

Amnesty International Group 22 Pasadena/Caltech News

Volume XXVII Number 10, October 2019

UPCOMING EVENTS

Thursday, October 24, 7:30 PM. Monthly Meeting. CANCELLED!

Tuesday, November 12, 7:30-9:00 PM. Letter Writing meeting at the Caltech Athenaeum, corner of Hill and California in Pasadena. (Starting in November, our letter writing meetings will be back indoors in the Rathskeller.) This informal gathering is a great way for newcomers to get acquainted with Amnesty.

Sunday, November 17, 6:30 PM. Rights Readers Human Rights Book Discussion Group. For this month we read a graphic memoir, **"Belonging: A German Reckons with History and Home"** by Nora Krug.

COORDINATOR'S CORNER

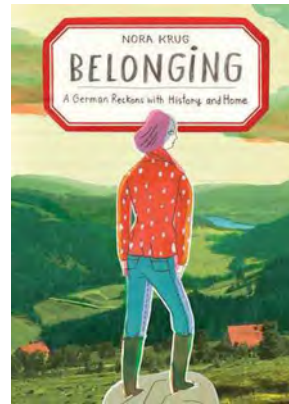
Hello All,

This is Joyce, writing the column this month in place of group coordinator Kathy.

Due to some unforeseen circumstances, the October monthly meeting had to be cancelled. We had intended to discuss strategies and plans for our monthly meetings in the first half of 2020. We are hoping to arrange a meeting very soon to brainstorm about ideas, possibly on a Saturday afternoon. If you are interested in attending, please let us know at aigp22@caltech.edu. We welcome new ideas – the more the merrier!

December 10 is International Human Rights Day. This year Amnesty's ten featured cases in the annual Write For Rights campaign are all young people. You can find the case descriptions, target addresses, and sample letters at <https://write.amnestyusa.org>. Please join us at our Group 22 Write For Rights event, which will probably be on a Saturday in early December. Stay tuned for details! You can check for upcoming events on our website at <http://www.its.caltech.edu/~aigp22>.

If you are on Facebook, please "like" and follow Group 22. There's a link on our website above, or you can just type 'amnesty pasadena' into the Facebook search box. Keep up to date with group coordinator Stevi's announcements and links to current Amnesty news and actions!



Next Rights Readers Meeting

**Sunday, Nov. 17,
6:30 PM**

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

***Belonging: A German
Reckons with History
and Home***

by Nora Krug

REVIEW

<https://www.goodreads.com/book/show/38531325-belonging>

Nora Krug's story of her attempt to confront the hidden truths of her family's wartime past in Nazi Germany and to comprehend the forces that have shaped her life, her generation, and history.

Nora Krug was born decades after the fall of the Nazi regime, but the Second World War cast a long shadow throughout her childhood and youth in the city of Karlsruhe, Germany. For Nora, the simple fact of her German citizenship bound her to the Holocaust and its unspeakable atrocities and left her without a sense of cultural belonging. Yet Nora knew little about her own family's involvement in the war: though all four grandparents lived through the war, they never spoke of it.

In her late thirties, after twelve years in the US, Krug realizes that living abroad has only intensified her need to ask the questions she didn't dare to as a child and young adult. Returning to Germany, she visits archives, conducts research, and interviews family members, uncovering in the process the stories of her maternal grandfather, a driving teacher in Karlsruhe during the war, and her father's brother Franz-Karl, who died as a teenage SS soldier in Italy. Her quest, spanning continents and generations, pieces together her family's troubling story and reflects on what it means to be a German of her generation.

[Goodreads Community Review by Emily May]
This is not an easy book to read. It's a graphic memoir of what it was like to grow up in a post-

Hitler Germany. In Krug's childhood, the Holocaust looms in the background of everything but is rarely spoken about. The book looks at the collective shame of the German people-- a shame drilled so deep that the word "heimat" or "homeland" brings no sense of pride; a shame that means hiding your accent to avoid provoking strong and painful emotions in those you meet.

