



Voices of Choices

Compassion & Choices Arizona Newsletter

Previous Issues at: www.choicesarizona.org

Issue #1 - 2008

Compassion & Choices Arizona (formerly known as Hemlock Society or End of Life Choices)

P. O. Box 12126, Tucson, AZ 85732 * Toll Free 1-877-535-3600 * Email: info@choicesarizona.org * Web: www.choicesarizona.org

OUR MARCH FOR END OF LIFE CHOICES SUCCESSFUL!!

LETTING OUR LEGISLATORS KNOW WHAT WE WANT!

Congratulations to all those who joined us at the State Capitol on a bright sunny day on January 23, 2008. Special congratulations to those who walked the walk with their walkers and to those who had difficulty walking but came anyway with their lawn chairs, sat and held Death with Dignity balloons! There were about 100 of us, more than last year and we got good press and TV coverage. But is 100+ good enough to convince legislators that this is what Arizonans want? Statistics say we want the law changed, but the turnout leaves one in doubt. Plan to do better next year where hopefully hundreds will come!!"



The update above is courtesy of Irene Weitzman, Ph.D., President of the Northwest Valley Chapter

HB 2387

Introduced by Representatives Lopez, Bradley, Cajero Bedford, Garcia M, Sinema, Senator Pesquiera: Representatives Campbell CL, Chabin, DeSimone, McGuire, Schapira, Thrasher, Senators Aboud, Allen

Our Heroes...

And Our Heroines!

Irene Weitzman (above, left) single-handedly recruited about three-quarters of the marchers and Linda Lopez submitted HB 2837 to the Arizona Legislature. Others who supported the bill are:

The 100+ people described above by Dr. Weitzman, those motivated activists who gathered at the state Capitol, were rallying for a change in state law that would allow terminally ill people to be prescribed medication to end their lives. One of the three tenets of Compassion & Choices, changing the law is widely supported by the membership as demonstrated at this March for End of Life Choices.

One marcher named Thomas, of Sun City West, summed

up the position of most of those gathered: "If I am ever in the position of being near death and suffering, I want to end my life, painlessly and quickly."



Marchers made themselves comfortable during the event! Come March (or Sit) but Stand with us next year!

At least one marcher asked to be allowed to die "like a dog," referring to the common practice of allowing animals to die quickly and painlessly when they are suffering or near the end of life.



Compassion & Choices AZ organized the march for the third year in support of a bill that emulates Oregon's Death with Dignity Act.

Compassion & Choices legislative champion, Representative Linda Lopez introduced the bill for the sixth consecutive year. The measure was afforded an informational hearing the first year it was introduced, but has not been heard in committee since that time.

"The people in Arizona want the right to determine how they end their lives.

The right-to-die issue is the civil-rights issue of our time.



Representative Linda Lopez



Photos on this page courtesy Moses Weitzman, Edward Marks and Margot Champagne



TO CONTACT YOUR LOCAL CHAPTER OR STATE LEADERSHIP

THIS IS YOUR STATE ORGANIZATION - PLEASE LET US KNOW HOW YOU WANT TO HELP! QUESTIONS OR COMMENTS WELCOME.

CHAPTER LEADERSHIP

Casa Grande - Francene Haskins
(520) 836-9272

Cochise County - Billie Stockl
(520) 803-9285
Email: bstockl@cox.net

Flagstaff - Need a Chapter Leader!
Contact: C&C Arizona Toll Free 1-877-535-3600

Green Valley - Peter Smith
(520) 648-8487
Email: peterd@laposadagv.net

NW Valley (Northwest Valley: Carefree, El Mirage, Glendale, Morristown, Peoria, Sun City, Sun City West, Surprise, Wickenburg, and Youngtown)
Irene Weitzman

(623) 214-6552
Email: ireneweitz@aol.com

Metro Phoenix Area - Loretta Lande
(480) 990-8086
Email: lorettalande@aol.com

Prescott - Need a Chapter Leader!
Contact: Margot J. Champagne
(928) 776-3025
MJCesq100@aol.com

