

August
2009

Vol. 44 No. 5



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

Remembering Hiroshima: Saying No More Nuclear Weapons

As long as the nuclear cult exists, as long as the belief is sustained that nuclear weapons bestow status, strength and security, the pressure to join the club will be irresistible... In the long term, there are only two alternatives: allow the possession of nuclear weapons to all states that desire them, or deny them to all states by eliminating nuclear weapons.

- Joseph Rotblat, 1993

On Thursday, August 6, 2009, the 64th anniversary of the atomic bombing by the U.S. of Hiroshima, Japan, we will take our witness against nuclear weapons and for peace, to the Musikfest "free speech zone." Starting at 7:30 pm, we will stand with banners and hand out a small leaflet to the throngs that walk through the "free speech zone" (located on the bridge across the Monocacy Creek on the part of Main Street, Bethlehem, that curves around Foy Concert Hall and the other buildings that are part of the south campus of Moravian College; down the hill from Central Moravian Church). As dusk arrives we will light candles and stand in vigil until 9 pm. You are invited to join us for this public presence organized by the Nuclear Abolition Sisters of LEPOCO.

Also: We hope to do some leafleting about peace issues at Musikfest on other days. If you can help at any time please call LEPOCO at 610-691-8730.

Is Single-Payer Health Care Coming Soon to Pennsylvania? A Forum on a Common Sense Solution to the Healthcare Crisis

We're learning again this summer that the for-profit health industry has the very powerful ability to take care of its own interests at the expense of the real healthcare to which everyone should have access.

There are citizens groups working hard to change this sad situation. Among those groups is Healthcare For All Pennsylvania. As part of the work of LEPOCO'S Ad Hoc Committee on the Economic Crisis we have invited Chuck Pennacchio, Executive Director of Healthcare for All Pennsylvania, to speak for a public forum on Wednesday, August 12, at 7 pm, in Room 605 (there is easy access by elevator), at the Fowler Family Southside Center, part of Northampton Community College, 511 East Third St., south Bethlehem (part of the old Bethlehem Steel offices). Please join us and invite others to join us for this important discussion.

Also: Contact LEPOCO at 610-691-8730 if you would like to join the Ad Hoc Committee on the Economic Crisis in their ongoing study and discussion.

Reflections from a Visit to the War Zone That Is Gaza

When I was growing up, my parents instilled in me the knowledge that Jews were hard working people who would not stand for injustice. My Jewish education taught me that Jews were obliged to fight against discrimination and other wrongs whenever they occurred. And we met discrimination ourselves. Growing up in Pen Argyl, my uncle, brother and I were the only non-Christians in the school system. A friend asked to see my horns. It was difficult.

When I was 13, my grandmother took me on a pilgrimage with Hadassah (the Zionist Woman's Organization) to Israel in 1956. I remember the wonderful feelings I had traveling around this new exciting pioneer



state. This land opened its doors to people who had survived the Holocaust, to people who had been banished from their homes because they were Jews. The United States and other countries did not let these refugees enter their borders but, in essence, gave them a small piece of land on which they could resettle. It was a time of hope and passionate belief in how special Israel was and would become. I grew up believing that a people who had no land were given a land that had no people.

I am heartbroken and appalled by what Israel, the land I loved, is doing in Gaza today. As part of a 13 person UN Relief/CODEPINK delegation in late May 2009, I witnessed physical and psychological damage from the Israeli occupation of Gaza. Israel had been blockading Gaza -- by air, sea, and land -- for years, before this recent December to January assault. The years-long blockade itself threatened the lives of adults and children. Most Gazans were unable to get medication or go to hospitals. Think of what your life would be like without ordinary items such as fabric, thread, needles, candles, matches, mattresses, blankets, cutlery, glasses, musical instruments, books, tea, coffee, chocolate, crayons, clothing and shoes. These have not been allowed legally into the Gaza Strip for years. People in Gaza essentially live in a prison colony.

Yes, Hamas sent rockets into nearby cities. And yes, these rockets violated international law since they were

(continued on page 2)

Reflections from a Visit to Gaza —

(continued from page 1)

were aimed at civilians. Israel returned with sophisticated weapons and an all-out assault on areas densely populated with Palestinian civilians, killing over 1400 people, including many children. Thirteen Israeli soldiers were killed during the December-January bombing. The number of deaths is disproportionate for Israel's claim to be acting in self-defense.

