

FINALEXIT™ NETWORK NEWSLETTER

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SUPPORTING THE HUMAN RIGHT TO A DEATH WITH DIGNITY

RICHARD N. CÔTÉ'S RIGHT-TO-DIE BOOK LAUNCHES

All around the world, a small army of unpaid volunteer end-of-life researchers, death-with-dignity activists, and a half-million members of their groups have been working for over three decades to establish access to the right to a gentle, pain-free, dignified, self-chosen death at the time and place of their own choosing. The result so far: five countries and three U.S. states have finally answered the question, "Who owns my life?" with the unequivocal answer, "You do." The other 190 countries still say, "You don't," despite the fact that approximately 75% of the residents of developed countries approve of physician aid-in-dying for these stricken people.

After five years' full-time work, FEN member Richard N. Côté's intensely researched book, *In Search of Gentle Death: The Fight for Your Right to Die with Dignity* is now available.

Through its 525 pages and 90 PHOTOS, Côté describes the international death-with-dignity movement as he traveled to five continents and conducted direct interviews with its founders, leaders, and volunteers. The book explores why and how they developed means that people who were terminally ill or enduring unspeakable, untreatable pain could use to end their tortured life legally, painlessly, in a dignified way, surrounded by their loved ones, at the time and place of their own choosing.

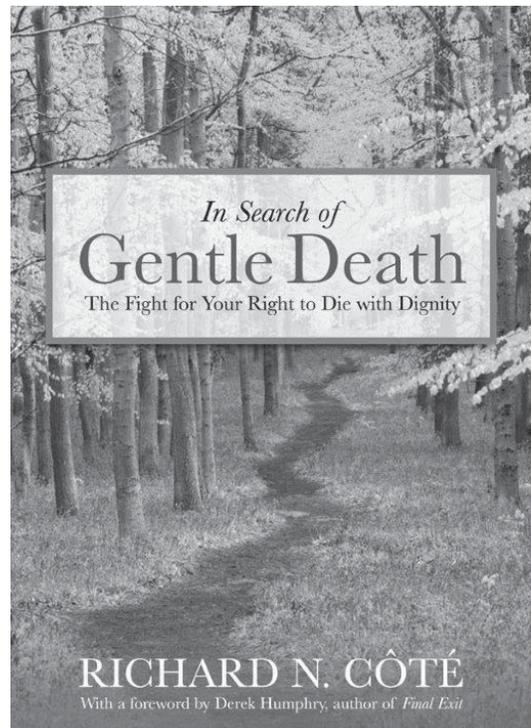


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Derek Humphry wrote, "Côté's book is unique...the most current, the widest ranging, and remarkably intimate look at those people behind the burgeoning world right-to-die movement in the last thirty years."

Lee Vizer, FEN editor, writes: The book is a phenomenon, a scholarly effort involving interviews and photos of people we know, with personal stories so riveting that they read like a mystery novel. It's a page-turner that I hated to finish. Now it sits near my computer, a superb reference when I have facts to check or remember. A detailed index and extensive bibliography help.

Note: Hardcover editions of *In Search of Gentle Death: The Fight for Your Right to Die with Dignity* may be



ordered at www.corinthianbooks.com for \$29.95, free of shipping costs and signed by the author. (dickcote@earthlink.net) Amazon carries it too, sans signature. An eBook version will be available soon.

IN SEARCH OF GENTLE DEATH (Continued)

Richard Côté has written an important book detailing the history of the right- to- die movement via the lives of those who have been part of it. *In Search of Gentle Death: The Fight for Your Right to Die with Dignity* is more than worthy of your attention.

1. It is imminently readable. He writes well. It is interesting. It is based on more than 100 live interviews gathered on five continents.
2. Côté has an excellent and empathic understanding of Final Exit Network, our history, our goals, and our encounters with the law.
3. It is encyclopedic. It will be used as a reference for years to come since he has done extensive and documented research.
4. It covers people and organizations that are not necessarily mainstream. Until now they have lain mostly unsung, though worthy of the honor his recognition grants them.
5. He has covered the world. It is easy for us in the U.S. to be isolated and parochial, immersed in our own struggles. This work documents that we are one of many -- from Australia to Japan, from Canada to Colombia -- who, incrementally, are making progress toward our mutual goal with different approaches.



