Reduce Military Spending: Fund Our Communities

On Tuesday, October 19, there will be two opportunities to hear Mike Prokosch of the Boston Area United for Justice With Peace speak about “The 25% Solution.” At 4 pm, he will be at Maginnes Hall, Room 111, Lehigh University, 9 W. Packer Ave., south Bethlehem. At 7 pm, he will be at the Unitarian Universalist Church of the Lehigh Valley, 424 Center St., Bethlehem. Both programs are free and open to the public.

It is terribly urgent that we begin the process of reducing military spending. There is probably no way we can meet the needs of our schools, communities and the environment without making reductions in spending on war. Come to this program to learn some of the specifics. As Tom Ulrich, the prime organizer of this program wrote in the last LEPOCO Newsletter: “The 25% Solution links staggering facts about our excessive military spending to our paltry investment in public education, equitable health care, affordable housing, green jobs, veterans’ services, and more. Spending almost as much as the rest of the world combined, we spend more than $5000 per household per year on the military/ars. The 25% cut in military spending would yield $175 billion a year to rebuild communities and extend a more decent and just life to U.S. citizens.”

The visit by Mike Prokosch is sponsored by the Lehigh Valley Peace Coalition, LEPOCO Peace Center, Veterans For Peace #152, Coffee Party of Bethlehem, L.V. Unitarian Universalist Church Social Action Committee, Lehigh Valley Friends Meeting, Lehigh University Progressive Student Alliance.

Afghanistan: The 10th Year of War

On October 7 we began the 10th year of U.S. war in Afghanistan – now expanded into Pakistan with drone attacks and covert and not-so-covert cross-border attacks. To mark the 9th anniversary of the war the Lehigh Valley Peace Coalition showed the documentary film, “Rethink Afghanistan,” by Robert Greenwald at the NCC Fowler Center. Attendance included many of those expected at such events with a few newer faces. Several dozen postcards were written by those in attendance and addressed to elected officials calling for an end to the war.

The film is very good in bringing the reality of the war in Afghanistan to a U.S. audience – the severe poverty, the horrible violence of the war, the rampant corruption. LEPOCO has a copy of the film available to be shown in other community settings.

Also, during the anniversary month, American Friends Service Committee is presenting “Windows and Mirrors: Reflections on the War in Afghanistan,” at the Arch Street Meeting House (4th & Arch Sts., Philadelphia). This is a provocative exhibit on the human cost of war featuring 45 large murals created by U.S. and international artists to memorialize the civilian casualties in Afghanistan along with a collection of artwork by Afghan school children about living with war. The exhibit brochure says, “These windows on a war-torn country are also mirrors reflecting our own identity as a nation at war.” The exhibit is open Monday-Saturday, 10 am-4 pm (Tuesday 10-9). For more information see www.afsc.org/windowsandmirrors.

Honoring the Work & Life

An evening for remembering Joe DeRaymond & supporting the Fellowship of Reconciliation’s work with the Peace Community of San José de Apartadó

Friday, October 22, 6:30-9:00 PM
(Program at 7:15 PM)

St. Luke’s Evangelical Lutheran Church
417 North Seventh St., Allentown (ample off-street parking)

Featuring: delicious food,
Peace Community photographs,
remembrances of Joe DeRaymond,
& updates from Colombia by
Susana Pimienta & John Lindsay-Poland,
Program Staff with FOR.

Donation: $20-50 (no one turned away)

RSVP, if possible, by calling LEPOCO at 610-691-8750, e-mailing lepoco@fast.net, or by sending payment to LEPOCO, 313 W. 4th St., Bethlehem, PA 18015 (please note Oct. 22 in check memo). All money raised benefits the work of FOR with the Peace Community in Colombia.

Organized by the Americas Solidarity Group of LEPOCO & FOR’s Task Force on Latin America and the Caribbean with support from Amnesty International Group 347 of Bethlehem.
Local Peace Activists Have Been Busy

On Sunday, September 5, a LEPOCO group joined the Steelworkers & Friends Labor Day Parade through downtown Bethlehem. Mike Lawton carried a “Jobs Not Wars” sign and his picture was in the next day’s Express Times. Others participating included: Robin Reinhard, Tom Ulrich, Ellen Buck, Peter Crownfield, Laurie Spalholz, Nancy Tate and Tom Stinnett.

David Rose and Maria Weick were key in organizing showings of the film, No Tomorrow, a documentary that presents a unique perspective on questions about capital punishment. The film was viewed by the Easton Chapter of the NAACP on September 13, and by Bethlehem’s Amnesty International Chapter on September 17.