The mixed art is very powerful. Krug uses a scrapbook-style scattering of images, clippings and traditional comic strip art to first explore her own upbringing, and then later to delve into her family's past. There's nothing simple about this book at all. It's both an informative read for the non-German reader, and an emotional memoir.

It's also a good little piece of investigative journalism, though nowhere near as dispassionate as that sounds. Krug finds herself asking the difficult questions that no one in her family seems willing to ask. She wants to know - she has to know - what role her grandparents played in the Nazi atrocities.

For what reason? She's not sure. Perhaps to absolve them in her mind; perhaps to adequately blame them. Whatever the reasoning, I felt every bit of the author's desperation to find out about her grandparents. I sat along as she dug into their history and hoped so very much that they weren't guilty of the worst crimes. I, too, wanted it to not be them. I wanted them to have been the good guys.

Ultimately, though, it's not that easy and Krug knows it all too well. Most Germans were complicit in some way; the true "good guys" didn't live to tell the tale. Despite an extensive investigation, many answers remain out of reach.

Not a simple read, or fully satisfying, but thought-provoking nonetheless. CW: antisemitism; holocaust (disturbing images).

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

<http://www.simonandschuster.com/books/Belonging/Nora-Krug/9781476796635>

Nora Krug's drawings and visual narratives have appeared in *The New York Times*, *The Guardian*, and *Le Monde diplomatique*. Her short-form graphic biography, *Kamikaze*, about a surviving Japanese WWII pilot, was included in the 2012 editions of *Best American Comics* and



Best American Nonrequired Reading. She is the recipient of fellowships from the Maurice Sendak Foundation, Fulbright, the John Simon Guggenheim Memorial Foundation, the Pollock-Krasner Foundation, and of medals from the Society of Illustrators

and the New York Art Directors Club. She is an associate professor at Parsons School of Design in New York and lives in Brooklyn with her family. Krug is the author of the graphic memoir, *Belonging*.

DEATH PENALTY NEWS

By Stevi Carroll

Julius Jones - Oklahoma

"They should just take the n****r out and shoot him behind the jail" a juror told the judge another juror said during Julius Jones's trial. No action was taken. Christopher Jordan, the co-defendant, in Mr Jones's trial made a deal with prosecutors to testify against Jones. He served 15 years in prison. In 1999, when Mr Jones was on trial for the murder of a white businessman, his court appointed lawyer did not call any alibi witnesses, did not cross-examine Christopher Jordan, and did not have Mr Jones testify. Additionally, an eyewitness described the shooter as looking like Mr Jordan, not Mr Jones.

Mr Jones's clemency petition also included letters from faith and civil rights leaders. The Oklahoma NAACP, the Congressional Black Caucus, the Catholic Archbishop of Oklahoma City Paul S Coakley and Oklahoma Representative George Young have also weighed in on this case. And Kim Kardashian West tweeted to her followers to ask the pardon board and Gov. Kevin Stitt "to give 'careful and thoughtful consideration' to Jones's petition."

In a 21-year period, the Oklahoma County District Attorney sent 54 men and women to death row. Over half of those convictions have been reversed and several people have been exonerated. While Oklahoma has not executed

anyone since 2015, the state has carried out more executions since 1976 except for Texas and Virginia.

Stay of Execution for One of the Federal Death Penalty Cases

Lezmond Mitchell is a member of the Navajo Nation and is the only Native American on the Federal death row. Attorney General William Barr and the US Department of Justice scheduled Mr Mitchell to be executed on December 11, 2019. When AG Barr announced the resumption of the Federal death penalty last July 25, the DOJ falsely said that the five inmates had exhausted their appeals and “that it was carrying out the executions to advance the interests of the victims’ families.” Mr Mitchell was granted a ‘certificate of appealability’ which means that the courts thought the issues he raised are worthy of further judicial review. Additionally, the Navajo Nation and the victims’ family are on the record at his trial stating they oppose the government seeking the death penalty in his case. The appeal argument for his case is scheduled for December 13, 2019.