Sedona - Deborah Darby
(928) 634-3237
Email: peacefulpassing@msn.com

Sun Lakes - Bob Wallace
(480) 802-4327
Email: joyrobwall@wbhsi.net

Tucson - Cherie Esser
(520) 825-2219
Email: jcbesser825@yahoo.com

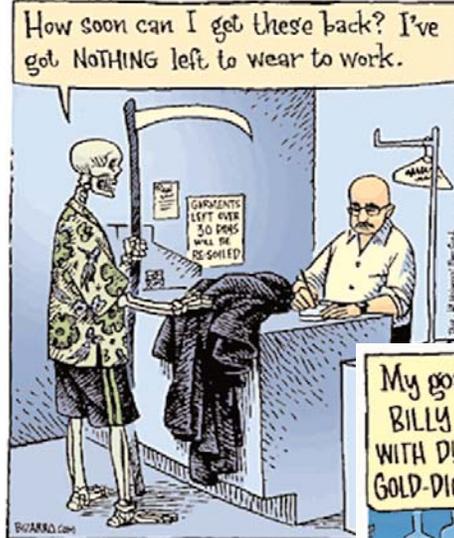
Yuma - Need a Chapter Leader!
Contact: C&C Toll Free 1-877-535-3600

STATE LEADERSHIP

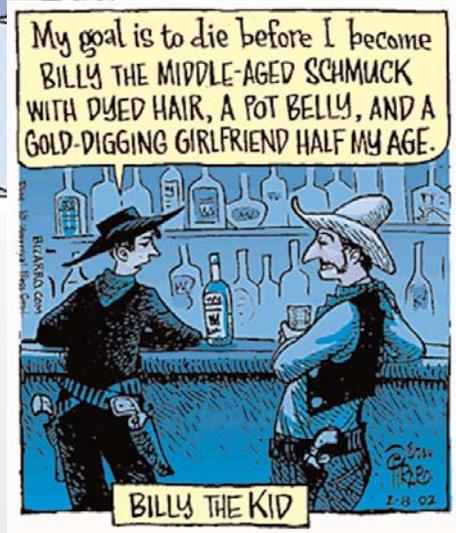
Compassion & Choices Arizona Board
President: Billie Stockl, Sierra Vista
Vice President: Margot Champagne, Prescott
Secretary: TBA
Treasurer: Stanley Steinberg, Tucson
Cherie Esser, Tucson
David Brandt-Erichsen, Tucson
Marshall Lindsay, Scottsdale
Bob Wallace, Sun Lakes
Irene Weitzman, Sun City West

Newsletter Editor
Deb Darby (send info: peacefulpassing@msn.com)

**Compassion & Choices Arizona
Medical Advisory Group**
Dr. Robert H. Furman
Dr. Harvey Turner



**What's so Funny
About Death?**



Courtesy of <http://www.willamette.edu/~sbasu/poli303/cartoons%20on%20death.htm>

CHAPTER NEWS UPDATES & INFORMATION

SEDONA



Charlotte Fox

The Sedona Chapter of Compassion & Choices welcomed popular author Charlotte Fox who spoke to a group of about 40 people on preparing for death by getting your “affairs in order.” Charlotte lost her husband suddenly about five years ago and found the devastating experience was a springboard to putting together her workbook called, “...And Then There was One...”

Preceding Charlotte, Sedona Chapter leader Deborah Darby gave the group updates on the March for End of Life Choices at the state capitol in Arizona and on the status of currently pending legislative efforts nationally.

VP of the Sedona Chapter, Susan Barrington, who is the director of the Sedona Community Center where the event was held, offered those who attended copies of the “Five Wishes” document that was put together by Aging with Dignity with a grant from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation. Susan normally sells the documents, which is the first living will that talks about your personal, emotional and spiritual needs as well as your medical wishes, for \$5 per copy, but she made them available free of charge to all who attended. You can get one at: <http://www.agingwithdignity.org>.



