

# WES Express

Monthly Newsletter of the Washington Ethical Society

June 2015

## Upcoming Platforms – Join us at 11am

**Sunday, June 7. "Learn and Let Learn: Lessons from Flying Trapeze" Rev. Rob Keithan.** At home, work, and play, life gives us endless opportunities to learn and to support learning. When are we the student, and when the teacher? This platform will look at how we learn, how we help others, and why it matters—through the lens of flying trapeze! Music from *Fortissima*, DC's Feminist Chorus.

**Sunday, June 14. "The Joy of Participation or 'I Had Such Fun Doing It!'" Mike Franch, Ethical Culture Leader.** Mike writes, "My theme is the joy of participation, so we'll start out with a wonderful tea-drinking chanty of no redeeming religious or ethical value whatsoever, but which is a lot of fun. Even if you sing badly (as I might) and even if you don't sing at all but sit there quietly, you are participating. Singer or non-singer, the morning would not be the same without you. In fact, without you, every place would be different. We'll celebrate being together on this Sunday with joy and humor." Music from the WES Chorus.

**Sunday, June 21. "Nurturing the Evolving Species: The Challenge and Play of Parenthood," Rev. Lisa Ward.** Parenting is not for the weak-hearted. If we are parenting well, we slowly but surely become less vital to our child's existence. If we companion, as Kahlil Gibran names it, "life's longing for itself," we give in to our transforming relevance and engage the new blooming of existence that, by nature, challenges who we are. We teach, we learn, we grow, and we resist...ah parenthood!

**Sunday, June 28. "I've Got the Joy," LEA.** Singer-songwriter LEA will interweave a bit of story, jokes and favorite songs from her childhood.

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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](http://ethicalsociety.org)***

## June Theme: Joy and Humor

**Melissa Sinclair, Director of Religious Education**

I had to laugh when Amanda asked me to write on the theme for the month as, well, I don't have a great sense of humor! Most jokes fly right over my head. I can't remember a good joke to save my life and I wouldn't be able to retell it in a funny way even if I could remember it.

On the other hand, my husband has a great sense of humor and I enjoy his wit. Sometimes he gets a smile from me; other times, it's just an eye roll. I think he gets a special thrill when he gets a true guffaw out of me, as it's so rare and so unpredictable.

There's just something about smiles and laughter. It's difficult to be sad when someone is crying with laughter. Have you ever started laughing simply because the other person was laughing? Laughter is contagious! Laughter is joyful. It is the most wonderful mood lifter!

I may be humorless but I do find a lot of joy in the world. There are so many things that bring a smile: a silly puppy chasing his tail, watching the flowers bloom that you planted earlier in the spring, feeling the sun on your skin after a long, cold winter, watching the children play with glee on the playground. You can just feel your heart filling with joy while at the same time a smile spreads across your face almost involuntarily.

It was just last Sunday that I was telling a WES member that I'm so glad that my developing wrinkles are following laugh lines versus scowl lines. I also find joy in gazing upon a smiling face. Surely that other person has suffered pain and sorrow, but it's their smile and laughter that shine through.

However, I sometimes feel guilty for feeling joy and experiencing humor. How can we be happy when there is so much suffering in the world? How can we laugh when so many people cry? Yet I need moments of joy and humor to get through all the other times and I can do more good for the world when I feel high and not low.

I challenge all of you this month to purposefully experience joy and humor. Get outside and take walks. Listen to the birds sing and watch the butterflies flutter. Talk with your dearest friends and share funny stories. Watch a silly comedy. Just allow that joy to seep into your bones and laugh out loud without restraint. Fill your joy and humor tank for rougher days and remember to keep refilling that tank whenever it gets low.



Melissa Sinclair,

Director of  
Religious Education

*Ways to engage with  
June's theme:  
Joy/Humor*

June platforms

Story for All Ages:  
Rob Keithan & Moira Lee

## From Your Board of Trustees

**By Adam Goldberg, WES Board of Trustees**

As we come to the beginning of the new WES year, I want to start by thanking Sera Morgan for her service on the Board of Trustees, particularly as President for the last year. Her leadership and guidance has meant a lot to me and her fellow Board members. We'll miss her, but look forward to working with her as she continues to serve the community in other capacities!

