

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 •

An Evening of Storytelling at First E on Saturday, November 8



*Clockwise
from top
left: Dorothy
Kirk,
Barry
Stewart
Mann,
Nita
Roberts,
and Gail
Reeder.*

On Saturday, November 8, from 7:00 until 10:00 p.m., First E will host our Second Annual Evening of Storytelling. Talented storytellers and musicians will entertain and move you to laughter and tears.

This is our second year of presenting a storytelling event in the fall, and some of last year's storytellers are returning: Dorothy Kirk, Gail Reeder, and Nita Roberts. They will be joined by Barry Stewart Mann, an Atlanta-based actor, storyteller, writer, and educator. This year we'll have music by Aviva, singer, songwriter, and pianist, and the First E Street Band.

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**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

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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 First E. Board met on Monday, September 8, due to the first Monday falling on Labor Day. Ashlea Davis presented a proposal to produce a theatrical production at the First E in December. The Board was in unanimous support for her proposal. Stay tuned for more details to come! Bill Read reported that he successfully petitioned DeKalb County to consider both of our property lots as belonging to a non-profit, and therefore exempt from property tax, saving First E over \$1,000. Thank you, Bill! The Board discussed the wrap-up of the Lanier Clance Memorial Lighting Fund and agreed to make one final push at the Founders' Day Celebration of Life. The next Board meeting will be on Monday, October 6, at 7:00 PM at the First E. All are welcome! ~

Community News & Activities

--**The First E Third Friday Film Series** presents *United in Anger* on **November 21 at 7:30 p.m.** at First E. Donations \$1-\$10.00; no one turned away. Refreshments available. Discussion led by members of of SisterLove.

--**The Atlanta Celebrates Photography Show** will run through **November**. We are pleased to host the work of these wonderful photographers on the walls of our Sanctuary.

--**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.

--**The First E Liberation Ukulele Group** meets 1st, 3rd, and 4th Wednesday evenings at First E around 7:30. Instruction available once a month. All levels welcome. 404-626-4763 for more information.

--**Charis Books and More** will celebrate its **40th birthday in November!** Visit the store at 292 Moreland Ave., Atlanta, 30307, call 404-524-0304, or go to www.charisbooksand-more.com for a complete listing of events.

--**The Racism Action Project (RAP)**, a discussion group about race, will meet at the Little 5 Points Community Center on Sunday, November 19, from 5:00 to 8:00 p.m.

--**Lost-n-Found Thrift and Consignment Store**, 2585 Chantilly Drive, is open M-Sat 10-5; Sundays noon-6.

--**Ending Gun Violence** in Georgia: A Multi-faith Event of Advocacy and Action, will take place on November 14-15. For information, contact Maureen Thompson Hunt 404-601-3124 or mthompson@cpcatlanta.org.

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Guild Reports

Program Guild *by Charlene Ball*

The Program Guild met on Tuesday, October 21, and planned the Sunday COLs for January, February, and March. For those who might want more information about our process, here's what we do. We meet once a quarter to plan the next three months. We dig into our address books (virtual or paper, or rolodex) for names of possible speakers. After discussion, we tentatively plug in speakers to ask. Certain speakers already have understandings with us that they will speak monthly or bi-monthly. These are our Fellowship Minister, Rev. Marsha Mitchiner (every other month); Rev. Duncan Teague (monthly when he is available); and Rev. Kate Hauk (every other month). When they have been placed, we look for guest speakers to fill in the three or four other Sundays in the month.

We select guest speakers to ask based on whether we have heard them and think the congregation would like to hear them; whether they have been requested by members of the congregation and would bring a message that goes with our values; and whether they have spoken at First E before and were well received. Also, of course, their availability is key. We're now in the process of asking speakers for January, February, and March. While we are securing speakers, we also begin to ask accompanists and musicians for special music. Our regular accompanists are Dr. Jean Heinrich, Alan Dynin, Bill Chelton, Charli Vogt, and Janet Metzger.

