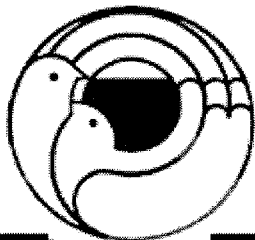


January
2009

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

Honor King: End Poverty, Racism & War

The Martin Luther King Holiday this year (Monday, January 19) falls on the eve of the inauguration of the next president of the United States. Most gatherings for the King Holiday will in some way celebrate and acknowledge the historical significance of Barack Obama's election and inauguration as president of the United States.

For nine years the Nuclear Abolition Sisters of LEPOCO have sponsored public readings of M.L. King's April 4, 1967, Riverside Church speech, "Declaration of Independence from the War in Vietnam," in January.

This year we are inviting people to attend a candlelight vigil the evening of the holiday, Monday, January 19, 5:30-7 pm. The vigil is being planned in collaboration with The Martin Luther & Coretta Scott King Memorial Project. We want to take the message,



"Honor M.L. King: End Poverty, Racism and War" to the community and to the new administration on this important date.

The vigil will take place at the proposed site of a monument to honor Martin Luther & Coretta Scott King in Allentown in the grassy triangle where Martin Luther King, Jr. Blvd. breaks from Union St. near 4th & Union Streets. (Parking is available in a lot on the south side of ML King Blvd., but pedestrian access would be much safer from the north side of the triangle and parking is available on numerous streets including 4th St. and Union St.)

King, often, as in the Riverside speech, linked the problems of poverty, racism and war, "I am convinced that if we are to get on the right side of the world revolution, we as a nation must undergo a radical revolution of values. When machines and computers, profit and property rights are considered more important than people, the giant triplets of racism, materialism, and militarism are incapable of being conquered."

Please join us on January 19th. Bring a candle and a sign with a Kingian message, if possible, but most importantly bring yourself. Dress warmly and help carry the King nonviolent message to our new president. People will be gathering across the U.S. with this message.

There will be many local programs during mid- to late-January honoring Dr. King's witness for peace and justice. We list some of the ones we know about on the following page.

- Nancy C. Tate

Human Rights Activist to Speak at LEPOCO Dinner

Jennifer Harbury is a lawyer, the author of several books, and an internationally known critic of U.S. foreign policy who has said, "The problem, of course, lies with the realities concealed from us. This has always been the case. While the American (sic) public has slowly grappled with ongoing injustices visible within our own borders, it has long failed to discover and correct our government's abuses abroad. In the end, however, this is our government, and torture is being utilized in our names and supported by our tax dollars. We are responsible."

On Saturday, March 14th (pre-dinner music at 5 pm and dinner at 5:30 pm), at the Episcopal Cathedral Church of the Nativity in Bethlehem, the Lehigh-Pocono Committee of Concern will hold its Annual Dinner with Jennifer Harbury as keynote speaker. She will not only talk of her professional career, but the very personal ways in which her life has been touched by speaking truth to power.

After studying civil rights law at Cornell University and Harvard, Jennifer Harbury traveled throughout Asia and Africa, witnessing brutal injustice and repression. Upon her return she began work in a small legal aid bureau on the Texas-Mexico border. In the early 1980s thousands of Mayans were escaping to Texas from death squads and massacres in Guatemala. U.S. immigration was sending these refugees back. Harbury decided to go to Guatemala to see for herself what was going on first hand.

In Guatemala she met Efrain Bamaca Velasquez (known as Commandante Everardo) a leader of the Mayan resistance to the Guatemalan oligarchy's harsh repression of indigenous people. She and Everardo fell in love and married. Subsequently he was captured, tortured for two and a half years, and executed without trial. Harbury conducted hunger strikes in Guatemala and outside the White House in Washington, D.C., to try to force officials in both countries to tell her the truth about what had happened to her husband. The U.S.

(Continued on page 4)

Other King Holiday Events in January

*** See page one for plans for the Honor King Vigil: End Poverty, Racism & War, on Monday, January 19, 5:30 to 7 pm, in Allentown.

*** Saturday, January 17, 11 am, there will a Honor King's Legacy: Stop the War(s): Yes We Can Rally & Parade for Peace, Philadelphia City Hall (west side) (15th & Market Sts.), Philadelphia. The parade is to Barack Obama's People's Inauguration Train Launch Event. This is sponsored by the Brandywine Peace Community, the Coalition for Peace Action and others. Please see www.ufpj-dvn.org for more information.

*** Sunday, January 18, 2-6 pm, there will be a Community Celebration with Interfaith Worship Service, Diversity Fair, Youth Activities and a Spaghetti Dinner, at Congregation Keneseth Israel, 2227 Chew St., Allentown. All activities are free and open to the public. (Call 610-435-9074 for more info.) The keynote speaker will be Rabbi Israel Dressner, a leading participant in the civil rights movement of the 1960s.

Rabbi Dressner will also be the featured speaker (on "We Shook Hands Through the Bars") at a dinner program at Keneseth Israel on Saturday, January 17, at 6 pm. A reservation is needed for this event and admission is \$15.

