

## “This Is Our Time”

Only weeks after LEPOCO wound up its 50<sup>th</sup> year observances in September, our world took a turn to the really dark side with the election of November 8, 2016. LEPOCO's Annual Dinner on Saturday, March 18, will feature a speaker whose topic is a hopeful antidote for these times.

Michael McPhearson, current national executive director for Veterans For Peace, based in Saint Louis, will speak on, “Organizing, Resistance & Triumph: This Is Our Time.”

In the Fall 2015 issue of the VFP Newsletter, Michael McPhearson wrote, “Because it is clear that the absence of war is not peace, we must work for world peace by taking part in the global struggle for justice both at home and abroad. To do this we must be leaders in opposing war and militarism and as co-conspirators in the struggle for justice.”

Michael McPhearson began his latest tenure at VFP in 2013, having served in this capacity from 2005 to 2010. In the interim he was the National Coordinator for United for Peace & Justice. He is former co-chair of the Saint Louis-based Don't Shoot Coalition that formed in the aftermath of Michael Brown's police killing death in Ferguson, MO. He also worked closely with the Newark-based People's Organization for Progress and the Saint Louis-centered Organization for Black Struggle.

Growing up in Fayetteville, NC, next to Special Forces headquarters and the 82<sup>nd</sup> Airborne, Michael McPhearson enlisted in the Army Reserve at the age of 17. He was a field artillery officer during Gulf War I and a ROTC Distinguished Military Graduate of Campbell University in Buies Creek, NC. After six years of reserve service and five years of active duty service, he left the military in 1992 as a Captain. He is a perfect example of the veterans who are among our most dedicated and inspiring peace- and justice-makers.

The LEPOCO dinner offers a wonderful evening of scrumptious food, music from the Peace Singers, the Art Raffle drawing (see enclosed raffle ticket form), selections from LEPOCO's peace boutique, and visiting with friends who are dedicated to peace and justice work.

This year's gathering will again be at Wesley United Methodist Church, 2540 Center St., Bethlehem, starting with a social period at 5 pm. Tickets may be ordered in advance from the LEPOCO office (see coupon on this page). No dinner tickets will be available at the door;

program-only tickets will be available at the door. Dinner reservations by Monday, March 13, will be most helpful with planning.

- Nancy Tate

## Hoodie Rally Set for February 26<sup>th</sup>

To mark the five-year anniversary of Trayvon Martin's death, the Metropolitan Community Church of the Lehigh Valley will host a Hoodie Rally on Sunday, February 26, at 2 pm, at the Bethlehem City Hall, Payrow Plaza, at Church and New Sts. The Rally organizers hope this event will help ensure that the legacy of Trayvon Martin and so many victims of social injustice are not forgotten. LEPOCO is a supporting group of this event. You are invited and encouraged to attend.

## LEPOCO Annual Dinner: Saturday, March 18, 2017

Wesley United Methodist Church  
2540 Center St., Bethlehem  
(Social at 5 pm; Dinner at 5:30 pm)

Enclosed is \$ \_\_\_\_\_. Please reserve \_\_\_\_ tickets for:

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_ Mail tickets to:

Address \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_ Hold tickets at door.

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

### Annual Dinner Tickets:

\$35 - Regular Adult; \$75 - Special Supporter;  
\$10 - Limited Income Adult / Child;  
\$10 - Program-only, regular;  
\$5 - Program-only, limited income

Return to: LEPOCO, 313 W. 4<sup>th</sup> St., Bethlehem, PA 18015  
or call 610-691-8730 to confirm your reservation.

# The Pipelines & Our World

On February 1<sup>st</sup>, seventy-six water protectors standing in opposition to the \$3.8 billion Dakota Access Pipeline (DAPL) were arrested in North Dakota after they had established a new protest camp, the Last Child Camp, on historic Sioux treaty land – one of the latest moves to stop DAPL. The pipeline had been halted in early December after months of nonviolent protests including massive encampments by water protectors. At their peak the encampments involved as many as 10,000 people from across the U.S. and from around the world.

Some Lehigh Valley activists joined the encampments in North Dakota and others organized fundraisers and local protests supporting the water protectors.

The new administration in Washington, DC, has moved quickly to protect Mr. Trump's personal investments in DAPL and to press its "destroy-the-climate" agenda by signing executive orders on January 24, to advance both DAPL and the Keystone XL pipeline.

The arrests on February 1<sup>st</sup>, are a part of the ongoing resistance to the administration's actions. Another part of that resistance is the effort to get banks to withdraw their financial backing from the project. Thousands of customers have withdrawn deposits from banks like Wells Fargo, TD, and Bank of America. You can join this effort by visiting [www.defunddapl.org](http://www.defunddapl.org).

