

World Right-to-Die Newsletter

Issue No. 64

www.worldrtd.net

June 2013

EXTRA! VERMONT LEGISLATURE APPROVES DEATH WITH DIGNITY LAW

Continued on page 3

DOWN UNDER RTD GROUP AIMED AT YOUTH

Most Right to Die organizations appeal to older members. Australia has spawned an unusual RTD group: Save-Ya, which is geared toward the 18-30 age group.



SAVE-YA may be the first youth lobby group to advocate for voluntary euthanasia law reform. Voluntary euthanasia is an issue which not only affects older people.



Angelique Flowers

SAVE-YA was prompted by the case of Angelique Flowers, first diagnosed with severe Crohn's Disease at age 15 and then with aggressive terminal colon cancer at age 30 having suffered for 15 years. She fought for the right to die peacefully on her own terms, but died a year later in agony. Before she died, Angelique said,

"The law wouldn't let a dog suffer the agony I'm going through before an inevitable death. It would be put down. Yet under the law, my life is worth less than a dog's."

Continued on page 2

RIGHT TO DIE-EUROPE IN ROME

Italian RtD organization Libera Uscita is hosting a conference for Right to Die- Europe, in Rome, from June 14-16, 2013, at Hotel Mediterraneo, a four star hotel in the area of Termini Central station. The program can be viewed at www.liberauscita.it with registration and hotel details



A NEW WF MEMBER FROM HONG KONG

The WF Board tentatively approved the admission of the Awakening Research Foundation Hong Kong Limited, founded in 2012, by Dr. Tung Lam. The goal of the Foundation is to promote medical law in Hong Kong and China. Current objectives include full implementation of "Advance Directive," and legalization of "Voluntary Active Euthanasia" in Hong Kong and China. According to the opinion surveys done by the Foundation 99.3% of Hong Kong citizens do not know the concept of "Advance Directive" and 49.3% of Hong Kong citizens agreed with "Voluntary Active Euthanasia." They are using social media like YouTube and Twitter to gain followers. They are attempting to influence the unsympathetic Hong Kong government to pass legislation in both of these areas. Google this organization to see several short videos on YouTube.



Dr. Tung Lam

FRANCIS RESIGNS; GIRSH NEW PREZ

Neal Francis was elected World Federation president by the attending delegates at the biennial meeting in Zurich, July, 2012. He resigned the position in November and also resigned from his presidency of Your Last Rights (YLR), an Australian umbrella organization started in 2010, to unify the RTD organizations in Australia, financed partially through the generous legacy of Brisbane mayor, Dr. Clem Jones. Francis also headed Death With Dignity Victoria (DWDV), from which he also resigned. According to Dr. Rodney Syme, active participant in both organizations, Continued on page 2

GIRSH NEW PREZ

Continued from page 1



Fay Girsh

“Neil’s resignation from VE activities seemed to be caused by differences of opinion with some YLR Board members. A cessation of funding for YLR finally led to Neil’s resignation as CEO and Chair. His earlier resignation from DWDV meant he was no longer a member of any WF member organization, and therefore, not eligible to remain President.”

Faye Girsh, who has been Vice-President of the WF Board for five years, has assumed the office of President. A retired psychologist, Girsh founded the Hemlock Society of San Diego in 1987, is currently president of that organization and was the head of the national Hemlock Society USA, until it merged with Compassion in Dying in 2005 (now Compassion and Choices). She is also a Senior Advisor to the Final Exit Network, and is working on the program for the 2014 WF conference, to be hosted by the Network in Chicago (see article on the conference, pg. 3). She succeeded Derek Humphry as editor of the WF newsletter.

Girsh says, “A vital World Federation enables people in all parts of the world, who are struggling with trying to provide options for a more peaceful death, to exchange new ideas, get encouragement and develop a unity of purpose. Our main function is to encourage communication. We do this through our web site, this newsletter and through our biennial world conferences. The WF, now in its 33rd year, is a unique, unusual and special organization. It is important to keep it strong, important and united.”

