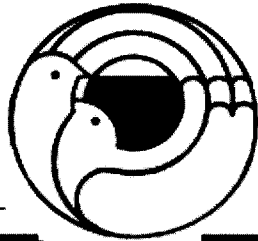


January  
2014  
Vol. 49 No. 1



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

## Numbers Down, But Interest Up at November SOA-Watch

We arrived at Columbus, GA, home of Fort Benning and SOA/WHINSEC, on Friday, November 22. After checking in at the downtown Econolodge, we headed for the first of many workshops at the big riverside conference center.

A little explanation: SOA stands for School of the Americas, the Pentagon school for training Latin American soldiers/terrorists who go home to commit atrocities against their own people. When our protests almost resulted in the closing of the school, the Pentagon re-named it, "Western Hemisphere Institute for Security Cooperation." Thus, WHINSEC.

Scheduled, as always, on the weekend before Thanksgiving, activity builds to a climax on Sunday. That is when the thousands of protesters, carefully briefed by SOAWatch staff, solemnly process past the huge fence blocking the Ft. Benning entrance. As we process, we chant, "Presente!" as the thousands of victims are named, one at a time -- children, mothers, fathers, the young, the aged -- all killed by military and paramilitary squads led by graduates of the SOA. During peak years as many as 20,000 of us took part in these somber proceedings. So far this year, as in past years, bills submitted in the U.S. Congress calling for the closing of the "school of assassins" have failed to pass. And so our numbers grow fewer.

But, here's the good news. Throughout Friday and Saturday, and well into both evenings, dozens of workshops were held in the rooms of the conference center downtown. Attendees are of all ages, but mainly college-age young people, who arrive by the bus- and van-load. They come to learn more about the devastating consequences of U.S. policies in Latin America. Workshops, often with overflowing attendance, are led by SOA Watch staff as well as by representatives of groups such as Fellowship of Reconciliation; Witness for Peace; PAX Christi USA; Pace e Bene, Project Unspeakable; Georgia Latino Alliance for Human Rights; Committee in Solidarity with the People of El Salvador (CISPES); Plowshares; Students for a Democratic Society; United States Social Forum (USSF); Christian Peacemaker Teams; El Refugio; Progressive Catholic Coalition; Women for Genuine Security; Beehive Collective; Mexico Solidarity Network; Veterans for Peace; Voices for Creative Nonviolence; War Resisters League; National Religious Campaign Against Torture; American Friends Service Committee; and others.

Workshop presenters include speakers from Latin America, accompanied by interpreters, fluent in Spanish and English. Many presentations include slides and videos. The presentations are followed by questions and answers.

Examples of workshop topics are: Colombia Teach-in, focusing on mistreatment of workers and disappearance of labor union leaders at the world's largest open pit coal mine, owned by the U.S. Drummond Corporation; Killer Drones -- the Vehicle of Empire; Imperialism and the Links Between Trayvon Martin, Colombia, and Syria; Swords into Plowshares; Connecting the Dots: Resistance, Racism, and the Global Struggle for Justice; Legislative Strategy to Close the SOA;

(Continued on page 2)

### ML. King Birthday Observance

## Remembering the Peace Witness Saturday, January 18, 1:30 pm Allentown

The public is invited to attend LEPOCO's 14<sup>th</sup> annual event honoring Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s peace message, which will be held, Saturday, January 18, 2014, at 1:30 pm.

We will **gather at the**

### **Dr. King and Coretta Scott King Memorial**

(located at the intersection of Union Street, 4<sup>th</sup> Street, and Martin Luther King Drive in Allentown).

After opening remarks, we will **walk with banners & drums to the Allentown Public Library**

(Hamilton & 12<sup>th</sup> Streets), to hear a program of commentary, songs from the LEPOCO Peace Singers and our **speaker Roberta Meek**, Muhlenberg College history instructor, jazz vocalist, and Peace Camp leader of many years. She will speak and "songspeak" on the theme, "**Still Seeking the Beloved Community**," about the three evils of poverty, racism and militarism.

People who would prefer not to walk, but who want to hear the program should arrive at the library by 2:30 PM.