Faye Girsh

6. There are errors. He wrote that the outstanding 2000 World Federation Conference was sponsored by Canada RTD, when it was Hemlock USA. (I was CEO. It was painful to see my crowning achievement attributed to someone else. He apologized, promising a change in the next edition.) And he dubs Ted Goodwin "Theodore." Ted deems that name unforgivable! The book is, nevertheless, a monumental achievement, done by a gifted writer who has made himself a significant part of our movement in these 400 pages.

7. Côté has a unifying perspective. He does not put anyone down. For example, he opens with a sincere, laudatory account of his friend and maverick George Exoo, though few agree with this characterization. He credits researchers and developments in NuTech, where inventive investigation into the means of gentle deaths is conducted, far from the public and political drama of the big, law- changing efforts. He understands, memorializes, and conveys what all of us, as part of this world-wide movement, are trying to accomplish as no other writer has done.

READ IT!

Faye Girsh ■

EXIT GUIDE TRAINING SESSION PLANNED

Final Exit Network is setting up an exit-guide training session, tentatively 10/26-28/12, in San Jose, CA. Interested members should please contact me at 919-932-1504 or msdx2468@gmail.com for an application. We are particularly interested in training guides for the Central States.
Fran Schindler

NOTICE: I don't know whether the AZ case is still news. If so, I fulfilled fines and community- service

terms of my probation sentence and petitioned the court for release from the time constraints. That discharge was granted. So I am no longer officially considered a felon and can travel freely and enjoy other privileges of citizenship which my felon status had not allowed since five years ago. **Wye Hale-Rowe** (Editor's Note: Wye had been arrested as an exit guide in the AZ case.) ■

TWO REVIEWS by Jerry Metz, M.D.

TWO REVIEWS by **Jerry Metz, M.D.** A FILM: *A Song for Martin*, Swedish with English subtitles - 2003.

A Song for Martin follows the descent into despair for both victim and caretaker, opposite sides of the same coin. Abandoning her long-dead marriage, violinist Barbara falls in love with Martin, famous composer and conductor, and the couple finds brief happiness until his minor lapses of memory crescendo past fortissimo to a finale where dissonance is finally resolved. The screenplay could only have been written by a witness to the mental unraveling of a loved one: detailed, accurate, devastating. Viewers will be tempted to take a break, to regain equanimity, and to remind themselves, "It's only a movie."

This film provides perfect-pitch dialogue and a lovable cast of characters in an idyllic setting. Unforgettable. Viewers must provide their own Kleenex.

A BOOK: *To Die Well - Your Right to Comfort, Calm, and Choice in the Last Days of Life* by Sidney Wanzer, M.D. - 2008.

Inspired by the Terri Schiavo case and the unwanted medical intervention that delayed the death of his 92-year-old, demented mother, Dr. Wanzer provides patients and physicians with a clear-headed analysis of the realities of end-of-life issues. He defines two crucial turning points. A patient whose health cannot be restored arrives at the first point, and the strategy is to provide comfort measures that lead to a peaceful death, free from unnecessary tests or heroics. If comfort is unattainable the second turning

point is reached, and consideration is given to the avoidance of useless suffering by hastening the inevitable end. A chapter is devoted to Questions – That- Must- Be -Asked whenever the second turning point is reached, followed by another chapter on successful methods, including withdrawal of unwanted treatment, voluntary refusal of food and fluids, the use of morphine and the "double effect," barbiturates, and helium.

Dr. Wanzer makes clear the patient's right to self-determination, the right to receive realistic information about prognosis, side-effects of treatment and possibilities of success; he notes the right to refuse a doctor's recommendations or even to change doctors. Rights are only valuable if they can be enforced, and this book is a map through the jungle of American healthcare and jurisprudence. Patients learn what they can expect of their doctor and can become comfortable making reasonable demands or asking for second opinions.



Jerry Metz

The knotty problem of irreversible dementia rates its own chapter, and the author is frank in expressing his view of the way things should be while giving many valuable and practical suggestions to cope with the agonizing challenges faced by family members in the US at this time. The dementia of our laws is curable, a step that will become increasingly obvious as our population ages. In the meantime, a copy of *To Die Well* is a valuable weapon.

