

## UPCOMING EVENTS

**Thursday, April 26, 7:30 PM.** Monthly Meeting. We meet at the Caltech Y, Tyson House, 505 S. Wilson Ave., Pasadena. (This is just south of the corner with San Pasqual. Signs will be posted.) We will be planning our activities for the coming months. Please join us! Refreshments provided.

**Tuesday, May 8, 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, May 20, 6:30 PM.** Rights Readers Human Rights Book Discussion group. This month we read "The Wayfinders: Why Ancient Wisdom Matters in the Modern World" by Wade Davis.

## COORDINATOR'S CORNER

Hi All

Kathy is having a tough time dealing with the recent passing of her mother, so we are writing the column this month.

Last month's book, *The Tiger's Wife*, had a very small discussion group, a bit surprising for such a popular book. Most of our group was not too thrilled with it, though. [*I loved it!* -Joyce, newsletter editor for this month]

Things have been quiet recently in AI-land, except for the AGM in Denver, CO -- see the separate report below. Joyce and I (Lucas) took the train there, a 25-hour trip that involved much reading, watching the great scenery and good dining. Sleeping was a bit tough, though. Downtown Denver turns out to be quite attractive, with a dedicated pedestrian area and some good restaurants.

Group 22 is skipping the Doo Dah this year. Not only did inspiration for a creative entry fail to strike, but it turns out that almost all our active members are unavailable that day (April 28th). We'll try again next year.

Cheers,  
Stevi and Lucas

## Report on the 2012 AGM

by Lucas Kamp

The Annual General Meeting of AIUSA took place on March 30 through April 1 in Denver, Colorado. Joyce and I took the train, which arrived quite late on the 30th, so we missed the opening events (training and rally). However, the sessions on Saturday and Sunday morning were generally very useful and inspirational.

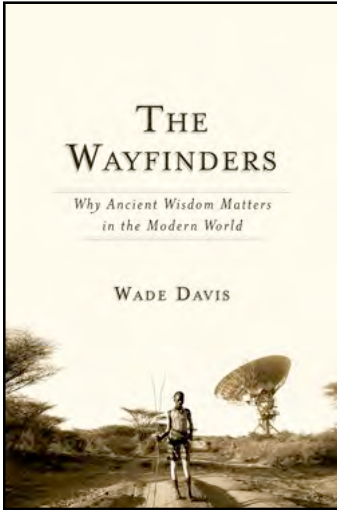
The opening remarks by AIUSA's new Executive Director, Suzanne Nossel, were very interesting -- she promises to be a forceful and effective leader. The keynote addresses were by Robert Ford, a recent ambassador to Syria, and the three hikers who were detained by Iran for over two years; all were very good.

The plenary session following was less successful, I felt. In the first program block, I attended the session on death penalty abolition, which had some very good speakers, including Troy Davis's nephew and his minister, as well as the mother of Reggie Clemons, another death-row inmate on whose behalf AI is currently active.

In the second block, I attended the session on campaign tactics, which was also quite interesting. A highlight there was when Joe Baker (a SoCal veteran whom some of us remember from way back) described the "conflict diamonds" campaign that AI did in 2001; Group 22 was active in that and I well remember visiting jewelry stores in Pasadena and grilling the employees about the provenance of their wares. Apparently, that campaign was quite a success and some important agreements were subsequently signed by de Beers and other companies. The voting plenary on Sunday morning was quite lively, though none of the resolutions struck me as being of great significance.

In summary, I was pleased to have attended the meeting and believe I learned some useful things. The one downside was the frequent talk of the financial problems that AI is going through -- it is starting to get depressing! I hope that we can pull out of this trough.

**RIGHTS READERS**  
**Human Rights Book Discussion Group**  
Keep up with Rights Readers at  
<http://rightsreaders.blogspot.com>



**Next Rights Readers meeting:**

**Sunday, May 20,  
6:30 PM**

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

***The Wayfinders*  
by Wade Davis**

For May, we have selected *The Wayfinders: Why Ancient Wisdom Matters in the Modern World* by Wade Davis, an award-winning anthropologist, ethnobotanist, filmmaker, and photographer. Davis currently holds the post of National Geographic Explorer-in-Residence.

Every culture is a unique answer to a fundamental question: What does it mean to be human and alive? Anthropologist and National Geographic Explorer-in-Residence Wade Davis leads us on a thrilling journey to celebrate the wisdom of the world's indigenous cultures.

