

SEEKING JUSTICE IN TEXAS

TEXAS COALITION TO ABOLISH THE DEATH PENALTY
WORKING TO ABOLISH THE DEATH PENALTY IN TEXAS / SUMMER 2007

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A Note from the Chair

Rick Halperin, President



There is a clear slowdown on death sentencing and executions across the US, but one would never know that by looking at the carnage of the death penalty industry in Texas thus far this year. Thirteen (13) of the nation's 18 executions have occurred in this state, and there are at least 11 more serious dates

scheduled in the weeks and months ahead. There have now been more people put to death since Rick Perry became Governor in 2001 than under any other single governor in American history....a horrific record, indeed.

It is likely that 2 more terrible milestones will be reached this summer: the state will assuredly put to death its 400th person since executions resumed on December 7, 1982, and the 100th person sentenced to death in Harris County will also likely be put to death later this summer as well....meaning that Harris County alone will have had more persons executed from that jurisdiction than in any single entire US state (besides Texas of course).

Legislatively, we are waiting to see what bills will ultimately pass through this session. Bills have been introduced which, if enacted, would expand the scope of the death penalty in Texas, and we should have these results by the time of our next newsletter. (Ed's note: See page 3 for article).

Some major positive news occurred in April, when the *Dallas Morning News* editorial board reversed its policy (of more than 100 years) of supporting the death penalty by calling for its complete and total abolition, citing arguments that abolitionists have been putting forth for decades. We are hopeful that other major papers across this state will likewise call for the complete end of the death penalty.

TCADP remains committed to growth and activism, and we are diligently working with numerous communities across the state to increase our visibility and to raise the profile of these related issues to the populace.

Thank you all for your continued support and for all you are doing to bring the terrible ordeal of state executions to its much-needed end.

Impending Executions

Please note that dates are tentative.

- June
- 6 Michael Griffith #394
- 13 Cathy Henderson #395
- 20 Lionell Rodriguez #396
- 21 Gilberto Reyes #397
- 26 Patrick Knight #398
- July
- 10 Rolando Ruiz #399
- 24 Lonnie Johnson #400
- August
- 15 Kenneth Parr #401
- 22 Johnny Conner #402
- 30 Kenneth Foster #403

Please note that the numbers are for Texas Executions since 1982 and subject to change.



My Transformation on the Death Penalty

I would like to share with you my journey into the field of abolition and remembering Roy Pippin. I knew Roy for more than 15 years before he went to death row. I sold real estate for 25 plus years, and I met Roy at an inspection of a house. I was there to cover the inspection for a

Nancy Bailey

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Bellaire, TX

77402-1566

vacationing colleague, and Roy was there to inspect the heating and air system. From that day forward, Roy was my heating and air 'guy.' Through the years he became the heating and air expert for many of my clients as well. Roy was a happy-go-lucky, free spirit, frequently late, but good at what he did, fair with his pricing, and very successful. (His customers knew he would never cheat them.) In those days, he was the same good-hearted Roy that those of you on death row knew.

Up to that point in my life I had never given a lot of thought to the death penalty. I never questioned it. I supported it. When I would read in the paper that someone got 20 or 30 years for murder, I wondered why. I thought the penalty for murder was death. As you can see, there are multitudes of people out here with not much good information. I think I was fairly representative of much of the

public. When I learned that Roy was wanted for murder, it rocked my world. I had never had any encounters with the criminal justice system, so the following year was one shock after another. Jury selection and the trial were somewhat of a blur but, on the other hand, were the beginning of my education in this field.

Like many on death row, Roy was not lucky in the attorneys who were appointed to handle his case. However, when Roy arrived at Ellis, he was very lucky in the people he met. The man who lived next door to his first cell was knowledgeable in the law and gave Roy the first idea that he could help himself. He met other knowledgeable men along the way who taught him more. He went on to file *pro se* writs in State, Federal and Supreme Courts. Just prior to his death he filed a successor writ in the State, 5th Circuit and Supreme Courts, and a lethal injection suit in the Federal, 5th Circuit, and Supreme Courts. The Roy I knew in the free world could never have done the legal work he was doing during the last years of his life.

Roy was always the good hearted, generous person who so many men on death row learned to love. He couldn't stand it when someone he knew wasn't receiving letters or visits,

and many found friends because of his concern. And, it was Roy who urged me to help others in every way I could. He was proud of my participation in the abolition and prison reform effort.

Although life on death row is mind numbing, Roy never lost his sense of humor. Most of all he enjoyed laughing at himself. No one could tell a story like Roy, and he had us laughing till we cried during our final visits.

Roy never sat back and accepted bad treatment or disrespect as something death row prisoners deserved and must tolerate, and yet he found ways to fight back in non-violent ways to bring attention to conditions on death row.

