

Amnesty International Group 22 Pasadena/Caltech News

Volume XVIII Number 8, August 2010

UPCOMING EVENTS

Thursday, August 26, 7:30 PM. Monthly Meeting. Caltech Y is located off San Pasqual between Hill and Holliston, south side. You will see two curving walls forming a gate to a path--our building is just beyond. Help us plan future actions on Sudan, the 'War on Terror', death penalty and more.

Tuesday, September 14, 7:30 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!

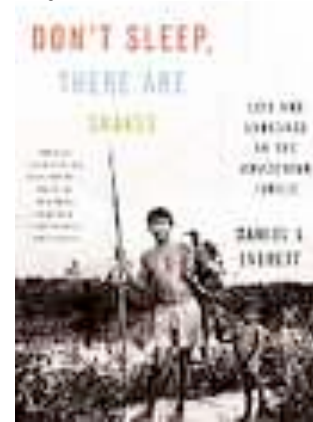
Sunday, September 19, 6:30 PM. Rights Readers Human Rights Book Discussion group. This month we read "Don't Sleep, There Are Snakes: Life and Language in the Amazonian Jungle" by Daniel Everett.

Next Rights Readers Meeting:

Sunday, September 19, 6:30 PM

**Vroman's Bookstore
695 E. Colorado Boulevard
In Pasadena**

Don't Sleep, There Are Snakes By Daniel L. Everett



COORDINATOR'S CORNER

Hi everyone

Well, we're back from our car trip to Oregon. Had fun in Ashland seeing 3 plays in 2 days, then on to Corvallis to visit with Rob's family. It was 100 degrees in the Willamette Valley! On the way back, we stopped at Crater Lake where we got caught in a thunder and hailstorm! (We hid out in an empty men's room at the visitor center until the hail had passed!!). On the way home we drove down 395 through the beautiful and rugged Eastern Sierra to Yosemite, then home. Pics to follow on facebook as soon as I get it together. It's back to work on Monday for both of us!! Many regrets I missed the August book group discussion of "The Girl Who Played with Fir". It just happened to coincide with our trip.

Some Group 22 members have been active in the local DP Abolition movement. See Stevi's DP update for details.

Con cariño,
Kathy

RIGHTS READERS

Human Rights Book Discussion Group

Keep up with Rights Readers at
<http://rightsreaders.blogspot.com>

AUTHOR BIOGRAPHY



DANIEL L. EVERETT, a former evangelical Christian missionary to the Pirahã in the Brazilian Amazon for more than 20 years, is Chair of Languages, Literatures, and Cultures and Professor of Linguistics and Anthropology at Illinois State University.

PUBLISHER'S COMMENTS:

A riveting account of the astonishing experiences and discoveries made by linguist Daniel Everett while he lived with the Piraha, a small tribe of Amazonian Indians in central Brazil. Everett, then a Christian missionary, arrived among the Piraha in 1977 — with his wife and three young children — intending to convert them. What he found was a language that defies all existing linguistic theories and reflects a way of life that evades contemporary understanding: The Piraha have no counting system and no fixed terms for color. They have no concept of war or of personal property. They live entirely in the present. Everett became obsessed with their language and its cultural and linguistic

implications, and with the remarkable contentment with which they live — so much so that he eventually lost his faith in the God he'd hoped to introduce to them.

Over three decades, Everett spent a total of seven years among the Piraha, and his account of this lasting sojourn is an engrossing exploration of language that questions modern linguistic theory. It is also an anthropological investigation, an adventure story, and a riveting memoir of a life profoundly affected by exposure to a different culture. Written with extraordinary acuity, sensitivity, and openness, it is fascinating from first to last, rich with unparalleled insight into the nature of language, thought, and life itself.

PRISONER OF CONSCIENCE GAO ZHISHENG

BY JOYCE WOLF



The American Bar Association honored Gao Zhisheng with the 2010 International Human Rights Lawyer Award at its annual conference in San Francisco on August 6. Gao's 17-year-old daughter, Geng Ge (also known as Grace Geng),

accepted the award for her father. Geng and her mother and brother have been living in the U.S. since they fled China over a year ago. Gao himself has been missing since April 2010 when he was allegedly abducted by Chinese security forces.

According to an article in the Epoch Times, Geng stated that she is extremely proud of her father and that he would be very happy if he knew that she was accepting this award for him. She misses him and admires him very much. She said that she would like to say to everyone, "If you are doing the right thing, keep doing it. Don't give up."
<http://www.theepochtimes.com/n2/content/view/40742/>

Group 22 adopted the case of human rights lawyer Gao Zhisheng (pronounced Gow Jirsheng) in March of this year. Amnesty International suggests that we write on a regular

basis to the Director of the Beijing Municipal Justice Bureau. Here is a sample letter that you can use as a guide.