Fund-raising items for sale

Members of the Sedona community seemed, as always, happy to participate in a forum allowing them to “talk about death” and had many questions to ask and stories to tell.

To reach Charlotte for more info, please go to her website: www.therevasone.com.



COCHISE COUNTY

The Cochise County Chapter of Compassion & Choices Arizona met at “My Place” in Sierra Vista for a discussion of recent chapter business and the March for End of Life Choices. Guest Speaker for this event was Sandy Hall, owner of The Neighborhood Clubhouse, which provides full or part-time adult day care. Due to illness, Billie Stockl, current Chapter President, was unable to attend. Evadean Sanders presided over the meeting and gave an update on activities both state-wide and nationally.

Upcoming public meetings in Cochise County:

May 24, Sierra Vista Library, 11AM

Aug 16, Sierra Vista Library, 11 AM

Nov 22, Sierra Vista Library, 11 AM

Guest Speakers to be announced at a later date.

THE GREEN VALLEY CHAPTER

Guest Speaker Deborah Totten, who serves as the Community Outreach & Development Coordinator with Carondelet Hospice & Palliative Care, spoke on “Life Care Planning Made Simple.” According to Deborah (and in keeping with the Compassion & Choices education outreach), the completion of ADVANCE HEALTH DIRECTIVES is important for adults of all ages, especially seniors, regardless of health status. Less than 25% of adults take the simple measures needed to ensure their wishes are carried out and their loved ones are prepared.



Deborah Totten

Deborah explained “Advance Health Directives” in new ways. Even those who thought that they “have all this taken care of” came away with a much better understanding and appreciation of the importance of life care planning. In addition, Deborah provided information for the FREE “Arizona Advance Directive Registry” which allows you to store your completed Advance Directives with easy access from a secure website maintained by our Arizona Secretary of State’s office.

YOUR CHAPTER...

What is YOUR Chapter up to? Please be sure to send information regarding your Chapter meetings to the newsletter editor at peacefulpassing@msn.com so we can keep our readers up-to-date concerning meetings, membership and other pertinent and/or interesting data.

See back page for deadlines!

NATIONAL COMPASSION & CHOICES NEWS

WASHINGTON, MONTANA ARE THE ONLY STATES WITH VIABLE EFFORTS TO CHANGE THE LAW THIS YEAR

WASHINGTON:

The "death with dignity" ballot measure promoted by former Governor Booth Gardner deserves public support.

Assisted suicide for the terminally ill is humane and, as Oregon has demonstrated, can be administered in a civilized way. It provides a choice that is actually taken by fewer than two dying people per thousand, but for them it solves a terrible problem. The people who used Oregon's law in 2006 - 46 did so - were very ill. Forty had terminal cancer and most of the rest had Lou Gehrig's disease. They were people who were losing control over their motions and bodily functions; some of them were in great pain. They were not ending their lives on a whim.

Having the option of taking one's life is a comfort even to some who never do it. Here are Oregon's figures. In 2006, 35 people ordered a lethal dose of drugs and used them. Another 11 used drugs they had received before 2006. That's the 46. Another 19 died of their diseases even though they had the drugs and could have used them. Eleven had received the drugs and were still alive at the end of the year.

*"This will be my last campaign.
This will be the biggest fight of my career."
Booth Gardner*

Many people who opposed Oregon's law feared that patients would be railroaded into suicide. The law has a number of safeguards to prevent this - waiting periods, doctors' signatures and witnesses who aren't named in the patient's will. It can't be used for non-adults, nonresidents, the nonterminal, the mentally impaired or anyone who objects.

There have been no big scandals under this law, which has been used by a small and steady number of patients. In a population of 3.7 million, of which 30,000 die each year, deaths under the law have been running at about 40 per year. That suggests a death rate for Washington of about 70 per year.