*In case of questionable weather, please call the LEPOCO office (610-691-8730) by 12 Noon, January 18.*

*Presented by the Nuclear Abolition Sisters of LEPOCO.*

# Military Charter High School Proposed in Bethlehem

A Military Charter High School (AMASA) was proposed to the Bethlehem Area School District School Board at a Public Hearing held December 9, at East Hills Middle School. The target date for opening the school is the Fall of 2014, at the former Holy Child School in Fountain Hill. The school plans to offer an advanced aerospace curriculum and require all students to be enrolled in JROTC.

The hearing was attended by more than 30 people opposed to the proposed school. About 16 people spoke against the school, including several members of LEPOCO, Quakers, college professors, a representative of the PTO, and the president of the Bethlehem Teachers Association. Several letters opposing the school had been mailed to the superintendent or the School Board before the meeting and they were presented as part of the legal testimony. About five people spoke in favor of the proposed military charter school.

The hearing consisted of the charter school organizers presenting their proposal, then responding to questions presented by the school board members. The school board asked many pointed questions indicating they had serious concerns about the quality of the proposal and the readiness of the organizers to open a school in September 2014. Three members of the School District administration then addressed the organizers with their concerns, before opening the floor to public comment.

The school board will vote on the proposed charter school at their February 10 Board Meeting. Based on the response of the board and the comments from the administration it seems quite possible that the board will vote no to the charter school. The organizers can then begin an appeal process with the state. A transcript of the Hearing will be sent to the governor-appointed appeals board along with the signatures of 1,000 Bethlehem residents in support of the school (already collected by the organizers).

LEPOCO will be organizing a meeting soon to plan strategies to continue the work opposing this school. Please call the LEPOCO office for more information.

- Martha Christine

## Numbers Down, But Interest Up at November SOA-Watch

(continued from page 1)

Earth First! and Global Land Struggles; Hospitality and Visitation: Standing in Solidarity with Detained Immigrants and their Loved Ones; The Siege on Indigenous Women in Guatemala; Where there is no justice...there is escrache (a form of social condemnation that emerged in the absence of legal justice). And there were many more.

A highlight of the weekend was a Friday night celebration of "Father Roy's 30 Years," featuring a dramatization of the famous climbing of the 30-foot pine tree, outside the SOA, by Roy, Linda and Larry. Roy placed a boom-box high in the tree, from which he blasted Archbishop Romero's sermon, broadcast by radio the day before he was murdered. His sermon, addressed to Salvadoran army soldiers, ordered them to refuse to carry out their orders to kill.

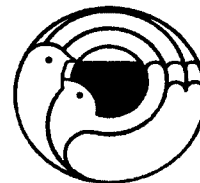
Father Roy Bourgeois is the founder of SOA Watch. He began vigiling at the gate of Ft. Benning 30 years ago after six priests, personal friends of his, were murdered in El Salvador by SOA graduates. At orders from the Vatican, he was recently defrocked by his Maryknoll order for participating in an ordination of women priests. His friends at the celebration presented him with a telescope.

We enjoyed great protest music and songs by Charlie King, Ernie and Bert, Steve Jacobs, Holly Near, Emma's Revolution, Prince Myshkins, and others. For a donation of \$20, we each received a free CD, "Sing It Down," hot off the press. (We'll play it for you!)

- Carmen and Bob Riggs

Check out the LEPOCO website at [www.lepoco.org](http://www.lepoco.org) for a Calendar of Events, Newsletter Archive, Videos, & More.

Sign up for LEPOCO e-mail updates or to receive your copy of the newsletter by e-mail, by calling 610-691-8730, or by writing to [lepoco@fast.net](mailto:lepoco@fast.net).



### 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 .....	\$ 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, Tom Stinnett, Nancy Tate, Jeff Vitelli.

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

LEPOCO Steering Committee: Sarah Andrew, Terry Briscoe, Martha Christine, Sheila Clever, robert Daniels II (ex-officio), Janet Goloub, Julius Iwantsch (co-treasurer), Monica McAgnon, Dan Miller, Janet Ney, Susie Ravitz, Stefan Rogers, Tom Stinnett (co-treasurer), Nancy Tate (ex-officio).