To read more about this case, go to <https://deathpenaltyinfo.org/news/sole-native-american-on-federal-death-row-attempts-to-stop-execution-opposed-by-navajo-nation>.

Recent Exonerations

Larry Trent Roberts - State: PA
 - Date of Exoneration: 9/17/2019
 In 2007, Larry Trent Roberts was sentenced to life in prison without parole for a murder in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania. He was acquitted at a retrial in 2019 based on cell phone evidence showing he was miles away from the crime.

Carlos Weeks - State: NY
 - Date of Exoneration: 10/2/2019
 In 1995, Carlos Weeks was sentenced to 27 1/2 years to life in prison for a shooting that killed one youth and injured another in Brooklyn, New York. He was exonerated in 2019 after one eyewitness admitted she never saw the gunman and the other said she didn't remember the shooting at all.

Willie Veasy - State: PA
 - Date of Exoneration: 10/9/2019
 Willie Veasy was convicted of murder in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania in 1993 and sentenced to life in prison. He was exonerated in 2019 after the only eyewitness at trial recanted

and Veasy's confession was deemed to have been obtained through police misconduct.

Stays of Execution

October
 2 Stephen Barbee TX
 10 Randy Halprin TX
 16 Randall Mays TX (Warrant withdrawn for court to study medical records)
 17 Jamies Frazier OH (Reprieved - sentenced to die October 20, 2021)
 17 Angelo Fears OH (Resentenced to life - death warrant vacated)

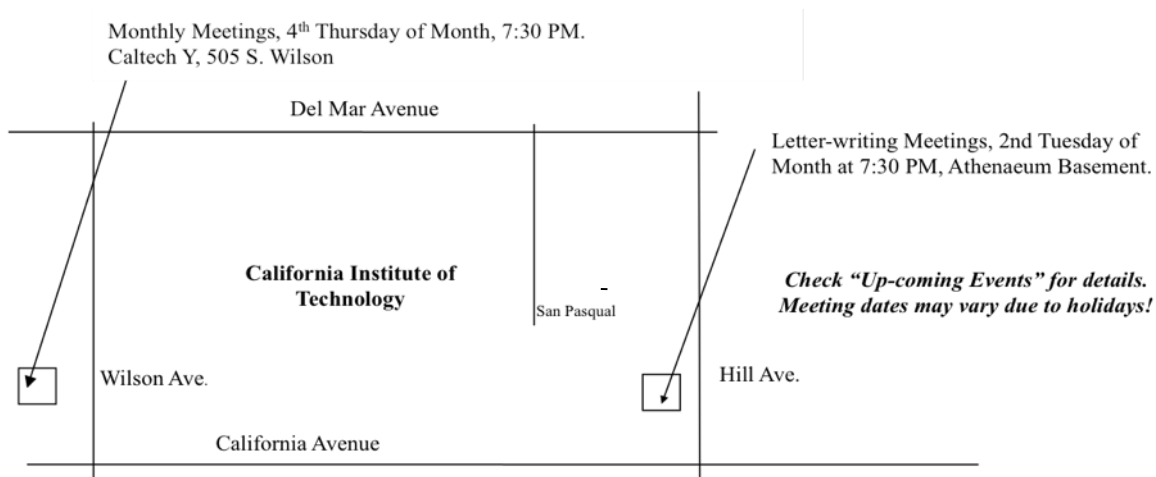
Executions

September
 25 Robert Sparks TX
 Lethal Injection 1-drug - pentobarbital
 Years From Sentence To Execution - 10

October
 1 Russell Bucklew MO
 Lethal Injection 1-drug - pentobarbital
 Years From Sentence To Execution - 22

Group 22 September Letter Count	
AIUSA Banned Books Actions	23

Group 22 October Letter Count	
UAs	14
POC Narges Mohammadi (Iran)	14
POC Gao Zhisheng (China)	13
Total	41



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/

Find us on Facebook – search "Amnesty Pasadena"



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.