

UPCOMING EVENTS

NOTE: NO THURSDAY MEETINGS IN JUNE, JULY, OR AUGUST. The Thursday planning meetings will resume after summer break on September 28.

Tuesday, July 11, 7:30–9:00 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 next to the building. This informal gathering is a great way for newcomers to get acquainted with Amnesty.

Sunday, July 16, 6:30 PM. *Rights Readers Human Rights Book Discussion Group.* This month we read the novel "*The Incarnations*" by Susan Baker.

COORDINATOR'S CORNER

Hi everyone

Finally summer is here—at least weather wise, although the official start is next week, June 21.

I just finished our June book, "the Bad-Ass Librarians of Timbuktu" by Joshua Hammer (with a title like that, I had to read it!) It was exciting, like a thriller, and I read it rapidly. Spoiler alert: the good guys win!

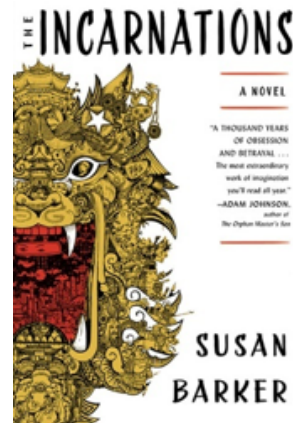
Last weekend Paul, Rob and myself plus an LAUSD friend took the Gold Line to Little Tokyo to see the George Takei exhibit at the Japanese American National Museum.

Really an interesting display of stuff from his childhood, career (Star Trek and more since then), and political and civic activism. (I am now following him on Facebook!) The exhibition closes August 20. For more info, go to the museum website at <http://www.janm.org>. Their permanent exhibition on the forced evacuation of Japanese-Americans on the West Coast is also very interesting.

Rob didn't have time to submit an article for Security with Human Rights so I have copied and pasted some information from the AIUSA website and also included this link to an urgent action against the Muslim Ban as well as two other actions at:

<https://www.amnestyusa.org/take-action/act-now/>

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Next Rights Readers Meeting

Sunday, July 16,
6:30 PM

Vroman's Bookstore
695 E Colorado Blvd.
Pasadena

The Incarnations

by Susan Barker

BOOK REVIEW

By Carol Birch, Aug 13, 2014, The Guardian.

<https://www.theguardian.com/books/2014/aug/13/the-incarnations-susan-barker-review>

THE INCARNATIONS

By Susan Barker

"Last week I met a shoeshine boy in Wangfujing, who was first made flesh during the Neolithic era, when men were cave dwellers and dragged their knuckles on the ground."

Suspend your disbelief, flow along with this wonderful book, like the crazy traffic flowing around Beijing's six ring roads. It is 2008, the Olympics are at hand. Taxi driver Wang is receiving letters from a mysterious watcher, claiming to be the soulmate who has accompanied him through the past 1,000 years and five previous lives. Wang, a befuddled, obscurely depressed man in his early 30s, is disturbed enough to go to the police, but is not taken seriously. This is because he has a history of mental instability, as did his mother, Shuxiang, a clever, cynical woman with whom he'd shared a stifling and reclusive bond until her death (which he heard about at boarding school, having been packed off by his father). Once a womanising boor, his father is now disabled and drooling, in the vicious care of his second wife, Lin Hong, an ageing femme fatale who once tried to seduce Wang when he was a teenager.

Wang, now tired and prematurely balding, has put all that behind him and believes himself content with his pretty wife and much-loved nine-year-old daughter. Into his life of bland acceptance the letters drop one by one like bombs, telling stories of violence, obsession and betrayal, each from a different era of Chinese

history, from the Tang dynasty to the cultural revolution. The book moves effortlessly from past to present and back again. In each life, Wang and the mysterious letter-writer have played out different roles and relationships, though soulmate here doesn't imply helpmate, and bitter betrayal lies at the heart of each story.

