

September 30, 2020

Hello from Amnesty International Group 22 Pasadena/Caltech!

It's been a long long summer. Keep calm and safe, and remember to vote.

Here's an update about our group's recent human rights activities, with news about our adopted Prisoners of Conscience in Iran and China and Death Penalty news from Stevi.

Please contact aigp22@caltech.edu if you would like to be included on the Zoom invitation lists for Letter Writing or for Book Group Discussion.

LETTER WRITING

Thanks to group member Paula for hosting our Zoom Letter Writing on September 8 and to group coordinator Kathy for her list of current Urgent Actions.

Kathy reported Group 22's September total of 77 emails and 30 letters to

Amnesty USA.

Kathy's list of current Urgent Actions is available at https://www.its.caltech.edu/~aigp22/current_ua.html.

Next Letter Writing is Tuesday, October 13, 7:30 -9 pm.

BOOK GROUP

Our October selection is bestseller "The Nickel Boys" by Colson Whitehead.

Here's the Kirkus review:

<https://www.kirkusreviews.com/book-reviews/colson-whitehead/the-nickel-boys/>

By the way, this novel won the 2019 Kirkus Prize for fiction. I also loved the author's previous novel "The Underground Railroad" when it was our book selection for May 2018.

Our virtual book group meeting will be Sunday, October 18, 6:30 pm.

Vroman's Bookstore in Pasadena is not holding book group meetings during the pandemic, so they no longer special-order book group selections. However, Kathy reports that you can go to the store and buy the book or you can order it and then pick it up. They may still give the Amnesty book group discount if you ask. They are open daily from 10:30 to 6 but limit the amount of people in store at one time. Mask wearing required.

<https://www.vromansbookstore.com/vromans-curbside-pick>

PRISONER OF CONSCIENCE GAO ZHISHENG

Group member Wen Chen mentioned Gao Zhisheng in her September talk to the Carmichael Rotary Club. Her talk was featured in their newsletter and included a link to an article about Gao. Thank you very much, Wen!
<https://www.carmichaelrotary.org/Stories/chinese-history-and-human-rights>

The article about Gao is a heartfelt personal tribute by his friend, Teng Biao. Amnesty published it in 2019 and there's a link to it on our own Group 22 page about Gao. Teng Biao wrote, "Gao Zhisheng is not 'one of' the bravest lawyers in China, he is indisputably 'the' bravest one."

It's been over three years since human rights lawyer Gao was disappeared – let's read that article again and get inspired to take action for him!

<https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2019/08/bravest-lawyer-china-gao-zhisheng/>

A sample letter is available on our Group 22 page for Gao:

<http://www.its.caltech.edu/%7Eaigp22/GaoPOC/Gao.html>

PRISONER OF CONSCIENCE NARGES MOHAMMADI

Although Narges endured a severe bout of Covid-19 symptoms in July, this month she was able to write an open letter from Zanjan Prison against Iran's use of the death penalty for young protesters. "In this painful exile, I want to do my share by expressing serious concern over our people's poverty and despair, and protest the suppression of nationwide protests, the death sentences handed down for participants and the public masquerades organized in this regard."
<https://women.ncr-iran.org/2020/09/09/human-rights-advocate-narges-mohammadi-speaks-out-against-death-penalties/>

Here's a sample letter that you can use to take action for Narges:

http://www.its.caltech.edu/%7Eaigp22/POC-Narges/narges_sample.pdf

DEATH PENALTY NEWS

by Stevi Carroll

Since July, eight people have been executed in the United States of America: one in Texas and seven by the Federal Government. The seven held by the Federal Government have been on death row from 21 to 14 years from their sentences to their executions. I guess there's no time like the 2020 election year to clean out the Federal Death Row.

Abe Bonowitz and others at Death Penalty Action give us information and actions we can engage in. For information, please go to <http://deathpenaltyaction.org/>

And for things we can do, please go to
<http://deathpenaltyaction.org/federal-death-penalty>

Please stay healthy and safe - and remember to VOTE.

LAST WORD

Thank you for reading this far. Do what Stevi said!
Peace and all good,
Joyce, Kathy, and Stevi