Members of the congregation serve as facilitators for COLs. Three of us facilitate regularly: Patton White, Charlene Ball, and Bill Laney. We are always looking for more facilitators, however, so if you are wondering what facilitating is like and think you might like to try it, see one of us. We are Patton White (patton@beacondance.org), Charlene Ball (mcharleneball@yahoo.com), Linda Bell (lbell@gsu.edu), Bill Laney (bill339la@yahoo.com), and Hank Pfadenhauer (amirtechnicality@gmail.com). Also see us if you would like to give feedback, recommend a speaker, musician, or topic, or join the Program Guild. ~

Membership Guild *by Wilj Sturkey (with additions by Charlene Ball)*

The Membership Guild co-sponsored a potluck after the service on October 26, on which we celebrated El Dia de los Muertos. Our pattern is to try to have a potluck or a kiddush every other month. The potluck coincided with the opening of a new show of photographs that were part of Atlanta Celebrates Photography. First E members and friends mingled with art opening guests and enjoyed food, drink, and fellowship.

The Membership Guild will make a presentation to the congregation on November 30 during Guild Month, introducing our group and explaining what we do. As part of our group's agenda in the coming months, we plan to partner with Ashlea Davis to come up with ideas for some new brochures to spread the word about First E in order to attract new members. Ashlea is a graphic designer who has created many eye-catching and creative pieces in the past for First E. With her help, we hope to draw in more new members to First E.

At our recent meeting we addressed the problem we were having with our system of contacting newcomers who had left their addresses in the Visitor Book requesting information about First E. When our system is working properly, we send out an email acknowledging the visit and enclose a copy of the most recent newsletter. We also send the visitor's name on to other First E members. We had a temporary breakdown in the system that we hope is now fixed. ~

Social Justice Corner

Winter's Bone Screened on October 17 with Live Music from The Rosin Sisters

By Linda Bell

The 3rd Friday Film Series has been sponsored for quite a while now by the Social Justice Guild. We have shown a variety of films, recently *Persepolis*, *Good Night and Good Luck*, *Crisis in the Congo*, *Dirty Wars*, and *Winter's Bone*. We choose our films for their social justice themes and try our best to select important films that our members and others in the community may not have had a chance to see.

Our October film was *Winter's Bone*, from 2013. As advertised, the film shows an unflinching Ozark Mountain girl as she hacks through dangerous social terrain hunting down her crystal meth-dealing father while trying to keep her family intact. It was hailed in *Entertainment Weekly* as "one of the unshowiest and most true-blooded epics of Americana you're ever likely to see," given 4 stars by Roger Ebert, and received 92 film festival nominations and 69 wins, including AFI Movie of the Year. It is a significant film, one that I would recommend to all who still haven't had the opportunity to see it.

Our showing was particularly memorable, though, partly because of the difficulty we had with the sound system toward the end, just as we were all caught up in the action and biting our nails. Fortunately, we had had the subtitles on for those of us who are hard of hearing so we could finish watching the film and not be left with the anxiety the story had generated.

Mostly, it was memorable because we had asked Barbara Panter of the Rosin Sisters to lead the discussion afterwards. The discussion was lively and interesting, and it really made a difference having Barbara, her husband Whit Connah, and Jan Smith, another member of the Rosin Sisters. With their roots in Appalachia, an area affected by many of the same problems as the Ozarks, they were able to add significant insights and accounts from their own experiences, enormously enriching the discussion.

Especially memorable was their playing and singing a couple of songs. One, "Farther Along," was played early on in the film and then later sung. For any interested in their wonderful singing, the Rosin Sisters (along with Whit) are regulars at the Marlay House, a pub in downtown Decatur next to the Post Office, on Tuesday evenings from 8:00 to 10:00 p.m. ~

Community News & Activities ~ continued from page 2

--**Bucky Motter** and Sophie Sputnik invite you to their event, "an evening of rockin' / acoustic but not unplugged," at My Sister's Room in Atlanta on November 8 @ 11 PM.

--**Submissions and news for the December Newsletter** are due to Charlene by Sunday, November 16. Send Board and Guild reports and news items to mcharleneball@yahoo.com.

--**Contact Robert Stewart** with your news and activities for his weekly e-newsletter: robertstewart369@gmail.com -- ****NOTE CHANGE IN EMAIL.** ~

Evening of Storytelling ~ Continued from page 1

Dorothy Kirk began writing her life stories in her memoir, "Born Gifted Need Help," a few years before retiring. Several of her stories make up her one-woman show, "Hold Still! I Can't See Myself." Her second show, "I Came Out in a Darkroom," was inspired when a younger friend told Dorothy she was the only person she knew who came out before Stonewall. For her, it's been a 50-year journey from invisibility to possibility.