In the first incarnation, Wang is Bitter Root, who rapes his idiot sister and thereby begets a daughter named Night Coming. Bitter Root is castrated and sent away as a eunuch to serve the emperor. Night Coming grows up to be married off to the son of a wealthy family, only to discover on her wedding day that she is to be a "spirit bride". The son is dead, the proxy bridegroom a cockerel, and she is to join the deceased in the world beyond. She runs away, however, to look for her father, taking her feathered bridegroom with her and killing and eating him on the way. "Widowed at the age of 13," as she drily says. Bitter Root and Night Coming transmute into two starving slave boys being driven across the Gobi by a Mongol slave-driver, before becoming concubines in the harem of a vile and sadistic emperor with "rotting-molars-and-gum-pits-stinking breath". The opium wars follow with Wang as a foreign devil and his soulmate a Pearl River fisherboy. In the final incarnation they are schoolgirls in the Anti-capitalist School for Revolutionary Girls during the worst excesses of the cultural revolution.

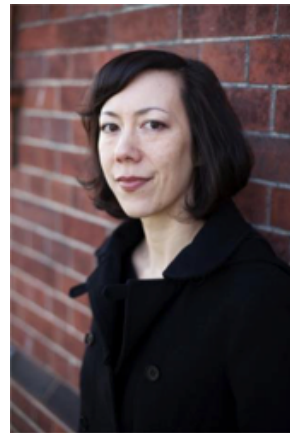
What is Wang to make of all this? His stalker, clearly highly literate and erudite, proclaims their undying bond, but is hardly comforting and often threatening: "I pity your poor wife, Driver Wang. What's the bond of matrimony compared to the bond we have shared for over 1,000 years? What will happen to her when I reappear in your life? What will become of her then?"

As each new character appears, the reader searches for the identity of the letter writer. Could it be old lover Zeng with his dragon tattoos and scarred face? Wang's mother returned from the dead? Or something altogether stranger? It isn't necessary to believe in reincarnation to appreciate this book. It may all be neurotic fantasy, but as a device for forcing the reader to look closely and ponder deeply, it works beautifully. The relationships are multilayered and troublesome in so many ways, and strong as the many bonds are, no one seems capable of making anyone else happy. What is this drama being played out so intensely

over so many ages? Where did it begin and where will it end? And where does the present fit into it all?

Susan Barker (pictured) delivers a masterful ending. This would have been a good book if it had simply recounted a series of bizarre tales and stopped, but a bittersweet final revelation poses more questions, reveals deeper dimensions and sends the reader back to the beginning searching for clues missed the first time round.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR



Susan Barker grew up in east London. She studied philosophy at the University of Leeds and creative writing at the University of Manchester. She is the author of the novels *Sayonara Bar* (2005) and *The Orientalist* and the *Ghost* (2008), both published by Doubleday (UK) and longlisted for the Dylan Thomas Prize.

Her third novel *The Incarnations* (Doubleday, July 2014) is about a taxi driver in contemporary Beijing and interwoven with tales from the Tang Dynasty, the invasion of Genghis Khan, the Ming Dynasty, the Opium War, and the Cultural Revolution. While writing *The Incarnations* she spent several years living in Beijing, researching modern and imperial China.

She has received grants from the Arts Council England and the Society of Authors, and has been an artist in resident at the Corporation of Yaddo, Hawthornden International Writers' Retreat and the Red Gate Gallery in Beijing. In 2010- 2012 she was a Royal Literary Fund Fellow at Leeds Trinity University.

Follow her on twitter: [@SusankBarker](https://twitter.com/SusankBarker)

SECURITY WITH HUMAN RIGHTS

Kathy Hansen-Adams

<https://www.amnestyusa.org/issues/national-security/>

We all need safety from violence and terrorism, but no government should sacrifice people's human rights in the name of national security. Unfortunately, in the United States and beyond, that's exactly what's happening – and Amnesty International is helping stop it.

THE PROBLEM

On multiple fronts, the United States government is violating human rights in the name of national security, often in violation of both U.S. law and international law.

