

Community Coalition for Social Justice
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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, October 13, 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 IS SEPTEMBER 9TH WAS A SUCCESS : Thanks to all who attended our program on religious diversity at Greater St. Paul AME Church. The speakers were Rev. Georgia Morrow of Greater St. Paul AME Church, Rabbi Joe Hample of Tree of Life Congregation, Dr. Sumitra Reddy and Dr. Hota GangaRao speaking on Hinduism, Imam Sohail Chaudhry on Islam, Bradley Wilson on Baha'i, and Julie Brefczynski-Lewis on Buddhism. Belinda Nicholas led us in song, and John Lozier played his harp. Dr. Alex Snow, teaching assistant professor of religious studies at WVU, moderated the discussion. The sign of a successful program is that people want to stay and talk after the formal program, and that certainly happened this time!

We also appreciate the assistance of Glynis Board of West Virginia Public Radio, who interviewed all our speakers. Her story ran on September 11th and then again on the "Inside Appalachia" show. You can find her story at <http://wvpublic.org/post/faith-leaders-morgantown-meet-talk-tolerance>.

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 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. See below for the first invitations.

YOU ARE INVITED TO THE SUKKAH OF PEACE FESTIVAL OCTOBER 10: The Jewish Community extends an invitation to our festive Sukkah of Peace. We will have a veggie potluck outside in the sukkah followed by a Sabbath/holiday service inside the synagogue on Friday October 10 at 6:00 pm at the Tree of Life Congregation, 242 S. High St., Morgantown.

Sukkot (Feast of Booths or Tabernacles) is one of the three biblically based pilgrimage holidays known as the **shalosh regalim**. It is an agricultural festival that originally was considered a thanksgiving for the fruit harvest. Sukkot are hut-like structures that the Jews lived in during the forty years of travel through the wilderness after the exodus from Egypt. As a temporary dwelling, the sukkah also represents the fact that all existence is fragile, and therefore Sukkot is a time to appreciate the shelter of our homes and our bodies.

Please RSVP to Rosa Becker at rebrosalin@gmail.com.

INVITATION TO A CELEBRATION OF DIWALI: The WVU Indian Students Association invites you to the annual "TARANG EVENT" (celebration of Diwali) on October 18th at the WVU Mountainlair ballrooms.

Diwali, Divali, Deepavali, or the Festival of Lights is a five-day Hindu festival and one of the most important days on the Indian cultural calendar. Diwali marks the return of Hindu Lord Rama to his kingdom of Ayodhya after defeating demon king Ravana. Each day has a different focus, and you can get more information at <http://www.diwalicelebrations.net/5days-diwali/index.html>.

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. You can also buy the bumper stickers on September 9th.

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, October 16th, 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/>.

STATE-WIDE NEWS

FAIRNESS WEST VIRGINIA SEEKS GALA SPONSORS: Patrick Folio, chair of the Fairness West Virginia Institute has distributed this information:

"Fairness West Virginia Institute cordially invites sponsors for its 2014 Conference and Gala (C&G) to be held in Charleston on Saturday, November 15! The C&G is The Conference & Gala is West Virginia's LGBT event of the year and this year's celebratory focus will be on how to Bring It Home. From marriage equality to non-discrimination, we're almost there!

"You can get the sponsorship packet at fairnesswv.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/08/Fairness-West-Virginia-Institute%E2%80%99s-2014-Conference-and-Gala-Sponsorship-Packet.pdf. It lists all sponsorship levels, benefits, and terms, advertising rates for the program guide, and regular and student admission rates for each event, including tables for ten at the gala. Your sponsorship will support our education and advocacy on behalf of LGBT West Virginians and inspire our 5,000 supporters and 10,000 Facebook followers all across our wild and wonderful state!

"To sign up as a sponsor or get your sponsorship questions answered, please contact Travis Crum at travis@fairnesswv.org.

“The daytime conference will take place at the Charleston Civic Center beginning at 9 am, and the evening gala will be held at the beautiful West Virginia Culture Center at the State Capitol Complex starting at 6 pm. Our preliminary schedules for both events should be complete by the end of September.”

Beth Littrell, Senior Attorney at the Southern Regional Office of Lambda Legal, will be the closing speaker at the conference and will also be speaking at the gala.

Littrell is the attorney representing Lambda Legal in its lawsuit to overturn the ban on marriage equality in West Virginia. According to Fairness, West Virginia, “The decision in this case is anticipated to come down in the coming months so this keynote will be highly engaging! She has been a lawyer for the past thirteen years, spending every day since graduating law school as a civil rights attorney working to achieve full equality for LGBT people and those living with HIV.”

QUEER FILM FESTIVAL COMING UP: the Appalachian Queer Film Festival is hosting two upcoming screenings of a breakout LGBTQ film.

