



# World Right-to-Die Newsletter

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## The World Comes to Toronto in September!



Lord Joel Joffe

Canada Dying With Dignity and the World Federation of Right to Die Societies are excited to announce pre-registration for the September 7-10, 2006 conference. Register before June 30 and you'll be entered into a draw to receive your registration free!

Enjoy exciting Toronto in the Fall, meet old friends, find out what's going on in our movement worldwide!

See page 2 for all the details.



### OUR SPEAKERS: PEOPLE WITH COURAGE

#### Dr Robert Buckman

Medical oncologist at the Toronto-Sunnybrook Regional Cancer Centre and a renowned speaker

#### Jocelyn Downie

Canada Research Chair in Health and Law, Dalhousie University and author of "Dying Justice"

#### George Felos

Attorney for Michael Schiavo and supporter of choice at the end of life

#### Lord Joel Joffe

Member of the House of Lords, who introduced and fought for an assisted suicide bill in the UK

#### Dr. Rob Jonquiere

CEO Netherlands Voluntary Euthanasia Society, physician and expert on the Dutch law

#### Evelyn Martens

Long-time RTD activist, acquitted on several counts of providing a peaceful death to two Canadian women

#### Philip Nitschke

First physician in the world to help someone die legally and author of "Killing Me Softly"

#### Arthur Schafer

Director of the Centre for Professional and Applied Ethics, at the University of Manitoba

..and others!



Evelyn Martens



Philip Nitschke

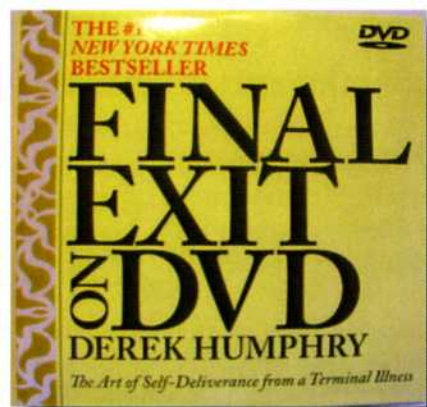
### TOPICS YOU DON'T WANT TO MISS

- What is Working around the World and Why
  - How to Move Aid-in-Dying Forward
    - Censorship and the RTD
  - Engaging the Disability Movement

### PLUS THESE SPECIAL EVENTS:

GALA AWARDS CEREMONY  
NU TECH SPECIAL MEETING  
RTD BOOK FAIR AND FILM FESTIVAL





## New from Derek Humphry: Final Exit on DVD

Final Exit on DVD, is an upgrade of the important 2000 Final Exit VHS video. It includes new footage demonstrating the do-it-yourself helium bag method, which achieves a quick and painless death – not suffocation. There are graphics and titles illustrating helium tank set-up and step-by-step procedures for self-deliverance. Any inert gas will bring about the same result. Though graphic and descriptive, the DVD is done with dignity and compassion. Written, directed and narrated by Derek Humphry. (\$20 US plus \$5 shipping. 46 minutes.)

This DVD plus other Humphry books, e.g., *Final Exit 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition*, a new anniversary edition of *Jean's Way*, and the *The Good Euthanasia Guide* can be ordered through the internet: <https://www.finalexit.org/ergo-store/> or by sending a check or money order to ERGO, 24829 Norris Lane, Junction City OR 97448 USA. Outside of the US and Canada send \$30 US for airmail shipment. There is a 40% discount for orders of 10 or more.

*Browse all the new DVDs, books and tapes – in Toronto at the Right to Die Book Fair!*

## Details of the World Federation Conference

See you in Toronto!

### TIMES

For World Federation delegates\* the conference will begin on Thursday, September 7 at noon and run to noon on Sunday, September 10. For non-delegate attendees, the conference begins at 7:30 am, Friday, September 8 and runs to Saturday, September 9 at 6:00 pm (with an option to attend the awards gala Saturday 8:00 – 10:30 pm.) The conference is open to all members of the public.

### COST

World Federation Delegates*	\$312 USD/ \$359 CAN
Dying With Dignity Members	\$199 USD/ \$229 CAN
Attendee	\$259 USD/ \$299 CAN
Optional Award Dinner, Sept. 9	\$59 USD/ \$69 CAN

\*Delegate: An official representative of a World Federation of Right to Die Society member society, or an invited guest of the World Federation Board of Directors.

### REGISTER AND INFORMATION

For more information, and to register: visit our [website www.dyingwithdignity.ca](http://www.dyingwithdignity.ca) or call 1.800.495.6156 or 416.486.3998 (in Canada.). **Emails** to: [wfc-2006@dyingwithdignity.ca](mailto:wfc-2006@dyingwithdignity.ca). **Fax** to 416.486.5562. **Mailing address** is 802 - 55 Eglinton Avenue East, Toronto, ON M4P 1G8.

