

## UPCOMING EVENTS

**Thursday, March 28, 7:30-9:00 PM. *Monthly Meeting.*** We meet at the Caltech Y, Tyson House, 505 S. Wilson Ave., Pasadena. Please join us!

**Tuesday, April 9, 7:30-9:00 PM. *Letter Writing meeting*** at the Caltech Athenaeum, corner of Hill and California in Pasadena. This informal gathering is a great way for newcomers to get acquainted with Amnesty.

**Thursday, April 25, 7:30-9:00 PM. *Monthly Meeting.*** We meet at the Caltech Y, Tyson House, 505 S. Wilson Ave., Pasadena.

**Sunday, April 28, 6:30 PM. *Rights Readers Human Rights Book Discussion Group.*** This month we read "**The Boat Runner**" by Devin Murphy. (For April we changed the date to the 4th Sunday because Easter falls on the 3rd Sunday.)

## COORDINATOR'S CORNER

Hello all,

At the March letter writing, Joyce brought actions for our Iranian POC, Narges Mohammadi, and also for several other imprisoned Iranians. Since it's the season for "Nowruz" or the Persian New Year, we sent 18 cards wishing the recipients a happy new year.

Nowruz is celebrated from the Balkans to the Black Sea basin to Central Asia to the Middle East and elsewhere on the first day of spring, or the vernal equinox. Los Angeles has the largest Persian community outside Iran and prides itself on the largest Nowruz celebration in the country. It's not a religious holiday but rather a universal celebration of new beginnings: wishing prosperity and welcoming the future while shedding the past. Nowruz is a month long celebration filled with parties, craft making, street performances and public rituals. And yes, lots of food.

[Above information from CNN.com, "Nowruz: what it is and how you can celebrate"]

Field trip to a Persian restaurant, anyone?

Don't miss the Environmental Fair at the Arboretum which Veronica has been tirelessly organizing – Saturday, March 30, 9:00-3:00.

Con cariño,  
Kathy



**Next Rights Readers Meeting**

**Sunday, April 28  
6:30 PM**

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

***The Boat Runner*  
by Devin Murphy**

## KIRKUS REVIEW

<https://www.kirkusreviews.com/book-reviews/devin-murphy/the-boat-runner/>

An ambitious coming-of-age story centered on a Dutch family dealing with personal tragedy and the German occupation during World War II.

It's the summer of 1939, but the rumblings across Europe barely reach Jacob Koopman, Murphy's 14-year-old narrator, as he enjoys the prosperous life that his father's light-bulb factory has brought the family. He's close to his year-older brother, Edwin; has a tattooed rogue in his Uncle Martin, who runs a fishing boat on the North Sea; and even enjoys a stint at a Hitler Youth camp, where the father sends the boys to curry favor for a big deal with Volkswagen. Then Hitler invades Poland on September 1. Edwin disappears during an air raid, and the father must flee when his industrial sabotage is discovered. Uncle Martin enlists Jacob in violent actions against the Germans that disturb the boy, but it's a Royal Air Force raid on his hometown that persuades him, just shy of 18, to enlist in the German army. There he finds himself in a naval program involving midget submarines carrying a single torpedo and sent off on solo missions with what turn out to be rather low chances of success. At a critical moment, Uncle Martin reappears. Murphy throws so much at this impressionable, tormented Dutch teenager that it's a wonder he doesn't crack up. When he finally comes to question loyalties once rooted in family and country, he has embarked on a trek across Europe and another string of engaging adventures. The ending—or endings—may well provoke anything from quibbling to all-night debate.

Murphy's debut novel is a purposely limited view of war, as was *The Red Badge of Courage*, but strong characters and compelling narrative convey the impact well beyond one family. An impressive debut.

#### ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Devin Murphy is the nationally bestselling author of *The Boat Runner* and *Tiny Americans*.



His fiction has appeared in more than sixty literary journals and anthologies, including *The Missouri Review*, *Glimmer Train*, and *Confrontation*. He is an Associate Professor at Bradley University and lives in Chicago with his wife and kids.

[https://www.goodreads.com/author/show/6883996.Devin\\_Murphy](https://www.goodreads.com/author/show/6883996.Devin_Murphy)

## DEATH PENALTY NEWS

By Stevi Carroll

### Governor Newsom and the Death Penalty

Wednesday, March 13, 2019, Governor Gavin Newsom signed an executive order putting a moratorium on the death penalty in California, thus halting the possible execution of 737 human beings. This moratorium will be effective as long as he is governor.

Governor Newsom came to this decision after arriving at the conclusion that the death penalty is "ineffective, irreversible and immoral." He had the opportunity to meet Pete Pianezzi, a wrongfully convicted man who narrowly escaped execution and was later pardoned. He believes the death penalty has wasted millions of tax-payer dollars and that we need to consider the 164 people nationwide who have been wrongfully convicted, sentenced to die, and exonerated. The Governor said, "In America, we execute more human beings than any other democracy on earth. Just in 2017, the United States joined Iran, Iraq, Saudi Arabia, Somalia, Pakistan, China and Egypt as the world's top executioners."

