

## UPCOMING EVENTS

**Thursday, May 22, 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, June 10, 7:30 PM.** Letter writing meeting at Caltech Athenaeum, corner of Hill and California in Pasadena. In the summer we meet outdoors at the "Rath al Fresco," on the lawn behind the building. This informal gathering is a great way for newcomers to get acquainted with Amnesty.

**Sunday, June 15, 6:30 PM.** Rights Readers Human Rights Book Discussion group. This month we read "Burying the Typewriter" by Carmen Bugan.

## COORDINATOR'S CORNER

Hi All

Crazy weather we've been having, huh?! At least it has cooled down to more "normal" weather for this time of year... (All you global warming skeptics out there...wake up!)

At our last meeting, several of us took photos holding up a birthday card for our Chinese POC, Gao Zhisheng.



You can see all our photos and many others at <https://secure.flickr.com/photos/gzsaction/>

Con Cariño,  
Kathy

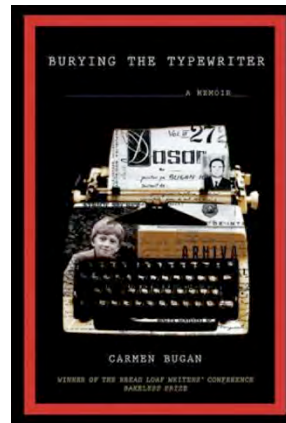
## RIGHTS READERS

Human Rights Book Discussion Group

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

Next Rights Readers meeting:  
Sunday, June 15, 6:30 PM

Vroman's Bookstore  
695 E. Colorado, Pasadena



*Burying the  
Typewriter: A Memoir*

by Carmen Bugan

Winner of the Bakeless Prize for Nonfiction, a childhood memoir of political oppression and persecution during Romania's Ceausescu years.

## REVIEW

Carmen Bugan grew up amid the bounty of the Romanian countryside on her grandparent's farm where food and laughter were plentiful. But eventually her father's behavior was too disturbing to ignore. He wept when listening to Radio Free Europe, hid pamphlets in sacks of dried beans, and mysteriously buried and reburied a typewriter. When she discovered he was a political dissident she became anxious for him to conform. However, with her mother in the hospital and her sister at boarding school, she was alone, and helpless to stop him from driving off on one last, desperate protest.

After her father's subsequent imprisonment, Bugan was shunned by her peers at school and informed on by her neighbors. She candidly struggled with the tensions of loving her "hero" father who caused the family so much pain. When he returned from prison and the family was put under house arrest, the Bugans were forced to chart a new course for the future. A warm and intelligent debut, *Burying the Typewriter* provides a poignant reminder of a dramatic moment in Eastern European history.

## Author Biography

Carmen Bagan's poetry and prose have appeared in Harvard Review, Modern Poetry in Translation, PN Review, The Times Literary Supplement and her first collection of poems, *Crossing the Carpathians*, was published in 2004 with Oxford Poets/Carcanet. She was awarded a large grant by the Arts Council of England and was a Fellow at the Hawthornden International Retreat for Writers and until recently she served as a Creative Arts Fellow in Literature at Wolfson College, in the University of Oxford, where she ran seminar and lecture series on the theory and practice of translation from 2005 until 2009. She recently completed a second collection of poems and a memoir about growing up in a family of political dissidents in Romania. Carmen Bagan was educated at the University of Michigan (Ann Arbor), in Ireland, and at the University of Oxford where she obtained a doctorate for a dissertation on Seamus Heaney and East European poetry in English translation. She lives in Geneva, Switzerland, with her husband and son.



**PRISONER OF CONSCIENCE**  
**Gao Zhisheng**  
by Joyce Wolf

Group 22 recently received an update from Amnesty for work on the case of Gao Zhisheng, our adopted prisoner of conscience. Amnesty International's China Team completed their review of Gao Zhisheng's case in January of this year and issued new recommendations in light of his scheduled release this August. "It is unclear what will happen to Gao Zhisheng after his release, and it is therefore vital that there is sustained pressure on the Chinese authorities in the lead-up to this date."

Following are guidelines from the new case file update:

Please use Chinese characters for Gao Zhisheng's name (高智晟)

## Write to the President, Premier, Ministry of Justice, Ministry of Public Security, Ministry of State Security:

- Urging them to immediately release Gao Zhisheng
- Urging them to ensure that as long as he remains in detention, Gao has access to family, legal representation of his choosing, and any medical care he may require.
- Urging them to ensure that as long as he remains in detention, Gao is not tortured or ill-treated
- Urging them to ensure that Gao Zhisheng does not face any harassment or restrictions on his freedom of movement, speech and association after he is released from prison

Since we began working for Gao Zhisheng in March of 2010, we have been mailing letters to China's President, Premier, and Minister of Justice. So this month let's try someone new, the Minister of Public Security, Guo Shengkun.

