

Community Coalition for Social Justice
PO Box 160
Morgantown, WV 26507-0160
ccsjwv@hotmail.com
www.ccsjwv.org

UPDATE: 3 AUGUST 2014

MISSION STATEMENT: The Community Coalition for Social Justice is a coalition of organizations and individuals dedicated to promoting the principles of social, environmental, and economic justice and respect for all persons. We oppose discrimination and hate-motivated violence in Morgantown and surrounding communities.

STEERING COMMITTEE MEETING AND MEMBERSHIP: Our next meeting will be at Panera's on Patteson drive on Monday, August 11, at 7:00 p.m. If the weather is nice, we may be meeting outside.

Please send your web site suggestions to Mike Attfield at attfield@comcast.net. Please contact any of the steering committee members to volunteer to help and to share your suggestions for our work or e-mail us at ccsjwv@hotmail.com. Please send items to share with our membership to Barb Howe at barbara.howe@mail.wvu.edu.

PLEASE ALSO REMEMBER TO SEND YOUR DUES - \$10 for individuals and \$25 for organizations – to CCSJ, PO Box 160, Morgantown, WV 26507-0160. We have added PayPal to our website so you can join or donate by credit card if you wish to do that.

SEPTEMBER PROGRAM ON RELIGIOUS DIVERSITY: CCSJ is planning a program on the religious diversity of the Morgantown-area community to be held Tuesday, September 9th, at 7:00 pm at Greater St. Paul AME Church on Beechurst Avenue, next to Stansbury Hall. The speakers confirmed to date are Rev. Georgia Morrow of Greater St. Paul AME Church, Rabbi Joe Hample of Tree of Life Congregation, and Dr. Sumitra Reddy, speaking on Hinduism. We will also be inviting other speakers. Each will speak on two issues related to his/her faith community: "What is your message about social justice and tolerance in your teaching and practice?" And "What does your religion teach about compassion?"

Following the program, we would like to set up an adult interfaith group to visit various congregations throughout the area, following the pattern of a youth interfaith group that has been active in Morgantown. We have already been invited to the Tree of Life Congregation for the harvest festival of Sukkot in October. We hope this will be an opportunity for all of us to learn about the rich diversity of the Morgantown area as reflected in its religious practices.

BUMPER STICKERS FOR SALE: CCSJ has diversity-related bumper stickers for sale. The large ones (Celebrate Diversity and Coexist) are \$3.50 each, the "Olympic circles" one is \$2.00, and the "Teach Peace" one is \$1.50, which includes postage.

If you'd like one, please send a check made payable to CCSJ to PO Box 160, Morgantown, WV 26507-0160, and indicate which one you'd like.

CCSJ PROMOTING TEACHING TOLERANCE MATERIALS: We want to reach out to community groups to see if they are interested in using the Southern Poverty Law Center's Teaching Tolerance materials. These are available free of charge to educators, which can include leaders of youth groups, not just school teachers. Those using the materials could order them online at www.tolerance.org, and we would pay for the postage. If you are interested in this project, please email us at ccsjwv@hotmail.com.

MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR. DAY 2015 CELEBRATION: Our theme for the 2015 celebration on January 19 will be related to the 50th anniversary of the Voting Rights Act of 1965. Please plan to join us at 2:00 pm that day for this annual free event. And please let us know if you'd like to help plan the celebration.

LOCAL NEWS



MORGANTOWN HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION: The next regular meeting of the commission will be Thursday, August 21, at 6:30 p.m. in the Public Safety Building Conference Room on Spruce Street. You can get copies of the agendas and minutes for the commission meetings at <http://www.morgantownwv.gov/government/commissions/human-rights-commission/human-rights-commission-agenda-minutes/>.

Jan Derry, executive director of the Northern West Virginia Center for Independent Living, has succeeded Don Spencer as chair of the commission.

WEST VIRGINIA COUNCIL OF INTERNATIONAL PROGRAMS NEEDS HOSTS FOR VISITING PROFESSIONALS: The West Virginia Council for International Programs (CIP) is looking for people to host 8 visiting professionals from various countries who will be in Morgantown from August 24 to November 22, working at area agencies, auditing WVU classes, and generally learning about life in the U.S. Each person stays with three different hosts for about a month at a time; hosts are volunteers who provide a room, meals, and, sometimes, some transportation for a professional. If you are interested, please contact Christine Titus, chair of the host family committee, at Christine.Titus@hotmail.com or call her at 304-290-0995.