Robert Daniels II, Ruth Walden, Pat Judge, Martha Christine, Janet Goloub, Tim Chadwick, Mylien Nguyen, Steve and Renate Brosky Nancy Tate, Tom Stinnett, Ginny Booth, Gene Hunter and Kim Moyer, all helped staff LEPOCO’s table at the Pennsylvania Renewable Energy and Sustainable Living Festival, September 17-19, in Kemptown. New names were added to our contact lists, free literature was distributed, and peace boutique items were sold.

On September 18, George Cedeno and Kelly Quain took LEPOCO information to a International Day of Peace event held at the Wildflower Café, Bethlehem. A concert and a candlelight vigil were part of the event organized by Michelle Krier, Jordyn Pfalzgraf, and Miranda Hever as part of the United Nations worldwide observance.

A second local event for the International Day of Peace was organized by Monica Willard and Jackie Tice at the Banana Factory, September 19. The observance at the Banana Factory has become an annual event, this year under the theme, “Stories of Resilience and Inspiration.”

Susie Ravitz, LEPOCO founding member and current Steering Committee member, spoke about LEPOCO’s work for a HIL Neighbor forum at First Presbyterian Church, Bethlehem, on September 20.

On September 25, Ruth Walden and Sharon Mills staffed a table with information about cutting the military budget at the Jobs, Justice and Economics conference, organized by the Conference of Churches in Allentown.

Also on September 25, Lee and Ellen Buck, Kim Moyer, Addison Bross, and Kelly Quain staffed a LEPOCO booth at the Peace Fair of the Buckingham Friends Meeting in Lahaska. The free literature and peace boutique items drew a record response this year.

The weekend of September 24, LEPOCO staff-person Robert Daniels II, was blessed with the opportunity to attend the Kirkridge retreat, “Everyone ‘Neath the Vine and Fig Tree,” led by Elizabeth McAlister and Frida Berrigan.

On September 30, thirty LEPOCO members and friends gathered at the home of Kim and David Rose in Easton for a theater party before the performance of the short, but moving play, A Thousand Cranes, performed by Lafayette College students. The play told the poignant story of Sadako Sasaki, a young girl who developed leukemia ten years after the atomic bombing of her city, Hiroshima. She died, but not before attempting to fold a thousand paper cranes — the act that Japanese legend says will restore one’s good health. Her story has inspired adults and children around the world to work for peace.

Robert Daniels II, Kim Moyer, Renate Brosky and Tim Chadwick witnessed for peace at the annual Walk for Farm Animals at the Lakshmi Cow Sanctuary in Bangor on October 2.

Over 40 people joined the Free Palestine Walk in downtown Bethlehem on October 9. Palestine Solidarity, a local committee, organized the event in Bethlehem with support from LEPOCO and others. Free Palestine Walks were held in over 45 U.S. cities that day to build awareness about the plight of the Palestinian people and to raise funds to support a public education campaign on this issue. Vince Stravino, Mohamed Bugaighis, Peter Crownfield, and Addison Bross are all active in Palestine Solidarity and can be contacted to learn about future local efforts.

Check out the LEPOCO website at www.lepoco.org for a Calendar of Events, Newsletter Archive, Videos, & More.

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

Newsletter of LEPOCO
Lehigh-Pocono Committee of Concern
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The LEPOCO Newsletter is published 8 times a year by the Lehigh-Pocono Committee of Concern, a nonviolent, nonprofit 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 staple, fold and label the newsletter each month.

LEPOCO Steering Committee: Addison Bross, Robert Daniels II (ex-officio), Becky Irwin, Julius Ivantsch (co-treasurer), Ruth Karpinski, Mimi Lang, Janet Ney, Susie Ravitz, Stefan Rogers, Tom Stinnett (co-treasurer), Nancy Tate (ex-officio), Ruth Walden.
Popcorn & Politics

Friday, November 5th, 7 pm: Promises
A Popcorn & Politics Film projected on the big screen at the LEPOCO Peace Center.
Refreshing, human, and sometimes humorous documentary takes a look at the
Palestinian-Israeli conflict through the eyes of seven Palestinian and Israeli children who
dared to cross the lines and meet their neighbors.
Directed by Carlos Bolado, B.Z. Goldberg, and Justine Shapiro. 106 minutes. 2001.
Please bring a snack or beverage to share.