Jerry Metz, M.D. - 2008. ■

ANOTHER BOOK REVIEW: By Colleen Brokaw

Jane Brody's Guide to the Great Beyond- A Practical Primer to Help You and Your Loved Ones Prepare Medically, Legally, and Emotionally for the End of Life - 2009

Jane Brody's book's extensive subtitle is not an exaggeration. Its 265 pages cover death and dying,

detailed and unique AD sample forms, how to talk to the dying -- including relevant advice to doctors!-- how to get the end-of-life care you need, and more. Info about and from organizations is covered: FEN, C & C, etc. The book also offers valuable after- death
(Continued on next page)

Colleen Brokaw (Continued)

data about autopsies, funeral planning (from organ donation to green burial), etc., etc., etc.!

Ms. Brody believes that assisted dying would be unnecessary if palliative care were more universally available and effective, and she later describes circumstances where it is neither.

The book is well written and mostly easy and engaging to read, even though it



Colleen Brokaw

includes much detailed 'dry' information, like lists and statistics. Facts are balanced with personal, moving stories and funny, appropriate cartoons. Those using the book for reference will find it user-friendly, with a fine table of contents, a thorough index, and excellent bibliographies at the end of each chapter.

I was pleased that my local library stocked it. I saved the expense of a hardcover-only edition. ■

WITH THANKS TO AN OPPONENT

Executive director Alex Shadenberg of the Euthanasia Prevention Coalition stated, "The problem with euthanasia or assisted suicide is that you're giving someone else the right to be involved in causing your death. Society needs to be vigilant about suffering, but the answer is not giving power over life and death to somebody else."

I read those comments with interest. When he says, "You're giving someone else the right..." he hits exactly what we're all about: the right to choice that

every person should have, but- in most countries and states- does not. He then makes, inadvertently, a perfect argument for the right to die on one's own terms when he says, "The answer is not giving power over life and death to somebody else."

Spot on, Sir! Right now the states and countries [and religions and doctors] have that power over us, and we'd like it for ourselves, thank you!

Bernie Klein ■

AFTERMATH OF SANJAY GUPTA'S CNN R-T-D PRESENTATION

All of this focus on exits and assisting deaths is becoming so frustrating to me. We are missing one big point here: what else we offer to people. We offer **PEACE OF MIND**.

We offer a place to call and talk when no one else will listen. We educate every day about advance directives. We let people understand that they are not trapped, that they really have a choice and that the choice is theirs.

I have a stack of calls from people with lots of life-threatening illnesses, like terminal cancers, etc. who have been informed of the process and say they are interested but never call back. Obviously, they are not ready, but they



Fran Schindler,
Case Coordinator

know we are here if they need us.

WE ALLOW PEOPLE TO LIVE MORE FULLY BECAUSE OF US – NOT TO DIE TOO SOON BECAUSE OF US.

If only we could get the chance to **SPEAK OUT** what else we are about and get rid of the sensationalism, people would have a better idea of who we are and what we believe in.

If we promoted Fran's ideas instead of just end-of-life choices, we might reach the audience we should be reaching. This is the out-of-the-box thinking we have been looking for. **Bob Levine**

Fran is eloquent in her advocacy for what Bob Levine calls an out-of-the-box approach. The box, in this case, is the casket. **Jerry Metz, M.D.**

MINNESOTA TRIAL PIQUES INTEREST IN SPEAKERS

The latest attack on FEN has generated increased interest by groups in addresses by FEN speakers. On June 10, 2012, I spoke to the Quaker community in Duluth, MN at the invitation of Larry Spears. We reviewed the various ways dying is managed- or not- in the state, how dying is often the most expensive thing we do and usually the least satisfying.

Often, legal and religious restrictions make dying more difficult than it should be. Health care facilities have federal and state religion-based conscience clauses that, depending on each state's requirements, can defeat any expressed options desired by the patients. Those patients' preferences can be subject to whatever interpretation or "medical knowledge" an unwilling doctor chooses to bring to them. And medical facilities and their personnel do have a right to refuse to comply if they offer an alternative person or facility. But what if alternatives are also unwilling, not available, or too far away when minutes count? Whoever shows up at the bedside at the time of need exerts enormous power. Performing an invasive procedure against a patient, when specific prohibitions against it are known to the attendant, may incur a battery suit later against that individual, but the damage is done. A religious zealot might risk charges against him in order to give priority to the call of conscience, following "God's law" rather than secular law and the autonomy of the patient.