One opportunity to learn more about the water protectors will take place in Lancaster on Sunday, February 26, at 3 pm, when Mark Clatterbuck, Native American Indian Religion Professor at Montclair State University of New Jersey, will speak about DAPL, for the Lancaster Interchurch Peace Witness, at the Church of the Apostles, 1850 Marietta Ave., Lancaster (17603).

## Don't Give Up

The Conservation Voters of PA reported in January that, "Pennsylvania has more polluted rivers and streams than any other state."

So the Delaware Riverkeeper and many other groups continue the fight to keep this horrible situation from getting worse as they lead opposition to the PennEast Pipeline that will carry fracked natural gas from Luzerne County, through the Lehigh Valley, into New Jersey. This pipeline would endanger even more streams and rivers in our state as it crosses 88 waterways, including our Susquehanna, Lehigh, and Delaware Rivers. The public water supplies of at least two communities, Bethlehem and Riegelsville, would be threatened by the pipeline.

A recent study by Key-Log Economics (January 2017), "Economic Costs of the PennEast Pipeline: Ecosystems Services, Property Value, and the Social Cost of Carbon in Pennsylvania and New Jersey," concludes that, "Adding up all one-time recurring costs, and discounting those future costs to 2017, we estimate that total external costs of PennEast Pipeline to be between \$13.3 and \$56.6 billion." You can read the report at [www.delawareriverkeeper.org](http://www.delawareriverkeeper.org) under "Resources."

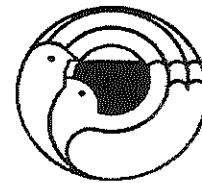
As if to show its economic prowess, PennEast announced in late January that it has been doling out "grants" to all kinds of community groups (some would call these bribes, attempting to quell the opposition to this pipeline). Of course, the true irony is that there is no way the \$410,000 in donations (as helpful as they may be immediately for these needy organizations) would begin to address the environmental damage the pipeline will create, including the possible costs for contamination of the drinking water for thousands and for possible pipeline breaks or fires.

The Delaware Riverkeeper organized a people's hearing at the National Press Club in Washington, DC, on December 2<sup>nd</sup>, where 65 people from 15 states spoke about their "uniformly bad personal and organizational experiences with FERC (Federal Energy Regulatory Commission) that regularly reviews and almost uniformly rubber stamps pipelines like the proposed PennEast project. You can read a report on this important gathering online, written by Ted Glick, entitled, "First-ever National People's Hearing on FERC Held in DC."

In January FERC delayed the final due date for the environmental impact statement for the PennEast Pipeline from February 17 to April 7. The opposition continues.

Just under the wire before the great hiding and denial of environmental damages that we are witnessing with the new administration in Washington, DC, the Environmental Protection Agency issued a report in mid-December that confirmed water contamination from natural gas fracking. The study can be read at [www.epa.gov/hfstudy](http://www.epa.gov/hfstudy).

- Compiled by Nancy Tate



Newsletter of LEPOCO  
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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 .....	\$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, Amanda Zaniesienko.

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

**LEPOCO Steering Committee:** Olivia Arena-Miller, Terry Briscoe, Martha Christine, Julius Iwantsch (co-treasurer), Nancy Johnston, Dan Miller, Janet Ney, Jim Orben, Susie Ravitz, Scott Slingerland, Tom Stinnett (co-treasurer), Nancy Tate (ex-officio), and Amanda Zaniesienko (ex-officio).

## Potluck/Popcorn & Politics

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Sunday, February 19<sup>th</sup>, 6:00 pm

Ted Morgan & Mary Lou Hatcher

*"Vietnam & Cambodia Today: Impressions From Our Recent Travels"*

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

Ted Morgan and Mary Lou Hatcher spent three weeks traveling in Vietnam and Cambodia last month (January 2017). It was their first visit to these countries. Ted has spent his life writing (two books on the 1960s) and teaching at Lehigh University (including courses on, "Social Movements and Legacies of the 1960s" and "Propaganda, Media & American Politics") about the Vietnam anti-war movement (receiving high praise for his work from Bill Moyers when Moyers spoke at Lehigh University in 2015). Now retired as a professor of political science, he participated in the Vietnam anti-war movement and served as a conscientious objector to that war. Mary Lou Hatcher is on the national board of the Friends Committee on National Legislation, is active in the Philadelphia Yearly (Quaker) Meeting and works as a spiritual director at Princeton Seminary.

