

UPCOMING EVENTS

Thursday, February 27, 7:30-9:00 PM. Monthly Meeting. We meet at the Caltech Y, Tyson House, 505 S. Wilson Ave., Pasadena. Our guest speaker will be Norit Admasu from African Communities Public Health Coalition (ACPHC). ACPHC strives "to provide the culturally-relevant mental health and immigration services, education, and advocacy our [African] communities deserve." Visit <https://africancoalition.org> to learn about this organization.

Tuesday, March 10, 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.

Sunday, March 15, 6:30 PM. Rights Readers Human Rights Book Discussion Group. This month we read the novel "Gateway to the Moon" by Mary Morris.

COORDINATOR'S CORNER

Hello everyone,

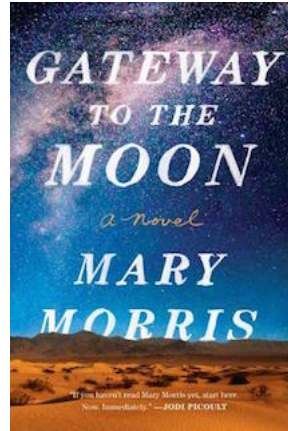
Amnesty recently posted an updated Urgent Action for Narges Mohammadi, our group's adopted prisoner of conscience in Iran. We'll work on it at our March letter-writing. Of course you can write immediately – just visit <https://www.amnestyusa.org/urgent-actions/urgent-action-update-activist-reports-ill-treatment-in-prison-iran-ua-105-15/>

I'm looking forward to attending the AIUSA Annual General Meeting, March 6-8, San Diego, at Hilton La Jolla Torrey Pines. Several members of Group 22 plan to go, and we will report our experiences in next month's newsletter. I'm hoping to meet members of other USA groups who are also working for our POCs Narges Mohammadi and disappeared human rights lawyer Gao Zhisheng.

The AGM agenda, program book, and speakers' bios are all available now on the website: <https://www.amnestyusa.org/take-action/events/amnesty-internationals-2020-annual-general-meeting>.

Online registration is closed, but you can register onsite if you decide to go!

-Joyce (substituting this month for Kathy)



Next Rights Readers Meeting

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

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

**Gateway to the
Moon**

by Mary Morris

REVIEW

(www.goodreads.com/book/show/35791945-gateway-to-the-moon)

From award-winning novelist and memoirist Mary Morris comes the story of a sleepy New Mexican community that must come to grips with a religious and political inheritance they never expected.

Entrada de la Luna is the sort of town that ambitious children try to leave behind them. Poor health, broken marriages, and poverty are the norm, and luck is unusual. So when Miguel Torres notices an advertisement for a position looking after two small boys a few towns over, he jumps at the opportunity.

Rachel Rothstein is not the sort of parent Miguel expected to be working for, though. A frustrated artist, Rachel moved her family away from New York looking for a fresh start, but so far New Mexico has not solved any of the problems they brought with them. But Miguel genuinely loves the work and he finds many of the Rothstein family's customs similar to ones he sees in his own community.

Studded throughout this present-day narrative are historical vignettes following the ancestors of Entrada's residents, beginning in fifteenth-century Spain and moving forward to the discovery of America, highlighting the torture, pursuit, and resistance of the Jewish people throughout history, leading to the founding of the enclave that Miguel now calls home. A beautiful novel of shared history, Gateway to the Moon is a moving and memorable portrait of home and community.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

<http://www.marymorris.net/bio/>



Born in Chicago in 1947, Mary Morris moved East to go to college. Though she never returned to the Middle West, she often writes about the region and its tug. Morris likes the fact that there is more magnetism

around the shores of Lake Michigan than the North Pole. She feels drawn there and feels an affinity for Midwestern writers such as Willa Cather and Mark Twain who wrote their stories of the Middle West from afar. In her first collection of short stories, *Vanishing Animals & Other Stories*, awarded the Rome Prize in Literature from the American Academy and Institute of Arts & Letters, Morris writes about childhood and adolescent memories. The *Chicago Tribune* called Morris "a marvelous storyteller—a budding Isaac Bashevis Singer, a young Doris Lessing, a talent to be watched and read".

