

WES Express

Monthly Newsletter of the Washington Ethical Society

July - August 2016

Upcoming Platforms: Join us at 10:30am

Sunday, July 3. "Great Awakenings" Hugh Taft-Morales, Leader, Ethical Humanist Society of Philadelphia and Baltimore Ethical Society. Waves of "righteous" social change periodically wash over the United States affecting our national culture. Beginning with the 18th century, an angry god of "The First Great Awakening" roused us Americans from our slumber. At the beginning of 19th century, "The Second Great Awakening" sounded the alarm of public social reform. At the start of the 20th century, progressivism woke us up to our government's responsibility for those in need. In the spring of the 21st century, what might be our "great awakening"? Hugh Taft-Morales explores these waves and the possibility that there is a righteous humanist wave of compassion and activism on the horizon. Music from the Chalice Messengers.

Sunday, July 10. Summer Film Series! "Harry Potter and Eliciting the Best" Amanda Poppei, Senior Leader. Join us for the first of four platforms based on popular movies. Amanda explores the ethical imperative found in Harry Potter. You needn't have watched the movie to enjoy the platform--but if you'd like to, several showings will occur at members' homes in the weeks beforehand. Email Amanda at amandap@ethicalsociety.org to sign up for one. Music from the Seth Kibel Trio.

Sunday, July 17. "Human Dignity" Michael De Dora, Director of Public Policy, Center for Inquiry. When most Americans think of Congress and the United Nations, they think of fractured and polarized political bodies where there is little agreement and little progress. Within the halls of Congress and the UN, however, religious and humanist organizations have been quietly working more closely than ever on issues of shared concern — from protecting freedom of religion, belief, and expression to advancing rights for sexual and gender minorities. A central component of these efforts: a shared, secular conception of what it means to be human. Michael De Dora, who also serves as the Center's main representative to the UN and chair of the UN's civil society committee on freedom of religion or belief in New York, will discuss these efforts, as well as possibilities for the future. Music from jazz vocalist Nicole Rumeau.

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The Washington Ethical Society is a humanistic congregation that affirms the worth of every person.

We strive through our relationships to elicit the best in the human spirit.

With faith in human goodness, we appreciate each person's unique capacities. We joyfully celebrate together and support each other through life. We nurture a sense of reverence and responsibility for each other and the earth. We invite you to join our community of children and adults as we work for a world where love and justice cross all borders.

ethicalsociety.org

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July - August 2016

Upcoming Platforms: Join us at 10:30am

Sunday, July 24. "Social Justice - What Is It, Anyway?"

Andrew Batcher. Over the last two years, WES member Andrew has been working with Cedar Lane Unitarian Universalist Church as Social Justice Consultant. He will bring that work to WES as he invites us to think about what social justice is.

Sunday, July 31. Summer Film Series "Lars and the Real Girl: Relationships Matter" Amanda Poppei, Senior Leader.

Join Amanda for the second in our summer series looking at ethics in the movies. This film explores the importance of community as a young man tries to navigate having a relationship...with a blow-up doll. Intrigued? There's more than meets the eye. Music from singer/songwriter LEA.

Sunday August 7. "Why Ethical Culture should care about Olympism and the Olympic Games" Marty Kaufman. Ethical Culture and the Modern Olympic Games share an uncanny, almost eerie, set of values and guiding principles. (True!) The ethical ideal is fleeting or it's so rare that we don't get many chances to view or experience those ultimate moments. Yet every four years the Olympic Games give us this opportunity, if we only know some history and where to look. Music from DC's feminist singers, Fortissima.

Sunday August 14. Summer Film Series "The Shawshank Redemption: Ethical Revenge?" Join Amanda for the third in our series, as she explores the complex themes of a movie that addresses freedom, justice, and the human desire for revenge. Music from WomanSpirit Singers.

Sunday August 21. Kid-led Multigenerational Service. Join our Sunday School children as THEY lead the platform, sharing what they have learned in their Harry Potter themed Sunday School this summer, and teaching us about their ethical leadership.