One of the things Sera took a leadership role on was the development of our Congregational Ends Statements, which I'm hoping the membership will be affirming at our meeting on June 7. I'm especially excited about our work to implement the Focus Goals we've developed from those Ends Statements:

- 1. Develop skills & approaches to welcome all, particularly people who have been historically underrepresented at WES. Reach out to those who want what WES offers but don't know it yet.*
- 2. Increase integration of children, youth and adults across the WES community. Develop and increase awareness of agreements, including approaches to conflict, across WES. Increase opportunities for deep relationships around common challenges and stages of life. Explore the ethical culture approach to our bodies as part of our whole selves.*
- 3. Increase internal coordination and integration of social justice activities. Increase educational opportunities and engagement that will facilitate a deeper understanding throughout the WES community of what social justice is and how to move toward it.*
- 4. Increase integration of the values and practice of environmental stewardship throughout WES.*

Each of these sets of Goals corresponds to one of our four Ends Statements. For the next year, they should aid all of us as we target our efforts to achieve our Ends – whether we're on the Board, a member of staff, on a WES team, or simply acting as an individual WES member looking to make a difference in our community or in the wider world.

I know they'll be at the top of my thoughts as we consider the important policy matters that are sure to come to the Board's attention this year. Please feel free to ask me, or any member of the Board, about the Ends, the Goals or the specific issues we're working on. And, of course, do not hesitate to raise items for our consideration, and please join us at a Board meeting!

## June Membership Meeting

The WES Membership will meet June 7 at 6pm to elect members of the WES Board of Trustees and to approve the next year's budget.

At this meeting, the members in attendance will also discuss and approve the *Ends Statements* that Adam Goldberg mentioned in the previous article. The Board developed these *Ends Statements* over the past year. In the March newsletter, WES Trustees Lindsay Lucke and Danna Pope explained the process:

"As you may recall, your Board has been working to establish our *Ends Statements* – that is, statements of what we want to achieve in the long run. The *Ends Statements* originated in a series of community discussions and these statements fill a need for strategic planning. While there might be a few tweaks to be made to the phrasing of the *Ends*, there was consensus on the underlying ideas. We used the draft *Ends Statements* to collectively create *focus goals*, which help us move closer to our Ends. We can't do everything and will do best if we focus our attention."

For your convenience, here are the *Ends Statements* that will be introduced at the upcoming membership meeting:

1. WES is an inclusive and diverse center for Ethical Culture, humanism and progressive religion that models the interconnected community we envision for the world.
2. WES nurtures children, youth, and adults as whole beings – mind, body, and spirit – who seek their best selves in relationship with others.
3. WES works with others to build a community with justice, equity, and opportunity for all and uses collective power to eliminate oppression.
4. WES children, youth, and adults act collectively as citizens of the world and stewards of the earth.

You can read the focus goals and review the agenda for the upcoming membership meeting by checking the member section of the [WES website](#).

Would you like to have one of your WES events posted on our website or Facebook page?

Please send news and/or images to Beth Baker, [bethbaker@starpower.net](mailto:bethbaker@starpower.net).

We can also use images of any of our celebrations. Thanks!

## Felix and Friends

☞ At bottom, the world is to be interpreted in terms of joy, but of a joy that includes all the pain, includes it and transforms it and transcends it.

☞ The Light of the World is a light that is saturated with the darkness which it has overcome and transfigured.

Felix Adler from *Life and Destiny*, 1913.  
(Scan of the original printed page courtesy of Google Books)

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## Coming up at WES

### Tuesday, June 2

**Meditation Group**, Adler Study, 7:30pm. This group, which meets on 1st and 3rd Tuesdays, is open to anyone interested in meditation. We will use an approach called *Recollective Awareness Meditation*, based on a form of vipassanā, which involves meditating with our thoughts, emotions, and sensations rather than considering them distractions. The leader, Sigfried Gold, is a teacher in training with the *Skillful Meditation Project*. Call or email him (301-775-3339, sigfried@sigfried.org) with questions. For more information about *Recollective Awareness Meditation*, see <http://skillfulmeditation.org/>.