Friday, December 3rd, 7pm: Plunder: The Crime of Our Time
A Popcorn & Politics Film projected on the big screen at the LEPOCO Peace Center.
This is a hard-hitting investigative documentary that explores how the financial crisis
was built on a foundation of criminal activity, and uncovers the connection between the
collapse of the housing market and the economic catastrophe that followed.
Directed by Danny Schechter. 100 minutes. 2009.
Please bring a snack or beverage to share.

An Extraordinary Moment

On October 2, the United Auto Workers local in
Allentown took two buses to the Washington, DC, rally
for One Nation Working Together. Among the passen-
gers were identified peace activists, Addison and Mary
Louise Bross, Barbara Richardson, Phil Reiss, Abebe
Hailye, Jeff Vitelli, Cathy Frankenberg, Joyce Moore,
Nancy Tate, Tom Stinnett, and Bob and Ruth Walden.
The speech at the rally that has drawn much atten-
tion was given by Harry Belafonte and can be viewed at
www.democracynow.org on their October 4 program.
To a cheering crowd of thousands Belafonte said
"...citizens from all walks of life have come here today
to rekindle his (Martin Luther King's) dream and once
again hope that all America will soon come to the reali-
zation that the wars that we wage today in far away
lands are immoral, unconscionable, and unwinnable."

Phyllis Bennis of the Institute for Policy Studies
wrote, "It (the rally) was an extraordinary moment. The
first national mobilization in Washington led by civil
rights and labor groups in more than a decade was mo-
tivated by the economic crisis and energized by the
demand for jobs — but reflected the breadth of under-
standing of a wide range of communities and consti-
tuencies who joined One Nation Working Together."

LEPOCO Book Group

The First Wednesday LEPOCO Book Group will
meet next on Wednesday, November 3rd, at 6 pm, at the
Panera Bread Café, 3301 Bath Pike (Center St.), Bethle-
hem. At that meeting the group will discuss Eaarth:
Making a Life on a Tough New Planet by Bill
McKibben. Our old familiar globe is suddenly melting,
drying, acidifying, flooding, and burning in ways that
no human has ever seen. This irreversible climate
change makes it imperative that we get creative about
our survival.

On December 1st, the group will discuss Long for
This World: The Strange Science of Immortality, by
Jonathan Weiner. It has been described as a fascinating
primer on longevity research.

January 5th, the discussion will be about Call It
Sleep, by Henry Roth, published in 1934. The New
Yorker said this book is "arguably the most distin-
guished work of fiction about immigrant life." It is a
coming of age book that takes place in New York's
Lower East Side in the early 20th Century.

The Poisonwood Bible by Barbara Kingsolver
(1998) will be discussed at the February 2nd meeting
of the group. This Kingsolver book is "a compelling
family saga and a sobering picture of the horrors of
fanatic fundamentalism and an insightful view of an
exploited country (the Congo) during three turbulent
decades beginning in the late 1950s."

New readers and discussion participants are wel-
come. Call Bob & Carmen Riggs at 610-867-1244 or
Becky Irwin at 610-351-6936 if you have questions.

-Susie Ravitz

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 interested in the following issues: ________

Name __________________ Phone # __________ e-mail ______________
Address __________________________ City __________ Zip __________
Return to: LEPOCO Peace Center, 313 W. 4th St., Bethlehem, PA 18015.

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A TALE OF TWO HEALTH CARE SYSTEMS - Allen Hoppes, a friend of Robert Daniels and a legal resident of Spain, has roots, and many friends, in the Lehigh Valley. In July, Allen was visiting Pennsylvania, and while doing some house painting, on July 31st, he fell off a roof. He sustained a compression fracture in his spine, a pelvis broken in three places, and severe injuries to both feet. He was taken to Lehigh Valley Hospital Center, treated there, and released five days later with a rented wheelchair, some basic physical therapy instructions and prescriptions for pain.

His friends came and got him. He was in bed, or in a wheelchair, feet splinted and bandaged, requiring creative, inventive assistance for just about everything. His friends, Lee and Howie, were wonderfully supportive. He also received good care at LVHC, but was worried about the bills, as he is uninsured.

Although Allen was scheduled to return to LVHC for foot surgery on August 17th, his wife and family in Spain were busy making other plans. On August 15th, two Spanish nurses arrived at Lee and Howie's, put Allen in an ambulance, and escorted him to JFK airport. They all boarded a plane, flying First Class, as his feet had to be elevated. On landing in Madrid, they went directly to La Paz Hospital where he had the surgery on both feet the 18th of August.