*Please bring food to share for the Potluck Dinner at 6:00 pm.  
Discussion will start around 6:30 pm.*

Friday, March 3<sup>rd</sup>, 7 pm

*"Merton: A Film Biography"*

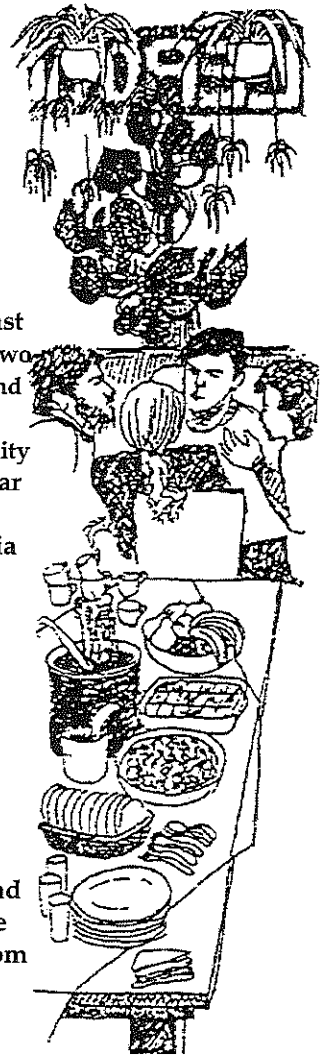
A Popcorn & Politics Film projected on the big screen  
at the LEPOCO Peace Center, 313 W. 4<sup>th</sup> St., (south) Bethlehem.

This film biography of Thomas Merton (1915-1968), the Trappist monk, poet, social activist and student of comparative religion, features interviews with some of those who knew him – the Dalai Lama, Lawrence Ferlinghetti, musician Joan Baez, other monks and friends. Passages from his writings are interwoven with the interviews.

Produced by Paul Wilkes & Audrey L. Glynn. 57 minutes. 1984.

Post-film discussion led by Merton enthusiast, Mimi Lang.

*Please bring a snack or beverage to share.*



## Remembering Berta Cáceres

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March 3, 2017, will be the one-year anniversary of the assassination of Berta Cáceres in Honduras. Berta Cáceres was an indigenous, environmental and human rights leader, recognized internationally for her important work. Her activism immediately before her murder included leading opposition to the Agua Zarca Dam, a project threatening a watershed sacred to the Lenca people. Indignation about her murder has been widespread since March 3, 2016, including the introduction of the Berta Cáceres Human Rights Act in the U.S. House of Representatives by Rep. Hank Johnson of Georgia, in June 2016. It is expected that this legislation will be re-introduced in the new Congress.

The Americas Solidarity Group is planning an event in Easton on Friday, March 3<sup>rd</sup>, to mark the one-year anniversary of Berta Cáceres death. We will urge Rep. Matt Cartwright to support the Berta Cáceres Human Rights in Honduras Act. We will also bring attention to the 123 land and environment activists who have been murdered in Honduras since the 2009 coup in that country. U.S. aid to Honduras has continued since the

coup and international companies are financiers of projects like the Agua Zarca Dam.

If you would like to join the event on March 3, please watch LEPOCO weekly email updates and/or contact the LEPOCO Office at 610-691-8730. The Americas Solidarity Group meets monthly, currently on First Thursdays at noon (bring a brown-bag lunch if you like).

The Mexican environmentalist, Gustavo Castro, the only witness to Berta Cáceres' murder, launched an international criminal complaint against Honduras on January 16, in the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights. Gustavo Castro was injured in the attack that killed Berta, but then he was detained by Honduran authorities for several weeks when he tried to return to his home in Mexico after Berta's murder.

In a related matter, if you would like to visit Honduras, Witness for Peace organizes delegations regularly. Upcoming delegations will be May 25 to June 3 and June 25 to July 5. Contact WFP at [www.witnessforpeace.org](http://www.witnessforpeace.org) or at 202-547-6112.

- Nancy Tate

## Being Present & Counted

On January 18<sup>th</sup>, ten Lehigh Valley women met with one of our local representatives in Congress, Charlie Dent, at his Allentown office for over an hour. I requested the meeting in early December, after feeling that we had to do something about the train wreck lurching toward us all, post election. It seemed a fair idea to alert Rep. Dent to local women's distress, and concern for the well-being of the country's women and families, given our new president's cabinet and senior staff picks.

When I called Sarah Andrew, LEPOCO member and local attorney, she was enthusiastic about representing her concerns for many of her clientele: seniors on Social Security and Medicare. Sarah also had ideas for others to join us. LEPOCO member Martha Christine signed on to talk about climate change, and another member, Karen Hicks, spoke about Planned Parenthood, and reproductive healthcare. Another local advocate for humane immigration policies and treatment gave her thoughts to Charlie and asked for his help. Another experienced local woman spoke about threats to housing programs for lower income families. A professor of physics spoke about threats to science funding. I addressed public education and the terrible choice of Betsy DeVos to be Secretary of Education. We also covered the threats to block grants and to severely cut vital "safety net" programs like food stamps and the Earned Income Tax Credit for working families.

