

Amnesty International Group 22 Pasadena/Caltech News

Volume XXI Number 9, September 2013

UPCOMING EVENTS

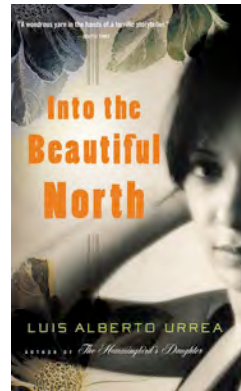
Thursday, September 26, 7:30 PM. Monthly Meeting. We meet at the Caltech Y, Tyson House, 505 S. Wilson Ave., Pasadena. (This is just south of the corner with San Pasqual. Signs will be posted.) We will be planning our activities for the coming months. Please join us! Refreshments provided.

Tuesday, October 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, October 20, 6:30 PM. Rights Readers Human Rights Book Discussion group. This month we read "Into the beautiful North" by Luis Alberto Urrea.

RIGHTS READERS Human Rights Book Discussion Group

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



Next Rights Readers meeting:

Sunday, October 20
6:30 pm

Into the Beautiful North
by Luis Alberto Urrea
Vroman's Bookstore
695 E. Colorado, Pasadena

COORDINATOR'S CORNER

Hello everyone,

[This is Joyce, substituting for Kathy this month.]

I had the most delightful day last week in Wisconsin, visiting with Martha. For those of you who don't know, Martha was one of the original founders of Group 22. She edited the Group 22 newsletter and started our human rights book discussion group in 1999. After moving to Wisconsin in 2007, she continues to provide us with suggestions for our book selections and with wonderful supplementary material in her Rights Readers blog.

Martha and I met in La Crosse, midway between her home farther north and my cousin's place near Milwaukee. We sat and watched barges on the Mississippi and talked books and human rights until the storm clouds rolled in and the rain drove us inside. I told her that Group 22 sent their regards and how much we all miss her.

Save the date: the annual Amnesty Western Regional conference is Nov. 1-3 at the Sheraton Hotel near LAX.

<http://www.amnestyusa.org/events/regional-conferences/western-regional-conference>

Best regards,
Joyce

[Look for Kathy's column next month!]

REVIEW (amazon.com):

Nineteen-year-old Nayeli works at a taco shop in her Mexican village and dreams about her father, who journeyed to the US to find work. Recently, it has dawned on her that he isn't the only man who has left town. In fact, there are almost no men in the village--they've all gone north. While watching *The Magnificent Seven*, Nayeli decides to go north herself and recruit seven men--her own "Siete Magnificos"--to repopulate her hometown and protect it from the bandidos who plan on taking it over.

Filled with unforgettable characters and prose as radiant as the Sinaloan sun, INTO THE BEAUTIFUL NORTH is the story of an irresistible young woman's quest to find herself on both sides of the fence.

AUTHOR BIO:



Luis Alberto Urrea, 2005 Pulitzer Prize finalist for nonfiction and member of the Latino Literature Hall of Fame, is a prolific and acclaimed writer who uses his dual-culture life experiences to explore greater themes of love, loss and triumph.

Born in Tijuana, Mexico to a Mexican father and an American mother, Urrea has published extensively in all the major genres. Urrea attended the University of California at San

Diego, earning an undergraduate degree in writing, and did his graduate studies at the University of Colorado-Boulder. After serving as a relief worker in Tijuana and a film extra and columnist-editor-cartoonist for several publications, Urrea moved to Boston where he taught expository writing and fiction workshops at Harvard. He has also taught at Massachusetts Bay Community College and the University of Colorado and he was the writer in residence at the University of Louisiana-Lafayette. Urrea lives with his family in Naperville, IL, where he is a professor of creative writing at the University of Illinois-Chicago.

PRISONER OF CONSCIENCE
Gao Zhisheng
 by Joyce Wolf

Good news from China on human rights! On September 8 the early release of journalist Shi Tao was announced. He had served over 8 years of his 10-year sentence for “leaking state secrets abroad”. Amnesty has been working on his case since his arrest in 2005 after Yahoo revealed his identity.
<http://pen.org/press-release/2013/09/08/pen-member-shi-tao-released-prison>

We hope that China soon decides on an early release for Group 22’s adopted prisoner of conscience, imprisoned human rights lawyer Gao Zhisheng. He is now serving a 3-year sentence in remote Shaya Prison, but his ordeal of harassment, detention, torture, and enforced disappearance began more than 7 years ago.

For next month, we suggest sending cards of support to Gao Zhisheng in prison and telling him that we sent birthday greetings to his son Gao Tianyu, who turned 10 on August 27. (Gao Zhisheng’s wife and children escaped to the US in 2009.)

Here is Gao Zhisheng’s prison address:
 Gao Zhisheng
 Shaya Prison
 P.O. Box 15, Sub-box 16
 Shaya County, Aksu Prefecture
 Xinjiang Uighur Autonomous Region, 842208
 People’s Republic of China

SRI LANKA ACTION
#TellTheTruth

At Group 22’s monthly meeting in August, we participated in an action for human rights in Sri Lanka. As requested by AIUSA country specialist Jim McDonald, we took photos of ourselves holding #TellTheTruth signs. Can you spot the Group 22 members who made it into the Amnesty collage?