# Potluck / Popcorn & Politics

Sunday, January 26<sup>th</sup>, 6:00 pm

Fran Dreisbach

*"Get Acquainted with Malawi and Zambia"*

Potluck & Politics at the LEPOCO Peace Center.

Fran Dreisbach, decades-long peace activist and Quaker witness, locally, regionally, and internationally, retired professor of social work, and world traveler, visited Malawi and Zambia in August and September 2013, at the end of their winter. She will report on this trip and talk especially about two places that she visited: an organization for AIDS victims and a wildlife park.

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

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

Friday, February 7<sup>th</sup>, 7:00 pm

*"James Baldwin: The Price of the Ticket"*

A Popcorn & Politics Film projected on the big screen at the LEPOCO Peace Center.

Using rarely-seen archival footage, intimate interviews, and eloquent public speeches this documentary portrait allows the late writer and civil rights activist to tell his own story in his own words: exploring what it means to be born black, impoverished, gay and gifted in a world that has yet to understand that "all men are brothers." Close friends, colleagues and even critics -- among them, Maya Angelou, Amiri Baraka, William Styron -- help illuminate the narrative.

Directed by Karen Thorsen. 87 minutes. 1989.

*Please bring a snack or beverage to share.*

Friday, March 7<sup>th</sup>, 7:00 pm

*"A Place at the Table"*

A Popcorn & Politics Film projected on the big screen at the LEPOCO Peace Center.

This documentary investigates incidents of hunger experienced by millions of people in the United States, and proposed solutions to the problem.

Narrated by Jeff Bridges. Directed by Kristi Jacobson and Lori Silverbush. 84 minutes. 2012.

*Please bring a snack or beverage to share.*



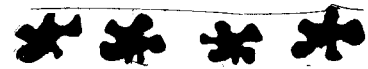
## Veterans For Peace Report

On November 11, the Lehigh Valley Chapter of Veterans For Peace and friends held what has become an annual Veterans Day vigil at the Rose Garden Park in Bethlehem. As in previous years the event was comprised of a display of replications of burial markers; one for each member of the U.S. military from Pennsylvania who was killed in Iraq or Afghanistan. Favored by tolerable weather, the action drew an appreciable number of pedestrian visitors and evoked many positive responses from passing motorists. Among those stopping by was a broad spectrum of veterans and a good deal of appropriate literature was passed out. The focus of this year's activity was that this day also be remembered for its original identity as one of Armistice, with its connotation of the end of one war and the hope of a lasting peace.

Local members of V.F.P. continue to lend their presence to demonstrations in Horsham regarding the development of the Horsham drone command center, held on last Saturdays of the month.

- Paul Fichter

## Book Group



After a break in January the First Tuesday LEPOCO Book Club will meet next on February 4<sup>th</sup>. The book for discussion will be, *Hidden America: From Coal Miners to Cowboys, an Extraordinary Exploration of the Unseen People Who Make This Country Work*, by Jeanne Marie Laskas. On March 4<sup>th</sup>, they will discuss, *The Woman Behind the New Deal: The Life and Legacy of Frances Perkins...*, by Kirstin Downey; on April 1<sup>st</sup>, *The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness* by Michelle Alexander; and on May 6<sup>th</sup>, *Hammarskjold: A Life*, by Roger Lipsey.

So choose one or more of these books that you would like to read and join the lively discussion. The Book Club meets at the Bethlehem Wegman's (off Rt. 512, north of Rt. 22). The meeting starts at 6 pm. You can get some food and/or drink and join the group in the upstairs dining area.

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

# Peace Pilgrimage

## NOT Snowed Out

"Will the Peace Pilgrimage be CANCELLED? It's never happened before!" On Peace Pilgrimage Eve, December 13, with snow and ice on the way and the bus company cancelling, it seemed a real possibility that for the first time in 54 years the Nazareth-to-Bethlehem Christmas Peace Pilgrimage would not take place. But with a lot of emails and resourceful creativity, more than 50 people braved the weather and walked (...almost...) ten miles to commemorate the original pilgrimage of the pre-natal Prince of Peace. The course was slightly different -- the walkers started in Bethlehem, walked half-way to Nazareth, then turned around and came back -- but the intentions were the same.