Our group included five college professors/staff. We told Charlie our reasons for finding the president's cabinet choices alarming, and we also asked him about his thoughts on these individuals. He was pretty mild-mannered, as always, but did say he thought some threats, like deporting recipients of DACA (Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals, aka Dreamers), were "unlikely" to happen. One of our group, who works in the immigration rights area, was not as convinced that deportations would not happen. Martha asked Dent to consider being on a House Panel on climate that requires equal membership from both Democrats and Republicans.

We impressed upon Rep. Dent that we think his reputation as a Republican "moderate" and his long-time experience in Congress should help him serve (we hope) as a moderating voice as the new Administration attempts to pass radical and damaging legislation that will hurt so many in our country. We left feeling that we will likely come back to visit Charlie, as events play out in D.C. It was worthwhile to just be present and counted. Why not make an appointment yourself and go with a friend who is a Dent (or Cartwright, or Casey, or, gulp, Toomey) constituent, to give these men, our representatives, your worry, concern, advice?

- Kathryn Hoffman

## The Economic Crisis in Venezuela

The 31 people who attended Cory Fischer-Hoffman's talk on Venezuela were presented with a detailed and compelling analysis of the economic crisis there. Given the title of her talk, "Understanding Venezuela's Economic Crisis: What the Media Won't Tell You," we were not surprised by Cory's ultimate message: the crisis in Venezuela is a result of the workings, and therefore the failings, of global capitalism, not the failure of Venezuela's socialist experiment.

Clearly sympathetic to Venezuela, Cory discussed the economic crisis there from a broad perspective, giving her take on the roots of the economic crisis, the benefits and inherent contradictions of Venezuela's dependence on its oil wealth in the context of global capitalism, as well as the successes and the mistakes of Chavez-Maduro state-level policies.

As packed with information as Cory's presentation was, it was nonetheless an introduction to a very complex subject. What is happening in Venezuela is of great importance for our understanding of change and so merits more study. Consider that it is regarded by some as having demonstrated the most far-reaching process of social transformation of the twenty-first

century thus far, on the one hand, and, on the other, that it is thought to be a key player in the establishment of supportive economic relationships among Latin American nations.

This November 20, 2016, presentation, held at the Lehigh Valley Friends Meetinghouse, started off with another tasty LEPOCO potluck, enabling attendees to come together as a gathering of friends building a community of concern.

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.

This program was part of the "LEPOCO Potluck & Politics" series, also promoted by the Alliance for Sustainable Communities-Lehigh Valley's Transitions U as the fourth in their "LEPOCO Presentations on Latin America" series. It is hoped that increased understanding will arise via the cumulative impact of the series.

- Martin Boksenbaum

# Dancing for Justice & Peace in the Great Darkness

The image of the Statue of Liberty face in hands and crying was an apt one for so many people in the days right after the November election. But oh what an aroused, energized, determined, and peaceful public has been dancing in the great darkness and in the streets since that time. Four days after the election as many as 200 people gathered in Center Square, Easton, chanting, "Love Trumps Hate." And this was only one of the several large gatherings of dismay and commitment to activism that occurred locally on campuses and in public squares in early November.

◆◆ The opposition to DAPL (the Dakota Access Pipeline) captured the country's attention (see page 2 of this newsletter).

◆◆ Rainbow colored umbrellas as "Silent Witness Peacekeepers" appeared at the Metropolitan Community Church of the Lehigh Valley as protection from an anti-LGBT protestor outside the church and training was held for others to become silent witnesses.

◆◆ The rush to make plans to go to the Washington, DC, Women's March became the number one task for many in late November and December. (LEPOCO and others spent hours trying to acquire a reasonably-priced bus for the trip to DC. The effort was to no avail as price-gauging crowd-sourced bus companies made that impossible. The privatization of activism has downsides as does the privatization of other community efforts.) But the spirit of resistance prevailed and we all know well the massive demonstrations that occurred on January 21: over 4 million marchers in the U.S., in 650+ towns and cities; over 300,000 marchers in another 250+ cities around the world.

◆◆ We heard deeply true analysis including Ariel Dorfman (NYT, 12/16/16) and Alwyn Eades (Morning Call, 1/4/17) comparing our election to events in Chile (1970-1973): "Now, America, You Know How Chileans Felt," and "Was Climate Change Survey a Warning to Government Workers?" respectively.