(for larger image go to <https://www.facebook.com/amnestyglobal>, or click on <http://tinyurl.com/ovpfop8>)

DEATH PENALTY NEWS
 By Stevi Carroll

Marshall Gore
 So there is this mentally ill inmate in Florida who was scheduled to be executed on September 10 but had his execution rescheduled for October 1. Amnesty International is on record that “a federal judge...noted that there was a “reasonable basis” for asserting that Marshall Gore might be incompetent for execution, given the various “delusional” statements he had made. The judge noted that Marshall Gore had indicated a belief that his execution was set for his ‘death and organ harvesting/to be a human sacrifice or both,’ that

his then execution date of June 24 added up to 6-6 and that "because of his virgin innocence of murder, he is a target of Satan Worshipers who have threatened that date by mail for years."

A reasonable person might believe that Mr. Gore's execution date was changed so that his mental state could be evaluated with perhaps a thought leaning toward not executing a mentally ill person, especially since the US Supreme Court has ruled that shouldn't happen. But no. Apparently, Attorney General Pam Bondi had a re-election fundraiser to attend on September 10th that created a conflict for her attendance at Mr. Gore's execution.

In an effort to underscore her death penalty *bona fides*, AG Bondi did say, "I personally put two people on death row and, as Attorney General, have already participated in eight executions since I took office, a role I take very seriously."

By our next newsletter, AG Bondi may have her calendar cleared of fundraisers, and Marshall Gore may have had his final meal.

Debra Milke

After 24 years in prison, most of it on death row, Debra Milke was released on a \$250,000 bond. September 23, 2013, she attended a status conference in the Maricopa County (AZ) Superior Court where she learned that her case may be re-tried January 2015. Or it may not.

Ms Milke's conviction for the first-degree murder of her four-year-old son rested on a confession taken by Detective Armando Saldate. It seems there is no recording of the confession and no witnesses who corroborate the confession took place. Ms Milke denies she confessed to this crime. "In March, the U.S. 9th Circuit Court of Appeals overturned her conviction and death sentence because a judge had denied her defense attorneys' request to use the detective's sordid personnel record to counter his claims that Milke confessed to him," according to an account at the website azcentral.com. Presently, Detective Saldate has said he will invoke his rights under the Fifth Amendment and refuse to testify about the questioned confession.

Debra Milke may not be retried.

California and the Death Penalty

November 2012 Californians rejected Proposition 34 in favor of retaining the death penalty. What a difference a few months can

make. A September 11, 2013, article by Paula Mitchell begins, "Public support for the death penalty among California voters has shifted dramatically."

The counties with the most death penalty cases voted to repeal it. Los Angeles County uses the death penalty more than any other county in the nation. Two hundred twenty-nine of the 736 inmates on death row come from LA County. Fifty-four percent of the voters in LA County voted for Prop 34; this was 10% more than the state average. In Northern California in Alameda County, the percentage of voters in favor of repeal was even higher at 62.5%, and Alameda County is ranked ninth nationally for people sentenced to death.

California has 58 counties. Of those counties, 20 have no one on death row. Another 17 counties have three or fewer inmates on death row, a total of 35 inmates. Therefore, 37 of California's 58 counties either do not prosecute capital cases or do so sparingly.

With the current suspension on lethal injection, and possible move to the 1-drug application of lethal injection, it will be interesting to see what we the citizens of California and our elected officials decide about State-sanctioned homicide.

Interactive Death Penalty Map

For an interactive map of the US that shows the states that have abolished the death penalty and the frequency of executions in other states, go to <http://www.ncadp.org/map>.

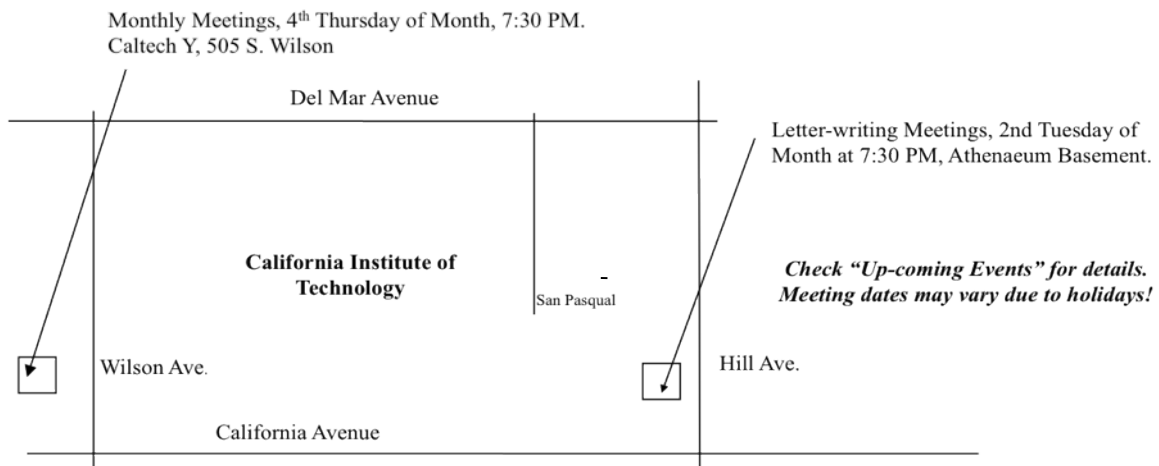
Stays of Executions

August		
15	Nathaniel Jackson	Ohio
18	Nathan Dunlap	Colorado

Executions

September		
10	Anthony Banks	Oklahoma 3-drug lethal injection
19	Robert Garza	Texas 1-drug lethal injection

GROUP 22 MONTHLY LETTER COUNT	
UAs	18
POC	7
Total	25
To add your letters to the total contact lwkamp@gmail.com .	



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.