

UPCOMING EVENTS

Thursday, January 25, 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, February 13, 7:30-9:00 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, February 18, 6:30 PM. *Rights Readers Human Rights Book Discussion Group.* This month we read "**Black Dragon River: A Journey Down the Amur River Between Russian and China**" by Dominic Ziegler.

COORDINATOR'S CORNER

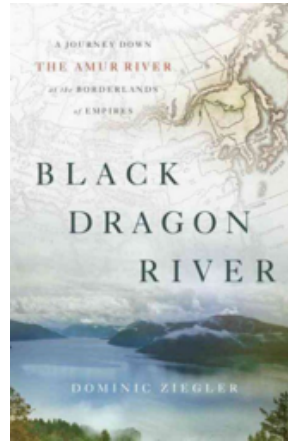
Hi all

I can't believe it's almost the end of January 2018 already. Happy New Year to all.

Rob and I participated in the Women's March last year, but not this year. However, Group 22 members Stevi, Joyce and Paula did, along with tons of other people, as you can see from the photos Stevi took which are in this newsletter. Do you think our Dear Leader has gotten the message yet?!

Group 22 members Ted and Laura Brown are moving (I think they're already there!) to Austin, Texas, to be near family. We will miss their presence at our meetings and their great house for parties! Good luck in your new hometown! I've heard Austin is nice but have only been to Dallas and San Antonio. My sister lived in Dallas when she was teaching at UT Southwestern in Dallas. She liked Texas because Dallas was cosmopolitan, but the people had that southern friendliness and courtesy.

Con Cariño, Kathy



Next Rights Readers Meeting

**Sunday, Feb. 18
6:30 PM**

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

***Black Dragon River:
A Journey Down the
Amur River Between
Russian and China***

by Dominic Ziegler

BOOK REVIEW

Reviewed by Jean Zimmerman, Nov. 22, 2015.

[www.npr.org/books/authors/456510026/dominic-ziegler]

'Black Dragon River' Charts History Along The Amur

"Here be dragons" warns a widely misunderstood inscription, originally in Latin, on a 16th century globe. The phrase has become a legendary reference to unknown pockets of the earth, where who knows what strange beasts lurk. But it turns out the globe in question probably wasn't warning against immense, fire-breathing winged creatures, but the Kingdom of Dargroian, described by Marco Polo as a place where "people feasted upon the dead and picked their bones." In other words, human beings are quite odd and ferocious enough. We need not go looking for mythic beasts.

The phrase comes to mind while plunging into the world author Dominic Ziegler explores in his thrillingly thorough geohistory, *Black Dragon River: A Journey Down the Amur River at the Borderlands of Empires*. No, there are no dragons here, unless they are carved on Buddhist temples. But that's all right, because the indigenous societies Ziegler turns up are absorbing on their own. The book is almost as sprawling as its title. Here be Genghis Kahn, here be Cossacks, here be "Evenki, Nivkh, Manchus, Daurians, Nanai, Solons, and Ulchi, to name a few; and then there were the Russians, the Chinese, the Japanese, and the Koreans."

If that quote from the book's prologue sounds like a mouthful, it is because proper nouns are the author's metier. A reader will wrestle with several capitalized constructs on any given page, whether they are place names, the names

of historical figures, tribal nomenclature, or natural history terms coming along at a fast clip. Fight against the current and risk drowning. Flow with it, as the Amur flows, and there are countless enjoyable details to discover.

Ziegler, the former Tokyo bureau chief and Greater China correspondent for the *Economist*, set out to follow the entire course of the Amur. He begins on horseback, traversing the Mongolian steppe to the Amur's headlands at the Onon River, then boards the Trans-Siberian Railway through the villages and territories that have had such a complex and in many cases tortuous past. *Black Dragon River* presents Ziegler as both an amiable traveling companion and formidably erudite professor, serving up well-spiced anthropology.

