

**Community Coalition for Social Justice
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UPDATE: 1 FEBRUARY 2016

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 **Tuesday, February 9, at 6:30 p.m.** We will meet in the back room. All are welcome.

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. You can join or donate by credit card via PayPal on our web site.

MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR., DAY 2016: Thanks to all who came and all who participated. It was a wonderful event, as we celebrated Dr. King's influence around the world through song, speech, and stamps. We had about 77 people on the stage and about 300 in the audience, a great crowd given the very frigid temperatures.

We have already reserved the Met for our 2017 event. We are always looking for ideas for themes and volunteers to be part of this event, so please let us know if you are interested.

FIND US ON FACEBOOK! Just look for "Community Coalition for Social Justice" under "Groups" and become our friend. Thanks to Mike Sharley for being our group "leader."

LOCAL NEWS



MORGANTOWN HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION: The next regular meeting will be Thursday, February 18, 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 www.morgantownwv.gov/government/commissions/human-rights-commission/human-rights-commission-agenda-minutes/.

You can find a calendar of annual human rights observances at www.morgantownwv.gov/wp-content/uploads/Annual-HR-Observances.pdf.

Here are the events for February, which is Black History Month to celebrate black history and African American culture in the United States.

February 1-7: World Interfaith Harmony Week

February 14: Race Relations Day – A day designated by the National Council of Churches in recognition of the importance of interracial relations and learning.

February 15: Susan B. Anthony Day - Birthday of Susan B. Anthony (1820-1906), a pioneer in the Women's Rights Movement.

February 20: World Day of Social Justice – Recognition of the imperative for tackling issues such as poverty, exclusion and unemployment.

WEST VIRGINIA UNIVERSITY COMMUNITY HUMAN RIGHTS FILM FESTIVAL: All are invited to these events in the Gluck Theatre of the WVU Mountainlair. The festival is sponsored by the WVU Division of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion; The City of Morgantown Human Rights Commission; WVU Libraries; WVU Human Rights Film Festival Planning Committee; and WVU Office of Multicultural Programs.

Tuesday, February 2, 7 p.m.: "Blood on the Mountain." Directed by Mari-Lynn Evans. From the producers of "The Appalachians and Coal Country," "Blood on the Mountain" is a searing investigation into the economic and environmental injustices that have resulted from industrial control in West Virginia. This new feature documentary details the struggles of a hard-working, misunderstood people, who have historically faced limited choices and have never benefited fairly from the rich, natural resources of their land.

Tuesday, February 9, 7 p.m.: "15 to Life." Directed by Nadine Pequenezza. Does sentencing a teenager to life without parole serve our society well? The United States is the only country in the world that routinely condemns children to die in prison. This is the story of one of those children, now a young man, seeking a second chance in Florida. At age 15, Kenneth Young received four consecutive life sentences for a series of armed robberies. Now a U.S. Supreme Court decision could set him free.

Tuesday, February 16, 7 p.m.: "MOOZ-Lum." Directed by Qasim Basir. Amid a strict Muslim rearing and a social life he's never had, Tariq enters college confused. New peers, family and mentors help him find his place, but the 9-11 attacks force him to face his past and make the biggest decisions of his life.

Tuesday, March 1, 7 p.m.: "Not My Life." Directed by Robert Bilheimer. "Not My Life" comprehensively depicts the cruel and dehumanizing practices of human trafficking and modern slavery on a global scale. Filmed on five continents, in a dozen countries, "Not My Life" takes viewers into a world where millions of children are exploited through an astonishing array of practices including forced labor, sex tourism, sexual exploitation, and child soldiering.

Tuesday, March 8, 7 p.m. "Oxyana." Directed by Sean Dunne. "Oxyana" is a harrowing front line account of a community in the grips of an epidemic, told through the voices of the addicts, the dealers and all those affected. It is a haunting glimpse into an American nightmare unfolding before our eyes, a cautionary. tale told with raw and unflinching honesty.

For more information, go to diversity.wvu.edu/di/human-rights-film.

“A PLACE AT THE TABLE” EXHIBIT AT MONONGALIA ARTS CENTER: The Proud Students Against Landmines and Cluster Bombs (PSALM), a student group at St. Francis Central Catholic School, will have a display at the Monongalia Arts Center’s Benedum Gallery at 107 High Street, Morgantown, from February 5-27. According to the *Dominion Post*’s story, the display will feature “a sculptural table with hand-painted plates representing the needs of people with disabilities and the efforts being made to meet those needs.” There will also be “photos and other items to educate the public about PSALM’s work.” There will be a reception on Friday, February 5, from 5:30-7:30 p.m. to open the exhibit. The Arts Center is open Monday - Friday, 11:00 a.m. – 7:00 p.m., Saturday, 11:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m., and Sunday, by appointment only, free of charge. For more information, go to www.wvcbl.org.