A living will is meaningless at Code Blue, unless the proxy surrogate is present in the room. Conscience clauses can operate as a Christian version of sharia law, making the carrying out of living wills a crap shoot.



Marie Alena Castle

Even physician aid-in-dying (PAD) is not necessarily the route to a good death. The limitations imposed on the procedure- like being declared terminal- can require the patient to suffer a long time before being allowed to die. Current PAD laws state that all the doctor does is write the Rx; the patient has to swallow the drugs entirely unaided. Not all patients can. There are catches to hospice care too: Medicare's time limits are finite. If the

patient outlives the estimated time, extra unanticipated days or months can create enormous financial and emotional stress on the family. Under the current social/political climate, self-deliverance may be an option worth considering, for those who want more control at the end of life.

At the presentation, one attendee brought up the oft-expressed concern that depressed people might use helium to end their lives. However, the argument is spurious. Derek Humphry's *Final Exit* has been available for years and has been mostly ignored by those with suicidal intentions. They seem to prefer more spontaneous methods, like a rope or a gun or an approaching train, violent methods that create unspeakable suffering for loved ones in their wake.

One vocal group of disabled opponents, Not Dead Yet, maintains that a right to die would lead to a duty to die, especially for those not able-bodied. If that were true- and that's quite an "if"- the only way to prevent a duty to die would be to obviate the option of self-deliverance. That would certainly solve the problem. All that would be left are patients already living in daily torment. Terrific.

Marie Alena Castle ■

MINNESOTA LEGAL UPDATE

HASTINGS, Minnesota, July 2, 2012 — Three volunteer exit guides appeared before a judge to face an indictment on serious felony charges leveled merely because they showed compassion for a member of Final Exit Network.

Doreen Gunderson Dunn, then 57, delivered herself from extreme, irremediable suffering on May 30, 2007.

Because she chose to keep her decision to herself, others assumed that she died from natural causes.

More than five years later, during a sweltering heat wave, Dr. Larry Egbert, FEN's former medical director, Ted Goodwin, the founding former president, and Roberta Massey, a former case coordinator, appeared in Hastings to be fingerprinted, photographed, booked, and released until their trial, which may be years away. Jerry Dincin, a former president, was also indicted but was excused from appearing in person because he is under treatment for metastatic cancer.

The "initial appearance" on July 2 was mostly a formality.

Judge Karen Asphaug asked the prosecutors to state whether the State of Minnesota would ask that bail be required to be posted in order for the defendants to be released until their trial. The State did not ask for bail to be required. Therefore, the defendants returned home without seeing the inside of a jail cell — "released on their own recognizance," in legal parlance.

The prosecutors asked Judge Asphaug to impose a condition of pretrial release that Final Exit Network, Inc. be prohibited from "assisting in any suicides in the State of Minnesota" pending trial. FEN's attorney, Robert Rivas, responded: "We could never agree to a term of pretrial release that is worded so that it implies that Final Exit Network assists in suicides anywhere else. Final Exit Network does not participate in any illegal assistance in suicides, anywhere."

In ruling on this issue, Judge Asphaug imposed a compromise. She required FEN to commit to "comply with the law" in all of its activities. FEN's attorney said that would not be a problem.

Judge Asphaug required FEN to submit its motion to dismiss the indictment by August 13, 2012. The court will conduct its next hearing at 9 a.m. on October 15.

Some news media have reported inaccurately that FEN argues that laws against "assisting in a suicide" are unconstitutional. That is not accurate. FEN's position is that Minnesota's law is unconstitutional because it not only bans assisting in a suicide, but also --- needlessly --- bans speech on the subject of self-deliverance.



Robert Rivas

Robert Rivas, General Counsel, FEN ■

Are you relatively healthy but in despair?

Call 1-800-273-TALK (8255)

or 1-800-SUICIDE (784-2433)

RECENT ELECTIONS FOR NEW NETWORK BOARD MEMBERS

Five candidates were nominated; three openings were available. Colleen Brokaw, an appointed incumbent, resigned for personal reasons after being elected. Elected were Howard Finney, Portia Westerfield, and Ralph Wiens. Voting was close, and we so hope Laurel Doud will run again. All candidates were highly qualified.

We sent out 1800 ballots and received 1,542 returns. Impressive!