### LOCATION

The meetings will be held at the elegant Sheraton Centre Toronto Hotel. To make a room reservation, go directly to their web site.

### NuTech Workshop To Meet in Toronto

The New Technology in Self-Deliverance Group – better known as NuTech – will hold a workshop as an adjunct event in Toronto at 8AM Sunday, September 10 in the Sheraton Centre. All official delegates to the world conference are invited; others by invitation only. Only persons closely involved in hastened deaths are welcome.

Speakers at the NuTech workshop will include Dr. Philip Nitschke (Australia), Dr. Aycke Smook, (Netherlands), and Derek Humphry (Oregon). Rod Newman (Montana) will demonstrate and sell inert gas balloon kits.

Previous meetings of NuTech, starting in 1998 involving international experts, were held in Berkeley, Seattle, Vancouver, Boston, and San Diego. It was the pioneer work of the NuTech group which developed the inert gas tank and bag method of legal self-deliverance from a terminal or hopeless illness.



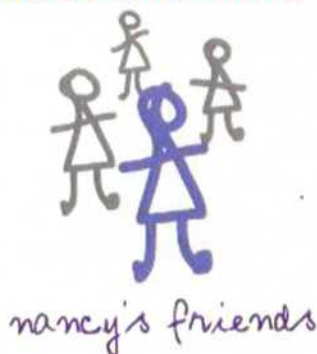
## A Doctor's Perspective: Patient-Directed Dying

Patient-Directed Dying, ISBN 0-595-38144-8, is published by iUniverse (Editor's Choice), Feb. 2006. Available at [www.iUniverse.com](http://www.iUniverse.com), [www.BarnesandNoble.com](http://www.BarnesandNoble.com), [www.Amazon.com](http://www.Amazon.com), and through order from bookstores, \$17.95.

"Patient-Directed Dying" by Dr. Tom Preston, is "a manifesto calling for mercy and reasoning in helping terminally ill patients die a peaceful death." One of the original members of the Compassion in Dying team, Dr. Preston has years of personal experience as a writer, advocate and physician for dying people.

In this new book Dr. Preston tells the stories of five dying patients and his discussions with them. With this readable method he shows how dying is a process, how this process is fundamentally altered by modern medicine so that few of us die naturally, and why patients—not physicians or others—should be able to direct their dying. He gives compelling reasons why physician aid in dying is not suicide, and why it is ethical and consistent with other already legal medical practices that help patients die.

## Nancy's Friends Launches in Australia



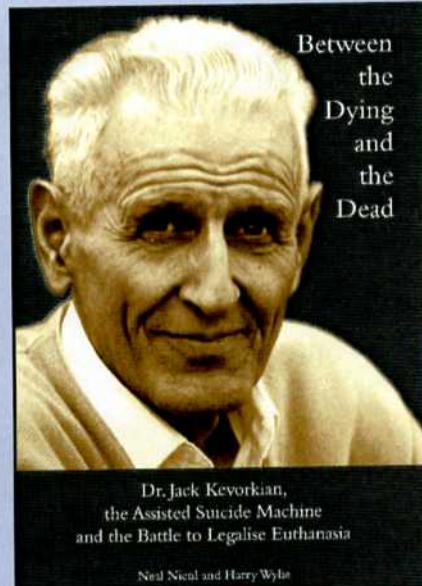
In November 2005, Exit International launched a new support network for people seeking information and clarity about their end of life choices. With its genesis in a visit to Australia two years earlier by Dr Dick MacDonald and modelled loosely on the Caring Friends network in the

## New Authorized Kevorkian Biography: *Between the Dying and the Dead*

*Between the Dying and the Dead: Dr. Jack Kevorkian's Life and the Battle to Legalise Euthanasia* by Neal Nicol, Harry Wylie and Jack Kevorkian (contributor). Hardback available May 28 from [Amazon.com](http://Amazon.com) for \$17.61. Fusion Press, London

Dr. Jack Kevorkian is best known for inventing the 'suicide machine' and being an outspoken proponent of the right to die with dignity. He has changed the way many people think about their end of life options. *Between the Dying and the Dead*, his first authorized biography, he and his colleagues tell the story of this complicated and controversial man.

On 22 November 1998, Dr Jack Kevorkian made headlines across America when a videotape showing him administering a lethal injection to Thomas Youk, a 52-year-old man in the final stages of Lou Gehrig's disease, was broadcast on national television. The program triggered intense debate, three days after it



was aired Kevorkian was arrested and charged with second-degree murder. He was tried and sentenced to 10-25 years in a maximum-security prison.

At a time when assisted suicide and euthanasia are at the forefront of political and public scrutiny, *Between the Dying and the Dead* is an absorbing account, by two people who know him well, of Kevorkian's battles with the press, right-to-lifers, politicians, doctors and the legal authorities and the struggles that led to his imprisonment.