On the day of Roy's death, though still weak from his hunger strike, Roy set a small protest bonfire in his cell. He had thought the smoke would go out on the run, but it didn't, and

he was overcome by smoke. When I talked to him that afternoon just prior to execution, he was laughing at himself for having to be rescued from his bonfire. He was happy; he had talked with his son and other members of his family; he was at peace.

Being a part of Roy's journey taught me many things. This journey taught me that the death penalty is wrong and a multitude of reasons why it is wrong. I learned I am not powerless and that I can do something about the death penalty.

I have been told by friends, who knew how worried and distraught I was, that Roy was handled with care when taken out of his cell and while being carried by stretcher from the infirmary to the transport van which would take him to Huntsville to be put to death. For that I am grateful, but I will not ever forget what happened at 6 PM March 29, 2007.



SEEKING JUSTICE IN TEXAS
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Mail your name, address, and phone number with annual donation to Austin office to receive quarterly newsletters. All donations are tax-deductible. Thank you! If you are already a member and would like to receive the TCADP newsletter via email, send your name and email address to info@tcadp.org.

Legislative Update

By Bob Van Steenburg

TCADP had both success and failure in the 80th General Session of the Texas legislature. We were successful in getting Rep. Jessica Farrar (D-Houston) to sponsor a bill (HB 3740) calling for abolition of the death penalty. Rep. Farrar had not previously sponsored any legislation dealing with capital punishment, so her involvement was a significant event. Unfortunately, HB 3740 did not get a hearing by the House Criminal Jurisprudence Committee and died without action. However, TCADP did present a briefing on the bill to staffs of members of the Texas House. Participants at the briefing included Linda White of MVFR, Rich Woodward of Texas A&M, and Walter Long, a lawyer well known for his work supporting defendants in death penalty cases. Additionally,

Rev. Carroll Pickett, former chaplain at death row, and Sam Millsap, former DA from Bexar County, also provided testimony in support of HB 3740.

Overall, there were more than 30 pieces of legislation filed that dealt with the issue of the death penalty. Two of these expanded the use of capital punishment. These are the so-called "Jessica's Law" bills that provide for the death penalty for individuals convicted a second time for the offense of the sexual abuse of a child. As of the writing of this update, a joint House-Senate conference committee was meeting to iron out differences in their respective bills. It is anticipated that a jointly acceptable bill will be developed, passed by the legislature, and sent to the Governor for signature. From

TCADP's perspective, no bill that expands the use of the death penalty is acceptable. Victims' groups and prosecutors continue to express concern about this bill.

A bill (HJR 23) sponsored by Rep. Naishtat (D-Austin) that granted the governor the power to enact a moratorium on executions passed out of committee and was referred to the House Calendar committee for scheduling to be heard by the full House.

Other bills included, among other things, establishing of requirements for attorneys in capital cases, video taping of interrogations, and establishing an innocence commission.

It is not expected that much good news will come out of the legislature with regard to capital punish-

ment. The legislature continues to take an approach that the death penalty is a fine and proper way to dispense justice. This attitude makes it incumbent for all TCADP members to continually visit and write those members of the legislature who represent you and make them aware of your concerns about the Texas death penalty system. We must work to raise the level of the voices of those of us who oppose capital punishment. This may be one of the most important things that we can do.



Imagine...

A unique kind of peace protest was staged outside the walls of the Huntsville Unit coinciding with the execution of James Clark on April 11.

The piano John Lennon used while composing the song "Imagine" - now currently in the possession of singer George Michael - was placed just inside the protest area located on the corner of Avenue J and 12th Street as a silent protest during the execution.

The piano's presence in Huntsville was not a direct protest of the death penalty, but rather a protest against violence in general.

"We consider the original act that the person is being executed for as violence and we think the death penalty in itself is an act of violence. We're not being political or that we believe or don't believe in (the death penalty)," stated Caroline True, creative director for the project.

The piano is being photographed at sites around the world where acts of violence have taken place in order to spread the message of peace. The pictures will then be compiled into a book.



"Imagine there's no countries
It isn't hard to do
Nothing to kill or die for
And no religion too
Imagine all the people
Living life in peace..."
-Imagine

by John Lennon

TCADP Board Develops Strategic Plan for 2007/2008

On April 15th the TCADP Board of Directors met in a strategic development session. The purpose of this was to identify and develop a plan to accomplish the most critical activities for the organization. The board identified three areas or initiatives that it felt were essential for TCADP to focus on this year. After identifying the three initiatives, the board also established the goals and objectives that it felt would lead to success in these areas. These are described below.

INITIATIVE: Fundraising

GOAL: Raise \$65K in donations, grants and fund raising activities in 2007 and \$100K in 2008.