Many passers-by acknowledged the modern pilgrims with flashing car lights and peace signs.

Arriving at Christ UCC in downtown Bethlehem by mid-afternoon, the walkers were welcomed with warm soup, sandwiches and homemade cookies. Concerned about those who would have to drive a distance to get back home (some from as far as away as York, PA), the program was abbreviated. However, we still had time for inspiring songs from LEPOCO's Peace Singers and an amazingly informative talk by Peter Lems, from American Friends Service Committee (AFSC), which will no doubt encourage many to work to halt the use of invasive drones. If you were unable to hear him speak, find out more about his work at [www.afsc.org](http://www.afsc.org).

The Peace Pilgrimage Planning Committee will begin their work again in January to prepare for the 2014 Christmas Peace Pilgrimage. It's always the second Saturday in December (December 13, 2014). Plan ahead and make 2014 the biggest year ever for Peace!

- Donna Hartmann

Editor's Note: Thank you to Donnelly-Colt, the producer of progressive resources based in Hampton, Connecticut (where LEPOCO gets many of our buttons, stickers, etc.), for the surprise donation of a wonderful new large Peace Pilgrimage button. Their donation helps us understand the web of opposition to war that ties our many actions to those who act in other places and at other times. Since there was a smaller than normal attendance at this year's walk we have a number of the buttons still available at LEPOCO for a donation of \$2-\$5 to the Pilgrimage. Thank you Clay Colt and Kate Donnelly!

## The Heart of Justice \_\_\_\_\_

"Why is there violence?" This was the question that spurred a brainstorming session that culminated in the planning of a day-long workshop on prison justice sponsored by the Lehigh County Conference of Churches (LCCConfC). The question was a cry of pain at the craziness of yet another shooting at a school. While we were tiptoeing around the issue of gun control, we realized that we were onto something much bigger.

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The conversation kept turning back to fear and why people felt they needed to be protected. Fear from...? We talked about laws written to protect us which can also be used to harm. We saw that protection can mean putting that which we fear behind bars. But where is the violence -- in the law, in the person that breaks the law, or in a system that uses the law to dehumanize?

*The Heart of Justice: Breaking the Cycle of Fear, Violence, Punishment, Retaliation*, summed up what we wanted to accomplish. Workshops, a panel discussion, and numerous organizations staffing information tables drew a crowd of 80+ people to Sacred Heart Hospital Auditorium on November 9.

By looking at the *Face of the Prisoner*, a workshop led by Rev. Karen Moeschberger, attendees were shown that people in prison are not really much different than those who aren't in prison. There is no reason to fear this population of people. *The Life of Inmates and Family Communications*, led by Rev. Michael Comick allowed us to see the humanity still present in those who are in prison for 30, 40 years, maybe even life. We were shown that the desire for human contact and the gratification of this desire with notes from family, friends, or even total strangers was more than an act of compassion -- it is to notice that people behind bars care, cry, and hope just like those on the outside.

Decarcerate PA, who provided the morning plenary speaker, Hakim Ali, and a workshop, focuses on not building more prisons. Keeping people out of prison by helping communities is much less violent than warehousing pseudo miscreants, dehumanizing them, and then setting them free on populations who have little means to deal with the onslaught. LEPOCO has agreed to support this grassroots organization and we look forward to seeing the energy and passion from the young people of Decarcerate sometime in the spring.

Perhaps the greatest kudos went to the afternoon session of the day -- Restorative Practices. RP takes a non-punitive approach to justice. This cuts down on fear, a need for retaliation, a desire for protection. The RP approach has reduced violence in high schools by 67% in some areas. In our gathering, it gave hope to participants who, energized by the need for justice in our prison system, needed instruction on how to achieve it.

Prisons are formed by our inability to know how to help. The LCCConfC daylong workshop shed some light on how to help. Over the coming months, we'll continue to follow-up on the workshop and next fall, we'll present the same topic again.

