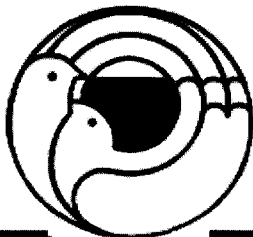


January-February  
2010

Vol. 45 No. 1



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

## "Lifting the 'Peace-a-lujah' Voice" at the Annual Dinner: March 6 —

*It's an act, a kind of performance art, almost a form of religion.*

The New York Times

On Saturday, March 6<sup>th</sup>, at the Cathedral Church of the Nativity (321 Wyandotte St.) in south Bethlehem, the LEPOCO Peace Center will hold its Annual Dinner with Reverend Billy and Savitri D, spiritual leaders of the Church of Life After Shopping, as keynote speakers. Following the recent Supreme Court decision to allow unlimited amounts of corporate dollars to flow into political campaigns, the Rev.'s appearance couldn't be timelier.

The Church of Life After Shopping is a radical performance community using theater, humor, and grassroots organizing to advance individuals and communities toward a more equitable future. They are dedicated to participatory democracy, ecological sustainability, the preservation of vibrant local economies, and the return of free expression to public space -- in short, peace and justice. They pursue these goals through creative resistance to consumerism, militarism and the corporations who profit from these systems.

After several years of writing and producing experimental theater in California, Bill Talen moved to New York City in 1994, where he became an artist in residence at St. Clement's Church. Taking inspiration from such diverse sources as performance artist Andy Kaufman, social critic Lenny Bruce, and author Professor Elaine Pagels (though Talen doesn't cite him, Elvis probably deserves a nod for the hair), Talen developed his street preacher persona in collaboration with Reverend Sidney Lanier. Soon, the Reverend Billy came to life on the sidewalks of Times Square. Opposing the corporate takeover and Disneyfication of the neighborhood, he set up his portable pulpit at the door of the Mouse, the Disney Store. Moral soap operas, also called "Retail Interventions," were staged inside the chain stores, principally Disney, the GAP, Nike, and Starbucks. The satirical preacher was soon accompanied by a choir, and began staging whole "Worships," where unsuspecting shoppers were jolted with passionate sermons and songs decrying the sweatshop exploitative tactics of these corporate entities (if you will, picture the overturning of the money-changers' tables in the temple in ancient Jerusalem). The Reverend's developing theology became the "Church of Life After Shopping," founded on a resistance to consumerism and a defense of independent shops, community gardens, and local economies.

Born in Taos, New Mexico, and living in Brooklyn since 1996, Savitri Durkee a.k.a. Savitri D, is a self-described "freedom fighter and lover of wildness." Appropriately enough, she is also married to the Reverend Billy. Under her direction the Reverend and Church of Life After Shopping have toured in Europe, Africa, South America, and throughout North America.

Bill Talen is the author of two books *What Should I Do if Reverend Billy is in My Store?* and *What Would Jesus Buy?: Fabulous Prayers in the Face of the Shopocalypse*, and is featured in the film *What Would Jesus Buy?* (the P&P First Friday movie last December). He has won the OBIE Award, The Dramalogue Award, the Historic Districts Council's "Preservation" Award (for leading demonstrations to save the Edgar Allan Poe House at 85 W. 3<sup>rd</sup> St.), has been jailed over 50 times, and ran for mayor of New York City as the Green Party candidate in 2009. You can learn more about him at [www.revwilliam.com](http://www.revwilliam.com).

*People look at my act and wonder: Is it politics? Is it art? Is it religion? We do that on purpose, because we're resisting consumerism. We want to share an experience with you. And as soon as you label that, you commoditize it; you make it something to buy. If we're doing our job and resisting consumerism, then people are going to have problems naming what we are.*

- Rev. Billy

### Return Coupon

**LEPOCO Annual Dinner: Saturday, March 6, 2010**

Episcopal Cathedral Church of the Nativity  
321 Wyandotte St., south Bethlehem  
(Pre-dinner music at 5 pm; Dinner at 5:30 pm)

Enclosed is \$ \_\_\_\_\_.

Please reserve \_\_\_\_\_ tickets for:

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_

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

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Zip \_\_\_\_\_

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

Return to: LEPOCO, 313 W. 4<sup>th</sup> St., Bethlehem, PA 18015,  
before 5 pm, Tuesday, March 2, 2010.