- People have been held for years at the Guantánamo detention camp in Cuba without even being charged with a crime. Prisoners have been tortured and mistreated, and they are not given fair trials.
- The U.S. has used lethal force, including through drone strikes, in several countries, leading to civilian deaths. Military operations have exposed civilians and U.S. service members to toxins that have led to devastating medical conditions.
- Surveillance and targeting of Muslims – based on who they are, not what they've done – has fueled harassment, discrimination, and violence.
- For years, the U.S. government allowed officials to torture people through horrific techniques that violate U.S. and international law. President Trump has vowed to expand the use of torture even further in the years ahead.

AMNESTY IN ACTION Changing lives and policies

Amnesty International helps expose and end national security policies that violate human rights. We've secured fair treatment for people in individual cases, we've helped force the government to release information about its activities, and we've played a key role in helping end practices that abuse human rights.

- We're fighting President Trump's Muslim Ban and mobilizing grassroots activists to push Congress to intervene.
- Our research uncovers individual cases of people whose human rights are violated by U.S. national security policies, and we campaign to secure their rights.
- We campaign to close Guantánamo, end unlawful strikes that kill civilians, and ensure accountability for torture. We mobilize grassroots activists to push for federal policies that protect safety and human rights together. Take action to demand that the Trump Administration and Congress protect human rights in national security.

59

Number of people detained at Guantanamo by the end of January 2017, a drop from 103 a year earlier.

13,000

Number of people deported under the NSEERS program, without being convicted of any crimes, before it was dismantled.

132

Number of protests Amnesty International USA held in the weeks after President Trump issued his first Muslim Ban.

CASE STUDY SHAKER AAMIR



Shaker Aamer, the last British resident held at Guantanamo Bay for more than 13 years, walks along a residential street in London on December 15, 2015. (JUSTIN TALLIS /AFP/Getty Images)

In 2002, Shaker Aamer, a U.K. resident and father of four, was one of the first people sent to the notorious makeshift prison the U.S. started at Guantánamo Bay, Cuba, after the September 11, 2001, attacks. Shaker was born in Saudi Arabia; he studied in Georgia and Maryland, and he worked as a translator for the U.S. Army during the Gulf War.

Shaker always maintained his innocence. He said he was subjected to torture for years. He was cleared for transfer out of Guantánamo in 2007, indicating that authorities had no plans to charge him – but he was not released.

Amnesty International campaigned aggressively for Shaker's release for more than a decade – mobilizing thousands of people to write letters, directly advocating with the U.S. and U.K. governments, and working closely with his family and attorneys. Finally, in October 2015, Shaker was flown to the U.K. and freed. He had been imprisoned for 13 years without being charged with a crime.

DEATH PENALTY NEWS

By Stevi Carroll

California Supreme Court and Proposition 66

As we remember, California voters passed Proposition 66 this past November. The day after the election Ron Briggs, lifelong Republican, former supporter of the death penalty, and former member of the El Dorado County Board of Supervisors, and the late John Van de Kamp, former Attorney General of California (1983-1991), filed a challenge to the Proposition's constitutionality with the California Supreme Court. The Court denied the stay until the votes were certified. Then on

December the 19th, Mr. Briggs and Mr. Van de Kamp filed again, resulting in the stayed implementation of the initiative on December 20.

In early June, the CA Supreme Court held oral arguments on the lawsuit. While initiatives are supposed to be only for a single subject, Proposition 66 addressed a number of issues. These include:

- the requirement that all state death penalty proceedings are completed in five years
- lawyers without experience in capital cases can be forced to take them should a backlog of cases occur
- habeas corpus petitions would be transferred from the CA Supreme Court back to the sentencing court
- and the limitation of the sentencing court's time for deciding the cases and the prisoners' ability to appeal the court's findings.

During the oral argument this month, the justices exhibited a lack of questioning about the proposition's violation of the single-subject rule. Additionally, the justices did not question California's lethal injection protocol. Under Prop 66, oversight of the protocol would go from the Administrative Procedure Act, an agency that monitors compliance. The Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation would have the ability to execute in any manner and with any drugs.

