

AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL

ORANGE COUNTY

GROUP #141 ORANGE

Newsletter

GROUP #178 IRVINE

September 2002

Pain and Healing: A Year Later

This article is taken from a column by AIUSA Executive Director William F. Schulz.

Not one of those good people whose lives we commemorate September 11 asked to be part of a drama. Not one of them knew that their deaths would trigger a worldwide struggle. Not one could have imagined all that their dying has come to mean.

For some it has come to mean almost no end to anxiety. For others it has spurred hatred of a debilitating intensity. For many it has given birth to suspicions of the stranger. And for almost all of us it has unsettled our lives.

But out of the ashes of that terrible day have emerged other revelations. That our lives here in the United States are inextricably linked to the fates of others. That terrorism has a multitude of causes. And that our security is tied tightly to the pursuit of justice. Justice for the victims of the attacks and justice for the world at large.

For the human rights movement, this past year has brought a special set of challenges. What happened on September 11 was a crime against humanity. Despite all the controversies that have marked the ensuing months, we must not forget that. The people who lost their lives that day were victims of a horrific human rights crime. Our job at Amnesty International is to save people from such ill fortune. And we, among others, failed. It is in our own interests as much as it is in any one else's—indeed, it is at the heart of our organization's calling—to do everything we can to see that such crimes do not happen again. We are unalterable adversaries of all those who would use the violation of other people's human rights as a means to accomplish their ends. Human rights are designed to make the world a safer place.

To do that, we believe, means respecting the human rights of all. Here of course is where the controversy sets in. But here is where we have to say that protecting even the most despised among us from things like torture or the denial of due process is why we have human rights in the first place. If virtue were a universal human trait, power distributed evenly and guilt or innocence a given, Amnesty International could go out of business immediately.

But this is the paradox (and, granted, it is a hard faith to abide by when we are feeling frightened and justifiably angry): The more respect we extend to other peoples' rights, the more likely we are to convict the guilty, absolve the innocent, discourage antagonism, cultivate friendships, win the admiration of the world and secure our own country's future.

The United States does not exist in a vacuum. It may well be the most powerful country in the world but one of the things that means is that our every action is subject to extra scrutiny. For good or ill, we have long been a model for the rest of the

world. The question one year after September 11 is, "A model of what?"

The answer for which we at Amnesty have been pleading this past year is: A model of respect for the rule of law in the name of which the struggle against terrorism is being waged. A model of compliance with the highest principle of the American tradition—equitable treatment of all citizens. A model of generosity to those who suffer deprivation around the world. And a model of good sense when it comes to the strangers among us—the recognition that if we harm the multitude who would do us no harm to stop the tiny fraction who would, we end up increasing that fraction beyond imagining.

In 1965 in the midst of the Vietnam war, the great Buddhist monk, Thich Nhat Hanh, wrote these words to inspire young people whose lives were at risk every day: "Promise me, promise me this day, promise me now," he asked. "Even as they strike you down, you will remember: humanity is not our enemy. The only thing worthy of you is compassion . . . Hatred will never let you face the beast in human beings. One day, when you face the beast alone, with your courage intact, your eyes kind . . . out of your smile will bloom a flower. [And] on the long, rough road, the sun and the moon will continue to shine."

Perhaps Thich Nhat Hanh's vision is too much to ask. But we at Amnesty International don't believe so. Over the past year our members have mourned the dead, comforted the living, stood up for the vulnerable and waded deep in the waters of justice. I give you my word that that will continue. I like to think that it is borne of compassion. I know that it is a repudiation of hatred. And I am certain that, as long as we and others tread this road, the sun and the moon will continue to shine.

AIUSA Pays Tribute to Victims of September 11

One year after the atrocious attacks of September 11, 2001, Amnesty International pays tribute to the victims and expresses its sorrow and outrage over these horrendous human rights crimes. As an organization that works on behalf of victims, Amnesty International remembers all those who were killed or injured in New York, Virginia and Pennsylvania on that fateful day. Among the approximately 3,000 victims were people of diverse religions, homelands, occupations and political beliefs, yet their shared tragedy will unite them in our hearts and minds forever. Some were our loved ones; some our friends; some our colleagues; some were strangers. No matter who they were, what they believed, or where they were when they died, each was the victim of a massive human rights violation.

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August Meeting Minutes

Group #141 Orange

Attendees

Jeannine Christensen, Kevin Gaffney, Deidre Jackson, Tami Jacoby, Priscilla Rocco, and Ernie Solheid.