### Annual Dinner Tickets:

\$25- Regular Adult; \$50 - Special Supporter;  
\$10- Limited Income Adult / Child;  
\$10 - Program-only, regular; \$5 - Program-only, limited income

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

## Get on the Path

The Reverend Dr. James Forbes, Jr., Pastor Emeritus of Riverside Church in New York City and founder of the Healing of the Nation Foundation was the inspired speaker for the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Christmas Peace Pilgrimage in December. Rev. Forbes is listed in several sources as "one of the twelve best preachers in the English language." He lived up to his reputation with a rousing presentation of hope and encouragement to tired peace walkers and those who came to hear his message.

He began by teaching us the chorus to a rap-like poem he wrote years ago that he updated for our event. It was appropriately titled, "Get on the Road and Stay on the Road." The words stay with me at this writing:

*Get on the path, get on the path, get on the path  
I'll meet you there.  
Get on the path, stay on the path  
God will meet us there.*

Dr. Forbes encouraged us to imagine a world where there are "campgrounds of contentment on the road to peace." We need imagination to reflect what we really want and believe. He advised that we have to avoid the negative images that people cannot change. He asked that we consider how to help people overcome their anxiety and fear, since both of these forestall peace. If we don't believe in peaceful change, it will not happen. One way to model change is for people of peace to become incredibly calm, cool and collected, even in the face of death. To quote Dr. Forbes, "Try to find the nicest way to confront power. Remove your hand from the lion's mouth very gently."

Dr. Forbes invited us to strategize and seek wisdom about how we can have an impact on Afghanistan instead of thinking of it as a graveyard of nations. He used a biblical reference from Revelations to describe each of us as a leaf on a tree of healing. To become instruments of healing for the nation, we have to heal our own weaknesses.

- Mimi Lang

Editor's Note: To hear Dr. Forbes's powerful message, please check [www.youtube.com/rthubarbdoom](http://www.youtube.com/rthubarbdoom) for a link in February.

## Responding to Haiti

There are a multitude of reasons to be concerned about the crisis resulting from the earthquake in Haiti. Obviously the first concern is for getting the immediate aid (food, water, medical care and shelter) to those who need it. There are truly remarkable efforts underway to raise funds for aid and to deliver that aid, but all messages from Haiti are clear: the crisis is so severe that all efforts so far are nowhere near addressing the problems faced by the people of Haiti.

There are many organizations deserving of our support. Here are addresses for three that LEPOCO has found to be especially appropriate in their work in Haiti: 1) Partners in Health, PO Box 845578, Boston MA

02284-5578 or [www.pih.org](http://www.pih.org); 2) Doctors Without Borders, PO Box 5030, Hagerstown, MD 21741 or [www.doctorswithoutborders.org](http://www.doctorswithoutborders.org); 3) The Quixote Center, PO Box 5206, Hyattsville, MD 20782 or [www.quixote.org](http://www.quixote.org).

There is also the need to understand the justice issues around the aid effort, the rebuilding efforts, and Haiti's history. That history has contributed to the dire results of the earthquake. Two organizations that are very helpful in this regard are: 1) TransAfrica Forum, based in Washington, DC. They are calling for "increased coordination and faster, more efficient aid delivery." Learn more at [www.transafricaforum.org](http://www.transafricaforum.org); 2) the Institute for Justice & Democracy in Haiti. They issue action alerts called, "Half-Hour For Haiti." You can sign-up to receive these at [www.ijdh.org](http://www.ijdh.org).

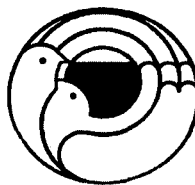
A good way to learn more about this crisis in the justice and history context is to listen to or watch, "Democracy Now," available on-line at [www.democracynow.org](http://www.democracynow.org). The following days had especially enlightening reports about Haiti: January 14, 15, 19, 20, and 21

On January 17, Bill Quigley of the Center for Constitutional Rights wrote in "Ten Things the U.S. Can and Should Do for Haiti": "Decisions have already been made which will militarize the humanitarian relief - but do not allow the victims to be cast as criminals. Do not demonize the people."

Editor's Note: If you would like a copy of Nancy Tate's op-ed "Haiti Needs Aristide, Justice As Well As Disaster Aid," *The Express Times*, 1/22/10, contact LEPOCO.

