

The Existentialist

Newsletter of the First Existentialist Congregation of Atlanta

470 Candler Park Drive, N.E., Atlanta, GA 30307 • Founded in 1976 •

A Philosophically Based Spiritual Community

Dedicated to Human Liberation

and Founded on Existentialist and Feminist Principles •

Roger Easley Photography Exhibit Summer 2014

Artist's Statement
By Roger Easley

These photos are some of my favorite images, taken since late 2011. Photography's power to capture moments has fascinated me since childhood.

I first borrowed my father's camera when I was 14. The first photo I took was of a windmill's rotating blades, blurred by their motion. I still love to use long shutter speeds to create an image that captures movement, such as flowing water, traffic headlights, or racing bicyclists.

Digital cameras make it possible to shoot lots of images and view the results immediately without the expense of film, developing or printing. This gives a photographer a chance to try different vantage points and exposure settings with immediate feedback. Instead of shooting a photo or two and



"Flower" by Roger Easley

Continued on page 7

**First Existentialist
Congregation of
Atlanta**

470 Candler Park Drive,
NE
Atlanta, Georgia 30307
404-378-5570
www.firstexistentialist.org

All Are Welcome
Join us in our
Celebrations of Life on
Sundays at 11:00 a.m.
Children's Program
during Sunday services

Fellowship Minister:
Marsha Mitchiner,
revm@bellsouth.net
Office Administrator:
Rick Westbrook,
office@firstexistentialist.org

Board of Directors:
D. Patton White, Chair
Bill Read, Treasurer
Stell Simonton,
Recorder
Linda Bell
Elaine Gale
Bill Laney
Hank Pfadenhaur
Andy Weiskoff
Cindy Lou Who
Newsletter Editor:
Charlene Ball,
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We are a philosophically based
spiritual community
dedicated to
human liberation
and founded on existentialist
and feminist principles.



Notes From the Board

By D. Patton White, Board Chair

The Board met on Monday, May 5. Present were Cindy Lou Who, Marsha Mitchiner, Hank Pfadenhauer, Linda Bell, Stell Simonton, Libby Ware, Bill Laney, Bill Read, Andy Weissock, Elaine Gale and Rick Westbrook.

New officers were elected for 2014, and they are D. Patton White, Board chair; Stell Simonton, recorder; and Bill Read, treasurer.

With the change in the by-Laws, we now have a Finance Committee that includes the current treasurer and current Board chair, plus two additional members who may be past Board chairs or treasurers. Edith Covington and Libby Ware were elected to the committee.

Libby proposed that the congregation ban gun usage in the facility. Discussion ensued. Bill proposed a policy saying that First E does not allow guns on property belonging to the First Existentialist Congregation of Atlanta. The proposal was adopted. Patton proposed we post a sign that communicates this new policy, without implying a confrontational stance. Ted offered to ask his brother to manufacture the sign. Patton suggested that we include this new policy in the June newsletter. (See the box below.) Bill Read will make sure that the rental policy includes this policy.

Ted shared that Aviva would like to host a Hemp Awareness fund-raising event. Cindy Lou proposed we offer the building at no charge and request 10% of the income generated from the event. The proposal was adopted.

Bill Laney presented a full proposal for the purchase and installation of new lights. The total cost would be \$2,034.00. Marsha volunteered to head up a "This Little Light of Mine" fundraiser. (See page 5.)

Accessibility. Bill explained in detail the upgrade to the front landing, as well as the stairs—including the update to the cement work as well as the railings—to bring the entry way into a more usable condition. Bill will request two separate bids from the Rojas's to do the work in two phases or one.

Rick was not present, so Elaine presented his report. We will have renters this summer, bringing us more income. The income will be a percentage of their receipts. Patton also shared that the new refrigerator policy will be that Rick will remove any items from the refrigerator on Mondays that are not clearly labeled for upcoming events.

We had Guilds and Committees reports. Highlights were that currently our finances are in the black. The Board discussed a possible yard sale fundraiser for "This Little Light of Mine." Founders Day will be on September 21, and Dr. Jean Heinrich will speak. The Third Friday film for April raised funds for the Social Justice Guild, and we had good attendance and good discussion. The May film was *Cloudburst*, co-sponsored by SAGE, and the June film will be *Persepolis*, co-sponsored by Kanoon, a Persian Community Center.