US, Nancy's Friends has provided a much needed service within the Exit International community. Coordinated by Melbourne-based Lindy Boyd, Nancy's Friends is staffed by twenty-five Friends who live in every state of Australia. In its first five months of operation, Nancy's Friends has received over 30 requests for visits.

According to Lindy Boyd "some 'travellers' (people visited) have wanted a Friend to share ideas with, while others have wanted practical, accurate information. The positive feedback from Travellers confirms the need for a network like this."

"Travellers have found their Friends to be knowledgeable, helpful and to have really made a difference to their lives."

Traveller, Joanne, is one of many who has benefited from a visit by

a Friend and says she has formed a much deeper bond than even she expected. "My Friend is wonderful. It is so comforting to have someone nearby who I can meet and chat with we think the same on so many issues. Thank you."

According to Nancy's Friend, Chris, the benefit is not all one way. "I get an enormous feeling of satisfaction in participating in this network. One of the main things we are able to do as Friends is to visit people currently awaiting a clinic visit from Dr Nitschke. There are often delays here and one of the advantages of the Friends Network is that we can step in quickly, visit the person in need and allay their fears and anxieties, answer their questions and often offer some very practical suggestions.



# COURT CASES: The law it is a changin'

## Acquittal in Belgium

A Belgian nurse accused, in 2000, of poisoning her aunt, was acquitted in February 2006. Els Ope de Weerd said she had acted solely to reduce her aunt's suffering at the end of her life. The verdict was greeted with applause in the courtroom. A commission is being considered to reduce the risk of similar cases appearing in the courts.

## German MD Charged

Dr. Mechtild Bach is being investigated for eight cases in which she is accused of giving fatal combinations of morphine and Valium without good reason. Dr. Bach, a cancer specialist, denies all charges saying she accompanied the dying patients only.

## Dutch Sedation Case

The Netherlands Voluntary Euthanasia Society (NVVE) is requesting clarification of the guidelines for terminal sedation since the doctor appears to decide rather than the patient. It cites the recent case of a doctor who helped a patient to die when the latter was in imminent danger of suffocation. He was charged with murder, acquitted by several courts, faced an appeal by the Minister of Justice against the acquittal and was finally discharged from that too.

## German Mother Helps Son

In Berlin a mother was prosecuted for helping her severely handicapped son to die but the court decided there should be no punishment. The mother had sacrificed the last 9 years of her life and had wanted to die with her son. It was decided she had suffered enough.

### The Price Health Professionals Pay

Though acquittals or no punishment have occurred in the majority of these cases against health professionals it is usually true that the professional's license is suspended when charges are filed. Often the professional does not continue to work in his or her profession despite the court's verdict, after the trial is over.

## Canadian Nightmare

In Winnipeg a blind and partially deaf 88-year-old man who fatally stabbed his terminally ill wife in her hospital bed was sentenced to three years probation for an act the judge described as "illegal but understandable." Having pled guilty to manslaughter as part of a deal that saw the Crown drop its original charge of second-degree murder he had already served 17 months in jail.

## West Australia Leniency

A disability pensioner, 60, pled guilty to the attempted murder of his 44-year-old partner who was terminally ill with Huntington's disease. He admitted to putting a lethal dose of her prescription in her food though it was not clear what caused her death. Justice John McKechnie noted the care and devotion by the man to the woman over many years. In giving him a three year suspended sentence the justice said,

"There is much debate within the community as to whether there should be a so-called right to die. The proper place for the resolution of these matters is community debate followed by the reflection of the community standards by its lawmakers in parliament."

## Dutch "Non-MD" Case

A Dutch court imposed a 15-month sentence on Friday on a man who helped a friend commit suicide. The last five months of the jail term were suspended. The court was told the man bought drugs for a friend who had a serious obsessive-compulsive neurosis and had long expressed the wish to die.

The panel of judges ruled the man had not stuck to the strict guidelines. He is not a medical professional as is required by Dutch law for assisted euthanasia.

## France: Humbert Case Dismissed

A woman who helped her blind, mute and paralyzed son commit suicide expressed disappointment when a French court dropped charges against her for intentionally ending his life.

Marie Humbert said she felt cheated because she wanted to stand trial to defend her son Vincent's oft-stated wish to die after his debilitating injuries in a road accident in 2000. She wanted to campaign for allowing assisted suicide.

She said she was happy there would be no consequences for Doctor Frederic Chaussoy, her co-defendant, who took 22-year-old Vincent off life support after she failed to kill him with a lethal injection in 2003.

*Meet Evelyn Martens and hear her story. Her famous right-to-die case and ultimate acquittal may be a step in changing the law in Canada. Come to Toronto!*

