

# Amnesty International Group 22 Pasadena/Caltech News

Volume XIX Number 2, February 2011

## UPCOMING EVENTS

**Thursday, February 24, 7:30 PM.** Monthly Meeting. Caltech Y is located off San Pasqual between Hill and Holliston, south side. You will see two curving walls forming a gate to a path--our building is just beyond. Help us plan future actions on Sudan, the 'War on Terror', death penalty and more.

**Tuesday March 8, 7:30 PM.** Letter writing meeting at Caltech Athenaeum, corner of Hill and California in Pasadena. This informal gathering is a great way for newcomers to get acquainted with Amnesty!

**Sunday, March 20, 6:30 PM.** Rights Readers Human Rights Book Discussion group. This month we read "Stones into Schools" by Greg Mortenson.

## COORDINATOR'S CORNER

Hi everyone

Lucas Kamp and I attended the get-together of all the AI groups in LA County, called OCLA or "Organizing City Los Angeles" on January 29. We saw some old members and met new ones from college groups and YPAI (Young Professionals Amnesty International), a new group that has formed. It was fun and Kala, our organizer for the Western region, kept everybody going the whole day! Read Lucas' report in this newsletter. There will be another meeting Saturday May 14.

Joyce Wolf, case manager for our Chinese POC, Gao Zhisheng, has put a page for him on our group's website where you can take action. See her column in this newsletter for information on how to access this!

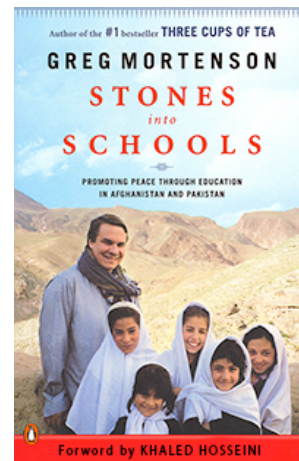
This month for our book group we're reading Greg Mortenson's "Stones into Schools"- the continuing story of his quest to build schools for poor children, especially girls, in remote regions of Pakistan and Afghanistan. I'm proud to say that Greg is an RN as well as a famous humanitarian who has won many awards for his work building schools and a mountain climber. I have included an article on Greg from one of the "freebie" nursing magazines I receive. I have explained the medical terms in parentheses.

Con cariño,  
Kathy

## RIGHTS READERS

Human Rights Book Discussion Group

Keep up with Rights Readers at  
<http://rightsreaders.blogspot.com>



Next Rights Readers meeting:  
Sunday, March 20, 6:30 PM

Vroman's Bookstore  
695 E. Colorado Boulevard  
In Pasadena

## About the Author



Greg Mortenson is the co-founder of nonprofit Central Asia Institute [www.ikat.org](http://www.ikat.org), founder of Pennies For Peace [www.penniesforpeace.org](http://www.penniesforpeace.org), co-author of the #1 New York Times bestseller *Three Cups of Tea* [www.threecupsoftea.com](http://www.threecupsoftea.com), and author of bestseller *Stones into Schools* [www.stonesintoschools.com](http://www.stonesintoschools.com).

In 2009, Mortenson received Pakistan's highest civil award, Sitara-e-Pakistan ("Star of Pakistan") for his dedicated and humanitarian effort to promote education and literacy in rural areas for fifteen years.

Several bi-partisan U.S. Congressional representatives nominated Mortenson for the Nobel Peace Prize this year. The award recipient is chosen by a secret process and announced in October.

Mortenson was born in Minnesota in 1957. He grew up on the slopes of Mt. Kilimanjaro, Tanzania (1958 to 1973). His father Dempsey, co-founded Kilimanjaro Christian Medical Center (KCMC) [www.kcmc.ac.tz](http://www.kcmc.ac.tz) a teaching hospital, and his mother, Jerene, founded the International School Moshi [www.ismoshi.org](http://www.ismoshi.org).

He served in the U.S. Army in Germany (1977-1979), where he received the Army Commendation Medal, and graduated from the University of South Dakota in 1983.

In July 1992, Mortenson's sister, Christa, died from a massive seizure after a lifelong struggle with epilepsy on the eve of a trip to visit Dysersville, Iowa, where the baseball movie, 'Field of Dreams', was filmed in a cornfield.

To honor his sister's memory, in 1993, Mortenson climbed Pakistan's K2, the world's second highest mountain in the Karakoram Range.

While recovering from the climb in a village called Korphe, Mortenson met a group of children sitting in the dirt writing with sticks in the sand, and made a promise to help them build a school.