STATE-WIDE NEWS

FAIRNESS WEST VIRGINIA UPDATE ON MARRIAGE EQUALITY: This article was published in the *Charleston Gazette* on July 10, 2014, and is copied here from the Fairness West Virginia web site.

“W.Va., other states await U.S. court decision on marriage equality,” by Kelly Kimble and Jennifer Meinig

“All eyes are on Bostic. At least all eyes with an interest in the issue of marriage equality in North Carolina, South Carolina, Virginia and here at home in the Mountain State.

“The United States Court of Appeals for the Fourth Circuit, which holds appellate jurisdiction over these states, is set to rule on the constitutionality of Virginia’s ban on same-sex marriage in the case of *Bostic v Schaefer*. This decision will definitively shape how each of these states deals with the issue going forward. If the court overturns the ban — and we are optimistic that it will — the decision will mark only the second time that a federal appeals court has declared unconstitutional state laws denying same-sex couples the freedom to marry, or refuse to recognize the out-of-state marriages of same-sex couples.

“What does this mean for the marriage equality case here in West Virginia?

“U.S. District Judge Robert C. Chambers recently took a ‘wait-and-see’ approach in *McGee v Cole*, the marriage equality case pending in West Virginia’s Southern District Court, by ordering that the case before him be stayed pending the Fourth Circuit Court’s decision.

“If Judge Chambers were to rule prior to the *Bostic* decision, his decision would almost certainly be appealed which could further delay the freedom to marry for the thousands of loving, committed same-sex couples who call West Virginia home. By awaiting the Fourth Circuit Court’s analysis, Judge Chambers will be in a better position to issue a ruling that will withstand possible challenges on appeal. We at Fairness West Virginia and the ACLU of West Virginia applaud Judge Chambers for his considerate approach.

“The Fourth Circuit Court is expected to rule on *Bostic* any day this summer. With much anticipation we wait, standing together with the 57,000 LGBT West Virginians and the thousands of other LGBT citizens in North Carolina, South Carolina, and Virginia who simply want their relationships and families to be treated with fairness and respect.

“As we move forward in this fight for equality, we continue to uphold the values that all West Virginians share. We do not tolerate discrimination. We do not accept inequality. We value the Golden Rule of treating others how we’d like to be treated. We remain steadfast in our knowledge and belief that while equality may be limited by the scope of the law, history will favor those who actively seek to break the chains of indifference.

“Kelly J. Kimble chairs the board of Fairness West Virginia, and Jennifer Meinig is executive director of American Civil Liberties Union of West Virginia.”

On July 28th, according to the Freedom to Marry web site (www.freedomtomarry.org/litigation/entry/4thCircuit), “the U.S. Court of Appeals for the 4th Circuit [which includes West Virginia] affirmed a lower court ruling in favor of the freedom to marry, declaring that banning same-sex couples from marriage is unconstitutional. The decision affirmed the February 13 ruling from U.S. District Court Judge Arenda L. Wright Allen in *Bostic v. Schaefer*, where same-sex couples sought the freedom to marry and respect for their marriages legally performed in other states.” The vote was 2-1 in this case.

After the ruling, West Virginia Attorney General Patrick Morrisey asked U.S. District Judge Robert C. Chambers to keep the West Virginia same-sex marriage lawsuit on hold “until a ruling in a similar Virginia case is final and the U.S. Supreme Court reviews it,” according to an article in the *Charleston Gazette* by Kate White on July 30. However, “attorneys for three same-sex couples suing over the state’s ban asked the judge Wednesday to immediately lift the stay, deny Morrisey’s request for a lengthier wait and rule in their favor.”

- See more at: <http://www.wvgazette.com/article/20140730/GZ01/140739971#sthash.GUjwplB0.dpuf>
Stay tuned.

RELIGIOUS HOLY DAYS IN AUGUST 2014

For Native Americans, August marks the season of Wilhoon, the season marking the salmon runs of late summer; the Hopi Snake Dances, marking a sixteen-day ritual of purification; the Stomp Dance, performed by Seminole and other Oklahoma tribes as a time of renewal and purification; the Sun Dance, observed by Plains peoples (Arapaho, Cheyenne, Shoshone, Arikara, Crow, Sioux, and others) as a time of penitence and sacrifice; and the Iroquois Green Corn Ceremony, a time of renewal involving dances, fasting, offerings, and readings from the code of Handsome Lake.