Letter-Writing

We sent letters on behalf of our adopted prisoner of conscience, the Venerable Thich Huyen Quang, in Viet Nam, calling for his release from house arrest.

We also sent letters to Palestinian Authority President Yasser Arafat, asking that he arrest those who carry out attacks against civilians, and Sheikh Ahmed Yassin, leader of Hamas, calling on that organization to end all attacks on civilians and to respect fundamental principles of international humanitarian law.

Finally, we wrote on behalf of Amina Lawal, a 30-year-old Muslim woman in Nigeria, who was sentenced to death by stoning for allegedly confessing to having had a child while divorced.

Mandate Workshop

The majority of the meeting was taken up with a Mandate Workshop conducted by Kevin Gaffney and Deidre Jackson, summarized in the article on page 3 of this newsletter.

Action File Coordinator

We'll discuss at the September meeting whether we need a coordinator for our Action File case.

August Meeting Minutes

Group #178 Irvine

Letter-Writing

We sent out 21 letters and 9 postcards concerning AI actions.

Tabling

Julie Ralls and Al White from our group will be tabling at the Peace Jam at the Unitarian Church in Costa Mesa on 21 September from 11:30 to 3:00 PM. The group is a co-sponsor of the event. See the flyer for the event.

We will be asking the LA office if it is permissible for our group to table at a Green Party event on 20 September 2002.

Action File

Julie Ralls reports that Dr. Sa'adey's sister has asked us to stop working on his case. Julie Ralls will contact the country specialist to find out what our group should do.

China Update

Ting Huang mentions the possibility of political change at the 8 November 2002 communist party meeting in China.

West Africa RAN

We wrote letters for three POC's in Togo.

Upcoming Speakers

In September, Kevin Gaffney and Deidre Jackson will speak on AIUSA's new Mission and the Integrated Strategic Plan. In October, Sadullah Khan from CAIR (Council on American-Islamic Relations) will speak on the topic "Islam and Violence." In November, group member Lynn Mikami

will describe her impressions from her recent trip to Cuba.

August Meeting Minutes

Group #175 Long Beach

Attendees

Kevin Gaffney, Deidre Jackson, Sally Ann Michel, Jim Roberts, and Daal Praderas.

We missed several of our regulars at this meeting who were vacationing or otherwise unavoidably absent. Happily, we welcomed two new attendees, Dall Praderas and Sally Ann Michel.

Condolences

We want to extend our condolences to Gerre McKenna, our long-time member, on the recent death of her husband Dick who was also a supporter and friend of AI. Dick succumbed after a long bout with cancer and heart problems. We shall miss him.

AI Mission

Our normal agenda format was suspended in order that Diedre and Kevin could give us a workshop on the new and evolving AI Mission which last year replaced the Mandate in the AI statute.

Next Month's Meeting

Next month our meeting will be hosting speakers and a discussion on Human Rights in Vietnam and sending off letters and petitions for Long Beach's and Orange's adopted prisoners of conscience both of whom are in Viet Nam.

Nigeria: Death by Stoning Upheld

This article is taken from an August 20 AI press release.

Amnesty International is gravely concerned at yesterday's decision by a Shari'ah court of appeals in Funtua, Nigeria, to uphold the sentence of death by stoning imposed on Amina Lawal, a young Nigerian woman accused of giving birth to a child out of wedlock. Lawal and her lawyer have been granted 30 days to appeal the decision. Amnesty International is urging its members and the public at large to participate in planned actions directed to the US House of Representatives and to Nigeria's secular government in Abuja, which in the past has deemed the Shari'ah penal code unconstitutional.

Lawal was originally sentenced to death on March 22, 2002, after confessing to sexual relations with a man other than her husband (adultery is a crime punishable by death under Quranic-based Shari'ah law currently applicable to Nigeria's majority Muslim northern states). While charges against the alleged father of the child have been dropped, the religious court of appeals yesterday stood firm on Lawal's death sentence despite international protests.

"This judgment is incompatible with the Nigerian constitution and also with Nigeria's legal obligations under international human rights law and the African Charter for Human and People Rights," Amnesty International said, noting that the practice of stoning to death is a cruel form of torture prohibited by both the International Covenant on Civil

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Amnesty International's New Mission

The 25th International Council Meeting, held in Dakar, Senegal, in August 2001, adopted sweeping changes in Amnesty International's work. Kevin Gaffney and Deidre Jackson have been conducting trainings at the local group meetings to outline these changes. They spoke at the Orange and Long Beach groups' meetings last month and will be speaking at the Irvine group's meeting this month.