His ultimate decision came, though, because he realized "I cannot sign off on executing hundreds and hundreds of human beings."

Not all Californians support Governor Newsom's moratorium on the death penalty. Carl DeMaio's Reform California PAC is raising funds for a poll to see if other Californians want to recall the Governor. One reason to recall Governor Newsom is the death penalty moratorium. Mr. DeMaio needs nearly 1.87 million signatures to qualify for the 2020 ballot, and since many signatures are excluded, his effort would have to secure 2.6 million voter signatures.

With the drop in crime and many Californians losing the desire to execute people, let's hope Governor Newsom's recall is not on the 2020 ballot and his executive order prevails.

### New Hampshire

With only one person on death row and its last execution in 1939, the New Hampshire state legislature voted 279-88 to repeal the death penalty. Rep. Renny Cushing, D-Hampton, believes the death penalty "does nothing to bring back our loved ones. All it does is widens the circle of violence." Mr Cushing has personal knowledge of what it means to have a family member murdered and has always opposed capital punishment, even after his father was murdered. He said, "If I changed my position on the death penalty because my father was murdered, that'd only give a little more power to the killers."

Additionally, Rep. Gary Danielson, R-Bedford, believes he could not say he's pro-life and then sanction the state's executing people. This is why he voted to repeal the death penalty.

The one person who is on the NH death row is Michael Addison who was sentenced to death for murdering a police officer. This repeal does not exclude his execution. Despite that, U.S. Sen. Kelly Ayotte, who prosecuted Addison as New Hampshire's attorney general, disagrees with repealing the death penalty. She said, "Essentially the House today voted to overturn Michael Addison's sentence for murdering Michael Briggs." Because this repeal of the death penalty does not include Mr Addison, this is not true. Ms Ayotte believes that the death penalty

needs to continue in a limited scope and that it deters crime.

A vote of 279-88 is enough to deny Gov. Chris Sununu a veto which he used last year on a similar bill.

New Hampshire joins these states without the death penalty: Alaska, 1957; Connecticut, 2012; Delaware, 2012; Hawaii, 1957; Illinois, 2011; Iowa, 1965; Maine, 1887; Maryland, 2013; Massachusetts, 1984; Michigan, 1846; Minnesota, 1911; New Jersey, 2007; New Mexico, 2009; New York, 2007; North Dakota, 1973; Rhode Island, 1984; Vermont, 1964; Washington, 2018; West Virginia, 1965; Wisconsin, 1853; and the District of Columbia, 1981. For some of these states with existing death row inmates, their death sentences are upheld.

Thank you, New Hampshire.

## Recent Exonerations

Grover Thompson - State: IL  
- Date of Exoneration: 1/14/2019  
In 1981, Grover Thompson was sentenced to 40 years in prison for the attempted murder of a 72-year-old woman in Mount Vernon, Illinois. Thompson died in prison in 1996, but was posthumously exonerated in 2019 based on the confession of the real attacker, a serial murderer and rapist.

Gary Washington - State: MD  
- Date of Exoneration: 1/15/2019  
In 1987, Gary Washington was sentenced to life in prison for a murder in Baltimore, Maryland. He was exonerated in 2019 after the only witness, then a 12-year-old boy, recanted his identification.

Steven Chaney - State: TX  
- Date of Exoneration: 1/16/2019  
In 1987, Steven Chaney was sentenced to life in prison for murder in Dallas County, Texas. He was exonerated in 2019 when the bite-mark evidence against him was discredited and the real killer was identified.

Patrick Pursley - State: IL  
- Date of Exoneration: 1/16/2019  
In 1994, Patrick Pursley was sentenced to life in prison without parole for a murder in Rockford, Illinois. He was acquitted in 2019 at a retrial

after the prosecution's ballistics evidence was discredited.

Geraldo Iglesias - State: IL  
- Date of Exoneration: 1/16/2019  
In 1995, Geraldo Iglesias was sentenced to 35 years in prison for a murder in Chicago, Illinois. He was exonerated in 2019 by evidence that a detective physically abused a witness until he falsely claimed Iglesias admitted the crime.

Eric Blackmon - State: IL  
- Date of Exoneration: 1/16/2019  
In 2004, Eric Blackmon was sentenced to 60 years in prison for a murder in Chicago, Illinois. He was exonerated in 2019 after successfully arguing that his trial attorney provided ineffective assistance by failing to interview multiple alibi witnesses who all said Blackmon was at a Fourth of July party at the time of the shooting.

Huwe Burton - State: NY  
- Date of Exoneration: 1/24/2019  
Huwe Burton was convicted in 1991 for stabbing his mother to death when he was 16 years old. He was exonerated in 2019 after an investigation revealed that his confession was coerced and that his mother's real killer was likely a downstairs neighbor.

