

Amnesty International Group 22 Pasadena/Caltech News

Volume XIX Number 7, July 2011

UPCOMING EVENTS

Thursday, July 28, 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.

Tuesday, August 9, 7:30 PM . Letter writing meeting. We will meet at the "Rath al Fresco" of the Caltech Athenaeum, NW corner of Hill and California, in Pasadena. This is on the lawn behind the building. Look for the table with the Amnesty sign. This informal gathering is a great way for newcomers to get acquainted with Amnesty!

Sunday, August 21, 6:30PM. Rights Readers Human Rights Book Discussion group. This month we read "Blood of the Wicked" by Leighton Gage.

COORDINATOR'S CORNER

Hi All,

This month Kathy and Robert are off to the southeastern part of our beautiful country for a much-deserved vacation. Joyce, Lucas and Stevi are picking up the newsletter slack.

Our July book, *A China More Just* by Gao Zhisheng, made me, Stevi, think about China's use of forced labor and the items we buy with "Made in China" stamped on them. Joyce has more about lawyers and China.

Since Hospira stopped wanting their drug, sodium thiopental, used for state-sanctioned murder, states have begun using pentobarbital, but that too is slamming into some problems of conscience for its manufacturers. And then there's SB 490 right here in California that may, if passed, change the death penalty here in the Golden State.

This month's Thursday meeting will be the last one in the current Caltech Y office. The Y is moving to its new address on Wilson Avenue at the end of August. They hope to be able to accommodate us there, but because that space is smaller, they aren't sure. Meanwhile, we will have to look around for a meeting place in August.

AIUSA is asking that we write to eight compelling cases that are being highlighted during this year's Summer Solidarity Action:

<http://www.amnestyusa.org/our-work/campaigns/individuals-at-risk/summer-solidarity?msource=W1107EAIAR1&tr=y&audid=8599471>

We hope that some of you will be willing to write on these cases!

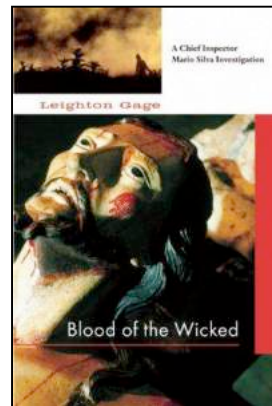
As the heat and humidity steam much of our country, we need to stay hydrated and cool as possible, and hope that we will not get the scorching temperatures!

Happy Summer,
Lucas & Stevi

RIGHTS READERS

Human Rights Book Discussion Group

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



Next Rights Readers meeting:

**Sunday, August 21
6:30 PM**

**Vroman's Bookstore
695 E. Colorado Blvd.
In Pasadena**

***Blood of the Wicked*
by Leighton Gage**

Kirkus Review

Multiple cross-currents complicate a high-profile Brazilian murder investigation. Cynical photographer Walter Abendthaler snaps countless photographs of bishop Dom Felipe, who's arrived by helicopter for a visit to the Brazilian agricultural town of Cascatas do Pontal. Faithful villagers and political protesters are both out in force when the bishop is killed by a covert assassin's high-powered rifle. The case falls to brooding Mario Silva, Chief Inspector for Criminal Matters, headquartered in the capital city of Sao Paulo. As the investigation moves forward, flashbacks fill in the grim past that formed Silva's worldview. While he was a college student in the '70s, his parents were hijacked by street thugs who raped his mother and killed his father. After deciding in an instant to enter law enforcement, Silva spent the next few years hunting down the men

who destroyed his parents. He's raised eyebrows by making his laconic nephew his second in command. Their investigation casts a wide net as they explore internal conflicts of the clergy, clashes between the church and political factions and, courtesy of an elusive street urchin, the criminal underbelly of the region. As Silva also trades barbs with jaded newspaper editor Diana Poli, Gage creates a contemporary tapestry of Brazil by detailing the backstories of Diana and several others. Gage's debut builds a compelling foundation for future Silva cases.