SCOTTS RUN MUSEUM AND TRAIL CELEBRATES BLACK HISTORY MONTH FEBRUARY 6: Visit the museum in Osage from 10:00 a.m. -1:30 p.m. and then attend the family-friendly program from 2:00-4:30 p.m. at the Jesus Mission Church in Osage. Ilene Evans from Voices from the Earth and the West Virginia Humanities Council will present her living history portrayal of Harriet Tubman and her escape on the Underground Railroad. There will be music by the Flying Colors, and Jeremy Thomas will present a speech by Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. If you attended the CCSJ Martin Luther King, Jr., Day event, you heard the Flying Colors and Jeremy’s presentation. The program is free, but donations are appreciated. For more information, contact Mary Jane Coulter at 304-599-9614.

WVU CENTER FOR BLACK CULTURE AND RESEARCH BLACK HISTORY MONTH EVENTS:

February 4, 7:00-9:00 p.m.: “Conversations with Cops” is an ongoing multicultural program series that seeks to foster positive communication between Morgantown law enforcement and the cultural communities that create WVU. This is an open forum for students to communicate freely and openly with local law enforcement agencies about any pertinent subject. Representatives will be present from the Morgantown Police Department, the WVU University Police, the WV State Police, the Monongalia County Sheriff’s Office, the U.S. Attorney’s Office, and WellWVU’s panel on sexual assault prevention. The event will be moderated by Eric Jordan of the WVU Center for Black Culture & Research and Mariana Matthews of the WVU Peer Advocate Program. This event will take place in the Shenandoah Room of the WVU Mountainlair. FREE PIZZA will be served on a first-come, first-served basis. The program is sponsored by the WVU Office of Multicultural Programs, Morgantown Police Department, WVU University Police, WV State Police, Monongalia County Sheriff’s Office, and U.S. Attorney’s Office. For more information, please email: Jason.Burns@mail.wvu.edu or call: 304-293-0890.

February 10, Center for Black Culture & Research 2nd Annual Music Showcase. A night of great music from student acts! This year acts will work with a house band lead by WVU Graduate Student music director Donnie Lee. Student acts include Mountaineer Idol winner Derrick Ward, nationally known rapper Chris Allen, past Mountaineer Idol winner Ellis Lambert, and many more! This program will take place in the Gluck Theatre of the WVU Mountainlair. No time was posted for this event, so please contact Eric Jordan for more information at 304-293-3390 or email eric.jordan@mail.wvu.edu.

February 15, LAMP Speaker Series. This program will be from 7:00-9:00 p.m. in the WVU Mountainlair Ballrooms. LAMP stands for Leading Afro-American Muslim Professionals. No further information was available.

February 16, 7:00-8:30 p.m.: “The Color of Food: Stories of Race, Resilience and Farming” by Natasha Bowens, farmer and food justice activist. To celebrate Black History Month, the WVU Center for Black Culture and Research and the WVU Food Justice Lab in the Geography Program will spotlight the central role and unique stories of people of color in promoting equity in our food system. Food justice is the concept that all people should have access to affordable, culturally appropriate, and nutritious food for a sustainable healthy life. Ensuring the well-being of farmers, workers, animals, and lands that make up our food system are also key elements of promoting food justice. People of color continue to be the largest population negatively impacted by injustices in our food system. Yet, people of color are also leading movements to make our food system more just. From Dr. Martin Luther King’s explicit vision on food justice, First Lady Michelle Obama’s current initiatives for healthy food, to the Black Panther Party’s free breakfast program to feed children before school (which inspired the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s school breakfast program), people of color continue to be major leaders in reforming the U.S. food system. Natasha Bowens is also an activist playing a pivotal role in the food system and continues to be an inspiration to people through her remarkable work.

Natasha Bowens is an author, beginning farmer and community activist who focuses on building empowerment and community with food and storytelling. Her book *The Color of Food: Stories of Race, Resilience and Farming* is a book the *Foreword Review* calls “a trailblazing look at the past and present of North American farming” through the eyes of farmers of color. Natasha spent the past five years gathering stories and portraits of farmers and food activists from Black, Latina, Asian and Native communities across the country - stories that invite us to dig deep into race, culture and community for a truly sustainable food system. Natasha started The Color of Food in 2010 after exploring race and agriculture on her blog *Brown.Girl.Farming*. and *Grist* magazine. Her work has now garnered national attention such as *The Atlantic*, *Mother Earth News*, *VICE*, *YES! Magazine* and National Public Radio

The program will be in the Rhododendron Room of the WVU Mountainlair and is free and open to the public. For more information, please contact Eric Jordan.