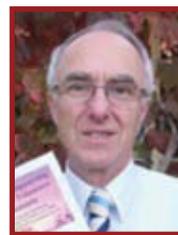
RTD GROUP AIMED AT YOUTH

Continued from page 1

SAVE-YA can be contacted at SAVEyouthadvocates@hotmail.com. Flowers can be seen on YouTube at Voluntary Euthanasia Advocate Angelique Flowers’ Dying Letter to Prime Minister. “Younger people can be exposed to such circumstances personally or through hopelessly ill family and friends, so it is vital that young people are given the opportunity to have their say, and that the Members of Parliament able to bring about such law reforms, are made aware of youth opinion” says Amy Orange SAVE-YA’s young founder.

The World Federation Board has voted tentative approval for SAVE-YA as a member, to be ratified by the Delegates’ meeting at the next world conference in September, 2014, in Chicago. At that time we hope to all have a chance to meet them.

GROUP APPEALING TO CHRISTIANS

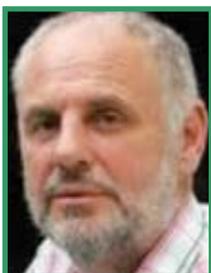


Ian Wood

We have written before about Christians Supporting Choice for Voluntary Euthanasia, which was founded by Ian Wood and Rev. Trevor Bensch.

They have produced excellent literature making the case that providing a peaceful death is consistent with Christian values and beliefs. Recently they have lobbied legislators in South Australia, when the Death with Dignity (DWD) bill was introduced. This is another organization appealing to an unusual segment of society – Christians. “It is essential for these Christians to become active, standing proudly in their faith and give voice to the significant majority of Christian support shown in surveys over the past 15 years.” See www.christiansforve.org.au for their excellent, persuasive materials.

NITSCHKE LAUNCHES VOLUNTARY EUTHANASIA POLITICAL PARTY



Phillip Nitschke

Dr. Philip Nitschke, head of Exit International, has started a new political party. The Voluntary Euthanasia Party (VEP) will field Senate candidates in a number of Australian states in September. Though VE is overwhelmingly supported by the electorate, the major political parties have succumbed to attacks by the churches. The Greens have taken a stand on VE, but this is secondary to their other goals. The VE Party plans to run candidates in Tasmania, South Australia and Victoria. A private member’s bill, sponsored by the premier and the Greens, allowing VE for terminally ill Tasmanians, is being introduced.

News sources report that Nitschke’s mother is in a nursing home, and his father is 96. He has been careful not to commit to helping them choose a dignified death, since he is a subject of constant surveillance in Australia. (See www.vep.net.au)

From the Canberra Times

LETTER FROM COLOMBIA ADMD

ADMD-Colombia is one of our oldest WF members. Founded in 1980 by Beatriz Gomez, it was instrumental in influencing the decision of the Colombia Constitutional Court, in 1997, to decriminalize assisted dying. It has also been the leading voice for accepting advance directives in that Catholic country. Beatriz Gomez was the recipient of the 2004 Marilyn Seguin Award from the WF, for her effectiveness and perseverance in founding, funding and leading this pioneering organization. She died in 2006, but her son, Alejandro, has been active in perpetuating his mother's work as has Dr. Juan Mendoza- Vega, a prominent neurosurgeon, who was the only WF President from that country. In asking Alejandro Gomez for an update he sent this report:

Unarguably, with my mother's passing in 2006, DMD-Colombia lost a great degree of dynamism and momentum. Her constant leadership over the past 30 years had given the Foundation much influence nationally and internationally; needless to say her generous pocketbook also helped DMD get over some rough spots financially. Unfortunately, with her absence, the Foundation unfortunately suffered some desertion in its ranks, from well-respected board members. But the faithful carried on, and I can proudly say that my mother's legacy lives on with a growing membership base; its finances (albeit a small operating budget) are back in the black, and it has a significant public presence with monthly talks and presentations, along with considerable press coverage. Clearly, people do make the difference, but I can say to you that DMD-Colombia has been able to gradually recover from the loss of her founder and guiding light. The Foundation trudges on with its present leadership, defending and promoting the principles on which it was created.