During the December assault, the residents of Gaza were told to go to safe areas. We met families who thought they were in "safe" areas. One grandfather of a family we met was killed instantly when a white phosphorous bomb came through the roof of his home. The mother in the same family, sitting near him, was seriously injured. When friends tried to drive her by tractor to a hospital she was killed by Israeli soldiers. Her three-year-old daughter, now motherless, has scars over both legs and a three-inch white phosphorous burn around her middle. This same quiet child clings to a teenage relative, afraid to leave him even for a minute. They learned that there are no safe areas in Gaza.

We also met fishermen who fear Israeli gunboats because they are kidnapped and shot at while trying to make a living. These kidnapped fishermen are either taken to Israeli jails or returned to Gaza with their equipment and boats ruined. Palestinian farmers are in a similar situation. The Israelis recently built automated (soldierless) watchtowers along the border that open up and fire machine guns into Gaza when activated. The week before I arrived the Israelis dropped flyers on communities near the borders, telling the people that they would be shot at if they were within 300 meters, nearly a fifth of a mile, of the border. Gaza is about 25 miles long and between three and seven miles wide. 1.5 million people live in this small land. The new no man's land Israel has created further reduces the area for living and farming in Gaza.

We met with an organization of young college students and recent graduates. Many youths had to forfeit scholarships to study abroad because they were not allowed to exit Gaza via either the Egyptian or the Israeli borders. They asked us to put them in contact with young people around the world, since they are barred from studying abroad.

The destruction we saw from the recent assault was severe. In addition to bombed out schools, hospitals, police and fire stations and of course homes, we saw destroyed cement factories among the ruins. Gaza can no longer make its own cement and not one bag of cement is allowed into Gaza through the Egyptian or Israeli crossings. Families whose homes were bombed now must live in bare tents, without even cots.

We must do more to get both sides to stop the hostilities. What Israel is doing in Gaza is horrible beyond any words that I can express. So that we can all live in a more peaceful world, there must be a just resolution to the Israel/Palestine conflict. The killing must stop. Peace with justice must reign in our world.

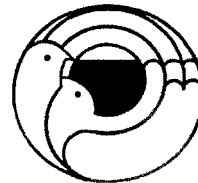
Since Hamas won the 2006 elections, the Israelis have laid siege against Gaza. We in the United States have provided the wherewithal for this campaign. From 2003 to 2007 our aid to Israel averaged \$2.8 billion per year. We must help to terminate these violations of international law, not encourage their persistence.

Our media is not sending us true accounts of what is happening in Gaza. It is hard to believe that if politicians actually saw what is going on there, they would continue to fund Israel's military actions in Gaza. I was horrified to see bomb fragments that were clearly connected to the United States. Our tax money helped to fund the devastation of Gaza.

What can we, as U.S. citizens, do to change this? Encourage elected officials and others to travel to Gaza and talk to ordinary people who hope to lead ordinary lives but suffer attacks and privations. We must let our representatives know that we do not want our money to continue supporting a government that attacks and kills civilians, a government that traumatizes and embitters the lives of survivors and a new generation. The continued hostilities directed toward Gaza undermine any hope of stability in the Middle East and the world.

- Joyce Ravitz

Editor's Note: For other reports and updates from the delegation please see www.vivagaza.org.



Newsletter of LEPOCO

Lehigh-Pocono Committee of Concern

313 West Fourth Street

Bethlehem, PA 18015

phone: 610-691-8730

fax: 610-691-8904

website: www.lepoco.org

e-mail: lepoco@fast.net

The *LEPOCO Newsletter* is published 8 times a year by the Lehigh-Pocono Committee of Concern, a nonviolent, non-profit organization dedicated to peace in all forms.

Annual dues are:

Regular Member	\$35
Limited Income Member	\$ 5
Household Membership	\$45
Supporting Member	\$75

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

Newsletter Staff: robert Daniels II, Michelle Mecham, Bob Riggs, Tom Stinnett, Nancy Tate, Jeff Vitelli.

Thanks to all the people who staple, fold and label the newsletter each month.

LEPOCO Steering Committee: Addison Bross, Peter Christine, robert Daniels II (ex-officio), Julius Iwantsch (co-treasurer), Ruth Karpinski, Mimi Lang, Michelle Mecham, Janet Ney, Susie Ravitz, Tom Stinnett (co-treasurer), Nancy Tate (ex-officio).