◆◆ JStreet (and others) thanked President Obama and Secretary of State Kerry for their last-minute, but significant abstention in the UN Security Council that allowed the passage of a resolution demanding the cessation of Israeli settlement expansion in the West Bank.

◆◆ Presenting an answer in advance to the new president's Muslim ban in the U.S., hundreds of marchers left Berlin, Germany, on December 26, for a months-long, "Civil March to Aleppo." They will retrace the 2100-mile path many refugees have been forced to walk from Syria to Germany. The marchers, from 15 countries, are carrying white flags to symbolize the struggle for peace, democracy and freedom - describing themselves as a community united against killing.

◆◆ LEPOCO held a moving program of music, readings, and remembrance, that spoke well to our present moment, at St. Luke's Lutheran Church in Allentown, on the very snowy Saturday of Martin Luther King weekend. This followed a walk from the King statue to the church. (Copies of the program, "Remember Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., End War, Racism, Poverty," are still available at LEPOCO.)

◆◆ After the inauguration of our new president the dynamic of activism has changed even more dramatically. Vigils, marches and rallies appear across the country every day. Local examples include the Hijab Solidarity March & Demonstration in Allentown on January 20, women's marches in Bethlehem (2), Riegelsville, Reading and Doylestown, on January 21, campus actions against the Muslim ban, Tuesday rallies at Senator Toomey's Allentown office, a large vigil against the Muslim ban in Easton on January 30...

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## From Wisconsin

Barbara Andrews wrote in her holiday message: "The world has gone crazy and there doesn't seem to be much that I can say that makes sense of anything going on now? I am still trying to temper my anger and astonishment and accept that for many complicated reasons, my strongly held views and values have been repudiated. There is a part of me that wants to hibernate and shut all that craziness out (maybe leave the country!). It all feels so chaotic, but I also know that I have to speak my truth louder no matter what is happening. I just have trouble 'listening' and understanding the 'other side.' What the hell - I was on a list in the seventies so maybe it's time to renew my membership to the 'enemy list.'"

Barbara Andrews was one of the Muhlenberg V in the 1970s -- one of her important actions before she left the Lehigh Valley many years ago. Rumor has it she has become quite involved in activism since the letter above was written in December 2016.

# Challenging Trumpism, Wars & Militarism

Under the theme "Challenging Trumpism, Wars & Militarism," peace activists gathered at American University in Washington, DC, on the Sunday following the Women's March. The speakers included leaders from Americans Friends Service Committee, United for Peace & Justice, Peace & Planet, and Peace Action. Five LEPOCO activists attended. Several points from that discussion are important to consider as we plan our activities under new and difficult conditions. One is that it may be challenging to raise the issues of militarism in the context of this new activism, but it will be very important to do so.

One speaker predicted four years of resistance as the new "America First" policy will lead to our country pulling back from international engagement concurrent with the U.S. taking aggressive unilateral military and economic action against other people and countries. With so many generals in the new cabinet we can expect international solutions will start and end with military solutions. The privileging of war over diplomacy led to failures under President Obama, now we can expect the privileging of militarism to become much worse.

We will need to work to protect the diplomatic successes of recent years including the Iran Nuclear Accord, the U.S.-Cuba Memorandum of Understanding and the Paris Climate Agreement.

We may see our government making alliances with other strongmen leaders like Prime Minister Shinzo Abe of Japan, President Rodrigo Duterte of the Philippines, and President Vladimir Putin of Russia.

Providing an apt image, one speaker said we are in a hall of mirrors with a president who lies out of all sides of his mouth.

Attendees did some brainstorming of action ideas for possible anti-militarism work in this new era. One important point raised was: "Remember to encourage hope." Another was to raise issues like, shouldn't we use the \$1 trillion planned for a nuclear weapons upgrade, for childhood education instead.

## Last Agency Standing: The Pentagon?

William Hartung wrote on February 3<sup>rd</sup>, "At over \$600 billion a year and counting, the Pentagon already receives significantly more than its fair share of federal funds. If President Donald Trump has his way, though, that will prove a sum for pikers and misers. He and his team are now promising that spending on defense and homeland security will increase dramatically in the years to come, even as domestic programs are slashed and entire civilian agencies shuttered.

"The new administration is reportedly considering a plan -- modeled on proposals from the military-industrial-complex-backed Heritage Foundation -- that

would cut a staggering \$10.5 trillion in federal spending over the next decade. The Departments of Energy, Commerce, Transportation, and State might see their budgets slashed to the bone; the Corporation for Public Broadcasting would be privatized; and (though the money involved would amount to chicken feed) the National Endowment for the Arts and for the Humanities would be eliminated altogether. In the meantime, the ranks of the Army and Marines would be expanded, a huge naval buildup would be launched, and a new Star Wars-style missile defense system would be developed -- all at a combined cost of up to \$1 trillion beyond the already munificent current Pentagon plans for that same decade...