Alejandro Gomez

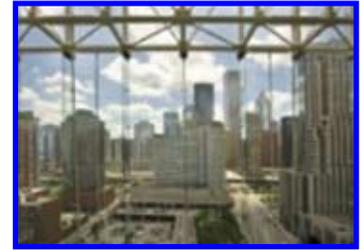


Dr. Richard MacDonald presenting award to Beatriz Gomez, Tokyo WF Conference

WF 20TH CONFERENCE, SEPTEMBER 2014, CHICAGO: Early Details

by Julia Hamway, Conference Coordinator

Final Exit Network, will be the host for the 2014 World Federation 20th Biennial Conference. The dates of the conference are September 17-21, 2014, Wednesday through Sunday, and it will be held at the flagship Embassy Suites Downtown/Lakefront Hotel with spectacular views of Chicago. All rooms are suites with a living room/work area, a wet bar, microwave, refrigerator and two 37-inch TVs.



view of Chicago from hotel

Final Exit Network, has secured an excellent price – \$190/night for early hotel registration (\$225 after early registration). Conference registration will be \$325 for early registration (\$400 after late registration cutoff date). Early conference registration will open June, 2013; hotel registration opens September, 2013. Early registration will be open for at least six months. A conference website address will be announced in May.

The hotel is a short, two-block walk to shopping on Chicago's Magnificent Mile, three blocks to Lake Michigan and the Navy Pier and within comfortable walking distance of popular restaurants with a wide variety of price ranges. A full hot and cold breakfast and evening reception are included in the price of the room. More details will be published in subsequent communications.

The FEN WF conference planning committee is creating an inspiring schedule with world-class speakers in the RTD movement. With the theme "Dignity, Control, Choice – Around the World," the committee is focusing on leaders who work on the front lines of legal and philosophical right to die issues throughout the world. Delegates will join FEN hosts to share the latest news, will have the opportunity to network with each other and will work together to promote the agendas of RTD societies around the world. Everyone is invited, and welcome to join Final Exit Network hosts and World Federation delegates, to be a part of this inspiring opportunity. If you have suggestions for the program, please let us know (fayegirsh@msn.com). Plan now to join us in Chicago.

VERMONT

Continued from page 1

As we go to press, both houses of the Vermont legislature passed a Death with Dignity law, based on the Oregon model, and it now goes to the desk of Governor Pete Shumlin, who publicly supported such a law in his campaign. This will be the first state on the East Coast, and the first law passed by a legislature in the U.S. Kudos, Vermont!

FROM FRANCE: A BOLD STRATEGY

by Jean-Luc Romero, President, ADMD-France

In France, we have reached a crucial moment of our mobilization to legalize euthanasia and assisted suicide. This year, more than ever, we should join forces around this one goal: support the claims which our societies have been demanding for the past 33 years.



Jean Luc-Romero

Everything started six years ago, when we decided to make our action a priority for the politicians. 2012 was a crucial year, with the shock campaign we launched in March 2012. The candidates to the presidential election, who had declared they were against such a law in their answers to a survey poll we had just sent them, were suddenly shown on their death-beds: François Bayrou (center right) Marine Le Pen (extreme right) Nicolas Sarkozy (out-going president) Thanks to a photomontage, they were shown in a hospital, on their death-beds. The wording was, “Should we put you in this position so that you should change your position regarding euthanasia?” The other candidates (François Hollande, socialist; Eva Joly, ecology; Jean-Luc Melenchon, extreme left) were left unscathed. These pictures went around the world.

This campaign was launched to set the stage for a big public meeting, which followed a street, march, organized on March 24, 2012. There were 4000 people on the Place de la République in Paris, and 2000 people in the Cirque d’Hiver Bouglione. Some candidates to the presidential election were present, and others were represented. The Mayor of Paris and our two political counsellors opened the debate in front of a large audience of celebrities (politicians, writers, philosophers, scientists, film directors).

There is no doubt that this intense lobbying, which lasted for 6 years, led the future president, François Hollande, to inscribe the famous proposal 21 in his program: legalization of euthanasia and assisted suicide. The general election following the victory of François Hollande, brought a socialist majority to parliament which was elected because of his program. It included the right to die in dignity, which had already been voted for by some of the re-elected parliament members in November, 2009.

Wanting to act fast upon this important society issue, last July, François Hollande asked Professor Didier Sicard (professor of medicine) to conduct a survey on the end of life. Bad casting: he himself, as well as 7 of the 8 other members of the commission, turned out to be anti-euthanasia activists. Two of them were anti-abortion, pro-life, anti-contraception, and anti-euthanasia activists. Therefore it was no surprise that Professor Sicard submitted a report saying that it was utopian to believe that it would be possible to rewrite the laws on euthanasia, that euthanasia as practiced in the Netherlands, Belgium and Luxemburg invariably led to a slippery slope, and that, at the very best, in a distant future, one could imagine assisted suicide as practiced in Oregon (not Switzerland – “far too liberal”).