The following Articles 1, 2, and 3 of The Statute of Amnesty International, adopted by the 25th International Council Meeting in August 2001, lay out the organization's mission and methods.

Article 1–Vision and Mission

Amnesty International's *vision* is of a world in which every person enjoys all of the human rights enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and other international human rights standards.

In pursuit of this vision, 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.

Article 2–Core Values

Amnesty International forms a global community of human rights defenders with the principles of international solidarity, effective action for the individual victim, global coverage, the universality and indivisibility of human rights, impartiality and independence, and democracy and mutual respect.

Article 3–Methods

Amnesty International addresses governments, inter-governmental organizations, armed political groups, companies, and other non-state actors.

Amnesty International seeks to disclose human rights abuses accurately, quickly and persistently. It systematically and impartially researches the facts of individual cases and patterns of human rights abuses. These findings are publicised, and members, supporters and staff mobilise public pressure on governments and others to stop the abuses.

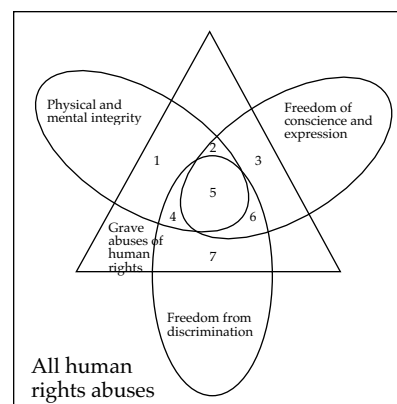
In addition to its work on specific abuses of human rights, Amnesty International urges all governments to observe the rule of law, and to ratify and implement human rights standards; it carries out a wide range of human rights educational activities; and it encourages intergovernmental organizations, individuals, and all organs of society to support and respect human rights.

New Mission

Under these changes, Amnesty's International's familiar mandate is being replaced by the Mission Statement contained in the second paragraph of Article 1.

The new mission refers to grave abuses of some human rights. The following diagram shows how the mission fits into the context of all human rights. The square represents all abuses of human rights, the triangle grave abuses of human rights, and the three ellipses abuses of one's physical and

mental integrity, one's freedom of conscience and expression, and one's freedom from discrimination.



The mission excludes non-grave abuses of human rights as well as grave abuses that do not fall into one of the three ellipses. As the diagram shows, many of the abuses fall under more than one category. Some examples of abuses falling into each sector of the diagram are as follows. Note that 3, 6, and 7 are new areas of the mission.

1. Torture of common criminals
2. Torture of political prisoners of conscience.
3. Closure of an opposition party newspaper.
4. Female genital mutilation.
5. Rape in custody of a female political prisoner.
6. Closure of a gay or lesbian newspaper.
7. Not being given a job because of one's race, color, religion, or political beliefs.

Integrated Strategic Plan

The Integrated Strategic Plan (ISP), which is in the process of being formulated, will contain the strategies to implement the new mission. After it is finalized, it will take effect in 2004 and be in force until 2010. The ISP will contain strategies dealing with human rights, organization, and finances. AIUSA is asking members to prioritize proposals within each of these strategies. Within each of these proposals, there are targets also to be prioritized. The feedback from the membership will be presented at the regional meetings this fall.

The proposals for a Human Rights Strategy are:

1. Build mutual respect and fight discrimination.
2. Demand accountability and the fair administration of justice.
3. Defend freedom of expression.
4. Protect human rights in armed conflict.
5. Strengthen the human rights protection of migrants and refugees.
6. Work for socio-economic justice.

Proposals for an Organizational Strategy are:

1. Deliver timely, effective, and creative action
2. Guarantee quality strategic research.
3. Mobilize people
4. Strengthen governance and management.

The proposal for a Financial Strategy calls for mobilizing and growing the organization's financial strength by 20% average per year from 2004–2010 by increasing membership and fundraising.

US: Bullying Allies, Obstructing Justice

The international community must reject the US campaign against international justice, Amnesty International said in a new report released on September 3.

The USA has approached many governments requesting them to sign agreements not to surrender or transfer US nationals to the new International Criminal Court (ICC). It has already signed such bilateral agreements with Israel, East Timor, Romania and Tajikistan. The USA is exerting extreme pressure on states to meet their demands, in many situations threatening to withdraw US military assistance.