The cost of getting Allen back to Spain, including the nurses, was picked up by the insurance that comes with his $55/year Spanish credit card maintenance fee.

Allen is back at his Madrid home now, recuperating slowly, and looking forward to dancing and hiking again. As he pays taxes in Spain, his hospitalization and rehabilitation there are free to him. He says "I'm not too worried about the U.S. hospital bills, but I'm wondering how I'll repay all the kindness I've received." He has applied for medical assistance in the U.S. and is still waiting to hear whether he qualifies.

Although Spain's economy is still struggling to recover from the global recession, with unemployment exceeding 20%, the socialist administration has budgeted a low proportion of the national wealth to Spain's military defense budget (about 9.9 billion of 489 billion in revenues) in order to maintain social spending. According to some studies, Spain has one of the best health care systems in the world.

What could we do in this country if we would banish our permanent war economy?--!!

MUSIC, MUSIC, MUSIC - One of the most joyous ways that LEPOCO activists celebrate our solidarity in pursuit of peace and social justice is by coming together to be inspired by the music of activist performers. The recent Anne Hills concert to benefit the Veteran's Sanctuary in Allentown, and the Bright Morning Star reunion concert a few years back, are just two that came immediately to mind.

November 4th will present us with another golden opportunity to celebrate. Charlie King and Karen Brandow, joined by Kim and Reggie Harris, will be at Godfrey Daniels Coffeehouse, 7 East 4th St, in south Bethlehem, for a concert at 8 pm.

Charlie King has been at the heart of the peace and justice wing of U.S. folk music for over 30 years, with a dozen solo albums and three with Bright Morning Star. Charlie first teamed up with Karen Brandow in 1998, and they have been performing together regularly since then. Karen had been a human rights worker in Guatemala, studied classical guitar, and was an active voice in the Nueva Cancion movement of Latin America. Together they are political satirists and often put into song the stories from the extraordinary lives of ordinary people they've met.

Kim and Reggie Harris have a faithful following in the Lehigh Valley, having performed at Godfrey Daniels and at Musikfest. Kim and Reggie's concerts and workshops present African-American Spiritual and Freedom Songs. Their upcoming release "Get On Board" features songs of the Underground Railroad.

LEPOCO is planning a pre-concert party at the Peace Center (walking distance from Godfrey Daniels), at 6 pm. The concert and the party are $30 (limited income: $17). Call LEPOCO or send a check to reserve your spot. This will be an evening of music guaranteed to lift our spirits for the post-mid-term elections long-haul.

LUCIUS WALKER PRESENTE - On September 7th, the world lost yet another passionate sower of the seeds of justice. Lucius Walker passed away of a heart attack at the age of 80 at his home in Damerest, New Jersey.

Lucius Walker was a friend of LEPOCO as our Annual Dinner speaker in 1997. He was Executive Director of the Inter-Religious Foundation for Community Organizations (IFCO) for many years. In August of 1988 he was on a fact-finding delegation to Nicaragua when his group was attacked by government soldiers, and he was wounded. Out of that experience he founded Pastors for Peace, which, over the years, has sent hundreds of tons of medical supplies, building materials, and computers in delegations to Cuba in defiance of the U.S. embargo. Lucius said, "We don't consider Cuba our enemy, but rather our neighbor. And as people who are motivated by the great teachers of faith, we believe that we are to love our neighbors. That means we have to act contrary to U.S. policy, which is an imposition of a blockade against Cuba to try to force it to do the will of the U.S. rather than to pursue its own path towards a better world."

Granma, the Communist Party newspaper in Cuba said that "Cubans don't want to even think about a world without Lucius Walker."
Thank you to Laurie Spalholz, Karen Hicks, Mike Lawton, Susie Ravitz and others who reviewed and weighed our options about whether LEPOCO should hold a Yard Sale this Fall. The decision of the Action Meeting was that there will not be a Yard Sale this fall. Tentative plans have been made to hold a streamlined Yard Sale in the spring of 2011, but a new group of organizers is needed to make it happen — any volunteers? For those holding boxes of possible donated items, we apologize for the delayed decision, and we trust you can find good placement for your fabulous “stuff.”

Several environmental groups have joined together to plan the Unity Rally to STOP the Susquehanna-Roseland Powerline that threatens the Delaware Water Gap National Recreation Area, the Appalachian Trail, and other natural areas. The Rally will be Sat., Oct. 23, 11 am to 1 pm, at the Portland Walking Bridge at Rt. 611 and Main St., Portland, PA (meeting on the Pennsylvania side of the bridge). For more info. see www.savethepark.org or www.stopthelines.com.