WU Yuhua Juzhang
Beijingshi Sifaju
12 Xinjiekouwaidajie
Xichengqu
Beijingshi 100088
PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA

Dear Director,

I am deeply concerned about Gao Zhisheng (高智晟), a Beijing-based human rights lawyer who was detained in Shaanxi Province on February 4, 2009. His current whereabouts has been unknown since April 20, 2010.

A highly respected lawyer, Gao Zhisheng has represented a number of human rights defenders, including members of the spiritual group Falun Gong. The American Bar Association recently honored him with their 2010 International Human Rights Lawyer Award.

Although Gao was named one of the top 10 lawyers in 2001 by China's Justice Department, in 2005 the government revoked his license and sent him to jail for three years, during which time he reportedly was tortured. I respectfully urge that the authorities open a full and impartial investigation into allegations that Gao Zhisheng suffered ill-treatment in detention, including beatings and inadequate access to medical treatment, and bring those responsible to justice.

Thank you for your attention to this important matter.

[your name and address]

DEATH PENALTY NEWS BY STEVI CARROLL

July finished up and August slipped in to a cool beginning. Members of our group, Candy, Larry and Stevi, were able to support the Los Angeles County Coalition for Death Penalty Alternatives in August. August 3, the LA County Coalition for DP Alternatives was on the agenda for the meeting of the Pasadena Human Relations Commission. James Clark from the ACLU made a presentation during which he asked the Human Relations Commission to pass the LACCDPA resolution calling on the DA to stop seeking death sentences. James had members of the religious

community, a member of the Pasadena ACLU, and two members of Amnesty: a woman who may become the sunny SoCal coordinator for the death penalty and Stevi. The Commission members who commented on the death penalty and the resolution expressed support. They told us they will discuss the resolution with all the members of the Commission and support the Coalition when it appears before the Pasadena City Council.

The LACCDPA changed its monthly meetings from Wednesday evening to Sunday afternoon at 3, so Candy, Larry and Stevi attended the August 8th meeting. James led a fast-paced and informative meeting. In addition to telling the group about the Human Rights Commission meeting, James talked about a tabling event that needs volunteers, World Day 10/10/10 event that needs a location, the campaign around the Attorney General's election and Stephen Cooley that needs letters to the editor. Pasadena Star-News: letters.star-news@sgvn.com

San Gabriel Valley Pride celebration is September 12, 2010, in Memorial Park in Pasadena. LACCDPA needs volunteers to be at an information table. To volunteer, contact James Clark at jclark@aclu-sc.org.

Information from James Clark for writing letters to the various editors:

We need to get our message into LA-area newspapers NOW! We are concerned there will be more election related, pro-death penalty rhetoric in the next two weeks and we need to act now to deflect the negative tone. Please send letters to the editor this week! Below are some tips, talking points, and contact info for LA papers.

Remember, the letters to the editor page is the most widely read page in the paper—it really does make a difference when we get letters published and we need a lot of letters to be sent for one or two to get published.

Please look for an article that you can use as a hook—possibly an article about the budget crisis, the impact of budget cuts, or a high profile trial. Here are some suggested messages:

- 1) Due to the budget crisis, LA was forced to cut overtime for homicide investigators, putting many homicide

investigations on hold. In 2009, LA County spent at least \$14.3 million on 13 death penalty prosecutions. For the same amount of money, the county could have paid for 185 homicide investigators.

- 2) From 1998 to 2008, 54% of murders in LA County remained unsolved due to lack of funds for DNA testing and homicide investigations.
- 3) From San Joaquin to San Diego, prosecutors across California are choosing life without parole instead of the death penalty because the death penalty is three times more expensive and leaves victims' families in limbo for decades.

You can send a letter to any paper where you see a story you can use as a launching pad for your letter. Here are the instructions for sending letters to the three largest papers in Southern California.

Los Angeles Times

Submit a letter to the editor. Please fill in your full name, mailing address, daytime phone number, and e-mail address below. This information is seen only by the letters editors and is not used for any commercial purpose. Letters that do not contain full contact information cannot be published, and we generally do not publish more than one letter from a single person within any 90-day period. Letters become the property of The Times and may be republished in any format. They typically run 150 words or less and may be edited. You will be contacted before your letter is published.

Submit using online form:

<http://www.latimes.com/news/opinion/la-comment-oped-cf,0,2007619.customform>

Or email:

letters@latimes.com

Los Angeles Daily News

Letters to the editor: Please limit letters to 125 words. Letters must be signed and include a daytime phone number and the community or city in which you live.

Submit using online form:

http://www.dailynews.com/opinions#letter_for_m

Or email:
dnforum@dailynews.com

Orange County Register

Please provide your name and telephone number (telephone numbers will not be published). Letters of about 200 words will be given preference.