- Sheila Clever, LEPOCO & Justice & Advocacy Committee of LCCConfC



# The Struggle Shared

*Nothing I can do will change the structure of the universe. But maybe by raising my voice I can help the greatest of all causes -- goodwill among men and peace on earth.*

- Albert Einstein

## MOCK ELECTIONS IN

HONDURAS - Even as an international solidarity network was meeting at the SOA Watch ("Close the SOA" at Ft. Benning, Georgia) gathering, November 22-24, the people of Honduras were going to the polls in record numbers to support a democratic alternative to the two-party system which has dominated Honduran politics for the last century. Out of the mass protests of the resistance movement that has gained strength in that Central American country since ex-president Mel Zalaya was removed from office by a military coup in 2009, a new party, Libre, emerged. The Libre presidential candidate, Xiomara Castro Alaya, wife of the deposed president, drew much larger crowds at all of her events leading up to the elections, and her ratings in the polls, except for those paid for by her opponent's parties, had her leading by large margins.

Notwithstanding this evidence of popular support for change, it came as no surprise that the mainstream media announced the winner of the Honduras elections as Juan Orlando Hernandez (JOH), before the votes were all counted and the reports of fraud investigated. JOH is the ex-President of Honduras' National Congress and was the presidential candidate for the National Party. The National Party, and the regime of Pepe Lobo, de facto President from the elections after the coup, staged an electoral coup d'etat on November 24<sup>th</sup>, with the full support of the ruling elite, multinational corporations, and the U.S. State Department. The State Dept. issued a press release with this spin on the elections: "The people of the United States commend the people of Honduras for their strong participation in the November 24<sup>th</sup> elections and the Supreme Electoral Tribunal (TSE) for its professional counting of the vote."

Greg McCain, a human rights defender living in Honduras, and a member of the Honduran Solidarity Network's Election Monitoring Delegation,

credentialed by TSE to be international observers, paints a different picture. He reports massive irregularities, vote buying, and attempts by government officials and mainstream media to push a JOH victory on the world before the abuse of the democratic process could be challenged.

In the days leading up to November 24<sup>th</sup>, SOA Watch activists who were in Honduras to observe the elections, were detained for hours at a roadblock. The Libre Party Headquarters in Tegucigalpa was raided by armed police. Since the 2009 coup, over 200 social movement activists have been murdered.

The greatest source of fraud, was in the transcribing of tallies and the transmission of votes. Boxes of voter I.D.'s were found in the offices of the National Party. McCain reports that whole cemeteries were registered to vote, while some voters who showed up were turned away, because records said they were dead. One local National Party candidate for a deputy post was seen unabashedly peeling off 100 lempira bills and handing them to people in a crowd outside the gates that led to the voting tables. This same official had used her political influence to arrest 80 campesinos the night before the election, saying, "Keep them in jail. They're 80 votes that aren't for me."

The struggle for democracy is far from over in Honduras. Stay tuned and be ready to raise your voice in solidarity with people demanding free democratic elections.

## OUR WALMART, ONE YEAR

LATER - Last December this column featured an article about unprecedented protests at Walmart stores across the country on Black Friday, and the emergence of the Organization United for Respect -- OUR Walmart, and the Workers Making Change at Walmart Campaign. It concluded, "We would hope that after this year's demonstrations, perhaps future Black Fridays

will be occasions to celebrate worker solidarity. As one striker in Dallas said, 'If you change Walmart, if you change Corporate America, it can really better a lot of people's lives.'" So did last year's Walmart strikes have historic impact?

On Friday, November 29, 2013, there were 1500 organized protests at Walmart stores in 100 U.S. cities, in 46 states. In Paramount, California, some 600 people, including over 100 Walmart employees, attended a protest. In total, over 100 protesters were arrested in Walmart actions. Shoppers around the country were met by workers calling attention to starvation wages, no benefits, and harassment for exercising the right to organize.

Despite the increased public awareness Walmart's greed has only increased. The corporation's profits hit \$15.7 billion in 2013, they still account for 10% of total retail sales in the U.S. Walmart Associates still make less than \$25,000 per year. Nationally, the largest group of Medicaid recipients is Walmart employees, and each Walmart Associate costs taxpayer \$1000 per year in public assistance. Walmart's response to the poverty of their workers, was to provide bins before Thanksgiving for their employees to contribute food to their co-workers who could not afford Thanksgiving dinner. But many Walmart workers could not join their families for Thanksgiving dinner. They were required to work.