Governments should refuse to sign agreements which would give impunity to US nationals should they be accused of genocide, crimes against humanity and war crimes. The USA is demanding an exemption for its nationals should they commit these crimes on the territory of states that have ratified the ICC.

"These agreements seek to undermine and weaken the ICC which was created to end impunity for the worst crimes known to humanity," Amnesty International said.

"When legal advisers from the 15 European Union members meet tomorrow, they should take the lead in stopping this campaign by asking its member states to refuse bilateral agreements."

Amnesty International's report concludes that any state that enters into an impunity agreement with the USA will violate its obligations under international law. The USA claim that the impunity agreements are in accordance with international law is wholly without merit. In fact, the agreements seek to manipulate provision included to ensure that people accused of these crimes are brought to justice.

Background

The Rome Statute of the ICC entered into force on 1 July 2002. As of 30 August 2002, 78 states had ratified it; 139 states have signed it. The ICC is in the process of being established to investigate and prosecute people accused of genocide, crimes against humanity and war crimes, when national courts are unable or unwilling to do so. It is expected that it will become fully operational in the first half of 2003.

The USA has been the only state actively to oppose the establishment of the ICC. Since the adoption of the Rome Statute in July 1998, the USA has sought an exemption for US nationals from the jurisdiction of the Court.

Amnesty International, other NGOs and governments have repeatedly demonstrated that USA fears that the Court could be used for politically motivated prosecutions against USA nationals have no basis since the Rome Statute contains substantial safeguards and fair trial guarantees.

Countries that have ratified the Rome Statute are obliged to comply with requests by the International Criminal Court to arrest and surrender persons accused of genocide, crimes against humanity and war crimes. Signing an impunity agreement with the USA is contrary to a state's obligations under the Statute and goes against the very purpose of the Statute which is to end impunity for the worst crimes under international law.

States that have signed the Rome Statute are obliged by

international law not to take any steps that would undermine the Rome Statute. Signing an impunity agreement with the USA is clearly against the object and purpose of the Statute which is to end impunity for the worst crimes under international law.

All states—regardless of whether they have ratified, signed or not signed the Rome Statute—that enter into impunity agreements with the USA or refuse to arrest and surrender persons accused by the ICC may violate their obligations under international law to bring to justice those responsible for genocide, crimes against humanity and war crimes.

For a copy of the report "International Criminal Court: The US efforts to obtain impunity for genocide, crimes against humanity and war crimes", visit: www.amnesty.org/icc.

September 11 Victims

Continued from page 1

Amnesty International considers the September 11th attacks to be crimes against humanity under international law and has called for the perpetrators to be brought to justice, for without accountability human rights pledges become hollow rhetoric.

Amnesty International believes the best way to prevent human rights violations is to protect human rights values; respect for human rights can lessen the hatred that leads to violence. Since 1961, Amnesty International activists have worked for the day when all individuals enjoy full respect for their most basic human rights. As the millions who were touched mourn the thousands who died, Amnesty International USA reiterates its commitment to making that day a reality.

Nigeria

Continued from page 2

and Political Rights (ICCPR) and the Convention against Torture. Amnesty International is strongly opposed to the death penalty in all circumstances on the grounds that it represents the ultimate inhuman and degrading punishment and violates the right to life.

The organization is calling on members and other concerned individuals to write to Nigerian President Olusegun Obasanjo to push for the abolition of the death penalty and other forms of cruel, inhuman and degrading punishment in all Nigerian states. AIUSA encourages its members to write their Representative in Congress to urge her or him to co-sponsor H. Con. Res. 351, a resolution passed in the House International Operations and Human Rights Subcommittee that condemns the practice of execution by stoning as a gross human rights violation. (See www.amnestyusa.org/women/act.html.)

Amnesty International is asking the Nigerian government to ensure that Amina Lawal enjoys her full rights of appeal in accordance with Nigeria's obligations under international human rights law, including article 6 (2) of the ICCPR, and the safeguards guaranteeing protection of the rights of those facing the death penalty.

"Amina Lawal should be allowed to fully enjoy her rights of appeal to a higher, impartial, independent tribunal which follows the due process of law. This sentence must not be carried out," the organization said.

