

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 •

Awesome Volunteers Install New Legacy Markers in Candler Park

by Tom Painter

At 9 a.m. on the steamy Saturday morning of August 23, a group of energized volunteers gathered on the park side of Candler Park Drive at Miller Ave., the location of what used to be an African American Legacy Marker of the Early Edgewood-Candler Park BiRacial History Project. Earlier this year in January, a semi-truck and trailer caught and broke off a large limb from a tree just south of the marker's location, dragged the limb like a very large club as the truck moved northward, hitting and destroying the marker.

The August 23 group was ably led by Edi Kelman (who also provided cold water and



Photos of neighborhood volunteers with newly installed Legacy markers. Top right photo by Bonnie Palter; bottom left photo by Edi/th Kelman.



very tasty brownies!), and was tasked with installing a new marker, freeing the pathway along the street from creeping kudzu and low-hanging branches, spreading mulch around the marker, and generally sprucing up the place. Randy Pimsler and Danny Feig were the marker installers-in-chef. Other helpers included Amy Irwin, Bill Read, Bonnie Palter, Carol Gregory, Daryl Nenstiel, Diriga Bough, Don Bender, Glen Lopez, Jesse

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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 *Winter's Bone* on **October 21 at 7:30 p.m.** at First E. Donations \$1-\$10.00; no one turned away. Refreshments available. Discussion led by Barbara Panter. Special musical guests!

--**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.

--**The Program Guild** will meet next on **October 21** at 6:00 p.m. at First E. All members and friends are welcome to attend.

--**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.

--**The 44th Atlanta Pride** is Saturday-Sunday October 11-12. Information: <http://atlantapride.org/pride/>

--**Charis Books and More** will celebrate its **40th birthday** in November. To help build the Charis float for Atlanta Pride, drop by Charis from 4-7:00 p.m. this Thursday through Saturday; info@charicircle.org.

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

--**October Month of Resistance to Mass Incarceration.** Events on October 11, 22, and 30 to protest mass incarceration. Information: <http://stopmassincarceration.net/>

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Guild Reports

Program Guild *by Charlene Ball*

The Program Guild will meet October 21 to plan the Celebrations of Life for the first 3 months in 2015.

In October, we will have First E member Hank Pfadenhauer speaking on physics, philosophy, and faith; Rev. Kim Palmer on panhandlers; special guest Sam Livingston of Morehouse College on the Congo; and Rev. Marsha Mitchiner on the Day of the Dead. We'll also have our Day of the Dead altar, and members are invited to bring pictures of departed loved ones (including pets) and their favorite foods.

The Program Guild is Patton White (patton@beacondance.org), Charlene Ball (mcharleneball@yahoo.com), Linda Bell (lbell@gsu.edu), and Bill Laney (bill3391a@yahoo.com). Contact us if you would like to facilitate, give feedback, recommend a speaker, musician, or topic, or join the Program Guild. ~

We Need More Facilitators!

***First E needs more facilitators!** We who facilitate regularly love the job, but what would happen if none of us were available? When we're all in Paris, in jail, taking care of kids, washing dogs, dancing on the Beltline, writing, sewing costumes, or climbing the Himalayas? (Believe it or not, some of us have done all these things.)*

Some of you have facilitated before. Why not give it a try again? Some may feel that facilitating is complicated. But really all you need to know is the order of service in the Sunday bulletin. It stays the same from Sunday to Sunday. There might be an extra musician or a special performance, but you'll know about that way ahead of time. We'll send you contact information for the speaker of the day, and you can email and ask about their topic. You can talk to them before the service if you have any questions. We'll also send you the email for the accompanist so you can discuss the songs.

Facilitating is a great way to contribute to First E and meet some wonderful people. So I invite you to facilitate. You'll be glad you did. ~ Charlene

DAY of the DEAD CELEBRATION

We will hold our annual DAY of the DEAD CELEBRATION on Oct 26. Please bring pictures of your deceased loved ones and items that remind you of them. We will have an altar to place these to share with your First E family. Also, after the service we will have a pot luck, so bring something that was a special food of your loved one. We will enjoy the fellowship of our community with food and stories. ~ Marsha

Social Justice Corner

Appropriate Whiteness Workshops

By Libby Ware

The Social Justice Guild of First Existentialist, RAP (Racism Action Project), and Georgia WAND sponsored four workshops led by Loretta Ross, an expert on women's issues, hate groups, racism and intolerance, human rights, and violence against women. Her work focuses on the intersectionality of social justice issues and how this affects social change and all movements. Loretta spoke at First Existentialist in May about Appropriate Whiteness and many in attendance said they would like to hear more.

Loretta developed the idea of appropriate whiteness when she worked with former KKK members and she discovered that the only white people who express pride in being white are people who are involved with White Supremacy movements. She

believes we can construct a lens of being white and appropriately proud. Instead of being ashamed of what whites have perpetuated in this country, we can look at white abolitionists and civil rights workers as people to be proud of.

