

“VOICES OF CHOICES”

OUR NEWSLETTER

COMPASSION & CHOICES ARIZONA
SUPPORTS OPTIONS FOR ONE WHO IS
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.

Spring 2006

COMPASSION & CHOICES ARIZONA (formerly Hemlock Society and End of Life Choices)

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



COMPASSION &
CHOICES ARIZONA
Compassion In Dying • End-of-Life Choices

Formerly known as

END OF LIFE
CHOICES ★ ARIZONA
Fifth Freedom Foundation

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We Marched for Human Freedom & Human Dignity



We march.



Representative Linda Lopez at Press Conference.

Freda Anderson's Speech to Press

My husband, Robert Anderson, was born in California in the 20's, lived through the depression, as a teenager lied about his age so that he could serve his country, was a decorated World War 2 veteran, worked hard all his life to provide for his families, had a wicked sense of humor and a zest for living.

On October 19th, 2004, after several weeks of increasing back pain, he was finally sent to the emergency department for an MRI to determine the source of his excruciating and uncontrollable pain. An MRI confirmed cancer in the spine and liver with a prognosis of 4-6 months. Between that day, October 19th and November 22nd, a mere 35 days, my husband would endure 2 hospital stays at Mayo Hospital Scottsdale, 2 separate stays in very different in-patient units of Hospice of the Valley, and 2 different hospice home teams. So I feel I speak from what could be termed 1st hand experience.

Why am I here to support physician aid in dying?

1. First and foremost, to educate that this legislation is to provide people with a choice, the power to decide for themselves how and when to move on from this world to the next. The legislation is not intended for mass slaughter of the terminally ill, elderly, infirm or depressed. For those who are opposed to it for religious, moral or any other grounds, the legislation does not force anybody to participate.

I find it ironic that in this country, we condone that more than 20% of women elect to bring life into this world by C-sections not required for medical reasons. We can put murderers to death by lethal injection, we can humanely put our beloved pets out of their misery when it is their time, but kind, gentle humans who have lived a full life and ready to remove the pain and suffering, be it

physical and/or mental, forget it. As my husband would say, that's logic!

On a personal level, I am here to support physician aid in dying:

2. So that no other loved one has to hear the words "what have I ever done that they ignore me this way" referring to both doctors and specialists in a hospital who abandoned my husband with their absence simply because they had no quick fix to the problem. Doctors and specialists who are clearly not trained to deal with patients facing death, which is ironic since no one has yet found a way to escape this fate.

I support physician aid in dying because pain management for terminally ill cancer patients within the hospital setting failed my husband miserably – not only could they not control his physical suffering, they were unaware of other specialists in the area who may have been able to help. It was suggested I move him out of hospital since he was dying and I guess they needed the bed for the next victim who would prove more financially rewarding.

3. Hospice – while these organizations undoubtedly have brought comfort to many families, in my own experience, comfort care and over sedation was one and the same; after 6 days in hospice, when my husband begged me to go home and get pills to help put him out of his misery.

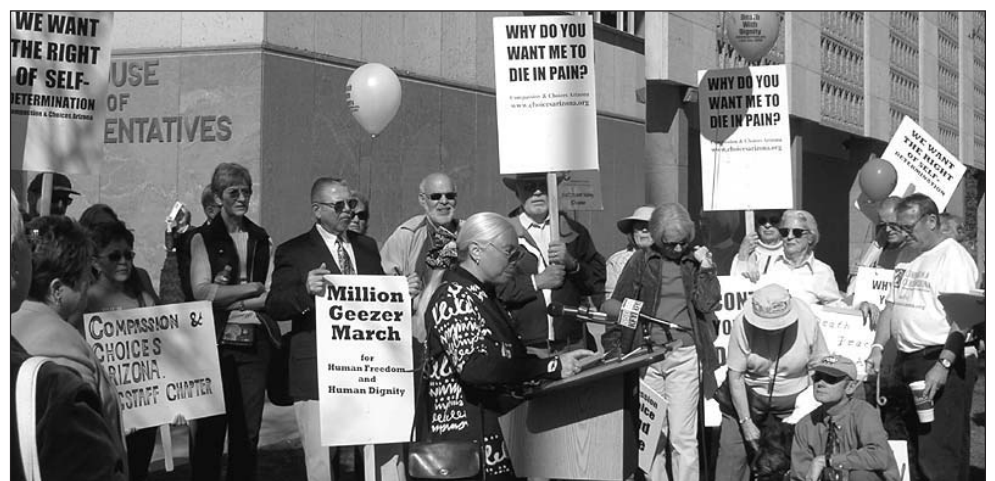
I could not fulfil our pledge to do what was necessary for the other when our quality of life was non-existent, because by this time, his body was tolerant to extremely high levels of morphine and my greatest fear was putting him in a coma, without ending his life.