OBJECTIVES: This will be accomplished by the following specific actions: (1) membership dues and donations; (2) a Personal Appeal letter; (3) Fund Raising Parties; (4) a Direct Personal Appeal to selected individuals; (5) Chapter fundraisers; (6) international support; (7) Sara Hickman musical tour of Texas; and (8) a major fund raising event in 2008.

INITIATIVE: Membership Development

GOAL: Double TCADP membership by April 2008.

OBJECTIVES: This will be realized by the following actions: (1) attendance at/participation in a wide variety of conferences; (2) networking, using MySpace; (3) expansion of Chapter activities to increase local membership;

(4) outreach to religious communities; and (5) international development.

INITIATIVE: Religious / Civic Outreach and Education

GOAL: Recruit 75 faith communities statewide to participate in the National Weekend of Faith in Action in October 2007.

OBJECTIVES: This will be accomplished by: (1) contacting specifically identified faith communities; (2) Chapters contacting five faith communities in their areas; and (3) providing specific actions, activities and information that can be used by participating communities.

GOAL: Secure guest presentations by TCADP sponsored representatives at eight Rotary clubs by the end of 2007.

OBJECTIVES: This will be accomplished by identifying potential Rotary clubs around the state, developing an appropriate presentation, and then scheduling the presentations.

GOAL: Negotiate with five major school districts to establish an education program in high schools by the spring of 2008.

OBJECTIVES: This will be realized by identifying target school districts and developing an appropriate educational program.

These initiatives have been adopted by the Board of Directors and will constitute the Strategic Plan for TCADP. This plan will be published and provided to

chapters and members of the organization soon. You are encouraged to determine the ways in which you and your local chapter can support this plan. In fact, it is essential that you do so in order for this to be a success. Success in these areas will significantly improve the ability of TCADP to accomplish its mission statement of abolishing the death

penalty in Texas. In particular if anyone has any contacts with a local Rotary Club or high school educators, that would be most helpful in accomplishing the third initiative described above. For further information or if you have any questions, contact Vicki McCuiston (info@tcadp.org) or Bob Van Steenburg (austin@tcadp.org).



JOURNEY OF HOPE

From Violence to Healing™

HELP WANTED!

The Texas Journey of Hope is drawing near! This will be an important year for all of us in Texas. We will without a doubt hit the 400th execution this year. Texas needs all the help it can get to stop this violence!

It is our job as abolitionists to educate the public about the death penalty. There is no better way to do this than to have murder victim family members, exonerees, families with someone currently on death row, witnesses to executions, former prosecutors, former legislators and active citizens join together with one message → opposition to the death penalty.

If you can donate your time, set up a venue or help financially, email texasjourney2007@aol.com or snail mail P.O. Box 312645, New Braunfels, TX 78131

There are still DVDs available for fundraising (house parties/receptions). These can be shipped at no cost to you.

Venue Dates:

Oct 12-16 Houston

17-18 Huntsville

18-22 San Antonio

23 travel to Austin

24-27 Austin

25 Dallas (mission team)

28 JOH departs

Policies for Venues

1. No venues in the evening, unless they are held at a regularly scheduled meeting time or the host is willing to pay an honorarium.

2. No venues on travel days, unless they are in the morning.

3. The JOH is asking to have a tree planting in every city.

TCADP Chapter News

Chapters should be one of the key entry points into the organization to help with fundraising, education, and membership growth. Being in Texas, TCADP faces the unique challenge of geographical distance. Chapters and their local work must help overcome this cumbersome barrier.

Expectations of TCADP chapters...

Would you like to organize a TCADP chapter in your community? It's easy. Here is all there is to it (from Chapter 3 of TCADP By-laws):

3.01 General. To be recognized as an official chapter member of the corporation, a group must have at least five listed members and the group must have had at least two consecutive quarterly meetings attended by at least three of those members. After being recognized as an official chapter member, the Chapters must continue to meet the requirements specified in Article 3.03 of these bylaws.

3.02 New Chapters. Groups that are desirous of becoming a chapter of the Corporation must submit an application describing the group, its members and what it plans to accomplish as a chapter. New chapters must be approved by a 2/3 vote of the Board of Directors.

3.03 Duties and Responsibilities. Chapters must follow the By-laws, policies and procedures established by the Board. Chapters are expected to support the goals and activities of the corporation and, as a minimum, hold quarterly meetings, and provide a quarterly report of their actions and activities.

3.04 Fundraising. Chapters may conduct fundraising for chapter activities and may have a local bank account.

3.05 Dues. Persons become members of the Corporation through the payment of established dues and automatically become members of the local chapter where they reside. Chapters may solicit donations from their members in order to generate operating funds.

