

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 •

Be in the Moment! ***Existentialist Moment Coffeehouse March 15***

Don't miss the the Existentialist Moment Coffeehouse on March 15 at the First Existentialist Congregation! Enjoy music, food and a silent auction, all benefiting First Existentialist.

Hear the Bentley Brothers, the fabulous Ted Pettus and Andy Weiskoff duo. Catch Aviva, of Aviva and the Flying Penguins. Get jazzed up with the rhythms of Janna Nelson and Scott Hooker. Get inspired by Craig Rafuse. Let the music of Aubrey Cox stir you up, and Jean Heinrich fire you up. Improv by Lesly Fredman of Theatre on the Prowl will provide some on-the-spot fun.

And there's more! It's all about the existentialist moment -- that place in time and space where you choose to let things happen. Bring your own existentialist self and know that your presence supports the congregation financially.

Doors open at 7:30 p.m. and music starts at 8 p.m. Cost is \$5 per adult. ~



*The Bentley Brothers, AKA Ted Pettus (L) and Andy Weiskoff (R), strike a pose.
Photo by Judy Aehle.*

**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:
Libby Ware, Chair
Bill Read, Treasurer
Charlene Ball,
Recorder
Elaine Gale
Bill Laney
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Cindy Lou Who
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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 Libby Ware, Board Chair

The Board met on February 3. Bill Laney has contacted three electricians for quotes on lighting in the sanctuary. We will need to buy LED lamps (10@\$70 a piece) and track heads. Once the Board votes on the quotes, we will need to schedule the electrician between art shows.

The Board voted for First Existentialist to be one of the sponsoring organizations of Moral Monday and asked the Social Justice Guild to pay at least part of the cost. (Subsequently, the Social Justice Guild voted to pay the entire amount of \$100 to be a sponsoring organization.)

Cheri Smithson let us know that she is pursuing offering her program that takes place after the school day as an art program. The certification rules are less stringent than for an after-school program. We are also looking at having a "Mothers Morning Out" program that would be before noon.

Stell announced that there will be a Coffeehouse with numerous musical acts and a silent auction on March 15. (See front page story.)

The next Board meeting will be Monday, March 3, at 7:00 downstairs. All are welcome to attend. ~

ANNUAL MEETING

By Libby Ware

The annual meeting will be on Sunday, April 6, immediately after the service. This is YOUR annual meeting where we will elect a new Board; vote on a by-law change that replaces the Finance Guild with a Finance Committee; and hear a short finance report and a quick summary of what the Board has worked on the past year. We will end with a Q&A so bring your questions to the Board and Guild/Committee Chairs. In order to vote, you must have pledged by March 6, so if you haven't filled out a pledge form yet, you can find them in the sanctuary and on the home page of our website:

www.firstexistentialist.org

My country is the world, and my religion is to do good. ~ Thomas Paine

Guild Reports

Program Guild by Charlene Ball

The Program Guild held a facilitators' workshop on February 16. It was well attended, and we had a good discussion about facilitating at COLs. Our lineup of speakers for March includes guest speakers Sandra Barnhill of Foreverfamily Inc. on March 9 and Barbara Van Helsdingen, who will speak on Inuit spirituality, on March 30. Regulars Rev. Marsha Mitchiner, Rev. Janna Nelson, and Rev. Kate Hauk will return. Since March is Women's History Month, talks will focus on women's history and issues of special concern to women and families.

We welcome our new member, Dr. Jean Heinrich! Jean is glad to be back at First E after her travels.

Contact information for members of the Program Guild is as follows: Patton White: patton@beacondance.org; Charlene Ball: mcharleneball@yahoo.com; Linda Bell: lbell@gsu.edu; and Bill Laney: bill339la@yahoo.com. ~

Community News & Activities

--**Artist Vickie Martin** will show her work on the walls of First E March 23-April 27. Opening is Sunday, March 23.

--"**Existential Moment Coffeehouse**" will happen at First E on Saturday, March 15. Doors open at 7:30 pm, and music starts at 8:00. Admission \$5 per adult.

