

# Amnesty International Group 22 Pasadena/Caltech News

Volume XXVI Number 3, March 2018

## UPCOMING EVENTS

**Thursday, March 22, 7:30-9:00 PM. *Monthly Meeting.*** We meet at the Caltech Y, Tyson House, 505 S. Wilson Ave., Pasadena. (This is just south of the corner with San Pasqual. Signs will be posted.) We will be putting together our calendar of events, including guest speakers and Amnesty videos, for the coming year. Please join us! Refreshments provided.

**Tuesday, April 10, 7:30-9:00 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, April 15, 6:30 PM. *Rights Readers Human Rights Book Discussion Group.*** This month we read "**Divided We Stand: The Battle Over Women's Rights and Family Values That Polarized American Politics**" by Marjorie J. Spruill.

## COORDINATOR'S CORNER

Hello all,

This is Joyce, substituting for Kathy. There are lots of things going on, starting with our own group's March 22 meeting. We plan on mapping out events - speakers, videos from Amnesty USA, topics for discussion - that we can have for each monthly meeting in the future

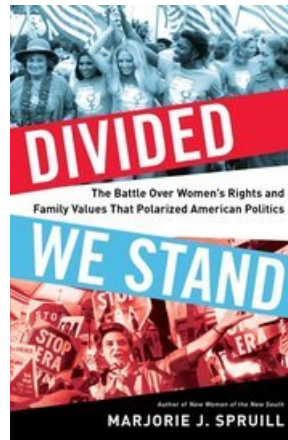
**March for Our Lives on Saturday, March 24.**

General info on the Los Angeles march at <http://marchforourlivesla.com>.

Email from AIUSA: There will be Amnesty delegations participating in marches in the following cities: Washington DC, New York City, Boston, Chicago, Atlanta, Oakland and **Los Angeles**, Orange County, Colorado Springs, Fort Collins, Dallas / Fort Worth, Minneapolis, Columbus and Detroit. Please sign up to march with us at

<http://www.amnestyusa.org/marchforourlives>

**Save the Date! April 28, Amnesty International's Southern California State Meeting** in downtown Los Angeles. Register at <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/amnesty-international-southern-ca-state-meeting-tickets-43494150174>



**Next Rights Readers Meeting**

**Sunday, April 15  
6:30 PM**

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

***Divided We Stand***

**by  
Marjorie J. Spruill**

## BOOK REVIEW

**'Four Days That Changed the World': Unintended Consequences of a Women's Rights Conference**

By GILLIAN THOMAS, MARCH 6, 2017

[[www.nytimes.com/2017/03/06/books/review/divided-we-stand-marjorie-j-spruill.html](http://www.nytimes.com/2017/03/06/books/review/divided-we-stand-marjorie-j-spruill.html)]

Among feminists, Donald Trump's election has prompted unprecedented soul-searching about What Went Wrong. The revelation that a majority of white women helped put Trump over the top cut especially deep. The initial mystery — how could women vote for that man? — gave way to betrayal: How could they do this to other women? Then, after some Kübler-Ross stages of grief, and a few million pink pussy hats, came the questions: How to harness the euphoric rage of the record-breaking women's marches? How to make tangible progress, not merely prevent further losses?

To answer these riddles requires understanding how we got here, and Marjorie J. Spruill's "Divided We Stand" offers a detailed if sometimes dense primer. Spruill, a professor of women's, Southern and modern American history at the University of South Carolina, convincingly traces today's schisms to events surrounding the National Women's Conference, a four-day gathering in Houston in November 1977. At the time, Ms. magazine called the event — a federally funded initiative to identify a national women's rights agenda — "Four Days That Changed the World." So why is it that today, as Gloria Steinem recently observed, the conference "may take the prize as the most important event nobody knows about"?

In Spruill's telling, the Houston conference was world-changing, but not entirely for the reasons the organizers had hoped. The event drew an estimated 20,000 activists, celebrities and other luminaries for a raucous political-convention-cum-consciousness-raising session. The delegates enacted 26 policy resolutions calling not just for ratification of the Equal Rights Amendment (then just three states shy of the 38 needed) but a wide range of measures including accessible child care, elimination of

discriminatory insurance and credit practices, reform of divorce and rape laws, federal funding for abortion and — most controversially — civil rights for lesbians. Those “planks” later were bundled as a National Plan of Action and presented to President Jimmy Carter, amid much fanfare, in a report entitled “The Spirit of Houston.”

The conference had an unintended, equally revolutionary consequence, though: the unleashing of a women-led “family values” coalition that cast feminism not just as erroneous policy but as moral transgression. Led by Phyllis Schlafly, a small but savvy coalition of foot soldiers mobilized against the conference’s aims. These activists found common cause in their deep religiosity and opposition to feminism’s perceived diminishment of “real” womanhood. And although their leadership denied it, the group also had ties to white supremacists. “Divided We Stand” argues that the potency of these advocates and their successors reshaped not just the nation’s gender politics, but the politics of the Democratic and Republican Parties as well.

