

**Community Coalition for Social Justice
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Update: 12 March 2005

I. CCSJ PROJECTS

Next Steering Committee Meeting - Wednesday, March 16, 7:15 p.m., Public Safety Building Conference Room, Spruce Street. Please contact our secretary, Suzanne Gosden, at suzanne.gosden@mail.wvu.edu or our president, Tim Hairston, at questz1@adelphia.net if you have issues for the steering committee to consider.

County Human Rights Commission

If you are interested in exploring this idea for Monongalia County, please contact Suzanne Gosden, Barb Howe at barbara.howe@mail.wvu.edu, or Al Anderson at 328-5002. We would have to show a need for such a group, as well as a structure, how this would work with the state human rights commission, etc. - including how a government body would differ from a not-for-profit group like CCSJ.

Economic Justice-Social Security

Dave Cormier of the WVU Institute for Labor Studies has asked if we would like to host a forum on social security issues. Please contact Barb Howe if you are interested in such a program.

Library Books Update

Mike Attfield is updating our library books/videos brochure to include the materials on economic justice that were purchased last year and the materials that the Clay-Battelle and Clinton District libraries have finished purchasing under the Appalachian Community Fund grant. We have allocated \$700 for this year, including \$400 from the Appalachian Community Fund, to offer books to Head Start, PERC (Parents Resource Education Center, for parents of children with disabilities), and public schools this year.

Outreach

We had a table at the Native American Studies Program event on March 1 as part of that group's "environmental organizations" fair.

II. PLEASE SEND YOUR DUES AND IDEAS!

Please send your dues so that we have the resources to continue our work. We use your money to purchase books for local schools, for instance. **Dues are \$5 for individuals and \$25 for organizations.** Youth under the age of 18 are free. Please send your checks, payable to CCSJ, to PO Box 160, Morgantown, WV 26507-0160.

Please send your web site suggestions to Mike Attfield at attfield@labyrinth.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.

Deadline for items to include in next Update will be March 31. Please send items to share with our membership to ccsjwv@hotmail.com.

If we can support your event or your issues in some way, please let us know, especially if you represent a member organization. We want to be a true coalition that unites groups and individuals interested in social justice, so please let us know how we can help and please send us information about your group to publicize to our membership.

III. MEMBER ORGANIZATION NEWS

National Organization for Women

The next meeting of the Morgantown Chapter of NOW has been changed to Monday, April 11th at 7 p.m. in Room 163 of the Law School. Anyone interested in participating in the group this spring who has not become a member of NOW may get a form to print off at www.now.org/membership/member-print.html or join for on-line at www.now.org/member.html. You can renew membership at www.now.org/renew.html. Please include the Morgantown chapter code, which is WV0205. For information about the chapter, contact Jessi Kalvitis at hagdinvincible@yahoo.com.

The next NOW “**Women’s History Month Movie Night**” is **Monday, March 21, in G21 White Hall** on the WVU Downtown Campus at 7:30 p.m. (Note change of room from previous notices). The featured film Monday is ***Fly Girls***. At the height of World War II, more than a thousand women became pilots who flew for the United States military. Margaret Bahnsen, Lieutenant Colonel, United States Army (Retired), and former commander of the WVU US Army Mountaineer Battalion, will introduce the film and lead the discussion. Refreshments will be provided. The Center for Women’s Studies is co-sponsoring this event.

On Monday, March 28th, NOW and the Center for Women’s Studies will co-sponsor a showing of ***Shelter*** at the NRCCE Building (1st floor Assembly Room) on the WVU Evansdale Campus at 7:30 p.m.. This is an Appalshop production that traces the development of domestic violence shelters and focuses on five women involved in the Family Refuge Center, a shelter in Lewisburg, West Virginia. According to Appalshop’s web site, “*Shelter* challenges our national ambivalence towards issues of domestic violence and common institutional responses from police, the court system, and social service agencies, while highlighting a model program that offers a holistic and healing approach to the problem.” It “explores the lives of women affected by violence and follows them through the long process of navigating through the system towards lives of safety and dignity.” Dr. Ruth Kershner, visiting associate professor of community medicine, will introduce the film and lead the discussion.