(from <http://www.kirkusreviews.com>)

Wilda Williams - Library Journal

Brazil. The name conjures up a seductive image of a bikini-clad girl dancing the samba along a Rio beach. But it is also a country with deep-rooted social and political problems, where less than one percent of the population owns half the arable land, where the wealthy live in gated, guarded luxury while the poor are crammed into squalid favelas, or shantytowns, and where corrupt local police enforce their own laws. Against this backdrop, Gage, who lived in Brazil for many years, sets his debut mystery, a gripping and brutal tale of murder and vengeance. When a sniper's bullet cuts down a bishop in an agricultural town in the state of São Paulo, Chief Inspector Mario Silva of the Brazilian Federal Police is ordered to investigate. Was the bishop, who disapproved of liberation theology, assassinated by a radical priest seeking to redistribute land to the poor, or was he killed by powerful landowners offended by his sermon condemning the recent gruesome murder of an activist and his family? The body count rises, as Silva and his team find their probe hampered by crooked cops, ambitious reporters, and missing witnesses. Sensitive readers, be warned: there are graphic scenes of horrific violence. But Gage's inspector is a fascinating character, a man who once dispensed his own brand of Brazilian justice now charged with upholding the law of the land. Highly recommended.

(from <http://www.barnesandnoble.com>)

About the Author (from Wikipedia).

Leighton Gage (born 1942) is an author of crime fiction best known for the Chief Inspector Mario Silva Investigations series of novels set in Brazil. He was inspired to write these novels after spending over 20 years living in Sao Paulo, Brazil, and being immersed in the Brazilian culture. The subjects in his novels are often real problems that exist in Brazil today, problems that are foreign to the American culture.

PRISONER OF CONSCIENCE

Gao Zhisheng

by Joyce Wolf

Gao Zhisheng, Group 22's adopted Prisoner of Conscience, is a featured case in a new Amnesty International report titled "Against the Law: Crackdown on China's Human Rights Lawyers Deepens." Download the report at <http://tinyurl.com/3j93pdh>

The report is 65 pages long, but even a quick glance through it will help to establish context for the story of Gao Zhisheng. An independent legal profession first began to emerge in China after the passage of the Lawyers Law in 1996, which defined the role of lawyers as providing a service to society and defending the legitimate rights and interests of their clients. However, within the last several years, the Chinese Communist Party has attempted to impose control over the actions of lawyers. The Ministry of Justice issued an Opinion in 2010 that included four principles (the Four Constants), one of which states "Constantly ensure Communist Party leadership of lawyers' work and organizations."

The few hundred lawyers in China (out of a total of 240,000) that take on human rights cases are threatened with loss of their licenses and are subject to discrimination and harassment, in some cases imprisonment, torture and disappearance. The Amnesty report cites 39 cases, including Dalian lawyer Wang Yonghang, who received a 7-year sentence as a result of defending a Falun Gong practitioner (the husband of Group 22 member Lulu).

Radio Free Asia has a poignant interview with Gao Zhisheng's wife. "His brother has put out missing person notices. He wanted me to post them online. I have them right here. I'll read it to you. Missing Person. Gao Zhisheng. Aged 49. Han Chinese. Height: one meter, eighty centimeters (five feet, nine inches). Native of Beijing. Traveled back to his ancestral home for the grave-sweeping festival, to visit his mother's grave, in February 2010."

<http://tinyurl.com/3mvpq13>

Please help us take action for Gao Zhisheng. Visit <http://tinyurl.com/aigp22Gao> on Group 22's website.

VIOLATIONS AGAINST WOMEN

by Cheri Dellelo

United Nations Population Fund in Jeopardy (from Pathfinder International)



Women's health continues to be a target for family planning and reproductive health opponents in Congress. Recently, a bill was introduced in the House

of Representatives that would permanently eliminate U.S. funding for the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA). UNFPA is a critical organization working in more than 150 countries to provide the most vulnerable and marginalized women with healthcare services. UNFPA's programs help women deliver healthy babies and survive delivery, enable couples to determine the number and spacing of their children, and prevents the spread of HIV and AIDS and other sexually transmitted infections. It also promotes gender equality and combats violence against women. UNFPA and women worldwide need your help. Contact your Representative now to support this vital organization— <http://tinyurl.com/3vcrj6n>.

Help Prevent Child Marriage

(from GirlUp/United Nations Foundation and National Geographic)



Child marriage is a human rights violation. Tragically, 1 in 7 girls in developing countries is married by age 15—often to a man twice her age or older. Child brides are often separated from friends and family and are denied an

education. They are also at higher risk for violence, HIV, and death during pregnancy or childbirth. There will be more than 100 million child brides in the next decade if we don't act now. It is critical that the U.S. continues to work in partnership with local communities, leaders, governments, and the United Nations to address the rights and needs of girls. Please ask the Obama administration to

- Develop a strategy to help partner countries prevent child marriage,
- Support programs and policies that prevent child marriage, and

- Monitor and report on efforts to end child marriage.

You can do so by signing Girl Up's petition, which they will deliver to the White House later this summer—<http://tinyurl.com/3rv2n7l>.