To begin the process of organizing a chapter or becoming a regional representative please contact info@tcadp.org.

Current committees that direct the work of TCADP:

- **Legislative** – Develop and manage actions involving advocacy with members of the state legislature and public officials and organizations - Bob Van Steenburg and David Atwood.
- **Death Row Conditions** – Strive for more humane housing and procedure policies for death row prisoners and provides support for prisoners' families - Nancy Bailey, Curt Crum, and Christina Lawson.
- **Special Events/Fundraising** - Develop and manage special events and activities to raise/solicit funds for the organization – Bob Van Steenburg and David Atwood.
- **Membership** – Increase the Corporation membership - Jim Coombes, Sherry Coombes, Curt Crum, David Mitschelen, and Rick Halperin.
- **Program Services/Education** - Develop and manage activities to educate communities about the death penalty – Marie Leonard and Rick Halperin.
- **Conference** – Plan the annual state conference - Jim Coombes, Sherry Coombes, Jean Van Steenburg, and David Mitschelen.
- **Budget** – Develop an annual operating budget - Sherry Coombes, Bob Van Steenburg, Rick Halperin, and Stan Allridge.
- **International** – Organize and direct International Support to end the dp in Texas - Sandrine Ageorges, Marie Leonard, and Rick Halperin.

These committees need your involvement. If you have expertise or interest in any of these areas and would like to serve on any of these committees to support their efforts, please email Vicki at info@tcadp.org and she will put you in touch.

Chapters (C), Regional Reps (RR), and Affiliates (A)

Amarillo (RR)

Eileen Dolan
amarillo@tcadp.org

Austin (C)

Bob Van Steenburg
(512) 258-6480
austin@tcadp.org

Beaumont (RR)

Jesse Doiron beaumont@tcadp.org

Brazos Valley (C)

Marie Leonard
collegestation@tcadp.org

Corpus Christi (C)

Jeanne Adams (361) 882-1133
corpuschristi@tcadp.org

Dallas/Ft. Worth (C)

Curt Crum dallas@tcadp.org

El Pasoans Against the DP (A)

Carol Tures elpaso@tcadp.org

Houston (C)

Nancy Bailey (281) 933-4925
houston@tcadp.org

Laredo (RR)

Sr. Rose Marie Tresp
laredo@tcadp.org

Lubbock (C)

Vince Gonzales (806) 799-1150
lubbock@tcadp.org

Rio Grande Valley (C)

Sylvia Garza riogrande@tcadp.org

San Angelo (RR)

Robert Leibrecht
sanangelo@tcadp.org

San Antonio (C)

Roger Barnes (210) 669-6107
sanantonio@tcadp.org

Southwest Chapter MFSA (A)

mfsa@tcadp.org

Victims of Texas (A)

Christina Lawson
victimsoftexas@tcadp.org

Victoria (C)

Rev. Wanda Ritchea
victoria@tcadp.org

Prevention, Not Punishment: Prohibiting the DP for Severely Mentally Ill Offenders by Kristin Houlé

On April 18, 2007, the U.S. Supreme Court heard oral arguments in the case *Panetti vs. Quarterman*, concerning Texas death row inmate Scott Panetti. Mr. Panetti has a long, documented history of severe mental illness - including more than a dozen hospitalizations in psychiatric institutions - and has been diagnosed with paranoid schizophrenia. Inconceivably, he was allowed to defend himself at trial, during which he dressed in a purple cowboy suit and sought to include testimony from John F. Kennedy and the Pope.

Mr. Panetti was convicted of killing his wife's parents and sentenced to death in 1995. Since arriving on death row, he has refused all medication, believing that God has "cured" him. The Supreme Court considered whether the Eighth Amendment forbids the execution "of a death row inmate who has a factual awareness of the reason for his execution but who,

because of severe mental illness, has a delusional belief as to why the state is executing him, and thus does not appreciate that his execution is intended to seek retribution for his capital crime." While aware that he is to be executed, Mr. Panetti does not connect his punishment with his crime but rather believes that the State of Texas is in league with the forces of evil and seeks to execute him in order to prevent him from preaching the Gospel.

The execution of Scott Panetti would clearly violate the intention of *Ford v. Wainwright*, the 1986 Supreme Court ruling that prohibits the execution of the insane. In its interpretation of the Ford standard, the Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals has required only a "bare factual awareness" which has allowed the insane to be executed in violation of the Eighth Amendment. The Fifth Circuit has so narrowly interpreted Ford that

it has yet to find over the past two decades a *single* death row inmate incompetent to execute. Preliminary reports suggest that around 20 inmates have been executed in Texas despite evidence of their severe mental illness. Clearly, current constitutional safeguards are inadequate to protect those with severe mental illness from the death penalty.