*** Sunday, January 18, at 6 pm, former U.S. Representative Harold Ford, Jr., will speak on "It's a New Day," at Shiloh Baptist Church, 403 Pastor Fred Davis Street, Easton. This event is co-sponsored by Life Church, Allentown.

*** The Allentown NAACP will hold their annual King Holiday program at 11 am, on Monday, January 19, at St. James AME Zion Church, 4th & Union Sts., Allentown.

*** The Bethlehem NAACP will hold their M.L. King program, The Dream Comes True, on Monday, January 19, at 1 pm, at the Cathedral Church of the Nativity, 321 Wyandotte St., Bethlehem.

*** On Wednesday, January 21, at 7:30 pm, Professor Nikki Giovanni, poet, activist and educator, will speak in Baker Aud., Zoellner Arts Center, Lehigh University, Bethlehem.

*** On Tuesday, January 27, Tim Wise will speak on From Lincoln to King to Obama: A New Birth of Freedom, Are We Ready? in Prosser Aud., Moravian College, Bethlehem.

Making Strides Toward Peace: Christmas Walk, 2008

On December 13, a group of nearly 200 people walked from Nazareth to Bethlehem. Most of them held signs saying "Peace" or "Paz." The entire group had one mission: to help in a yearly peaceful demonstration, showing that peace is the way. The Peace Pilgrimage occurs

every year on the second Saturday in December. This year, we celebrated the 49th Annual Peace Pilgrimage. The 10-mile walk is broken up by four rest stops at churches -- the Trinity Lutheran Church, the First Baptist Church, the First Church of the Nazarene, and the Central Moravian Church. The fifth stop, the Christ United Church of Christ, includes a dinner program.

Throughout the trip, the pilgrims received horn honks of appreciation and many smiles. Close to when darkness fell, at the Church of the Nazarene, the group lit candles and lanterns. Once they reached the Central Moravian Church, pamphlets were handed out that included Christmas carols. The group sang a few carols and continued on their way. At the end, after the group had stomped triumphantly into the Christ United Church of Christ, the crowd ate a nourishing meal of chili, soup, and sandwiches.

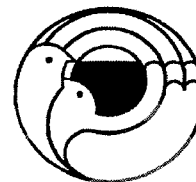
Afterward, the LEPOCO Peace Singers serenaded the tired walkers with several songs about peace and war. Following that Janet Chisholm gave a talk about her lifetime of activism and the nonviolence training program she runs at Kirkridge. In the end, this year's peace walk was very successful. The entire group had a good time.

- Angela Root

Videos of the Peace Singers and Janet Chisholm's talk "Walking Away from Fear" can be found at LEPOCO's YouTube site, www.youtube.com/rhubarbdoom.

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 10 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, 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), Nils Hovik, Julius Iwantsch (co-treasurer), Mimi Lang, Michelle Mecham, Janet Ney (co-treasurer), Sue Ravitz, Nancy Tate (ex-officio).

Popcorn & Politics

Friday, February 6th, 2009, 7 pm: Standard Operating Procedure

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

Director Errol Morris (*The Thin Blue Line, The Fog of War*) poses the question, "Is it possible for a photograph to change the world?"

by focusing his lens on the incidents of abuse and torture of suspected terrorists at the hands of U.S. forces at the Abu Ghraib prison.

116 minutes. 2008.

Please bring a snack or beverage to share.

Friday, March 6th, 2009, 7 pm: Mesalla: Activists in Iraq

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

September Eleventh Families for Peaceful Tomorrows presents this film documenting the emerging network of peace activists in Iraq known as "LaOnf." LaOnf (an Arabic word that roughly translates to "nonviolence") formed in 2006 to join together Iraqi civil society organizations for the creation and support of nonviolent strategies to oppose occupation, terrorism and corruption in Iraq. Actions organized have included artistic and cultural activities, candlelight vigils, olive tree plantings, and the Annual Week of Nonviolence.

Directed by Alberto Arce. 50 minutes. 2008.

Please bring a snack or beverage to share.



Calling All Concerned Parents!

LEPOCO's Youth & Militarism program needs you. As you may well be aware the "No Child Left Behind" Act gives military recruiters easy access to personal details about your high school students. Notifying the school in writing not to release information is one way to "combat" the "attack" on your own child, but what of the other children? Not everyone's parents are as well informed as you, not every student has that protection.

LEPOCO attempts to address this in part by tabling at high schools; offering brochures and advice to students with uncertain ideas about their future. Our chief goal is modest: Give students enough information to make fully informed decisions about what they want to do post high school. Getting into schools to do this is hard because most principals and administrators believe that giving a peace group access to their students is controversial. They don't want their institution of education to become a "political forum." I contend that inviting the recruiters in the first place makes the school a political forum and therefore requires they give equal access from opposing viewpoints.

Now, I can get into the legal reasons why a school must allow for views alternative to the military's, but the conversation quickly turns cold and lawsuits really burn up a lot of time and resources that might be better spent elsewhere. It's a last resort that we need not apply if principals are aware of the desire by parents to keep the message of recruiters in check. First and foremost, the issue is moral.