"One thing is already clear; this drastic tilt toward yet more Pentagon spending and away from investment in diplomacy abroad and civilian needs at home will only further militarize American society, accelerate inequality, and distort the country's already highly questionable foreign policy. After all, if your military is the only well-funded, well-stocked arm of the government, it's obvious whom you're going to turn to in any crisis..."

You can read Bill Hartung's complete article entitled, "What Happens When All We Have Left Is The Pentagon? Trump's Vision of a Militarized America," at numerous sites online.

## UN Conference on Nuclear Disarmament

On December 3, 2016, the UN General Assembly adopted ground-breaking Resolution 71/71, supported by over 140 countries, calling for the start of negotiations on an international treaty to prohibit and eliminate nuclear weapons, and affirming its decision to hold a High Level Conference on Nuclear Disarmament no later than 2018 to review progress... Such an event carries with it the expectation of deliberations to reach an agreement or agreements on concrete nuclear disarmament measures. (Source: [www.unfoldzero.org](http://www.unfoldzero.org))

## We Refuse to Pay for War!

Anticipating resurgent interest in refusal to pay for abhorrent, discriminatory policies, a group of war tax refusers has created a statement to encourage people to consider war tax resistance and contact the National War Tax Resistance Coordinating Committee for more information. Over 100 people have signed the following statement: "Nearly half of the federal income tax is funding endless war and war preparations. In good conscience, we will not pay this war tax. Some of us live below the taxable income. Many of us who are taxable have chosen to re-direct our refused taxes to organizations that provide for basic human needs. To explore this form of conscientious objection, please contact the National War Tax Resistance Coordinating Committee at [www.nwtrcc.org](http://www.nwtrcc.org) or 800-269-7464 -- for information, literature, counseling, guidance." Copies of the NWTRCC statement are available at LEPOCO.

# LEPOCO's First Tuesday Book Group

## 2017 Reading List

- February 7:** **Beyond Katrina: A Meditation on the Mississippi Gulf Coast**  
6 pm *by Natasha Trethewey*  
Meeting location: Bethlehem Public Library - 11 W. Church St., Bethlehem, PA 18018
- March 7:** **Harvest of Empire: A History of Latinos in America**  
6 pm *by Juan Gonzalez*  
Meeting location: Bethlehem Public Library - 11 W. Church St., Bethlehem, PA 18018
- April 4:** **The Warmth of Other Suns: The Epic Story of America's Great Migration**  
6 pm *by Isabel Wilkerson*  
Meeting location: Bethlehem Public Library - 11 W. Church St., Bethlehem, PA 18018
- May 2:** **The Face of War**  
6 pm *by Martha Gellhorn*  
Meeting location: Bethlehem Public Library - 11 W. Church St., Bethlehem, PA 18018
- June 6:** **The Cellist of Sarajevo**  
6 pm *by Steven Galloway*  
Meeting location: Bethlehem Public Library - 11 W. Church St., Bethlehem, PA 18018
- July 4:** **Being Mortal: Medicine and What Matters in the End**  
6 pm *by Atul Gawande*  
Meeting location: TBA
- September 5:** **The Nordic Theory of Everything: In Search of a Better Life**  
6 pm *by Anu Partanen*  
Meeting location: TBA
- October 3:** **Consequence: A Memoir**  
6 pm *by Eric Fair*  
Meeting location: TBA
- November 7:** **The Fire This Time: A New Generation Speaks about Race**  
6 pm *edited by Jesmyn Ward*  
Meeting location: TBA
- December 5:** **War No More: Three Centuries of American Antiwar and Peace Writing (Library of America #278)**  
6 pm *edited by Lawrence Rosenwald & James Carroll*  
*(This is a very long book. For the Book Group, we will read at least every third author. There are 150 authors in the book.)*  
Meeting location: TBA

You are invited to read one, some, all of these books and join this lively discussion group. Members of the group facilitate the discussion.  
The group does not meet in January and August.

For more information contact Book Group convener, Mimi Lang, 610-866-2407, or the LEPOCO Peace Center, 313 W. 4<sup>th</sup> St., Bethlehem, PA 18015 / 610-691-8730 / [lepoco@fast.net](mailto:lepoco@fast.net) / [www.lepoco.org](http://www.lepoco.org).