This fall, TCADP will launch a campaign to educate anti-death penalty activists, faith communities, and other allies about the intersection of the death penalty and severe mental illness. TCADP will seek to gather thousands of signatures on postcards that call on public officials in Texas to prohibit the application of the death penalty to seriously mentally ill offenders and to increase the amount of resources the state allo-

cates to mental healthcare. The postcards will draw attention to the fact that while Texas remains the leading executioner in the USA, it ranks 47th overall in terms of per capita spending on mental healthcare. Other resource materials, including fact sheets and case studies, will be made available, as well.

TCADP encourages all members to participate in

this important public education campaign. If you would like more information, please contact TCADP's Soros Justice Fellow Kristin Houlé at khoule@tcadp.org or 512-441-1808. More details on the Scott Panetti case will be available toward the end of June, when the Supreme Court is expected to issue its ruling.

This Fall TCADP launches a postcard campaign to gather support to prohibit the application of the death penalty for the severely mentally ill and to increase resources for mental health services in Texas.

TCADP and Sant' Egidio Community Help Son of Victim

When Dominique Green was scheduled for execution in 2004 for the murder of Andrew Lastrapes, Sr., Dave Atwood of TCADP contacted the Lastrapes family in Houston (Andrew Lastrapes' widow, Bernatte, and two sons Andre and Andrew) and asked if they might speak out against the execution of Dominique. Dave learned that the Lastrapes did not want Dominique to be executed and that they had forgiven him and wanted him to have another chance at life. The family then spoke out publicly against the execution. Andrew and Andre visited Dominique on death row and attended the execution vigil outside the Walls Unit on the day of execution.

The Lastrapes are a beautiful family and TCADP and Sant' Egidio Community in Rome wanted to do something for them. Andrew expressed an interest in the truck driving school at Houston Community College. Through the coordination of Dave Atwood of TCADP and with funds provided by the Sant' Egidio Community, Andrew was able to enroll in school.



Andrew Lastrapes, Jr. and Dave Atwood of TCADP

Sara Hickman to perform "Music for Life" Tour to Benefit TCADP

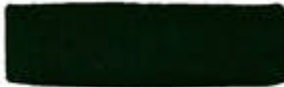


Sara Hickman, Austin musician, singer, songwriter, has agreed to perform a 12-month concert tour of Texas cities to benefit TCADP and increase the dialogue on the problems concerning the death penalty in Texas. The "Music for Life" tour will kick off **October 3, 2007** at the First United Methodist Church in Austin, TX. The tour will then visit a city a month and finish up in Austin in September 2008. Other stops on the tour will be in San Antonio, Houston, College Station, Corpus Christi, El Paso, Dallas, Ft. Worth, and possibly San Angelo, Lubbock, and/or Huntsville. Each concert will include other musicians who have agreed to donate their time and a speaker who will highlight their personal encounter with the death penalty in Texas. Details for the

tour are in development. If you know of a church, university, or venue with a capacity over 100 people that would host a concert in one of the cities mentioned above, please contact Vicki at info@tcadp.org. It would be easiest for us to work with an already established coffeehouse or music venue. Peace with Justice/Faith Organizations are invited to sign on and support the work of this tour. Check out Sara's music at www.sarahickman.com.

Organizing Tip...

Hand out
armbands/ribbons/symbols of solidarity
to wear during specific campaigns or to wear on
days of executions.



The Armband Protest Against the Death Penalty will mail you a free black armband to wear on execution days; send an email to armbandprotest@comcast.net. The armband is plain and black but striking, will definitely draw attention and start a conversation!

WITNESS AND ACTION

FAITH COMMUNITIES RESPOND TO THE DEATH PENALTY IN TEXAS

Saturday, June 9th
St. Ignatius Martyr Catholic Church

on Oltorf between College and Euclid Aves.
in Austin

8:30 AM-12:30 PM



The workshop will feature Murder Victims' Family Member, Linda White, and Program Developer and Action Coordinator, Kristin, Houlé. Participants will learn more about the death penalty and have the opportunity to develop action plans to effectively educate faith communities and work to end capital punishment. **All faith communities are invited to attend. The workshop is free to all interested individuals.** Sponsors: TCADP-Austin, St. Ignatius Martyr Parish, Austin Diocese Office of Social Concerns and Pax Christi Austin. **For more information or to register for the workshop, contact Jean Van Steenburg at (512) 258-6480 or Sean McGuire (512) 442-3602 ext.134.**

8th Annual March to Stop Executions

Houston, TX

October 27, 2007 2:00 pm

SAVE THIS DATE!

Exact Location TBA

Statewide Participation is Crucial!

Paradox Players Present A Benefit Performance of



OUR TOWN

A Play By Thornton Wilder



Howson Hall, First Unitarian Universalist Church,
Austin, 4700 Grover Ave.