From that rash promise, grew a remarkable humanitarian campaign, in which Mortenson has dedicated his life to promote education, especially for girls, in remote regions of Pakistan and Afghanistan.

As of 2011, Mortenson has established or significantly supports 171 schools in rural and often volatile regions of Pakistan and Afghanistan, which provide education to over 68,000 children, including 54,000 girls, where few education opportunities existed before.

His work has not been without difficulty. In 1996, he survived an eight day armed kidnapping by the Taliban in Pakistan's Northwest Frontier Province tribal areas, escaped a 2003 firefight with feuding Afghan warlords by hiding for eight hours under putrid animal hides in a truck going to a leather-tanning factory. He has overcome fatwehs from enraged Islamic mullahs, endured CIA investigations, and also received threats from fellow Americans after 9/11, for helping Muslim children with education.

Mortenson is a living hero to rural communities of Afghanistan and Pakistan, where he has gained

the trust of Islamic leaders, military commanders, government officials and tribal chiefs from his tireless effort to champion education, especially for girls.

He is one of few foreigners who has worked extensively for sixteen years (over 72 months in the field) in rural villages where few foreigners go.

TV newscaster, Tom Brokaw, calls Mortenson, "one ordinary person, with the right combination of character and determination, who is really changing the world".

Congresswoman Mary Bono (Rep – Cali.) says, "I've learned more from Greg Mortenson about the causes of terrorism than I did during all our briefings on Capitol Hill. He is a true hero, whose courage, and compassion exemplify the true ideals of the American spirit."

**Here's more on Greg Mortenson, from a nursing perspective:**

## **NURSE STUMBLES INTO LIFE'S WORK**

### **BUILDING SCHOOLS**

**By Janet Boivin, RN**

**Monday November 23, 2009**

Greg Mortenson, registered nurse and author of the best selling book "Three Cups of Tea," says that after building schools for girls in Pakistan and Afghanistan for 16 years, he is now focusing on the training of health workers as well.

"It [healthcare] kept tugging at my heart," Mortenson said in an interview with *Nursing Spectrum/NurseWeek* magazines after addressing nurses at Sigma Theta Tau's 40th Biennial Convention in Indiana on Nov. 2. "One out of three children are dying" from lack of adequate health care.

Sigma Theta Tau awarded Mortenson with its Archon Award for demonstrating exceptional leadership in promoting health and welfare throughout the world. Mortenson was also nominated for the 2009 Nobel Peace Prize, which President Obama was recently awarded.

Mortenson began building schools after his sister Christa died from epilepsy in 1992 and he attempted to climb K2 in Pakistan, one of the world's most treacherous mountains, in her memory. Mortenson's attempt was unsuccessful.

He became lost while descending the mountain and stumbled into the remote village of Korphe where he was cared for and befriended by villagers. When he left Korphe, he promised he would return to build a school. He did return to Korphe, built a school, and from there went on to construct dozens of other schools in first Pakistan and then Afghanistan.

Mortenson, who also cofounded the Central Asia Institute to carry out his work, said when he first started his humanitarian efforts in Pakistan he considered building clinics instead of schools. But he said he wanted to build something that would directly empower the local Pakistanis, projects more easily done with schools than clinics.

Mortenson recently started a maternal health training program teaching local women about the basics of good maternal-child health care. Afghanistan has one of the highest maternal and infant mortality rates in the world.

"Many women die but not from difficult problems," he said. Often mothers die from common complications of pregnancy such as cephalo-pelvic disproportion (when a baby's head or body is too large to fit through the mother's pelvis. Editor's note MKH), placenta previa (when the placenta is attached to the uterine wall close to or covering the cervix. It is a leading cause of antepartum hemorrhage. Editor's note MKH), abruptio placentae (when the placenta has separated from the uterine lining in late pregnancy. Editor's note MKH), because there are no obstetricians to perform cesarean sections.

One maternal health worker, Aziza, who works in the Charpusan Valley in Pakistan on the border of Afghanistan, was able to eliminate maternal mortality after she was educated, Mortenson said.

The remote region of central Asia has a high infant mortality rate from outbreaks of diseases such as diphtheria, and from malnutrition. Babies in that part of Central Asia begin life nutritionally disadvantaged because women believe that colostrum (Colostrum comes out before the mother's milk from the breasts and contains antibodies to protect the newborn against disease, as well as being lower in fat and higher in protein than ordinary milk. Editor's note MKH) is poison and do not let their infants nurse for the first three days after birth,

Mortenson said.

