Peace Pole Dedication

Peace is a word. Peace is a way. Peace is a celebration of life.

On Sunday, September 18th, 70 community members welcomed a new peace pole in Bethlehem's Rose Garden Park at 4th Avenue & Union Boulevard.

Concluding a year of LEPOCO 50th anniversary events, the day was opened with inspiring Balinese Gamelan music by the local group, Mekar Sari. The long nesting LEPOCO peace dove emerged and enveloped the crowd several times (piloted by David Rose, Bill Rosebrock, Rick Dow and Dan Schwartz). Deva Vidya then opened the ceremony calling the four directions in the tradition of our land's first people.

The LEPOCO Peace Singers performed “(Last Night I Had) The Strangest Dream” and “If You Want Peace (Work for Justice).” Frances Hendricks read a poem that she had written about peace. Olga Negron, Bethlehem City Councilman, read a Proclamation of Peace signed by Mayor Robert Donchez.

The stars of the day were eight community members representing the heritage of the eight languages proclaiming, “May Peace Prevail on Earth.” These included Naoko Cauller (Japanese), Salim Kassis (Arabic), Susie Ravitz (Lenni Lenape), Yuliana (Russian), Malachi Greene (English), Victoria Alvarez (Spanish), Yok Lai (Chinese), Todd Carpien (Hebrew). Each community member revealed their respective panel on the peace pole, and spoke the words inscribed.

Following the dedication program, 25 people walked with signs for peace, along Union Boulevard and up to the Peace Pole at Moravian College’s campus, then down Main Street and across the Fahy Bridge to the Peace Pole at PBS39/Steel Stacks. At each stop, a song was sung by all and an Ellen Bass poem “Pray For Peace,” was read by Mimi Lang.

It was my honor to M.C. this event. Here are some of my words spoken on that day:

The idea of peace poles has roots going back to Emperor King Ashoka who built the Maurya Empire after brutally conquering most of modern-day India, Pakistan and Afghanistan. In 250 B.C., it is said that King Ashoka had a “change of heart,” dedicated his life to peace and began planting 50-60’ tall stone peace poles across India as well as digging wells and planting trees along roads for the benefit of all people.

In modern times, the Peace Pole Project was championed by Mr. Masahisa Goti of Japan, who was deeply affected by the destruction of World War II and the atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

In 1955, Mr. Goi authored the universal peace message, “May Peace Prevail on Earth.” Today there are over 200,000 peace poles in 190 countries...

I like to think of this Peace Pole right here in Bethlehem as a single point, both infinitely small and infinitely large -- perhaps as a star, if you will, representing a brilliant intention for a consciousness of peace.

In this respect, we are in this moment, the people of Bethlehem -- Pennsylvania, beam out this Peace Pole to all the other Peace Poles around the Earth -- creating a web of brilliant intention, the world over.

In another respect, this Peace Pole represents world cultures coming together.

Our new Peace Pole has eight languages on it, Chinese, Japanese, Russian, Arabic, Hebrew, Spanish, Lenni Lenape and English -- representing eight traditions, or eight different ways of being.

I’m sure, if we look, in each tradition, that peace has a place, that people value peace, that people strive for peace.

And if we look, we may also see that each tradition has its own history of non-peace: there are establishments of war and aggression, there are institutions of slavery and pain, there are practices of injury through ignorance.

Yet, we can choose right now, which aspects of each tradition to carry forward -- to set the intention that we can bring peaceful traditions together and let go of aggression, let go of ignorance...

- Scott Slingerland

An Antidote for the 2016 Election Blues

Sign the United for Peace and Justice “Peace Pledge” at www.unitedforpeace.org/tag/peace-pledge

“Not matter which pro-war candidate is elected to the White House, I pledge to continue organizing for peace. I know that voting alone cannot and will not end the U.S.’s perpetual wars, so I am recommitting myself to nonviolent direct action and movement building.

“I will protest, vigil, lobby, sit-in and take creative action to dismantle the war machine and build a culture of peace with racial, economic and social justice that redirects the billions spent by the Pentagon tofund crucial programs for our people, our communities, and our planet.”
Veterans For Peace:
Public Witnesses

The Lehigh Valley Chapter 152 of Veterans For Peace celebrated the International Day of Peace on Wednesday, September 21st, with a peace walk in downtown Allentown. The walk began outside the Zion’s Reformed United Church of Christ, located at 620 Hamilton Street, and then visited several locations in center city (Federal Court House, City Hall, PPL Center, PPL Plaza, and the Lehigh County Government Center). It was a loop walk of about one mile. There were over a dozen participants, and a lot of people on the street for their lunch hour witnessed the walk.