COMPASSION & CHOICES NATIONAL FIGHTS HOSPITAL TAKE-OVERS BY CATHOLIC CHURCH IN COLORADO

Compassion & Choices is on the front lines of a Colorado movement fighting the transfer of two hospitals to a Catholic health organization.

Our own Roland Halpern, Director of Community Relations, is spearheading a coalition of concerned citizens, advocacy and nonprofit groups who fear the sale would restrict patients' rights to direct their own health care. They are joined by a group of doctors who say Catholic ownership could have disastrous consequences for women's health.

If these facilities are sold to the Sisters of Charity of Leavenworth Health System, healthcare in these facilities would be limited to procedures acceptable under the Catholic Church's Ethical and Religious Directives. This would prohibit patients from receiving tubal ligations and abortions, as well as limiting options such as withdrawal of artificial hydration and nutrition. Patients would be forced to seek such services elsewhere.

Such a move would leave patients unable to receive the type of end-of-life and reproductive care they desire at those hospitals, according to an article in the Denver Post.

Important Note! Please see below!



**FOR HELP FROM OUR CLIENT SUPPORT PROGRAM,
CALL 1-800-247-7421 AND ASK TO SPEAK TO SOMEONE IN "CLIENT SUPPORT"**

Our Compassion & Choices Arizona Chapter Leaders and members as well as our toll free number receive many inquiries from individuals wanting information on hastening one's death.

For such information, please call the National organization of Compassion & Choices at 1-800-247-7421 and ask to speak to someone in "Client Support". National has medically trained employees who will assess your needs and provide the appropriate guidance.

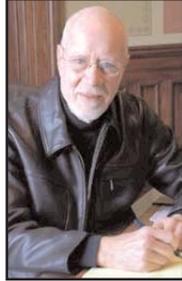
**COMPASSION & CHOICES AZ MEMBERS ARE NEITHER TRAINED NOR QUALIFIED TO PROVIDE SUCH INFORMATION,
AND CAN ONLY REFER YOU TO OUR NATIONAL ORGANIZATION OF C&C FOR ASSISTANCE.**

WISCONSIN LEGISLATOR ALSO CHAMPIONS END OF LIFE CHOICES

Excerpted from *The Daily Page* in Madison, Wisconsin

Interview with Fred Risser

Over the last 15 years, state Senator Fred Risser (D-Madison) has tried on eight occasions to pass legislation allowing doctors to assist the suicides of terminally-ill patients. Risser doesn't believe it will pass this time, either, but he vows to keep introducing the bill until it passes.



Credit: Emily Denaro

Risser recently sat with *The Daily Page* to discuss the need for this bill and counter the objections against it.

The Daily Page Q: Why does Wisconsin need a Death with Dignity bill?

Risser: This is a freedom-of-choice bill. It is not mandatory, and applies only to those people who want [this option]. It's been used in the state of Oregon for 10 years. It's had two votes. The people initially voted for it. Then it went into the court structure. Then the people voted again in 1997 on whether to repeal the law. They voted against that and it went into effect. The federal courts got involved and the Supreme Court, in essence, said it's a state matter.

There's a group of people who feel they deserve that right, that they should have the freedom to decide when and how to die when death is imminent. People who are terminally ill should not have to suffer. Should they be forced to undergo certain indignities or should they have the choice to bring their family together and die with dignity?

Q: The bill has been introduced several times over the last 15 years. Do you find support for it has grown?

When this matter has been polled, the public generally is supportive of this type of legislation. The devil is in the details, of course. Our bill applies to a small group of individuals. There's a very detailed process as to how this works.

This really protects the public against quackery. It has a very rigid procedure for making this applicable. In

essence, it calls for an oral request, a subsequent written request, three independent witnesses, and a psychological review to make sure the patient is competent.

Q: Critics have said that, under this bill, HMOs would pressure doctors to steer the elderly, disabled and the poor toward suicide.