Some women in Afghanistan and Pakistan are also malnourished because their husbands do not give them enough protein to eat and save the meat, poultry, and eggs for themselves. Mortenson did a study of women in Korphe and found the average hemoglobin level was 8 or 9 (Editor's note: normal hemoglobin levels for adult women are from 12-16 mg/dl. Blood transfusions are usually given when the hemoglobin is below 10 mg/dl, depending on the physician – MKH). The women have so little body fat they stop menstruating and are infertile, he said.

When one villager complained to Mortenson that his wife was infertile, Mortenson told him he needed to fatten her up by giving her some meat and eggs. The man was a father the next time Mortenson saw him. The villager, he said, thanked God for his wife's improved fertility.

In his book "Three Cups of Tea," Mortenson mentions he is a nurse but it is not a central theme in his narrative. But nursing, he said, "has had a profound impact on my journey."

Mortenson was a medic in the Army, an orderly, and then an ED nurse, often working to earn money to support his early humanitarian efforts in Pakistan. Nursing taught him to listen to people and to ask questions, he said.

In Pakistan and then Afghanistan Mortenson, asked people: "I want to help you. What do you want?" They answered, "We want our babies to stop dying and we want our children to go to school."

Working the night shift gave Mortenson the stamina he needed to go without sleep. Consumed by the important work he is doing, Mortenson usually sleeps only four or five hours a day. He lives in Montana with his wife Tara Bishop, a clinical psychologist, and two young children but spends several months of the year in Afghanistan and Pakistan.

Although Mortenson is beginning healthcare training programs, his school building efforts are not diminishing. "Education for girls has to be our top priority," he said. "Unless they are empowered, nothing will change in the world."

Mortenson said he also plans to send health workers to his schools to teach the teachers how

to do rudimentary health screenings for children.

The education of girls in developing countries, such as Bangladesh, has proven to lower maternal and infant mortality, reduce population growth, and improve the basic quality of health, Mortenson said.

Mortenson's book and his philosophy of listening to, respecting, and empowering indigenous populations, is also influencing military and political thinking regarding the U.S. role in Afghanistan. "Three Cups of Tea" is mandatory reading at the Pentagon and for commanders in Afghanistan and Iraq, Mortenson said. Army generals have also visited his schools.

Mortenson said that while Taliban militants are blowing up hundreds of girls schools in Pakistan and Afghanistan, his schools have never been destroyed because they are run by the local villagers and not by governments or outside nongovernmental organizations.

Mortenson has gone into five new areas in Afghanistan to build schools, including the home of one of the Taliban's top leaders, Mullah Muhammed Omar.

To learn more about Mortenson and his work in Afghanistan and Pakistan go to his Web site: [www.gregmortenson.com](http://www.gregmortenson.com)

*Janet Boivin, RN is a senior staff writer for Nursing Spectrum and NurseWeek magazines.*

## **PRISONER OF CONSCIENCE GAO ZHISHENG**

**By Joyce Wolf**

I've been reading *A China More Just*, the book by missing human rights lawyer Gao Zhisheng, Group 22's adopted prisoner of conscience. Somehow he managed to survive the extreme poverty, cold, and hunger of his early life in an isolated mountain village and find the inspiration to educate himself in law. At the age of 31 he passed his bar exam and embarked on a brilliant career defending victims of human rights violations.

Gao describes the harassment of himself and his family by plain-clothes police that began in

October 2005. On one occasion when Gao turned his video camera on the two dozen police following him in a neighborhood market, they attempted to hide their faces with women's shawls, leaving only slits for their eyes to peer out. The crowds of about 200 onlookers "were in stitches, laughing, whistling, cheering and jeering. This was the first time in nearly three months that the plainclothes police had brought residents something positive – laughter. "

Gao completed his book in early 2006 before his ordeals of imprisonment and torture and enforced disappearances. He was taken off to detention in August 2006, and there was no humor to be found in the invasion of privacy that his family was forced to endure in the following months. His wife, Geng He, describes the events of that time in a BBC interview of January 28, 2011. (<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-asia-pacific-12308620>) "Every single move that you make will be watched," the police told her on the day of Gao's arrest. Three shifts of police literally lived in the family's home 24 hours a day, not even permitting them to lock their bathroom door.