4. Hospice - where over sedation eventually helped to hasten his painful journey to death. In my opinion, an environment of "don't ask, don't tell". So for those opponents of physician aid in dying, I suggest that in reality, the slippery slope for abuse already exists without legislation.

I tell my story because I regretfully do not believe that my husband's agonizing journey was unique. It's happening every day, in every city, throughout our country.

From the moment of diagnosis, we both accepted what would be the end result; however, neither of us could have anticipated that the journey would be so horrendous. So I owe it to my husband and to all of those still living, to fight for legislation to provide us as individuals with the right to control our own end, if we so choose, and to protect those doctors who understand that their oath includes aiding patients in their transition to a more peaceful and dignified death when their time is truly near. ■

— Freda Anderson



Freda Anderson addresses the press.

Nora Miller's Speech to Press

In 1999, my husband Rick and I were living in Portland, Oregon, when we found out that he had lung cancer. Despite our best efforts, by October he faced an imminent death from the various complications of that disease. An arsenal of medications held most of his symptoms at bay, but he found their side effects almost unbearable. Without them, he found the pain and anxiety almost unbearable. Because we lived in Oregon, he was able to ask his doctor for a legal lethal dose of medication that he could use to make his exit when he could no longer handle the ordeal that his life had become. One cold night in November, that moment came, and with his family around him and with a peaceful smile on his face, he took that medication and slipped into a deep sleep from which he never awoke.

Not everyone would do what Rick did. In fact, in the seven years since Oregon's law came into effect, barely more than 200 people have made the same choice—less than one-tenth of one percent of all the

Oregonians who died during that same period. Given Oregon's experience, it seems that only a few even consider it. But the glory of this country is that we honor and cherish individual freedoms, even when the individual differs from the majority. I was proud of and grateful to the people of Oregon for making it possible for me to help my husband when he most needed help.

Oregon's law is not about people who want to die. It's about people who know they have no choice about dying, and ask only for the right to choose the time and manner of that death.

I recently moved from Oregon to this gorgeous state of Arizona with its marvelous desert and brilliant sunny skies, and I'm here today because I think that the residents of Arizona have a right to the same kind of comfort that people in Oregon have.

The only rights we can count on are those we secure and defend ourselves. ■

—Nora Miller

How YOU Can Help

- 1) **Volunteers needed for our new and improved Client Support Program (formerly Caring Friends).** You can help those who call in for our guidance. You can receive excellent training on the National level. Please call or email John Abraham for more information (see article on page 6).
- 2) **We need documented cases of "bad" deaths.** If you know of someone who suffered needlessly, please consider sending us documentation of the event: dates, times, places, specific treatments (or lack thereof), physicians' names, etc.
- 3) **We need more physicians for our Medical Advisory Group.** If you know of a physician sympathetic to our cause, please advise us ASAP.
- 4) **We'd like to build an AZ database of physicians to whom our members may turn for help.** If you know of any such physician, please notify our Executive Director ASAP. (No physician would be listed who does not first agree to be listed, and all such listings shall be proprietary information). This notice will appear in every newsletter until we have at least 2 such physicians in any town of over 20,000 population in AZ. To date we have 0 — so call me!
- 5) **Invite someone else to join us!** We must grow. Call 520-577-2245 or see your chapter leader for a membership application to give to a friend.
- 6) **Become a chapter leader where we need another chapter:** Kingman, Lake Havasu City, Mesa, Tempe, Glendale, Wilcox. We have a thorough Training Manual for you. Contact Executive Director.



More marchers led by Bob Wallace.