I can write a letter to a school under the LEPOCO banner, but it doesn't carry nearly as much weight as a

letter from you. I'd like you to consider contacting the school your teenager attends and find out how often military recruiters visit and if alternative viewpoints are also invited in. If not, why not? If you're not a parent but you are still concerned about the issue your voice is still vital. This is an issue that affects the whole community. If you'd like to explore other ways to tackle this issue please send an e-mail to me at lepoco@fast.net, call the LEPOCO office at 610-691-8730, or attend the next Youth & Militarism meeting at the LEPOCO Peace Center.

- robert Daniels II

SUPPORT LEPOCO!

- Enclosed are my yearly LEPOCO dues of \$_____.
(\$35 individual; \$45 household; \$75 supporter; \$5 limited 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.

A Persistent Peace



When the Jesuit peace activist John Dear spoke at Lafayette College on November 17th, the packed audience got a choice sample of the drive and energy that mark Fr. Dear's commitment to peacemaking. Introduced by Katalin Fabian, assistant professor in Lafayette's Government and Law Department and director of its Peace Studies program, Dear was on tour with his new book, *A Persistent Peace: One Man's Struggle for a Nonviolent World*. Like the book, his talk was in large part autobiography, reviewing the journey he began as (he claims) a naïve Catholic college student who sought an easy "A" in a psychology course by volunteering in a mental hospital, but instead discovered a responsibility for "God's suffering people." He then felt a wish to see the land where Jesus urged people to love their enemies. In 1982 he arrived in the Holy Land -- in time for Israel's invasion of Lebanon (named Operation Peace for Galilee). His prayer for a sign from above was providentially followed by the sonic boom of Israeli jets bombing people within 15 miles of where he stood. Confirmed, then, in his calling, Dear had joined Jesuits in El Salvador on 16 November 1989, when 28 soldiers trained at our School of the Americas murdered six prominent priests execution-style, along with their servants, placing their excised brains alongside their bodies to indicate the regime's antipathy to thinking. In 1993 he joined Dan Berrigan and others in a Plowshares action, hammering F15E fighter jets and winning a 20-year sentence, of which he served eight months.

After a term at the Fellowship of Reconciliation in Nyack, NY, Dear resides now in New Mexico, home to numerous millionaires, poor Chicanos, and the Los Alamos nuclear facility, which he has mobilized church groups to shut down.

Don't look soon, Dear said, for a great turning-point in the struggle, citing Martin Luther King, Jr., and Dorothy Day as servants who persevered without demanding results for their efforts. He deplored the early Church's development of a Just War Theory and current Catholics leaders' willingness to "take lessons in morality from the war-culture." Yet, Dear scorned finger-pointing as too easy. "We need the workers of Los Alamos on our side -- they alone know how to dismantle the bombs. We must love people, hate violence."

- Addison Bross

For the complete video of John Dear's talk, "A Persistent Peace," please visit www.youtube.com/rhubarbdoom.

Human Rights Activist to Speak at LEPOCO Annual Dinner

(Continued from page 1)

denied any knowledge of the situation, but eventually an official in the State Department leaked that the U.S. knew all along what happened to Everardo, and that men on the payroll of the CIA participated in his torture and murder. Harbury's book *Searching for Everardo: A Story of Love, War, and the CIA in Guatemala* (1997), is a classic work of courage and truth telling, uncovering U.S. complicity with right wing regimes that use torture and violent, anti-democratic methods to suppress poor people's rights.

Harbury's *Truth, Torture, and the American Way* (2005), documents the long time use of torture by the CIA. The book reveals that the excessive tactics employed by U.S. interrogators at Abu Ghraib and Guantánamo is nothing new and goes on to reveal that torture is counter-productive. "*Our use of violence and repression can only sow seeds of hatred and trauma, which in the end will produce only greater violence against us.*" She adds, "*We must accept the fact that we are indeed our brothers' and sisters' collective keepers. If we are indifferent to the basic human needs of others, then peace will always elude us. Suffering, when too long ignored, inevitably leads to conflagration.*"

- robert Daniels II

Return Coupon

LEPOCO Annual Dinner: Saturday, March 14, 2009

(Pre-dinner music at 5 pm; Dinner at 5:30 pm)

Enclosed is \$ _____.

Please reserve _____ tickets for:

Name _____

Phone _____

_____ Mail tickets to:

Address _____

Zip _____

_____ Hold tickets at door.

Return to: LEPOCO, 313 W. 4th St., Bethlehem, PA 18015,
before 5 pm, Tuesday, March 10, 2009.

Annual Dinner Tickets:

\$25- Regular Adult;

\$50 - Special Supporter;

\$10- Limited Income Adult / Child;

\$10 - Program-only, regular

\$5 - Program-only, limited income

Dinner tickets by advance reservation only.
Program-only tickets available at the door.

The Struggle Shared

*Whatever befalls the earth, befalls the sons and daughters of the earth.
We did not weave the web of life; we are merely a strand in it
Whatever we do to the web, we do to ourselves.*

- Chief Seattle's Message, 1854

GLOBAL WARMING ALARM -

The momentum has been building for some time, but in the past year, the seriousness of the climate change crisis has approached the "hundredth monkey" level in public consciousness. Dozens of environmental groups, from Greenpeace to the Union of Concerned Scientists have declared global warming to be the most serious threat to life on the planet in history, and have committed the bulk of their resources to efforts to reverse it.