Geng He has been living in the U.S. since she and the children fled China in 2009. She has been doing everything she can to publicize her husband Gao's torture and disappearance. Please help by expressing your concern to the authorities in China. You can find more information about Gao Zhisheng and about writing to authorities in China, including a sample letter, on Group 22's new web page at <http://www.its.caltech.edu/~aigp22/GaoPOC/GaoZhisheng.html>.

## **REPORT ON THE ORGANIZING CITY: LOS ANGELES (OCLA) MEETING ON 1/29.**

**By Lucas Kamp**

Kathy Hansen-Adams and I went to this meeting, which was from 10 am to 3 pm, organized by the AI Western Regional Office, with a goal to get all the AI groups in the LA area to meet each other.

There were about 25 people there, with a large (about 7) contingent from UCLA and also a group from YPAI: Young Professionals for AI -- a group of recent college graduates who want to continue being active in AI but didn't have any Local Group to join, either because there's none near them or such groups are all old fogeys (something

we've seen before:); otherwise the usual groups: Burbank, South Bay, Irvine, Redondo Beach -- the latter represented by Tony Gabriele and Ann Lau, whom we included in our group in the "LA Snapshot" section, because there were only two of us from Group 22 and each group was supposed to describe highlights of what we'd done the past year. Kathy and I had some problems coming up with major highlights, but we ended up by cheating and talking about the Doo Dah (even though we didn't do it last year) and several China events with Ann Lau. There was a lot of interest in the Doo Dah, it looks like we will be doing that again this year. Doo Dah is 30 April this year, still in East Pas, as far as I know. We may not have to be the main organizers, Ann Lau is interested in doing something on China, which we might join.

Kathy and I also mentioned the book group in our "year's highlights" report; we listed 3 books, including "Don't Sleep There Are Snakes" and that evoked some interest from a few people with linguistic inclinations.

The meeting was well structured, with lots of sessions where we broke up into smaller groups which discussed a topic and then presented our results to the whole group. The main theme was plans for the coming 6 months, with a detailed calendar of events, the first of which is the Death Penalty Action Weeks: 21 Feb - 6 Mar. We'll be talking more about these things at our upcoming meetings.

There are pictures of this event on Facebook on the Amnesty West page.

## **VIOLATIONS AGAINST WOMEN**

By Cheri Dellelo

### **Bill Passed to Remove Planned Parenthood Funding**

This week, Indiana Republican Mike Pence presented to the House a proposal to ban all federal funding for Planned Parenthood (federal funding currently represents 1/3 PP's budget) and to eliminate a program known as Title X, which provides aid for family planning and reproductive health. The House voted in favor of the bill, so now the amendment will proceed to the Senate for a vote.

This move is an attempt to prevent Planned Parenthood from spending federal money on abortion services. By law, Planned Parenthood already cannot allocate any federal funding for abortions. However, abortion opponents argue that allocating money to Planned Parenthood for the provision of other medical services "frees up" funds for abortion. What it will really do is significantly hamper Planned Parenthood ability to provide a wide range of safe, reliable health care—and more than 90 percent is preventive, primary care, which helps prevent unintended pregnancies through contraception and education, reduce the spread of sexually transmitted diseases through testing and treatment, and screen for cervical and other cancers.

Here is AI's stance on reproductive rights:

"Human rights defenders working on sexual and reproductive rights issues at the domestic level have often faced fierce resistance, not only from officialdom, but from powerful political or religious institutions, the media or even from other sectors of the human rights movement.

"As well as seeking to end police brutality, gender-based violence and other abuses, sexual and reproductive rights defenders are also affirming an emancipatory vision of human rights, one which sees bodily and sexual integrity as integral to human flourishing, well-being and dignity as freedom of conscience or belief. Indeed, autonomy in one's intimate, affective and family life is itself an issue of conscience.

"Amnesty International supports women in claiming their rights."

If you are interested in taking action, you can send a letter to your senator through Planned Parenthood's website:

<http://www.plannedparenthoodaction.org>.

### **CBS Reporter Raped in Egypt**

On February 15, 2011, CBS News released a statement revealing that four days earlier, U.S. reporter Lara Logan had been beaten and sexually assaulted while covering the celebrations in Tahrir Square in Egypt following the resignation of then President Hosni Mubarak. They indicated that she was overwhelmed along with her camera crew and security staff: "It was a mob of more than 200 people whipped into frenzy. In the crush of the mob, she was separated from her crew. She was surrounded and suffered a brutal and

sustained sexual assault and beating before being saved by a group of women and an estimated 20 Egyptian soldiers." Logan returned to her hotel after the assault and was flown out of the country within hours on a chartered network jet. She is now recovering in the U.S. and is not yet granting interviews.