The narrative relates the astonishing adventures of Genghis Kahn, whose Mongol soldiers in 1215 laid waste to the city that is now Beijing; Ziegler quotes a period source to tell us that the corpses of the slaughtered "formed whole mountains, and the soil was greasy with human fat." Cossacks followed, grabbing one-sixth of the world's land for Russia.

Fur drove Russia east along the Amur, in search of wolverines, weasels, foxes of red and blue, white and black coloring. (The czar demanded as a yearly tribute a sable pelt from every able-bodied male in Siberia.) Ziegler profiles the Decembrists, those romantic, upper-class revolutionaries who after a failed coup in 1825 were condemned by Czar Nicholas I to a Siberian settlement called Chita. Unlike the usual grueling penal colony, the exiles could bring their wives and live with their families.

The river's waters swarm with life. The Amur is home to a hundred-twenty fish specimens, "a primal soup, thick with wanton life and death. Myriad fish gorge on the tapioca pearls of fish eggs caught up and down by the current. Ospreys and bears scavenge for dying fish in the shallows." Ziegler is at his best in such passages, when he leaves the dizzying flights of history to recount firsthand observations - like ending his 4,000-mile journey by taking an ancient Soviet hydrofoil toward the river's mouth on a freezing fall day, trading trinkets with a trio of inebriated helicopter pilots.

We might wish to follow in Ziegler's footsteps before the land he describes mutates beyond recognition. Currently the Russian Far East has seen environmental depredations on an unprecedented scale. The few remaining

Siberian tigers, he writes, eat boar, and boar typically consume the mast that falls from the immense oak trees of the taiga, the deep Siberian forest. As an explosion of logging ravages the vast wilderness, boars starve and tigers disappear; Chinese takeout chopsticks, Ziegler tells us, are likely made from fallen Russian larch.

In this over-examined world, it's nice to know there are outer reaches that we can discover afresh. "As the long reel of the river's story turns," Ziegler writes, "many peoples flicker in and out of view as they move along the Amur's banks or float upon its waters." The Amur, in other words, means life.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR



Dominic Ziegler is The Economist's Asia editor. He was the founding author of "Banyan," The Economist's weekly column on Asian affairs. He has previously served as the magazine's Tokyo

bureau chief and as its Greater China correspondent. In that role, he opened The Economist's first mainland bureau in Beijing in 1994. He has been with the magazine since 1986.

[www.penguinrandomhouse.com]

**I'm Marching 1-20-18 -
Women's March LA**
By Stevi Carroll

Pink clouds filled the Eastern morning sky as I pulled out of my garage to go pick up Paula, so we could join others on the Gold Line heading into LA for the second annual Women's March. When we got to the Sierra Madre station, Paula commented on how last year the parking structure was much more crowded. The platform was also less crowded this year, but as the train moved from one station to the next, seats filled until finally many passengers had to stand. The vibe in the train was friendly, hopeful, and electric. Walking into the main corridor of Union Station, I noticed streams of people exiting the MetroLink bays as they headed to the Red Line platform and then Pershing Square.

The Red Line at Pershing Square exits upward via a long staircase. Organizers funneled people who needed the escalator to the left and those who could take the stairs on the right. I loved seeing the mass of humanity flow up the stairs. I didn't check what time we arrived, but I'm pretty sure we were on the train by 7:30, which should have gotten us to Pershing Square by around 8:15. The street before the stage was already packed when we got there, as were the streets that fed into that corner.



Group 22 members Paula and Stevi

After we pressed our way through the crowd in pursuit of photos, we decided to weave our way to the end of one of the crowds. I don't think we reached an end, but we did get to an area that was less tightly packed. Unlike last year, I was able to get to City Hall. At neither Pershing Square nor City Hall was I able to hear clearly what the speakers said, but those who could appreciate the ideas they heard.

During the march, a woman who said she is from Taiwan talked with me about her friends/acquaintances who voted for and still support DT. She said what they have in common is they are rich. We all, Paula and the woman's husband, too, had a great time 'making eye contact and small talk.' (thanks Timothy Snyder)

A variety of issues were on display: get out and vote, gay rights, income inequality, women's rights, the environment, trump's shortcomings, health care. I think my favorite sign said,

"Resistance is fertile." The sign's creator bordered the saying with artificial flowers.