(Salutation: Your Excellency)

Guo Shengkun  
Gong'anbu  
14 Dongchang'anjie  
Dongchengqu  
Beijingshi 100741  
People's Republic of China

Copies to:  
Ambassador CUI Tiankai  
Embassy of the People's Republic of China  
3505 International Place, NW  
Washington DC 20008

The AIUSA China co-group calls our attention this month to an article on the Amnesty blog about Tiananmen. This year marks the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the tragic events.  
<http://blog.amnestyusa.org/asia/do-you-know-what-happened-in-tiananmen-square-in-the-spring-of-1989>

In 1999 some Group 22 members were at the 10<sup>th</sup> Tiananmen anniversary vigil.  
<http://www.its.caltech.edu/~aigp22/biz/>  
On May 25 a few of us will be attending "Spirit of Freedom," the annual commemoration event arranged by Ann Lau and the Visual Artists Guild. See <http://www.visual-artists-guild.org>

## DEATH PENALTY NEWS

By Stevi Carroll

### The Eighth Amendment of the US Constitution

*Excessive bail shall not be required, nor excessive fines imposed, nor cruel and unusual punishment inflicted.*

#### Clayton Lockett

Clayton Lockett committed a heinous crime. Stephanie Neiman, his victim, was 18 years old when Mr. Lockett and two other men, Shawn Mathis and Alfonzo LaRon Veasey, beat, sexually assaulted, shot and buried Ms Neiman alive. No, Mr. Lockett is not a man who would evoke pity. His execution, however, has caused many people to examine not only the means by which we in America put people to death but also the suitability of the death penalty.

As most of us know, Mr. Lockett was executed April 29, 2014, in Oklahoma. Possibly because she is up for reelection this year, Governor Mary Fallin (R) wanted to expedite his execution, thus scoring points with pro-death penalty voters. Sixty percent of Americans say they favor the death penalty, so this is an important electorate. Governor Fallin is not alone in her use of this tactic. Then Governor Bill Clinton, Arkansas, oversaw the execution of Ricky Ray Rector in 1992 while Governor Clinton was running for president. Mr. Rector had serious brain damage and was executed. Governor Clinton won the presidency.

Mr. Lockett's case presents unsettling aspects of executions in the USA. To begin with, he and Charles Warner, another inmate who was to be executed April 29, filed suits to find out the source and purity of the drugs with which they were to be killed. After a lower court ruling found the secrecy law unconstitutional, the Oklahoma Supreme Court issued a stay and suspended executions until the issues could be litigated in court. Governor Fallin wanted the men executed despite the court order, and the legislature began impeachment proceedings for the Supreme Court justices.

The upshot of this is that Mr. Lockett had reason to believe his execution would in fact be painful and thus became suicidal. In the process of taking him to be X-rayed to see if he had any means by which he could commit suicide

hidden in a body cavity, guards used a taser on him when he refused to be shackled. He was taken to the medical clinic where personnel found superficial, self-inflicted wounds on his arms suggesting he was attempting to commit suicide. He was put on suicide watch with guards checking his cell every 15 minutes. He refused to eat or see his lawyers. And then he was executed.

Because after an hour of searching for a suitable vein in which to insert the needle the prison staff could not find one, a catheter was inserted in Mr. Lockett's femoral artery. This procedure required well-trained medical personnel. Perhaps the lack of these personnel is why the IV line may have missed the artery or punctured it which led to the drugs leaking into the soft tissue. Mr. Lockett then writhed in pain. After 16 minutes, warden Anita Trammell had the blinds closed so the witnesses could not see, and after 43 minutes, Mr. Lockett died of a heart attack.

Of course, Clayton Lockett's execution lit up the news for a cycle or two. On NBC's "Meet the Press" Governor Rick Perry said, "I don't know whether it was inhumane or not, but it was botched. There's an appropriate way to deal with this and obviously something went terribly wrong." The Dallas News has a site called "Sounding Off" where people from Irving, Texas, posted their thoughts following Mr. Lockett's execution. The prompt was "Should Texas reconsider its execution practices?" Governor Perry has some kindred spirits.