### Newsletter of LEPOCO

Lehigh-Pocono Committee of Concern  
313 West Fourth Street  
Bethlehem, PA 18015  
phone: 610-691-8730  
fax: 610-691-8904  
website: [www.lepoco.org](http://www.lepoco.org)  
e-mail: [lepoco@fast.net](mailto:lepoco@fast.net)



The LEPOCO Newsletter is published 8 times a year by the Lehigh-Pocono Committee of Concern, a nonviolent, non-profit organization dedicated to peace in all forms.

#### Annual dues are:

Regular Member .....	\$35
Limited Income Member .....	\$ 5
Household Membership .....	\$45
Supporting Member .....	\$75

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

Newsletter Staff: robert Daniels II, Bob Riggs, Tom Stinnett, Nancy Tate, Jeff Vitelli.

Thanks to all the people who staple, fold and label the newsletter each month.

LEPOCO Steering Committee: Addison Bross, Peter Christine, robert Daniels II (ex-officio), Julius Iwantsch (co-treasurer), Ruth Karpinski, Mimi Lang, Michelle Mecham, Janet Ney, Susie Ravitz, Tom Stinnett (co-treasurer), Nancy Tate (ex-officio).

# Popcorn/Potluck & Politics

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Friday, February 5<sup>th</sup>, 7 pm: The Cove

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

This thrilling documentary follows the long path of redemption for former dolphin trainer Ric O'Barry, who brings together a team of diving specialists, electronics experts, and adrenaline junkies, to expose horrible crimes committed in a Japanese fishing village.

A superior piece of filmmaking and activism directed by Louie Psihoyos. 92 minutes. 2009.

*Please bring a snack or beverage to share.*

Friday, February 26<sup>th</sup>, 7 pm:

Split Estate with Catherine Frankenberg

Potluck & Politics at the LEPOCO Peace Center.

Catherine Frankenberg is Program Organizer for the local Clean Water Action office. She will lead a discussion following the screening of Split Estate. The film is an eye-opening examination of the consequences and conflicts that can arise between surface land owners, and those who extract the energy and minerals below. This documentary is of value to anyone wrestling with the implications of natural gas drilling that is apparently entering a boom phase in Pennsylvania. The film is 76 minutes and was released in 2009.

*Please bring some food to share for the potluck dinner at 7 pm.*

*The film and discussion should begin around 7:30 pm.*



## Get Active

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1) Peace Camp 2010 needs your help. Right now we are searching for a convener or co-conveners, and members for the planning committee. New and former participants in Peace Camp are all welcome. An initial planning meeting has been set for Wednesday, February 10, at 3:45 pm, at the LEPOCO Peace Center. Please attend if possible or call 610-691-8730 to express your interest in helping. This is LEPOCO's most important and direct effort to reach young people in the work for peace.

2) The Lehigh Valley Peace Coalition is picking itself up, dusting itself off and preparing to move forward with the all-important effort of collaborating to end the U.S. wars. After a hiatus of four months we will meet against on Thursday, February 4, at 7 pm at the LEPOCO Peace Center. Those active in all fashion of peace groups and individuals who want to work with others are urged to attend. We are approaching 1000 U.S. dead in the Afghanistan war and the seventh anniversary of the war in Iraq. The challenge for finding peace is great. Please consider attending this important meeting.

3) The Lehigh Valley Committee Against State Killing will welcome Ashlee Shelton, of Pennsylvanians for Alternatives to the Death Penalty, to update us on state and national organizing in opposition to the death penalty at our next meeting on Thursday, February 25, at 10 am, at the LEPOCO Peace Center. All those concerned about this issue are urged to attend.

## Steering Committee Nominations

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LEPOCO's Steering Committee plans and provides leadership for the Action Meetings, held the second Monday of the month (these meetings are open to all members and friends of the organization). The Committee makes decisions between monthly meetings and handles finances, personnel, and other organizational issues. The election for this year's Steering Committee will be completed at the Annual Dinner. (See balloting instructions on page 4.)

We want to thank Peter Chrisine and Michelle Mecham for their recent service on the Steering Committee. Peter has been off to college since September and the demands of Michelle's work prevent her from attending the monthly meetings.

The recent amendment to LEPOCO's constitution allows for six to ten people in the at-large Steering Committee positions, hence this year's larger pool of nominees. We believe this larger group will help us better tackle the many issues that LEPOCO needs to address. Once these nominees are approved we will have eight at-large members of the Steering Committee and two co-treasurers.

Among them will be Julius Iwantsch continuing as co-treasurer and Janet Ney and Ruth Karpinski continuing as at-large members, all completing the terms they began in 2009. Please note the line on the ballot where you can note your interest in serving on the Steering Committee or you can suggest another person for this position.