Barry Stewart Mann teaches and performs through the Alliance Theatre, Arts for Learning at the Woodruff Arts Center, the Atlanta Partnership for Arts in Learning, and Lesley University. He was named National Storyteller of the Year in 1999, and was a featured teller at the 2012 Festival Internacional de Cuentacuentos in Santo Domingo, DR. He shares his life with a household of fellow actors — his partner Sheri and their sons Tendal and Royce.

Gail Reeder is a writer/comedian whose love of laughter is a rural N.C. family tradition. She was a member of The Sisters of No Mercy and Funny That Way theatrical troops. In addition to three books on fabric art, Gail has written a column for *Pulse Magazine* and articles for *Southern Voice*. Her story of the North Carolina demonstration was recently published in *Sinister Wisdom*, Summer 2014.

Nita Roberts spent 33 years telling stories to the toughest of audiences, her seven-year-old Fulton County students. After retirement, she decided to spin yarns for safer audiences...adults. She lives in Roswell with her partner Jeanne, their fourteen-year-old, one-eyed peekapoo KC and Alex the Cat, who rescued them all from having to sleep soundly throughout the night. Her favorite topic, besides all things Southern, is her son, Kyle.

Aviva has been writing songs on piano since the age of 8, when she won her first national award for composing. She has written over a hundred original songs and is registered with BMI. In 2011 she won a city competition for best songwriting in Atlanta. In 2012, Aviva and the Flying Penguins released "*Painted Truth*" featured in iTunes, and she has just released a music video, "*Love Unspoken.*"

The First E Street Band is an eclectic and shape-shifting group of musicians from First E and beyond, who enjoy creating and sharing their talents at various E-vents throughout the year. You never know what they will come up with collectively on a given night, but you can count on it being a heartfelt and mind-expanding experience.

Delicious snacks will be on hand, prepared by First E member Mary Turnpaugh. Wine, beer, sodas, and bottled water will also be available for donations. Admission is \$10, more if you can, less if you can't. If you enjoyed last year's event, be sure not to miss this year's. An Evening of Storytelling at First E is a fundraiser for our congregation, so come out to support a good cause and enjoy some quality entertainment from talented artists. ~



Top: Aviva of Aviva and the Flying Penguins; bottom: Andy Weiskoff and Ted Pettus (aka the Bentley Brothers) of the First E Street Band.

Once upon a time Long, long ago The other day Up on the mountain When I was young Back in the day Long ago so far In the old days Have you ever met friend? When it gets this time of . . . See, there this frog . . . day, Bre'r bit was going the road . . . upon a time Long, long . . The other . . Up on the mountain . . When I young . . . in the day Long ago so . . In the old Have ever met friend? When it gets this time of . . . See, there this frog . . . day, Bre'r bit was going the road . . . upon a time Long, long . . The other . . Up on the mountain When I was young Back in the day Long ago so far In the

Presenting

An Evening of Storytelling at

❖ First E ❖

Saturday, November 8
7:00-10:00 PM

featuring

Dorothy Kirk
Barry Stewart Mann
Nita Roberts
Gail Reeder

*Admission \$10, more if you can, less if you can't
Delicious Snacks, Wine, Beer, Sodas available*

First Existentialist Congregation
470 Candler Park Drive, Atlanta, GA 30307
404-378-5570

. . . . When I was young Back in the day Long ago so far In the

November Speakers at First E

Stacey Hopkins, who will speak on November 2 on "Rock the Vote!", coordinates We Count! Georgia at Georgia WAND (Women's Action for New Directions). She has spent many hours registering voters, canvassing, and testifying about voter rights. She says, "Getting my feet wet in the political and social justice arena, I guess I could consider myself a community organizer and/or activist. Politically speaking, I'm a Democratic voter but consider myself part of the Human Party. I currently work with non-profit organizations as a community organizer recruiting, training, and mobilizing citizens directly affected by the organization's issues by developing strategic campaigns and engaging in direct actions. I have over sixteen years of experience in residential real estate law and mortgage lending, with extensive hands-on experience in all aspects of residential lending."

Pam Glustrom and Cheri Tiernan will speak on November 9 about the Compassionate Cities Charter, which Atlanta has signed. First E has also signed the Charter. Pam is a retired Special Education teacher currently devoted full time to volunteer service. In addition to serving on the organizing committee of Compassionate Atlanta, Pam volunteers at Shepherd Spinal Center, Paideia School and for a hunger relief program at First Presbyterian Church. She is married, lives in midtown and has 3 grown sons. Cheri Tiernan is the Head of Community Relations at the Shambhala Meditation Center of Atlanta and serves on the organizing committee for Compassionate Atlanta. Cheri is a writer and former marketing director for Boys & Clubs of America. She lives in Decatur with her husband, Jamie, and their two young children, Sean and Cate.