Sunday August 28. "Groundhog Day: Repeat as Necessary" Amanda Poppei, Senior Leader. In the fourth and final part of our summer film series, Amanda will explore this crowd-pleaser which makes real the idea that we need to practice ethical living until we succeed. Music from the WES Chorus.



**Amanda Poppei
Senior Leader**

A Harry Potter Summer

Melissa Sinclair, Director of Life Long Learning



Interest in all things Harry Potter has not faded even though the books and movies wrapped up years ago. Children grow up with the stories and movies of Harry Potter. Families make trips to the Wizarding World of Harry Potter (with locations in Florida, California, Japan, and London). Children still dress up as characters for Halloween. People get sorted into houses on the online site, Pottermore, and Harry Potter merchandise still flies off the shelves. The world of Harry Potter has been woven into childhood of American youth.

What makes it fabulous for a humanistic Sunday School is that the stories are full of ethical dilemmas. In 2009 Amy Anderson and Hugh Taft Morales wrote a curriculum called, "The Ethics of Harry Potter" while Hugh was interning with the Northern Virginia Ethical Society (NoVES). A Unitarian curriculum has also been created, "Harry and the UUs". Using these two resources, I decided to give Harry Potter themed classes a try. I have wanted to do it for years and years and, with growing enrollment and high summer attendance, this seemed to be the year to finally give it a go.

While the course will run for seven weeks, there are many more themes to explore than time to explore them. A quick brainstorming session on Facebook came up with these possible ethical themes to explore: slave labor, discrimination against people different from yourself, the idea of your choices being more important than your history, people aren't purely good or purely evil, ethical choices can change over your lifetime, should you involve others when something is personally risky, when to seek help and when to act alone, and many more.

We will offer three Harry Potter classes this summer. One for rising Kindergarteners through 2nd graders is called First Years. The next class will be for rising 3rd - 5th graders and these students will be known as Quidditch Players. The oldest group, rising 6th-8th graders, will be the Prefects.

While knowing the books or movies will enhance students' experiences, it won't be necessary to participate, enjoy, and understand the class themes. The first week of classes will begin with students being sorted into their houses. Then over the rest of July and most of August the students will explore the selected ethical themes. On August 21 the students will present an *Ethics of Harry Potter* platform, and we will end the last week of August with the *End of Year Feast*.

It is bound to be a lot of fun with a lot of excitement, and I hope it will provide a deeper understanding of what it means to be an ethical human being.

From Your Board of Trustees:

By Lindsay Lucke

I knew when I was elected to the Board two years ago that I would soon be moving away after being a member of WES for almost 30 years. The time is rapidly approaching for me to fulfill the plan I made with my daughter over a decade ago. I am both sorely grieved and looking ahead in happy anticipation. Ambivalence. I hate it.

Gratitude. I thank this community from the depths of my soul for supporting me and helping me learn skills that have enabled me to have a better life than I imagined possible. Your kindness has helped to drain away the anger and pain of a miserable childhood. It has helped me to replace my expectations that I would be attacked and put down with expectations of kindness and forgiveness. Wanting to ensure that WES continues as a healing space was a big part of my motivation for wanting to serve on the Board.

Imperfection. My service on the Board has not been everything I had hoped to make it. I have been distracted by the two deaths in my family and now by the emotional turmoil of planning to take my leave. Throughout my difficulties, the safe, respectful space created in Board meetings has sustained me. The other Board members have supported me, picked up my slack, and been liberal with their hugs.

Asking for what you want.

1. As I prepare to leave, I ask you all to continue your growth in understanding and compassion, so that you can continue to offer kindness to people who may not appear to need it but are in fact desperate to receive it.
2. Please come visit me. Isn't there some reason you need to come to Boston? I'm only 15 or 20 minutes from either Logan or downtown. I will always be a member of WES, so – hey – come visit!