Nonetheless, the ground of public opinion is shifting. Demos, a public policy organization, recently published a study that concluded that Walmart could pay every employee \$14.89 an hour, without raising prices, simply by not buying its own stock to further enrich the Walton family.

Democrats in the U.S. Senate have introduced legislation to raise the minimum wage, and raising the minimum wage is a serious issue in several state legislatures. President Obama recently met with Walmart workers and other low-wage workers, especially in the fast food industry, to discuss his support for raising the minimum wage. You can join the groundswell of solidarity for Walmart workers by calling Jim Walton, the owner of Walmart, at 479-464-1500. Tell him to pay his employees a living wage.

- Jeff Vitelli

# Drones Around the Globe:

Proliferation & Resistance; Drone Summit in Washington, DC, November 16-17, 2013

CODEPINK organized the weekend meeting on weaponized drones, attended by over 300 people and held at Georgetown University Law School. Panels included speakers who presented useful information on the legal questions regarding drone use in warfare while guests from Yemen reported on the effects of drone attacks in their communities, even though the U.S. is not at "war" with Yemen.

Representatives from Germany, U.K., and Israel, discussed the proliferation of drones in their countries. The U.K., Israel, and the U.S. are the three known manufacturers of drones at this time. Another panel, moderated by Col. Ann Wright, included two women from Afghanistan, a former Colonel in the U.S. military, and a former U.S. intel analyst who discussed their differing views of the drone war.

The film "Wounds of Waziristan" was shown. It is available for download online as is a film, "Unmanned" by Robert Greenwald, Brave New Films. Both are highly recommended.

Sunday was spent in well attended organizing workshops -- how and where do we influence the military, manufacturers, researchers, politicians, all of whom participate in, or promote and profit from drone attacks. We met to talk about student organizing, art for activism, challenging corporations in their boardrooms, and global organizing.

Monday was a lobbying day when many of us visited the offices of our local Congresspeople. Notably, 35 people crowded into the office of Sen. Charles Schumer (NY), Chair of the Committee on Rules & Administration. He is a supporter of drone warfare and we went to his office to ask for an appointment to speak with him regarding our opposition to drone warfare. Many photos of victims of drone attacks were taped on the walls of his office. When no requested meeting with the Senator was granted, either by phone or in person, four people were arrested because they refused to leave the area of the office.

It's clear we have a major challenge to stop this "war on terrorism," the given rationale for drone attacks. After each attack in Pakistan, Afghanistan, Yemen, Somalia new militants come forward. People in Pakistan are protesting their own government for allowing U.S. drone strikes. Almost weekly there is another "mistaken" strike. The U.S. military usually reports them as strikes on militants, Al Qaeda or Taliban. But most often civilians who happen to be in the area of the targeted strike are killed.

To learn more, contact [www.codepink.org](http://www.codepink.org), [www.droneswatch.org](http://www.droneswatch.org), [www.knowdrones.org](http://www.knowdrones.org), [www.brandywinepeacecommunity.org](http://www.brandywinepeacecommunity.org).

- Marge Van Cleef, Philadelphia Death Walk  
Against Drones

Editor's Note: As this newsletter is being prepared the last of nine 2013 demonstrations against the proposed weaponized drone command center at Horsham was held December 28<sup>th</sup>. Stay tuned for action plans in 2014.

## WRL Celebrates 90 Years —

The War Resisters League (WRL) "is rooted in the conviction that wars will cease only when all people refuse to fight, and also when all people refuse to cooperate with the immensely unjust and multifarious structures which create war, when we work actively and unceasingly to oppose them." The program booklet for the 90<sup>th</sup> Anniversary celebration of WRL which took place in New York City on October 18, 2013, provided both a history of the organization and a statement of its core principles.