--**Silent auction** at Existential Moment Coffeehouse seeks donations of artwork, jewelry, crafts, gift certificates for massages or your business. Contact Elaine at ergale@hotmail.com.

--**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.

--**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** offers sandwiches, meals, and produce from local farmers and growers. Victoria Bennett-Trestrail is the owner and proprietor.

--**Lost-N-Found's thrift store** is open! Check it out.

--**Historic Old Fourth Ward Walking Tour Saturday, March 1**, tours at 10:00 am and 1:00 pm, 90 minutes, pay ahead \$10.00, no walk-ups. For tickets: blackmeccatours@yahoo.com.

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January 2014 Finance Report

Final Reminder: Please make your 2014 Pledge Now

| 2014 Cash Flow | Operating | All Other |
|--|---------------------------------------|---------------|
| Total Income | 5,416 | 434 |
| Total Expenses | (5,055) | 0 |
| Net thru January 31 | (361) | 434 |
| | | |
| Fund Types & Names | Account Balances on January 31 | |
| | < unaudited > | |
| General Operating Account | | 361 |
| | | |
| Designated Operating Funds | | 21,782 |
| | | |
| New "Use As Needed" Fund | | 1,609 |
| Gay Dellinger Estate Gift | | 162 |
| Sanctuary Accessibility | | 13,384 |
| Lanier Clance Lighting | | 1,294 |
| Leadership Development | | 215 |
| Community Garden | | (143) |
| Building & Grounds | | 111 |
| Woodland Sanctuary | | 1,569 |
| Minister's Discretionary | | 682 |
| Original 1st E History | | 68 |
| Labyrinth & Garden | | 256 |
| Social Justice | | 1,053 |
| Attic Insulation Fund | | 1,250 |
| Children's Program | | 122 |
| Music Fund | | 150 |
| | | |
| Pat Hewatt Revolving Loan Fund (\$8K) | | 5,065 |
| | | |
| Special Use Permit Loan Fund (\$4.5K) | | 44 |
| | | |
| Total First E Funds | | 27,252 |
| | | |
| Old Stone Church History Project | | 1,191 |

Third Friday Film Series
presents
Fruitvale Station
Friday, March 21, 2014
Doors open 7:00 pm – film starts at 7:30 pm
Popcorn and refreshments available
Donations welcome - \$1 to \$10 sliding scale
No one turned away
Sponsored by
First E's Social Justice Guild

If you would like to become a member or friend of First E, please fill out a pledge form located on the sanctuary literature rack or download the form from our website at <http://www.firstexistentialist.org>.

Annual Congregational Meeting
April 6
Be sure to pledge by March 6 (one month before the meeting) so you can

VOTE

Please 'like' us on Facebook!
<https://www.facebook.com/groups/43340332955/>

Social Justice Corner

Moral Monday Georgia: Becoming a Jailbird

By Lorraine Fontana

No doubt you've heard about the wide-ranging coalition in NC called Moral Monday (MM): the movement that's drawing huge crowds of folks to rallies and demonstrations at the North Carolina State Capitol, where the N.C. government is now run by Republicans with a decidedly right-wing agenda. That coalition took several years to build to the point where it is now. Well, it's catching . . . and several other Southern states (South Carolina, Alabama, maybe Florida) are trying to build such a coalition, including Georgia.

Georgia's MM is a still growing diverse coalition of organizations and individuals—from racial justice groups like NAACP, NAN, SCLC, and Rainbow Push to churches (e.g. Virginia Highlands Church and Ebenezer Baptist), disability organizations, unions, student groups (e.g. Georgia Student Justice Alliance), women's organizations (e.g. WAND), and the SNaP Coalition

(Solutions not Punishment formed in response to the attempted City of Atlanta banishment ordinance for those found guilty of prostitution) . . . and its newest member, First Existentialist Congregation of Atlanta!