Popcorn / Potluck & Politics

Friday, August 7th, 7 pm: Johnny Got His Gun

Popcorn and Politics: A *First Friday Film* projected on the big screen at the LEPOCO Peace Center. Blacklisted screenwriter Dalton Trumbo directs this film adaptation of his own classic anti-war novel. After a mortar shell leaves his body mangled on the final day of World War I, Joe Bonham lies trapped in a hospital bed, a fully conscious quadruple amputee who cannot speak, hear, or see, left to wander within his own mind between his harsh reality and memories of a happier life long gone.

106 minutes. 1971.

Please bring a snack or beverage to share.

Friday, September 4th, 7 pm: Gandhi My Father

Popcorn and Politics: A *First Friday Film* projected on the big screen at the LEPOCO Peace Center.

Beautifully photographed on location in India and South Africa, this dramatic film looks at the tumultuous relationship between Mohandas "Mahatma" Gandhi and his troubled son Harilal. A rare glimpse at the personal struggles of the man revered in India as the "Father of the Nation" and the toll it cost his family. Directed by Feroz Abbas Khan.

In Hindu, Gujarati, and English with English subtitles. 135 minutes. 2007.

Please bring a snack or beverage to share.



I'll Drink to That!!

I have been asked to write a regular column regarding all things environmental. I am honored to do so. This month I am focusing on the timely issue of bottled water. However, I would appreciate any suggestions for future articles.

What could be more essential to the survival of human life than the availability of free, clean water? We use water to bathe, cook, clean, grow crops and of course, to drink. In these hot summer months there is nothing more refreshing than an ice-cold drink of water. But before you drink another bottle, stop to consider the ramifications on the health of your body and the health of the planet.

Reports released on July 8, 2009, by both the Environmental Working Group (EWG) and the Government Accountability Office expressed concern over the safety of bottled water. Studies done by EWG showed higher levels of contaminants in bottled water than that allowed in tap water. More information can be found at www.ewg.org.

According to the Container Recycling Institute U.S. citizens use over 34 billion single serving water bottles every year. Only about 20% of these are recycled. That leaves billions of bottles going to landfills.

A hidden cost to our precious home is the amount of fuel associated with transporting bottled water. According to www.fastcompany.com: "About 1 billion bottles of water a week are moved around in ships, trains and trucks, in the United States alone. That's a weekly convoy equivalent to 37,800 eighteen-wheelers delivering water." All this fuel is needlessly consumed on an essential element that can be obtained from the tap for a fraction of the price.

At www.treehugger.com an article by Lloyd Alter uses a case study of Fiji bottled water to demonstrate that it actually takes nearly seven times more water to

produce a bottle of water than the bottle itself actually holds. The article states that, ironically, nearly half of the inhabitants of Fiji lack access to clean water.

Lastly, recent events in and around the Lehigh Valley have led to water restrictions on ordinary citizens while the for-profit industry sucks aquifers dry. This water is sold with a nearly 20-fold markup, according to the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom.

By now you are probably wondering what you can do about all this. Well the answer is as easy as turning on your tap. A reusable water bottle to carry along on your travels seems like a small step toward solving such a large problem, but it really can save some green in our world and some green in your wallet.

- Michelle Mecham



The "Mimi's 70!" Dance for Peace Party

Don't miss the party event of the summer to celebrate the 70th birthday of our own Mimi Lang and to raise money for LEPOCO (admission donations are requested in numbers that begin or end in "7"; \$7, \$17, \$27 ...\$70). Popular DJ and peace activist, Evan Hoffman, will "spin" the lively dance music of many generations to raise our hopes for a better and happier world for all. The party will be at Mimi's home on Saturday, August 1, 7-10 pm. Please call LEPOCO at 610-691-8730 for directions and to help facilitate planning. You are also asked to bring a beverage or favorite snack/dessert to share.

Perspective on Iran

Attendees at the June meeting of the Lehigh Valley Peace Coalition were given special insight on the recent election and postelection demonstrations in Iran when Faramarz Farbod came to share his thoughts. The Iranian born adjunct professor of political science at Moravian College was able to provide both an enlightening overview as well as a personal account of a nation apparently at odds with itself.