WES News

Aging with Intention Discussion Series

We hope you'll join us for our quarterly discussion group on Aging with Intention, at the Campbells' house from 3-5pm on Sunday, July 10. WES friend and Life Coach Lynn Cave has kindly offered to lead a workshop on "Connecting with Your Values for a More Fulfilled Life." As Lynn explains, sometimes there is a gap between knowing our values and living them. Our values can change over time as well. Through interactive discussion, this workshop will connect or reconnect us with our personal values. Once we've identified our values, we can take stock to see if we are living them as we'd like or focusing our energies on something else that may not be as meaningful. Please RSVP to Julie Campbell, juliecampbell@aol.com, so that we will have enough seating—and refreshments!

Film Series

WES will show films in members' homes and Amanda will discuss the films in some of her platforms. Here is what we have in store for your summer viewing:

Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban - Platform on Sunday, July 10

- July 2, 5pm with potluck, Melissa Sinclair's home, yes kids
- July 9, 5pm with potluck, Sandra & Tom Bishop's home, yes kids

Lars and the Real Girl - Platform on Sunday, July 31

- July 24, 3pm viewing followed by Neighborhood Potluck, Sandra & Tom Bishop's home, yes kids

Shawshank Redemption - Platform on Sunday, August 14

- August 12, 6pm adults only pizza and movie night, Kaufman home
- August 13, 4pm with grilling (bring side to share), Robyn and Mike Kravitz's home, yes kids

Groundhog Day - Platform on Sunday, August 28

- August 21, 5pm with potluck, Kaufman home, yes kids
- August 27, 5pm with potluck, Shelby French and David Pehlke's home, yes kids

Save the Date! WES Auction October 15

Don't forget to plan your auction events and donations! Have you discovered a new destination or recipe that you want to share with your WES friends? No need to plan anything too elaborate, just come up with an activity or event that you could organize. It can be any time during the year...a seasonal activity or outing...how about an election night party...or Sunday brunch...or a picnic...or a theme dinner centered on a cuisine or a favorite book or movie? The auction team is happy to help you brainstorm. [Click here for the donation form.](#)



Also, we need small to medium sized items for baskets. No item is too random! Our master basket designer, Cayo Gambler, can incorporate just about anything, so can you pick up some extra items the next time you are shopping or look around your house for items that you don't use anymore? Please put donations in the bin in the WES office marked "auction."

Any questions? Please email Sarah Morris (se.morris@verizon.net).

Coming Up at WES

Friday, July 1

There will be no First Fridays event in July.

Saturday, July 2

Screening of "Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban" and Potluck Dinner, 5pm, Melissa Sinclair's home. Join WES friends to see the first movie in the Summer Film Series, which will be discussed at platform on July 10. Bring a dish to share. Children very welcome. Please RSVP to Melissa at melissas@ethicalsociety.org.

Thursday, July 7

Board of Trustees Meeting, 7pm, Library. All are welcome to attend meetings of the Board of Trustees. Agenda and materials are available in the Members' Access section of our website.

Saturday, July 9

Screening of "Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban" and Potluck Dinner, 5pm, Tom and Sandra Bishop's home. Join WES friends to see the first movie in the Summer Film Series, which will be discussed at platform on July 10. Bring a dish to share. Children very welcome. Please RSVP to Sandra at saundrabishop@gmail.com.

Sunday, July 10

Aging with Intention Discussion Series, 3–5:30pm, Campbells' House. Our quarterly discussion group on *Aging with Intention*. See page 5 for more information.

Biology Reading Group, 12pm, Library. We will be reading *How the Leopard Changed Its Spots*, by Brian Goodwin. This is a pioneering book on the use of complexity theory in understanding biological processes. It is not necessary to do the reading to attend the meeting, though it helps. For further information, get in touch with Barbara Searle, bsearle70@msn.com.

Two-Platform Feedback Session, 12pm, Social Hall. Join Amanda to share what worked well for you during our two platforms in April and May, and what you wish for as we plan to return to two platforms in the fall. If you miss this session, it repeats on July 31.

Thursday, July 14

Working for Racial Equity, 5-7pm, WES Social Hall. Have you been learning about anti-racism work and Black Lives Matter, and wondering what the next step is for you and for WES? Join us to vision together! We will continue our discussion of

plans for shorter term and longer term projects, including Restorative Justice, Muslim solidarity, and deepening our existing work. If you aren't on the WRE listserv or have any questions, please email Danna Pope, dannapope@gmail.com.