In December, a 192 member UN Framework Convention on Climate Change heard from Polish Environmental Minister Maciej Nowicki, "Humankind in its activity just reached the limits of the closed system of planet Earth. Further expansion in the same style will generate global threats of really great intensity -- huge droughts and floods, cyclones with increasingly more destructive power, pandemics of tropical disease, a dramatic decline of biodiversity, increasing ocean levels. All these can cause social and even armed conflict, and migration of people on an unprecedented scale."

Professor James Hanson, of NASA, one of the world's most respected scientists, who first announced that global warming was taking place twenty years ago, has been particularly outspoken. He believes that the most ambitious international goals to stabilize carbon dioxide emissions at 450 parts per million (current levels are 385 ppm, about 100 ppm higher than at the beginning of the industrial revolution) are "a recipe for global disaster, not salvation... Present levels have already brought us to the precipice of a planetary tipping point." He says that we have less than 10 years to reverse it.

His testimony in the recent trial of six Greenpeace activists who scaled the chimney of the Kingsnorth coal burning power plant in Kent, UK, and painted the name of British Prime Minister Gordon Brown, led to a

jury's decision to acquit based on the "lawful excuse" defense where property damage is permitted to prevent a greater harm, in this case, global warming.

In response to such dire warnings, locally, members of the Alliance for Sustainable Communities, have committed to dramatically increase their personal efforts to address the international climate emergency. In November, Joris Rosse, for the Alliance, issued a "Call for a general mobilization in order to respond with our utmost will power and intention to mitigate the existing extreme climate emergency crisis... We were taught a life that is not sustainable. Now we must create one that is, hoping we are not already too late."

In December, Len Frenkel, of Lehigh Valley Vegetarians, and an Alliance member, published a letter in *The Morning Call* around a Global Day of Climate Action suggesting some "extreme measures" that people must take, from demanding the new administration develop a national transportation system, a system of gasoline rationing, and other such sacrifices similar to those imposed during World War II, mandating manufacturers to produce hybrids, electric and other energy efficient vehicles, growing food in backyard and community garden spaces, and severely lessening consumption of meat. Contact Len at 610-709-8984 or at frenkel@rcn.com to learn more.

And, Greta Brown, several times local Green Party candidate Congress, and a member of the Alliance, has announced plans to embark on a 1600-mile walk this spring to call attention to the global warming crisis and hopefully inspire people along the way to take action. Greta can be reached at 610-865-9050, or at her webpage, [www.foralltheGrandChildren.blog.spot.com](http://www.foralltheGrandchildren.blog.spot.com).

These three remarkable individuals and other Alliance members have formed a new Initiative for Climate Emergency (ICE) and invite

people to join them. Please contact them for events that will follow a meeting being held on January 8.

Sources: www.CommonDreams.org and other sources already noted in article.

LEHIGH VALLEY HABITAT GOES GEOTHERMAL - Habitat for Humanity of the Lehigh Valley has been building homes for needy families for twenty years, with the tremendous coordination of volunteer labor, donated materials and expertise. There are currently ten homes under construction in Bethlehem to be completed in 2009. Three of these homes are particularly remarkable models of energy efficient design.

Through a partnership with PPL, Water Furnace International, local plumbing and heating contractors and other businesses, each of the homes on James St. are being built with two-ton ground source heat pumps and waste water recovery systems that will provide all the heating and air conditioning for the homes. To tap the subterranean source, six-inch boreholes were drilled 300 feet into South Mountain and connected to heat pumps. The U.S. Department of Energy, the EPA, and many environmentalists agree that geothermal systems are the most environmentally friendly way to heat and cool a home, as they emit no greenhouse gases. The systems cost over \$15,000 each, all of which is being donated by PPL, to demonstrate that energy efficient construction and affordable housing can be accomplished together. The homes will be completed and dedicated this spring, and the public will be invited.

While PPL is to be commended for demonstrating this important form of alternative energy, we must keep the pressure on our major public utility to abandon or convert the coal-fired plant in Martin's Creek, and the Berwick Nuclear Power Plant as they pose dangerous threats to the environmental safety of the region and the planet. Perhaps this PPL effort that is environmentally friendly can be an opening for dialogue about a sustainable, affordable energy future for everyone.

Source: Habitat Lehigh Valley Newsletter, Vol, 19, No.3, Fall 2008.

- Jeff Vitelli

Terror Training in the Americas

"The past is not dead. In fact, it is not even past."

- William Faulkner

On November 16, 1989, Salvadoran Army units of the Atlacatl Battalion surrounded the University of Central America (UCA) in San Salvador and massacred six Jesuit priests, their housekeeper and her daughter. Of the 26 soldiers who committed this massacre, 19 received training at the School of the Americas (SOA). In 1981, the Atlacatl Battalion had committed a massacre of over 900 civilians in the hamlet of El Mozote, Morazán. Every year since 1990, on the weekend before Thanksgiving, people gather at the gates of Fort Benning, in Columbus, Georgia, to protest the continued operation of the SOA, renamed in 2000 The Western Hemisphere Institute for Security Cooperation (WHINSEC). In 1996, it was proven that manuals that taught torture and assassination were used at the SOA to train Latin American soldiers. This year, LEPOCO member Joe DeRaymond and Sarah Snider attended the convergence to protest terror training in the Americas.