Faramarz provided a historical context for the demonstrations that took place following the June 12th elections. He explained that within the very name of the country, "Islamic Republic of Iran," there exists an irreconcilable paradox -- that being between the unelected, "divinely" appointed, theocratic leadership (the "Islamic" in Islamic Republic), and the elected, more participatory aspects of government (the Republic). To those two conflicting elements Faramarz added a third factor to understanding Iran: the increasing militarization of politics and economics. The post 9/11 policies of the U.S. in the Middle East (President Bush naming Iran as part of the "Axis of Evil" being an overt example) set the stage for the election of Ahmadinejad and the ascendancy of a hyper-national security state with ties to the conservative religious rulers of the Guardian Council. Theomilitarism, one might say. This was a severe blow to the more moderate reformists working on emphasizing the more representative elements of the Islamic Republic.

Still, in the years since Ahmadinejad's election in 2005 a heterogeneous social movement for democratic change in Iran survived, and gained a momentum that manifested itself in the streets following the June 12th elections. Many Iranians saw the election as an opportunity to push for democratic change, improved relations with the world, and better management of the economy. The postelection state repression has forced Iranians to take a stand, either with theocracy or democracy. Though it may be hard to see the bloody clampdown on dissent and protest as a plus for democracy advocates, Faramarz cautions us to keep the long-term view in mind. Violent repression is a sign of desperation. In the short-term theomilitarism may trump theorepublicanism, but given the overcoming of passivity and the dramatic clarification of positions in the Iranian public there is hope. In Faramarz's words, "Indeed, I am inclined to say that if the regime persists in moving toward theomilitarism, more and more segments of the public may abandon theorepublicanism altogether in favor of republicanism, a secular republic."

Faramarz said President Obama's role and the role of the United States could be to recognize the social movement developing in Iran and take the war option that the Bush administration clung to "off the table." This could diffuse the thuggish behavior of the baton wielding regime, bringing further light to the repression, and empowering the reformist movement for change.

- robert Daniels II

Editor's Note: To view Faramarz Farbod's writings please visit www.zmag.org/zspace/faramarzfARBOD. For further updates on the situation in Iran please see www.tehranbureau.com and www.link.tv.org/mosaic



Veterans For Peace, Lehigh Valley Thomas Paine Chapter, Report

On May 25th the Lehigh Valley Veterans For Peace participated in the United Veterans of Bethlehem Memorial Day parade. As has been the case in previous years, response to the group was positive, at times enthusiastically so. Tentative plans are in the works for VFP having its own Memorial Day observance next year.

For the most recent Veterans For Peace radio program on station WDIY Louise Legun was to conduct a telephone interview with Aaron Hughes, a former Army sergeant and Iraq Veterans Against the War member. Technical difficulties precluded the interview from taking place and Judy Woodruff, VFP co-treasurer, ably filled in on no notice to discuss Mr. Hughes's attempts at reconciliation with the Iraqi people including a personal return to Iraq.

In conjunction with the Social Action Committee of the Unitarian Universalist Church of the Lehigh Valley, Veterans For Peace sponsored a talk by Cindy Sheehan on June 23rd. Ms. Sheehan, whose son Casey was killed in Iraq in 2004, has been a committed and outspoken critic of U.S. military policies in Iraq. A significant part of her talk, delivered with energy and humor, pertained to her recently published book "Myth America: Ten Greatest Myths of the Robber Class and the Case for Revolution." Ms. Sheehan spoke of the existence of an elite class which manipulates the "robbed class" in pursuit of its own interests, at the cost of livelihood and lives of that lower class. She enumerated the myths put forth toward that end: "America is the greatest nation in the universe; elections matter; the center is where we live and breathe; it's noble to die in Robber Class wars; the Federal Reserve system cares about you; it's a privilege to pay taxes to the Robber Class; health care, quality education, housing, and healthy food are also privileges; America has a free press; environment, who needs it; and, 19 Muslims with box cutters caused 9/11." Ms. Sheehan offered hope for redress by the Robbed Class through organization and mutual concern at the community level, adding that little actions have more effect than big actions.

Upcoming events planned for VFP include an expanded hour-long radio program with a different format on July 30th, from 6-7pm, on WDIY Bethlehem, as well as having a booth at the Coopersburg Days Festival on September 19th.

- Paul Fichter

Videos of Cindy Sheehan's talk "Myth America" can be found at LEPOCO's YouTube site, www.youtube.com/rhubarbdoom.