Dean McKee - State: FL  
- Date of Exoneration: 1/30/2019  
In 1988, 16-year-old Dean McKee was sentenced to life in prison for murder in Tampa, Florida. He was granted a new trial and the charges were dismissed in 2019 after DNA tests excluded him as the killer.

Bladimil Arroyo - State: NY  
- Date of Exoneration: 2/23/2019  
In 2002, Bladimil Arroyo was sentenced to 20 years to life after he confessed to a murder in Brooklyn, New York. He was exonerated in 2019 based on evidence that his confession was false.

Michael Sullivan - State: MA  
- Date of Exoneration: 3/1/2019  
In 1987, Michael Sullivan was sentenced to life in prison for murder in Middlesex County, Massachusetts. He was exonerated in 2019 after DNA tests excluded him from the only physical evidence linking him to the crime.

David Bryant - State: NY  
- Date of Exoneration: 3/4/2019

David Bryant was convicted in 1976 for the rape and murder of an 8-year-old girl in the Bronx, New York. The charges were dismissed in 2019 because his attorney had failed to procure testing that would have shown that Bryant wasn't the source of blood and bodily fluids found on the victim.

### Stays of Execution

March

8 Timothy M. Jacoby PA

**Legally premature death warrant. Stay granted** by the York County Court of Common Pleas on February 8, 2019 to permit Jacoby to pursue state post-conviction appeals that are available to all Pennsylvania prisoners as a matter of right.

20 Archie Dixon OH

**Rescheduled for June 23, 2021 by Gov. John Kasich on September 1, 2017.**

### Execution

February

28 Billie Coble TX

Lethal Injection 1-drug (Pentobarbital)  
years from sentencing to execution: 28

## PRISONERS OF CONSCIENCE

**Gao Zhisheng  
& Narges Mohammadi**

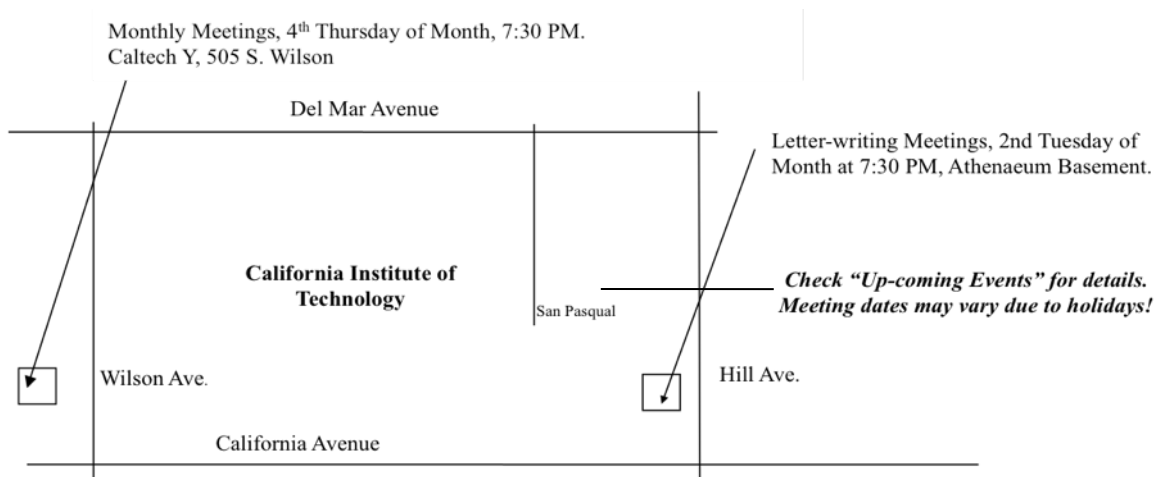
By Joyce Wolf

April may well be the cruelest month for Group 22's adopted Prisoners of Conscience. Gao Zhisheng will be 55 years old on April 20, wherever China is secretly detaining him. And on April 21, Narges Mohammadi will mark her 47th birthday in Iran's notorious Evin Prison. We plan to send birthday wishes with messages of support to Gao Zhisheng's wife in California and Narges Mohammadi's husband in Paris.

It was a happier birthday for Gao Zhisheng in April 2015. He had recently been released from prison, and although suffering from the effects of torture and ill treatment, he was able to speak with his wife and children by phone. Because he was no longer in prison, Amnesty closed his case file, and Group 22 marked the end of our work for him with a birthday party (still on YouTube at <https://youtu.be/rvMrqy8TIfY>). Sadly, Gao Zhisheng was disappeared in August 2017 and we resumed our work for him when Amnesty reopened his case file a few months ago.

### GROUP 22 MARCH LETTER COUNT

UAs	26
Nowruz cards (Iran POCs)	18
Total	44



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>



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