. . . twenty-four of us [were] arrested after refusing to leave Senator Stone's office when he declined to even talk with us as a group about repealing Georgia's Stand Your Ground

MMGA has tried to select issues that our lawmakers can affect both through the laws they pass, and those they repeal, and that are agreed upon by a majority of progressive folks in the state. The first issue was Medicaid Expansion, since Governor Deal has decided to opt out of the Affordable Care Act (ACA) federal funding to expand those covered by Medicaid. The second was violence and guns—demanding the repeal of Georgia's version of a “stand your ground” law and opposing HB-875 which amends existing firearm laws to allow guns to be carried in school, places of worship, bars, and on college campuses. The third was standing for refunding public education, better pay for teachers and other school employees, and fighting against the school-to-prison pipeline. Still future (as of this writing) issues will involve labor and unemployment insurance, voter suppression, and reproductive rights.

MMGA did its first civil disobedience (CD) in relation to the Medicaid Expansion issue by sitting in at Governor Deal's office on January 27, when 10 people were arrested for trespassing. Our Social Justice Guild members have been rally attendees and I (Lorraine), through my work with Occupy Our Homes Atlanta (one of the key groups in the coming together of the MMGA idea), decided to finally get arrested doing CD at Senator Jesse Stone's office on February 8. This second CD had a group of twenty-four of us being arrested after refusing to leave Senator Stone's office when he declined to even talk with us as a group about repealing Georgia's Stand Your Ground and opposing the crazy “more guns” bill; we were charged with 16-11-34—preventing or disrupting lawful meetings, gatherings, or processions: a misdemeanor.

We had, of course, planned ahead, and our attorney, and my old NLG friend and colleague Brian Spears, worked to get us out on signature bonds (no bail money needed up front, but arrest if we fail to show up for the arraignment). We were a privileged group in that respect. The staff/officers were quite regimented and we were subjected to the jail's very strict rules re certain things: e.g. the men and women were separated and we could not talk with each other. Many others we saw the night we spent at the Fulton County Jail on Rice Street were not so lucky. We saw a woman who seemed angry and uncooperative getting wrestled to the ground and mistreated by two female officers after she refused to move out of a holding cell when they wouldn't tell her anything about how or where her two children were. One man started vigorously

Continued on page 7

Artist Exhibit: Vickie Martin

Vickie's art has been described as a dance of shapes, rhythms and textures. Being the daughter and grand-daughter of piano tuners, using rhythm is natural for her. Collage is added using anything interesting she finds, such as dress patterns, old maps, tissue paper, produce bags and stamps to name a few. A tactile surface is created, using not only paint, but everyday household items, such as salt, coffee, tea and alcohol. The layering of all of this creates a depth, and the more you look at her work, the more unexpected things begin appearing.

Vickie Martin will be exhibiting from March 23 through April 27. Opening will be Sunday the 23rd from 12:45-2:45 p.m. ~

*Do the best you can
until you know better.
Then do better. ~ Maya
Angelou.*



Circle of 4ths, by Vickie Martin. Photo courtesy of the artist.

Moral Monday Georgia: Becoming a Jailbird ~ continued from page 5

pounding on the glass wall of his holding cell and shouting—at first I thought he might be mentally ill—but later I was told he had been in there SO long without any processing or info about why, that he lost it.

The MM 24 spent from c. 4:30 p.m. to c. 4:00 a.m. the next morning in custody—getting arrested, driven to the jail, and processed (booked, fingerprinted and photographed) at the facility—while either sitting in DMV-like seats in a large main detention facility room and waiting, or in sparse holding cells with dirty benches along the walls and an open toilet without toilet paper. I was with a group of five women who were the last to be released, and we stepped out into the exit lobby to the cheers of all the other arrestees and our supporters that included my SJG sister, Libby, who had been there waiting for hours to drive me home. Thanks, Libby!