(continued on page 4)

# Steering Committee Nominations

(continued from page 3)

**Addison Bross** of Bethlehem first got involved with LEPOCO in the early 1980s. He is involved in many projects like the writing of Op-eds including a recent one about Glen Beck's January performance, speaking with wisdom at rallies and programs, helping to draft the LEPOCO Statement on Torture, and being involved in the the Committee on the Economic Crisis . He is running for a second term on the Steering Committee. Addison is professor of English Emeritus at Lehigh University and Co-Director of the Peace Studies minor. He is a trained facilitator for "Creating a Culture of Peace" and has helped lead these sessions at Kirkridge.

**Becky Irwin** of Allentown moved to the Lehigh Valley in early 2008 after living outside Washington, DC, where she and her husband raised their two sons. Her interest in peace and justice began in earnest in 2003 when she became alarmed about The Project for the New American Century, a plan for the U.S. military to control most of the world. She has been a regular at LEPOCO events since moving to the Valley, has helped with Peace Camp, co-hosted a lively theater party in October and is a founding member of the LEPOCO Book Club. This would be her inaugural term on the Steering Committee.

**Mimi Lang** of Bethlehem first got involved with LEPOCO in 1987 after walking the Peace Pilgrimage. She is now the LEPOCO representative to the Peace Pilgrimage. Among many other efforts Mimi is active with the Nuclear Abolition Sisters and the Committee on the Economic Crisis, especially their efforts on health care. She has been the facilitator at the Annual Dinner for many years and we want her to publish her poems written for those dinners and other occasions. This will be her second term on the Steering Committee.

Mimi is the Spinal Cord Resource Nurse at Good Shepherd Rehabilitation Hospital in Allentown.

**Ruth Walden** of Bethlehem grew up in Ontario, Canada, and has lived in Bethlehem for two decades. She has two children for whom she was a "stay-at-home Mom." Now she works as an associate teacher at Wilson High School in a special needs class. She has helped at

Peace Camp and is a generous participant in what needs to be done at LEPOCO. She is a member of the Beijing Circle of women meeting at the Episcopal Cathedral Church of the Nativity to discuss, research, and act on issues relevant to the status of women. (The circles were started at the World Conference on Women in 1995.) Ruth is a member of the Lehigh Valley Food Coop and practices yoga. This will be her first term on the Steering Committee.

**Stefan Rogers** of Allentown grew up in Indiana where his parents taught at Manchester College. His interest in peace and justice issues was influenced by the Peace Studies Program at the college and by his activities as a youth in the Church of the Brethren. He attended Juniata College and graduated from Manchester College. He moved to the Lehigh Valley after college and is married to long-time LEPOCO member Sharlee DiMenichi. He has been helpful with various LEPOCO projects. This would be his first term on the Steering Committee.

**Susie Ravitz** of Easton was a founding member of LEPOCO. She is involved in many peace efforts including the L.V. Peace Coalition, the Nuclear Abolition Sisters, and the Committee on the Economic Crisis. She was one of the "Dent Nine," arrested for sitting-in to protest the Iraq war in 2006. She is retired after 22 years as director of the Valley Youth House Shelter and several years of working at Art's Toy Manufacturing Company, Easton. She serves on the Board of Directors for the Easton Area Neighborhood Center and has five children and nine grandchildren living from California to Israel. As a mainstay of the Steering Committee, this will be her sixth term.

**Tom Stinnett** of Riegelsville is a mechanical engineer. He has worked for several companies in the biotechnology equipment field. He's been involved in LEPOCO since 1971 and spent much of 1972 showing "The Automated Air War" slide show to a variety of groups. He served as LEPOCO's treasurer between 1974 and 1983 (BC - before computers), but has been a consultant to subsequent treasurers in computerizing the organization's financial records. Besides his earlier time as treasurer he has served a one-year term as co-treasurer since March 2009 and he is now running for a full term.

## Election Ballot

### At-Large Steering Committee Members (vote for six):

Addison Bross \_\_\_\_  
(2-year term)

Becky Irwin \_\_\_\_  
(2-year term)

Mimi Lang \_\_\_\_  
(2-year term)

Ruth Walden \_\_\_\_  
(2-year term)

Stefan Rogers \_\_\_\_  
(2-year term)

Susie Ravitz \_\_\_\_  
(2-year term)

### Co-Treasurer (vote for one):

Tom Stinnett \_\_\_\_  
(2-year term)

\*\*Please note here if you or anyone you know would be interested in serving on the Steering Committee:

This ballot can be cast at the Annual Dinner on Saturday, March 6, 2010, by 6:15 pm, or by mail to arrive at the LEPOCO Peace Center, 313 W. 4th St., Bethlehem, PA 18015, by Friday, March 5, 2010.