Comments were written on the back of ballots: "ALL these nominations sound fabulous. I am grateful to them and to all FEN volunteers." " I wanted to vote for all five. How on earth am I supposed to choose? My solution is to increase the number of board members!" " Thanks to the Nominating Committee for a great slate that made deciding difficult! How can people like me thank people like you for doing such a tough job so well?" "If the Network is to continue on its upward track of real service to others, not just handing out words, it will be because of people like you."

Final Exit Network is grateful to the committee (Ila DeLuca, Chair, and Judy Snyderman) for their Herculean effort in finding, vetting, encouraging and selecting such fine candidates. May we all, veterans and newbies, "go forth shining" in our chosen work. (Thanks to Claire Blehr for that lovely phrase!)



Ila DeLuca

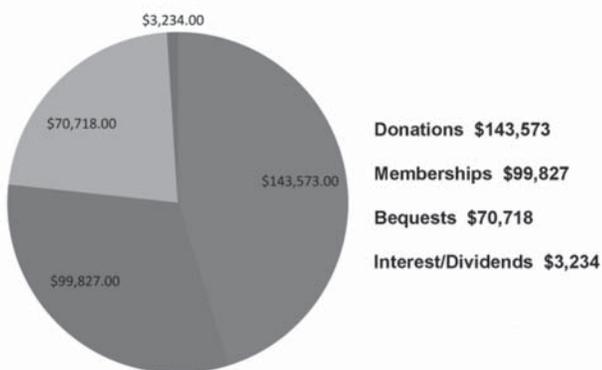


Judy Snyderman

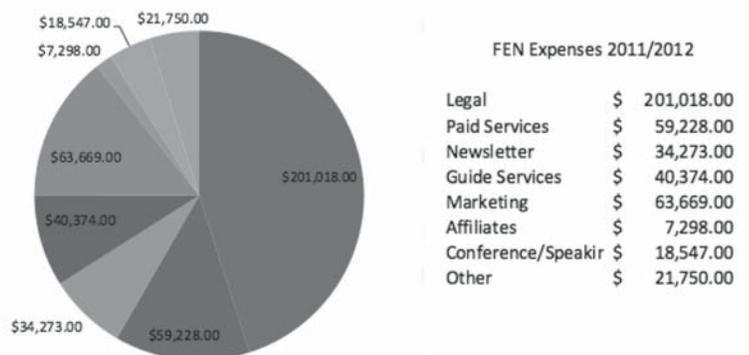
Here's another kudo for Ila: The YWCA of San Gabriel Valley, CA, has a Women of Achievement in the Armed Forces Program Award, honoring courage and commitment. Our Ila was one of seven women receiving the honor.

2011-12 Financial Data supplied by Judy Snyderman, Treasurer, assisted by Erica Twitchell

FEN Income



FEN Expenses



FERTILE VENUES FOR OUR VOLUNTEERS: SENIOR EXPOS

Two- thousand participants attended the Brazos Valley Senior Expo on 5/23/12, in Bryan Texas. About 160 people stopped at our booth to pick up literature and information, other than those who just came for candy. About 55 showed genuine interest, taking papers and engaging in discussion. Twelve filled out cards for more info- potential new members! - and one woman offered to volunteer.



I was the only soldier at the post and, unfortunately, could only talk to one person at a time. Another volunteer on duty might've at least doubled our exposure and opportunities for dialogue.

There were several favorable comments about the bumper sticker - "Good Life, Good Death, My Choice." I found the table cover and posters quite effective too.

Thanks to all who helped behind the scenes.
DON MOORE

My EXPO took place on April 24, '12, at the Red Lion Hotel in Kennewick, WA. A FEN newsletter had suggested EXPOs as a way to get our name out there, so when I saw a local EXPO ad, I contacted the organization. I staffed the booth alone for the 6 hours. My husband, Jim, helped me set up and take down.



Probably 250-300 people came to the event, and most stopped by the booth. Organizers had instituted a clever game in which people could get a prize if they visited each booth! I had some brochures and a few copies of the last newsletter, all of which disappeared quickly. Luckily, the banner listed a web address, which I copied onto scraps of paper and distributed to many visitors.

I hope those scraps bore some new members, but there's no way of knowing.

Evidently there are at least two senior expos a year here, and I suspect the same people attend both. But maybe if people see the same booth twice, the memory will stick.

