in 1945.

Why was this new weapon put in the field? Both the U.S. and Russia have been spending hundreds of billions of dollars to "modernize" their nuclear arsenals. Fearing a "deterrence gap," the U.S. decided it needed a weapon capable of delivering a nuclear strike that was "prompt" (would reach its target in 15-30 minutes) and "assured" (able to penetrate air defenses). But the weapon's low-yield suggests it might be designed for other aims as well, the intimidation of states like North Korea and Iran.

Regardless of the opponent, the larger aim would seem to be to "normalize" the use of nuclear weapons in war. As per usual, President Trump has made a variety of contradictory statements regarding nuclear weaponry. He has said that he would be the last person to use such weapons. But he's also questioned the point of having nuclear weapons if we can't use them. It's worth remembering that during the Korean War, Gen. MacArthur sought permission from President Truman to use 25-35 nuclear bombs against Chinese targets in Manchuria. Truman fortunately rejected the idea. Would Trump be similarly inclined if the use of a low-level nuclear missile was among the options the Pentagon gave him for dealing with a crisis? The question is worrisome.

Humanity presently faces two existential threats - nuclear war and climate collapse. It's noteworthy that both threats find their remote origins in the scientific and technological revolutions of the modern West since the seventeenth century, transformations that have also brought enormous benefits. Equally noteworthy, of the two threats, only one - the climate crisis - is presently receiving much attention in the 2020 presidential race, and it is not getting much. In public debates, no one asks about the danger of nuclear war and what can be done to minimize or eliminate it. Except for isolated protests like those of the Plowshares movement, most of the public has apparently come to accept nuclear weapons. Even though the Bulletin of Atomic Scientists recently moved the Doomsday Clock (an indicator of how vulnerable our existence is) 20 seconds closer to midnight, the mass protests of a generation ago have disappeared. It is time that citizens again become aware of the threat that nuclear war poses. It is time for the public to push all candidates (Democratic and

Republican) for president to declare what they intend to do about this nuclear threat.

- Mick Baylor

The Doomsday Clock: Threats from Nuclear War & Climate Change

Most readers of the LEPOCO newsletter have an acute sense of the meaning of the Doomsday Clock although details may be sketchy. The Doomsday Clock was created by the Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists in 1947. Most of the scientists had helped to develop the nuclear weapons they now feared. They used the images of apocalypse (meaning, midnight), and the term nuclear explosion (meaning countdown to zero), to convey how much of a threat nuclear weapons were/are to humanity and planet. (See page 6 of the last LEPOCO Newsletter for more information on this topic.)

Since the cold war the time on the clock had been as close to midnight as 2 minutes (2018) and as far away as 17 minutes in 1991. The 2018 time has been called "the new abnormal." The current time on the Doomsday Clock is 100 seconds to midnight. To quote Mary Robinson, Chair of the independent group, The Elders, who spoke at the January Doomsday Clock announcement, "Humanity continues to face two simultaneous existential dangers - nuclear war and climate change - that are compounded by a threat multiplier, cyber-enabled information warfare, that undercuts society's ability to respond."

At a peace conference held at Sacred Heart Catholic Church in Camden, NJ, on February 15, several speakers addressed the possibilities of increasing awareness of these dangers to all of us. Dominican sisters, Ardeth Platt (83) and Claire Gilbert (74) spoke of their work in traveling the world to increase awareness of the dangers. Together they have spent a total of 15 years in some 40 prisons for their nonviolent actions against nuclear weapons. And yet, they are vibrant and enthusiastic about their work and continue to offer talks on the Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons.

Sister Ardeth described the barriers to taking action and the antidotes to the barriers: for apathy try anger and outrage; for inertia try a sense of urgency; for isolation use community solidarity; for self-doubt remember we are never too young or too old to keep learning; for fear, be courageous. She said, "Hope is the embrace of the unknowing and the unknowable."

Other speakers were Ananya Singh, an inspiring high school senior/college freshman who has been working for three years on environmental issues. She has been active in local and national climate change work and is CEO of Greening Forward, a student-led climate justice organization. John Bach, a Quaker chaplain, from Harvard University, spoke of his time in prison for resistance to militarism, racism and the existence of nuclear weapons. He advised us to consider

(continued on page 2)

Bits & Pieces

⊕ Please note, there are **no First Friday Films or Potluck & Politics programs listed** on page 3 of this newsletter because that in-office programming will be suspended for at least three months while the move of the office takes place. Please look for announcements of P&P programming at the new office as summer arrives.

⊕ On Monday, March 23, there will be a **Rally to End Gerrymandering** in Pennsylvania, in Harrisburg. The activities of the day will run from 11 am to 4 pm. There will be bus transportation available from the Lehigh Valley. You can find the important details and sign up at www.fairdistrictspa.com.

⊕ **March on Harrisburg** is planning another march. They are taking to the streets again to demand a democracy that represents the people, May 1-3. The "March to Make Corruption Illegal" will cover 31 miles from York to Harrisburg.

Ten states do not have any gift limitations for public officials, Pennsylvania is one of the ten. The focus of this march will be on limiting gift-giving to public officials in Pennsylvania. For more information see www.mohpa.org.