At each location, questions were posed to participants about the practice of nonviolence for their consideration, personal meditation and reflection. At 12 noon, all of the walkers observed a minute of meditation and prayer at the request of the United Nations, to create, with the use of time zones, a worldwide wave of peace on this day.

This walk was a part of the Campaign Nonviolence Week of Actions. Campaign Nonviolence is a long-term grassroots movement for a culture of peace and nonviolence -- free from war, poverty, racism, climate destruction and the epidemic of injustice and violence. The 2016 Campaign Nonviolence Action Week featured 720 marches, rallies, demonstrations, vigils and other events in every U.S. state and 17 countries. Veterans For Peace is an endorsing organization. The local chapter in the Lehigh Valley will be making the walk an annual event.

- Jeffrey Brightbill

Editor’s Note: The Peace Pole Dedication & Walk described on page 1 of this Newsletter was also one of the 720 events held during the Campaign Nonviolence Week of Actions.

VFP Will Observe Veteran’s Day

The Lehigh Valley Chapter of Veterans For Peace will hold their annual Veteran’s Day Vigil on Wednesday, November 11, in Bethlehem’s Rose Garden Park, at the 8th Ave. & Union Blvd., from 9 am to 2 pm. Representations of tombstones bearing the names and information of Pennsylvania members of the military killed in the wars in Afghanistan and in Iraq will be displayed. The members of L.V.-VFP say they especially enjoy the opportunity to talk with students arriving at and leaving Nitschmann Middle School (across the street from the park). You are invited to join them for any part or all of the vigil. Contact Phil Reiss at 610-282-8077, or Vince Stravino at 610-216-8103, for more info.

Book Club

The first Tuesday LEPCO Book Club will meet on November 1, at 6 pm, to discuss “This Is an Uprising: How Nonviolent Revolt Is Shaping the 21st Century,” by Mark Engler & Paul Engler. The meeting will be in the Laros Room, 2nd Floor, Bethlehem Public Library, 11 W. Church St.

In “This Is an Uprising,” the Englers write about a new generation that is unleashing strategic nonviolent action that is shaping public debate and forcing political change. They look at the hidden strategic art behind Occupy, the Arab Spring, #BlackLivesMatter, and more.

On December 6, the group will discuss “Trans Atlantic,” by Colum McCann.

The group has several steady members, but new members are always welcome. For more information contact Mimi Lang at 610-866-2407 or LEPCO at 610-691-8730.

Assist Humanitarian Volunteer Troy Spier

Many readers will remember Troy Spier who spoke for a LEPCO P&P on May 1. Originally from Berks Country, he is currently a doctoral student in Linguistics at Tulane University. In 2015 he volunteered for four months as a humanitarian aid worker in Macedonia and on Lesvos Island, Greece. Since early this year he has been giving presentations (like the one for LEPCO) and working on domestic refugee issues.

Troy now has an opportunity to work from mid-December to mid-January with an NGO in Bekaa Valley, Lebanon, near the Syrian border. He is seeking donations to help him continue this work. Funds raised will be used for direct aid and not for his living expenses. He will report back to those who send donations. Such donations can be made at www.gofundme.com/2spm9w8 or by check to Troy Spier, 204 S. Saratoga St., Apt. 416a, New Orleans, LA 70112.

Newsletter of LEPCO
Lehigh-Pocono Committee of Concern
313 West Fourth Street
Bethlehem, PA 18015
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The LEPCO Newsletter is published eight times a year by the Lehigh-Pocono Committee of Concern, a nonviolent, non-profit organization dedicated to peace in all forms.

Annual dues are:
- Regular Member ............... $35
- Limited Income Member ...... $10
- Household Membership ...... $45
- Supporting Member .......... $75

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

Newsletter Staff: Tom Stinnett, Nancy Tate, Jasmin Maurer.
Thanks to all the people who collate and prepare the newsletter for mailing each month.

LEPCO Steering Committee: Olivia Arena-Miller, Terry Briscoe, Martha Christine, Julius Ivanitsch (co-treasurer), Nancy Johnston, Dan Miller, Jasmin Maurer (ex-officio), Janet Ney, Jim Orben, Susie Ravitz, Scott Slingerland, Tom Stinnett (co-treasurer), Nancy Tate (ex-officio), and Amanda Zaniesienko.
Popcorn/Potluck & Politics

Friday, November 4th, 7 pm
“Rabbit-Proof Fence”

A Popcorn & Politics Film projected on the big screen
at the LEPOCO Peace Center, 313 W. 4th St., (south) Bethlehem.