The Struggle Shared

*Can you dry every tear? And bind every wound, And take every hand,
That death has consumed, And tear down the walls, That burden each heart,
For gone is the distance, That keeps us apart.*

*Lord, hear my prayer, And give us this day, Lessen the burdens,
That stand in the way, And open the heavens, And come back the dove,
That flows on compassion, forgiveness and love.*

- Arlo Guthrie, from *The Hymn* as heard on *Prairie Home Companion*, 4/25/09

O, SHENANDOAH, WE LONG TO SEE YOU... - Shenandoah, Pennsylvania, is a community of about 5600 people now, mostly white descendants of English, Welsh, Irish and German immigrants who faced discrimination when they came here in the early 19th century to work in the coal mines. Today it is a bitterly divided community, ironically, over discrimination, and immigration.

A year ago, a group of half a dozen drunken members of the Shenandoah Valley High School football team attacked an undocumented Mexican immigrant worker and beat him so brutally that Luis Ramirez died two days later. Four of the gang were eventually arrested. Brian Scully, 18, was charged as a juvenile, and sentenced to detention. Colin Walsh pled guilty to federal civil rights violations, and cooperated with investigators in the trial of Brandon Piekarsky and Derrick Donchak. Originally criminal homicide and ethnic intimidation were among the charges against them. In May, however, an all-white jury of their Shenandoah peers acquitted both teens of all but simple assault and alcohol related offenses. Judge William Baldwin, constrained by "jury nullification," sentenced Piekarsky to six to twenty-three and Donchak to six to twenty months in the county jail.

The jury forman told reporters he believed others on the jury were possibly racists, and the teens who assaulted Ramirez certainly were.

In the weeks after the murder, the community of churches and friends of the Ramirez family held a vigil near the site of the murder. LEPOCO member Michelle Mecham was among several people from the Lehigh Valley who went to Shenandoah in solidarity. Michelle reports that while she was there, holding posters and candles for peace, there was an-

other demonstration across town attended by white supremacists.

The case has received national attention. In May, after the jury verdict, the Mexican American Legal Defense and Education Fund, the NAACP, the Anti-Defamation League, and the Southern Poverty Law Center appealed to the U.S. Department of Justice to prosecute the teens for federal civil rights violations. More recently Gov. Ed Rendell joined this appeal. The Justice Department has said that its Civil Rights Division and the FBI are completing an investigation and if evidence indicates a prosecutable violation occurred they will take appropriate action.

The Wyoming Valley Interfaith Council, in conjunction with a number of other groups held a candlelight vigil in Wilkes-Barre on July 17, the anniversary of Luis Ramirez's murder.

LEHIGH RIVER SOJOURN, 2009 - Joining the Lehigh Valley Wildland's Conservancy's 13th annual paddle of the Lehigh was a perfect way to immerse oneself in the culture of the river. The folks on the Sojourn, who are stepping out of their 9-5 routines, leaving behind their cell-phones, i-pods, car-lock remotes, (anything that can't get wet), to find the peace of going with the watery flow, are a wonderful network.

The Conservancy's ongoing commitment to preserving, protecting, restoring, and enhancing the natural community, adds an environmental education dimension to the Sojourn which makes it special.

On day two of the five-day trip, for example, the lunch-stop included a visit to the Lehigh Gap Nature Center, at the foot of the Kittatinny Ridge. The area is one of the nation's first, and worst Superfund sites, as nearly a century of air pollution from the New Jersey Zinc Company in Pal-

merton stripped the vegetation from the land, leaving a barren moonscape that leached heavy metals into the Lehigh River. In partnership with the Conservancy, the Nature Center, purchased significant acreage on the west side of the mountain. Working with the EPA, university researchers, and volunteers, the Nature Center seeded the mountainside with warm-season prairie grasses. The before and after photos are amazing. The grasses send their roots as much as 18 feet through the rockface, into sub-soil, retaining heavy metals, keeping toxins out of the food-chain, and actually making the mountain look green from a canoe on the river. The project is a model of successful environmental activism.

On the third day I partnered with Elizabeth Griner, active on the planning committee for the Sojourn, and one of the LEPOCO Peace Singers. The two of us enjoyed belting out chants and songs to the rhythmic dip and drip of paddling. As we made connections between river-work and peace-work, we envisioned how fine it would be to have a larger LEPOCO presence join next year's Sojourn. Contact the Conservancy in Emmaus (www.wildlandspa.org) for more information.