Friday, August 1

- Kamál – Bahá’í - The beginning of the eighth month of the Bahá’í year, meaning “perfection.”
- Lughnassadh [Lammas] – Wicca-The harvest of first fruits, celebrating the harvest of corn and wheat. Wiccan practitioners see this time as a signal of the god Lugh’s decline of strength as the sun rises farther south each day, while the Goddess witnesses this season with sorrow and joy. It is both a somber and celebratory feast day.

Monday, August 4

- Tisha B’Av – Judaism- Beginning at sundown, a solemn day of mourning and fasting for the destruction of the First and Second Temples in Jerusalem, as well as other tragedies in Jewish history that coincide with this date.

Wednesday, August 6

- Feast of the Transfiguration – Christianity (Western and Eastern churches)-Celebrates the manifestation of Jesus’ divinity as God’s Son to his disciples Peter, James, and John on Mount Tabor.

Friday, August 8

- Fravardeghan Days [Muktad] begin – Zoroastrianism-A time of memorializing one’s ancestors in preparation for Nowruz [see August 18], according to Zoroastrians who follow the Shenshai calendar.

Sunday, August 10

- Zhōngyuán Jié [Ghost Festival] – Taoism -According to Chinese Taoist belief, this day is when deceased ancestors visit the homes of the living. Families prepare feasts and set tables with empty chairs so that the living and the dead can share the meal together.
- Narali Purnima or Rakhi or Raksha Bandhan – Hinduism-Celebrating the end of monsoon season, marked by throwing coconuts to Varuna, the sea god. During this festival, girls and women tie amulets on their brothers' wrists for protection against evil.
- Ullambana – Buddhism-A day when Buddhists make offerings to the Triple Gem—the Buddha, the Dharma [teachings], and the Sangha [monastic community]—on behalf of their ancestors.

Friday, August 15

- Assumption of the Virgin Mary – Christianity [Catholic churches]-According to the Catholic Church, this day commemorates how, at the end of her life, Jesus' mother Mary was assumed—body and soul—into heaven, where she intercedes for all believers.
- Dormition of the Theotokos or Most Holy Mother of God – Christianity [Orthodox churches]-According to the Orthodox Church, this day marks Mary's death and resurrection by God, as a sign to all believers of their ultimate destiny.

Monday, August 18

- Nowruz – Zoroastrianism - The start of the New Year for Zoroastrians who follow the Shenshai calendar, beginning the year 1384 AY [After Yazdegird III, the last of the Persian Zoroastrian monarchs].
- Sri Krishna Jayanti or Krishna Janmashtami – Hinduism -A festival celebrating the birth of Krishna, the eighth incarnation of the god Vishnu, whose purpose was to destroy the demon Kansa who was responsible for evil's increase in the world.

Wednesday, August 20

- Asmā' – Bahá'í -The beginning of the ninth month of the Bahá'í year, meaning “names.”

Friday, August 22

- Paryusana or Paryushan Parva begins – Jainism- The beginning of an eight-day festival that is considered a holy convocation by Jains. Believers impose restraints on their daily activities by fasting, meditation, and prayer. The last day of Paryusana is called Samvatsari (Saturday, August 30) and is a solemn occasion for examining one's thoughts and feelings, and for asking forgiveness for offenses committed against others through deeds, words, or thoughts.

Saturday, August 23

- Khordad Sal – Zoroastrianism-The birth anniversary of the prophet Zarathustra (Zoroaster), according to the Shenshai calendar.

Tuesday, August 26

- Festival of Ksitigarbha (Jizō) Bodhisattva – Buddhism-Celebrating Ksitigarbha (Jizō) Bodhisattva, the savior of beings who suffer in the hellish realms, as well as the guardian of expectant mothers, travelers, and deceased children in Japanese culture.

Friday, August 29

- Ganesh Chaturthi – Hinduism-A festival celebrating the birth of Ganesh, the god who removes obstacles and brings luck.

- Das Laxanā Parva begins – Jainism-The Festival of the Ten Virtues, celebrated over ten days by the Digambara Jains, helps believers to recall and practice forgiveness, tenderness or humility, honesty, contentment or purity, truth, self-restraint, austerities, charity, celibacy, and non-attachment.

If you want more information about any of these holy days, please contact UCSF Medical Center Spiritual Care Services at 415-353-1941 (Rev. Dr. Peter Yuichi Clark)

Our thanks to the Council of Religious Leaders of Metropolitan Chicago, the Multifaith Action Society of British Columbia (Canada), BBC's Religion Website, Peel Schools District Board (Mississauga, Ontario, Canada), the Arizona State University Provost's Office, the NCCJ of the Piedmont Triad, and www.interfaithcalendar.org