“Rabbit-Proof Fence” is based on the true story of three young girls who crossed the Australian desert on foot to return to their home, following a government edict in 1931. The edict said that black aboriginal children were to be gathered up and taken to settlements. The captured children were forbidden to speak their native language, forced to abandon their aboriginal heritage, and taught to be culturally white. The film is beautiful and compelling.

Directed by Phillip Noyce. Musical score by Peter Gabriel. 94 minutes. 2002.

*Please bring a snack or beverage to share.*

Sunday, November 20th, 6:30 pm

Cory Fischer-Hoffman

“Understanding Venezuela’s Economic Crisis: What the Media Won’t Tell You”

A LEPOCO Potluck & Politics event at the
Lehigh Valley Friends Meetinghouse, 4116 Bath Pike (Route 512), Bethlehem (18020), ½ mile north of Rt. 22.

Venezuela’s economy is in crisis, but mainstream media fail to explain the nuanced factors that have led to food shortages and hyper-inflation, choosing to blame Venezuela’s socialist experiment. Cory Fischer-Hoffman will talk about the current situation and lead a discussion about long-haul solidarity in this shifting context. Cory Fischer-Hoffman is a media-maker, a scholar and an organizer. She has worked as a solidarity activist and journalist in Venezuela for a decade, has a PhD in Latin American Studies from the University of Albany-SUNY, and is now a post-doctoral fellow of the Mellon Digital Humanities Initiative at Lehigh University.

*Please bring food to share for the Potluck Dinner at 6:30 pm.*

Discussion will start around 7 pm.

Group Theatre Events

Touchstone Theatre is presenting José Torres-Tama in “Aliens, Immigrants, and Other Evildoers,” November 3-6. LEPOCO is ordering a block of tickets for the Sunday, November 6, performance at 2 pm. We will gather at 12:30 pm, at La Lupita, south Bethlehem, for lunch together before the play.

If you would like to be part of this group attendance at “Aliens...,” please call LEPOCO (619-8730) as soon as possible. Tickets will be $17 for the play.

Torres-Tama, born in Ecuador, raised in New York, and currently living in New Orleans, originally created this play after Hurricane Katrina. The recently revised show “addresses the current fires of fear being stoked by political demagogues...” Torres-Tama is passionate about the potential of powerful, dynamic performance art to act as a catalyst for social change.

If you cannot join the LEPOCO group on November 6, but want to attend another performance, please contact Touchstone about tickets at touchstone.org or call 610-867-1689.

Also: LEPOCO is working on a theater party for mid-December around “The Santa-Land Diaries” by humorist David Sedaris, at Civic Theatre, Allentown. Again, contact LEPOCO for more information.

Please Stop to Shop at

LEPOCO Community Shopping Event at
Ten Thousand Villages
904 Lehigh Valley Mall Outdoor Shops, Whitehall
Sunday, November 27, Noon – 5 pm

A great opportunity to learn about this wonderful local fair trade retailer and to support LEPOCO (the beneficiary of a percentage of the net sales during the shopping event).

Thank you Ten Thousand Villages, Lehigh Valley, for so generously sharing your work with local community groups.

Also

There will be Community Shopping Events at Ten Thousand Villages on Monday, November 28, 4-9 pm, benefiting the Nazareth-to-Bethlehem Christmas Peace Pilgrimage, and on Tuesday, November 29, 4-9 pm, benefiting Women For Women International, organized by the Peace & Justice Committee of 1st Presbyterian Church, Allentown.

3 LEPOCO Newsletter / October - November 2016
Farewell to Harley Selkregg —

Harley Selkregg was my friend and comrade. He was a proud LEPOCO member and letter writer to The Morning Call on all things just or unjust (abusingly calling out politicians or government misdeeds, war, and attempts to cut human benefits).

An Allentownian and retired engineer from General Electric, Harley died on August 13th, at the age of 85, at Phoebe Nursing Center, where I last visited him, a day before his passing.

I think what I will remember most for is his dry humor, reserved manner, and love of discussion on all things political and hopeful. He believed in the power of activism. Most of the time I knew him he was well into his senior years, and had physical limitations that prevented him from marching or attending many events.

Over the years he helped get the LEPOCO newsletter out, attended the Annual Dinners, and always donated to his causes: peace campaigns where the better candidate had a chance to win, and especially animal welfare. His companion for his later years, after his wife Mimi died, was Lucky, a golden cocker spaniel.

I’ll let Mike Lawton continue this remembrance.

Harley liked to read Karl Marx. He had a wry sense of humor and was closely attuned to the predations of capitalism. He was always ready to give assistance, monetarily or otherwise, to any friend in need.

He was a generous supporter of LEPOCO for over 25 years.

He loved opera, especially Italian opera. Puccini was his favorite.