Tuesday, June 19, 2007 8:00pm

Cost \$20.00

There Will Be A Silent Auction From 7:00 pm Until After the Intermission

**All Proceeds Benefit the
Texas Coalition to Abolish the Death Penalty**

Everyone is Invited!!

TCADP-Austin is sponsoring this event and welcomes attendees,
donations of items for the silent auction and donations to TCADP.

For further information, to buy a ticket, or make a donation,
call 512-441-1808.



Member Spotlights...Texas and Abroad

Stefanie Gonzalez of Houston, TX

How did you come to be against the death penalty?

I was raised in a household that supported the death penalty (my mother is a police officer). My views changed when my life was deeply affected by the justice system. Long story short – I have a close friend who was incarcerated unfairly, whose case is under investigation by the Innocence Project. This circumstance has changed my views completely and those of my friends and family as well. Mistakes do happen – on every level. The idea of innocent people receiving the death penalty is a tragedy.

How did you learn about the Texas Coalition to Abolish the Death Penalty?

Through the innocence projects that I have dealt with over my friend's case.

What are your expectations in becoming a member of TCADP for yourself?

I hope to continue to support this organization and hopefully be able to become involved to help bring about a change. I plan to increase my contribution when I am able to and continue to promote membership among my friends/family.

What do you think is standing in the way of ending the death penalty in Texas?

Political agendas, Narrow-minded people

What is the most compelling argument for you that the death penalty is wrong?

That it is not our decision nor should it be in our hands to decide who is put to death. God has the final judgment. Through all of the uncertainties, who are we to make such a decision?

What other societal issues concern you? Wrongful Convictions and other civil rights issues

What other organizations are you a member of? Lakewood Church Prison Ministry

What are your gifts, hobbies, and areas of expertise?

I am an entering law student. I plan to practice Criminal Defense and most of all, do ethical legal work and never forget what motivates me. Hobbies: running, traveling, biking, Church activities, reading, enjoying life. I currently work at a Spanish publishing house, with contracts and copyrights.



Sue Fenwick of Uckfield, East Sussex, England

How did you come to be against the death penalty? I always have been, but since becoming involved with Texas in 1994 my determination has grown as I have learned, seen and heard the reality for myself.

How did you learn about the Texas Coalition to Abolish the Death Penalty?

Through Rick Halperin and Nancy Bailey.

What are your expectations in becoming a member of TCADP for yourself? for the organization?

(a) To be as up to date as possible with events in Texas. (b) To spread the word in the UK and encourage others to join to learn the truth as it happens from people who are right in the midst of it.

What do you think is standing in the way of ending the death penalty in Texas?

I think its support by Texans is the main stumbling block. However, I know from my many visits there that a large majority of the citizens who aren't 'actively involved' do actually have very little knowledge of what goes on and how the court and legal system work. So many I spoke to were aware that executions took place but they seemed to have little knowledge (or in some cases little interest) in the how and the why of it all and, perhaps most worrying of all, didn't really want to and just accepted that it was part of everyday life in Texas, something that didn't really concern them but that they felt was "generally a good thing".

What is the most compelling argument for you that the death penalty is wrong?

Leaving aside the execution of innocents (which is important) I would ask what does it achieve? It creates another set of victims (the loved ones of the executed); it's politically driven by those with their own agendas; it's biased against those with little or no money (no \$4M OJ Simpson-type defense team for those at Polunsky!) and its barbarism is something that I feel future generations of US citizens will look back on in shame.

What other societal issues concern you? Animal cruelty, poverty in other countries.

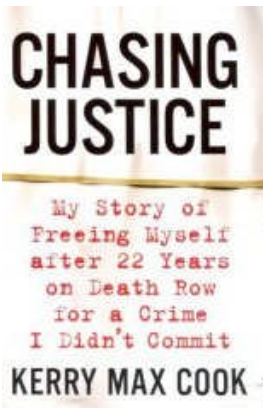
What other organizations are you a member of? Human Writes (Founder) and a couple of animal charities in the UK.

What are your gifts, hobbies, and areas of expertise?

I'm a Legal Secretary in my daytime job, prior to which I worked for the prison service here in the UK. I do my Human Writes (www.humanwrites.org) work evenings and weekends and this doesn't leave a lot of time for other things. My two sons and baby granddaughter are all very close and dear to me.



Review of Chasing Justice by Vicki McCuiston



In his book, **Chasing Justice**, Kerry Max Cook very closely details his trek through the criminal justice system in Texas. He chronicles his life as an accused man, convicted felon, death row inmate and finally free man after his release from Texas death row after serving 20+ years for the murder of Linda Jo Edwards.