The protesters gather at the gates of Fort Benning to commemorate the victims of the UCA massacre and all who have died at the hands of graduates of the SOA, and to demand new US policies -- policies of cooperation and social development rather than the militarized, exploitative policies represented by the SOA/WHINSEC. Fr. Roy Bourgeois has led this movement and has seen the protest grow from a handful of people to many thousands in recent years. (This year, SOA Watch (SOAW) estimated 12,000 were present on Saturday; the police estimated 8500.)

The massacres continue to haunt El Salvador. Those who planned and committed the crimes in this small nation have been granted amnesty under the terms of the 1992 Peace Accords that ended the civil war that raged from the 1970's. On November 13, 2008, the Spanish Association for Human Rights and California's Center for Justice and Accountability filed a writ in the Spanish courts for indictment under the legal principle of universal accountability against the Salvadoran President in 1989, Alfredo Cristiani Burkard. He has been accused of covering up the 1989 UCA massacre.

So: in El Salvador and throughout the Americas, the past is not even past. The structures of the death squads that killed tens of thousands during the civil war are still in existence, and selective assassinations continue in El Salvador. Impunity reigns for the perpetrators to this day. Early last year, I met a 2008 victim of a death squad or "sicariato" -- he told a chilling nightmare of events from which he barely escaped with his life, as his brother and father were killed before his eyes and he escaped wounded.

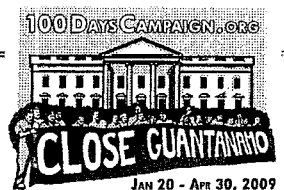
A few years ago, Roy Bourgeois began The Latin America Initiative. Delegations from the SOAW visited leaders throughout Latin America to lobby for their withdrawal from participation in this school of terror.

So far, the governments of Venezuela, Costa Rica, Uruguay, Bolivia and Argentina have withdrawn all their soldiers from training at the SOA, and Chile has pledged to reduce their military's participation by two-thirds. This year, as 35 pro-WHINSEC legislators have lost their seats in Congress, and the presidency of Barack Obama promises a new foreign policy, hope is high that the US government will close the school. It will be up to the people, to us, to create an environment that will facilitate politicians' right actions. The citizen diplomacy of Roy Bourgeois and the activists of SOAW have moved governments of Latin America away from terror policies. Can the citizens of the United States move our government in a similar direction? This is our challenge for 2009, difficult but clearly possible, with persistence and focused action.

Since 1990, 226 people have spent over 95 years in prison for nonviolent protests of this school of terror. In 2008, six more "crossed the line" and face trials and imprisonment in 2009. For more information, see the SOAW website, www.soaw.org or contact LEPOCO.

- Joe DeRaymond

Joe DeRaymond spent three months in prison in 2006 for "crossing the line" at Ft. Benning in November 2005. He is currently in El Salvador for three months working to organize international election observers with CIS (Centro de Intercambio y Solidaridad) for the January and March elections in that country. Those elections will choose national and local leadership for the country. At least four other Lehigh Valley folks are considering joining the March delegation of election observers. For more information see www.cis-elsalvador.org or talk with Sarah Snider or Chris Spohn.



Witness Against Torture invites people to join them in Washington, DC, January 11 to April 30, for a day, a week or more. Since their walk to visit prisoners at Guantánamo Bay in 2006, they have organized marches, vigils and nonviolent direct action calling for the closure of Guantánamo, Bagram, Abu Ghraib and their counterparts, and the abolition of torture tactics. They are supported by the Center for Constitutional Rights, the Torture Abolition and Survivors Support Coalition International, September 11th Families for Peaceful Tomorrows, United for Peace and Justice, Pax Christi USA, the War Resisters League, the School of the Americas Watch and Muslim American Society Freedom Foundation in planning this 100 Days Campaign to Close Guantánamo.

January 11-20, a liquid-only fast is underway. January 11 is the seventh anniversary of the first prisoners arriving in Guantánamo. Tim Chadwick, of Bethlehem, is one of over 40 people participating in the fast.

January 20 to April 30 there will be a weekly schedule of events including daily vigils at the White House, film showings and speakers, visits to members of Congress, and creative actions of civil resistance and street theatre.

To sign up or to learn more details see www.100dayscampaign.org.

Our Current Crises

Greeting the New President

- From the start I've felt that the most significant thing about the "Obama Phenomenon" was not Obama, but the phenomenon - the fact that millions of ordinary Americans (sic) (especially young people) were not merely enthusiastic but were engaged, organizing and mobilizing, taking possession of their democracy, and doing the grunt work that is the essence of government.
- Jim Hightower, *The Progressive*, December 2008

- If you are going to Washington, DC, for the inaugural, there will be a "Rebirthing King, Rebirthing America," on Monday, January 19, at 4:30 pm, All Souls Church, Unitarian, 1500 Harvard St., NW, organized by the Olive Branch Interfaith Peace Partnership with speakers from diverse religious communities. See www.all-souls.org or www.olivebranchinterfaith.org.

