

Amnesty International

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Staff Writer

"When the first 200 letters came, the guards gave me back my clothes. Then the next 200 letters came and the prison director came to see me. When the next pile of letters arrived, the director got in touch with his superior. The letters still kept arriving and the president called the prison and told them to let me go."

-Julio de Pena Valdez,
a prisoner in the
Dominican Republic

Write a letter. That's all you have to do. Today, thousands of world citizens are being imprisoned by their governments for the beliefs they hold dear. Most of them will be psychologically and physically tortured, and many will eventually be killed. Write a letter and let the leader of one of these countries know that you are concerned about human rights, and that you know about and do not approve of their treatment of prisoners of conscience.

Amnesty International supports freedom of opinion and seeks to procure the release of, and fair trials for these prisoners. It helps

them to find jobs and tries to broaden the right of asylum. It does not support perpetrators of vio-

organization in terms of its benefit to individual people, Amnesty had in 1981, over a quarter of a million

members. The campaign, originally dubbed "Appeal and Amnesty" at its birth in 1961, publishes information on specific prisoners of conscience throughout the world. Individual chapters of Amnesty "adopt" certain prisoners, sending

released by having hundreds or thousands of letters sent to the governments holding them.

Many of us think of Amnesty International as a social service, an organization working for freedom, economic and political justice, and world peace. The founders of Amnesty, Peter Benenson, Erik Baker, and Louis Blom, had no such grandiose visions. Their goal was to protect individual victims from human rights violations.

The organization does not align itself with particular ideas, striving for impartiality through simply supporting non-violent victims of injustice. Amnesty provides a humanistic service, and tries not to alienate potential supporters who may differ along political lines.

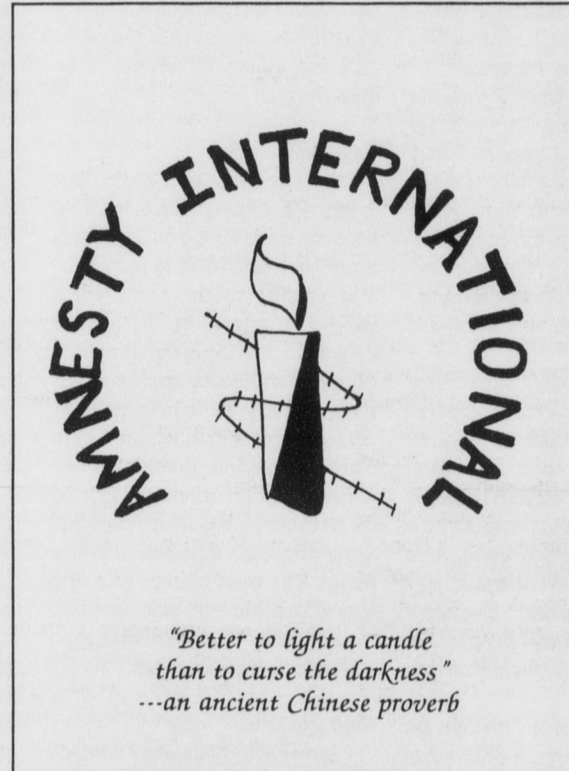
But the seemingly individualistic orientation makes itself felt by authoritarian and Fascist regimes throughout the world. Many powerful governments will do what they need to maintain their prominent position in the social structure, be it through intimidation, torture, kidnapping, or murder of political opponents. When such governments realize they are being watched by the world, and that the world does not approve, they are often inclined to change some

of their practices.

Guilford College has its own chapter of Amnesty International, co-chaired by Chris Bishop and Kelly Prothero. At the weekly meetings (Tuesdays at 9:00 pm in Dana Lounge), members are briefed on the heinous governmental crime of the week, and provided with a list of the victims, perpetrators, and their addresses and telephone numbers. A brief history of similar human rights violations puts the current situation in perspective. Members then write letters on the stationary provided, seal and address them, and hand them over to be mailed.

This week was Human Rights Week at Amnesty, and events at Guilford have included a forum on the death penalty, video presentations, and a Write-a-thon. Next semester, Amnesty will sponsor Central America Week, a Convention of the N.C. Amnesty clubs, and another Write-a-thon.

Amnesty International is probably one of the most important organizations you could ever join. Whatever your background or personal beliefs, you can make a difference if you hold human life in high esteem. All it takes is a pen and a few minutes of your time.



lence, no matter how just the reasoning for the violence may have been.