He liked old Charlie Chan movies. I had no familiarity with Chan, so I looked him up on Wikipedia. He was a fictional character, an Hawaiian detective in Honolulu described as, “intelligent, heroic, benevolent and honorable...” This sounds like a good description of Harley. Through mean-spirited times, he kept his eyes on the prize - a more just, humane world.

- Kathryn Hoffman & Mike Lawton

Mimi Lang’s Trip to Cuba —

Mimi Lang went to Cuba with a Witness for Peace delegation in May. She reported on her experience in a presentation, “Salsa, Salsa & Slides: Report from a Cuba Delegation,” at her home in Bethlehem. Some 25 or so people attended, filling the living room and spilling out into adjoining spaces.

Mimi’s slides and personal insights, as well as the post-presentation discussion, provided food for thought as well as opportunities for people to say what was on their minds. The attendees could also avail themselves of the always enjoyable socializing and the tasty potluck of finger foods and beverages.

Mimi’s WFP delegation focused mainly on Cuba’s art and culture. Much color, vibrancy, and expressive-

ness was in evidence. There is some evidence as well pointing toward the development of tourism. Some present expressed concern that with the opening up of Cuba to U.S. influence, Cuban art and culture might suffer.

A significant part of Cuba’s limited financial resources is used for education, very much more so per capita than here in the U.S. And medical programs are well developed, with training provided to poor people from around the world.

Some present opined that Cuba’s economic difficulties and the limitations on political freedoms there were due to Cuba being a communist country, one not open to growth. It would seem appropriate for those of us in the Americas Solidarity Group to plan future programs that explore the economic and political dimensions of Cuban society, factoring in the impact of both the U.S. embargo/blockade and the disappearance of the support they had received from the Soviet Union.

- Martin Boksenbaum

This program was part of the “LEPOCO Potluck & Politics” series, also promoted by the Alliance for Sustainable Communities-LV in their “Transitions U” series – the third of a series of LEPOCO presentations on Latin America. We hope increased understanding will arise via the cumulative impact of the series.

Tom Hayden: Presente! —

Tom Hayden died on October 23. As Democracy Now! reported, Tom Hayden spent decades shaping movements against war and for social justice. He was the principal author of the Port Huron Statement, the founding document of SDS (Students for a Democratic Society), and was one of the Chicago 8, convicted for helping to organize protests against the Vietnam War at the Democratic National Convention. Some LEPOCO members will remember when Tom Hayden and Jane Fonda and the national Indochina Peace Campaign (an effort to influence a presidential election against war when George McGovern was the Democratic candidate) came to the Lehigh Valley, speaking to thousands of students at three local colleges.

In May 2015, at least four local activists attended the “Vietnam: The Power of Protest” conference in Washington, DC, where Tom Hayden spoke. “We gathered here to remember the power that we had at one point, the power of the peace movement, and to challenge the Pentagon now on the battlefield of memory. We have to resist their military occupation of our minds and the minds of future generations...”

“What happened at the end of the Vietnam War is that people walked away... Four million students walked away. The military... walked away. The counterculture walked away. We all walked away...”

“It might have been otherwise, if King and Robert Kennedy had not been assassinated. We might have been united, at least for a moment... We might have elected a president. We might have ended a war...”

The entire speech is available at www.democracynow.org.

4 LEPOCO Newsletter / October-November 2016
Discussion of Racism & White Supremacy

Attendees were lucky to get into the room, let alone find a seat, during Northampton Community College’s panel discussion on “Racism & Inequity: Where Do We Go From Here?” The room was packed with students and members of the community coming together to hear this timely and important discussion.

The panel was part of a day of events on October 6, for NCC’s Peace Conference and Cohen Lecture, which brought in white anti-racist activist and educator Tim Wise as its keynote speaker. Wise has written books such as White Like Me: Reflections on Race from a Privileged Son, and Dear White America: Letter to a New Minority.

The panel also featured local educators working on the issue of race in their classrooms and communities including Dr. Denise Francois-Seeley, Dean of Business & Technology Division at NCC; Prof. Kamau Kenyatta of NCC; and Dr. Karen Gaffney of Raritan Valley Community College.

One of the first points that was made by the panel was to make the difference between racial prejudice and white supremacy and racism. All panelists agreed on this, pinpointing the importance of power in the equation that creates racism, as well as the longstanding legacy of white privilege in our country that has left this racism embedded into our very systems, including our education systems.

Both NCC's professors and Dr. Gaffney from Raritan discussed how classrooms can be used to educate on issues of racism, and yet the racism built into our education systems prevents many students of color from succeeding. Although NCC touts a diverse student population, the point was made that higher ups in educational institutions are often white and class-privileged, as well as blind to the needs of their students of color.