"Fighting white supremacy can be fun." ~ Loretta Ross

Loretta defines White Supremacy as a system that advantages some people and not others. The workshop participants identified the following components of the White Privilege System: sexism, homophobia, transphobia, anti-semitism, anti-Islam, classism, etc. The purpose of White Supremacy is to maintain the status quo and to secure the role of the 1% by dividing the 99%. The best use of white privilege is to use it against white supremacy with the goal of deconstructing and dismantling white privilege.

The group explored how white supremacy hurts white people. Some of the ideas include:

- Fear of talking about race, privilege, and supremacy
- Ideas based on fear vs. facts
- Missing out on the richness of diversity
- Normalizing racism and violence
- Scapegoating, false blame, and false solutions
- Silence of not talking about race in families
- Acting against your own self-interest, dividing working people
- Rigid ideas of masculinity and femininity
- Fear of saying the wrong thing
- Multi-generational trauma
- Invisibilizing whiteness—stripping of ethnic heritage, forcing you into bland "whiteness."

The four workshops addressed the following issues:

1. The Difference Between the Merit System and White Privilege
2. Understanding the History of White Abolitionists
3. How to Actively Listen and Ask Questions with People of Color
4. How to Have Difficult Conversations with the People You Love about White Supremacy

We learned ways to be accomplices to people of color. Loretta prefers "accomplices" rather than "allies." The white right wing manipulates white racial anger. To fight those groups we need the right way to counter their propaganda. Don't criticize the person, but the behavior. Dr. King taught that we can do this work from a place of love. Putting issues at the level of an individual negates the systemic realities that put us where we are. But most of all, Loretta believes that fighting white supremacy can be fun. ~

Volunteers Install New Legacy Markers ~ continued from page 1

Orrock, Jim Kessel, John Skach, Kelly Jordan, Ken Edelstein, Peter & Kelly Bluestone, Roger Bakeman, Roz Mance, Seth Eisenberg, Tom Painter, and Nik Nerburn. Apologies to any who helped whose names were not included. The newly replaced Legacy Marker provides information about the 1893-1942 site of the African American Edgewood Evening Star Lodge, which is now a soccer pitch.

Once this task was complete, the group moved to the park's southwest corner and handily replaced a second marker that had been knocked seriously out of kilter during construction of the McLendon Ave. sidewalk. This was the site of the Rose Hill/Mayson Ave. Subdivision (1892-1942). Thanks to the BiRacial History Project's partners, a Park Pride Small Change grant, a Love Your Block grant from the Mayor's office, Kissberg Construction, CPNO and neighborhood volunteers, these Legacy Markers once again provide passersby with valuable information, telling the stories of the African American community and residents who once thrived in Candler Park. ~



Left to right: Randy Pimsler, Tom Painter, Danny Feig. Photo by Glen Lopez.

For more information visit (www.BiRacialHistoryProject.org)

Thanks to All who Helped with Candler Park Tour of Homes on September 28

Thank you to all who helped with the Candler Park Tour of Homes, Gardens, and Significant Spaces, as well as the simultaneous Atlanta Celebrates Photography exhibit. We had a wonderful turnout, and I think those who came expecting one event were pleasantly surprised to have an extra bonus. Edi Kelman was instrumental in setting up and maintaining the "Old Stone Church" history and bi-racial intercongregational aspect of the tour; and Glen Lopez (home with pneumonia) continues to keep our walls decorated with incredible art.

Many of our members stayed after service to help, and a few key members from our sister congregation, Antioch East Baptist, came by to show support. ~ Much Love, Cindy Lou Who

Primavera Preschool and After-school Art Program at First E

Primavera Preschool, a Spanish immersion preschool serving children 2 to 4 years old, operates out of First E three mornings a week, Mondays, Tuesdays, and Wednesdays, from 9:00 a.m. until 12:45 p.m. The school emphasizes a multimodal nature based approach to learning that includes outdoor exploration, music, dance, yoga, art, cooking, literacy, gardening and practical life activities. The school's guiding principles are based on philosophies in Montessori, Reggio Emilia and Waldorf education. Teachers are Julia Weidmann, Carla Key, and Sabrina Vera.

And five days a week, Cheri Smithson offers an after-school art program at First E for school-age children, Mondays through Fridays, from 3:00-6:00 p.m. This program mainly serves children from Mary Lin School and the Candler Park community.

First E is glad to provide home for these educational programs. ~



Photos courtesy of Primavera Preschool.