Millard Baxley wrote:

"I understand from the news that Tennessee is considering a return to use of the electric chair. Personally, I would like to see Texas consider doing the same. After all, a stiff shot of electrical juice might be less expensive to the taxpayers of Texas than searching for the right drug to use, and who knows? It might even cause a large reduction in crimes like this. Maybe, just maybe, our prisons would not be filled to overflow status if there were not all the public tears and hand wringing for the welfare of his kind?"

Steve Stringer wanted efficiency:

"Lethal injection is most peaceful, but firing squad is quick. I know this would be more stressful for the condemned, but it would be effective."

Lee Swann just wanted those 'unfortunate' death row inmates dispatched:

"The unfortunate people on death row have, for the most part, been there for quite sometime. It is now time to carry out the sentence that has been handed down. There are those who would like to restore 'old sparky' into use."

But surprise surprise, not all Texan voices support the death penalty.

Sharon Phares considered:

"Perhaps it is time to reopen the debate concerning capital punishment versus life imprisonment yet again. There is no easy solution for any of us."

Lee Swann summed it up:

"Texas should abolish the death penalty period! This latest botched concoction of so-called lethal drugs is a wake-up call from the Almighty, in my opinion to all of America, that the way we kill people using the death penalty is wrong."

In considering the drugs now used in executions, the ACLU is on record: "...no human being should be death's guinea pig." Cassandra Stubbs, ACLU Capital Punishment Project, points out that Clayton Lockett is just the most recent inmate to suffer during his execution. Dennis McGuire who was executed in Ohio in January 2014 "clenched his fist, heaved, struggled, and made horrible noises, according to witnesses. He was gasping, choking, and snoring in the 25 minutes it took to kill him." (After a review, the Ohio prison officials have determined that Mr. McGuire was completely unconscious and "felt no pain".) Michael Lee Wilson, also executed in January of this year, cried out during his execution, "I feel my whole body burning." In 2012, Eric Robert was executed using pentobarbital from a compounding pharmacy in South Dakota. During his execution, "he gasped heavily, snored loudly with his eyes open, and his skin turned purple," a condition an expert pharmacologist said is consistent with contaminated drugs.

According to Ms Stubbs, the UN Human Right Committee, which monitors compliance with the International covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ratified by the US in 1992) expressed concern with the use of untested drugs and their secrecy in the USA's executions. The committee recommended "the U.S. government 'ensure that lethal drugs used for executions originate from legal, regulated sources, and are approved by the United States Food and Drug Administration and that information on the

origin and composition of such drugs is made available to individuals scheduled for execution."

That does not give me much solace.

March 25, 2014, a study, "Rate of False Conviction of Criminal Defendants Who Are Sentenced to Death," was released. The authors reviewed the outcomes of the 7,482 death sentences from 1973 to 2004. They found that of that group, 117 (1.6%) were exonerated. The authors came to believe that with time, at least 4.1% of the inmates on death row would have been exonerated. This means an additional 200 people would have been cleared of charges. One conclusion Samuel Gross, the lead author of the study, includes, "The great majority of innocent people who are sentenced to death are never identified and freed."

The death penalty has many casualties. Randy Workman was the warden of the Oklahoma State Penitentiary in McAlester, Oklahoma. He participated in 32 executions in various capacities during his twenty years as corrections department employee before he retired in 2012. Prior to Clayton Lockett's execution he was interviewed. He has come to believe that the death penalty is an expensive punishment that brings neither a deterrence to crime nor closure for the victims' families. About the death penalty he said, "The only thing I can tell you for certain whenever people say do you believe that the death penalty will stop crime, I can guarantee you that person will never commit a crime again, and that is as far as I'm going to say." When asked if he thought the victims' families felt vindicated, he said, "90% of the time the people I've seen don't." When his cousin was murdered in 2000, his cousin's mother asked Mr. Workman's advice about whether or not to seek the death penalty. His suggestion was no. He pointed out to her that during the appeals process, she would have to relive her son's death and should the killer be executed, she would think the killer died too easily. When Mr. Workman was asked if he thought executions should be more painful, he said, "I wouldn't be a part of anything like that." Mr. Workman continues to support the death penalty.

### **Who in America supports the death penalty?**

In "Why is secular Europe so much more Christian on the death penalty?", Peter Weber discusses the differences between attitudes of

Europeans and Americans toward the death penalty with a look at religion.

We Americans love polls and Mr. Weber includes both a Pew poll and a Gallup pol. A 2013 Pew poll found 55% of Americans are in favor of the death penalty while a Gallup poll found 60%. The Gallup poll broke their numbers down by political parties with 81% of Republicans, 60% of independents, and 47% of Democrats in support of capital punishment.

The Pew poll broke their numbers down by religious and racial/ethnic groups.