Friday, July 15

Still Thirsty After All These Years, 5:30-8pm, Scion Restaurant, 1200 East-West Highway. This group is for WES adults beyond the demographics of the "Young and Thirsty" group, but still thirsty for connections, entertainment, and new experiences. We will meet for Happy Hour on the third Friday of every month. The Scion Restaurant will keep only one tab for the group so bring cash for your share. Happy Hour pricing ends at 7pm. Please contact Nancy McGuire (nkmontheroad@yahoo.com) or Shan Evans (sevans4406@yahoo.com) for more details.

Sunday, July 24

Screening of "Lars and the Real Girl" and Potluck Dinner, 3pm, Tom and Sandra Bishop's home. Join WES friends to see a film in the WES Summer Film Series, which will be discussed at platform on July 31. Viewing followed by Neighborhood Potluck and is kid friendly. Please RSVP to Sandra at saundrabishop@gmail.com.

Neighborhood Potlucks, 5pm. Neighborhood potlucks give us a chance to get to know those who live nearest to us and in a smaller group than at Platform. Bring a dish to share. Members should be contacted by their Neighborhood Coordinators--but friends and visitors are welcome to join as well! Please contact Lindsay Lucke at ldeflucke@gmail.com to be matched with your neighborhood and with any questions.

WES-SURJ Study Group Session, 12-2pm, Double Classroom. This is a reminder for members of the group that this group will be meeting.

Sunday, July 31

Two-Platform Feedback Session, 12pm, Social Hall. Join Amanda to share what worked well for you during our two platforms in April and May, and what you wish for as we plan to return to two platforms in the fall.

Friday, August 5

There will be no First Fridays event in August.

Sunday August 7

WES-SURJ Study Group Session, 12-2pm, Double Classroom. This is a reminder for members of the group that this group will be meeting.

Friday, August 12

Screening of "Shawshank Redemption," 6pm, Kaufman home. Join WES friends for pizza and a showing of the third movie in the Summer Film Series. Adults only, please. Please RSVP to Michelle Kaufman (mmcc333@aol.com).

Saturday, August 13

Screening of "Shawshank Redemption" and Potluck Dinner, 4pm, Robyn & Mike Kravitz's home. Join WES friends to see the third movie in the Summer Film Series, which will be discussed at platform on August 14. Bring a side dish to share; the Kravitzes will provide burgers, hot dogs and veggie burgers. Children very welcome. Please RSVP to Mike at michael.kravitz09@gmail.com.

Sunday, August 14

Biology Reading Group, 12pm, Library. We will be reading *How the Leopard Changed Its Spots*, by Brian Goodwin. This is a pioneering book on the use of complexity theory in understanding biological processes. It is not necessary to do the reading to attend the meeting, though it helps. For further information, get in touch with Barbara Searle, bsearle70@msn.com.

Sunday, August 21

Screening of "Groundhog Day" and Potluck Dinner, 5pm, Kaufmans' home. Join WES friends to see the fourth and final movie in the Summer Film Series, which will be discussed at platform on August 28. Bring a dish to share. Children very welcome. Please RSVP to Michelle Kaufman (mmcc333@aol.com).

Saturday, August 27

Screening of "Groundhog Day" and Potluck Dinner, 5pm, Shelby French and David Pehlke's home. Join WES friends to see the fourth and final movie in the Summer Film Series, which will be discussed at platform on August 28. Bring a dish to share. Children very welcome. Please RSVP to Shelby at Shelby.French@rescue.org.

Tuesday, August 30

Board of Trustees Meeting, 7pm, Library. All are welcome to attend meetings of the Board of Trustees. Agenda and materials are available in the Members Access section of our website.

Friday, September 2

First Fridays, 12:30-2:00 p.m. Join WES members and friends who are retired or have a flexible work schedule for our monthly lunch discussion group. If you have questions, need transportation to the meeting, or would like to be added to our email reminder list, please contact Cindy White at crwhite712@gmail.com.