ARIZONA CHAPTERS AND CONTACTS (2/06)

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Irene Weitzman, NW Valley

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Monte DuVal, M.D., Phoenix

Publicity for Geezer March by the Northwest Valley Chapter

Notices have appeared and will continue to appear
in the following local newsletters :

Hadassah
NOW
One Voice

In January

Notices in the Advocacy network will appear 3x in
January. Notices will be posted at local supermarkets,
libraries, and the Universal Unitarian Church. Notices
will be sent to the local newspapers, *the Wester*, *Daily*
News Sun and the *Sun Cities Independent*.

Members will be emailed as a reminder of the march.
Members without computers will be called

— Irene

Great job, Irene! John

Life/Death Logo; a Rebus

Some of you have seen this symbol on my letters. Others may have seen it writ large on a poster board I've used at a presentation. I include it here to reach us all as a reminder that life and death are inextricably linked. They are one. One does not exist without the other. Death is part of life. One could say that death even defines life. Without death, how would we define life?

Although highly stylized, when this page is held right side up, the word reads "Life." When you turn the page upside down, the same word reads "Death." Can you see it?



Our cause is not about death. We do not advocate that people hasten their death. We advocate that they have the right to do so if they so choose. We advocate that one's life be fulfilling, meaningful, worthwhile and worth living as long as one is alive. We advocate that throughout life, one want to live with a life worth living. This is what advance directives such as the living will and medical power of attorney are designed to achieve: to sustain a "livable" life, a desirable life, for those who make their wishes known. When we fill out our advance directives, make our funeral arrangements, put our financial affairs in order, or settle our unfinished relational business

(including saying our goodbyes) we are acting to approach the end of life with a sense of fulfillment.

When death is near, and if we then (for whatever reason) no longer want to live (usually because of emotional and psychological suffering, and sometimes because of physical suffering), we should not have to live.

When we reach the point that the end of life is close, and if the time we may have left is not worth living, then we have the right to embrace the final process of life: death.

I have valued this symbol since it's creation in 1986 by Constantine Suozzi, an artist friend of mine. It's a clever wordplay, but it is also a valuable reminder that death is 100% relevant. Life and death are hand in glove. Several years ago, in fact, I wrote an essay about what I perceive as the 12 benefits of death. Strange, I know, but life and death are a continuum. Some church elders called the essay heresy, claiming that death is "the wages of sin." Not the way I see it. Death is inevitably the final natural stage of life for all of us. Death is a perfectly natural part of life.

As we approach death, life can still be full, worthwhile, dignified, and no less precious than when we were born. If it is not, then why not invite Death to come on? ■

Living Will

A man and his wife were sitting in the living room and he said to her, "Just so you know, I never want to live in a vegetative state, dependent on some machine and fluids from a bottle. If that ever happens, just pull the plug."

His wife got up, unplugged the TV and threw out all of his beer.

—from Jean Osborne



YES, I want to join Compassion & Choices!

I understand this automatically includes national membership and state membership privileges in Compassion & Choices Arizona, the Fifth Freedom Foundation, and most local chapters as well! Make check payable to Compassion & Choices.

ANNUAL CONTRIBUTION

☐ \$45 Single ☐ \$60 Couple ☐ Single Life Member \$350 ☐ Couple Life Member \$430

☐ You folks are doing a great job! Here's an extra \$_____ contribution to help the cause.

This is a yearly membership, renewable annually. Please send my newsletters (national and state) to:

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone _____ Email Address _____

Mail to: P.O. Box 101810, Denver, CO 80250

Client Support

Our Client Support program is the heart of Compassion & Choices. We provide support to individuals facing a terminal illness and their loved ones, and assistance in all aspects of end-of-life choice, including advance directives.

If you or someone you love is facing the end of life, or just planning ahead, we can help.

What we offer:

- Assistance in all aspects of end-of-life decision making, including advance directives.
- Help in navigating the health care system, encouraging contacts to local resources, including hospice providers, pain specialists, social service agencies, support groups and others.
- Education for family members on how to advocate for their loved ones, and help those who are ill to advocate for themselves.
- Counsel to clients on their right to effective pain and symptom control.
- Advocacy for those receiving inadequate care in nursing homes or in any health care facility.
- Information on aid in dying when suffering becomes unbearable for terminally ill, mentally capable adults.
- A network of health care professionals available to consult with others in their field, providing information and support as requested.
- Professional education to doctors committed to compassionate patient care.