The panelists focused on solutions in answering the questions presented to them by moderator Dr. Jim Von Schilling of NCC. One of the biggest take aways was the importance of white people taking ownership in dismantling racism. Wise spoke briefly of needing to find one’s own self-interest in the work, to move past doing it because it was the right thing, but finding out how you’re affected and why it’s important to you.

Professor Kamau Kenyatta had another strong takeaway important to all white people engaged in anti-racism work: that one black person does not speak for the entire diaspora. The work of combating racism is often a challenging and difficult one, and his point reminded the audience of centering an entire identity’s struggle on one person.

This also brought up the point of everyone taking their own collective ownership in this work. Each panelist stressed the need to not put the work of undoing racism on any one person, an example being the election of Barack Obama as president. It isn’t plausible for any one politician or celebrity to do this work for us, but it is on all of us to come together collectively to address the issue of racism.

The panel was a welcome conversation in the Lehigh Valley about the issues of racism and white supremacy. The panelists provided a lot of valuable insight within the context of an academic setting, and raised the call to address these issues wherever we are for the benefit of all of us in this country.

- Jasmin Maurer

Other News from Black Lives Matter

The last issue of the LEPOCO Newsletter in late August carried the recently adopted “LEPOCO Statement on Violence, Policing & the Black Lives Matter Movement.” We failed to mention in that newsletter that the Statement had been adopted by the LEPOCO Monthly Action Meeting on August 8, 2016. And it is important to thank Jasmin Maurer and Barbara Diamond for their hard work in drafting the Statement.

At the October Action Meeting (after discussion at earlier monthly meetings) we endorsed “A Vision for Black Lives: Policy Demands for Black Power, Freedom & Justice,” which had been released in early August by more than 60 organizations under the banner Movement for Black Lives. You are encouraged to read/study the “Vision for Black Lives” which is available at www.m4bl.org. It is a deeply significant document with sections addressing: End the War on Black People; Reparations; Divest-Invest; Economic Justice; Community Control; and Political Power.

It is worth noting that local grappling with the issues of police violence continues. The Bethlehem NAACP held a well-attended forum, “Black Lives Also Matter,” in which community leaders and concerned citizens participated at Bethlehem Town Hall on August 23, and in late September students, faculty and staff at Lehigh University participated in a community forum addressing the police shootings of unarmed black people and the protests that have followed. Professor James Peterson was quoted in a report on the forum as saying, “We need people who are going to get medals for diffusing a conflict as opposed to resolving it with violence.”

 Holiday Open House

Friday, December 2nd, 6-8:30 pm
Saturday & Sunday, December 3rd & 4th
1-4 pm each day
Fair trade crafts & food from around the world,
Buttons, Stickers, Cards, Holiday Cards & 2017 Calendars.
LEPOCO Peace Center

5 LEPOCO Newsletter / October-November 2016
No PennEast Pipeline

Carrying signs that read, "Protect the Water, Defend the Land, Stop PennEast," 200 people gathered on the Delaware River Canal Towpath south of Riegelsville on October 8, for a Walk & Rally to halt the natural gas pipeline proposed to cross that towpath if its proposed 120-mile route through Pennsylvania and New Jersey is approved. On October 8, the walkers crossed the very spot where pipeline moguls want to cut trees and bury their pipe.

Walkers chanted against the pipeline as they moved along the towpath and streets of the small and quiet town where I live. Riegelsville, like dozens of towns and communities, is threatened with the destruction of land, wildlife, and trees; it is threatened with contamination of its drinking water supply and pollution of pristine streams; it is threatened with all the dangers of a 36-inch pipeline carrying natural gas: methane leaks and explosions.

One walker said, "A few people in big oil are going to get very rich, and the rest of us are going to get pollution and destruction." Jeff Tittel of the New Jersey Sierra Club said, "We see this as nothing less than a battle for the future of this beautiful valley."

Thank you to everyone who attended the event including many LEPCO members and friends.

Two future efforts against this pipeline are known.

1) On Sunday, November 13, the New Jersey League of Conservation Voters is leading a hike through a preserve, that would be directly on the pipeline route. Contact Bill Lynch at 908-997-0725 for more info. The hike starts at 1:45 pm, at Prallsville Mills, 33 Risler St., Stockton.

2) The Delaware Riverkeeper Network is organizing a people’s hearing at the national Press Club, in DC, to highlight the abuses of power being inflicted by FERC (the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission) on communities across the U.S. FERC routinely approves pipeline projects like PennEast. The Riverkeeper hearing will take place on Friday, December 2, 11:30 am to 4:30 pm. Contact the Riverkeeper office for more info. at 215-369-1188 or see www.delawareriverkeeper.org.