GINGER VETRANO

SENIOR EXPOS IN THE BOONIES AND THE MEGALOPOLIS NEAR YOU

Senior EXPOS are everywhere. Ads sprout like weeds in local papers, each ad an opportunity for FEN to staff a booth. Cut out the ad and contact our Marketing Committee (jlandis10@aol.com) to learn how you can set up a booth and promote the

peace of mind that membership in FEN offers. Don did it. Ginger did it. How about that! How about you?

A busy and productive annual meeting was held in Chicago on the weekend of July 13-15. Present were the Board of Directors- including three new electees- plus Advisory Board members, others who had been invited to receive awards, and several participants in our FEN community who had come at their own expense.



Wendell Stephenson

Non-members and members alike are often puzzled about where we “normally meet,” and how often. In this technological age, we meet face-to-face only once yearly, conducting much business via monthly conference calls of about 1½ hours each, and through frequent email exchanges and discussions on policy issues or immediate, urgent matters.

A special highlight of this year’s meeting was the honoring of FEN’s courageous volunteers who endured and withstood the attacks of prosecutors in Georgia and Arizona, each in their own way. Commemorative plaques were distributed in person to Larry Egbert and Ted Goodwin. Names of honorees who could not attend were read: Claire Blehr, Nick Sheridan, Wye Hale-Rowe, Frank Langsner, and Roberta Massey, who will receive their plaques by mail. Also honored was Robert Rivas, FEN’s Legal Counsel, for his outstanding work on behalf of our volunteers.

In a touching reunion, we were visited at lunch on Saturday by our deeply ill, former president Jerry Dincin, accompanied by his adoring wife, Susanne Streiker. Jerry and many of those assembled had shared profound experiences through the years, and hugs and goodbyes and a few tears were interchanged fluently in this likely farewell.

Highlights of the meeting included the election of

a new vice-president and a secretary. (See Page 12.) We reviewed the year’s many accomplishments; began the process of reorganizing our committees and choosing chairs; created a new medical category to broaden exit guide support for our members who suffer intolerably; displayed how funds were spent during the past fiscal year and adopted a sound financial plan for the coming one; commissioned each of the committee chairs to set goals for those committees.

FEN has its organizational goals too, including the expansion of public knowledge through speaking, presentations at conferences and EXPOS; organizing new affiliate chapters, and- most significantly- planning for FEN’s hosting of the 2014 Conference



Dawn Pollock

of the World Federation of Right-to-Die Societies (WF). Much more will be forthcoming about this illustrious conference in future newsletters.

Members are encouraged to peruse our website at finalexitnetwork.org for a wealth of information not presented above.

Wendell Stephenson and Dawn Pollock ■

An Observation about the Process

Attention must be given to the extraordinary skills of Wendell and Dawn in chairing and supporting the flow of these sessions, and to the mutual respect and listening skills of participants in accepting opinions not necessarily universally shared but treated with great civility. In a final go-round initiated by Wendell, a common theme echoed by most who spoke was the atmosphere of good will generated from the top down and the bottom up. Congress should do so well. (Ed.)

Item in ERGO'S LISTSERV 5/4/12

Re: Derek Humphry's *Final Exit*: "The danger of a book like this is chillingly obvious: someone who is not suffering from a terminal, physical illness but rather a potentially treatable mental illness may use the methods described to end his or her life." (Author unknown)

Actually, that's probably a good point about the book. If they don't [use the methods it describes] the chances are they will use chemicals mixed in a bucket or throw themselves off a bridge. There are endless studies that show reducing access or knowledge of one method simply increases the use of another method. Banning Derek's book may make lazy interventionists feel good but fails to address the real questions of suicide prevention.

Both suicide prevention and self-deliverance are about our efforts to empower people: Empower

those who really want to live to live well, and empower those who really want to die to die well.

In Rio de Janeiro, police used to keep the number of murders in their precincts low simply by dumping the bodies in another precinct. That didn't prevent murders any more than banning self-deliverance prevents unwanted suicides. It just made the books look better.

Chris Docker Director, EXIT, Scotland

"Suicide ends all possibility of a worthwhile life. One [a deeply ill person] who requests euthanasia does not have that possibility."

Gustavo Alphonzo Quintana, Colombia

A Letter to the Editor, Minneapolis Star-Tribune, 5/10/12

We could see in her eyes that she no longer wanted the burden that was her body. It was failing. She could not eat nor speak. She had no more control over her bodily functions. She lay on her bed moaning in discomfort. We knew it was time.