- Support staff made up of nurses and social workers with extensive hospice experience. Our interdisciplinary team of volunteer physicians, nurses, social workers, chaplains, pharmacists and others keep our program up to date.
- Trained support volunteers, who work in tandem with staff in many communities around the country to provide the best possible program.

Compassion & Choices is proud to make Client Support services available at no charge. All contacts are confidential. Please call our Client Support staff toll-free at 800.247.7421 or email us at clientsupport@compassionandchoices.org.

Together we can work to obtain a peaceful death.



Contact us at 800.247.7421
or visit www.compassionandchoices.org

*Support. Educate. Advocate.
Choice & Care at the End of Life*



PLEASE CHECK YOUR NEAREST CHAPTER...

You are automatically a local chapter member (in addition to nat'l and state) in these communities.

- ☐ Phoenix/Scottsdale/Tempe ☐ Tucson ☐ Green Valley
- ☐ NW Valley (Carefree, Cave Creek, Glendale, Litchfield Park, Peoria, Sun City, Sun City Grand, Sun City West, Surprise)
- ☐ Sedona ☐ Cochise County ☐ Sun Lakes
- ☐ Prescott ☐ Yuma ☐ Flagstaff
- ☐ I WOULD LIKE TO HELP START A CHAPTER

Phone: _____

For more information visit our website (www.choicesarizona.org)
or call us toll free at **1-877-535-3600** (in Tucson, call 577-2245); Fax: 520-751-1310



**COMPASSION &
CHOICES ARIZONA**
Compassion In Dying • End-of-Life Choices

Upcoming Chapter Meetings

*(All meetings are free.
Please bring your friends!)*

Green Valley

☐ Saturday, March 18 - meeting at 10am with refreshments at 9am. **John Abraham**, Executive Director of Compassion & Choices Arizona, will speak on *"What Nobody Ever Told You About Advance Directives"* at the El Dorado Room in La Perla Building. Take Interstate 19 to Exit 63 (Continental Road). Go east, through first light, to stop sign to Park Center (entrance to La Posada Campus). Turn left, at next stop sign turn right to La Perla. Park in front of building and ask at reception desk for location of El Dorado Room. Please come armed with any questions you may have about your advance directives, or advance directives in general.

Tucson

☐ Saturday, April 1 - 10:00am. Tucson Chapter public meeting at the library at River and Craycroft (NE corner, in the NE corner of the shopping center). Topic to be announced.

Northwest Valley

☐ Wednesday, March 29 - 1:30pm. Northwest Valley Spring Chapter Meeting at the Coyote-Quail Room at the Sun City West Foundation Center, 14465 R.H. Johnson Blvd., Sun City West. Guest speaker **John Abraham**, Executive Director Compassion & Choices Arizona and Fifth Freedom Foundation, will speak on *"What Nobody Ever Told You About Living Wills! An important update!"* Refreshments will be served.

Flagstaff

☐ Wednesday, May 24 - 8:30am to 2:30pm. The 9th Annual National Senior Health & Fitness Day will take place at the Radisson Woodlands Hotel, 1175 W. Rt. 66, Flagstaff. Compassion & Choices Arizona will have a table there, manned by Arlene Begay and Severy Partridge, with free literature. Also, our Advance Directives package will be available (donation \$10). This event is sponsored by City of Flagstaff Adult Center. Contacts: Arlene Begay, (928) 527-3160 or Severy Partridge (928) 774-5105.

We'll have a table at the 24th annual Tucson Peace Fair and Music Festival on February 25, 2006, from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. Hope to see you at the Reid Park Bandshell area!

We also plan to have a table at the Tucson Estates' Annual Health Fair on March 16th, 2006, from 9am to 1pm.

Client Support Training Program

We'll have our own Arizona training for our Client Support Team (used to be called Caring Friends) this March. Meeting at Spirit in the Desert Retreat Center in Carefree, AZ, from March 10-12, Friday evening through Sunday, about 8 of us will be trained to guide people near their life's end. **Julian Rush** and **Helen Beum** from National will be coming to do the training. If you have any interest in becoming a Client Support Volunteer, please contact John Abraham ASAP, 520-577-2245 or john@choicesarizona.org.