The Houston conference originated with a 1975 executive order issued by President Ford, charging a National Commission on the Observance of International Women’s Year (thereafter known as the I.W.Y. Commission) that would, as Ford put it, “infuse the Declaration of Independence with new meaning and promise for women here and around the world.” Later that year, Congress tasked the commission with holding conferences in all 50 states to elect the delegates.

The state conferences that convened in the summer of 1977 proved to be anything but unified, and documenting that turmoil takes up much of Spruill’s attention. Members of the Schlafly coalition — which called itself the I.W.Y. Citizens Review Committee, or C.R.C. — doggedly attended each meeting, disrupting the proceedings and attempting to win inclusion among the representatives who would travel to Houston.

In the end, few C.R.C. representatives were elected among the more than 2,000 racially diverse delegates who headed to the Houston Convention Center. So Schlafly and her followers took another tack: They organized a daylong Pro-Life, Pro-Family Rally across town at the Astro Arena.

The chapters detailing these competing events are the best in “Divided We Stand.” The feminists’ conference was steeped in symbolism, starting with the lighting of a “torch of freedom” in Seneca Falls, N.Y. — site of the 1848 women’s conference marking the beginning of first-wave feminism — that over the next six weeks was carried to Houston by a relay of runners including icons like Billie Jean King. Speakers included three first ladies — Rosalynn Carter, Betty Ford and Lady Bird Johnson — as well as Coretta Scott King, the Texas representative Barbara Jordan, the anthropologist Margaret Mead,

and fiery political newcomers like Ann Richards and Maxine Waters.

In contrast, the family values rally was as much a religious revival as a political event. A sign placed next to the podium said it all: “Women’s Libbers, E.R.A. LESBIANS, REPENT. Read the BIBLE while YOUR [sic] ABLE.” Many of the attendees — who were nearly all white — were men. Among them was the archconservative California representative Robert Dornan, who exhorted the audience to let their members of Congress know, as one attendee put it, that “the great silent majority is on the move to take the nation under God’s guidance.”

After Houston, that contingent was more successful in making political inroads than its feminist counterparts. The difference, as documented by Spruill, was in its single-minded pursuit of those power brokers Dornan had commended to it. Most notably, it won over the Republican Party leadership. At the time of the commission’s formation, Republicans were moderate when it came to feminism; the 1976 party platform, for instance, included support for the E.R.A. But by the 1980 presidential election, that had changed; the “family values” coalition co-opted the party platform, won conversions on abortion from Ronald Reagan and George H.W. Bush, and propelled them — along with numerous other state and federal candidates — to victory.

In contrast, the Plan of Action landed with a thud on President Carter’s desk. A born-again Christian uneasy with alienating religious conservatives, Carter had inherited the conference initiative and never threw his full weight behind it — and indeed, had rebuffed organizers’ entreaties to come to Houston. Despite efforts by some White House staff members, the plan never became a legislative blueprint. With a wary White House that became outright hostile after Reagan’s election, a split Congress and feminists’ attention diverted to the E.R.A. ratification effort — which failed when the time for approval expired in 1982 — any hope of implementing the plan stalled in the 1980s. The Houston conference may have succeeded in awakening countless women to feminism, but most of its policy goals remain on the movement’s to-do lists.

These divergent narratives from 40 years ago offer many lessons to those hoping to maintain the momentum of the Jan. 21 women’s marches. Two of the most salient: Forge unity out of diversity and hold elected officials accountable. Early signs show that today’s feminists are fast learners. The “unity principles” issued by national march organizers incorporated race, immigration status, gender identity, sexual orientation, class and disability within multiple resolutions, instead of segregating them (as was the case with the Houston planks). A next step: Strengthen alliances between the majority-white marchers and the women of color who

mobilized against Trump (and before that, led the Black Lives Matter movement). A second day of mass action — a nationwide “women’s strike” on March 8 — was an opportunity to show an even more united front. Meanwhile, women were vocal participants in the overflow crowds at congressional town halls held during last month’s recess, women-centric media are educating readers about grass- roots activism and thousands of women have begun preparing to run for office.

But perhaps the most auspicious sign came from the Republican representative Dave Brat of Virginia: He recently complained that “the women are in my grill no matter where I go.”

### ABOUT THE AUTHOR



Marjorie J. Spruill teaches courses in women's history, Southern history, and recent American history at the University of South Carolina. She is the editor or co-editor of several anthologies, including ONE

WOMAN, ONE VOTE and THE SOUTH IN THE HISTORY OF THE NATION. She is on the editorial board of the Journal of American Studies, the journal of the British Association for American Studies (BAAS). She lives in South Carolina.