In Polynesia we set sail with navigators whose ancestors settled the Pacific ten centuries before Christ. In the Amazon we meet the descendants of a true Lost Civilization, the people of the Anaconda. In the Andes we discover that the Earth really is alive, while in the far reaches of Australia we experience Dreamtime, the all-embracing philosophy of the first humans to walk out of Africa. We then travel to Nepal, where we encounter a wisdom hero, a Bodhisattva, who emerges from forty-five years of Buddhist retreat and solitude. And finally we settle in Borneo, where the last rainforest nomads struggle to survive.

Understanding the lessons of this journey will be our mission for the next century. For at risk is

the human legacy — a vast archive of knowledge and expertise, a catalogue of the imagination. Rediscovering a new appreciation for the diversity of the human spirit, as expressed by culture, is among the central challenges of our time.

### About the Author



Wade Davis is an Explorer-in-Residence at the National Geographic Society. Named by the NGS as one of the Explorers for the Millennium, he has been described as "a rare combination of scientist, scholar, poet and passionate defender of all of life's diversity." In recent years his work has taken him to East Africa, Borneo, Nepal, Peru, Polynesia, Tibet, Mali, Benin, Togo, New Guinea, Australia, Colombia, Vanuatu, Mongolia and the high Arctic of Nunuvut and Greenland.

An ethnographer, writer, photographer, and filmmaker, Davis holds degrees in anthropology and biology and received his Ph.D. in ethnobotany, all from Harvard University. Mostly through the Harvard Botanical Museum, he spent over three years in the Amazon and Andes as a plant explorer, living among fifteen indigenous groups in eight Latin American nations while making some 6000 botanical collections. His work later took him to Haiti to investigate folk preparations implicated in the creation of zombies, an assignment that led to his writing *Passage of Darkness* (1988) and *The Serpent and the Rainbow* (1986), an international best seller later released by Universal as a motion picture.

A native of British Columbia, Davis, a licensed river guide, has worked as park ranger, forestry engineer, and conducted ethnographic fieldwork among several indigenous societies of northern Canada. He has published 185 scientific and popular articles on subjects ranging from Haitian vodoun and Amazonian myth and religion to the global biodiversity crisis, the traditional use of psychotropic drugs, and the ethnobotany of South American Indians.

(Source:  
<http://www.nationalgeographic.com/explorers/bios/wade-davis/>)

## PRISONER OF CONSCIENCE

### Gao Zhisheng

By Joyce Wolf

This month I have wonderful news: Group 22's adopted prisoner of conscience Gao Zhisheng is alive and well! Subjected to 20 months of enforced disappearance, Gao reportedly began serving a 3-year sentence in remote Shaya Prison in December 2011, but no one was allowed to contact him until a few weeks ago. Here is a report from <http://www.ChinaAid.org>:

“(Shaya, Xinjiang—March 28, 2012) ChinaAid has confirmed that relatives of prominent Chinese human rights lawyer Gao Zhisheng were finally allowed to visit him in prison last weekend, putting to rest fears that the pioneer in the growing Christian legal defense movement in China had died during the two-plus years of his forced disappearance into police custody.

Gao's older brother and his father-in-law were permitted a half-hour meeting with Gao on March 24 at the Shaya prison, in a remote part of Xinjiang in far western China. They were able to see each other through a glass window and converse using a prison phone.

Gao's wife, Geng He, telephoned ChinaAid's founder and president Rev. Bob Fu on Tuesday night confirming the meeting and providing details.

She said that her husband broke into tears when her father told Gao, 'My health is greatly improved now that I have seen you.' Gao, who has disappeared into police custody several times since 2006, was last seen by his family members in April 2010 when he briefly resurfaced after a previous long period of disappearance. During that time, he gave an extensive interview to the Associated Press, an American wire service, in which he gave a detailed account of brutal torture inflicted on him by Chinese police.

Gao's wife said he looked fine during the weekend prison visit, which was conducted under the watchful eye of prison officials and Public Security Bureau officials. The PSB instructed Gao's family members not to talk to the outside world about the visit. PSB officers from Gao's hometown in Shaanxi province had accompanied Gao's older brother, Gao Zhiyi, on the entire trip from central China, a journey of

more than 3000 kilometers (more than 2000 miles) to Shaya.”

According to the following press release at <http://www.freedom-now.org/news>, AIUSA and other organizations sent a birthday letter to Gao Zhisheng. I suggest that Group 22 members follow their example and also send birthday greetings. We have already sent some cards and letters of support to Gao, and none of them have yet been returned as undeliverable, so let's continue. You can use the text of the letter in the press release as a guide. Postage is \$1.05.

For Immediate Release: International Human Rights Organizations Issue Letter to Gao Zhisheng on his 48th Birthday

Washington, D.C.: Today, Freedom Now, Amnesty International USA, Freedom House, and the International Bar Association's Human Rights Institute sent a letter, copied below, to imprisoned Chinese rights lawyer Gao Zhisheng in recognition of his 48th birthday.