The next Board meeting will be Monday, June 2 at 7:00 p.m. downstairs. (Patton will be out of town and not in attendance). All members and friends are welcome to attend. The meeting concluded at 9:24 p.m. ~

**Guns are not allowed on the property
belonging to the First Existentialist Congregation
of Atlanta.**

Guild Reports

Program Guild *by Charlene Ball*

The Program Guild held its quarterly meeting on May 6 downstairs at First E at 6:00 p.m. to plan the Celebrations of Life for July, August, and September. At our meetings, we brainstorm about who we have heard or know about that we think would be a good speaker for First E. Then we divide up the speakers among us, and each PG member follows up with a speaker, sometimes more than one.

As we go to press, Rev. Janna Nelson and Rev. Kate Hauk have been confirmed for July. Janna may also return in August, although she and Scott will be moving to New Mexico at the end of the summer. (See the letter from Scott and Janna on page 6.) In August, Rev. Duncan Teague will return. Yes, Reverend! Duncan has passed the last hurdle to become a UU minister, and we are so proud of him.

The Program Guild is Patton White (patton@beacondance.org), Charlene Ball (mcharleneball@yahoo.com), Linda Bell (lbell@gsu.edu), Jean Heinrich (doctorjean06@yahoo.com), and Bill Laney (bill3391a@yahoo.com). Contact us if you would like to be a facilitator, give feedback, tell us about a speaker or musician you'd like to hear, or join the Program Guild. We welcome your feedback. ~

Community News & Activities

--"**Recent Works,**" a photography exhibit by Roger Easley, will be on the walls of the Sanctuary from June 22 through the end of July. Opening is June 22.

--**The Third Friday Film Series presents *Persepolis***, Marjane Satrapi's animated feature film about a precocious girl growing up in post-revolutionary Iran, on Friday, June 20, at 7:30 p.m. at the First Existentialist Congregation. Donations: \$1-\$10.00; no one turned away. Popcorn, sodas, refreshments available for donations. Discussion led by Minoosh Wake-man of Kanoon, a Persian Community Center.

--**Scott Hooker and Janna Nelson invite you to join them on Saturday, June 28**, at 8:00 p.m., at the First Existentialist Congregation as they bid an affectionate musical farewell to the city that has given birth to their separate and combined musical careers. They will be joined by Jeff Crompton blowing various reed instruments; Ben Gettys at the upright bass; and Dennis Durrett-Smith at the drums.

--**Thanks to all who took part in the Workday** this past Saturday, and **special thanks to Cheri Smithson, Cindy Lou Who, Tom Blakeley, Stephanie Murphy, Aurelia Kime, and others** who cleaned up the mess in the basement resulting from ceiling tiles being removed.

--**Geek Chorus** meets on First Wednesdays--bring your favorite beverage to share, love offering to First E for allowing us to use the space, and musical instruments to pluck, bang or strum.

--**Ukuleles group** meets on second, third, and fourth Wednesdays at 7:30 p.m.. Participating is free. Teacher once a month: cost: \$15.00. All levels welcome.

--**Lisa Cottrell, LPC, is accepting new clients**, including individuals and couples. She has been trained this year in a type of therapy called Emotion Focused Therapy for Couples. She also offers groups for DBT Skills, Trauma and Addiction Recovery. Visit Lisa's updated website at www.wellbeingpsychotherapy.net or call 404-931-3066.

Continued on page 6

Social Justice Corner

Georgia's New Gun Law and Its Impact on Places of Worship

By Libby Ware

Most of us have heard of the new gun law in Georgia, one of the most permissive gun laws in the nation. What does it say and how does it impact First E?