SANCTUARY FOR A DOUGHTY GOAT - Farm Sanctuary reports an addition to their lively herd of goats at their New York shelter. A seven-month-old goat was recently found running along a busy highway, just miles from the sanctuary, headed in the right direction. It was determined that he had escaped from a slaughterhouse in nearby Newfield, NY, and, although sick and frail, seemed possessed by an indomitable survival instinct. When the owner of the slaughterhouse was contacted, he agreed to surrender the goat to the Tompkin's County SPCA, for rehabilitative care. From there the young goat, who caregivers named Doughty, which means "valiant," found its way to the New York Farm Sanctuary Shelter.

As Doughty runs and jumps with his newfound family, he is a testament to the intelligent, soulful, sociable nature of farm animals, and the hope that one day they will all find sanctuary.

- Jeff Vitelli

Bits & Pieces

Ⓒ On July 16, Ben Beachy of **Witness For Peace** wrote from Tegucigalpa, Honduras, where he is part of an emergency commission of observers from across the hemisphere:

"...tens of thousands of Hondurans are shutting down highways, halting work, and taking over universities in an effort to take back their country. They do so at the risk of arrest, abuse and outright attack from Honduran security forces. Since the illegal June 28 coup, the violation of basic human rights has grown increasingly flagrant: over 1000 arbitrary arrests of civilians, censure and expulsion of nearly all independent media outlets, dozens of physical attacks, and four murders.

"...it is critical that we demonstrate our solidarity with the Honduran people... While the Obama Administration has made welcome statements of respect for the democratic will of the Honduran people, such statements ring hollow unless the U.S. actually works to hasten the return to democracy by freezing all non-humanitarian aid to Honduras. Call your representative today to ask that she/he cosponsor the Delahunt-McGovern resolution condemning the coup and urging the Obama Administration to stand on the right side of history." Please see www.witnessforpeace.org and click on "Live From Honduras" for more details.

Ⓒ The Brandywine Peace Community will be at Lockheed Martin, our largest

military contractor, in Valley Forge, on **Hiroshima Day**, Thurs., Aug. 6. There will be a Vigil for Peace, 8 am to noon, and a Hiroshima Day Ceremony and Nonviolent Action, including civil disobedience at noon. Those interested in participating in the civil disobedience should call the Brandywine Peace Community for preparation and planning information. They can be reached at 610-544-1818 or see www.brandywinepeace.com.

Ⓒ If you want some words of encouragement please read "**Active Nonviolence Across the World**" by Richard Deats, in the Winter/Spring 2009 issue of *Fellowship* magazine. Looking at major regions of the world he traces the progress made through the practice of active nonviolence since the mid-20th century. Copies are available from the Fellowship of Reconciliation, Box 271, Nyack, NY 10960, 845-358-4601.

Ⓒ LEPOCO will hold its annual **Yard Sale** on Saturday, October 3. Watch the next newsletter for details of the organizing plans.

Ⓒ In a July 15th message Rep. **Dennis Kucinich** of Ohio writes, "Of \$2.4 trillion spent annually for health care in America, fully \$800 billion goes for the activities of the for-profit insurer-based system. This means one of every three health care dollars is siphoned off for corporate profits, stock options, executive salaries, advertising, marketing and the cost of paper work, (which can be anywhere between 15-35% in the private sector as compared to Medicare, the single payer plan which has only 3% administrative costs).



Events at Kirkridge

Retreat & Study Center, near Bangor:

September 10-13: *Creating a Culture of Peace Training of Trainers with Janet Chisholm.*

September 18-20: *"Community or Empire - Which Will We Build?" with Daniel Berrigna & Elizabeth McAlister.*

November 6-8: *"Love Force - The Peacemaker's Way" with Richard Deats.*

November 13-15: *"Making Activism Smarter & Thriving Personally" with George Lakey.*

For more information see www.kirkridge.org or call 610-588-1793.

Ⓒ **Greta Browne** continues on her walk from New Orleans to Rouses Point, NY, along U.S. 11. She is now traveling through Pennsylvania. As reported in earlier newsletters her walk is to call attention to global warming. On July 12, *The Express Times* carried a story about her walk. She writes about her journey at www.forallthechildren.blogspot.com.

Ⓒ The **Senate voted 58-40** to strip \$1.75 billion in funding for the procurement of additional F-22 Raptor aircraft on July 21. Both Pennsylvania senators and both New Jersey senators voted against the procurement. Thanks to everyone who urged them to do so. This is a significant victory, but there may be attempts to include funding for the F-22 in other appropriation bills.