On June 9, the LA Times ended an editorial saying, "Even if the Supreme Court lets Proposition 66 stand, the measure still faces other likely challenges. So an already-expensive death penalty system will cost taxpayers even more as the state is forced to defend it in court. The irony here is that the effort to speed up the death penalty by shortening appeals could very well suffer through a prolonged appeals process itself before ultimately being struck down. It should be put out of its misery now."

The Court will issue its ruling in September.

For more information about this case, go to "Death penalty in California: State Supreme Court holds high-stakes hearing Tuesday" at <http://www.mercurynews.com/2017/06/05/death-penalty-in-california-state-supreme-court-holds-high-stakes-hearing-tuesday/>

William Morva

July 6 may well be William Morva's last day of life. Mr. Morva did in fact murder a hospital

security guard and a sheriff's deputy. He also suffers from delusional disorder. The jurors for his trial were never fully told of the extent of his mental illness. They were simply told he had 'odd beliefs' and did not suffer from delusions.

Dawn Davison, Mr. Morva's lawyer, says that years before he was arrested he's suffered severe delusions that included "somatic delusion that he had gastrointestinal problems that required him to eat raw meat and massive amounts of dairy products, ... persecutory delusions, where he believed that he was being targeted by the local police, who were working with the Bush Administration to persecute him, and ... grandiose delusions that he had special knowledge and powers that he was destined to use to save certain indigenous tribes, although it wasn't clear what he was saving them from, or how he intended to do it. It was around this time that he told people he was living in the woods, going barefoot in he winter, living off the land in preparation for his "mission.""

Mr. Morva's delusions have become so great that he has not met with his lawyer in almost five years because he's come to believe she is working against him. While eight states have legislation pending that would bar mentally ill people from being executed, the US Supreme Court has not ruled on this. (To read more about the Supremes and the execution of the mentally ill, go to, "Does the U.S. Execute People with Mental Illness? It's Complicated" https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2017/us/mental-illness-death-penalty.html?_r=0)

Virginia Governor Terry McAuliffe can grant William Morva clemency because of his mental illness. Governor McAuliffe can be reached at (804) 786-2211.

In an article by Dr. Frederick J, Frese, dated June 12, 2017, he discusses his own struggles with severe mental illness. Dr. Frese is a professor of psychiatry at Northeast Ohio Medical University and a former Marine Corps captain who was discharged from the military after being diagnosed with paranoid schizophrenia. His story humanizes severe mental illness as he gives thanks for the excellent treatment he received. He believes we have a dangerous gap in understanding since we are willing to execute people who are severely mentally ill who have committed crimes "in the throes of their illness." He says, "No civilized country should allow this to happen." He goes on to ask, "Should we be executing individuals for actions they have

taken when they are detached from reality?" He supports the sentence of life without parole.

Perhaps Governor McAuliffe would benefit from Dr. Frese's wisdom - and compassion.

To read "A Veteran's Plea: Stop Executing People with Severe Mental Illness", go to <https://medium.com/@fredfrese/a-veterans-plea-stop-executing-people-with-severe-mental-illness-5f4520776d0a>

I think perhaps Congressman Joseph Kennedy III summed up our treatment of our citizens best when he said, "The ultimate test of our country's character is not the power we give the strong, but the strength we give the weak." May 4, 2017 - comments on the House Floor.

Recent Exonerations

Desmond Ricks - State: MI - Date of Exoneration: 6/1/2017

In 1992, Desmond Ricks was sentenced to 30 to 60 years in prison for murder in Detroit, Michigan. He was exonerated in 2017 by evidence that the police fabricated ballistics evidence and that he was not the gunman

Deshawn Reed - State: CA - Date of Exoneration: 5/19/2017

In 2014, Deshawn Reed was sentenced to life in prison without parole for a double murder in Oakland, California. He was exonerated in 2017 by evidence that identified another man as the gunman.

Patrick Prince - State: IL - Date of Exoneration: 5/16/2017

In 1994, Patrick Prince was sentenced to 60 years in prison for murder in Chicago, Illinois. He was exonerated in 2017 after evidence showed that a detective had physically abused him until he falsely confessed and new witnesses identified the real killer.