- "So I dream. Not nightmare dreams. Not daydreams. I dream 'Why not?' dreams, and I welcome you to dream with me so they will become reality.

"Why not call for the abolition of war as an institution? Why can't President Obama, by his actions, invest in diplomacy and return the State Department to its original size and significance? Why can't President Obama by his words, build a case not only for taking unilateral steps to remove nuclear bombs from hair-trigger alert, and start abolishing our stockpile, and work for a treaty on nuclear weapons abolition, but build a case for the abolition of war? Why not?

"...Obama has said that the economy is the greatest challenge of our lifetime. But civil society has not yet gotten together to put together the frightening economic crisis with military spending. If half the world's \$1.3 trillion military expenditure were put into infrastructure, millions of jobs would be created -- \$1.3 trillion will not prevent another 9/11. Only by proving to the world that we do not hate people, that we will not bomb people, that we will not put our military bases on their soil and our soldiers will not rape their women and girls; that we won't take their resource; that we will behave multilaterally; that we will encourage student exchanges; that we will sow trust; and we will condemn any act of racial, gender or ethnic discrimination will we prevent more 9/11s."

- Cora Weiss, speaking for New Jersey Coalition for Peace Action, Princeton University, 11/16/08, as printed in *The Nation*, 1/8/09

You are urged to join in the petitions, letters and campaigns calling on the new administration to act for peace and justice. Here is a sampling of what others have written: "Lead the world on climate change control and protection of the environment." - Maria and Bob Weick; "...begin diplomatic efforts with all regional nations (around Afghanistan and Pakistan) with the goals of not only addressing extremism, but creating jobs, mediating border disputes, dealing with the drug trade, rehabilitating Afghanistan's infrastructure, developing the economies of Afghanistan and Pakistan, and assuring Pakistan that its territorial integrity will be respected." - Thomas Paine Chapter of Veterans For Peace (Lehigh Valley), 1/8/09; "...reject the Bush administration plan to deploy 'missile defense' interceptors in Poland and a Star Wars radar system in Czech Republic." - Global Network Against Weapons & Nuclear Power in Space, 12/08; "...reverse the damage done at home and abroad by the U.S. government's unlawful actions in the name of national security." - Amnesty International, 11/5/08; "...enact a single-payer national health insurance plan...an improved Medicare for all." - statement signed by 15,000 U.S. physicians, 11/5/08; ... get rid of the wall at the U.S.-Mexico border and "all of the walls that violate the rights of people to free circulation." - Eduardo Galeano; "Shut down the School of the Americas (renamed the Western Hemisphere Institute for Security Cooperation)." - SOA Watch petition; "...find a path to ending these wars (Iraq & Afghanistan) and lead us to new policies of peacemaking." - L.V. Peace Coalition, 12/12/08; "...make an economy-wide carbon tax a central component of comprehensive climate legislation to be enacted within the first hundred days of the 111th Congress." - Climate Crisis Coalition, 11/20/08; "Appoint a hunger czar -- as Senator George McGovern and Congressman Jim McGovern called for in a recent op-ed -- who would 'coordinate the various food, nutrition and anti-poverty programs...to increase the independence, purchasing power and food security of every human being.' Announce a commitment to the goal of cutting poverty in half in ten years." - *The Nation*, 12/1/08.

Afghanistan

- "...But surging troops into Afghanistan would be akin to sending the fabled 600 into the valley of death. As in Vietnam, tens of thousands more troops will only provide the Taliban with many more targets, sparking Pashtun nationalist resistance and inspiring more recruits for the insurgency."

- Robert Dreyfuss, "Obama's Afghan Dilemma," *The Nation*, 11/22/08

In November the group, September Eleventh Families for Peaceful Tomorrows, published *Afghanistan: Ending a Failed Military Strategy: A Primer for Peace Activists*. The 21-page report includes a detailed analysis of the ten reasons to end the U.S. occupation of Afghanistan. You can find the complete report at www.peacefultomorrows.org.

"...war can resolve neither Afghanistan's conflicts nor the spectre of global terrorism. More troops and more guns will only plunge Afghanistan further into violence."

- Deborah Storie, *The Age*, Australia, 12/30/08, as printed on www.commondreams.org

- Afghan President Hamid Karzai urged U.S. president-elect Barack Obama to end civilian casualties once and for all yesterday amid reports that dozens of women and children were killed in U.S. air strikes on a wedding party in south Afghanistan.

- Bill Graveland, *The Toronto Star*, 11/6/08

Our Current Crises

Gaza

- The loss of civilian life in Gaza and in Israel is a source of deep concern to me, and after January 20, I'll have plenty to say about the issue.
- Barack Obama, 1/6/09

- Israeli professor Neve Gordon teaches at Ben-Gurion University of the Negev in southern Israel, the region most impacted by the Hamas rockets. Amy Goodman quotes him here in a 1/7/09 article written for www.TruthDig.com. "We just had a rocket about an hour ago not far from our house. My two children have been sleeping in a bomb shelter for the past week. And yet, I think what Israel is doing is outrageous. ...The problem is that most Israelis say Israel left the Gaza Strip three years ago and Hamas is still shooting rockets at us. They forget the details. The detail is that Israel maintains sovereignty. The detail is that the Palestinians live in a cage. The detail is that they don't get basic foodstuff, that they don't get electricity, that they don't get water. And when you forget those kinds of details, all you say is, 'Why are they still shooting at us?'"