We jailbirds were told that it might be six months to a year or more before we have a first court date set. I imagine this reflects the huge number of arrests and cases going through the criminal justice system in Atlanta every day . . . sad to think about. We have started to get to know each other, as we talked and shared during those hours of waiting while being processed . . . an amazing group of folks who differ in race, age, sexual orientation, occupation and class, but who all feel the madness of “Stand Your Ground” type laws and increased presence of guns in our society is a big enough wrong, that we wanted to stand up against it and draw attention to the issue. May many more join us as Moral Monday grows and touches more Georgians. ~

Community News & Activities ~ continued from page 3

--**9to5** will celebrate its **Third Annual Women's History Celebration** on Saturday, March 8, at Manuel's Tavern, 11:00 am to 1:00 pm. Tickets \$15. To order: www.9to5.org/mar8.

--**RAP, a discussion group about race**, meets at the Little 5 Points Community Center on Sunday, March 16, from 5:00 to 8:00 p.m.

--**Moral Mondays**--meet at the State Capitol each Monday 4-6:00 during the Georgia legislative session.

--**UUA Southern Region** to hold first-ever concurrent Annual Assemblies April 25-26.

--**Submissions and news for the March Newsletter** are due to Charlene by **March 16**. 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 . ~

***We are a philosophically-based, spiritual community
dedicated to human liberation and founded on existentialist and
feminist principles.***

Sandra Kay Barnhill on March 9: “I Am Because We Are”

For over two decades, Sandra Kay Barnhill, an attorney, has been an activist and national advocate for prisoners, their children and family members, and a champion for reentry services that provide comprehensive support to prisoners so that they can successfully reunite with their families and reintegrate back into the community. Ms. Barnhill is the founder and National President of Foreverfamily, Inc., formerly Aid to Children of Imprisoned Mothers, Inc. (AIM), a national nonprofit headquartered in Atlanta that provides direct service programming for children and families affected by parental incarceration. In its twenty-seven years, Foreverfamily has provided services to over 15,000 children with a parent in prison.

Sandra was a 2011 Visiting Fellow at the Arcus Center for Social Justice Leadership at Kalamazoo College where during the Spring term, she team taught a class on social justice and spent concentrated time doing researching for her forthcoming book. Through interviewing over thirty-five activists, examining their organizing styles, and contrasting them with established organizing models, Barnhill has much to say about the need to embrace these new social justice leadership models and incorporate them into the fabric of social justice organizing so that three generations of justice workers can learn from one another and create long-lasting change. The book’s website, Tough Mind Tender Heart.com, launched on January 15, 2014, and in its initial weeks had over 5,700 hits.

Ms. Barnhill’s pioneering work has been recognized by the Ford Foundation. In 2004, she was selected as one of eighteen recipients of their Leadership for a Changing World Award. In 1997, she was granted a one-year fellowship with the Annie E. Casey Foundation, the nation’s largest foundation dedicated solely to disadvantaged children and families. This fellowship examined parental incarceration and its effects on children and families. Among her honors was selection in 2009 as One of Atlanta’s Top 100 Black Women of Influence by the Atlanta Business League. Ms. Barnhill is a 2012 recipient of the R. Pruden Herndon Service Award from the Gate City Bar Association, a 2014 recipient of the Community Activist Award from the Atlanta Tribune, and a member of the Board of Visitors for the College of Arts and Sciences at Georgia State University, her undergraduate alma mater. She received her Doctor of Jurisprudence degree from the University of Texas at Austin School of Law. ~

Barbara Van-Helsdingen on Inuit Spirituality March 30

Barbara Van-Helsdingen has been a lifelong resident of the Niagara Region in Canada. Born in Niagara Falls, she graduated from Brock University with BA and Bed degrees. Barbara accepted her current position as a teacher with the Kativik School Board in Northern Quebec in the Arctic Circle, and has worked for eight years in the small Inuit village of Kangirsuk on the Ungava Peninsula. She is happy to share her northern stories and passion for the Inuit culture, mythology, and art. She is an amateur photographer who has captured many northern delights. Barbara also writes poetry and stories of her time living in the Arctic. She had the opportunity to share and witness Inuit Spirituality while in the Arctic. To the Inuit (and Barbara), all life is unique and sacred. Life is the greater life of Nature.