Email:
letters@ocregister.com

Thanks everyone, with your help I know we can increase our visibility and help educate Los Angeles!

With Hope,
James

James Clark (213) 977-9500 x 258 |

jlark@aclu-sc.org
www.EndDeathPenaltyLA.org

Are convictions ever wrong?

Page A-13 of the L A Times on August 5, 2010, had a small item that caught my eye: DNA frees man jailed in murders. I know the evil side of humanity hangs out in the world. I read I listen to the news, read articles and even read entire books; I belong to Amnesty International. When I read about Jerry Hobbs and his incarceration since 2005, I had to wonder just who might be the deliverer of evil. At the time of his hearing, Jerry pleaded not guilty. A guy in prison for other crimes in Virginia matched the DNA from the murder scene that sent Jerry Hobbs to prison. Thankfully Jerry wasn't executed.

New CA lethal injection protocols approved

The California Office of Administrative Law approved new lethal injection protocols. According to an article in the L A Times on August 7, 2010, "According to a Department of Corrections report on the new procedures, the revisions to California's lethal injection protocol will result in the 'dignified end of life' for condemned inmates." Assemblyman Curt Hagman's contribution to the discussion of this 'progress' was a law he introduced earlier this year. It "could have prevented a legal challenge this week to new execution procedures." (LA Times)

According to The StandDown Texas Project (<http://standdown.typepad.com/weblog/2010/08/Californias-revised-lethal-injection-regulations-approved-challenged.html>)

of August 6, "Assemblyman Curt Hagman says a bill he introduced earlier this year could have prevented a legal challenge this week to new execution procedures. ... Hagman's legislation would have allowed the director of the Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation to make all decisions related to the administration of the death penalty such as procedures, staffing and layout of the execution chamber." This is the thinking that puts people like Jerry Hobbs close to death through no action of their own. Just as Babs Bush told us many of the people stranded in the sports stadium in New Orleans after Katrina had never had it so good, maybe some people believe this 'dignified end of life' is a positive opportunity for some inmates. Who can quibble over dignified, eh?

July 2010 List of US Executions:

- 20 Derrick Jackson Texas Lethal Injection
- 21 Joseph Burns Mississippi Lethal Injection

August 2010 US Executions:

- 10 Roderick Davie Ohio Lethal Injection
- 13 Michael Jeffery Land Alabama Lethal Injection
- 17 Peter Cantu Texas Lethal Injection

Stays of execution:

- July 22 Jermont Cox Pennsylvania.
- August 4 Tamir Hamilton Nevada.
- August 17 Jeffrey Matthews Oklahoma
- James VanDivner Pennsylvania

It's just really tragic after all the horrors of the last 1,000 years we can't leave behind something as primitive as government sponsored execution.

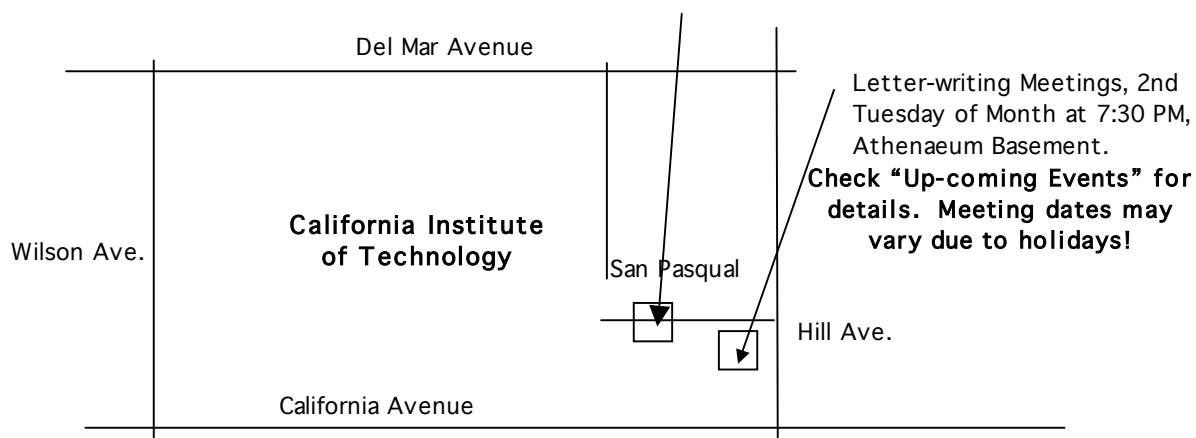
Russ Feingold

Compassion for now,
Stevi

MONTHLY LETTER COUNT

UA's	22
Total	22
To add your letters to the total contact lwkamp@gmail.com .	

Monthly Meetings, 4th Thursday of Month, 7:30 PM,
Caltech Y Lounge.



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 5-62
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.