Morris's stories often deal with the tension between home and away. Travel is an important theme in many of the stories in her three collections, including *Vanishing Animals*, *The Bus of Dreams*, and *The Lifeguard Stories*. It is also a recurrent theme in her trilogy of travel memoirs, including the acclaimed *Nothing to Declare: Memoirs of a Woman Traveling Alone*, *Wall to Wall: from Beijing to Berlin by Rail*, and *Angels & Aliens: A Journey West*. In her five novels, including *The Waiting Room*, *The Night Sky* (formerly published as *A Mother's Love*) and *House Arrest*, Morris writes of family, its difficulties and disappointments, its iron grip and necessity, and ultimately the comfort family can bring.

Her last two novels have been historically based. *THE JAZZ PALACE*, published in 2015, took almost twenty years to write. In the summer of 1997 Mary Morris wrote a short memoir piece and she shared it with the writer, Stuart Dybek. Stuart told her that she was writing a saga and she should just sit down and do it. For much of the next two decades Morris was writing *The Jazz Palace*. For years she traveled to Chicago for research, studied jazz piano, and read everything she could about the history of the city she loves, but left long ago. Despite years of rejections and revisions Morris never gave up on this book, or, as she sometimes likes to put it, the book never gave up on her. "I've been the

poster child for perseverance," Morris quips. The result is the novel about which leads Christina Baker Kline to write that "we know we are in the hands of a master." And Valerie Martin refers to as "a sweeping tribute, a jazz ode, by a wonderful writer to her native city." And Peter Orner refers to it as "An exquisite love letter to her hometown and yet a book that transcends time and place."

Morris began her newest work, *GATEWAY TO THE MOON*, in the summer of 2014. She had another idea for a novel, but her agent, Ellen Levine, urged her to a book that was "about" something.

Whether writing fiction or non-fiction, Morris sees herself as a storyteller, weaving tales. A Japanese critic once, referring to her non-fiction, told Morris that she is not really a travel writer; rather she writes stories that take place during journeys.

Her many novels and story collections have been translated into Italian, Spanish, German, Dutch, Swedish and Japanese. She lives in Brooklyn, New York with her husband and daughter and teaches writing at Sarah Lawrence College.

SECURITY WITH HUMAN RIGHTS

By Robert Adams

PROVISION CRIMINALIZING HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDERS AT THE BORDER CRIMINALIZES HUMANITY

02/18/2020

As the Supreme Court of the United States prepares to hear arguments on February 25 in the case of *United States v. Sineneng-Smith*, on whether to strike down as unconstitutional a criminal provision, which makes it illegal to "encourage" or "induce" people to violate U.S. immigration law, Amnesty International has submitted an amicus brief providing why the provision is unconstitutional.

Justin Mazzola, deputy director of research at Amnesty International USA said: "At a time when this country is enforcing some of the most inhumane policies against people seeking safety, the people who are showing humanity amidst the cruelty are being unjustly criminalized. Instead of targeting lawyers,

journalists, and activists for trying to stop human rights violations, the government should be listening to them and celebrating their efforts. This response demonstrates this administration's pattern of criminalizing humanity."

Brian Griffey, regional researcher at Amnesty International said:

"I have witnessed the Herculean efforts of human rights defenders as they do their all to provide shelter, food, services, and legal assistance to asylum seekers and migrants, showing them respect, kindness, and humanity. In response, the government has searched, detained, interrogated, and arrested those same human rights defenders at the border, on account of their protected views and speech. The U.S. should be defending these vital efforts, not terrorizing human rights defenders for doing their life-saving work."