### Thursday June 4

**Roadside Remembrance**, Thursdays 5:30-6:30pm, Outside WES. This Action, which builds on the Sidewalk Solidarity Actions of this past fall, will involve participants holding signs with the names of people who were killed by police. We will have a *Person of the Week* whom we will study and remember. While holding signs, participants are encouraged to share what they learned about this person. At 6:15pm we will do a short go-round where we share a thought about the person. For more information, contact Sandra Bishop at [saundrabishop@gmail.com](mailto:saundrabishop@gmail.com)

## **Friday June 5**

**First Friday Discussion Lunch**, 12:30-2pm, Social Hall. Ellen Dinerman and Jim Perdue will follow up on their WES platform presentation on *Death with Dignity* by bringing us a program previously scheduled for March, "Compassion and Choices." If you have wondered about end-of-life options that may be open to you even though you may not fit the profile covered by legislation being considered currently in various states, you are welcome to join us for this interactive discussion. Please bring a sandwich and any lunch extra you might like to share and arrive early enough so that we can begin lunch and a go-round at 12:30. For questions, please contact: Marty Brockway (ewbrocs@rcn.com).

## **Sunday, June 7**

**Newcomers' Q and A**, 12:30pm, Library. Bring your coffee, cookies, and questions to this informal gathering! Meet a member of WES and learn more about WES and what it means to be part of our community.

**Interplay Workshop**, Main Hall, 12:30pm. Peter Kent.

**Spring Membership Meeting**, Main Hall, 6pm.

## **Thursday, June 11**

**Roadside Remembrance**, Thursdays 5:30-6:30pm, Outside WES. See June 4 for more information.

**Board Meeting**, 7pm, Library. All WES members are welcome to attend monthly Board meetings. Every other month, they are held on Sundays after platform to encourage guests! Agenda and materials may be found before the meeting in the Members' Access section of the website, [www.ethicalsociety.org](http://www.ethicalsociety.org).

## **Saturday, June 13**

**Capital Pride Parade, 4:30pm**. The Washington Ethical Society contingent will march with the UU congregations again this year! Contact Melissa Sinclair at [melissas@ethicalsociety.org](mailto:melissas@ethicalsociety.org) for more details and to join our group. A GREAT event for families.

## **Sunday, June 14**

**Biology Discussion Group**, 12:45-2pm, Library. On the second Sunday of every month there's a lively buzz in the WES library as members and friends gather for the Biology Discussion Group, facilitated by Barbara Searle. Starting in June and continuing in July and maybe August, we will read *Good Natured: The Origins of Right and Wrong in Humans and Other Animals*, by Frans de Waal. All are welcome, whether or not you've done the reading! For more information contact Barbara: [bsearle70@msn.com](mailto:bsearle70@msn.com).

**Young@WES Afternoon Cookout and Potluck**, Home of Justin and Natalie Bend, 4-8pm. 8301 Sprague Place; New Carrollton, MD 20784. Please join us for a fun-filled afternoon and early evening with good food, good conversation and good friends!

## **Tuesday, June 16**

**Meditation Group**, Adler Study, 7:30pm. This group, which meets on 1st and 3rd Tuesdays, is open to anyone interested in meditation. Please see the description for June 2.

## **Thursday, June 18**

**Roadside Remembrance**, Thursdays 5:30-6:30pm, Outside WES. See June 4 for more information.

**Young and Thirsty**, 7pm, Busboys and Poets in Takoma Park, MD. All young(ish) adults are welcome to join this casual get-together to talk about topics philosophical and otherwise!

**Valuing Differences Group**, 7:30-9pm. This group meets monthly for an unstructured conversation about differences of race, gender identity, age, sexual orientation, etc., in our life space. It provides a safe place to ask questions, express concerns, and maybe find some fundamental answers. Members of the group take turns leading the discussion. We plan to start each month with a theme or a topic, but current events and the concerns of those attending may take precedence over anything preplanned. Contact June Fair, junelfair@gmail.com, or Shan Evans, sevans4406@yahoo.com, for more information.

## **Friday, June 19**

**Still Thirsty After All These Years**, 5:30-7:30pm, Austin Grill in Downtown Silver Spring. 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 the month. Please contact Nancy McGuire (nkmontheroad@yahoo.com) or Shan Evans (sevans4406@yahoo.com) for more details.

## **Thursday, June 25**

**Roadside Remembrance**, Thursdays 5:30-6:30pm, Outside WES. See June 4 for more information.

## **Friday, July 3**

**First Friday** is on recess until September 4.