It is needless to say that for the board of ADMD, this report is meaningless, and was heavily criticized. The president seems to think the same because he announced that a law project would be presented to Parliament in June 2013, the very moment he received this report from Professor Sicard. It was like a slap in the face.

This is where we are today: A text will be introduced without us knowing its content; we have intensified our lobbying; since January, we have had a large public meeting at the Hôtel de Ville in Paris, with an audience of 1200 people, a series of breakfasts with members of parliament and senators, 15 regional meetings, over which I am presiding myself between January and June, and about a hundred local meetings organized by our delegates, with some guest speakers from abroad.

Our Society, with its 50,000 members, is undoubtedly strong both on the activist and on the political scene. Its voice is heard more and more in the media. Like all activists for the right to die in dignity, we carry values of secular humanism and of freedom. France is the country that gave birth to human rights, and it must join the Netherlands, Belgium, Luxemburg, and Switzerland in their respect for those human beings who have reached the end of their lives and who do not want to go through the final stages of decay and loss of dignity because of having waited too long.

The gesticulations of the French Medical Board is not going to prevent us from reaching our goal. The fear of witnessing a new law of liberty in our country, is prompting them to act as though they are discovering a law, which is actually 8 years old (terminal sedation). However, 90% of the French population wants a law to legalize euthanasia and assisted suicide, and we will succeed in obtaining it. Our efforts and our strategy will be rewarded.

KEEP UP TO DATE! WF WEBSITE AND ERGO LISTSERV

The World Federation has an excellent web site. www.worldrtd.net is the place to turn for up-to-date RTD news from around the world. You can sign up to have updates delivered directly to your own email address. And have you seen the links to Facebook and Twitter, available with every news item on the the website? You'll also find an icon to print or email the item. WF Communications Director, Rob Jonquiere, does an exceptional job.



For additional information about the RTD movement, you can subscribe at no cost, to Derek Humphry's ERGO listserv. Visit http://lists.opn.org/mailman/listinfo/right-to-die_lists.opn.org or, send a message with subject or body 'help' to right-to-die-request@lists.opn.org via email.

NAGUI MARCOS: A Courageous Spokesperson

by Meg Westley, President, Dying with Dignity Canada

Nagui's journey towards death began nineteen years ago, when he learned he carried the gene for Huntington's disease, the illness that took his father's life. Nagui and his brothers cared for their father during his last painful years, when he had lost not only motor control, but also his mental clarity and emotional stability. It was an agonizing time for all concerned. Nagui vowed not to die that way.



Nagui Marcos

Nine years ago, Nagui began to experience symptoms of the disease. He joined DWD's Client Support Program. He described the day he talked with Dying With Dignity as "one of the happiest days of my recent life." He knew then he would be able to end his life when he felt it was no longer worth living.

His wife, Jan, supported him all the way. She wanted to be part of his decision-making, part of every moment of his life. They both became ardent and eloquent spokespeople for the right to die. Even as Nagui's condition deteriorated, he spoke with calm conviction about his choice, and why others should have that choice. Dr. Brian Goldman, who interviewed Nagui on CBC Radio's "White Coat, Black Arts," felt deep unease that anyone could plan his own death, but could not deny the rational, thoughtful nature of Nagui's decision.

One year later, we still remember Nagui. To honour this remarkable man, Nagui's brother, Chak Morcos, has created a special website featuring Dr. Goldman's interviews with Nagui, and the articles written about his life and his choice: www.naguimorcos.com.

RALLIES IN CANADA

In March, a large number of supporters rallied in Victoria, and then again in Vancouver, to support the plaintiffs in the important lawsuit, *Carter v. Canada*. The rally was sponsored by Dying with Dignity, Canadian Unitarians, Farewell Foundation, Dying with Dignity, Canadian Unitarians, BC Civil Liberties, and Raging Grannies. This is a good example of the strength of coalitions to show support for our issue.



MEMORABLE RECENT DEATHS



Booth Gardner

Booth Gardner was a two term Democratic Governor of Washington State, who later campaigned for the Death with Dignity law that ultimately passed in 2008, thanks to his strong financial support and the prestige of his backing.