In an amicus brief provided to the Supreme Court on this case, Amnesty International demonstrates that the United States Department of Homeland Security (DHS) has used the criminal provision under question – 8 U.S.C. § 1324(a)(1)(A)(iv) – to criminally investigate and chill a substantial amount of speech protected by the First Amendment. In particular, the government created a "Watchlist" of human rights defenders, which was maintained by DHS's Customs and Border Protection regional office in San Diego. The Watchlist contained the names, pictures, and other identifying information of fifty-nine journalists, lawyers, activists, and other humanitarian volunteers active at the border, including a clergy member. When individuals on the Watchlist started to experience harassment from border officials, they turned to Amnesty International for help, as early as December 2018 and in 2019, Amnesty International compiled their stories into a report, titled Saving Lives Is Not a Crime. Amnesty International launched an investigation into their accounts, as well as accounts from individuals in other regions, interviewing people who believed they had been targeted for their work in support of the human rights of asylum seekers, as well as migrants, at the border. These individuals' stories, belie the government's claim that § 1324(a)(1)(A)(iv) has not been and will not be used to deter, threaten, and punish protected speech. The government has repeatedly applied the statute to discourage disfavored, but protected expression.

DEATH PENALTY NEWS

By Stevi Carroll

Nicholas Sutton

Justice: the quality of being just; righteousness, equitableness, or moral rightness

Nicholas Sutton began life not on third base but with three strikes against him. His mother abandoned him as a baby which left him to be reared by an abusive father who created a horrible childhood filled with beatings, fear, and brain damage. At one point, his father held Mr Sutton and his grandmother at gunpoint. This situation ended with a standoff with police. By the time he was 12, he and his father were using drugs together, which led to Mr Sutton's addiction to drugs. This information about his life is just the tip of the metaphoric iceberg. He was 18 years old when he killed his paternal grandmother in Tennessee and two men in North Carolina. He was sentenced to life in Tennessee's overcrowded and dangerous prisons. Violence continued to plague his life.

While in prison, Mr Sutton was attacked by another inmate with a lead pipe. He was hit so hard one of his eyes was dislodged from its socket. Then in 1985, he found himself in what former correction commissioner and warden James E. Aiken called a 'kill or be killed' situation with another inmate called Carl Estep who had already told staff he wanted to kill Mr Sutton. Mr Sutton knew he would get no protection from the prison staff and ended up stabbing Mr Estep to death. At this point, Mr Sutton was 23 years old. For this murder, he had a co-defendant both of whom were offered a sentence of 30-40 years in prison if they pleaded guilty. Mr Sutton wanted to take the deal. His co-defendant did not. Mr Sutton was sentenced to death.

As you can see from the list of recent executions below, Mr Sutton was executed February 20. Was justice done?

Many people thought Mr Sutton's life should be spared. Why? First, let's remember that from sentencing to execution, 34 years elapsed. So, now let's think about ourselves and what has happened in our own lives over the past 34 years. While our core selves may be the same, we probably are not completely the same person. Could this be true for a person who from the beginning of his life had three strikes

against him, who over the course of his early adulthood took the lives of four people, and who has lived in a dangerous and violent environment for decades? So why did people speak up to save Mr Sutton's life, and who were these people?

People directly involved in Mr Sutton's crimes came forward to ask the governor to commute his death sentence. They included family members of the Estep, Sutton, and Almon families. Five members of the jury that sentenced him to death and one alternate juror came to believe he should not be executed.

Staff in correctional institutions are not known for being soft on criminals, and yet Mr Sutton saved the lives of three of them. He saw five prisoners were trying to take a guard hostage during a prison riot in 1985. In his clemency petition, the guard said, "Nick risked his safety and well-being in order to save me from possible death. I owe my life to Nick Sutton. If Nick Sutton was released tomorrow, I would welcome him into my home and invite him to be my neighbor . . . It is my opinion that Nick Sutton, more than anyone else on Tennessee's Death Row, deserves to live." Another time when a sheriff's deputy was in danger of being attacked from behind as he attempted to break up a fight, Mr Sutton stopped the attack. Another employee, a woman, who had fallen and was injured, said about Mr Sutton, "He sprang into action, helped me to my feet, retrieved my keys and radio, and alerted staff to come to my assistance. This was typical of Nick, who always puts others before himself and is willing to help anyone in need."