- For our January First Friday Film LEPOCO showed "Encounter Point," which presents Palestinians and Israelis who have experienced loss in the ongoing conflict, but who have now chosen to work together to seek nonviolent solutions to this conflict. One Palestinian in the film said, "Each of us are able to come up with better ideas than war and violence." The film was well received by those who attended. Would others like to have this film shown again? Please contact LEPOCO 610-691-8730 to make plans.

- The timing of the air strikes has far more to do with U.S. and Israeli politics than with protecting Israeli civilians.
- Phyllis Bennis, Institute For Policy Studies, "Talking Points: The Gaza Crisis" 12/28/08, published at www.unitedforpeace.org

- We women's organizations from a broad spectrum of political views demand an end to the bombing and other tools of death, and call for the immediate start of deliberations to talk peace and not make war.

- From a statement by 22 Israeli Women's Organizations, 1/1/09

- Facts about the Gaza Strip: Population: 1.5 million. 75% of them are refugees. 45% of them are under 14 years. Population density: 4,167 people/square mile. (The highest in the world.) 80% of Gazan households live below the poverty line, subsisting on less than \$3 per person a day.

- Sabeel Ecumenical Liberation Theology Center, Jerusalem (See www.fosna.org)

- The Israeli airstrikes on the Gaza Strip represent severe and massive violations of international humanitarian law as defined in the Geneva Conventions, both in regard to the obligations of an Occupying Power and in the requirements of the laws of war.

- From Statement by Prof. Richard Falk, United Nations Special Rapporteur for Human Rights in the Occupied Territories, 12/27/08

- On January 9, 2009, CODEPINK along with Jewish and Muslim women delivered a flood of white roses to Obama's Washington, DC, hotel, with the message, "Please do not be silent. The children of Gaza need you help."

- During the Bush Administration (from FY2002 through FY2009) Israel has received over \$21 billion in U.S. security assistance, including \$19 billion in direct military aid under the Pentagon's Foreign Military Financing program.

- From Backgrounder by Frida Berrigan & William Hartung, Arms & Security Initiative, New America Foundation

- Donations to AFSC Development, 1501 Cherry St., Philadelphia, PA 19102, marked for Gaza, will be used by American Friends Service Committee staff, in coordination with local partners and other international organizations, to help address critical unmet needs in Gaza.

Iraq

- As the 111th Congress was being sworn in on January 6, a seemingly endless line of figures dressed all in black with stark white masks slowly marched single-file around Capitol Hill. Each wore a placard bearing the name of someone who had died in the war in Iraq, Afghanistan, and Palestine, their age, and the date of their death. The March of the Dead was intended to remind yet another Congress that we elected it to end aggressive wars, and to announce that the peace movement will be present on Capitol Hill until the wars are ended. A report about this march was aired on "Bill Moyers Journal" on 1/9/09 and can be viewed at www.afterdowningstreet.org.

- As the New Year arrived the Doonesbury cartoon featured a series that spelled out the tragedy of Iraqi refugees and our media's poor attention to this crisis.

- Kimberly Rivera, the first female U.S. Iraq war resister to seek refuge in Canada has been told by the Immigration and Refugee Board of that country that she must leave Canada by January 27 or face deportation. Four other Iraq war resisters among the 200 U.S. war resisters believed to be living in Canada, have received deportation notices as well.

- A story from The Toronto Star posted on www.commondreams.org on 1/8/09

Bits & Pieces

Ⓞ The election of LEPOCO Steering Committee members will be completed at the Annual Dinner in March. At the February Monthly Action Meeting (Monday, Feb. 9, 7 pm), we will confirm the slate of four people, two at-large committee members and two co-treasurers. If you are interested in any of these positions please contact the LEPOCO Office.

Ⓞ Thank you to Kathryn and Evan Hoffman who hosted the LEPOCO Theatre Party on November 22nd at their home in Allentown, before the play at Cedar Crest College, "Unveiled Truths." The play dealt movingly with the topic of women and war. Thank you also to the 28 people who attended the very warm gathering.

Ⓞ Chris Ney, formerly of Allentown, reviews *Protest the War* the book featuring a series of portraits by local and internationally acclaimed photographer Judith Joy Ross, in the most recent issue of *WIN Magazine* (Fall 2008). Many of the portraits in the book are of Lehigh Valley peace activists. Chris Ney concludes that the book deserves a look "to see some of those thoughtful, gentle people who have placed themselves against the current of military violence and bloodshed." LEPOCO has extra copies of *WIN* or you subscribe for \$15/year to the War Resisters League, 339 Lafayette St., NY, NY 10012. *Protest the War* is available through on-line booksellers.

Ⓞ LEPOCO Peace Singers had great fun singing for First Night Bethlehem. Our program was well-received by those who attended the concert in the acoustically live Unitarian Church sanctuary. The program of readings and singing focused on hope for building a more peaceful and just world in the New Year.