# The Struggle Shared

*Veterans are the light at the tip of the candle, illuminating the way for the whole nation. If veterans can achieve awareness, transformation, understanding, and peace, they can share with the rest of society the realities of war. And they can teach us how to make peace with ourselves and each other, so we can never have to use violence to resolve conflict again.*

- Thich Nhat Hanh

## FUNDS FOR VET ORGANIZING -

Iraq Veterans Against the War (IVAW), turned five years old last summer. While proud of their achievements, the anniversary was no cause for celebration as the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan grind endlessly on. Our military continues to occupy both regions, creating safe havens for corporate interests at unfathomable costs to civilians, while our troops suffer physical, mental and spiritual trauma.

Dr. Ed Tick, author of *War and The Soul*, and founder of "Soldier's Heart," a veterans project of the International Humanities Center, writes about Fort Hood where he had worked with returning troops: There are "massive numbers and degrees of visible and invisible wounds; countless recycling of these wounded for further deployment; ...and untold frustration and despair of dedicated clergy and behavioral staff...."

He goes on, "We must hear this tragedy (the shootings at Fort Hood in December) as a wake-up call to our nation. There is a stress point beyond which all people break.... We must stop pushing our troops and their caregivers so far.... Everyone, including the psychiatrist is a tragic victim here. We must not do more violence by demonizing one person or his religion. Rather let our broken hearts open and realize that all our troops and their caregivers are carrying more pain than is tolerable, more demand than can be answered."

IVAW is seeking to answer part of that demand. While active participation in the national peace movement may have declined since the election of President Obama, membership in IVAW has steadily grown, doubling in size since late 2008. There are 1,800 members, living with the cost of war daily, who are passionately committed to make change happen. As of August 2009, there were four IVAW

5 LEPOCO Newsletter / January-February 2010

Field Organizers providing hands-on guidance to members in 62 chapters across the U.S. A chapter at Ft. Hood, for example, has been working on the issues of mental health treatment, and stopping multiple deployments.

IVAW is now determined to expand their Field Organizing Program in order to: 1) bolster members for a long-term struggle to end wars and occupations; 2) develop direct action campaigns; and, 3) develop leadership to sustain their movement. They need our help.

If you would like to help sponsor a Field Organizer you can contact IVAW at [www.ivaw.org](http://www.ivaw.org), or at 630 9th Ave., Suite 807, New York, NY 10036. To get involved locally with efforts to support Iraq and Afghanistan war vets, you can contact the local Veterans For Peace Chapter at [www.tom.paine152.com](http://www.tom.paine152.com). They meet every second Thursday of the month at 7 pm, at the LEPOCO Peace Center.

## GRANNIES RAGE AGAINST WAR

TOYS - On the morning of December 5th, 2009, as shoppers in the Times Square Toys "R" Us flagship store were going about their hectic rounds, they looked up at the giant ferris wheel in the middle of the store, and saw fifteen women unfurling bright yellow banners, "No More War Toys" and "War Is Not a Game," while singing, "All we are saying is give peace a chance."

The Raging Grannies Peace Brigade launched their latest anti-war campaign in response to the proliferation of obscenely violent toys on shelves this season. Their Times Square action was on the heels of Obama's announcement of a troop escalation in Afghanistan. Barbara Walker, one of the Brigade's founding members, put it in context: "Violence begets violence. These awful toys indoctrinate our young with the concept that war is the preferred tactic

to conduct our foreign policy. Such a mindset emboldens our leaders to supplant peaceful negotiation and diplomacy with bombs and bloodshed. We are trying to eradicate the cancer at its core."

ARLENE GROW, PRESENTE - On December 20, 2009, Arlene Grow, seasoned LEPOCO activist, life-long champion of freedom and justice, and passionate student of the world around her, passed away at the age of 84, in Cedarbrook Nursing Home.