Center for Women’s Studies

The Center for Women’s Studies Annual Honors and Awards Ceremony will be Saturday, April 16th, at 7:00 p.m. at WVU’s E. Moore Hall. This will also be a celebration of the center’s 25th anniversary. For further information, contact Barb Howe at barbara.howe@mail.wvu.edu or 293-2339 ext. 1155.

Center for Black Culture and Research

The WVU Center for Black Culture and Research will hold its annual Carter G. Woodson Awards Ceremony on Saturday, April 16th, from 6:00-7:30 p.m. in Hatfields at the WVUMountainlair. For further information, please contact the Center at 293-7029.

The Center is also seeking nominations for its Carter G. Woodson Awards, which honors WVU student achievement and the University's outreach work to the African-American community. Deadline for nominations is March 25. Applications are available at www.wvu.edu/~cbcr or by calling 293-7029, ext. 110.

IV. LOCAL, STATE, AND NATIONAL NEWS

WVU African Students Association sponsors African Night

The African Students' Association of WVU is organizing African Night at the WVU Evansdale Residential Complex (Towers), "an annual event on the University's calendar. This is an opportunity of the African Students in WVU to give Morgantown a taste of Africa and diversity of our cultural heritage. Some of the activities planned for the day include: Cultural Dance, Fashion Show, Food Bazaar, Poetry Recital and African Music." Tickets are \$10 for adults. Children under 10 are free. For further information, go to www.wvu.edu/%7Eafrican/.

West Virginia Religious Coalition for Reproductive Rights/Clergy & Laity: Pro-Faith, Pro-Family, Pro-Choice

The following message came via email from the West Virginia Religious Coalition for Reproductive Rights. For more information on this group, please email wvrcr@yahoo.com.

"BE A VOICE FOR CHOICE IN OUR MOUNTAIN STATE BEFORE IT'S TOO LATE!"

"Clergy & Laity: Pro-Faith, Pro-Family, Pro-Choice is a new pro-choice organization created as the result of meetings held with various clergy and lay people from a number of religious traditions. The organization intends to send a strong message to our West Virginia state legislature that people of faith are standing together to protect a woman's right to choose and to prevent unintended pregnancy and the need for abortion by supporting family planning services AND to raise consciousness about and build solidarity among pro-choice, pro-faith people."

The group has a petition that you can access at www.ppaction.org/campaign/WVClergyLaity/wwbu87x4l55ktkb. Or, e-mail Reverend Jim Lewis at ejlchas@aol.com.

The petition reads as follows:

"We are a statewide group of clergy and laity from diverse religious traditions that believe a woman should be free to make reproductive health choices according to her own conscience and faith.

"We are pro-choice because of our beliefs:

"We must spread the message that people of faith are pro-choice, pro-family planning, and pro-sex education. We believe women must be free to make reproductive decisions in keeping with their faith and circumstances.

"Our healing perspectives seek solutions to pressing problems such as unintended pregnancy, HIV/AIDS, inadequate health care, and access to reproductive health care.

"We oppose government interference and coercion in family decisions about when and whether to have children. Imposing any one religious point of view violates the religious freedom that is the foundation of our nation.

"We reach out to people of color, those living in poverty, and other populations who are disproportionately affected by restrictive laws and policies. We advocate for resources to make reproductive options a reality for all.

“As people of faith, we want to be more vocal at the state-level, asserting our own moral high ground and reclaiming religious language.

“Our faith diversity provides alternate theological views for discussions on morality and social policy.

“Grounded in compassion, we support non-judgmental, faith-based counseling for women who are facing problem pregnancies.

“While we are religiously and theologically diverse, we are unified in the commitment to preserve reproductive choice as a basic part of religious liberty.”