Women's Rights are Human Rights!



CTA (California Teachers Association). Photos by Stevi.

Diversity ruled the day. Families with tiny babies in front packs walked along side old people. I saw many families with young children. If I were close enough to any of them, I'd say, "Start 'em young," and the grown up would smile and agree. One woman said, "He has to understand." And of course, along with the age spread, the entire tapestry woven from the multitude of threads that make up the fabric of the United States was present.

According to Mayor Eric Garcetti, 600,000 people attended. The LA Sheriff's Department put the number at 300,000. One article I read said 500,000 and that LA was the largest event throughout the country.

The devil on my shoulder took glee in the idea that because of the partial government shutdown, DT couldn't go to Mar-a-Lago for golf and fundraising this weekend. He'd have to

see the people as they marched from the Lincoln Memorial to the White House. Of course, he had a tweet to make it all about him in a positive light:

<http://www.cnn.com/2018/01/20/us/womens-march-trump-tweet-trnd/index.html>

The day was sunny and bright. Rallying and marching with a few hundred thousand of my sisters and brothers was joyful and invigorating.

I hope we each will do our own little part in contributing to the kindness, love, and wisdom we need to continue in the creation of 'a more perfect union.'

DEATH PENALTY NEWS

By Stevi Carroll

The New York Times Editorial Board

December 31, 2017, in the online edition of The New York Times, the editorial board had an article titled "Capital Punishment Deserves a Quick Death."

After discussing the attempted execution of Alva Campbell November 15, 2017, during which authorities present could not find a vein in either his arms or his legs into which to insert the needle for the lethal injection, the NYT's editorial board goes on to say, "The number (of executions) should be zero. As the nation enters 2018, the Supreme Court is considering whether to hear at least one case asking it to strike down the death penalty, once and for all, for violating the Eighth Amendment's ban on cruel and unusual punishments.

Whether the justices take that or another case, the facts they face will be the same: The death penalty is a savage, racially biased, arbitrary and pointless punishment that becomes rarer and more geographically isolated with every year. In 2017 the total number of people sitting on death rows across America fell for the 17th straight year. In Harris County, Tex., the nation's undisputed leader in state-sanctioned killing, the year passed without a single execution or death sentence — the first time that's happened in more than 40 years."

As the article continues, they say because Texas and Arkansas were the states responsible almost half of the executions in 2017, we might think those are the states with largest number of new

death sentences during the year. We would be wrong. Of the 39 new death sentences handed down, one in three of them were from three counties in Western states: Riverside in California, Clark in Nevada, and Maricopa in Arizona. This is particularly troubling to me because as we know, California voters passed Proposition 66 last November. (To read more about where this stands, go to <https://deathpenaltyinfo.org/node/6852>)

While we may believe only the most heinous crimes merit the death sentence, the article lists a variety of influencing conditions: "Mental illness, intellectual disability, brain damage, childhood abuse or neglect, abysmal lawyers, minimal judicial review, a white victim." We may have considered these extenuating conditions, but what is pointed out is that according to a report by the Death Penalty Information Center, of the 23 people executed in 2017, 20 of them had at least one of the above factors and eight were younger than 21 when they committed their crime.

The article ends with "There's no reason not to take the final step. The justices have all the information they need right now to bring America in line with most of the rest of the world and end the death penalty for good." To read the editorial in full, go to https://www.nytimes.com/2017/12/31/opinion/capital-punishment-death-penalty.html?em_pos=small&emc=edit_ty_20180101&nl=opinion-today&nl_art=3&nlid=49109801&ref=headline&te=1

Donald J Trump, Jefferson Beauregard Sessions III, and the Death Penalty

According to a January 9, 2018, article in the Washington Post, Donald Trump "has long been a staunch backer of capital punishment, issuing public pleas for death sentences in prominent cases both before and after taking office." We remember his desire to have the Central Park Five executed. He took out a full-page ad and felt no compunction to reconsider even after they'd been found innocent.