In the aftermath of Logan's attack, some ignorant commentators have engaged in the all-too-common practice of 'blaming the victim,' questioning Logan's decision to put herself in harm's way and questioning CBS News' decision to send 'such an attractive woman' to cover this event. Author and journalist Nir Rosen posted derogatory comments on Twitter about Logan's attack: "Jesus Christ, at a moment when she is going to become a martyr and glorified, we should at least remember her role as a major war monger," he tweeted. He later added: "Look, she was probably groped like thousands of other women." As a result, he was forced to resign from his New York University fellowship at the institution's Centre on Law and Security.

If anything, what this incident has done is shine a spotlight on violence against women. In a swath of the globe notorious for mistreating women, Egypt is particularly infamous. According to a survey conducted in 2008 by the Egyptian Center for Women's Rights, 83 percent of native Egyptian women and 98 percent of women visiting from abroad have experienced some form of public sexual harassment. More than half the Egyptian women reported being molested *every day*. And contrary to popular belief, most of the victims were wearing modest Islamic dress. As Egypt's citizens begin the process of considering its liberation, they will do well to remember there is no liberation if it does not include the liberation of women.

#### **An Interview with Madeleine Albright**

In the following short video, former U.S. Secretary of State Madeleine Albright talks bluntly about politics and diplomacy, making the case that women's issues deserve a place at the center of foreign policy. Far from being a "soft" issue, she says, women's issues are often the very hardest ones, dealing directly with life and death. In the interview, she talks about her role in getting rape officially declared a weapon of war.

[http://www.ted.com/talks/lang/eng/madeleine\\_albright\\_on\\_being\\_a\\_woman\\_and\\_a\\_diplomat.html](http://www.ted.com/talks/lang/eng/madeleine_albright_on_being_a_woman_and_a_diplomat.html)

## **DEATH PENALTY NEWS**

**By Stevi Carroll**

### **Death Penalty Action Weeks**

Well, first of all, February 21 to March 6, 2011, is Amnesty's Death Penalty Action Weeks. Currently, we have not decided what we will do to bring attention to this issue. I do have four petitions that I will bring both to our book group on Sunday, February 20 and to our monthly meeting on Thursday, February 24. I found the cases of Scott Panetti, Texas, and Romell Broom, Ohio, particularly riveting. Go to <http://www.amnestyusa.org/death-penalty/participate-in-death-penalty-action-weeks/page.do?id=1641094> to see more information online.

### **California's new Death Chamber**

Here in California, Judge Jeremy Fogel of the Federal District Court in northern California toured the new \$900,000.00 death chamber at San Quentin on February 8, 2011. He has not made his decision whether California will commence executions. Julie Smalls from KPCC accompanied Judge Fogel. To hear her report, go to <http://www.scpr.org/news/2011/02/08/federal-judge-who-halted-california-executions-tou/>

### **Los Angeles County Coalition for Death Penalty Alternatives**

The Los Angeles County Coalition for Death Penalty Alternatives, of which Group 22 is a member, is hosting a free activist training at Claremont McKenna College on Saturday, February 26, 2011, from 10 AM to 3 PM. For more information, see the flyer at <http://www.enddeathpenaltyla.org/activist%20training%20flyer.pdf>.

The Coalition has also divided into working groups. The lobbying group had its first conference call February 16. The lobbying approach is to meet with county supervisors and city council members to discuss, among other items, how our money can be used better than on the death penalty. On March 3 at 10 AM, a group of us is meeting with Pasadena city councilmember Chris Holden. I'll have more information on the location as the date nears. Join us if you can.

The LA Times recently had an editorial discussing the shortage of one of the execution drugs. The editorial begins, "In response to violations of international human rights norms, Western governments are slapping sanctions on a rogue regime by halting exports of a deadly substance. That's nothing new; what is new is that the rogue nation is the United States." It goes on to talk about the use of the drugs and the imperfection of the death penalty as a solution to crime.

The editorial ends with a challenge: "Add to this the expense of the never-ending appeals process and the serious questions about execution methodology raised by the sodium thiopental fracas, and we have to ask: Is the visceral satisfaction Americans derive from killing convicted killers really worth its cost?" Just a little something to think about.