- Nancy Tate

No Dakota Access Pipeline

In April the Standing Rock Sioux made their stand against the Dakota Access Pipeline. The Pipeline would carry oil from the Bakken oil fields across four states. Not long after tribal leaders established the Sacred Stone Camp, other Native people began traveling to join them until by August, representatives of 280 Native American tribes had joined and international delegations had arrived from throughout the Americas.

News coverage has been light, but we all have heard by now that these nonviolent, often prayerful protectors (not protesters) have faced violence from police and private guards.

Calls are being sought: 1) to North Dakota Gov. Jack Dalrymple (701-328-2200) expressing opposition to the Dakota Access Pipeline and to the violent behavior of police and private guards toward the nonviolent water protectors; and 2) to the White House (202-456-1111) urging Pres. Obama to rescind the Army Corps of Engineers permit for the Dakota Access Pipeline.

Because the encampment is now facing a North Dakota winter, support is needed. You can go to www.ocetisakowincamp.org to learn about the specific requests - everything from horse feed to printer paper. You can make financial donations at that website or send a check to Oceti Sakowin Camp, PO Box 298, Cannon Ball, ND 58228.

Sources: The Hightower Lowdown, October 2016, and The Shalom Report from Rabbi Arthur Waskow, 10/24/16.

No Pipelines

It is worth mentioning that besides the over 100 water protectors arrested in North Dakota so far in October: 23 people were arrested on October 5th at the Virginia governor's mansion demanding protection for Virginia citizens from toxic coal ash, from fracked-gas pipelines, and calling for a commitment to renewable energy solutions. On October 11th, ten activists were arrested for shutting down five tar sands pipelines in four states "to avert climate catastrophe" with one of the five stating, "My love for the beauties of this world is far greater than my love of an easy life." On October 15th an Iowa landowner, who has suffered the violation of eminent domain that is taking her land for the Dakota Access Pipeline, was arrested along with her friend for blocking pipeline company trucks.

Sources: commondreams.org and democracynow.org.

Support LEPCO!

Enclosed are my yearly LEPCO dues of $______
($35 individual; $45 hh; $75 supporter; $10 lim. income)
I am also enclosing an extra donation of $_____.
I would like to support LEPCO's work with a monthly / quarterly pledge of $______
I'm interested in these issues:________________________
________________________
________________________
________________________
________________________

Name ____________________________ Phone # __________________________
Address __________________________
City ____________________________ State __________ Zip _______
email __________________________
Return to: LEPCO Peace Center, 313 W. 4th St.,
Bethlehem, PA 18015, or
Donate through PayPal by going to www.lepoco.org.
Peace Camp 2016

Photos by Susie Ravitz.

1. Members of the yellow group contemplate how to build peace.
2. A member of the Green Group creates a t-shirt to wear for their mock protest.
3. Campers had a great time coming together in larger groups throughout the day.
4. The Rose group poses together for a group photo.
5. Chris Klump led the groups in song through the week.
6. Purple Group is ready to learn about peace and have fun.
7. The Blue Group takes some time to slow down and read.
8. Helper Caitlyn beats the drum.
9. Singing peace, all together now!
Honduras

Amazingly on September 30 the U.S. State Department certified that Honduras had taken effective steps to address human rights concerns in their country. According to an LA Times story in The Morning Call on October 26, Senator Patrick Leahy of Vermont is saying, not so fast. His questions are important as the murder last March of the prominent environmental activist Berta Cáceres remains unresolved and just days after the State Department certification two land-rights activists were assassinated.

Amnesty International has declared Honduras a perilous “no-go zone” for many activists. In September Al issued a 60-page report, “We Are Defending the Land with Our Blood: Defenders of the Land, Territory and Environment in Honduras and Guatemala.” It is important for us to contact our senators and urge their support for Sen. Leahy’s stand. Senators can put a hold on aid to Honduras until human rights concerns are addressed. Such a hold would not affect aid to civil society organizations.

At the same time we need to continue urging our representatives in Congress to support the Berta Cáceres Human Rights in Honduras Act (HR-5474) introduced by Rep. Hank Johnson of Georgia. This act would suspend U.S. security aid to Honduras until human rights violations committed by Honduran security forces end. (See earlier issues of this newsletter and many other sources for more info. on the Berta Cáceres Act.)


Haiti

The ravages of Hurricane Matthew in Haiti killed hundreds of Haitians and left over a million in need of emergency humanitarian assistance. If you want to make donations, Partners in Health, PO Box 996, Frederick, MD 21705-9942 or www.ph.org, is one place to do so. Also, the Quixote Center is taking an innovative approach: “international aid that builds, rather than destroys, local capacity.” Guy Marie Garcon, head agronomist for the Peasant Movement of Gros-Morne, is calling for farmers around his town to, “Bring your bean harvest to town and we will buy it to send to those who have a great need.” The Quixote Center will purchase seeds and provide other assistance for this effort. You can support this effort with designated donations to the Quixote Center, 7307 Baltimore Ave, Suite 214, College Park, MD 20740 or at quixote.org.