	Favor	Oppose
White evangelical Protestants	67%	24%
White mainline Protestants	64%	30%
White Catholic	59%	34%
Unaffiliated	55%	38%
Hispanic Catholic	37%	54%
Black Protestant	33%	58%
White	63%	30%
Hispanic	40%	50%
Black	36%	55%

For Americans, religion is far more important than it is for Europeans. In a Pew poll, 50% of Americans said religion is very important compared to 22% Spaniards, 21% Germans, 17% British, and 13% French. Now although many Americans say the USA is a Christian country, we can see from the Pew poll that many of those same Christians favor the death penalty. With that in mind, how do those same Christians think Jesus would come down on the death penalty? A poll taken by the Barna Group in the summer of 2013 showed that only 5% of Americans thought Jesus would support government execution of the worst criminals. While religion does not seem to be as important to Europeans as it is to Americans, Europeans accept the abolition of the death penalty. In fact, for a country to be admitted as a member to the European Union, it must abolish the death penalty.

The discussion of the death penalty following Clayton Lockett's execution even reached late night television. John Oliver, a British national who is attempting to obtain USA citizenship and is married to an Iraq veteran, recently got his own program, Last Week Tonight With John Oliver. He was often seen on the Daily Show. In his second episode, he joined the death penalty discussion. He admitted the history of capital

punishment in Great Britain is "a long and bloody one." He noted that 51% of the British population would like the death penalty reinstated. He said the death penalty is something that is natural to want but that you shouldn't necessarily have it. He said we need to ask ourselves "should it be allowed in a civilized society?" He admitted that if someone committed a heinous crime, the individual would "very much like to kill them." He then went on to talk about the exonerations. This was followed by the study that shows 4% of death row inmates are innocent. He dispelled the deterrent argument. And the cost of the death penalty almost finished his commentary. To see John Oliver on the death penalty, go to <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Kye2oX-b39E#t=720>.

In the meantime, we must wonder what we Americans have learned from Clayton Lockett's execution.

### Clemency Granted

April  
30 Arthur Tyler Ohio

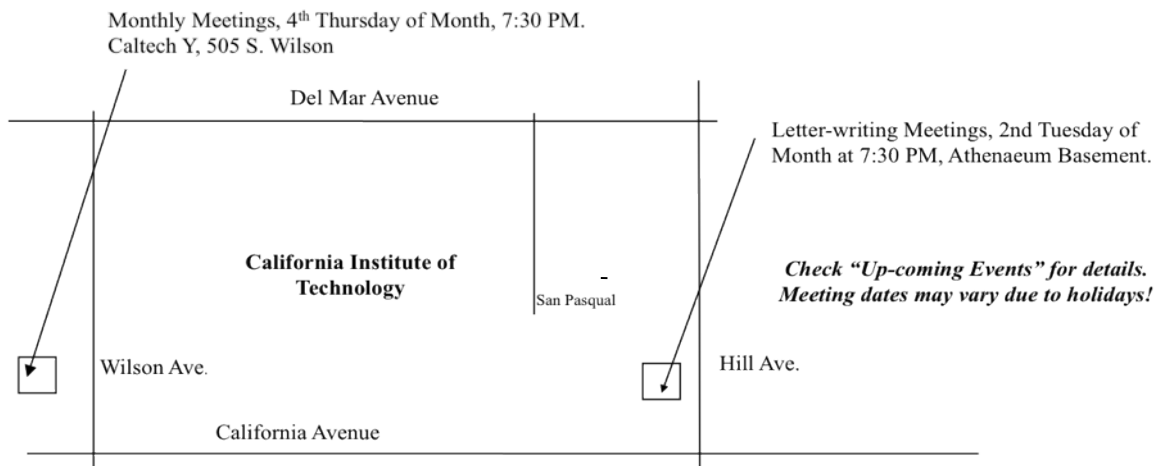
### Stay of Execution

April  
29 Charles Warner Oklahoma  
May  
5 Robert Pruett Texas  
13 Robert Campbell Texas  
29 Edgardo Cubas Foreign National - Honduras

### Executions

April  
23 Robert Hendrix Florida  
3-drug w/ midazolam hydrochloride  
23 William Rousan Missouri  
1-drug pentobarbital  
29 Clayton Lockett Oklahoma  
3-drug w/ midazolam hydrochloride

GROUP 22 MONTHLY LETTER COUNT	
UAs	13
POC	9
Total	22
To add your letters to the total contact <a href="mailto:aigp22@caltech.edu">aigp22@caltech.edu</a>	



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.