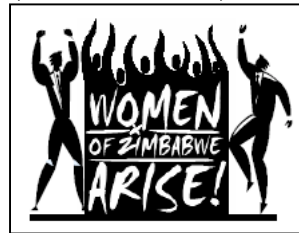
You can also learn more child brides in a recent *National Geographic* article

(<http://tinyurl.com/4ynrccn>) and you can find out more about organizations that are encouraging families to delay marriage and give girls an opportunity to reach their full potential in their follow-up piece at

(<http://tinyurl.com/3gjmux4>),

Suspected Poisoning at Property of Women of Zimbabwe Arise (WOZA)

(from FrontLine)



Women of Zimbabwe Arise (WOZA) is a civic group formed in 2003 to empower women to take leadership roles in the community and stand up for their rights. On June 22,

members of the group were rushed to the hospital with symptoms of poisoning following a visit to a property used for WOZA meetings in the suburbs of Bulawayo. The property had been vacated the previous day by the Zimbabwe Republic Police under the terms of an order of the High Court of Bulawayo of June 20, 2011, after a 12-day occupation that occurred without the presentation of a warrant. The premises were found damaged, some items were missing, and suspicious articles planted inside the house.

When members of WOZA reentered the house soon after the occupation to verify the state of the property, they were reportedly overcome by a pungent smell of chemicals and three of them immediately felt dizzy and nauseous, so they decided to leave. The next day, they went back into the house but reported feeling unwell again and eight members were brought to the hospital with dizziness, vomiting, diarrhea, and fainting. After being discharged from the hospital, they sent a letter of complaint to the police and the court. In addition to their suspicions of dangerous chemicals being planted, WOZA reported that some documents and two mobile phones were missing from the premises and that cards which Amnesty International members

had sent to WOZA were removed from their envelopes and replaced with condoms.

It is believed that the suspected chemical planting and disturbances at the premises used by WOZA are directly related to the organization's work in defense of human rights, and WOZA fears that a court case and other forms of recrimination may be launched against them for their reporting of this recent incident. At the following link, you can find a letter that you can send to the president of Zimbabwe, Robert Gabriel Mugabe, asking that the health, safety, and rights of the members of WOZA be protected—<http://tinyurl.com/3r9zk66>.

DEMAND JUVENILE JUSTICE

By Stevi Carroll

Amnesty International says that at least 2,500 people are serving sentences of life without the possibility of parole for crimes they committed when they were under 18. Amnesty doesn't know of any other countries to render this verdict.

According to the National Institute of Mental Health, our brains are not fully developed until we're 25 and the last part to develop is the frontal lobe, where the "executive functions" of planning, impulse control and reasoning are located. In other words, along with the old nature/nurture thing is simply the number of years our brains take to understand fully how to be reasonable with our impulse control.

Jordan Brown is one of those kids who faces life without the possibility of parole for a crime he allegedly committed when he was 11. He is being tried as an adult for the murder of his father's fiancée and her fetus. Judge Dominick Motto made this decision because Jordan Brown failed to admit guilt. Two psychologists testified that he was an unlikely candidate for rehabilitation because he failed to take responsibility for his actions. He says he's innocent, and his father supports him in this assertion. He's scheduled for court on August 5, 2011. He's been held in custody for over two years.

Amnesty had an urgent action for Jordan Brown, but its cutoff date has passed. A petition is available at

<http://www.thepetitionsite.com/379/justice-for-13-yr-old-jordan-brown/>

DEATH PENALTY NEWS

By Stevi Carroll

Death Penalty on the Way Out In California?

State Senator Loni Hancock introduced SB 490, a bill to ask voters to repeal the death penalty. One statistic Senator Hancock uses is the \$184 million dollars a year we spend to keep 714 inmates on death row. I am not comfy with math, but I think that comes out to \$257,703.00 per inmate on death row per year. The average cost of housing an inmate in the general population is \$47,000.00 per year. By a slim margin, Californians support life without possibility for parole over the death penalty.

Here's a message from James Clark, ACLU/LACCDPA (Los Angeles County Coalition for Death Penalty Alternatives):

Friends,

We're working hard to pass SB 490, which would put death penalty repeal on the 2012 ballot, but we need your help!

Please sign this petition on change.org and share it with your friends!

(<http://www.change.org/petitions/california-legislature-pass-sb-490-to-repeal-the-death-penalty>)

Andrew DeYoung

The last man to be executed before I wrote this column is Andrew DeYoung. That the state of Georgia executed someone is not extraordinary. The video tape made during the execution is.