# Bits & Pieces

☮ Tom Hayden died on October 23, 2016. A memorial celebration of his life will be held February 19 in Los Angeles. The Nation magazine published his article, "The Forgotten Power of the Vietnam Peace Movement," on January 5. In that article he wrote, "Since the Vietnam War's makers cannot accept responsibility or acknowledge the full truth, those who opposed the war are needed more than ever, to prevent the dimming of memory and to keep history from repeating. We must write our own history, tell our own story, and teach our lessons of Vietnam. We need to understand better why we did what we did and what it meant, not only for those of us who helped to make this history, but also to tease out for the generations to come what lessons might be learned from the legacy that these great upheavals left us. Of one lesson, I have no doubt: Peace and justice movements can make a difference."

☮ "Waging Peace: 100 Years of Action," is an exhibit honoring the centennial of American Friends Service Committee. It will be at the African American Museum (701 Arch St., Philadelphia), through April 23<sup>rd</sup>. The museum is open Thursday-Sunday. Call 215-574-0380 for more information.

☮ SOA Watch gathered over 1000 people at the U.S.-Mexico border in October, taking a stand against militarization of the border and shining a light on the connection between U.S. militarization abroad and the forced migration of thousands who flee North. After the election, SOA Watch returned to the gates of Ft. Benning, Georgia, on the 27<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the 1989 murder in El Salvador of six Jesuit priests, their housekeeper and her daughter. People have gathered at Ft. Benning, home of the School of the Americas (now called the Western Hemisphere Institute for Security Cooperation). Opponents of the participation by SOA graduates in the 1989 murder in El Salvador and other atrocities, have gathered at Ft. Benning every November since 1989. For more information see [www.soaw.org](http://www.soaw.org).

☮ On another sad anniversary, fifteen years since the U.S. opened the Guantánamo Bay (Cuba) detention center, 16 members of Witness Against Torture were arrested for nonviolent protests in the Hart Senate Office Bldg. in Washington, DC.

☮ In his last week in office, President Obama commuted the sentence of Chelsea Manning. She will walk free on May 17. The Bill of Rights Defense Committee wrote, "As a whistleblower, Manning enriched our democracy by making public information about misconduct, including war crimes, carried out by our government. She did so, because she wanted the public to have a more informed, more robust discussion about U.S. foreign policy."

☮ *The task is endless, it's true. But we are here to pursue it... Our task is to find the few principles that will calm the infinite anguish of free souls. We must mend what has been torn apart, make justice imaginable again in a world so obviously unjust, give happiness a meaning once more to peoples poisoned by the misery of the century... The first thing is not to despair.* - Words of wisdom and encouragement, written by Albert Camus in "The Almond Trees," in 1968, and shared in a recent holiday greeting.



## The Troubling Statistics: U.S. Bombs Dropped in 2016 (on All Weapons Platforms)

Syria	12,192
Iraq	12,095
Afghanistan	1,337
Libya	496
Yemen	35
Somalia	14
Pakistan	3
<b>Total</b>	<b>26,172</b>

"In President Obama's last year in office, the United States dropped 26,172 bombs in seven countries (Editor's Note: one every 20 minutes). This estimate is undoubtedly low, considering reliable data is only available for airstrikes in Pakistan, Yemen, Somalia, and Libya, and a single "strike," according to the Pentagon's definition, can involve multiple bombs or munitions. In 2016, the United States dropped 3,028 more bombs—and in one more country, Libya—than in 2015."

— The Council on Foreign Relations

CFS Sources: Estimate based upon Combined Forces Air Component Commander 2011-2016 Airpower Statistics; CJTF-Operation Inherent Resolve Public Affairs Office strike release, December 31, 2016; New America (NA); Long War Journal (LWJ); The Bureau of Investigative Journalism (BIJ); Department of Defense press release; and U.S. Africa Command press release.

Thank you to Women Against Military Madness, Minneapolis, Minnesota, for this graphic.



# Bits & Pieces

Ⓐ Planning for Peace Camp 2017 has begun. The next planning meeting will be Tuesday, March 7, at 4:15 pm at LEPOCO. If you are interested in helping with this year's Peace Camp contact LEPOCO.

Ⓐ LEPOCO's annual Peace-a-thon will be Saturday, May 27. Planning is underway. If you would like to help with the planning or participate contact LEPOCO or watch for a pledge sheet in future mailings.

Ⓐ Since the last issue of the newsletter a lot has happened including two LEPOCO theater parties. On November 6<sup>th</sup>, a group attended "Aliens, Immigrants and Other Evil-doers," performed by José Tores-Tama at Touchstone Theatre. Then in December a group partied at Kathryn Hoffman's home in Allentown before attending a performance of, "Santa-Land Diaries," at the Civic Theatre.