Gao Zhisheng  
Shaya Prison  
Shaya County, Aksu Prefecture  
Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region, 842208  
People's Republic of China

Dear Mr. Gao,

We write to express our best wishes and support on the occasion of your 48th birthday.

As a prominent rights lawyer, you fought to protect the rule of law by representing some of China's most vulnerable citizens. As a result of this work, the government revoked your law license and repeatedly detained you—often with no due process whatsoever. In spite of this pressure, you continued to risk your own liberty and defend the rights of others. In recognition of your work, the American Bar Association awarded you its International Human Rights Lawyer Award in 2010.

We are saddened by the fact that you are spending another birthday imprisoned, away from your wife and children. In light of your recent reappearance, we can only hope that you will soon be released and reunited with your family.

Your courage and selfless legal advocacy are an inspiration and example to lawyers around the world and we wish you all the best on your 48th birthday.

Sincerely,

## DEATH PENALTY NEWS

By Stevi Carroll

Forty-three people were executed in the USA in 2011, down from 46 in 2010. During that same year, Iran executed 360 people, Saudi Arabia 82, Iraq 68, Yemen 41, North Korea 30, and China an unknown number perhaps in the thousands. We can notice that the USA is the only Western democracy on this list of the top-executing countries in the world. Suzanne Nossel, executive director of Amnesty International USA, told the AP, "If you look at the company we're in globally, it's not the company we want to be in: China, Saudi Arabia, Iran, Iraq."

While Rick Perry received cheers when he said the 234 executions carried out during his time as governor of Texas represent "a form of ultimate justice", sixteen states and the District of Columbia have abolished the death penalty and as of this writing, both the House and the Senate of Connecticut have passed an abolition bill. Governor Dannel P. Malloy (D) has said he will sign it. Those inmates who are already condemned to die will still be eligible for execution and future convicts who are sentenced to life without of parole will be subjected to "death row conditions". I haven't seen an explanation of those conditions, but I'm thinking that means, among other things, 23-hour lockdown.

In 2011, legislators in Oregon issued a moratorium on executions and have used this time to study alternatives to the death penalty. Pennsylvania lawmakers have also started to study the application of the death penalty in that state. Georgia, Kansas, New Hampshire and Washington have bills to end capital punishment pending.

As we know here in California, the SAFE California campaign has an initiative on the November 2012 ballot to make life without possibility of parole the harshest sentence and to convert the sentences of present death row inmates to life without of parole, with work when applicable and payment of restitution to the victims' families as part of their sentences.

### The Science of the Death Penalty

A study sponsored by Tides Foundation, the Proteus Action League, and the National

Institute of Justice found that the available research on the death penalty "offers no useful information for policymakers." After reviewing dozens of other studies, this panel of independent experts found fundamental flaws in them. For one example, none of the studies took into account the possible effect of penalties other than death. "The key question, the report says, is whether capital punishment is less or more effective as a deterrent than alternative punishments, such as a life sentence without the possibility of parole. Yet none of the research that has been done accounted for the possible effect of noncapital punishments on homicide rates." Another area of weakness is that prior studies made unsupported assumptions about how murders would perceive and respond to the threat of capital punishment.

While better designed studies may give insight into whether or not the death penalty has a deterrent effect, they will take time to carry out and will be difficult to create. To read more about this report, go to "Current Research Not Sufficient to Assess Deterrent Effect of the Death Penalty" at <http://www8.nationalacademies.org/onpinews/newsitem.aspx?RecordID=13363>.

Perhaps the studies Oregon and Pennsylvania are undertaking will be steps in the right direction.

### SAFE California Campaign

The SAFE California Campaign would like people to throw house parties to raise funds for the November election. Even though I'm always up for a good partying time, I wonder if we want to have a physical one or call this plea a virtual house party and show our support. Let me know, if we'd like to party down somewhere and let's plan away.

If we cyber party, we have a couple of options. To donate online, go to [https://salsa.democracynaction.org/o/1265/p/salsa/donation/common/public/?donate\\_page\\_KEY=8141](https://salsa.democracynaction.org/o/1265/p/salsa/donation/common/public/?donate_page_KEY=8141).

If you'd rather use snail mail, donations can be sent to

SAFE California Campaign Headquarters  
237 Kearny Street, #334  
San Francisco, CA 94108

The website says we must include a contributor card that can be found at [https://salsa.democracynaction.org/o/1265/images/SAFE\\_CA\\_Contributor\\_Form.pdf](https://salsa.democracynaction.org/o/1265/images/SAFE_CA_Contributor_Form.pdf).