Although Mr. DeYoung was scheduled to be executed on July 20th, his death sentence was carried out on July 21st after the State tried to block the video recording of it. A Fulton County judge gave the go ahead and the Georgia Supreme Court concurred. Inmate Gregory Walker requested the video taping to show how the new three-drug procedure using pentobarbital doesn't sedate the condemned person to alleviate pain and suffering. Georgia governor Nathan Deal deferred to the decision of the courts, but said he had 'grave reservations' about the recording of executions.

My first thought when I saw the headline with "execution video taped" was 'hello YouTube, here comes a viral multimillion-hit clip.' Because

the video is evidence in a case, it is 'under seal by the court'. I hope that means no yahoo can 'liberate' it and create his 15 minutes of fame. That would have to be a crime. Mr. DeYoung died at 8:04 PM. He's reported to have blinked his eyes and swallowed for about two minutes, closed his eyes, and became still. I wonder what the video shows.

Roy Blankenship

Roy Blankenship's execution may shed some light on how pentobarbital performs as a substitute for sodium thiopental in the three-drug lethal injection. The follow quote is from an article by Bob Johnson, an AP reporter in Montgomery, Alabama:

"As the injection began, Blankenship jerked his head toward his left arm and began rapidly blinking. He then lurched toward his right arm, lunging twice with his mouth wide open as if he were gasping for air. A minute later, he pushed his head forward while mouthing inaudible words. His eyes never closed.

The movements stopped within three minutes, and he was declared dead 12 minutes later."

While some people think this reaction may be in response to pentobarbital or for some other cause, Dr. Howard Nearman the chair of the anesthesiology department at Case Western Reserve University's medical school is quoted as saying, "And he could have been faking it. Anything's possible."

Since I read that statement, I've been trying my best to imagine what it would be like to be strapped down to a gurney, have a needle put in my vein, know the solution that is going to stop my breath and heart has begun seeping into my bloodstream, and put on a demonstration like the one described above.

As lawyers begin to invoke Roy Blankenship's case in court findings as evidence about the use of pentobarbital's possible violation of the ban on cruel and unusual punishment, officials in Georgia want to figure out what may have gone wrong. No new executions are scheduled.

Drugs for State-Sanctioned Death

Remember a few months ago when Hospira Inc., the company that made sodium thiopental, said it would stop making the drug because its manufacturer in Italy objected since the EU has banned the death penalty? Image that -- a company that won't make money because of some moral pact a union of countries made that

says its member won't commit state-sanctioned murder.

Now we have those pesky Danes. Representatives from Lundbeck, the Danish company that manufactures pentobarbital (Nembotal), said in a statement that it "adamantly opposes the distressing misuse of our product in capital punishment." States that do execute using lethal injection will have access to this drug on a restricted basis. The drug is also used to euthanize animals such as dogs and cats. To keep buyers from redistributing pentobarbital to states for use in executions, entities that purchase it must give a written agreement not to redistribute.

Lundbeck's company spokesperson Mada Kronborg said people at the company were 'shocked and outraged' to find out their drug was being used to execute people. Maybe the media are thorough in Denmark because Mr. Kronborg said it was through the media he learned pentobarbital was used in executions. He said if they had known, they would have said no to this use.

I look forward to seeing in what country the manufacture of sodium pentobarbital lands and how it's distributed. I'm sure the free market will fill this void. Of course, an entirely new execution protocol may evolve for the states and the federal governments.

Mark Stroman

Texan Mark Stroman's is the penultimate execution before I wrote this column. After the September 11, 2001, attacks on the World Trade Center in New York, Mr. Stroman took justice into his own hands and killed two men and wounded another. What makes this execution noteworthy is Rais Bhuiyan, the survivor. Even though the shooting left him blind in one eye, he sued, unsuccessfully, to stop the execution. He said his Muslim beliefs instructed him to forgive Mr. Stroman.

Forgiveness Isn't Easy

Murder is the main reason most people in the United States are sentenced to death. National Public Radio has a series called StoryCorps. People talk with each other about important, usually personal, events that are recorded as oral histories of regular people. July 21, 2011, I was sitting on the living room floor, reading the paper and drinking coffee when I tuned in to the

story playing from my radio. Mary Johnson and Oshea Israel were having a StoryCorps conversation.

Oshea Israel and Mary Johnson had their first face-to-face conversation in Stillwater Prison where Mr. Israel was serving a sentence for killing Laramiun Byrd, Ms Johnson's only son. After 12 years and many requests to Mr. Israel, Ms Johnson visited Mr. Israel and told him about her son. Mr. Israel said Mr. Byrd became human to him at that time. When this meeting ended, they embraced. Ms Johnson knew she had hugged her son's killer and forgiven him. What followed were many prison visits.