Senate Bill 60, effective July 1, 2014 amends the current law prohibiting weapons in certain locations as follows {new language in italics}:

"A person shall be guilty of carrying a weapon or long gun in an unauthorized location and punished as for a misdemeanor when he or she carries a weapon or long gun while:

(4) In a place of worship, *unless the governing body or authority of the place of worship permits the carrying of weapons or long guns by license holders;*"

The final bill is actually an improvement over earlier versions that either allowed weapons in places of worship, regardless of the wishes of the congregation, or allowed them unless the place of worship prohibited it.

Although the law defines government buildings, parking lots, etc., there is no definition of "places of worship." As existentialists we could argue about whether the old stone church is a place of worship, but since we are classified that way for incorporation and tax purposes, this law would include First Existentialist Congregation of Atlanta.

The bill says that weapons are only allowed if the Board permits them, but the Board pre-emptively voted to prohibit weapons from the building and all of our property. (Also see Notes from the Board.) The Board discussed how to let people know that weapons are not allowed and we decided to post signs and put a notice in the bulletin every Sunday. ~

THIS LITTLE LIGHT OF MINE

Let It Shine, Let It Shine, Let It Shine

By Rev. Marsha Mitchiner

One of the items at the top of Lanier's wish list was better lighting in the sanctuary, especially for the art displayed on the walls. As previously noted, volunteers took down the old lights and track bars, reinforced the supports in the attic, then installed new (more and better) tracks. Bill Laney has devoted many hours researching the possible lighting that would meet our needs (thank you, Bill). Based on his report at Board Meeting, specific fixtures and types of bulbs were chosen. A generous donor will cover the costs of the bulbs. The cost of one fixture is about \$100 (this does not include the cost of the electrician). We need a minimum of 18 to light the walls, piano and stage- and would like to have several more to focus on other areas. Now, here's your chance to Let Your Light Shine. If you would like to buy a light, or part of a light, please note on your check that this is to Let My Light Shine. Contributions of any amount are greatly appreciated. ***Let it Shine, Let it Shine, Let it Shine!!!*** ~

Community News & Activities ~ continued from page 3

--**Edith Covington is helping adults** of all skills levels, beginners and up, to **develop their computer skills** on a 1:1 basis. Call Edith or email her at edithcovington@gmail.com

--**Glen Lopez has calendars for sale**, \$5, featuring his photography in our neighborhood including members of First E and Little 5 Points. See Glen for a calendar.

---**Bennett's Market**, owned by Victoria Bennett-Trestrail, offers sandwiches, meals, and produce from local farmers and growers.

--**Lost-N-Found Thrift Store** is located at 2585 Chantilly Drive, Atlanta, and is open Thursday-Sunday from 12:00 to 6:00. Shop and help homeless LGBTQ youth.

--**Heads Up--Charis Books and More will celebrate its 40th birthday** in November 2014. Look for announcements of special events, readings, etc., and a grand birthday party!

--**RAP, a discussion group about race**, meets monthly at the Little 5 Points Community Center from 5:00 to 8:00 p.m. June's meeting will be on Sunday, June 15.

--**The New Jim Crow Action Group** invites you to a conversation about the "criminal justice" system with the Honorable Steen Miles, on Wednesday, June 11, 2014, 7:30 p.m. at the Atlanta Friends Meeting house at 701 West Howard Avenue, Decatur, GA 30030. Ms. Miles is a retired journalist, former Georgia State Senator, and recent candidate for the U.S. Senate.

--**Adopt a homeless cat** for \$10 or dog for \$20 thru May 31 @ Dekalb Animal Services, 845 Camp Road, Decatur.

--**The Mountain Retreat and Learning Center** in Highlands, NC, invites you to their spring and summer events line-up, including Appalachian Spring, Mountain Homecoming, Wellness Retreat, Fun and Adventure Week, Intergenerational Family Camp, and in the autumn the Southern Unitarian Universalist Fall Institute.

--**Submissions and news for the July Newsletter** are due to Charlene by **June 15**. Send Board and Guild reports and member news items, opinion pieces, poems, meditations. The newsletter welcomes your submissions.