Community News & Activities ~ continued from page 2

--**Lost-n-Found Thrift and Consignment Store**, 2585 Chantilly Drive, is open M-Sat 10-5; Sundays noon-6. Lost-n-Found's youth drop-in center is open Mondays and Wednesdays noon-5; Fridays noon-8, with dinner served at 6 p.m. An article about Lost-n-Found appeared in *Atlanta Progressive News (APN)*: <https://www.facebook.com/atlantaprogressivenews>.

--**October 19-25 is "Breaking the Silence: Congo Week,"** an opportunity to raise awareness about the devastating situation in the Congo and mobilize support on behalf of the people of the Congo. On October 19, First E will have a speaker who will address the situation in the Congo. For information: <http://globalministries.org/africa/congo-week.html>.

--**Submissions and news for the November Newsletter** are due to Charlene by Sunday, October 19. 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.** ~

Rev. Duncan Teague Ordained at UUCA September 27, 2014

Rev. Duncan Teague, longtime friend of First Existentialist, was ordained to the UUA ministry by the Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Atlanta (UUCA) on September 27, 2014. Duncan's husband, David Thurman, presented Duncan with the stole representing the ministry.



Behind Duncan and David can be seen several First E members, as well as Rev. Marsha Mitchiner (center), Rev. Marti Keller (lower

left), both of whom participated in the service. We congratulate Duncan on his chosen path as an ordained UUA minister, and our love and best wishes go with him. Love and Courage. ~

October 2014: Month of Resistance to Mass Incarceration

By Bert Skellie, New Jim Crow Action Group

Churches and faith-based leaders and organizations have called for an interfaith month of resistance to mass incarceration. Dr. Cornell West, Rev. Jerome McCorry, and Pastor Richard Dalton have asked churches, synagogues and mosques to include sermons and special programs on mass incarceration. For more information, visit: <http://stopmassincarceration.net/> ; "Faith Based Initiative." Events in Atlanta are listed below:

October 1- Month of Resistance KICK OFF event and Press Conference. 5-6pm, Woodruff (Troy Davis) Park, downtown Atlanta

October 11- Resistance Concert and Panel 1-5pm, CWA Building, 279 Logan St.SE, Atl, 30312

October 22- National Day of Protest to Stop Police Brutality, Repression and the Criminalization of a Generation Gather at 4pm (tentative) in Woodruff Park (Edgewood and Peachtree) for a demonstration, speakout and march.

October 30- National Wear Orange Day in solidarity AGAINST mass incarceration.

stopmassincarcerationatl@gmail.com; <http://www.gofundme.com/d383es>

October 2014 Sunday Celebrations of Life

- October 5** *Physics, Philosophy and Faith*
Speaker: Hank Pfadenhauer
Facilitator: Bill Laney
Accompanist: Alan Dynin
- October 12** *Encountering the Panhandler: An Approach Grounded in Faith*
Speaker: Rev. Kim Palmer
Facilitator: D. Patton White
Accompanist: Aviva and the Flying Penguins
- October 19** *The Crisis in the Congo*
Speaker: Sam Livingston
Facilitator: Lorraine Fontana
Accompanist: William "Bill" Chelton
- October 26** *Day of the Dead / Celebrate Life*
Speaker: Rev. Marsha Mitchiner
Facilitator: Charlene Ball
Accompanist: Janet Metzger
Day of the Dead Recognition

*Kindness is in our power, even when fondness is not. ~
Samuel Johnson, lexicographer (1709-1784)*

The Back Page

Members and Friends Speak Out



DEAR JOHN CAMPAIGN— JUSTICE IN THE CONGO

By Libby Ware

Before Senator Barak Obama was elected President, before Hillary Clinton or John Kerry became Secretary of State, all three co-sponsored a bill that was enacted into law as Public Law 109-456. Section 105 of that law mandated that aid to The Congo would be terminated if there is evidence of human rights violations. A tremendous amount of persecution, rape, and murder is being perpetuated in The Congo.

The Dear John Campaign is a call for Secretary of State John Kerry to stop financing, arming, training, and providing diplomatic cover to strongmen in Africa (Rwanda and Uganda) who are destabilizing The Congo.

A tremendous amount of persecution, rape, and murder is being perpetuated in The Congo.

We have postcards in the sanctuary for people to fill out and send to Secretary of State John Kerry, urging him to fulfill the requirements of Section 105 of the law.

Congo Week takes place October 19-25. There will be events happening all over Atlanta. This is a good opportunity to learn more about The Congo. Our Speaker for October 19 is Sam Livingston of Morehouse College, who will talk about the crisis in the Congo. Please join us and pick up a postcard to send to John Kerry all through the month. ~

The Existentialist is published monthly. Deadline for the November 2014 newsletter is October 19. Send your articles and announcements to mcharleneball@yahoo.com. The editor reserves the right to edit or refuse any material submitted.

Neutrality helps the oppressor, never the victim. Silence encourages the tormentor, never the tormented. ~ Elie Wiesel, writer, Nobel laureate (b. 1928)