The most effective international

letters, money or gifts to them and their families, and expressing concern for their safety to their captors. Their hope is to get prisoners

Don't panic! Follow these exam tips

Karen Rowan
Features Editor

I think final exams are evil, evil things, but professors everywhere seem to have found some valid reason for their existence. Therefore, I suppose we'll have to learn to survive the trials of exam week. Fortunately, there are some things we can do to diminish the hardships of this heinous time in our lives, as Sue Keith, Director of the Academic Skills Center, was quick to point out.

The most important thing to remember is that you should start studying at the beginning of the semester. Organize your notes as you go along, so that when exams hit, you will be able to actually study, rather than spend all of your time wading through disheveled notes. If you review in stages, the task won't be as great at the end of the semester. However, since it is too late to apply this strategy, keep it in mind when classes begin in January.

Also, get a feel for the professor's particular style of teaching and testing. Listen for cues and follow the interests he or she expresses. If you pay attention throughout the semester, you will probably be able to guess what's going to be on the exam with some degree of accuracy.

"People do weird things around exam time."

Sue Keith,
Director of Academic
Skills Center

When you do get down to studying, there are a few things you should keep in mind. Don't study slumped over a table or lying in bed. Your brain won't get the oxygen that it needs, and fatigue will overwhelm you. In fact, there are studies that suggest the most productive way to study is standing up or moving around. So if you've got a lot of vocabulary words to memorize, you might want to combine exercise and study by taking your index cards with you on a walk to the woods.

Also, use mnemonic devices to memorize. Keith suggests creating bizarre cartoons in your mind, or imagining conjugating "estudiar" in green slime on a wall. Incorporate as many senses as you can for better results. "Mnemonics really work if we would just take the time to use them," said Keith.

In preparing for essay questions (cursed be the professor who came

up with this most vile idea!), construct possible topics using your notes and the course readings. Then outline the answers to the questions and write out rough responses.

During the weeks before and of exam week, treat yourself right. As Keith said, "People do bizarre things during exam week." Many students cease sleeping, eating, and exercising in favor of cramming. They operate under the false notion that if they stuff themselves full of knowledge the week before the exam, they'll be able to vomit everything they know back to the professor in pristine form.

Some basic tips for studying:

- Prioritize your studying needs and give yourself enough time to do what you need to do. If you have to study for a class that you're not particularly interested in, do it at a time when you're at your best.

- Take it easy before the exam; don't study unless you're reviewing one or two specific points that you know you need to work on. Leave time for the brain to process information. By cramming right up until exam time you won't give your gray matter time to do what it does best, and you may end up blanking out when you get the exam in your hands.

- Relax between exams if you only have an hour break. Take a quick nap or grab a bite to eat.

- If you arrive at your exam and you find yourself stressing out, put your pencil down and relax. Take a few deep breaths, stretch out, and get some oxygen to your brain. Try to calm down (although adrenaline can help you get through a tough exam), center yourself, and imagine yourself doing well on the exam.

- The first thing you should do when the professor hands you the exam is quickly survey the entire exam. Get the idea of what you're going to be working on.

- Then, budget your time. "I've seen students spend half an hour on a two-point question, then not have time to answer a 20-point question that they knew the answer to," recounts Keith.

- Answer what you know first, then go back to the ones you're not sure of. This will give you confidence and motivation. If you linger over a "killer" question, you may paralyze yourself before you ever really get started.

- Examine the wording of the questions carefully. In short-answer or multiple-choice questions, the words the professors uses often affect the logic of the answers. Words like "although," "often," and "always" tend to emphasize the controlling idea of the question and give valuable hints.

- In essay questions, pay atten-

tion to verbs such as "define," "discuss," "analyze," "compare or contrast," and "defend." If a professor asks you to analyze a topic, he or she probably won't be satisfied if you merely discuss it.

When writing essay responses, there are a few general tips you can utilize.

- First, quickly outline what you plan to say before you begin writing. Then check off your topics as you progress through the essay.

- To begin your essay, turn the question around into a statement. This will help set more firmly in your mind what it is exactly that you will be writing about, and it will help you stay on topic throughout the essay.

- Finally, if you find you don't have time to finish in the time allotted, outline what you had planned on saying in order to let your professor know what you would have said had you had the time. However, it is a good idea to write the conclusion anyway. Keith said she had known students to get full credit by doing this, although it doesn't always work out that way.

When all is said and done, remember that you aren't a victim of demonic professors, even though with exams lurking around the corner, it may seem that way.