**Thomas Arthur: Stay of Execution**

Thomas Arthur is a 70-year-old death row prisoner in Alabama who recently received a stay of execution from a federal court. He was sentenced to death for the murder of Troy Wicker in 1982. For more than 25 years, he has been on death row and has had four previous stays of execution. He is not seeking executive clemency but rather maintains his innocence and continues to request DNA testing of crime scene evidence.

**Clemency for Daniel Greene**

Daniel Greene was sentenced to death in December 1992 for the stabbing death of Bernard Walker. Mr. Greene was scheduled to die April 19, 2012, but on April 17, he was granted clemency and will now serve a sentence of life without parole. This is the fourth death sentence the Georgia Parole Board has commuted since 2002.

**Stays of Execution**

March 2012

18	Briley Piper	South Dakota
29	Tommy Arthur	Alabama

April

12	Garry Allen	Oklahoma
	Carey Grayson	Alabama

**Executions**

March 2012

20	Larry Puckett (35) Lethal Injection (3 drug)	Mississippi
22	William Mitchell (61) Lethal Injection (3 drug)	Mississippi
28	Jesse Hernandez (47) Lethal Injection (3 drug)	Texas

April 2012

12	David Gore (58) Lethal Injection (3 drug)	Florida
18	Mark Wiles (49) Lethal Injection (1 drug)	Ohio
20	Shannon Johnson* (28) Lethal Injection (3 drug)	Delaware

\* volunteer - an inmate who has waived ordinary appeals that remain at the time of his or her execution

**GROUP 22 MONTHLY LETTER COUNT**

UAs	25
POC	2
Total	27

To add your letters to the total contact [lwkamp@gmail.com](mailto:lwkamp@gmail.com).

**MORE LETTERS AND CARDS FROM PASADENA EARTH FESTIVAL**

Group 22 had a table at the Pasadena Earth and Arts Festival on April 14. Kids and a few grown-ups decorated **57 cards** for Tan Zuoren, some of them real works of art.



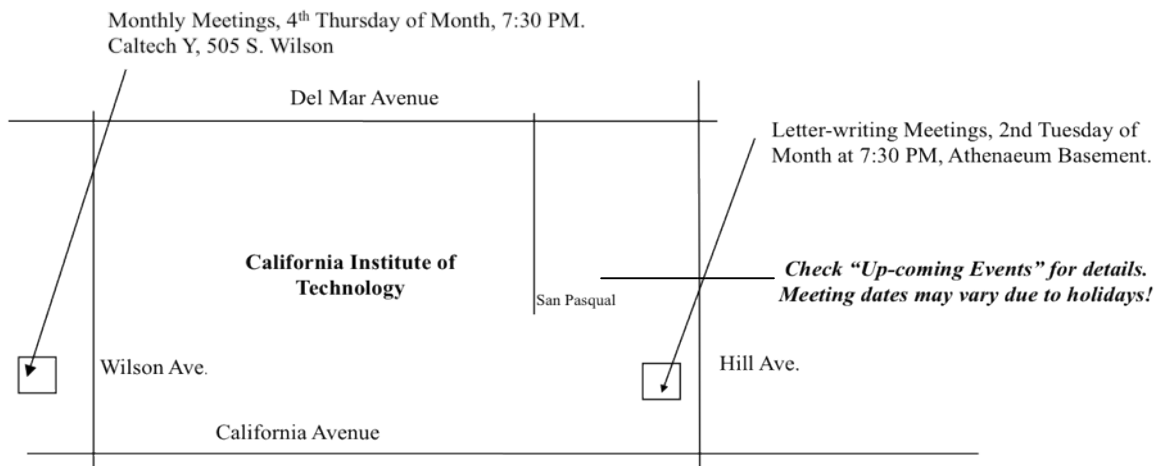
Tan Zuoren is a Chinese environmental activist who was arrested in 2009 after he tried to publicize the number of children that died during the Sichuan earthquake and the corruption behind

substandard construction that contributed to their deaths. He is now serving a 5-year prison sentence. The AIUSA China co-group provided us with his prison address so we could send cards of support.

For the Niger Delta action to Shell Oil we got **32 petition signatures and 12 letters signed**. It's not too late – you can still ask Shell Oil to “Own Up and Pay Up”. Go to [www.amnestyusa.org](http://www.amnestyusa.org) or click <http://tinyurl.com/72hyxc>.

Many thanks to Candy, Lucas, Paula, Carol and Jim, Kai, and Stevi for staffing the Group 22 table. Thanks also to Veronica, who initiated Group 22's participation in Earth Day events over 10 years ago at the Arboretum, and to Martha, who expertly coordinated Group 22's Earth Day events in following years.

--Joyce



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>



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.