Nonetheless, Governor Bill Lee denied the multiple requests for clemency. On February 20th, the state of Tennessee electrocuted Nicholas Sutton. During this same week, Donald Trump used his presidential power to pardon a number of convicted white-collar criminals including Michael Milken. No, Mr Milken did not murder anyone. He just committed financial crimes. As John K. Carroll one of the lead prosecutors in United States v. Michael Milken wrote, "In as guileless an admission as I have ever seen of rich man's justice, the White House bolstered its decision by listing a murderer's row of Republican donors and billionaires who provided 'widespread and long-standing' support for Milken's pardon. Sheldon Adelson, Tom Barrack, my old boss Giuliani and others are listed as supporters of the pardon." But finally as David Brooks said on the PBS

NewsHour on February 21, 2020, about Mr Milken's pardon, "I thought the pardon was legitimate in that case. This is a guy who had his Wall Street problems in the '80s, prosecuted by Rudy Giuliani. But as far as I can see, the Milken Institute is out in California. He's really dedicated last 20 or 30 years to serving the public, running a think tank, trying to spread ideas. And so in the case of somebody like that, who really spends decades in public service after whatever he did years ago, a pardon doesn't seem like the worst thing in the world."

As Dr Graham Reside said, "Executing Nick Sutton after such a valiant struggle to become a loving and generous witness in the world would be unjust." I'm left to wonder: What is the worst thing in the world?

Justice: the quality of being just; righteousness, equitableness, or moral rightness

Petitions - Not From Amnesty International

While these petitions are not from Amnesty, they are supported by Sister Helen Prejean and Death Penalty Action. If you are so moved, please sign these petitions.

Stop the Execution of Nathaniel Woods in Alabama on March 5

Nathaniel Woods, 44, is set to die by lethal injection on March 5 at William C. Holman prison in Atmore, Alabama.

Woods was convicted in December 2005 of capital murder for the June 17, 2004 shooting deaths of Birmingham police officers Carlos Owen, Harley A. Chisholm III, and Charles R. Bennett.

Attorneys filing Mr. Woods' appeal are arguing the constitutional claim that he was denied effective representation at trial, which is a violation of the guaranteed rights in the Sixth and Fourteenth Amendments to the United States Constitution. It is believed that Mr. Woods "almost certainly would not have been sentenced to death" if he had a good lawyer at the penalty phase of his trial.

The Alabama Constitution states that the power to grant commutations and reprieves in capital cases lies exclusively with the governor. Given the ineffective representation that Mr. Woods received, we appeal to Gov. Ivey to act urgently to stop this execution from going forward.

Please sign the petition and spread the word.

<https://actionnetwork.org/petitions/stop-the-execution-of-nathaniel-woods-in-alabama-on-march-5-2>

Stop the Execution of Carlos Trevino in Texas on June 3rd

Carlos Trevino is scheduled to die by lethal injection on June 3, 2020 in Huntsville, Texas. Trevino was

convicted in 1997 of murdering 15-year-old Linda Salinas and sentenced to death.

There is great concern around Mr. Trevino's case, as his appeal attorneys have produced new evidence that suggests that his original trial attorney was ineffective counsel, and did not present all the proper mitigating evidence, which resulted in an unfair sentence of death.

Some of the concerning facts:

- His trial attorney did not investigate potentially mitigating evidence that he suffers from fetal alcohol syndrome, due to his mother drinking while she was pregnant. Mr. Trevino weighed four pounds at birth, and has suffered from fetal alcohol syndrome symptoms throughout his life, greatly impairing his ability to make decisions.

Therefore, we are petitioning both the Board of Pardons and Paroles and Texas Governor Greg Abbott.

Please note: In Texas, the Governor does have limited power when it comes to the death penalty. But the story we are told that "it's out of the governor's hands," is only true if we allow it to be. Yes, the Texas Board of Pardons and Paroles must recommend clemency in that state in order for the Governor to grant clemency (mercy) by commuting a death sentence. But the fact is that the governor appoints the members of the Board of Pardons and Paroles. He can choose to appoint members who will take valid claims and concerns more seriously, instead of acting like rubber-stamping gate-keepers. He can still use his position of power and influence to enact justice in the State of Texas.