She was born Arlene Sharrer in Springfield Township, Bucks County, on December 9, 1925. She raised four sons from two marriages and was active in the Church of the Brethren in Quakertown. For many years she worked as a layout operator at the former Western Electric plant, and was described as one of the first "Rosie the Riveters." She loved to travel to expand her knowledge of the world, was an avid conversationalist, apparently happiest when surrounded by people she loved, sharing opinions. In her later years she was drawn to LEPOCO, as a place to share and develop her opinions. She was a mainstay of the stimulating discussions of world affairs at our newsletter collating work parties, and a tireless marcher against war and injustice, in Washington, DC, New York City, Philadelphia, and Ft. Benning, as well as at local actions.

Arlene remained, even at her advanced age, one of the most positive, enthusiastic, and determined people in LEPOCO's circle of activists. She spoke lovingly about all of her family members, but was especially proud of her granddaughter Brittany, with whom she travelled to Ft. Benning to protest the School of the Americas. Brittany gave the eulogy at Arlene's funeral services, and spoke of Arlene's passion for learning and sharing knowledge, her commitment to peace and justice in the world, and her love of family. She quoted her grandmother's response to those wondering about her marching for peace in the cold or pouring rain, "What else should I be doing with my time? Sitting around and waiting for something to happen?" She didn't sit around and we are very proud to have known her.

- Jeff Vitelli

# Bits & Pieces

Ⓐ Some local people are joining a **delegation to El Salvador**, March 19-27, to attend the 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Monseñor Romero program, organized by CIS to accompany the Salvadoran people in their struggle for social and economic justice and to build global solidarity. CIS (Center for the Exchange of Solidarity) is the organization with whom the late Joe DeRaymond worked on his many visits to El Salvador. The delegation plans to visit the rural community where a school is being named after Joe. If you want to speak with some of the people planning to join this delegation, or if you would like a registration form, please contact LEPOCO. You can also go to [delegaciones\\_cis@yahoo.com](mailto:delegaciones_cis@yahoo.com) for more info.

Also, this provides another opportunity to make donations to CIS in Joe's memory. Checks can be sent to Los Olivos, CIS, PO Box 76, Westmont, IL 60559-0076, noting that it is for the Joe DeRaymond Memorial Fund.

Ⓐ Saying **"Starve the war, not the nation!"** United for Peace and Justice wrote Jan. 25th: "The war (in Afghanistan) is causing rising civilian casualties and Afghan resentment of foreign forces. 2009 was the worst year since 2001 for Afghan children. Just in the past month, NATO forces killed ten civilians including eight schoolboys in Kunar province, four civilians in Nangarhar province (arousing a 5000-person protest), ten protesters in Helmand province, and four people in

Ghazni province whom the United States said were Taliban, but who the local people said were civilians. The UN reported that 2412 civilians were killed in Afghanistan in 2009, a 14% increase over 2008.

Ⓐ On Jan. 25th, the infamous U.S. Magistrate G. Mallon Faircloth sentenced three human rights advocates to six months in federal prison for carrying a protest against the **School of the Americas** onto the Ft. Benning military base in Georgia last November. The three were Nancy Gwin of Syracuse, NY; Fr. Louie Vitale, of Oakland, CA; and Ken Hayes of Austin, TX. Fr. Vitale had been on a co-defendant with Joe DeRaymond following a similar action in 2005, and carried some of Joe's ashes onto the base during the action this past November. A fourth SOA Watch activist, Michael Walli, a member of the Catholic Worker Movement, refused to appear for the trial and a warrant was issued for his arrest.

Ⓐ April 17-19, **SOA Watch** will host a strategy meeting, legislative training, and a lobby day in Washington, D.C. to build momentum for SOA Watch campaigns. LEPOCO's Americas Solidarity Group plans to attend. If you would be interested in joining this trip to D.C. please contact LEPOCO.

Ⓐ The **Jewish Community Center's** annual **Film Festival** will feature several multicultural programs this year. The films are shown at a variety of venues in the Lehigh Valley starting February 21<sup>st</sup> and running through March 23<sup>rd</sup>. For more info. see [www.allentownjcc.org](http://www.allentownjcc.org).

Ⓐ The Bucks County League of Women Voters has been holding a series of programs about **Marcellus Shale gas drilling**. Another forum is

planned for Wed., Feb. 24, at 9:15 am, at the Bucks County Intermediate Unit, Sandy Ridge Rd., Doylestown Township. A representative from the Delaware Riverkeepers will speak.