Colombia

Those seeking peace in Colombia are persisting in their efforts even after the disheartening defeat of the peace agreement in the October 2 referendum. The agreement would have ended the decades-long war in that country. Within days of the defeated referendum one of the largest marches ever was organized by university students and a 300-mile peace walk arrived in Bogota on October 23rd. The march was led by family members of 12 politicians kidnapped by FARC rebels in 2002 (11 of them were ultimately killed). One of the family members said, “We have walked...to say to our nation, that peace is possible, ...that we have to unite and leave behind our divisions... No more victims. We want peace, and let’s make this agreement now.”

The FOR Peace Presence in Colombia is organizing a tour of the U.S. in November, by members of an Afro-Colombian community that took a stand against the violence that had controlled their lives for over 15 years. In 2014 they transformed their neighborhood into a peace zone. They will visit six cities including New York, November 20-22, under the banner, “Bridging the Americas: Black Lives Matter Everywhere, From Colombia to the U.S.” For more information see www.peacepresence.org.

The graphic above is from the 5th Maine Peace Walk, October 11-26, undertaken out of deep concern about the wars being waged on Mother Earth, ranging from over-fishing, deforestation, and human-caused extinctions, to climate disruption and endless war. For more info. see globalnet@mindspring.com.

Other Acts For Disarmament

♦ On September 26, peace activists went to the Pentagon seeking a meeting with decision-makers for our wars, telling the police they would not leave until they had the meeting. Associated with the National Campaign for Nonviolent Resistance, 21 people from 11 states were arrested for “violating a lawful order.” A court date has been set for November 3.

♦ An International Peoples’ Tribunal on Nuclear Weapons and the Destruction of Human Civilization held in Sydney, Australia, handed down its judgement affirming the illegality of any use or threat to use nuclear weapons and convicting the leaders of nine nuclear-armed states of war crimes, crimes against humanity, crimes against peace, and crimes of threatening, planning and preparing acts which would constitute genocide, ecocide and omnicide on August 16.

♦ A landmark event occurred on August 19, when a UN committee, the innocuously-named Open-Ended Working Group, voted to recommend to the UN General Assembly that it mandate the opening of negotiations in 2017 on a treaty to ban nuclear weapons.

- compiled by Nancy Tate
Thank you to: Ed Liona for spending a full night at LEPOCO rewiring the basement lights to make them safe; Bob Riggs, Steve Kraft & Tom Stinnett who helped office staff collate the August-September issue of this newsletter; Susie Ravitz and Bill Buskirk who carried the LEPOCO banner in the Labor Day (on Sunday) Parade in Bethlehem; Dan Miller, Terry & Sylvia Briscoe, Martha Christine, Sheila Clever, Monica McCaughn, Susie Ravitz, Marcie Lightwood, Rick Weaver, Tom Stinnett, & Nancy Tate for staffing the LEPOCO booth at Bethlehem’s Vegfest on the Greenway (Aug 20); Scott Slingerland, Jasmin Maurer, Diane Dilendik, Giny Schimmel, Amanda Zaniesienko, Kathryn Hoffman, Tom Stinnett, & Nancy Tate who staffed a LEPOCO booth at a very rainy Pride in the Park festival on Aug 21; Tom Stinnett & Nancy Tate who took LEPOCO info. tables to Lehigh University’s Community Expo & Northampton Community College’s Quadfest in late August; and to Dalton Young, Tom Stinnett & Nancy Tate who took the LEPOCO booth to the Peace Fair at Buckingham Friends Meeting in LaHaska, Sept. 17.

Ellen Buck is making really cute all-purpose pouches (with a zipper closure) to raise money for LEPOCO. There are several pouches available at LEPOCO for $5 each. (They were a hit at the P&P film on Oct. 7.) Ellen wants to make more pouches and she needs more zippers (minimum of 10" in length) to complete her project. If you have zippers to share, please give them to Ellen or deliver them to LEPOCO and she will pick them up.