Angela Denise Davis, our speaker on November 16, will speak on "Thanksgiving." Angela is a certified rehabilitation counselor and an ordained minister. A graduate of Clark Atlanta University, she has a master of divinity degree from Vanderbilt University Divinity School and a master of science in rehabilitation counseling from Georgia State University. She worked as admissions director at Vanderbilt University Divinity School and continuing education director at American Baptist College in Nashville, Tennessee. Her vocational waters flow in two rivers. As an ordained

Giveaway Ceremony Reminder

On Nov. 30, please bring an item for yourself and each family member to give away as part of the Ceremony. If you can't decide on just one, you can bring the extra for a visitor to use. Ideally, it would be something with a personal meaning or a symbol of gratitude for you. It might be a souvenir from a trip; a book you enjoyed; a bulb from your garden; or an ear of dried corn—whatever inspires you. Thank you! *Sharon Mathis* ~

minister, she has facilitated a spiritual collective, Sister Harriet, since 2010. As a rehabilitation counselor, she helps blind and vision impaired individuals navigate their career path as the employment specialist at the Center for the Visually Impaired (CVI) and through her counseling and consultation service, Braille South. Angela is also an artist and has been a freelance graphic designer for over 15 years. She currently serves as vice president of the Statewide Independent Living Council (SILC). Angela lives in East Point, Georgia, with her partner, Mary Anne Adams, and their canine child, Kasi.

Rev. Kate Hauk will speak on November 23. Kate is an ordained U.C.C. (Congregational) minister of twenty-seven years. She has lived in Atlanta for twenty-two years and has two children: Alexis, a recent creative writing graduate of Emory, and Thomas, a sweet, Buddhist-gourmet chef, who would have been twenty on July 18. Kate has been a storyteller and a writer/editor, mostly of personal essays, since winning the essay Contest at Camp Allegheny at fifteen. She has worked in a variety of churches—U.C.C, Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Atlanta, The Friends School of Atlanta, and is now a part time interim minister at Oakhurst Baptist Church, a liberal congregation. She speaks every other month at First Existentialist Congregation.

Sharon Mathis, our speaker for November 30, will lead our annual Native American Giveaway (see The Back Page.). Sharon is a psychologist; playwright and solo performer; and founding member of the Congregation. Her most recent play "The Liars' Child" won an Ethel Woolson Award for best plays of 2013, and her solo show "He/She and Me" was produced in New Orleans, San Francisco, and New York. ~

November 2014 Sunday Celebrations of Life

November 2 Rock the Vote!

Speaker: Stacey Hopkins

Facilitator: Libby Ware

Accompanist: Dr. Jean Heinrich

Finance and Fundraising Guilds

November 9 Compassionate Cities

Speakers: Pam Glustrom and Cheri Tiernan

Facilitator: Charlene Ball

Accompanist: Aviva and the Flying Penguins

Education and Communication/Newsletter Guilds

November 16 Thanksliving

Speaker: Rev. Angela Denise Davis

Facilitator: Bill Laney

Accompanist: William "Bill" Chelton

Building & Grounds and Art Guilds

November 23 Readings, Stories, and Reflections of the Season

Speaker: Rev. Kate Hawk

Facilitator: D. Patton White

Accompanist: Alan Dynin

Program and Social Justice Guilds

November 30 Native American Giveaway

Speaker: Sharon Mathis

Facilitator: Barbara Van Helsdingen

Accompanist: Dr. Jean Heinrich

Membership Guild

The Back Page

Members and Friends Speak Out



The Giveaway Ceremony

By Sharon Mathis

The Giveaway Ceremony is about creating an experience of connection. I give away to honor my connection with this community in this moment. I give away to celebrate what I have been given by others, by my own labor, by the earth, and by whatever powers I can't name that sometimes seem to send me a blessing. In a society driven by getting more, I believe that gratitude for the abundance at hand is a radical choice. W.S. Merwin wrote, "we are saying thank you and waving, dark though it is."

~

The Existentialist is published monthly. Deadline for the December 2014 newsletter is November 16. Send your articles and announcements to mcharleneball@yahoo.com. The editor reserves the right to edit or refuse any material submitted.