The depth of the information he provides about these 20 years creates a compelling story of the Texas Criminal Justice system at work. The book spans Kerry's life on death row and 4 separate trials, none of which resulted in seeing justice truly served. There are often many arguments about the necessity of the appeals process for death penalty trials. Kerry's story emphasizes the need for the appeals process, but is also disturbing in that the appeals process did little to serve him - except to give him more time. It was the many faithful advocates—a team of dedicated attorneys, working from the Capital Punishment Project or pro bono, who fought tooth-and-nail to obtain his freedom in the late 1990s. Kerry himself refused to

give up, and that ultimately was a factor in saving his life as well. Kerry's explanation of the trials and the appeals process will better educate the American public on how our court system truly works in its handling of capital trials.

Kerry endured years of unbelievable abuse by law enforcement, correctional and judicial authorities. While the story is depressing and heartbreaking at times, it gives great insight into the complete isolation of his long period spent on death row. His account of his ability to triumph over what would have destroyed most men is astounding.

This book is a must read for everyone, pro or anti-death penalty. It is a very educational insight to our criminal justice system. **Chasing Justice** is a great read and will change perceptions on the death penalty and the legal system.

Cook's story is compelling, frightening, and well written (there was no ghost writer). Your time will be well spent in experiencing Kerry's journey of Chasing Justice! Buy the Book www.chasingjustice.com!

Report from the International Committee of TCADP

The Texas Coalition to Abolish the Death Penalty has recently agreed to set up an international committee to work in conjunction with the Texas actions. This committee is being chaired by Sandrine Ageorges of France and she is looking for serious and dedicated partners in several countries. The purpose of this committee, as approved by the Texas Coalition board and outlined by Sandrine are as follows:

Goal 1 - Bring TCADP and the death penalty situation in Texas to the forefront of the European media, human rights organizations and abolitionists actively involved with Texas cases. This includes working closely with our consular representatives in Texas to inform and educate our fellow citizens currently residing in Texas to gain support and membership; and to ask our respective Consuls to voice our concerns to our ambassadors in DC and our ministries of foreign affairs back home.

Goal 2 - Contact and work with our European representatives to challenge the contradiction of the European Union's commitment to universal abolition and the numerous trade agreements granted to Texas companies by the EU. Inform and educate politicians about DP in Texas; inform European companies about the DP situation in TX and encourage them to stop trading with Texas; encourage European citizens to pressure those companies to do so and if necessary recommend boycott of such companies in their home countries.

Goal 3 - Increase TCADP's membership abroad and work actively to assist the TCADP in applying for international grants and subsidies.

Goal 4 - Work within the Sister Cities program and contact the mayors of cities in Europe tied to Texas cities: inform them, educate them and assist them in engaging in conversation with their sister cities in Texas about the death penalty.

Goal 5 - Make all abolition educational material available in as many languages as possible to be accessible on TCADP's website and encourage people to download them and circulate them as much as possible.

Goal 6 - Gather and unite the numerous and dispersed energies currently working as individuals or small groups on individual Texas cases to offer them support.

In order to start working toward these goals, we are looking to select individuals with translation and communication skills willing to donate time to this project. The first countries to start working will be: Italy, Germany, Belgium, England, Switzerland and France. Once the working structure develops we will, of course be, looking to extend to other countries such as Australia, Canada, Mexico, Spain, Japan and the Scandinavian countries.

Those of you interested and willing to work with us, please contact Sandrine at: sandrine.ageorges@free.fr



Thank you to
The Global Good
for their donation of
Spanish translation of
TCADP resources
and website pages.

www.theglobalgood.com

TCADP Launches New Religious Outreach Program

Page 10, Summer 2007

TCADP is urging faith communities in Texas to devote some time this fall to the death penalty issue, as part of Amnesty International USA's National Weekend of Faith in Action (NWFA) or the Catholic Campaign to End the Use of the Death Penalty/ October's "Respect Life" activities in the Catholic Church. Specifically, we are calling on churches to undertake one or more of the following activities:



AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL USA
INVITES YOU TO PARTICIPATE IN THE

2007 NATIONAL WEEKEND OF
FAITH IN ACTION
ON THE DEATH PENALTY
OCTOBER 19-21, 2007



WWW.AMNESTYUSA.ORG/FAITHINACTION/

- Publicize their faith tradition's position/statements on the death penalty
- Participate in a new postcard campaign calling for a prohibition on the death penalty for offenders with severe mental illness and for increased funding for mental healthcare in Texas (see article on p. 6)
- Host a speaker/watch a film on the death penalty and hold a discussion
- Toll the church bells on the days of executions in order to encourage reflection and prayer

The NWFA, an annual solidarity event that takes place in hundreds of local faith communities throughout the country, has been designated as **October 19-21**. Participating faith communities are encouraged to schedule their activities around that weekend, or any time during the month of October. Upon registering, participants will receive a comprehensive organizing packet from Amnesty International, as well as supplementary resources from TCADP. Last year, 48 faith communities and human rights groups in Texas took part in the NWFA. This year, TCADP aims to recruit 75 participants!