The LEPOCO Garage/Yard Sale on Oct. 15 was a success - lovely weather, a steady flow of shoppers, and hardworking volunteers who made it all happen. A special note of thanks to Mimi Lang for again sharing her ample garage for the sale; to Susie Ravitz for getting the idea going; and to Diane Dilendik for steady direction preparing for, during and after the sale. Over 15 households made donations of items to sell and the following people helped with set-up, staffing and clean-up: Karen Hicks, Dan Miller, Jasmin Maurer, Mary Lou Hatcher, Marcie Lightwood, Rick Weaver, Giny Schimmel, Bill Rosebrock, Rick Dow, Mimi Lang, Diane Dilendik, Nancy Tate and Tom Stinnett. Over $700 was raised for LEPOCO.

On page 7 of this Newsletter you see a lovely collage of photographs from the July 2016 Peace Camp (photographs are by Susie Ravitz and page design by Jasmin Maurer). Many thanks to everyone who made Peace Camp possible. You will note in the “Meetings” box on this page that the first planning meeting for Peace Camp 2017 will take place on January 18. Volunteers welcomed.

On Thurs, Nov. 10, at 5 pm, the film “Salam Neighbor,” will be shown at Lehigh University, Zoellner Arts Center, 420 E. Packer Ave., south Bethlehem. The film documents the experiences of filmmakers Zach Ingrasci and Chris Temple when they lived among 85,000 Syrians in Jordan’s Za’atari refugee camp, seven miles from the Syrian border. Refugee camps like this one are evidence of what the UN Refugee Agency calls the world’s most pressing humanitarian crisis.

On Wed., Nov. 2, at 7:30 pm, a new documentary, “Newtown,” will be shown at the Carmike Theatre in the Promenade Shops, Center Valley. The film presents the real consequences of gun violence through the eyes of families in Newtown, Connecticut, who experienced the tragedy four years ago. It also shows what they are doing to prevent other gun-related tragedies. Contact the theatre for times.

On Friday, August 26, the Social Concerns Committee of the Unitarian Church, Bethlehem, set aside their fourth Friday movie tradition for a discussion of Gerrymandering in Pennsylvania. Barry Kaufman of Common Cause - PA, said, “Elections are being determined before the first vote is cast.” Legislative remedies have been proposed. For more info. see a four-part series in The Press, Bethlehem, and contact Common Cause - PA, or the PA League of Women Voters, both with offices in Harrisburg.

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

Monday, October 31 & Friday, December 2, 11 am each day: Americas Solidarity Group meeting at the LEPOCO Peace Center, Bethlehem.

Tuesdays, November 1 & December 6, 6 pm: LEPOCO Book Group meets at Bethlehem Public Library (see page 2 for more details).

Thursday, November 10, 5 pm: Annual Dinner Planning Committee meeting at the Peace Center.

Mondays, November 14 & December 12, 7 pm: LEPOCO Monthly Action Meeting at the LEPOCO Peace Center. All members & friends are welcome at this business meeting where the organization's activities are discussed.

Sundays, November 13 & December 4, 7 pm: LEPOCO Peace Singers rehearsals at the homes of Nancy Johnston and Barbara Wurth, respectively.

Tuesday, November 15, 11:30 am: Stop the Wars Committee meeting at the Easton Public Market on Northampton St.

Wednesday, January 18, 3:30 pm: LEPOCO Peaceathon Planning Committee meeting at the Peace Center.

Wednesday, January 18, 7 pm: Peace Camp Planning Committee meeting at LEPOCO Peace Center.

Wednesday, January 25, 3:30 pm: L.V. Committee Against State Killing (LV-CASK) Meeting 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 the meetings of any other committees or about any of the meetings listed above, please call LEPOCO at 610-691-8730.

For a regularly updated calendar of events and meetings, see www.lepoco.org.
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Monthly Peace Vigil
4:30 - 5:30 pm
(Second Thursdays)
November 10 & December 8
Our wars continue and expand.
Please help witness for peace.
3rd & Wyandotte Sts., Bethlehem
Contact: Vince Stravino 610-216-8103 or
LEPOCO 610-691-8730

Stand Up & Speak Out!
Saturdays
November 26 & December 31
12 Noon - 2 pm
Protest Horsham
Drone Command Center
(Outside Horsham Air National Guard Station,
Easton & County Line Roads, Horsham, PA)
10:45 am: Carpool from Lehigh Valley
(From Hellertown Park & Ride, Silver Rd.
near intersection of Rt. 412 & I-78)

See Inside for more info:
Fri., Nov. 4, 7 pm, P&P Film
"Rabbit-Proof Fence" (page 3)
Sun., Nov. 6, 12:30 pm, Theatre Event
"Aliens, Immigrants & Evil Doers"
(page 3)
Sun., Nov. 20, 6:30 pm, P&P
"Understanding Venezuela's Economic Crisis" (page 3)
Sun. Nov. 27, 12:5 pm
10,000 Villages (page 3)
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Nazareth-Bethlehem Peace Pilgrimage (see insert)