--**Contact Robert Stewart** with your news and activities for his weekly e-newsletter: rstewart@toyodausa.com . ~

Letter from Scott and Janna

Dear Congregation,

This is a quick note with more to come from Scott and me in the July newsletter. After the services on the third Sundays in June and July [June 15 and July 20] I invite you to join me in a discussion period. This is one of the opportunities for the many conversations I look forward to having with you as Scott and I prepare to move to New Mexico late summer. It is going to be a very challenging and difficult transition, and while we are clear that this is what we need to do at this time in our life, we are deeply aware of the many people, communities and places we will miss, with First Existentialist Congregation being at the top of the list.

Love, Janna

One isn't necessarily born with courage, but one is born with potential. Without courage, we cannot practice any other virtue with consistency. We can't be kind, true, merciful, generous, or honest. ~ Maya Angelou

Roger Easley's Nature Photography ~ continued from page 1

hoping it's good, now I can view the result and know if I should try again.

As digital cameras—like any computer technology—continually get better and less expensive, it's possible to capture high quality images without spending a fortune on equipment. Also, editing with photo software (comparable to printing from a negative) is another opportunity to crop and adjust an image for the best final result.

I first taught an introductory class for digital photographers in 2011 at the Midwest UU Summer Assembly, and have been carrying a camera and taking photos just about daily ever since.

I love nature photography, especially capturing light coming through leaves or flower petals, transforming them to stained glass. I am drawn to finding the one perfect leaf or blossom, isolated from its surroundings by using a long focal length. I am proudest of the photos capturing a point of view I have not seen in a photo before, such as the swirls of an American flag seen from below or stagelight colors reflected in a musician's trombone.

I appreciate the opportunity to share these recent works at First Existentialist. ~

Roger Easley's photography will be on the walls of First Existentialist from June 22 through July.

Roger Easley; 404-374-3991; Online portfolio: www.redbubble.com/people/rogere0829

Scott and Janna's Musical Farewell to Atlanta on June 28

Scott Hooker and Janna Nelson invite you to join them on Saturday, June 28 at 8:00 PM at the First Existentialist Congregation of Atlanta, 470 Candler Park Drive NE, as they bid an affectionate musical farewell to the city that has given birth to their separate and combined musical careers. They will be joined by Jeff Crompton blowing various reed instruments; Ben Gettys at the upright bass; and Dennis Durrett-Smith at the drums. They look forward to the presence of their Atlanta friends on the evening of the 28th, and to the continuation of their musical escapades in their new home, Albuquerque, New Mexico, where they will be joining extended family. ~

Rev. Marti Keller Speaks on "A Failure of Kindness" on June 8

A commencement speech at Syracuse University delivered by a creative writing professor last year has gone viral and published in book form. What might Paula Deen, Donald Sterling, our dentists and the Compassionate Cities movement have to add to the wisdom he shared with those new graduates--and us as well? Rev. Marti Keller will share her thoughts about "A Failure of Kindness" on Sunday, June 8 at First E.

Rev. Marti Keller has been working as a parish, community and teaching UU minister in the Mid-South for 16 years and now serves as the affiliated minister with the national UU Women's Federation. Locally, she is a board member for the Faith Alliance of Metro Atlanta (FAMA), the umbrella organization for the Compassionate Cities initiative in this area, as well as a member of the recently constituted Compassionate Decatur committee. ~

Nothing can dim the light that shines from within. ~ Maya Angelou

When Great Trees Fall

By Maya Angelou

***When great trees fall,
rocks on distant hills shudder,
lions hunker down
in tall grasses,
and even elephants
lumber after safety.***

***When great trees fall
in forests,
small things recoil into silence,
their senses
eroded beyond fear.***

***When great souls die,
the air around us becomes
light, rare, sterile.
We breathe, briefly.
Our eyes, briefly,
see with
a hurtful clarity.
Our memory, suddenly sharpened,
examines,
gnaws on kind words
unsaid,
promised walks
never taken.***

***Great souls die and
our reality, bound to
them, takes leave of us.***

***Our souls,
dependent upon their
nurture,
now shrink, wizened.***

***Our minds, formed
and informed by their
radiance,
fall away.***

***We are not so much maddened
as reduced to the unutterable ignorance
of dark, cold
caves.***

***And when great souls die,
after a period peace blooms,
slowly and always
irregularly. Spaces fill
with a kind of
soothing electric vibration.
Our senses, restored, never
to be the same, whisper to us.
They existed. They existed.
We can be. Be and be
better. For they existed. ~***