⊕ **"Embracing the Full Household of God:** How to Know, Serve, and Love the Immigrants and Refugees in Our Communities," is the theme of a day-long gathering being held by several local church organizations on Sat., March 28, 9 am-3 pm, at First Presbyterian Church, Allentown. Speakers include Teresa Waggener, Immigration Attorney for the Office of Immigration Issues of the Presbyterian Church (USA); Sandy Milien, Missioner for Community Engagement for the Episcopal Diocese of Bethlehem; The Rev. Dr. Deborah Appler, Professor of Old Testament/Hebrew Bible at Moravian Seminary; The Rev. Dr. Craig Atwood, Director of the Center for Moravian Studies at Moravian Seminary;

and The Rev. Maria Tjeltveit, Rector of the Episcopal Church of the Mediator, Allentown, site of the Refugee Community Center. The event is free and lunch is provided, but please register at www.bit.ly/fullhousehold.

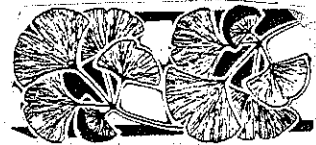
⊕ There will be a **"Color of Justice"** forum on Bail Reform at Muhlenberg College (Miller Forum, Moyer Hall), on Wed., April 15, at 7 pm. The keynote speaker will be Roseanne Scotti, former Executive Director, Drug Policy Alliance, New Jersey. Panelists will be Judge Glenn A. Grant, Acting Administrative Director of the New Jersey Courts; retired Senator Stewart Greenleaf, Republican from Montgomery and Bucks Counties; Rev. Gregory Holston, a senior advisor for the Philadelphia District Attorney's Office; and Attorney Mike Lee, also from the Philadelphia District Attorney's Office.

⊕ The Fourth Friday Film & Speaker Series at the Unitarian Universalist Church of the Lehigh Valley will present, **"Veganism Is Environmental Justice,"** on March 27, at 7 pm, at the church. The program will focus on why a plant-based lifestyle is an important part of the environmental justice movement.

⊕ The spring advocacy event for the local **Bread for the World** group will feature a program on "Better Nutrition, Better Tomorrow," on Sat., April 18, 9 am-3 pm, at First Presbyterian Church, Allentown. They will discuss food, hunger, and public policy, focusing on how ending hunger is not just about providing people with enough food, but also providing the right nutrients. For more information see www.ja.pppj.org.

⊕ April 22nd is the **50th anniversary of Earth Day**. This year many national environmental groups are calling on people to mobilize across the U.S. for climate action as part of the next international climate strike. Watch for more information about local events.

⊕ **April 28, Tuesday, is primary election day** in Pennsylvania. April 13 is the last day to register to vote before the primary.



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

Monday, March 9, 1 pm: Biking & Walking for Peace 2020 Planning Committee Meeting, LEPOCO Peace Center, Bethlehem.

Mondays, March 9 & April 13, 7 pm: LEPOCO Monthly Action Meetings at the Peace Center. All members & friends are welcome at this monthly business meeting where the organization's activities are discussed & planned.

Tuesday, March 10, 2 pm: Peace Camp 2020 Planning Committee Meeting, LEPOCO Peace Center, Bethlehem.

Wednesday, March 11, 1 pm: LEPOCO Moving Committee Meeting, LEPOCO Peace Center, Bethlehem.

Thursday, March 12, 2 pm: Annual Dinner Planning Committee Meeting, LEPOCO Peace Center, Bethlehem.

Thursdays, March 12 & April 9, 4:30-5:30 pm: Monthly Peace Vigils, Third & Wyandotte Sts., Bethlehem

Sunday, March 15, 6 pm: LEPOCO Peace Singers Rehearsals, at home of Marcie Lightwood & Rick Weaver. Call 610-691-8730 for more info.

Tuesday, March 31, 11:30 am: Stop the Wars Committee Meeting, Antolian Kitchen, Bethlehem.

Tuesday, April 7, 6 pm: First Tuesday LEPOCO Book Group, call LEPOCO, 610-691-8730 for directions to meeting location in a home. (See page 5 of last LEPOCO Newsletter for reading list for 2020.)

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

If you want more information about these meetings or the meetings of the Americas Solidarity Group, Newsletter Planning Group, the Popcorn/Potluck & Politics Planning Committee, or any other committees, please call LEPOCO at 610-691-8730. For a regularly updated calendar of events, see www.lepoco.org.



LEPOCO

Lehigh-Pocono Committee of Concern

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See Inside:

Page 1

- Annual Dinner
- LEPOCO Is Moving

Page 2

- Steering Committee Update
- Action Suggestions

Page 3

- New Nukes & Normalization of Nuclear Warfare
- Doomsday Clock Conference Report

Page 4

- Steering Committee Ballot

Page 5

- Bits & Pieces
- Calendar



Monthly Peace Vigil

(Second Thursdays)

March 12 & April 9

4:30-5:30 pm

*Our wars & bombings continue.
Help witness for peace.*

3rd & Wyandotte Sts., Bethlehem

Call LEPOCO at 610-691-8730 for more info.

Stand Up & Speak Out!

March 28 & April 25

12 - 2 pm

Protest:

Horsham Drone Command Center

(Rt. 611, Horsham)

Call 610-691-8730 about rides

& for more information.

Tax Day

Wednesday, April 15

**Taxes for Peace
Not War**

Help resist at local
post offices!

Call 610-691-8730
to claim a location & time.

LEPOCO Annual Dinner:

Saturday, March 21, 2020

Episcopal Cathedral Church of the Nativity
Bethlehem

Speaker: Reggie Harris

"Keeping Our Eyes on the Prize:
Holding On!

Recommitting Ourselves to the Struggle!"

(For more information, see page 1 & enclosed flyer.)