### The Case of Linda Carty

A couple of weeks ago, I was at All Saints Church for an unrelated talk and I saw Gloria Goodwin-Killian, a former death-row inmate and now anti-death-penalty activist. She alerted me to the case of Linda Carty, an inmate on Texas's death row. After checking a Texas execution schedule, I saw that Ms Carty's execution is not imminent. The case is really interesting in that Ms Carty is a British citizen and may be innocent. Check out the story at

**Death Row Briton Linda Carty talks about her controversial conviction and how she is paying for someone else's crime**

By David Rose

<http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-1263311/Death-Row-Briton-Linda-Carty-talks-controversial-conviction-paying-elses-crime.html#ixzz1EW11554U>

### Jordan Brown, 13, on Trial for Murder in Adult Court

The state of Pennsylvania wants to try an 13-year-old boy, Jordan Brown, as an adult for the murder of his father's fiancée and her eight-month fetus. Jordan was nine when he committed this crime. If he is convicted, he could be sentenced to life without possibility of parole. The Amnesty article about this case says, "The USA and Somalia are the only countries in the world that have not ratified the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, which prohibits life imprisonment without the possibility of release for crimes committed

before the age of 18." To read more on this case, go to

<http://www.amnesty.org/en/news-and-updates/13-year-old-us-boys-murder-trial-could-violate-international-law-2011-01-24>

**Online action:  
Stop resumption of executions in Trinidad and Tobago**

<http://action.amnesty.org.uk/ea-campaign/clientcampaign.do?ea.client.id=1194&ea.campaign.id=9544>

### Stays of Execution

February		
9	Roy Blankenship	Georgia
15	Edward Harbison	Tennessee

### Executions

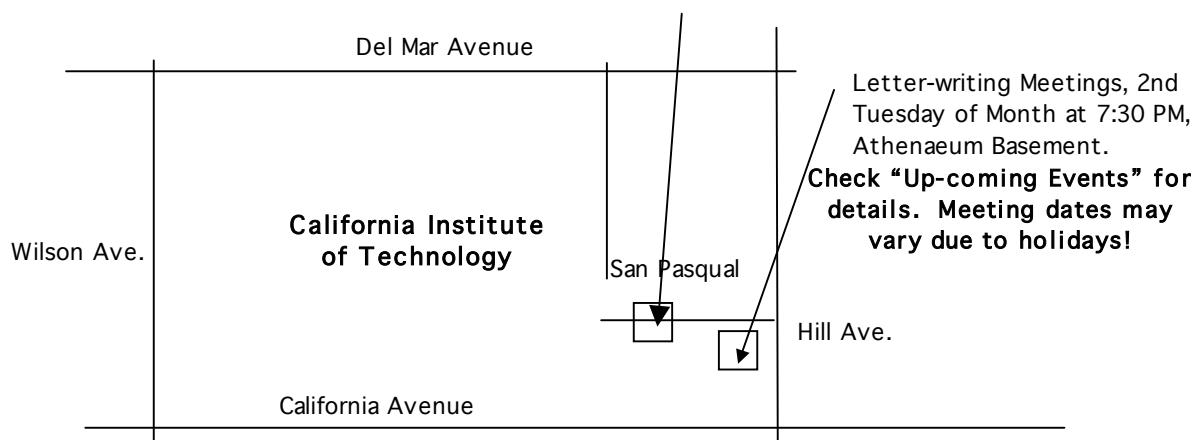
January		
25	Emmanuel Hammond	
	Georgia	Lethal Injection
February		
9	Martin Link	
	Missouri	Lethal Injection
15	Michael Hall	
	Texas	Lethal Injection
17	Frank Spisak	
	Ohio	Lethal Injection

### MONTHLY LETTER COUNT

DP	3
UA's	23
Wen's friends	6
POC	1
Total	33
To add your letters to the total contact <a href="mailto:lwkamp@gmail.com">lwkamp@gmail.com</a> .	

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Monthly Meetings, 4<sup>th</sup> Thursday of Month, 7:30 PM,  
Caltech Y Lounge.



From the 210 exit on Lake Avenue, head south, turn left on Del Mar  
From the 110 continue on Arroyo Parkway north, turn right on California  
Street parking is generally available.

Amnesty International Group 22  
The Caltech Y  
Mail Code 5-62  
Pasadena, CA 91125  
[www.its.caltech.edu/~aigp22/](http://www.its.caltech.edu/~aigp22/)  
<http://rightsreaders.blogspot.com>



Amnesty International's mission is to undertake research and action focused on preventing and ending grave abuses of the rights to physical and mental integrity, freedom of conscience and expression, and freedom from discrimination, within the context of its work to promote all human rights.