Ⓐ **Phyllis Bennis** wrote recently about then-President George H.W. Bush's efforts to get UN support for his invasion of Iraq. Two countries opposed him: Cuba and Yemen. "...no sooner had the Yemini ambassador ...put down his hand than a U.S. diplomat moved to his side, telling him 'that will be the most expensive "no" vote you ever cast.' The remark was picked up on an open UN microphone and immediately broadcast through UN headquarters and soon throughout the world... The message was clear: if you cross us on an issue important to us, you will pay a price... Three days later Washington made good on its threat and cut its entire aid budget to Yemen, an already measly \$70 million." This is still referred to in UN circles as the "Yemen Precedent." She continued, "This week the Obama administration announced plans to send \$70 million in aid to Yemen. But it won't be for medicine, building homes, or job training... The \$70 million will be for 'counter-terrorism' and 'security' purposes..."

"What if the United States had not reprimanded the Yemini government by punishing the entire Yemini population and then largely ignoring the impoverished people for most of two decades? ...twenty years later, things might just be a whole lot different."

## 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 most interested in working on 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.

## Events at Kirkridge

### Retreat & Study Center, near Bangor:

February 12-15: "Creating a Culture of Peace Basic Training" with Janet Chisholm.

February 19-21: Matthew Fox on "The Divine Feminine."

Feb. 26-28: Ysaye Barnwell, "Singing in the African American Tradition."

For more information see [www.kirkridge.org](http://www.kirkridge.org) or call 610-588-1793.

# Bits & Pieces

☮ The **LEPOCO Book Group** will meet on Wed., Feb. 13, at 6 pm, to discuss *Truman* by David McCullough. The group meets at Panera Bread Café, 3301 Bath Pike (Center St.), Bethlehem. For more info., call LEPOCO or Susie Ravitz at 610-253-2522.

☮ Thank you to all those who supported the **LEPOCO Peace Singers** by attending their performance at First Night, Bethlehem, on December 31<sup>st</sup>. And, thank you to the Singers who worked so hard to present an inspiring program.

☮ Over 50 people joined the Nuclear Abolition Sisters for the **reading of Martin Luther King, Jr.'s, "A Declaration of Independence from the War in Vietnam" speech**, on Jan. 17, at the Family YMCA in Easton. Thank you to everyone who participated in the meaningful reading of the speech.

☮ A lively group of protesters greeted the ticket holders arriving for **Glenn Beck's** appearance at The State Theatre in Easton on Jan. 9. One protester told the arriving crowd that they should surrender their Social Security cards before entering the theater since the card is for a government program not approved by Mr. Beck and his supporters. No one gave up their cards. The Beck visit did get some questioning coverage, mainly in The Express-Times, -- news stories, an op-ed by Addison Bross, and a letter by Reggie Regrut.

☮ Many are deeply concerned about the Jan. 21<sup>st</sup> decision by the **U.S. Supreme Court, ruling that corporations are entitled to spend unlimited funds in our elections**. Here are three national groups calling for action to save our country from the dismal fate of further corporate control: [www.FreeSpeechForPeople.org](http://www.FreeSpeechForPeople.org); Public Citizen's [www.dontgetrolled.org](http://www.dontgetrolled.org); and [www.MoveToAmend.org](http://www.MoveToAmend.org). What should we do locally?

☮ **Kathy Mattea** will present "My Coal Journey," on Wed., Feb. 17, at 7:30

pm, at Foy Concert Hall, Moravian College Hurd (south) Campus. This is a one-hour program incorporating stories from her family history and her current advocacy for the environment, with slides and the performance of her songs. Tickets (\$10) can be purchased at [www.lvartsboxoffice.com](http://www.lvartsboxoffice.com) or at the door.

☮ *But I can't stand that word "entitlement." It makes us sound like we're spoiled little brats to want the retirement funds we've already paid for, and the health care that should be our right to have.*

*There's always trillions for war and bank bailouts, but when we come to claim what is ours, all of a sudden the cupboards are bare. If you're concerned about the budget deficit, stop averting your eyes at the price tags dangling from the Pentagon and Wall Street.*

- Matthew Rothschild, editor of *The Progressive* magazine

☮ Emma Cleveland, the staff person for the new **Immigrants' Rights Project of the ACLU of Pennsylvania** has announced an Open House for Thurs., Feb. 11, 5:30-7:30 pm, at William Allen High School, 124 N. 17th St., Allentown. There will be music by the Latin jazz band "Ensemble 7," food, and information about the Project which will feature bilingual workshops, "Know Your Rights." For more info. call 484-350-3767.