Upcoming Events

Rights Readers Book Discussion Group

Amnesty International Group #22 in Pasadena / Caltech sponsors book discussions the third Sunday of each month at Vroman's Bookstore, 695 E. Colorado Boulevard in Pasadena. This month's discussion, on Sunday, September 15, 6:30 PM, is on *In Our Own Best Interest: How Defending Human Rights Benefits Us All* by William F. Schulz, Executive Director AIUSA. (If you plan to purchase the book at Vroman's look in the Current Events section or request it at Will Call.)

This month marks the third anniversary for the book group! Okay to attend even if you haven't read the book—this month's discussion promises to be very informative for those who want an introduction to what Amnesty is all about.

From *Publisher's Weekly*: If any foreign policy primer could be called a page-turner, it is this one by the executive director of Amnesty International USA. What the human rights community needs to do, argues Schulz in this well-written clarion call, is find "the compelling reasons why respect for human rights is in the best interests of the United States." For Schulz, this means convincing "realists" that a moral foreign policy serves a practical end. His case is strongest when arguing for human rights intervention into the cases of whistle-blowers around the world who have been jailed or killed. If these people's warnings about environmental degradation or inefficient control of weapons are not heard, he notes, the entire world, including the United States, could suffer disastrous consequences.

For further information, contact Martha Ter Maat at termaat@hsc.usc.edu.

GLAD Meeting

The Greater Los Angeles Development (GLAD) group is holding a special open house/meeting beginning at 6:30 PM on Monday, September 23. All local group members are invited to attend to see the new commodious Amnesty office and to invigorate GLAD.

Please RSVP to Tracy Gore at tgore@earthlink.net so they can plan for enough refreshments.

The new Western Regional Office is located at 2999 Overland Avenue, Suite 111, Los Angeles. Coming from the east, take I-10 West, exit at Overland Avenue, continue on the service road (in the middle lane). At the first light, the intersection of Overland Avenue and National Boulevard, 2999 Overland Avenue is the large pink and green building on the northwest corner (to your right and through the intersection).

There is parking along National Boulevard (in front of

the building) and Overland, as well as in the lot of the community center across the street (take a right at the intersection of Overland and National). There is also free parking in the residential area behind the building.

Western Regional Conference

The Western Regional Conference of Amnesty International USA will be held October 25–27 in Denver, Colorado. The conference is a unique opportunity for activists, scholars, communities, and students to come together to learn about, discuss, and act upon some of the most important human rights issues facing our world community today.

This year's conference theme is "Human Rights and the Arts." The use of the arts as a medium for human rights activism, including poetry and prose, film, dance, theater, and art, opens people to experience the pain, suffering and hope of human rights victims in ways that are vivid, moving and often beautiful.

Join us as we explore the connections between the arts and human rights activism and also celebrate the 30th anniversary of the Urgent Action Network.

The keynote speakers are General José Gallardo, former Prisoner of Conscience from Mexico; Sister Diana Ortiz, author of *The Blindfold's Eyes: My Journey from Torture to Truth* (written with Patricia Davis); and AIUSA National Executive Director William Schultz.

The conference site is the Executive Tower Hotel, 1405 Curtis Street, Denver, (303) 571-0300. The Executive Tower Hotel will be offering Amnesty International conference attendees a special group rate of \$89 single or \$99 double.

Conference attendees must make their own reservations directly with the hotel at the phone numbers listed above. Be sure to mention Amnesty International to obtain the group rate. Space is limited, so please make your reservations as soon as possible! Reservations must be made by October 4, 2002, to take advantage of the special rate! To request a roommate, please send your registration to the Los Angeles Western Region Office by September 20.

The registration fee is, before October 4, General \$15, Student/Senior/Limited Income \$10; and after October 4, General \$20, Student/Senior/Limited Income \$15.

To register, please send a check or money order (payable to AIUSA) with a completed registration form (please see www.amnestyusa.org/events/western/regionalconference.html) to: AIUSA Western Region, Regional Conference, 2999 Overland Avenue, Suite 111, Los Angeles, CA 90064. For further information, please call the Los Angeles Western Region Office at (310) 815-0450.

If you would like to continue receiving this newsletter and supporting the work of Amnesty International Group #141 and Group #178, please return this coupon to the appropriate address with annual dues of \$10.00. Dues are used to cover the costs of this newsletter and of letters on behalf of prisoners. Your address label contains your membership expiration date.

Name _____

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Please make your check payable to either Amnesty International Group #141 or Group #178. Contributions to AI are tax-deductible. Thank you for your interest and support!