## Security with Human Rights

By Robert Adams

### AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL ADS REJECTED BY WMATA TO BE DISPLAYED ACROSS WASHINGTON

02/26/2018

An ad campaign from Amnesty International USA that was rejected by the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA) will be displayed across the city today and tomorrow, calling on activists to join together with the global human rights group in holding world leaders to account.

The series of ads, which depict US President Donald Trump, Russian President Vladimir Putin, and North Korean leader Kim Jong-Un, warn that “a storm is brewing.”

“We want to send a message to Washington — there’s a storm brewing and we’re ready to stand strong for human rights. Our world leaders, including President Trump, need to know that when human rights are denied, Amnesty International and our supporters won’t be silent. We will continue to fight injustice around the world and here at home,” said Amnesty International USA executive director, Margaret Huang.

On Monday and Tuesday this week the ads will be displayed on a truck with LED video panels as it drives through Washington, DC, stopping at landmarks. It coincides with Amnesty International USA’s lobby day. More than 300 of the group’s activists will meet with their members of Congress on Capitol Hill on Monday to discuss crucial human rights issues, including refugee protection, gun violence and women’s rights.

The ads were originally intended to run as a teaser to the launch of Amnesty International’s annual report on the state of the world’s human rights, which launched last week in the US for the first time in the organization’s history. The report highlights the growing importance of activism in an era of “state-sponsored hate” in which leaders are openly pushing hateful rhetoric and policies that are undermining human rights.

However, the ad campaign was rejected by WMATA on the grounds that it violates its policy against issue-oriented advertising. Amnesty International USA rejects the notion that these ads are political, given they focus on human rights, which is a matter of international law.

“It’s deeply unfortunate that advocacy ads are so notoriously hard to place in our nation’s capital — exactly the market where they’re needed the most. We’re very disappointed with WMATA’s decision, but are determined to get our message out to defend human rights both here at home and around the world,” said Margaret Huang.

“The message of our ads is a simple one asking people to join us in upholding human rights, which is not and should not be a political or partisan issue. World leaders are accountable to their citizens and should respect their basic human rights. It should not be controversial to point out that this is their job.”

## DEATH PENALTY NEWS

By Stevi Carroll

### OOOO Oklahoma

What is a state to do when the Corrections Department can no longer get the drugs it needs to put people to death? Oklahoma has a possible solution - Nitrogen Gas.

In an interview with Scott Simon on NPR, Fordham University law professor Deborah Denno said that the OK state adopted nitrogen gas with very little knowledge of this method of execution and without having any physicians as part of the decision making process. The decision was made by two criminologists and a political science professor.

According to Professor Denno, the most humane method of execution is firing squad, but we also consider it the most barbaric.

Of course, our 'real' problem for our present procedure is that drug companies are no longer willing to have their drugs used to kill people intentionally.

March 16, 2018, the LA Times had an editorial that stated "The fallback: 'nitrogen hypoxia,' in which the condemned would be locked in a sealed chamber and the air would be replaced with nitrogen, sending the person to sleep and then death. At least that's the theory. No one has ever used the method, and there is no ethical way of studying whether it would work or not. In short, Oklahoma will be conducting human death experiments."

The editorial goes on to say, "Yet isn't there something ludicrous (and macabre) about trying to dress death up so prettily?" as we attempt to find a 'humane' way to execute human beings. Along with this ludicrousness is that disturbing reality that the condemned person may not be guilty.

The editorial ends with "There are no persuasive arguments in favor of the death penalty, and a menu of solid arguments against it. But it is debates such as this — how best to kill someone — that point up the inherent absurdity and inhumanity of an act that, if committed by any of us individually, would be a crime. No government should have that power of life and death over its citizens."

And yet the OK state now wants to use nitrogen gas.

### Donald Trump

One thing we know is that many Americans are dying from opioids. Lives are being destroyed. What is the solution? Mr. Trump knows what to do: the death penalty for drug dealers. He may have gotten this idea from Philippines President Rodrigo Duterte. Apparently, Mr. Trump will let us know what his plan for the opioid crisis is within the next three weeks.

### Stays of Execution

February

22 Doyle Lee Hamm AL

**Execution called off** by Department of Corrections Commission Jeff Dunn close to midnight on February 22, 2018 after execution team reported it would be unable to set an IV line before the death warrant expired.

23 Raghunandan Yandamuri PA

**Stay granted by the U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of Pennsylvania** on January 16, 2018 to provide Yandamuri the opportunity to pursue state and federal post-conviction challenges that are available to all criminal defendants.

March

9 Charles Ray Hicks PA

**Stay granted by the Monroe County Court of Common Pleas** on February 12, 2018 to provide Hicks the opportunity to state post-conviction challenges that are available to all Pennsylvania criminal defendants.