Please sign the petition asking Governor Abbott and the Texas Board of Pardons and Paroles to do everything within their power to stop this execution, including issuing a stay, and seeking a path to clemency in the case.

https://actionnetwork.org/petitions/stop-the-execution-of-carlos-trevino-in-texas-on-march-11th?clear_id=true

Recent Exoneration

Theophalis Wilson - State: PA

- Date of Exoneration: 1/21/2020

In 1993, Theophalis Wilson was sentenced to life in prison for three murders in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. He was exonerated in January 2020 by physical evidence that undermined the sole eyewitness's account of the crime.

Stays of Execution

January

16 Jimmy Meders GA

Commutated to life without parole by the Georgia Board of Pardons and Paroles on January 16, 2020.

February

12 Lawrence Landrum OH

Reprieve granted by Gov. John Kasich on September 1, 2017 and execution rescheduled for December 9, 2021.^

20 Melvin Bonnell OH

Reprieve granted by Gov. Mike DeWine on December 20, 2019 and execution rescheduled for March 18, 2021.

March

11 Anthony Belton OH

Date removed

12 Gregory Lott OH

Reprieve granted by Gov. Mike DeWine on January 31, 2020 and execution rescheduled for May 27, 2021.

13 Jordan Clemons PA

Legally premature warrant. Stay granted by the U.S. District Court for the Western District of Pennsylvania on February 11, 2020 to permit Clemons to pursue habeas corpus review of his conviction and death sentence that is guaranteed as a matter of federal law.

April

9 Abu-Ali Abdur' Rahman TN

Resentenced to life on August 30, 2019.

^ 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.

Recent Executions

January

29 Donnie Lance GA

Lethal injection 1-drug Pentobarbital
21 Years from Sentence to Execution

February

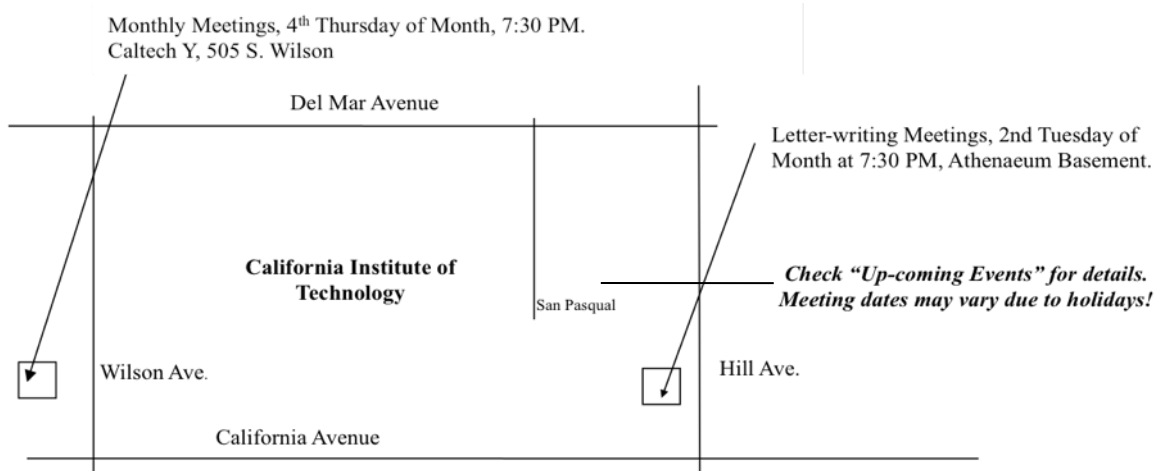
6 Abel Ochoa TX

Lethal injection 1-drug Pentobarbital
17 Years from Sentence to Execution

20 Nicholas Todd Sutton TN

Electrocution
34 Years from Sentence to Execution

GROUP 22 FEBRUARY LETTER COUNT	
UAs	39
POC (Narges Mohammadi)	2
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/
<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.