Please help us spread the word by reaching out to faith communities in your area or by providing TCADP with contact information for potential recruits! Sample outreach letters, brochures, and other materials are available. Contact Jean Van Steenburg at austin@tcadp.org or Nancy Bailey at houston@tcadp.org for more information or to request NWFA brochures. More details about the NWFA are available at www.amnestyusa.org/faithinaction. To learn more about the Catholic Campaign to End the Use of the Death Penalty, go to <http://www.usccb.org/sdwp/national/deathpenalty/>. Let's all help Texas communities put their faith into action this fall!

Thank you for your Generous Support

TCADP thanks the following members who have contributed generously from **January 1, 2007—May 15, 2007**. Your financial assistance is essential for TCADP to continue to GROW its advocacy and education efforts to end the death penalty in Texas. Forgive us if we have missed you. In some instances we do not have spouses names.

Jeanne Adams • John Adcock and Charles Spain • Sandrine Ageorges • Mary Anderson • Kay Arnold • David Atwood • Maria Augustejn • Ingrid Barnes • Dr. Johannes and Christiane Bastian-Engelbert • Neuza Beal • Sr. Denise Billeaud • William Bleecker • Donald Bollinger • Marian Breen • Rep. Lon Burnham • Kristen Castellanos • Paolo Cifariello • Carolyn Clark • Robert Cooper • Joan Covici • Richard Curley • Doris Curry • Melinda Daroow • Aglaia Davis • Mark Delaplaine • Jesse Doiron • Jimmy Dunne • Dr. Jose and Margaret Duran • Brigid Earthman • Jane Elmore • Martin Elsner • Gwendoline Essinger • Robert Folz • Allison Gagne • Ed and Mary Gifford • Merelda Gonzalez • Cynthia Halatyn • Galia Harrington • Howard Hawhee • Cecelia Hawkins • Chuck and Sue Heaberlin • John Holcombe • Nicole Home • Carole Johnson • Eva-Maria Kaifenheim • January Kirby • Erika Korn • Nichola Kralj • Ursula Landrum • Carol LaBonte • Marie Leonard • Rosie Leupp • Marjorie Loehlin • Sue Ann Lorig • Alvin Loewenberg, Jr. • David Mack • Vincent Maggio • Arthur Maisel • Father John Manahan • Mary Maxwell • Kathryn McCauley • Ralph McCloud • Barbara McGuiirk • Mary McKerral and Richard Steele • John and Dolores Mitchell • Todd Moye • Ursula Nowicki • Jerry D. Patchen • Elizabeth Pease • Fr. Robert Pena, OMI • Carol Peters • Stephen and Alice Phillips • Rev. Carroll and Jane Pickett • Jennifer Price • Nancy Price • Chris and Nancy N. Price • Martha Schecter • Robert Schuwerk • David Smith and Stephanie McFall • Imogene and Gene Sorley • Margaret Speidel • Rabbi Samuel Stahl • Rita Taubenfeld • Nancy Taylor • Burnham Terrell • Karen Tuel • Carol Tures • Robert and Jean Van Steenburg • William Vaught • Phil Wahlberg • Craig Washington • Joe Watt • Ruth Westfall-Jaimie and Demtria Williams • Dale Witeaker-Lewis • Gerhard and Christel Wieding • Beth Williamson • Daesene Willmann • Paul Woodruff • Richard and Rosie Woodward • Conna Wright • Catholic Diocese of Fort Worth • Dominican Sisters Gen. House • El Pasoans Against the Death Penalty

TCADP urges all members to keep their dues current. Maintaining your membership is important for a variety of reasons. We need to be able to count the number of people against the death penalty, particularly those who are willing to support it with a financial investment. We also need your financial support to support the education and advocacy necessary to move Texas Legislators in the right direction. **Thank you for your generous support!**

Help **GROW** TCADP!



TCADP must increase membership if the organization is to become a strong force in Texas politics. Texas legislators will only respond if we can convince them that our membership is a sizable part of their constituency. We know there are thousands, if not millions, of people against the death penalty in Texas, but the membership of the death penalty organizations in Texas does not reflect those numbers. Talk with your friends then provide TCADP with the names of potential members; the staff will contact those persons and invite their participation. Please join us in this effort and provide up to 10 names of those you know who might join TCADP. Mail to TCADP, 2709 S Lamar, Austin, TX 78704. And thank you for being an active TCADP member.

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