The evening was filled with remembrances, music, and the sharing of ideas, both on the podium and in the audience as old friends, and new, greeted each other. Among the highlights were the appearances of Harry Belafonte, Joan Baez, and Daniel Ellsberg, each of whom received an award from WRL. Belafonte recalled his years of activism as he received the 2013 Grace Paley Lifetime Achievement Award. Joan Baez charmed the audience with her singing. WRL gave Ms. Baez, a 2013 Peace Award which she, in turn, gave to Randy Kehler, a longtime activist and war tax resister. And, then, Daniel Ellsberg, "taboo-breaker and whistleblower" accepted a 2013 Peace Award.

A brief history of WRL related the organization's dedication from its humble beginnings in 1923 as a "secular organization that would support those objectors whose main principle against fighting did not merely derive from a theological standpoint." Resistance has taken many forms and the heroes of the anti-war movement are legendary.

Among those who helped to shape the League was Bayard Rustin, an advocate for gay rights and for non-violence. It was appropriate that, a few weeks after the anniversary celebration, President Obama honored Rustin for his "especially meritorious" contributions to American society. It was a long overdue honor. Rustin worked passionately for pacifism, workers' rights, and freedom for all whose efforts were often stymied by the anti-gay prejudice of his era. His partner, Walter Naegle, was on hand at the October program and also to receive the Presidential Medal of Freedom on behalf of the late activist.

Special Note: Randy Kehler will be the guest speaker at LEPOCO's Annual Dinner on March 29, 2014, at Wesley United Methodist Church, Bethlehem. Be sure to save the date so that you can be encouraged and enlightened by Randy's 40 years+ of research, writing, organizing and advocacy.

- Janet Ney

# Bits & Pieces

Ⓢ Each March LEPOCO chooses half of the members of the **Steering Committee** for the organization. They will serve a two-year term. If you would be interested in working with LEPOCO in this capacity or if you have suggestions for someone who would be perfect as a Steering Committee member, please contact the Peace Center at 610-691-8730

Ⓢ As this newsletter is being prepared people are gathering in Washington, DC, for the now annual **Fast for Justice**. Organized by Witness Against Torture participants will engage in a liquid-only fast from Jan. 6-11. They will participate in other activities highlighting "the ongoing crimes of Guantánamo, Bagram, indefinite detention, drones, and a lack of accountability for torture."

On Saturday, January 11, the 12<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Guantánamo, there will be a rally and procession starting at the White House. For more information see [www.witness torture.org](http://www.witness torture.org). At the site you can learn how to join an ongoing Rolling Fast, also in support of those on hunger strike at Guantánamo.

*They are artists of torture,  
They are artists of pain and fatigue,  
They are artists of insults and  
humiliation.*

*Where is the world to save us from  
torture?*

*Where is the world to save us from the  
fire and sadness?*

*Where is the world to save the hunger  
strikers.?*

This poem was written by Adnan Latif, who was found dead in his cell at Guantánamo on 9/8/12. From Yemen, Adnan Latif was sold for bounty at the Pakistan/Afghanistan border in 2001. He suffered torture at Guantánamo including solitary confinement for three years. He remained in detention even though he had been cleared for release in 2009. At the time of his death at age 36, he had spent over ten years detained at Guantánamo.

Ⓢ "150 Years... And Still It's an American Dream," is the theme for

the Bethlehem NAACP and YWCA tributes to Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. The first will be held on Sun., Jan. 19, in Hauptert Aud., Moravian College, at 3:30 pm, with a screening of "Backyard Philly Project" and a talk by Rev. Gracher Selby, pastor of St. John AME Zion Church, Bethlehem; and, the second on Mon., Jan. 20, at 10 am, at Sayre Hall, Cathedral Church of the Nativity, Bethlehem, they will hold a tribute featuring music by Freedom High School students, and talks by Dr. James West of Moravian College and Dr. Detrick McGriff of Broughal Middle School,

Ⓢ "Peter Schumann: The Shatterer," the first solo museum exhibition of Bread & Puppet Theater founder and director Peter Schumann, will continue at the Queens Museum in New York City, until March 30. The exhibition marks the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Bread & Puppet Theater and is introducing New York audiences "to a largely unseen body of work by one of the most independent, prolific, and complex artists of our time." For more info. see [www.queensmuseum.org](http://www.queensmuseum.org).