While the support for the death penalty wanes throughout the United States (and the ability to get the lethal injection drugs gets more difficult), the Justice Department has announced its intention to seek the death sentence in federal cases.

Three weeks prior to January 9, 2018, Jefferson Beauregard Sessions III has made at least two decisions regarding cases to be considered for the Federal death penalty. These cases along with the case against Sayfullo Saipov, the man charged with using a rented truck to kill eight people on a New York City bike path, "suggest that the Justice Department will be seeking an increased number of death sentences in the months and years ahead, according to Sarah Isgur Flores, a department spokeswoman."

During the Obama administration, two federal convictions led to the death penalty. That of Dzhokhar Tsarnaev, one of the Boston Marathon bombers, and Dylann Roof, the gunman who killed nine people in a Charleston, SC, church.

To read the Washington Post article, go to https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/post-nation/wp/2018/01/09/the-justice-department-is-seeking-its-first-federal-death-sentences-under-sessions-and-expects-more-to-follow/?utm_term=.7646c4e2f5c4

Recent Exonerations

Thomas Sierra - State: IL - Date of Exoneration: 1/9/2018

In 1997, Thomas Sierra was sentenced to 55 years in prison for murder in Chicago, Illinois. He was exonerated in 2018 after evidence showed the lead detective had manipulated witnesses to wrongly identify Sierra.

Kirstin Lobato - State: NV - Date of Exoneration: 12/29/2017

In 2002, Kirstin Lobato was sentenced to 40 years in prison for the murder and mutilation of a homeless man in Las Vegas. She was exonerated in 2017 by forensic evidence showing the murder occurred when Lobato was more than 150 miles away.

Richard Burkhart - State: MT - Date of Exoneration: 12/29/2017

In 2002, Richard Burkhart was sentenced to life in prison for a murder in Great Falls, Montana. He was exonerated in 2017 after the key witness who testified against him recanted and evidence of the real killer was discovered.

Gabriel Solache and Arturo DeLeon-Reyes - State: IL - Date of Exoneration: 12/21/2017

In 2000, Gabriel Solache was sentenced to death and Arturo DeLeon-Reyes was sentenced to life without parole after falsely confessing to the murders of a husband and wife and the

abduction of their two children. Both were exonerated in December 2017 based on evidence that police physically abused them into confessing during an interrogation lasting more than 40 hours.

John Velez - State: IL - Date of Exoneration: 12/11/2017

In 2002, John Velez was sentenced to 55 years in prison for murder in Chicago, Illinois. He was exonerated in 2017 after the main eyewitness against him recanted and the prosecution conceded that improper evidence had been introduced at his trial.

Nevest Coleman and Darryl Fulton - State: IL - Date of Exoneration: 12/1/2017

In 1997, Nevest Coleman and Darryl Fulton were sentenced to life in prison without parole after falsely confessing to murder and rape in Chicago, Illinois. They were exonerated in 2017 by DNA tests that pointed to a serial rapist as the real perpetrator.

Cory Epps - State: NY - Date of Exoneration: 12/1/2017

In 1998, Cory Epps was sentenced to 25 years to life in prison for fatally shooting a woman during a road rage incident in Buffalo, New York. He was exonerated in 2017 based on evidence that another man committed the crime.

Craig Coley - State: CA - Date of Exoneration: 11/22/2017

In 1980, Craig Coley was sentenced to life in prison without parole for the murders of his girlfriend and her four-year-old son in Simi Valley, California. He was exonerated by DNA testing in 2017 after police re-opened the case.

Source:

<https://www.law.umich.edu/special/exonerations/Pages/recentcases.aspx>

Stays of Execution

January

2 Sheldon Hannibal PA Stay granted by the U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of Pennsylvania on November 9, 2017 to provide Hannibal the opportunity to pursue federal habeas corpus challenges to his conviction and sentence that are available to all criminal defendants.