He died from complications of Parkinson's Disease, which was diagnosed in 1994.

He wanted the right to end his own life on his own terms. "This will be my last campaign. This will be the biggest fight of my career..." he told the NYTimes, "I can't see where anybody benefits by my hanging around..." But he was not eligible to use the law, since his situation was not terminal. He believed in "*My life, my death, my control,*" though his son, Doug, accused him of playing God, and was in disagreement on religious grounds. Gardner wanted a broader law than what was passed, which applies only to people with six months or less to live. He wanted one that would permit lethal prescriptions for people whose suffering is unbearable, a standard that prevails in the Netherlands.

Ronald Dworkin was an American philosopher and scholar of constitutional law. He was Professor of Law and Philosophy at New York University, and the author of more than 15 books. His theory of law as integrity – in which judges interpret the law in terms of consistent and communal moral principles, especially justice and fairness – is among the most influential contemporary theories about the nature of law (Wikipedia). Religion without God was another issue about which he wrote. An outspoken supporter of assisted dying, he wrote in *Life's Dominion*, "Making someone die in a way others approve, but he believes a horrifying contradiction of his life, is a devastating, odious form of tyranny."



Ronald Dworkin

COFFIN THERAPY

For people who fear death, there are solutions being developed in China and Ukraine. A Ukrainian coffin maker lets people relax for 15 minutes in one of his custom made caskets. To get an artificial, near-death experience at a mental health clinic in Shenyang, China, a patient lies in a closed coffin as family members read epitaphs. A psychologist commenting on these practices, pointed out that these practices could increase, rather than decrease, the fear of death. (nfbnewsline.org)



CHARGES DROPPED AGAINST FORMER WF PREZ



Ted Goodwin, past president of the World Federation and founder and past president of the Final Exit Network (FEN), had recent charges of assisting suicide dismissed. The case involved a Minnesota woman, who suffered through a decade of intense, chronic pain following an operation that went wrong.

She ended her own life in 2007. Charges remain against FEN and volunteers, who were present at the woman's death or involved in the administration of the organization. FEN lawyers insist that no assistance was provided, and that the activities of providing information and support are protected under the First Amendment.

SUCCESSOR TO TONY NICKLINSEN ASKS FOR HELP TO DIE

Paul Lamb has been a quadriplegic since his car crash 23 years ago. According to the BBC, Lamb said in a statement to the court: "I am in pain every single hour of every single day. I have lived with these conditions for a lot of years and have given it my best shot.



Paul Lamb

"Now I feel worn out, and I am genuinely fed up with my life. I feel I cannot and do not want to keep living. I feel trapped by the situation, and have no way out. I spend my day sitting in my wheelchair. My daily routine is tedious, monotonous and pointless. I often go to bed at 5 p.m. – such is the pointlessness of it all."

His case is going through the courts, thus far unsuccessfully, but with the aim of getting the law changed by the British parliament. His plea is similar to that of Tony Nicklinsen who had locked-in syndrome, whose plea for help in dying was unsuccessful.

WORLD RIGHT TO DIE DAY, NOVEMBER 2, 2013: Celebrate with Friends Around the World

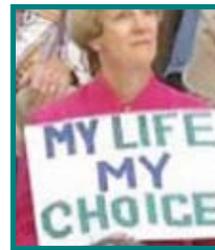
by Galina Coffee Lewis, Vancouver, Canada

The World Right to Die Day was originated by Jean-Luc Romero in Paris in 2008. It has been celebrated every year on November 2. This year, Margo MacDonald, Member of the Scottish Parliament, in association with Friends at the End (FATE), is hosting a press conference to launch her Assisted Dying bill, and to celebrate European End of Life Day on November 2, 2013.



Galina Coffee Lewis

Please plan some event in your city, and with your organization, to celebrate this event. Whether in a rally, press conferences, or a social gathering, please observe this day with all of us around the world.



In Canada, we hope to have Dying with Dignity rallies in every major city, and have our voices heard for choice in dying.

What ideas do you have for your organization? Please let me know at jglewis@telus.net, so we can find a way to coordinate and share our experiences. If possible, take pictures or videos so everyone can get ideas. These could be shared at the World Federation Conference in Chicago in 2014, and in this publication.