There will be a press conference in the lower rotunda in the Capitol in Charleston on Tuesday, March 15 at noon, when clergy and laity from across West Virginia will announce the formation of Clergy & Laity: Pro-Faith, Pro-Family, Pro-Choice. A detailed plan of action will be announced at this event. Contacts for more information are:

- * Rose Edington—346-6645 or rlightington@charter.net
- * Barbara Ferraro—344-8053 or bferraro@wvcovenanthouse.org

Morgantown ACLU Patriot Act-Free Petition Drive Update

The Morgantown ACLU is still working on this petition drive. Liam Honecker, vice president for the local ACLU chapter, is in charge of this effort now. Anyone who would like to volunteer to serve on this committee should contact him at liamsegg@verizon.net, but anyone can still contact Leah Rye at squamishforever@yahoo.com with questions or requests for petitions. Leah reports that the group is getting very close to its goal of 20,000 signatures and hopes to take the petition to City Council in the near future. Only residents of the City of Morgantown are eligible to sign these petitions, and the preference is for permanent residents of the city.

Mom’s Turn to Learn Day in Morgantown and Charleston April 2nd

The Center for Women’s Studies and WVU Council for Women’s Concerns are sponsoring their Fourth Annual Mom’s Turn to Learn Day from 11 a.m.-3 p.m. at the Morgantown Mall, near the Food Court. If you are interested in completing college or going to graduate school, this is a time to meet informally with representatives of WVU units like Admissions and Records, Financial Aid, and the Regents Bachelor of Arts Program. Fairmont State University will also be participating this year. For information on the Morgantown program, please contact Liz Finklea at efinklea@wvu.edu or call the Center for Women’s Studies at 293-2339.

The Charleston branch of the American Association for University Women is sponsoring its second annual Mom’s Turn to Learn Day at the Charleston Town Center Mall on the same day. For information on the Charleston program, please contact Juliana Serafin at serafijg@dow.com.

Funding for this year’s events in Charleston and Morgantown is provided by the WVU Center for Women’s Studies’ Alma and Claude Rowe Fund for Excellence Through Equity.

Hate Crimes Legislation Proposed

Two bills have been introduced into the West Virginia Legislature this year to expand the coverage of the state’s hate crimes legislation. HB 2442 would include “sexual orientation and disability as a bias-based crime civil rights violation for purposes of criminal responsibility.” HB 2470 would add “‘sexual orientation’ to the categories covered by the human rights act.” Both bills are pending at this time. You can track the status of both bills and get copies of them at www.legis.state.wv.us/bill_status/bstatmenux/bstatfrm.cfm.

WVU AIDS Awareness Campaign - WVU Makes a Statement to the Global Community

The following information is provided by Jeffrey David Freeman, founder and president of The Institute for Human Dignity, Inc., and a WVU student, from a recent press release:

“Oprah Winfrey, U2’s Bono, former Presidents Bill Clinton and Jimmy Carter, Will Smith, Brad Pitt, Angelina Jolie, Alicia Keyes and many others have all joined former South African president Nelson Mandela in his efforts to fight the HIV/AIDS epidemic. Mandela has said that it is no longer just a disease but instead a human rights issue. In 2003 there were 2.3 million deaths due to HIV/AIDS in Africa, and an astronomical 3.2 million new infections (a 12% increase from the previous year). The majority of these new cases are children who have had the disease passed on to them by their parents. What’s worse is that with proper medical treatment a child does not have to contract the disease even if both their parents are HIV positive. To complicate an already alarming problem, more than 14 million children have also been orphaned due to the HIV/AIDS epidemic.

“46664 was the number Nelson Mandela wore for 18 years while he was imprisoned for his efforts to rid South Africa of apartheid. The number is now being used as the name for a new campaign to bring global awareness to what could possibly be one of the greatest human rights issues in our world’s history. Gabriel David Freeman, Alvin Carl Hathaway, and Nicholas Paul Shelton are the founders of a non-profit corporation called, *The Institute for Human Dignity* (IHD). The primary goal of their organization is to advocate the practical uses of non-violent direct action. They have recently partnered with Mandela’s 46664 campaign to create the Higher Learning program which is a collective effort to make college students in America more aware of the growing concerns created by the HIV/AIDS epidemic. Because of their ties to West Virginia University, WVU has been chosen as the starting point for this new collective campaign.