This does not require any doctor or hospital to be involved, and if a doctor does not want to participate he does not have to. There are absolutely no requirements. They talk about a slippery slope, but I say the best answer to a slippery slope is to come up with some kind of regulation. That's why we have this bill.

Q: So, there's a difference between doctor-assisted suicide and euthanasia?

Euthanasia, in effect, does not rely on the patient's decision. Euthanasia, as I understand it, would make it possible for someone else to decide that a person has lived long enough and should pass out of the picture. The legislation I submitted is strictly a patient's choice.

Others have said that advances in palliative care negate the need for doctor-assisted suicides. Listen, advances in medical care are fantastic and should be promoted. I've been solidly for Hospice care, for instance. I've always supported home care. We're living in wonderful times and medical science can do many magical things.

This does not in any way slow that progress.

This applies only to the terminally ill, giving them the choice as to when and where death happens. Society should not insist that a person undergo physical torture. Your right is to have death with dignity if you choose it.

Q: Is death with dignity an option you would use?

It's something I'm not sure that I'd use, but other people have indicated that they would like to have that right.

NOTE: Compassion & Choices does not use the term "assisted suicide" but the journalist who wrote this article, Mr. Nathan Comp, did choose to use that term.



Yes, I want to join Compassion & Choices!

I understand that this automatically includes national membership and state membership privileges in Compassion & Choices Arizona and membership in my local chapter as well. **Please make checks payable to Compassion & Choices.**

Membership Options

- Individual Membership (one year): \$45 Life Membership for Individual: \$450
 Couple Membership (one year): \$60 Life Membership for Couple: \$600



Remember! If you join for a year, the membership needs to be renewed annually.

- I want to support the cause. Here is an extra \$ _____ contribution. Keep up the good work!

Please send my newsletters (national and state) to:

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone _____ Email: _____

Send a check or money order along with this form to:
Compassion & Choices
P. O. Box 101810
Denver, CO 80250

To join with Credit Card: Call 1-800-247-7421 (National Compassion & Choices)

To join online: <http://www.compassionandchoices.org/>

Questions regarding membership must be directed to the National Office at 1-800-247-7427 (ask for "membership").

If your Chapter would like to have Arizona State District 29 Representative Linda Lopez, our Legislative Champion speak to a public meeting in your area, please contact her assistant, Faye Parkin: Fparkin@azleg.state.az.us
Faye handles all of her calendar appointments.

**Thank You
Linda!**

**This is the sixth year in a row that Linda has submitted bills of this nature.
We appreciate her efforts and her willingness to share the information with our membership.**

ALOIA & LANDE FEATURE STORY

Used with permission of the *Auwatukee Foothills News*

Gwen Aloia still remembers some of her patients' agonizing final hours in the nursing home she worked at years ago. They're with her to this day. "I never forgot the suffering I saw," Aloia said.

That suffering sent the 57-year-old Ahwatukee Foothills resident marching at the Arizona capitol Jan. 23, side-by-side with other members of the national Compassion & Choices group. Compassion & Choices advocates the passage of "death with dignity" laws in all 50 states.

"Modern medicine is wonderful at prolonging life," Aloia continued, "but if the quality of life is just suffering then it doesn't make sense."

Arizona State Representative Linda Lopez (D-Tucson) has tried unsuccessfully for several years to get her Aid in Dying bill heard in the state House of Representatives. Lopez said she first became passionate about end-of-life issues after first-hand experience. "My father died in a nursing home," Lopez said. "I remember him begging me to bring him a gun so he could end his life."

Since first introducing the legislation in 2001, Lopez says she has spoken to others with similar stories. Still, her bills don't make it very far in the House. "Only one year has it even been heard in the committee," Lopez said. "Every other time, we've had chairmen who are personally against the issue. They let their personal beliefs conflict with the bill."

But advocates like Aloia and Loretta Lande are undeterred. Even if legislation can't get passed, they still feel it's important to keep the dialogue going.