Ⓢ After being snowed out on Dec. 14, the Lehigh Valley's Organizing for Action held a **remembrance** of the 26 victims of the 2012 **Sandy Hook** shootings, on Sun., Dec. 15, at Bethlehem's City Center Plaza. Ninety people came out in the bitter cold for the memorial vigil. For more info., contact Daniel Miller at 610-282-1928.

Ⓢ On a cold Friday evening, December 13, the International Community of African and Caribbean Diaspora of the Lehigh Valley gathered in candlelight vigil at the M.L. King and Corretta Scott King Memorial in Allentown, to mourn the loss of and to honor the life of the "great African and world leader," **Nelson Mandela** of South Africa who died on Dec. 5, at age 95.

*The Morning Call* carried this Mandela quote shortly after his death, *For to be free is not merely to cast off one's chains, but to live in a way that respects and enhances the freedom of others.*



## MEETINGS... MEETINGS... MEETINGS... MEETINGS... ETC.

- Thursdays, January 9 & February 13, 6:15 pm:** Lehigh Valley Chapter of Veterans for Peace meeting at LEPOCO Peace Center (prior to the meeting some in the veterans group will participate in the second Thursday Peace Vigil, 4-5 pm, and go for dinner at 5:15 pm, at the south Bethlehem Perkins Restaurant).
- Sunday, January 12, 7 pm:** LEPOCO Peace Singers rehearsal & meeting at home of Bob & Carmen Riggs in Bethlehem.
- Monday, January 13, 10 am:** Newsletter Planning Committee meeting at the Peace Center.
- Monday, January 13, 12:15 pm:** Americas Solidarity Group meeting at LEPOCO Peace Center.
- Mondays, January 13 & February 10, 7 pm:** LEPOCO Monthly Action Meeting at the Peace Center. All members & friends are welcome at this business meeting where the organization's activities are reviewed and set.
- Tuesday, January 14, 3:30 pm:** Bike-Walkathon 2014 Planning Committee meeting at LEPOCO.
- Tuesday, January 21, 3:30 pm:** Lehigh Valley Committee Against State Killing meeting at LEPOCO.
- Tuesday, January 21, 5 pm:** Military Charter School Response Committee Killing meeting at LEPOCO.
- Thursday, December 5, 5 pm:** Nuclear Abolition Sisters Meeting at Olive Branch Restaurant, south Bethlehem.

*Please join in the meetings and work of these groups as you are able. If you want more information on the Nuclear Abolition Sisters, the Peace Camp Planning Committee, or about any of the meetings listed above, please call LEPOCO at 610-691-8730. For a regularly updated calendar of events and meetings please see [www.lepoco.org](http://www.lepoco.org).*



# LEPOCO

Lehigh-Pocono Committee of Concern

313 W. Fourth St., Bethlehem, PA 18015  
610-691-8730 [lepoco@fast.net](mailto:lepoco@fast.net)  
Fax: 610-691-8904 [www.lepoco.org](http://www.lepoco.org)

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## Monthly Peace Vigil

*Our wars continue.*

*Please help witness for peace.*

4:00 - 5:00 pm

Second Thursdays:

January 9 & February 13

3<sup>rd</sup> & Wyandotte Sts., Bethlehem

Contact: Vince Stravino 610-216-8103 /  
Tom Ulrich 610-882-1136

Save the Date!

## LEPOCO Annual Dinner

Saturday, March 29

Speaker: Randy Kehler

Call LEPOCO 610-691-8730 for more details.

### ML. King Birthday Observance

## Remembering the Peace Witness

Saturday, January 18, 1:30 pm, Allentown

Gather at the Dr. King & Coretta Scott King Memorial  
(at intersection Union St., 4<sup>th</sup> St., & Martin Luther King Drive)

After opening remarks, **walk with banners & drums** to the Allentown Public Library

(Hamilton & 12<sup>th</sup> Sts.) for program of commentary, music and talk by

**Roberta Meek: "Still Seeking the Beloved Community."**

(See page 1 for more details.)