WVU CENTER FOR WOMEN’S AND GENDER STUDIES FIRESIDE CHAT: Center director Dr. Jennifer Orlikoff will give a presentation on February 25 at 4:00 p.m. in WVU’s Elizabeth Moore Hall. This event is free and open to the public. The topic has not yet been announced.

MORGANTOWN INTERFAITH GROUP: This group has been focusing on gun violence. For more information, contact Rev. Monica Styron at mstryon2015@gmail.com.

VOICES OF HUNGER IN WEST VIRGINIA PROJECT FEBRUARY 20: WVU’s School of Public Health and Catholic Charities West Virginia will discuss their photovoice project with Mountaineers who are persistently hungry to better understand the social and environmental conditions that impact the availability and quality of food in Preston and Monongalia counties. The program will be at St. John University Parish, 1481 University Avenue, Morgantown, from 2:00-4:00 p.m. RSVPs are required by February 10 to Dr. Haslyn Hunte at 304-293-0756 or hehunte@hsc.wvu.edu.

EMPTY BOWLS IS FEBRUARY 27: Come fight hunger in Monongalia County and enjoy soup, bread, and cookies at the Hazel and J.W. Ruby Community Center at Mylan Park. For more information and to order tickets, go to www.emptybowlsmon.org.

WEST VIRGINIA FRIENDS OF SYRIAN REFUGEES UPDATE: There was a wonderful positive meeting on January 14th at the First Presbyterian Church to update everyone about the possibility of 150 Syrian refugees being resettled in West Virginia. However, as of January 18, there was no clear information on when or if this would happen. To follow these developments, visit the WV Friends of Syrian Refugees Facebook page.

STATE NEWS

The legislature is in session, and there are some bills of importance to those interested in social justice.

SB 11 and HB 2508 – The West Virginia Freedom of Conscience Protection Act. The purpose of this bill is to “ensure that, in all cases where state action burdens the exercise of religion, strict scrutiny is applied and to provide a claim or defense to a person or persons whose exercise of religion is burdened by state action.” It is pending in the Senate Judiciary Committee and in the House Judiciary Committee.

HB 4012 – West Virginia Religious Freedom Restoration Act. This bill is similar to the one that the Indiana legislature passed last year and that raised so much opposition because it was, according to the *Charleston Gazette’s* January 30, editorial, “designed partly to let fundamentalist business owners refuse service to gays and lesbians.” The goal of the legislation is to “ensure that, in all cases where state action substantially burdens the exercise of religion, strict scrutiny is applied; to provide a claim or defense to a person or persons whose exercise of religion is substantially burdened by state action; including a short title; providing definitions; and addressing applicability construction, remedies and severability.” It has also been referred to the House Judiciary Committee.

The *Charleston Gazette* editorial also included these comments:

“At a rally on the Capitol steps supporting the bill, Allen Whitt of the evangelical Family Policy Council said the law is needed as a shield against ‘sinful and depraved’ behavior.

“All such a law would shield against is prosperity and better quarterly earnings. West Virginia doesn’t need this type of prejudice. Kill the bill.”

- See more at: <http://www.wvgazette.com/gazette-opinion/20160130/gazette-editorial-republicans-anti-business-bill#sthash.e7QZJiJZ.knkBTycH.dpuf>

Delegate Barbara Fleischauer is on the House Judiciary Committee. If you have opinions on these bills, you can contact her at barbaraf@wvhouse.gov or 304-340-3127.

Senators Robert Beach and Kent Leonhardt are Monongalia County representatives on the Senate Judiciary Committee. You can contact Senator Beach at Bob.Beach@wvsenate.gov or 304-357-7919 and Senator Leonhardt at Kent.Leonhardt@wvsenate.gov or 304-357-7827.

FAIRNESS LOBBY DAY IS FEBRUARY 9: Register for this free event at <https://act.myngp.com/Forms/-6089446569455581184>

FEB. 9TH

AGENDA

9AM: REGISTRATION

**9:30AM: LOBBYIST TRAINING
FEAT. JILL RICE, ACLU LOBBYIST**

**10AM: BIPARTISAN PRESS
CONFERENCE & RALLY
FEAT. SENATORS & DELEGATES,
BUSINESS LEADERS AND ALLIES**

**11AM: FAIRNESS WY RECOGNISED IN
HOUSE & SENATE FLOOR SESSIONS**

**FAIRNESS
LOBBY DAY**

RELIGIOUS HOLY DAYS IN FEBRUARY 2016

FROM PETER CLARK

Celebrating Black History Month

The Iroquois Midwinter Ceremony, in which old fires are extinguished and new fires are lit, and the Hopi Holy Cycle, in which the changing of the seasons and the nature of the Hopi sacred universe are celebrated, begin in January and February, but the dates of observance vary by tribe. This month is also known as Buxwlaaks or the season of blowing needles in aboriginal spirituality, in which the wind knocks loose the foliage of frozen evergreens. It marks the approach of the new year.