“The goals are simple. They are asking that each student at WVU respond to Mandela’s request for them to give one minute of their lives to AIDS. Students are able to do this by joining Global Petition, which is meant to unite people in their awareness of the HIV/AIDS epidemic and educate them as to how this fight can be won. Each student can join Global Petition by going to *The Institute for Human Dignity’s* home page, www.truthrising.org, and click on the 46664 icon. The whole process actually does take about 60 seconds, which is nothing considering how vital this single action could prove to be. The initial goal is set at 80% of the student body. They are also attempting to raise roughly 20 thousand dollars, or 1 dollar from 80% of the student body, which will go towards HIV/AIDS relief. If both goals are achieved by the end of the semester the IHD and Mandela’s 46664 will deem this initial campaign a success and will begin to expand into other universities.

“If WVU succeeds in accomplishing these two goals then it will become the first American university to definitively express their concern and awareness for the HIV/AIDS epidemic, and they will be making a statement to the Global Community about the character of this university. WVU would also be the first university to succeed in what the IHD and 46664 believe will eventually become a part of all major universities in the United States. This is WVU’s chance to set the trend and let the nation follow behind our example of compassion and concern for all humankind. 46664 donation boxes will be placed at the front desks of every dorm, the Honor’s office, the Sterling University Ridge main office, and some of the larger classrooms throughout campus. There will also be a booth set up in the Mountain Lair for students to join Global Petition, get information, purchase 46664 T-Shirts, or make contributions. During the remaining of the spring semester there will be a series of events to help promote this cause. Students will be made aware of these through their mix email accounts. Student will also receive an email on March 1st that will have a link that allows for them to Join Global Petition. If you have any questions or would like to get actively involved in the IHD or the 46664 campaign you will need to contact Gabriel Freeman via email at Gfreeman@TruthRising.org.”

Morgantown Unitarian-Universalist Fellowship to Host Program on Gay Marriage Issues

John Hagen, co-chair of the WVU Council on Sexual Orientation, will talk about "Gay Marriage Issues" on Sunday, April 3rd, at the Unitarian-Universalist Fellowship meeting at 10:30 a.m. The fellowship is located at 429 Warrick Street in Morgantown.

Mock Trial to Debate Consensual Sex or Rape

The WVU Sexual Assault Prevention and Education Office is sponsoring a mock trial to debate consensual sex or rape, with the audience to be the jury members. This will take place on April 3rd and 4th at 7 p.m. in the WVU Lugar Court Room at the Law School and at 8 p.m. on April 6th in G24 Eiesland Hall. For more information, please call 293-1377.

WVU Gay Pride Week Scheduled

Gay Pride Week is the week of April 11th. The WVU BiGLTM (Bisexual, Gay, Lesbian, and Transgendered Mountaineers) are organizing this event.

National Conference on Media Reform in St. Louis

The National Conference on Media Reform will be held in St. Louis on May 13-15. John Lozier is planning to attend this event and is interested in hearing from anyone else in the Morgantown area who wishes to go with him. Featured speakers will be author and National Public Radio commentator Jim Hightower; Juan Gonzalez and Amy Goodman, co-hosts of "Democracy Now!"; and syndicated columnist Arianna Huffington.

For more information, please go to www.freepress.net/conference/. You can reach John at jl@harpingforharmony.org or by calling him at 599-8233.

CCSJ Steering Committee 2004-2005

Tim Hairston (Monongalia-Preston Labor Council AFL-CIO), President. Al Anderson, Vice President. Suzanne Gosden, Secretary. Barb Howe (WVU Center for Women's Studies), Treasurer. Mike Attfield. Judy Cohen. Lourdes Cottingham (Equality for All Americans). Kris Hash. Liliana Hernandez. Jacqueline Moseley. Shelly Barrick Parsons (Presbyterian campus ministry). Leah Rye (Caitas House). Michael Sharley. Eric Simpson (Caritas House). Deb Strouse (WV Center for Dispute Resolution).