Ⓐ We still have some beautiful wall and book calendars for 2017 at LEPOCO, at a reduced price. Overall the holiday boutique sales were successful, especially Ellen Buck's creative pouches. Thank you to everyone who shopped for peace & justice.

And thank you to our friends at 10,000 Villages in the Lehigh Valley Mall who invited LEPOCO to be part of a community shopping event in late November. Unfortunately, 10,000 Villages will be closing their Lehigh Valley store as of February 25. Everything is on sale until that time.

Ⓐ The Standing Rock Sioux Tribe and tribes across the country invite allies in the U.S. and from around the world to join them for a Native Nations March on Washington, DC, on Friday, March 10, to demand a fair and accurate process for the Dakota Access Pipeline.

Ⓐ Another People's Climate Mobilization is set for Saturday, April 29, in Washington, DC. It will be a March for Climate, Jobs &

Justice. See [www.peoplesclimate.org](http://www.peoplesclimate.org) for more information.

Ⓐ A large group of walkers participated in the Nazareth-to-Bethlehem Christmas Peace Pilgrimage on December 10. Thank you to the planning committee that facilitates this annual event with such precision and grace. And, thank you to all who risk sore muscles and cold noses to make the long walk.

Ⓐ American Friends Service Committee held a March for Humanity on February 4<sup>th</sup>. They called for Sanctuary Everywhere, which they described as "the simple idea that everyday people can come together to keep each other safe. Whether we are welcoming refugees and immigrants, protecting religious groups under attack, working to ensure that Black Lives Matter, or advocating for the rights of LGBTQI people, we will stay unified."

Ⓐ For those who have been trying to call their members of Congress only to find they cannot even leave a message, there are some alternatives: call a local office (not just the DC office); send a fax message; drop by the local office in person and deliver your verbal or written message; send a postcard or a letter (again local offices may be a better destination and postcards will probably have a slight advantage over letters). Heaven knows there will be new reasons everyday to express our concerns to Congress if these first days have given us any indication of what to expect over the next four years.

Also, since the White House has closed the comment line (that charm-

ing volunteer-staffed place where all citizens could call to express their concerns to the White House), some are recommending that people call a Trump hotel or business office instead to leave a message for the president.

Ⓐ A special exhibit of four panels of the AIDS Memorial Quilt will be on display at the Bradbury-Sullivan LGBT Community Center, 522 W. Maple St., Allentown, through March 6. The AIDS Memorial Quilt was the largest community art project in U.S. history. Call 610-437-9988, for the hours.

Ⓐ If you did not hear the speeches at the Women's March in January (whether you were in D.C. or not) you may want to listen to some of the ones that were aired on Democracy Now.org on January 23<sup>rd</sup>. One that stood out was by actress and activist America Ferrera, which began: "I am deeply honored to march with you today... as a woman and as a proud first-generation American born to Honduran immigrants. It's been a heart-rending time to be both a woman and an immigrant in this country. Our dignity, our character, our rights have all been under attack, and a platform of hate and division assumed power yesterday. But the president is not America. His Cabinet is not America. Congress is not America. We are America! And we are here to stay!"

*"We march today for our families and our neighbors, for our future, for the causes we claim and for the causes that claim us. We march today for the moral core of this nation, against which our new president is waging a war..."*

## Support LEPOCO!

- Enclosed are my yearly LEPOCO dues of \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
(\$35 individual; \$45 hh; \$75 supporter; \$10 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. 4<sup>th</sup> St., Bethlehem, PA 18015, or  
Donate through PayPal by going to the "membership" page at [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)

Address Service Requested

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Lehigh Valley, PA



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## Monthly Peace Vigil

(Second Thursdays)

March 9, 4-5 pm  
& April 13, 4:30-5:30 pm

*Our wars continue.*

*Please help witness for peace.*

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

Contact: Vince Stravino 610-216-8103 or  
LEPOCO 610-691-8730

## Stand Up & Speak Out!

Saturdays

March 25 & April 29

12 Noon - 2 pm

*Protest Horsham*

*Drone Command Center*

10:45 am: Carpool from Lehigh Valley

## LEPOCO

### Annual Dinner

Saturday, March 18

Featured Speaker:

**Michael McPhearson**

Wesley United Methodist Church

2540 Center St., Bethlehem

Social at 5 pm; Dinner at 5:30 pm

(See page 1 for reservation coupon)

### Potluck & Politics

Sunday, February 19

Ted Morgan & Mary Lou Hatcher

"Vietnam & Cambodia Today"

(see page 3 for more info.)