Weekly Peace Vigils

Our wars continue. Can you join the much-needed witnessing for peace?

Bethlehem:

4:30-5:30 pm, Second Thursdays
3rd & Wyandotte Sts., south Bethlehem
Contact: Vince Stravino 610-216-8103

Allentown: Noon-1 pm, Fridays
Federal Courthouse, 5th & Hamilton Sts.
Contact: Rev. John C. Fowler 746-5013

4:30-5:30 pm, Fridays
PA National Guard Armory, 15th & Allen Sts.

Easton: 10-11 am, Saturdays

Centre Square
Contact: Reggie Regrut 908-859-5632

Support LEPOCO!

- ___ Enclosed are my yearly LEPOCO dues of \$ _____. (\$35 individual; \$45 hh; \$75 supporter; \$5 lim. income)
- ___ I am also enclosing an extra donation of \$ _____.
- ___ I would like to support LEPOCO's work with a ___ monthly/ ___ quarterly pledge of \$ _____.
- ___ I'm most interested in working on the following issues:

Name

Phone #

e-mail

Address

City

Zip

Return to: LEPOCO Peace Center, 313 W. 4th St., Bethlehem, PA 18015.

Bits & Pieces

☸ The "Young People Making Peace Summer Day Camp," aka **Peace Camp**, is full this year. It will be held July 27-31, at First Presbyterian Church in Allentown. We expect that at least 70 children will participate along with over 50 volunteers. Thank you to everyone who registered early. We look forward to a wonderful camp for young and old alike. A photo report from Peace Camp will appear in the next newsletter.

☸ As you may know from earlier mailings, **Joe DeRaymond** is heading to El Salvador and Colombia again this summer. He will be working with CIS (Centro de Intercambio y Solidaridad) in El Salvador and checking on developments since the installation of the new president of the country, Mauricio Funes. In Colombia he will join a delegation from the Fellowship of Reconciliation to the Peace Community of San José de Apartadó. Thank you to the several dozen people who contributed over \$1700 to help with the expenses of his travels. We all wish Joe well as he continues his work of standing in solidarity with the efforts for peace and justice in the Americas.

☸ This is the **season of summer festivals** and LEPOCO will be participating in even more local festivals this year. Can you help with the staffing? In each case we like to have at least two people at a booth at all times, plus a few extra to set up and tear down. It can be great fun to be a part of a presence for peace and justice in the midst of these lively gatherings. If you can help with any (or all) of these festivals please call LEPOCO at 610-691-8730.

August 16, Sunday, PrideFest
Cedar Beach Park, Allentown

August 24, Monday

Lehigh University Community Expo
south Bethlehem

September 19, Saturday

Celebration of Gifts Street Festival
Market Street, Bethlehem

September 18-20, Friday-Sunday
Pennsylvania Renewable Energy & Sustainable Living Festival, Kempton

September 26, Saturday

The Peace Fair

Buckingham Friends School and Meetinghouse, Lahaska

☸ On Thurs., July 30, at 6 pm, the Pennsylvania Public Utility Commission will hold a **Public Input Hearing** to receive public comment on the proposed energy efficiency and conservation plan filed by PPL Electric. The hearing will be in Bethlehem Town Hall, City Council Chamber, 10 E. Church St., Bethlehem. Under Act 129 of 2008, electric companies, like PPL, are required to develop programs to help customers reduce and control electricity usage, to help lower their monthly bills. For more info. on Act 129 or to view PPL's plan see www.puc.state.pa.us/electric/Act_129_info.aspx.

☸ Another **thank you** is in order for those who participated in LEPOCO's Annual Bike/Walkathon on June 6. Thank you also to our sponsoring groups and businesses (Coalition for Appropriate Transportation, Genesis Bicycles, Nature's Way Market, The New Street Book Shop, The Old Library Shop, Quadrant Bookmart, Valley Preferred Cycling Center, and the Wildflower Café & Gallery). Three businesses gave premiums that have been awarded to the participants who raised the most in pledges: Sean Steward, Walt Garvin, and David

Rose. A date has been set for next year's Bike/Walkathon: June 5, 2010.