Barbara was raised Catholic but has searched many different faiths through the years with an open heart. She has now found her heart settling in the greater Atlanta area with new friends and her partner Lynn. She feels a great hospitality and openness at the First Extentionalist Congregation and is happy to share her smile, hugs, and talk with everyone. With luck she will be a member who attends more frequently. Barbara will be able to share some of the art and photos after the service. Come and share some of her Northern Adventures through stories, art discussion, poetry, and photography. ~

. . . men can only know and come to care for one another by meeting face to face, arduously, and by the willing loss of comfort. ~
Wendell Berry

March 2014 Sunday Celebrations of Life

March is Women's History Month

- March 2** ***Readings, Stories and Reflections of the Season--
from Kate Hauk***
Speaker: Rev. Kate Hauk
Facilitator: Bill Laney
Accompanist: Alan Dynin
- March 9** ***I Am Because We Are***
Speaker: Sandra Barnhill
Facilitator: Lorraine Fontana
Accompanist: Dr. Jean Heinrich
- March 16** ***A Monstrous Regiment of Women***
Speaker: Rev. Janna Nelson
Facilitator: Ted Pettus
Accompanist: Scott Hooker
- March 23** ***Women of History: Past, Present, Future***
Speaker: Rev. Marsha Mitchiner
Facilitator: D. Patton White
Accompanist: TBA
- March 30** ***The Inuit and their Spirituality: How their Life and
Spirituality Affects us and Nature as a Whole***
Speaker: Barbara Van-Helsdingen
Facilitator: Libby Ware
Accompanist: TBA

*All men should be feminists. If men care
about women's rights the world will be a bet-
ter place. . . . We are better off when women
are empowered — it leads to a better society. ~
John Legend*

The Back Page

Members and Friends Speak Out

The Ladies Home Journal and the Awakening of a Feminist ~ By Libby Ware



I was raised with feminist principles by a woman who never called herself a feminist. As a child, I was raised with the mantras, "You can have whatever job you want; You need to go to college; It's fine if you get married, but you have to be able to support yourself."

My mother was told there was no such thing as a woman accountant even though she had the degree. When she found out that the man who had her job before her made more money, she complained. Her boss said, "But he has a family." She replied, to no avail, "I have a family." But I didn't know about feminism.

In the late 1960's and early 1970's, the Women's Liberation movement was happening. As a consumer of mass media, I thought feminists were a little "out there." This is partly because the newspapers would report only the most outrageous statements. (By the way, there was never an organized "bra burning" protest.) My family received several magazines—*Life*, *Look*, *Redbook*, *McCall's*, *The Ladies Home Journal*, *The Saturday Evening Post*, and *Reader's Digest*. I read all of them in addition to the daily newspaper.

I remember, when I was 17, sitting up in bed reading the August issue of *The Ladies Home Journal*, and suddenly I could feel my brain expanding. There were several articles by feminists and, wow, they made sense. You know that feeling you have when you read something and you love it so much you can't get enough of it? That's what I was experiencing. I can mark my becoming a feminist to that issue. *The Ladies Home Journal* converting people to feminism? How can this be? After all, this was the magazine with the regular feature, "Can This Marriage Be Saved?" (Once I was shocked to read that the marriage shouldn't be saved.)

In March 1970, at least 100 women marched into *The Ladies' Home Journal* office to protest the way the magazine's mostly male staff depicted women's interests. They staged a sit-in that lasted eleven hours, asking for female editorial staff, increased salaries, hiring women of color, free day care on the premises, and to stop running ads that degrade or exploit women. Even though not all of their demands were met, they were given a portion of the August issue for their own articles. And at least one teenager learned what feminism was all about and could put a name to the messages she was getting from her mother. How many other feminists were born reading that issue? We'll never know, but I do know that civil disobedience does matter even if the protesters don't know how many hearts and minds are converted by their actions. ~

*Existentialism is the subjective experience,
not some preset essence that determines what
a human becomes. - Rev. Marsha Mitchiner*

*The First E Newsletter is published monthly. Deadline for the
April 2014 newsletter is March 16. Send your articles and an-
nouncements to mcharleneball@yahoo.com. The editor reserves
the right to edit or refuse any material submitted.*