Ms Johnson's forgiveness of Mr. Israel was hard for him because he had been unable to forgive himself. Now that Mr. Israel is out of prison, they live next door to each other. They have developed a familial relationship. Ms Johnson hopes through Mr. Israel she will be able to experience those touchstones of life like graduation and marriage that she cannot experience with her natural son.

The conversation ends with
 "I love you, lady."
 "I love you too, son."

To read or hear this entire conversation, to go <http://www.npr.org/2011/05/20/136463363/forgiving-her-sons-killer-not-an-easy-thing>

Humberto Leal-Garcia

Intervention from the Obama administration and many other legal and foreign policy experts could not stop the execution of Humberto Leal-Garcia. Their concerns were that international law may be violated and the legal rights of Americans traveling or living outside the US could be jeopardized. Humberto Leal-Garcia is the 29th foreign national to be executed in the United States since the death penalty was reinstated in 1976. Manuel Valle, a Cuban national, is scheduled to be executed in Florida August 2, 2011. For an online Amnesty urgent action, go to <http://takeaction.amnestyusa.org/siteapps/advocacy/ActionItem.aspx?c=6oJCLQPAJiJUG&b=6645049&aid=16292>

Stays of Executions

June 2011

15 John Balentine Texas
 16 Ricky Gray Virginia

22 Frank Williams, Jr. Arkansas
 23 Roy Blankenship Georgia
 Stay lifted - executed.

July 2011

12 Marcel Williams Arkansas
 19 Kenneth Smith Ohio

Executions

June 2011

21 Milton Mathis 32
 Texas
 Lethal Injection
 3-drug w/ pentobarbital
 23 Roy Blankenship 55
 Georgia
 Lethal Injection
 3-drug w/ pentobarbital
 30 Richard Bible 49
 Arizona
 Lethal Injection
 3-drug w/ pentobarbital

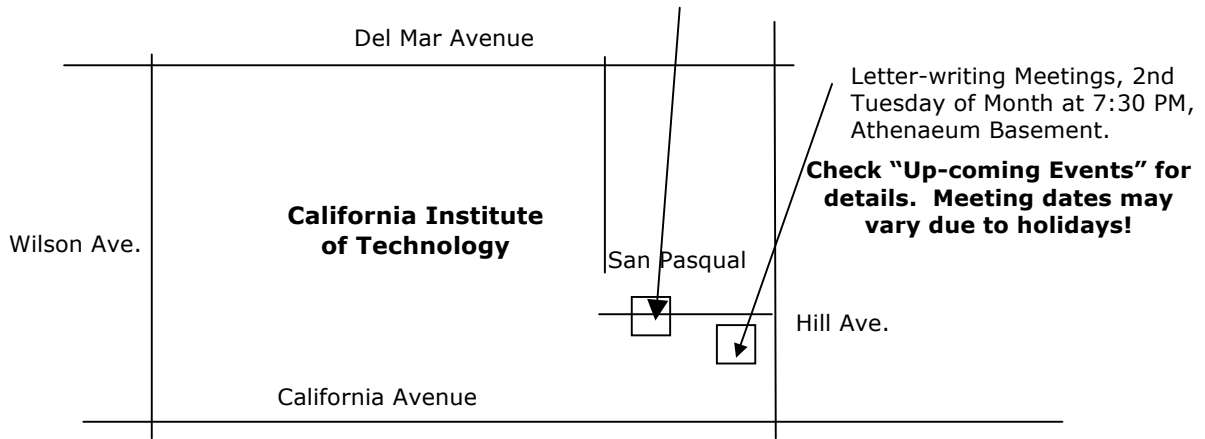
July 2011

7 Humberto Leal-Garcia 38
 Texas
 Lethal Injection
 3-drug w/ pentobarbital
 19 Thomas West 52
 Arizona
 Lethal Injection
 3-drug w/ pentobarbital
 20 Mark Stroman 41
 Texas
 Lethal Injection
 3-drug w/ pentobarbital
 21 Andrew DeYoung 37
 Georgia
 Lethal Injection
 3-drug w/ pentobarbital

GROUP 22 MONTHLY LETTER COUNT

POC	11
UAs	15
Women's Rights	2
Total	28
To add your letters to the total contact lwkamp@gmail.com .	

Monthly Meetings, 4th 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://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.