☮ There will be a **PICC Immigrant Leadership Training Series** to develop immigrant leaders for a more just and welcoming Pennsylvania. The workshops will be held monthly, having started on Jan. 30, at the Council of Spanish Organization of the Lehigh Valley. Call Hillary Blecker at 215-832-0895 for more info. on future workshops.

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

**Mon., Feb. 1, 11 am:** **Newsletter Planning Committee** meeting at the LEPOCO Peace Center.

**Thurs., Feb. 4, 7 pm:** **Lehigh Valley Peace Coalition** meeting at the LEPOCO Peace Center. (See page 3 for more info.)

**Sat., Feb. 6, 5:30 pm:** **Annual Dinner Planning Committee** food testing meeting at the home of Kathy Hoffman, Allentown.

**Sun., Feb. 7, 7 pm:** **LEPOCO Peace Singers** rehearse at the home of Bob Riggs, Bethlehem.

**Mon., Feb. 8, 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.

**Wed., Feb. 10, 3:45 pm:** **2010 Peace Camp Planning Committee** meeting at the LEPOCO Peace Center. (See page 3 for more info.)

**Thurs., Feb. 11, 6 pm:** **Nuclear Abolition Sisters** meeting at the Olive Branch Restaurant, 355 Broadway, south Bethlehem.

**Thurs., Feb. 11, 7 pm:** **Lehigh Valley Chapter of Veterans for Peace** meeting at the LEPOCO Peace Center.

**Sun., Feb. 21, 7 pm:** **LEPOCO Peace Singers** rehearse at the home of Marcie Lightwood, Bethlehem.

**Tues., Feb. 23, 10 am:** **Bike/Walk-a-thon Planning Committee** meeting at the LEPOCO Peace Center.

**Tues., Feb. 23, 7 pm:** **Americas Solidarity Group** meeting at the LEPOCO Peace Center for a working session on U.S. military bases in Colombia.

**Thurs., Feb. 25, 10 am:** **Lehigh Valley Committee Against State Killing** meeting at the LEPOCO Peace Center with special guest Ashlee Shelton, of Pennsylvanians for Alternatives to the Death Penalty.

**Sun., Feb. 28, 7 pm:** **LEPOCO Peace Singers** rehearse at the home of Ursula Wuerth,

*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 of the Fundraising Committee, the Ad Hoc Committee on the Economic Crisis, the Youth & Militarism/Truth in Recruiting Committee, or the Association of Students Advocating Peace: please call the Peace Center at 610-691-8730. For a regularly updated calendar of events and a schedule of meetings please see [www.lepoco.org](http://www.lepoco.org).*



**Lehigh-Pocono Committee of Concern**

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**See Inside:**

- Page 1  
Annual Dinner
- Page 2  
Peace Pilgrimage  
Haiti
- Page 3  
Popcorn/Potluck  
& Politics  
Get Active  
Steering Committee  
Election
- Page 4  
Steering Committee  
Ballot
- Page 5  
Struggle Shared
- Pages 6 & 7  
Bits & Pieces  
Meetings...
- Insert  
Art Raffle Tickets

**LEPOCO's Annual Dinner**  
**Saturday, March 6, 2010**

**Featured Speakers:**  
**The Rev. Billy & Savitri D.**  
spiritual leaders of the  
Church of Life After Shopping  
**Lifting the "Peace-a-lujah" Voice**  
(see page 1)

**Regular Peace Vigils**  
*Our wars continue. Can you join  
the much-needed witnessing for peace?*

**Bethlehem:**  
4-5 pm, **Second** Thursdays  
3<sup>rd</sup> & Wyandotte Sts., south Bethlehem  
Contact: Vince Stravino 610-216-8103

**Allentown:** Noon-1 pm, Fridays  
Federal Courthouse, 5<sup>th</sup> & Hamilton Sts.  
Contact: Rev. John C. Fowler 610-746-5013

Popcorn & Politics  
**Friday, February 5, 7 pm**  
**"The Cove"**  
Please bring a snack or beverage to share.

Potluck & Politics  
**Friday, February 26, 7 pm**  
**"Split Estate"**  
with Catherine Frankenberg  
Please bring  
some food to share for the potluck dinner.  
(see page 3 for more info.)

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

Sign up for LEPOCO e-mail updates  
by calling 610-691-8730 or  
by writing to [lepoco@fast.net](mailto:lepoco@fast.net)