The Lehigh Valley Veterans for Peace can use assistance setting up and staffing the display for the Veterans Day Observance on Thurs., Nov. 11, in Rose Garden Park, Bethlehem. If you can help them please call Louise Legun or Judy Woodruff at 484-248-6113. (Also, see mailer page.)

On October 11, food service workers employed by Sodexo at three Lehigh Valley hospitals walked off the job to protest what they say are low wages, poor benefits and anti-union tactics. Service Employees International Union is trying to negotiate a national agreement with Sodexo, a large corporation based in Europe, for all their workers. Contact SEIU 32BJ at 917-428-2245 for more info.

The Convention of the Episcopal Diocese of Bethlehem attended by 300 delegates approved a resolution the weekend of October 9th, put forth by the Diocesan Peace Commission that made “a formal request urging our Senators, Congressperson, and President Obama to withdraw all U.S. military presence and contractors from Afghanistan and Iraq before the end of 2011...and to support the people of Afghanistan and Iraq as they seek stabilization in their own terms.” Thank you.

The Peace Commission of the Diocese of Bethlehem will hold a Creating a Culture of Peace a training for generating nonviolent power, Nov. 5-7, at St. Stephen’s Pro-Cathedral, Wilkes-Barre. Fee is $120 (for students and Episcopalians: $45). Please register by Oct. 22 by contacting Fran Hlavacek at 570-296-5264 or franhcmnt@gmail.com.


Please gather signatures on the enclosed petition from family, friends, acquaintances, anyone and everyone, and mail it to Friends Committee on National Legislation at the address at the bottom of the petition. Thank you!

I think what we are witnessing in India is really warfare against the poor. It’s warfare against the poor because people are literally dying. More than 200,000 farmers have committed suicide in the last decade of neoliberal agriculture policies policies that tell you that agriculture is not about feeding people, agriculture is not about the livelihood of two-thirds of India’s population; agriculture is about producing cheap commodities for exports.


Regular Peace Vigils
Our wars continue. Please help witness for peace.
Bethlehem: 4:30-5:30 pm, Second & Fourth Thursdays 3rd & Wyandotte Sts., Bethlehem Contact: Vince Stravino 610-216-8103 / Tom Ulrich 610-882-1136
Allentown: Noon-1 pm, Fridays Federal Courthouse, 4th & Hamilton Sts.; Contact: Rev. John C. Fowler 610-746-5013

November 18-21
Converge at the Gates of Ft. Benning, Georgia
Close the SOA
Anti-militarization Conference, Workshops, Massive Rally, Concerts, Vigil of Memory & Resistance
Contact LEPOCO or See www.soaw.org For more info.

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

Sun., Oct. 24, 7 pm: LEPOCO Peace Singers rehearse at home of Barbara Wurth in Bethlehem. Call 610-691-8730 for directions. Also, meeting on Sundays, November 7 and November 21.

Mondays, Nov. 8 & Dec. 13, 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.

Fridays, Nov. 12 & Dec. 10, 10:30 am: Lehigh Valley Chapter of Veterans for Peace meeting at Crocodile Rock, Hamilton St., Allentown. The meeting will adjourn to join the Noon, Friday, Peace Vigil at the Federal Building at 5th & Hamilton.

Fri., Dec. 8, 1:15 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 about any of these meetings; or if you want to know the next meeting the Lehigh Valley Peace Coalition, the Newsletter Planning Committee, the Americas Solidarity Group, Lehigh Valley Committee Against State Killing, the Fundraising Committee, the Youth & Militarism/Truth in Recruiting Committee, the Economic Crisis Committee: please call LEPOCO at 610-691-8730. For a regularly updated calendar of events and a schedule of meetings please see www.lepoco.org.

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8 pm concert at Godfrey Daniels Coffeehouse
$30 concert & party with generous refreshments ($17 limited income)
Call 610-691-8730 to make a reservation.
(See page 4 for more info.)

Learn about
The 25% Solution
for cutting Military Spending
Tuesday, October 19
Mike Prokosch speaks
4 pm at Lehigh University
7 pm at Unitarian Universalist Church of L.V.
(See page 1 for more info.)

Veterans Day Observance
Remembering Pennsylvanians Killed in Iraq and Afghanistan
Thursday, November 11
Box Garden Park
8th Ave. & Union Blvd., Bethlehem
Sponsored by L.V. Veterans for Peace