“**The Campaign Documentary**, directed by Christie Herring, is a potent documentary about the battle to fight California’s Proposition 8 and support the rights of same-sex couples to marry. This film is part of an amazing lineup to be featured at the inaugural Appalachian Queer Film Festival taking place in Lewisburg October 23-26. Fairness West Virginia Institute is a proud sponsor of this unique educational event that will help break down stereotypes and broaden minds throughout West Virginia and Appalachia. We hope you can join us for the celebration!”

The ACLU of West Virginia says there are five reasons to attend this festival:

1. **Internationally acclaimed cinema!** Many of the films at 2014 AQFF premiered at Sundance this year and most will have their WV premiere!
2. **Engage with a diverse community.** An amazing opportunity to join two very disenfranchised groups of people – queer and Appalachians – to have an original conversation about experiences, similarities and working together to make a more tolerant and accepting West Virginia.
3. **Talks with filmmakers!** Following many of the film screenings, the filmmakers will be present to discuss the film and take your questions.
4. **Intellectually stimulating panels!** “A Parents Journey to Acceptance: Raising an LGBTQ Child” will explore the struggles, both familial and social, with raising a child who identifies as LGBTQ in Appalachia on Friday, October 24 at 5:15 p.m. “Queer Film and Activism” will explore the role film can play in creating an activist arm for storytelling and inevitably changing hearts and minds on Saturday, October 26 at 10 a.m.

The ACLU table. Come say hi at our table on Saturday, October 25 at 6 p.m.! Interested in helping out? Contact us at mail@acluwv.org and get involved!



RELIGIOUS HOLY DAYS IN OCTOBER 2014

For Native Americans, October marks the season of the Cherokee Green Corn Ceremony and the season of Xlaaw, the season to put up food for the coming winter.

Thursday, October 2

- Jashan-e Mehregan – Zoroastrianism

A celebratory festival of friendship, righteousness and justice.

Friday, October 3

- Yaum-al-Arafah – Islam

This day is the most important for Muslim pilgrims undertaking the Hajj journey; believers implore Allah for boundless forgiveness and mercy on the plain of 'Arafat, adjacent to the holy city of Mecca.

- Yom Kippur [Day of Atonement] – Judaism

The holiest day of the Jewish year. To reestablish their relationship with God, Jews ask for forgiveness and forgive others [Kol Nidre], and then they can confess their sins and ask for divine forgiveness. Prayer and fasting begin at sundown on this day and continue through the following day.

- Dashara, Vijaya Dashami, or Dussehra – Hinduism

Celebrates the triumph of Durga, the Divine Mother who manifests fierce compassion, over the forces of evil, as well as commemorating Rama's victory over the demon Ravana.

Saturday, October 4

- Feast Day of Saint Francis of Assisi – Christianity

A celebration of the patron saint of animals and ecology and the founder of the Franciscan Roman Catholic religious order, known for its ethic of simplicity and service. Many Christians mark this festival by bringing their animal companions to churches for a blessing.

- Eid al-Adhá – Islam

This three-day festival of sacrifice begins at sundown and is the concluding act of pilgrimage for Muslims; adherents offer sheep, goats, and camels, whose meat is then distributed to the poor.

- Worldwide General Conference begins – Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints

This is the largest worship service for Latter-day Saints (also known as Mormons) and lasts for two days. Conference proceedings are broadcast live over the Internet and through other electronic media.

Sunday, October 5

- World Communion Sunday – Christianity
- Bodhidharma Memorial – Buddhism

This day celebrates the monk (5th – 6th centuries C.E.) who emigrated from India and is credited with transmitting Ch’an [Zen] Buddhism to China.

Wednesday, October 8

- Pavarana – Buddhism

This day is the end of the three-month Vassa or rains retreat observed by Theravadin Buddhist monks.

- Sukkot [Festival of Tabernacles] begins – Judaism

Also known as the Festival of Booths and the Harvest Festival, Jews celebrate this time as a pilgrimage feast and time of thanksgiving. The booths or huts remind Jews of the tents used by the Israelites during their years wandering in the wilderness, as well as the dwellings used by Jewish farmers at harvest time.

Thursday, October 9

- Birth of Gurū Ram Das – Sikhism

This date in the Nanakshahi tradition celebrates the birth of the 4th Sikh gurū (1534 – 1581 C.E.), who is remembered for organizing the structure of Sikh society and for composing a four-stanza hymn that is the basis of many Sikh wedding ceremonies.

- Atmasiddhi Rachna Divas (Creation Day) – Jainism

On this day in 1896, the poet Shrimad Rajchandra-ji (who was a spiritual guide for Mohandas Gandhi) wrote the legendary treatise Shri Atmasiddhi Shastra, which explains the quintessence of Jainism.