Return to:

Amnesty International
Group #141 Orange
P.O. Box 864
Orange, CA 92856

Amnesty International
Group #178 Irvine
P.O. Box 16243
Irvine, CA 92623

Calendar

September

17 Tuesday 7:00 PM

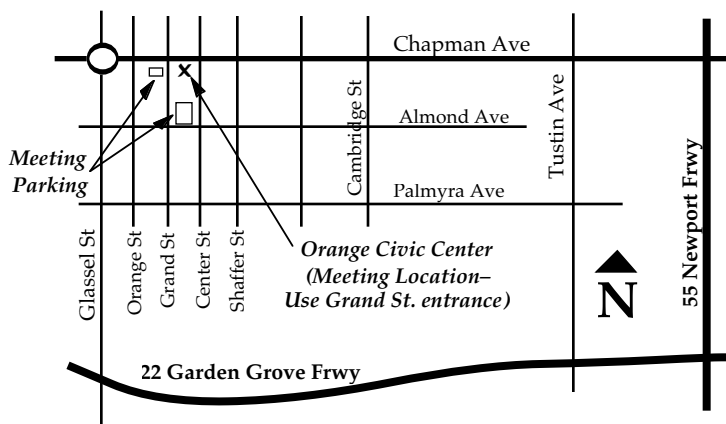
Group #141 Orange Monthly Meeting at the Orange Civic Center, Conference Room C, at 300 E. Chapman Avenue, in Orange. For further information about the group, contact Deidre Jackson at (562) 430-7381.

21 Saturday 11:30 AM–3:00 PM

Peace Jam 2002 at Orange County Unitarian Universalist Church, 1259 Victoria Street, Costa Mesa. For more information, see the enclosed flyer.

23 Monday 7:00 PM

Huntington Beach Group Monthly Meeting at Saints Simon and Jude Church, Room 7B, 20111 Magnolia Street in Huntington Beach. For further information about the group, contact Darcie Guy at (714) 374-5786.



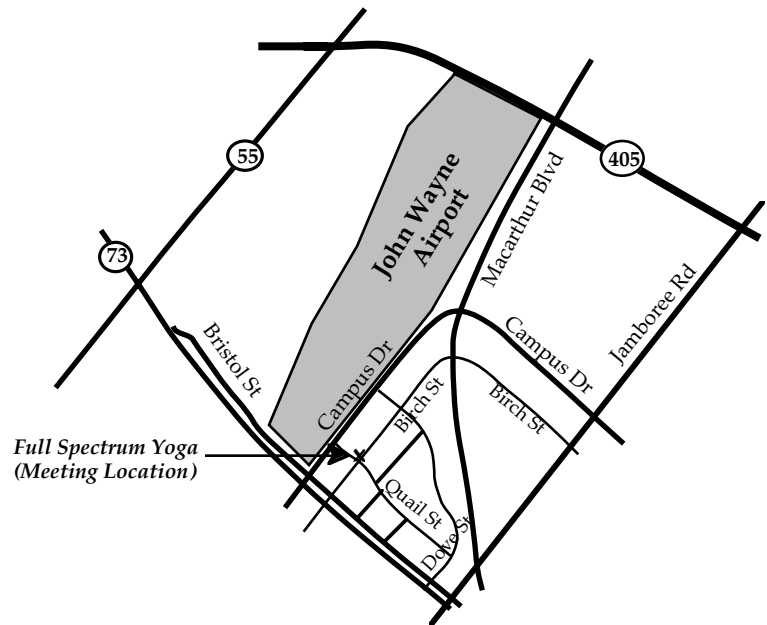
Group #141 Orange Meeting Location

24 Tuesday 7:00 PM

Group #175 Long Beach Monthly Meeting at the Unitarian Universalist Church, 5450 Atherton Street, Long Beach. Letter-writing from 7:00–7:30. Group #175 meets on the fourth Tuesday of each month. For further information about the group, contact Bobbi Kendig at (562) 420-1155.

24 Tuesday 7:30 PM

Group #178 Irvine Monthly Meeting at Full Spectrum Yoga, 2018 Quail Street, Newport Beach (across from John Wayne Airport). Group #178 meets the last Tuesday of each month. For more information about the group, contact Jacques Kilchoër at (714) 557-8427.



Group #178 Irvine Meeting Location

Amnesty International Group #178
P.O. Box 16243
Irvine, CA 92623