☸ On July 10, "**Bill Moyers Journal**" featured an interview with Wendell Potter, the former chief spokesperson for insurance giant CIGNA, who had recently testified before Congress about how the insurance companies serve Wall Street. Closing the program Bill Moyers said: *According to one poll after another, a majority of Americans not only want a public option in health care, they also think that growing inequality is bad for the country, that corporations have too much power over policy, that money in politics is the root of all evil, and that working families and poor communities need and deserve public support when the market fails to generate shared prosperity. But when the insiders in Washington finish tearing worthy intentions apart and devouring flesh from bone, none of these reforms happen. Oh, they say, "It's all about compromise, all in the nature of the give-and-take of representative democracy." That, people, is bull - the basic nutrient of Washington's high and mighty. It's not about compromise. It's not about what the public wants. It's about money, the golden ticket to "the select few who actually get it done." And nothing will change. Nothing. Until the money-lenders are tossed out of the temple, and we tear down the sign they've placed on government - the one that reads: "For sale."*

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

Tues., Aug. 4, 7 pm: Americas Solidarity Group meeting at the LEPOCO Peace Center.

Mondays, Aug. 10 & Sept. 14, 7 pm: LEPOCO Monthly Action Meeting at the LEPOCO Peace Center. All members and friends are welcome at this monthly business meeting where the organization's activities are reviewed.

Thursdays, Aug. 13 & Sept. 10, 7 pm: Lehigh Valley Chapter of Veterans for Peace meets at the LEPOCO Peace Center.

Fri., Aug. 14, 1 pm: LEPOCO Newsletter Committee planning meeting for September issue at LEPOCO Peace Center.

Tues., Aug. 18, 10 am: Lehigh Valley Committee Against State Killing meeting at the LEPOCO Peace Center.

Wed., Sept. 9, 2 pm: Fundraising Committee meeting at the LEPOCO Peace Center.

Wed., Sept. 9, 6 pm: Nuclear Abolition Sisters meeting at the Olive Branch Restaurant, 355 Broadway, south Bethlehem.

Wed., Sept. 16, 7 pm: Ad Hoc Committee on the Economic Crisis meeting at Mimi Lang's home, Bethlehem. Call 610-691-8730 for directions.

Please join in the meetings and work of these groups as you are able. If you want more information about any of these meetings; or if you miss the meeting listed above and want to know about their next meeting; or if you want to know the next meeting of the Lehigh Valley Peace Coalition, the LEPOCO Peace Singers, the Youth & Militarism Truth in Recruiting Committee, or the Association of Students Advocating Peace: please call the Peace Center at 610-691-8730. For a regularly updated calendar of events and a schedule of meetings please see www.lepoco.org.



LEPOCO

Lehigh-Pocono Committee of Concern

313 W. Fourth St., Bethlehem, PA 18015
610-691-8730 lepoco@fast.net
Fax: 610-691-8904 www.lepoco.org

Address Service Requested

Non-Profit Org.
U.S. POSTAGE PAID
Permit No. 617
Bethlehem, PA

See Inside:

Page 1

Remembering
Hiroshima
Health Care Forum
Reflections on Gaza

Page 3

First Friday Films
Water Matters
Mimi's Dance For
Peace Party

Page 4

Perspective on Iran
Veterans For Peace

Page 5

Struggle Shared

Page 6

Bits & Pieces
Events at Kirkridge
Weekly Peace Vigils

Pages 7

Bits & Pieces
Meetings,
Meetings...



Remembering
Hiroshima

Thursday

August 6, 2009

7:30 - 9:00 pm

Free Speech Zone at Musikfest
Bethlehem

(See page 1 for more info.)

*Is Single Payer Health Care
Coming Soon to Pennsylvania?*

A Forum on a Common Sense Solution
to the Healthcare Crisis

Wednesday, August 12

7:00 pm

Room 605, Fowler Center, NCC
511 E. Third St., south Bethlehem

(See page 1 for more info.)

Mimi's 70!!

Dance For Peace Party

Saturday, August 1

7-10 pm

with DJ Evan Hoffman

A Summer Fun Fundraiser for LEPOCO

(See page 3 for more info.)

Popcorn & Politics / First Friday Film

Friday, August 7, 7 pm

Johnny Got His Gun

At LEPOCO; share snacks & beverages.

Popcorn & Politics / First Friday Film

Friday, September 4, 7 pm

Gandhi My Father

At LEPOCO; share snacks & beverages.

(See page 3 for more details.)