Ⓞ SOA Watch is calling people to Washington, DC, for a training and lobbying session, February 14-17, as part of their campaign to build a new Latin America policy opposing militarism. If you are interested in attending, please contact LEPOCO or any active member of the Americas Solidarity Group.

Ⓞ George Lakey will lead a retreat at Kirkridge Retreat & Study Center, Bangor, February 20-22, on "Making Acti-

vism Smarter & Thriving Personally. George Lakey has led 1500 peace and strategy workshops on five continents, and his organization, Training for Change, has empowered NGOs and grassroots activists in 20 countries. To register or for more information, see www.kirkridge.org or call 610-588-1793.

Ⓞ MILK, the film about Harvey Milk, San Francisco Board of Supervisor member who was the first openly gay man to be elected to public office, continues at the Civic Theatre of Allentown (also known as the 19th Street Theatre) through January 22. Call the MovieLine at 610-432-0888 for more information

Ⓞ The Working Group on Extreme Inequality, a Project of the Institute for Policy Studies has published *Responding to Main Street: A Sensible Plan for Recovery*, that makes specific proposals for dealing with the economic crisis. It is available at www.extremeinequality.org. The Emergency Campaign for America's Priorities and the Coalition on Human Needs published *Towards Shared Recovery: Congress Must Do More to Reverse the Recession* in November. You can find it at www.actnow.org.

Ⓞ The Fourth Moravian College Peace & Justice Public Lecture will feature Darius Rejali speaking on "Torture & Democracy: What Now?" in Prosser Aud., at the college in Bethlehem. Darius Rajali, one of the world's leading

experts on torture, is a professor at Reed College, is Iranian-born, and has spent his scholarly career reflecting on violence, and, specifically, the causes, consequences, and meaning of modern torture in our world.

Ⓞ The Thomas Paine Chapter - Veterans for Peace will conduct their next interview show on WDIY, 88.1 FM, Wed., Jan. 28, 6 to 6:30 pm. They will interview Debra Khedding, Public Affairs Officer during the First Gulf War.

Ⓞ ...am I the only one who thinks it's ridiculous to hear senators chastise work-ing families over earnings? Come on - Corker, DeMint, Kyl, and the others who're throwing hissy fits about UAW wage levels are drawing nearly three times as much from us taxpayers in base pay, plus getting platinum-level health care, golden pensions, and all sorts of senatorial perks...

Yes, these union workers make a good living - but what exactly is wrong with that? Indeed, they're a tremendous American (sic) success story... They can afford to buy homes (and cars), send kids to college, take vacations - and pay taxes, including those that cover salaries and benefits for U.S. senators.

- The Hightower Lowdown, January 2009

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

Thurs., January 15, 7 pm: Y&M Truth In Recruiting Committee meeting at LEPOCO Peace Center.

Fri., January 16, 11 am: Newsletter Planning Committee meeting at LEPOCO Peace Center.

Wed., January 21, 10 am: 2009 Bike/Walkathon Planning Committee meeting at the LEPOCO Peace Center.

Wed., January 28, 3 pm: Fundraising Committee meeting at the LEPOCO Peace Center.

Mondays, February 9 & March 9, 7 pm: LEPOCO Monthly Action Meeting at the LEPOCO Peace Center. All members and friends welcome at this monthly business meeting where the activities of all committees and working groups are reviewed.

Tues., February 10, 8:30 am: Lehigh Valley Committee Against State Killing meeting at LEPOCO Peace Center.

Wed., February 11, 7 pm: Americas Solidarity Group meeting at the LEPOCO Peace Center.

Thursdays, February 12 & March 12, 7 pm: Lehigh Valley Veterans for Peace meetings 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 any of these meetings or want to know the next meeting of the Association of Students Advocating Peace (ASAP), the Nuclear Abolition Sisters, the Lehigh Valley Peace Coalition, or the 2009 Peace Camp Planning Committee, please call the Peace Center at 610-691-8730. For a regularly updated calendar of events and meetings schedule 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

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Bits & Pieces
Meetings...

National Coalition to Abolish the Death Penalty Annual Conference

January 22-25, 2009

Harrisburg

(Attend for one day or more.)

See www.ncadp.org or contact David Rose
for conference information or
LEPOCO for a registration form.

Pennsylvania: the 4th largest death row in the US.

Check out the
LEPOCO website

at www.lepoco.org

for a regularly updated
Calendar of Events,
Newsletter Archive, Videos, and More
and

Sign up for
regular LEPOCO e-mail updates
by calling 610-691-8730 or
by sending a message to
lepoco@fast.net

Weekly Peace Vigils

*Our wars continue so the witnessing
for peace must continue.*

Will you be there?

Bethlehem: 4-5 pm, 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 Clint Fowler 610-746-5013

4-6 pm, Fridays

PA National Guard Armory, 15th & Allen Sts.

Contact: Allentown Armory Activists

Easton: 10-11 am, Saturdays

Centre Square

Contact: Reggie Regrut 908-859-5632

Please attend as often as you are able!

LEPOCO Annual Dinner

Saturday, March 14, 2009

Speaker: Jennifer Harbury

(see pages 1 & 4)