***Maya Angelou
1928-20014***

June 2014 Sunday Celebrations of Life

- June 1** ***Encounter and Leap: The Poetry of Existentialism and Creativity***
Speaker: Sharon Mathis
Facilitator: Bill Laney
Accompanist: Dr. Jean Heinrich
- June 8** ***As the (Existentialist) Spirit Moves Her***
Speaker: Rev. Marti Keller
Facilitator: Libby Ware
Accompanist: Alan Dynin
- June 15** ***Back to Basics: Where We Came From, Where We Are, Where We're Going, Part 1***
Speaker: Rev. Janna Nelson
Facilitator: Robert Stewart
Accompanist: Scott Hooker
- June 22** ***The Impossible Dream: The Hard Work of Community***
Speaker: Rev. Duncan Teague
Facilitator: D. Patton White
Accompanist: William "Bill" Chelton
- June 29** ***Dog Is My Guru***
Speaker: Rev. Marsha Mitchiner
Facilitator: Cindy Lou Who
Accompanist: Dr. Jean Heinrich

The Back Page

Members and Friends Speak Out

A Week in the Life of Women

By Rev. Marti Keller



This past week, a disturbed young man in California stabbed and shot both women and men — killing six, wounding 13 — and then committed suicide. Left behind in social media were his plans, especially a YouTube posting documenting his intentions to murder three people in his apartment building and then attack a sorority house in Isla Vista near UC Santa Barbara. It is the same college community where my own daughter lived during the time she attended nearby Santa Barbara City College. Once his rampage began, he settled on attacking passersby, including two female students.

In his video and an online manifesto he published just before what one journalist has called his “spasm of violence,” the killer talked about his War on Women. “I will punish all females for the crime of depriving me of sex,” he announced. While he could not “kill every single female on earth,” he said, he could “deliver a devastating blow that will shake all of them to the core of their wicked hearts.”

His writings—his rantings—also declared that women are like a plague, needing to be contained in concentration camps, starved to death.

This act and the premeditated rationale behind it has resulted in a flurry of rage and fear, including a hashtag **#YESALLWomen** that has gone viral. It is an effort to keep attention on the underlying if extreme misogyny, the hatred against females, that fueled the attacks. And personalize it by the sharing of other stories: the threats; the date rapes; the beatings, stabbings, shootings. Large and small, the indignities, the terrors and horrors were and are being named.

As the *LA Times* reported, statistically speaking such rampages are rare, but man-on-woman violence is not. Most recent data indicates that in this country, an average of seven women are slain each day, most of them knowing their attacker—who is usually male. Also this week, in our local daily I read a reprinted Associated Press story about a pregnant woman in Pakistan who had been stoned to death by her own family outside a courthouse for marrying the man she loved. She had refused an arranged marriage, and her father had filed a kidnapping charge against her husband before resorting to this so called honor killing, one of an estimated 5,000 that still take place every year, most of them in Muslim countries or communities.

Misogyny in action, here and around the world.

I checked in with the Unitarian Universalist Association justice staff a few days ago, following these two horrific events, inquiring whether our liberal religious movement has ever taken a formal position in the form of a statement of conscience or other vehicles against women-hating, just as we have against racism—personal and institutional, and homophobia. It may be that our current study action initiative focusing on reproductive justice may circle the underlying issue (or an underlying issue), but will it get us where we need to be in terms of recognizing and naming hatred and hate crimes for what they are.

Yes, this Elliot Rodger was a person with a long history of mental unbalance, just as many of the racists, homophobes and anti-Semites have been. But his mindset and his acts also arose out of a deep and longstanding culture of permission around cruelty towards women and girls.

May the twitter feeds and more important frank and urgent conversations continue within UU.

It is past time.

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The First E Newsletter is published monthly. Deadline for the July 2014 newsletter is June 15. Send your articles and announcements to mcharleneball@yahoo.com. The editor reserves the right to edit or refuse any material submitted.