New Members Since Our Last Newsletter

COTTONWOOD

Judith Rupel

FLAGSTAFF

Chester Partridge

Eugene and Arlene Salazar

GLENDALE

Janet Proulx

GOLD CANYON

Dianne Buttermore

GREEN VALLEY

Wallace M. and BJ Cookson

Sarah Dillaha

Barrett Newhall

Tom and Priscilla Wilson

PAYSON

Ms. Carla R. Reed

PHOENIX

Martha Grenier

PRESCOTT

Nadine Jackson

SADDLEBROOKE

Robert Zimdar

SEDONA

Beth Mohan

SUN CITY

Einar R. Kvaran

John and Gloria Retynski

Barbara Walls

SUN CITY WEST

Charlene Stebar

TUCSON

Elizabeth Claiborne

Dr. Manuel R. Palacios-Fest

Ms. Kip Martinez

*First they ignore you, then they
laugh at you, then they fight you,
then you win.*

— Mahatma Gandhi

Newsletter Schedule

Our Newsletter schedule is as follows:

Mailings on or about:

- ◆ April 1, 2006
- ◆ September 22, 2006
- ◆ November 1, 2006
- ◆ January 22, 2007

I welcome all news contributions!

Please submit your suggestions/articles to John Abraham, john@choicesarizona.org

The deadlines for submissions are: September 1, October 1, January 1 and March 1—always the first of the month prior to mailing.

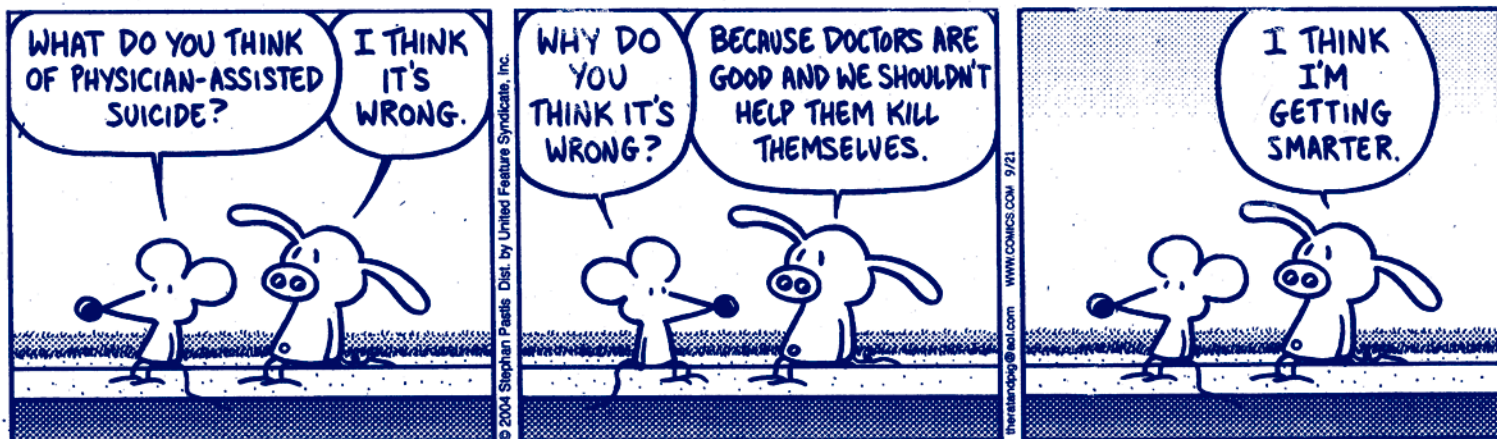
I'm looking forward to your contributions.

Check your renewal date



20030816 ctr=G
VICKIE FISCHER
1860 CALLE MONTANOSA
GREEN VALLEY, AZ 85614

If you are a member of Compassion & Choices (formerly Hemlock and End of Life Choices), your mailing label on this newsletter will say "M" or "L" (Life member), and show when your membership expires (year/month/day). Your chapter cluster code is at the right side.



Give this newsletter to your physician and to interested friends who may want to join us. For additional copies please contact your local chapter leader or myself, John Abraham at 520-577-2245 or john@choicesarizona.org

Is Fifth Freedom Foundation in your Will?



**COMPASSION &
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