14 Douglas Coley OH  
**Rescheduled** for September 18, 2019 by Gov. John Kasich on May 1, 2017\*

14 Warren Henness OH  
**Rescheduled** for February 13, 2019 by Gov. John Kasich on September 1, 2017.^

• On February 10, 2017, Ohio's Governor John R. Kasich [issued a statement](#) revising the schedule for eight upcoming executions. This revised schedule is in response to the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Sixth Circuit's denial of a motion to stay enforcement, pending appeal, of a federal magistrate judge's order declaring Ohio's execution procedures unconstitutional.

^ On September 1, 2017, Ohio's Governor Kasich [issued a statement and an updated execution schedule](#), which changed the execution dates for 19 of 26 condemned prisoners who had scheduled dates between September 2017 and September 2020. The execution schedule for these 26 prisoners now extends through April 2022.



## Executions

March

- 15 Michael Eggers\* AL  
Lethal Injection 3-drug (midazolam)  
Years from sentence to execution = 15
- 15 Carlton Michael Gary GA  
Lethal Injection 1-drug (Pentobarbital)  
Years from sentence to execution = 31

- volunteer - an inmate who waived ordinary appeals that remained at the time of his or her execution

### PRISONER OF CONSCIENCE Narges Mohammadi

By Joyce Wolf

March 20, the first day of Spring, is Nowruz, the Persian New Year holiday. The Amnesty Iran team puts out an annual action to send Nowruz greeting cards of support to seven Prisoner of Conscience cases in Iran, one of which is Narges Mohammadi.



Six of us attended the Group 22 letter-writing meeting on March 13 and wrote Nowruz cards for Narges. Pictured above are Paul, Cheryl, Elena, Joyce, and Robert. (Photo by Stevi.)

Group 22 member Candy did not attend letter-writing, but she emailed that she had written and mailed cards to all seven cases of the Nowruz action. Thank you, Candy – you inspired me to sit down and write 6 more Nowruz cards! Our group's total for the action is 19 cards, 7 of which are for Narges and 2 each to the other 6 cases.

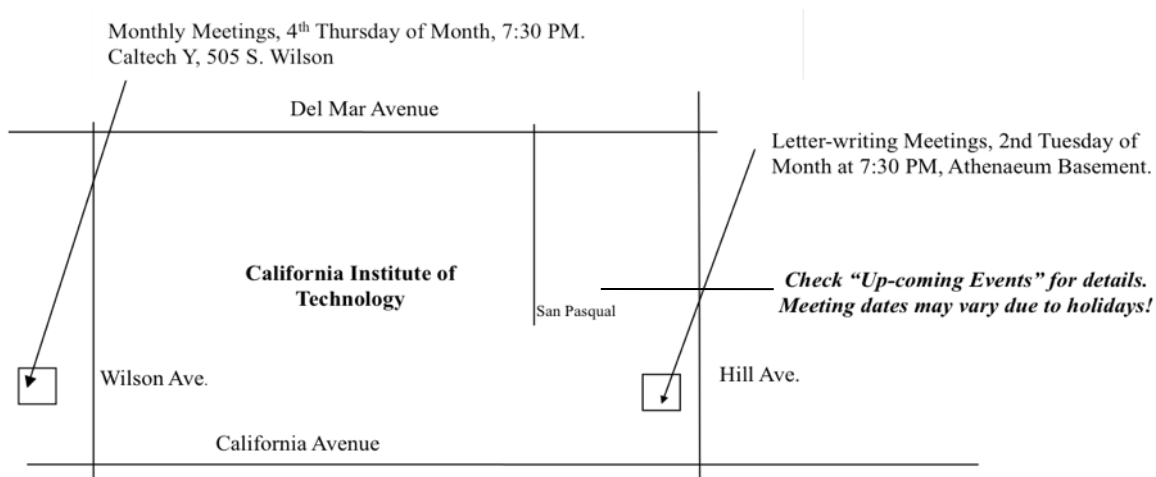
I don't think it's too late to participate! A copy of the Nowruz action is on our website: [http://www.its.caltech.edu/~aigp22/POC-Narges/Nowruz\\_action\\_2018.pdf](http://www.its.caltech.edu/~aigp22/POC-Narges/Nowruz_action_2018.pdf)

Next month, on April 21, it is likely that Narges will once again mark her birthday in prison. We hope to participate in an action for her on that date. In the past two years, Alexi coordinated international campaigns for Narges's birthday – remember the exciting rally at UCLA in 2016? And last year, all the beautiful daffodil-themed images from around the world? (The name Narges means daffodil.)

You can follow #FreeNarges on Twitter to join in the worldwide efforts on her behalf.

#### GROUP 22 MARCH LETTER COUNT

UAs	10
Nowruz cards for POC Narges	7
Nowruz cards for other cases	12
Total	29



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 C1-128  
 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.