Around the World on the Same Day – let us unite with our voices and demands for choice in dying. Listen to the song I wrote on YouTube. Google: "How to Say Goodbye Dying with Dignity."

END-OF-LIFE CHOICE PROPOSAL IN NEW ZEALAND

by Carole Sweney, President, VES-NZ

New Zealand is a small country with big ideas, leading the world in many areas of human rights over the years – women's right to vote in 1893, opposition to apartheid during the Springbok tour of 1981, the anti-nuclear stance in 1984, homosexual law reform in 1986, and, in April 2013, passing the Marriage Equality law.



Hon. Maryan Street,
Labour MP,
who introduced bill

The End-of-Life Choice Bill, written by Hon. Maryan Street, MP, with members of the Voluntary Euthanasia Society of NZ, is another move to improve human rights. Continued on page 8

BOOKS AND FILMS

BOOK

“DOCTOR PLEASE HELP ME DIE”

by Dr. Tom Preston, M.D. & Janice Harper, Ph.D., 2013
ISBN 978-1-4759-6379-3
www.iUniverse.com 170 pp

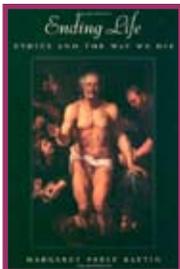


Dr. Preston, a retired cardiologist and a long-time proponent of physician aid in dying, lives in Seattle, and has participated in passing the law to legalize PAD in his state. He has a faculty appointment at the University of Washington, and has written four prior books about physicians' practices. Co-author, Dr. Harper, is a medical anthropologist. They review and refute opponents' arguments, and discuss outcomes of passing such a law. Preston shows how doctors fail their patients by not discussing dying with them, and advises patients on how to achieve a peaceful death.

BOOK

“ENDING LIFE: ETHICS AND WAY WE DIE”

by Margaret Pabst Battin,
2005, Oxford University Press
ISBN 0-19-514027-3

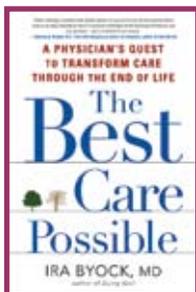


Though this book is 8 years old, it was not reviewed in this publication, and stands as a superb collection of articles by an expert who has always been prescient and progressive in her views on assisted dying and her ability to argue for them (Just in case you missed it, it remains available on Amazon.com).

BOOK

“THE BEST CARE POSSIBLE”

by Ira Byock M.D., 2012, Penguin Books
ISBN 978-1-58333-459-1



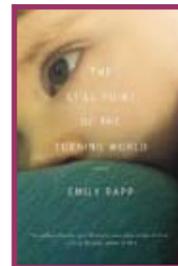
“...there are worse things than having someone you love die. Most basic, there is having the person you love die badly, suffering as he or she dies. Worse still is realizing later on, that much of his or her suffering was unnecessary.” These thoughts, by the staunch spokesperson for hospice and palliative care, demonstrate his understanding for suffering at the end of life. Byock's solution – that hospice care will fix everything – is respectable but incomplete, yet he is worth reading to understand the conclusions he reaches.

Two authors wrote books about the deaths of their children. Worth noting here because of their open attitude toward dying, and because the process was unnecessarily difficult:

“THE STILL POINT OF THE TURNING WORLD”

by Emily Rabb

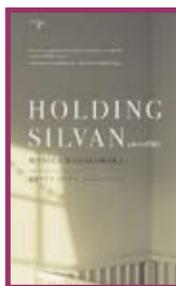
This is about the death of Ms. Rabb's son, almost three years old, who died of Tay Sachs Disease.



“HOLDING SYLVAN: A BRIEF LIFE”

by Monica Wesolowska

A moving account of an infant with severe brain damage, slowly dying of starvation in the loving embrace of his parents.



“INTO THE LIGHT” BOOKS

Three popular books in the U.S. deal with near-death experiences. One, “Proof of Heaven,” is written by neurosurgeon, Eben Alexander. The others are: “Waking Up in Heaven,” by Crystal McVea, and “Heaven is for Real,” by Colton Burpo, for kids.



YOU TUBE VIDEOS

There are many videos on YouTube on the subject of assisted dying, advance directives, Dignitas, and Switzerland. These two, from the UK, are excellent; each is about an hour.