We took her in to her doctor. We all gathered around her, and as she was injected with the lethal dose of fluid, we held her and spoke comforting words. Within seconds she was free of the body that had failed her so miserably. She was 12 years old. That is 84 in dog years.

Unfortunately we could not give my dear mother the same loving care. ALS robbed her of the functions of eating and speaking. She was trapped inside a body that was failing her. The only future she had was out of her control.

She wanted that control back, and she took it with the help of the book, *Final Exit*. She chose her day to die, and she did it with dignity and on her terms. Unlike with our dear dog, we could not surround her or be with her, for fear of legal retribution. She died alone.

When will we learn to treat human beings with the same compassion that we extend to our pets?

Mary Jaeger ■

NOTICE

NOTICE: Final Exit Network is hosting the biennial conference of the World Federation of Right to Die Societies in mid-October, 2014. The WF brings together most of the world's important r-t-d organizations, including Dignitas and Exit of Switzerland, Japan Society for Dying with Dignity, Friends at the End (UK), Dying with Dignity (Australia), Asociacion Venezolana Morir con Dignidad (Venezuela), and more. Additional data on this major event will be forthcoming in future newsletters and on our FEN website as well as the WF's: <http://www.worldrtd.net/>

FEN PRESIDENT ATTENDS WF INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE IN ZURICH

I arrived fortuitously in Zurich on Wednesday, June 13, just as cocktails and hors d'oeuvres were being served, hosted by Exit, the international conference's main host. I held a drink while rubbing elbows with Felix, the #1 person in charge of this convention. We had much to talk about, since FEN is host for the next one.



Wendell Stephenson

Thursday: Faye Girsh proposed a motion that individuals, not just organizations, be allowed to join the WF as members. The current board regarded the move with some consternation, agreed to consider it and return it eventually to the membership for a vote. Another issue was the unilateral decision of a couple of European members to reduce their WF contributions, normally determined by a standard formula per member nation. No action was taken.

A Japanese delegate touched us with a deeply personal story of his mother's struggles and protracted death after a horrible car accident. Japan, he stated, had lost its noble tradition of honoring suicides under certain conditions, but he hoped his country would revisit the practice.

Neil Francis, the WF's new president, spoke effectively on how to counter critics of the r-t-d movement without giving prominence to their falsehoods and distortions. He proposed an interesting strategy: Begin and end with our own positive messages and use the middle to attack the opponent's negativity.

Friday: The dais was packed with speakers, including politicians and government ministers. Presentation times were strictly enforced and moderated by a bigwig in Swiss TV. Providing some fire was Dr. Philip Nitschke, a critic both of the WF and, often, of the r-t-d movement, who averred that lethal drugs are abundant and readily available to anyone interested in exiting this world, rendering the Movement redundant. Later, Dr. Dick MacDonald pointed out the fatal flaw in Nitschke's position: Where assisted suicide is legal, the drugs to facilitate it are also legal and available, and vice versa. Also, Nitschke's assertions of drugs' flowing freely has caused authorities to tighten the faucets, making the r-t-d movement as relevant as ever.

Saturday: We toured Dignitas, a death facility with no residence requirements, attended a three-hour session sponsored by Nu-Tech, where we met the Dutch doctor who had pioneered the helium system, and enjoyed a gala dinner, preceded by another cocktail hour.

How inspiring it was to meet the giants who have led the movement for decades, took the risks, dealt with the venom, created the progress, made the differences. I flew home filled with awe and gratitude. In 2014, those pioneers are coming to our shores. ■

Our Guiding Principle

Mentally competent adults have a basic human right to end their lives when they suffer from a fatal or irreversible illness or intractable pain, when their quality of life is personally unacceptable, and the future holds only hopelessness and misery. Such a right shall be an individual choice, including the timing and companion, free of any restrictions by the law, clergy, medical profession, even friends and relatives no matter how well-intentioned. We do not encourage anyone to end their life, do not provide the means to do so, and do not actively assist in a person's death. We do, however, support them when medical circumstances warrant their decision.

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Frank Kavanaugh, Ph.D.
Sheila Lynch Redd
Jerry Dincin, Ph.D.
Schera Chadwick, M.A.

Newsletter Staff

Ms. Lee Vizer, M.A. Editor

Summer 2012



"My brain is dead but they have the rest of my body on a life-support system!"