Tuesday, February 2

- Presentation of Jesus in the Temple – Christianity

Commemorates Mary and Joseph's presentation of the child Jesus at the Temple in Jerusalem, as required by Mosaic law.

- Imbolc [also known as the Feast of Torches or Lughnassad] – Wicca

A celebration of beginning growth and the divine generative powers (i.e., the Goddess nurturing her young Son) from which physical and spiritual harvests will come, Imbolc is often an initiatory period.

Wednesday, February 3

- Setsunbun-sai – Shintō

A family celebration of the end of winter; beans are thrown into rooms of a house for good luck, with the shout, "Devils out, Fortune in!"

Sunday, February 7

- Mulk – Bahá'í

Beginning of the eighteenth month of the Bahá'í year, the name “Mulk” means “dominion.”

- Four Chaplains Sunday – Interfaith

A commemoration of four U.S. Army chaplains—Rabbi Alexander D. Goode, Rev. George L. Fox, Fr. John P. Washington, and Rev. Clark V. Poling—who died while saving soldiers from drowning when their troop transport ship, the U.S.A.T. *Dorchester*, was torpedoed by a Nazi U-boat in 1943. The four chaplains are remembered for their courage and their spirit of interfaith collaboration in service to humanity.

Monday, February 8

- Chinese / Vietnamese / Korean New Year – Buddhism / Confucianism / Taoism

The first day after the new moon is a religious and cultural festival for Korean, Vietnamese, and Chinese persons, marking the first day of the year 4714, the Year of the Monkey.

- Parinirvana – Buddhism

Some Mahāyāna Buddhist traditions mark this date as the anniversary of the historical Buddha's death in ca. 486 B.C.E. and his subsequent entrance into enlightenment or Nirvana. Other Buddhist schools mark this event on February 15th (see below).

Tuesday, February 9

- Losar [Tibetan New Year] – Buddhism

Celebrating the beginning of the year 2143 in the Tibetan calendar.

Wednesday, February 10

- Ash Wednesday – Christianity (Western churches)

The beginning of Lent, a forty-day period (excluding Sundays) in which Christians pray, repent, fast and reflect on Jesus' final journey to Jerusalem. It is a preparatory period for Holy Week and Easter; on this day, believers often receive an ashen cross on their foreheads to mark their repentance and mortality.

Friday, February 12

- Vasanta Panchami – Hinduism

A North Indian celebration associated with Saraswati, the goddess of learning, and with Lakshmi, the goddess of wealth.

Sunday, February 14

- Valentine’s Day – Western Christianity

A celebration of love originally connected to the Roman Christian martyr who died in 269 C.E.

Monday, February 15

- Nirvana Day – Buddhism

In northern Buddhist traditions, this day marks the anniversary of the historical Buddha’s death in ca. 486 B.C.E. and his subsequent entrance into enlightenment or Nirvana. In southern Buddhist traditions, the Buddha’s death is commemorated during Visakha.

Friday, February 19

- Birthday of Kwan Yin Bodhisattva – Buddhism [Mahayana Pure Land tradition]

A celebration of the birth of the bodhisattva of compassion—an enlightened being who vows to attain final, supreme enlightenment in order to save all sentient beings from suffering. In the Pure Land tradition, this bodhisattva frequently accompanies Amida Buddha in icons and other depictions.

Monday, February 22

- Magha Puja Day [Dharma Day] – Buddhism

In the Theravada Buddhist tradition, this full moon day of the third lunar month marks the historical Buddha’s sermon at Veruvana Monastery in the city of Rajagaha, where he spoke to 1250 enlightened monks who were ordained by him.

Thursday, February 25

- Ayyám-i-Há – Bahá’í [through February 29]

Starting at sundown, this festival marks the beginning of the intercalary days for festivities, gift giving, and charitable actions.

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, the Anti-Defamation League, Project Interfaith (Omaha, NE), the University of Victoria Faculty of Law (British Columbia, Canada), and www.interfaithcalendar.org

To subscribe to this calendar and sync it with your Google, Outlook, or iCal calendars, visit <http://ucsfspiritcare.org> and select the “Resources” menu