“THE BURNING ISSUE: THE RIGHT TO DIE”

1 hour +

Excellent discussion of pros and cons of assisted dying and voluntary euthanasia, as seen from cases in the UK. Part of a series on controversial issues.

“TERRY PRATCHETT: SHAKING HANDS WITH DEATH”

1 hour

Author Terry Pratchett delivers a superb lecture at the Royal College of Physicians on his dementia, and why he should have the choice of an assisted death.

END-OF-LIFE CHOICE PROPOSAL IN NEW ZEALAND

Continued from page 6

The bill proposes more choices than do laws in other countries. After research, the decision was made to include the provision that either the person or a doctor, can administer the required medication. Oral ingestion by oneself, while preferable to many, is not favored by all, even those able to do so. For some, holding a glass to their mouth, or swallowing, may not be possible. These people are catered to by the provision for a medical professional to administer the dose through other means (injection, gastric tube).



Carloe Sweney

Safeguards are proposed, through the use of two physicians to examine the person before accepting the application and implementing the procedure, the use of End-of-Life directives to clearly set out the person's wishes, the insistence on choice for all involved including medical staff, and a review body to monitor the use of the law.

The website for the bill is [http:// www.parliament.nz/en-NZ/PB/Legislation/Bills](http://www.parliament.nz/en-NZ/PB/Legislation/Bills). At our AGM in June, Dr. Rodney Syme, well-known Melbourne doctor and World Federation Board member, will speak about why he thinks assisted dying should be legal, and how we can communicate with doctors. This is a great opportunity for the New Zealand public to debate the issue, as we wait for the End-of-Life Choice bill to be passed through parliament.

WORLD FEDERATION BUSINESS: INDIVIDUAL MEMBERSHIP

by Faye Girsh, Editor and President (fayegirsh@msn.com)

At the 2012 Delegates Meeting in Zurich, the issue of Individual Membership came up; the Board agreed to make a decision by December.

Many people don't realize that the membership of the World Federation consists of 49 right-to-die organizations from 26 countries, whose main mission is choice and dignity at the end of life. Decisions are made by the Board, which is elected by the Delegates. Each member organization has one vote at the Delegates' meeting, though each organization may send as many Delegates as it wishes, to the conferences.

Currently, then, there is no mechanism for individuals to become World Federation members, unless they form an organization which could be a member. They can be individual subscribers to this newsletter and can attend the biennial conferences.

The matter of changing the by-laws to permit individual membership was referred to the Council of Former Presidents, whose decision was not to allow individual members because of the 33 year old structure, which would require a radical change. The Board is in favor of making the World Federation more flexible, with the opportunity for fresh ideas and energy. The only solution suggested thus far, is to establish a parallel organization, maybe called the World Right to Die Society, with membership consisting of individuals, with their own governance. The negatives of this suggestion is that it is currently difficult to find people willing to shoulder the responsibilities of board membership of one organization let alone two, and, more bureaucracy (and money) would be required, neither of which is realistic.

So, there you have it. Please let us know if you have suggestions that would accommodate individuals without increasing the difficulty and expense of running the existing organization.



CENTURY CLUB

We are always grateful to those who contribute to the Century Club. Because this newsletter is a major expense of the World Federation, your contribution helps to defray its cost. The newsletter is delivered by mail to people in 26 countries. Although you can read it online, most prefer to have it in hand, and we are glad to oblige. Century Club members have contributed at least \$100 once every six months (or \$500 for the Millennium Club).

Larry Egbert
Faye Girsh
Bernie Klein

Arthur & Adena Metcalfe
Frank Sargent

Send your contributions in any currency, made to **World Federation**, to:

Through July 31, 2013:

Faye Girsh
7811 Eads Avenue, #108
La Jolla, CA 92037 USA

Starting August 1, 2013:

Faye Girsh
8515 Costa Verde Blvd., #1751
San Diego, CA 92122 USA

For Individual Subscriptions, send \$25 for a two year subscription, in any currency, to the above address

Thank you friends, for your support!

Graphic Design and Printing by

PRINT-O-MAT
La Jolla's Printing and Graphics Professionals Since 1978

1116 Silverado St., La Jolla, CA 92037 - Tel 858.454.3158 - Fax 858.454.2214
info@printomat.net - www.printomat.net