Saturday, October 11

- Karwa Chauth – Hinduism

A day of fasting for married women, in which they dress like new brides and offer prayers for the long lives and safety of their husbands. Husbands offer sweets to their spouses at the end of the fast, once the moon is sighted.

Sunday, October 12

- Ghambar Ayathrem – Zoroastrianism [through Thursday, October 16]

This festival celebrates the creation of plants, the sowing of winter crops, and herds' return from pasture.

Monday, October 13

- Nichiren Shonin Memorial – Buddhism

This day celebrates the monk (1222 – 1282 C.E.) who encouraged his followers to devote themselves to the Lotus Sūtra as the exclusive means to enlightenment.

Wednesday, October 15

- Shemini Atzeret [Eighth Day of Assembly] – Judaism

This eighth day of Sukkot [Festival of Tabernacles] features prayers for rain and a good harvest in the coming year. It begins at sundown.

Thursday, October 16

- 'Ilm – Bahá'í

The beginning of the twelfth month of the Bahá'í year, meaning "knowledge."

- Simchat Torah – Judaism

This festival, also known as "Rejoicing with the Law," marks the end of Sukkot and the completion of the Torah reading cycle with the beginning of reading the first book again. Jews celebrate this day by singing, dancing, and marching around the synagogue or temple with Torah scrolls. This festival begins at sundown.

Monday, October 20

- Birth of the Báb — Bahá'í

Anniversary of the birth of the Báb, one of the twin Prophet founders of the Bahá'í faith, in 1819 C.E. His nineteen disciples, known as Letters of the Living, taught his religion throughout 19th century Persia. His shrine is located in Haifa, Israel. Bahá'ís suspend work on this day.

- Installation of the Gurū Granth Sahib – Sikhism

This date in the Nanakshahi tradition celebrates the transmission of the gurūship to the Holy Scriptures (the Gurū Granth Sahib Ji) by the tenth gurū, Gobind Singh Ji.

Thursday, October 23

- Diwali (Deepavali) – Hinduism, Jainism, and Sikhism

The festival of lights and Hinduism's most popular festival. It is dedicated to the Goddess Kali in Bengal and to Lakshmi, the goddess of wealth, in the rest of India. Diwali is also associated with stories of the destruction of evil by the god Vishnu in one of his many forms, as well as with the coronation of Sri Rama. Sweets and gifts are exchanged, and it is a time for cleaning and preparing for the future. This festival is also celebrated by Sikhs and Jains, with this day bearing additional names and significance as shown immediately below.

- Bandi Chhor Divas – Sikhism

Called "the day of the prisoner's release," this festival marks the return of the sixth gurū, Sri Hargobind Ji, and 52 other princes with him to the holy city of Amritsar after being released from detention in 1619 C.E.

- Mahavira Nirvana – Jainism

On this day Jains celebrate that the soul of Lord Mahavir (6th century B.C.E.), the 24th Tirthankara, attained nirvana and release from the cycle of rebirth [moksha].

Friday, October 24

- United Nations Day
- Day of Enlightenment of Lord Gautamswami (Jain New Year) – Jainism

Vikram Samvat 2071 begins. In the early morning of the first day of the new year, Ganadhar Gautamswami, the first disciple of Lord Mahavir, attained absolute enlightenment. Jains begin the new year with the glorification of Lord Gautamswami; and listen with devotion to the nine Stotras holy hymns and with listening to the auspicious Rasa (epical poem) of Gautamswami from their Guru Maharaj.

- Ra's al-Sanat al-Hijriyah: Islamic New Year [First of Muharram] – Islam

Commemorating the migration of the prophet Muhammad and his small band of followers from Mecca to Medina in 622 C.E., in order to escape persecution and to establish the first Muslim community. The Islamic year 1436 begins at sundown.

Tuesday, October 28

- Jnana Panchami – Jainism

On this fifth day of the Jain new year, some believers begin a 36-hour fast and offer prayers and rituals in order to seek right knowledge and transcendent wisdom.

Friday, October 31 Halloween

- Reformation Day– Christianity [Protestant churches]

This day commemorates October 31, 1517 C.E., when Martin Luther nailed his Ninety-Five Theses to the door of the church in Wittenberg, Germany, eventually leading to the Protestant Reformation in Europe. Most Protestant Christian churches will mark this on Sunday, October 26th.

- Samhain – Wicca

Celebration of the Celtic New Year. The dying God returns to the womb of the Goddess in preparation for rebirth at Yule. The souls of ancestors and those who have died during the turning of the past year's wheel are remembered. Vegan Wiccans harvest nuts, the kernels of which symbolize wisdom.

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