Raynella Dossett Leath State: TN - Date of Exoneration: 5/10/2017

In 2010, Raynella Dossett Leath was sentenced to life in prison for murdering her husband in Knoxville, Tennessee. She was acquitted at a retrial in May 2017 based on evidence that his death was a suicide.

Stays of Execution

June

13 William Montgomery OH Rescheduled for October 18, 2017*

13 Gary Otte OH Rescheduled for September 13, 2017*

28 Steven Long TX Rescheduled for August 30, 2017

Executions

May

26 Thomas Arthur AL Lethal Injection - 3-drug (midazolam)

June

8 Robert Melson AL Lethal Injection - 3-drug (midazolam)

*On May 1, 2017 Governor Kasich [issued another statement](#) revising the schedule for nine upcoming executions. This revised schedule was in response to the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Sixth Circuit's order setting a briefing schedule for the Court's *en banc* rehearing of the state's appeal of a federal magistrate judge's order issuing a preliminary injunction barring Ohio from carrying out 3-drug executions using midazolam or any execution using a paralytic agent or potassium chloride.

PRISONER OF CONSCIENCE

Narges Mohammadi

By Joyce Wolf

Searching on social media for recent news about Narges, I learned that she was taken to the hospital for emergency surgery on May 29. Here's the Facebook post:

Center for Human Rights in Iran
May 30 at 9:06am

Prominent imprisoned human rights activist Narges Mohammadi underwent surgery to stop severe abnormal uterine bleeding on May 29, according to the Center for Defenders of Human Rights. The hospital's chief physician recommended Mohammadi remain under observation in the hospital until the bleeding ceases and she has fully recovered from the operation.

But apparently she was sent back to prison and not allowed to recover in the hospital:

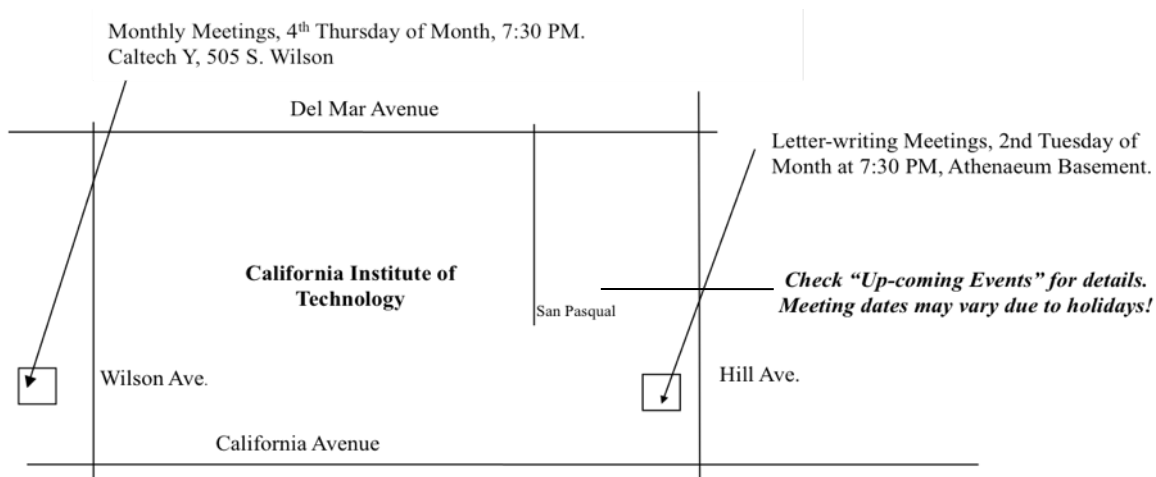
Free Narges @UnitedForNarges Jun 3
Another violation of BASIC HUMAN RIGHTS.
Narges Mohammadi sent back2 prison directly after surgery #FreeNarges #Iran

We'll try to find more information and put together an action for Narges for our July letter - writing.

GROUP 22 JUNE LETTER COUNT

Urgent Actions

36



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.