3 John David Stumpf OH **Rescheduled** for November 14, 2018 by Gov. John Kasich on May 1, 2017.**

3 William Montgomery OH
Rescheduled for April 11, 2018 by Gov.
John Kasich on September 1, 2017.^

February

13 Warren K Hennes OH
Rescheduled for March 14, 2018 by Gov.
John Kasich on May 1, 2017.**

13 Robert Van Hook OH
Rescheduled for July 18, 2018 by Gov.
John Kasich on September 1, 2017.^

** On May 1, 2017, Ohio's 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.

^ On September 1, 2017, Ohio's Governor Kasich **issued a statement and an updated execution schedule**, which changed the execution dates for 19 of 26 condemned prisoners who had scheduled dates between September 2017 and September 2020. The execution schedule for these 26 prisoners now extends through April 2022.
Source: <https://deathpenaltyinfo.org/upcoming-executions#stays>

Recent Executions

**No executions since November 8, 2017
Hooray!**

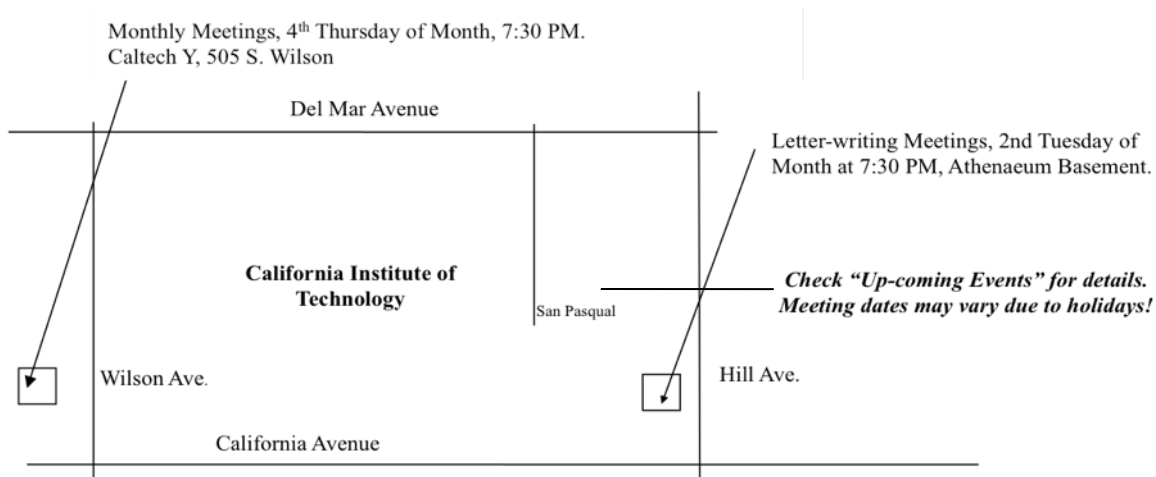
WRITE FOR RIGHTS
By Joyce Wolf

Group 22's Write For Rights event at Dog Haus Biergarten on Saturday, Dec. 9, resulted in 181 letters and cards for Amnesty's 10 featured cases in 2017, plus another 5 letters for our group's adopted prisoner of conscience in Iran, Narges Mohammadi. Sixteen people attended: Stevi, Paul, Candy, Laura, Ted, Kathy, Robert, Elena, Kai, Larry, Noor, Paula, me, and special visitors Mhairi, Jose, Nona. Thank you all!

This was the second time we held our annual W4R event at the Dog Haus, and we felt the outdoor patio with the long tables was a very pleasant place for letter writing. We're grateful to Trevor for making the original suggestion in 2016 and to Stevi for making arrangements with Dog Haus managers for our events.

When our event concluded, the Donations for Postage can contained \$70. At the book discussion party on Dec. 10, we received donations of 76 USA Forever stamps and \$30 cash. Many thanks to all who contributed.

GROUP 22 JANUARY LETTER COUNT	
UAs	27
POC	4
Total	31



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.