"It's death," said Lande, president of the Phoenix chapter of Compassionate Choices. "Death is a very unpleasant subject; it's not something people want to talk about. But it's something people should talk about, because no one gets out of this alive." Lande argues that the issue is one of rights, and that instances of patients utilizing an Aid in Dying law would be low. The facts bear this out: in the 11 years since Oregon voters approved the Death With Dignity Act, only 292 patients have died under its terms. In 2006, 65 prescriptions for lethal medicines were written but only 35 took them. "The security to (the patients) of knowing they have that choice is very significant," Lande said.



Loretta Lande

For information, visit www.choicesarizona.org, or contact Lande at (480) 990-8086 or at lorettalande@aol.com

EDITOR'S CORNER

MARCH FOR END OF LIFE CHOICES!



Deb Darby

Please take a few moments to listen to the audio of the press conference from the March for End of Life Choices that was held in January. More than 100 people stood up for the right-to-die cause and Linda Lopez called it the "Civil Rights Issue of our time!"

To hear the audio, go online to

<http://www.indybay.org/newsitems/2008/01/23/18474358.php>

And now for something completely different... *Opportunity for Training*

Most of you (who read this column) know that I believe (strongly!) in the concept of a good death. I've seen it and it's what I want. To that end, I want to mention some training that is being held in Flagstaff next month to train people who want to work with those who are dying. This is NOT Compassion & Choices training but for those with an interest in being a caring presence for those who are nearing the end - and their families - this training may be just what you need!

The training is offered by The Arizona Twilight Brigade/Compassion In Action in a 20-hour Weekend Intensive Workshop at NAU. Participants will learn how to provide reassurance and caring human companionship to the dying and their loved ones. The training is appropriate for lay volunteers as well as medical and mental health professionals.

Among other things, participants will also learn what to do and how to be there when someone is dying; learn how to address our own fears and unsolved issues; and learn how to care for ourselves as we care for others

***Their flyer says: "Death should not be feared.
It is to be understood and embraced.
Our mission is to teach you how."***

Date: April 11 – 13, 2008
Location: NAU Campus, Flagstaff, AZ
More info: Connie Sarff/Program Coordinator
Phone: 623-977-1379
Email: lovewillfindaway11@msn.com



Compassion & Choices Arizona
P. O. Box 12126, Tucson, AZ 85732

Compassion in Dying * End of Life Choices

NONPROFIT ORG
US POSTAGE
PAID
TUCSON AZ
PERMIT NO 792

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

Compassion & Choices Arizona supports options for those who are terminally ill and mentally competent to determine their own life's end, including freedom from unnecessary pain and suffering during the last part of life.

Please make sure we have the information about your Chapter events at least six weeks in advance to assure that your event gets good coverage on the website, in the newsletter and with the screaming yellow cards we will prepare and mail to your constituency!

Send info to: info@choicesarizona.org

UPCOMING MEETINGS & EVENTS!

SUN CITY WEST, NORTHWEST VALLEY CHAPTER MEETING, WEDNESDAY, MARCH 26, 1:30 PM, Coyote-Quail room, the Foundation Center, 14465 R.H. Johnson Blvd (between 146th and Stardust Blvd). The topic to be presented is **Packing your Suitcase for over the Rainbow: Making responsible End-of-Life Choices and Preparations**. Our program will feature the video, *Final Exit*, with Derek Humphry followed by a discussion by Julian Rush, former director of the Caring Friends Program of Hemlock, later co-director of the Client Services Program of Compassion and Choices. Julian will also present considerations involved in hastening ones own death when terminally ill, including the importance of Hospice. Information about the Funeral Consumer's Alliance will be provided.

**Please be sure to send your info in a timely manner!
We are not able to change the deadline to announce your events,
so we will need plenty of notice!**

**Deadlines for the remainder of the year:
June 30, Sept 30 and December 31.**

Issues will be published approximately mid-month following the deadlines.