



Voices of Choices

Compassion & Choices Arizona Newsletter

Previous Issues at: www.choicesarizona.org

Issue #2 - 2007

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

MEMBERSHIP DRIVE SCHEDULED FOR JUNE 30

SEVERAL AREAS IN AZ NEED MORE MEMBERS AND/OR NEW LEADERSHIP

Compassion & Choices Arizona is sponsoring a Membership Drive meeting on June 30 from 10:30 to 12:00 noon at the Mustang Library in Scottsdale 10101 N. 90th Street, Scottsdale (South of Scottsdale North Hospital).

Please plan to attend and to bring your friends. The shortage of new members in our organization has become critical. We need everyone to renew their membership and to encourage at least one other person to join!

Representative Linda Lopez (D), District 29, Tucson, AZ, will be speaking about her legislative efforts to-date, and the need to build membership so that our voices are heard loud and clear in the state of Arizona.

Other guest speakers are Roland Halpern, who will give an overview of our National organization and Compassion & Choices Arizona board president, Billie Stockl, who will also make a presentation entitled "Why I joined Compassion & Choices Arizona".



Billie Stockl

~ WE NEED TO CHANGE THE LAW! ~

NEW ASSOCIATED PRESS POLL METHODOLOGY QUESTIONED BY C&C RESEARCH

According to a new Associated Press poll more than two-thirds of Americans believe there are circumstances in which a patient should be allowed to die, but they are closely divided on whether it should be legal for a doctor to help terminally ill patients end their own lives by prescribing fatal drugs. Forty-eight percent said it should be legal; 44 percent said it should be illegal.

More broadly, 68 percent said there are circumstances when a patient should be allowed to die, while 30 percent said doctors and nurses, in all circumstances, should do everything possible to save the life of a patient.

The AP poll involved telephone interviews with 1,000 randomly chosen adults from May 22-24, 2007. The margin of sampling error was plus or minus 3 percentage points.

According to Roland Halpern of the C&C National offices, "In reviewing the poll, I note that the question, 'Do you think it should be legal or illegal for doctors to help terminally ill patients end their own life by giving them a prescription for fatal drugs?' has two flaws.

"First, they should have asked should it be legal, or illegal, but not both; and second, the word fatal is likely to be more emotive than something such as 'the means to end their life.' We have found that the word dying routinely polls better than the word death."

"The Gallup organization has been conducting polls on this issue since 1947 using the question: 'When a person has a disease that cannot be cured, do you think doctors should be allowed by law to end the patient's life by some painless means if the patient and his family request it?' Support has been averaging 70% since 1990 (a total of 9 polls)."

Halpern concludes: "I would look on the results of this poll as more of a fluke than a trend. If we look at support over the long haul, it continues to be in the 60% + range."

Canadians Support Physician Assisted Death Seven in 10 Canadians believe doctor-assisted death for terminally ill patients should be legal, says a new poll

CanWest Global sponsored the Ipsos Reid survey conducted June 5-7, just after the release of Dr. Jack Kevorkian.

The poll says 71 per cent of Canadians agree that it should be legal for a doctor to assist in the death of a terminally ill patient.

And 76 per cent agree with the "right to die" concept for individuals who want to die before enduring the full course of a deadly illness.

Thanks for David Brandt-Erichsen for this update

TO CONTACT YOUR LOCAL CHAPTER OR STATE LEADERSHIP

CHAPTER LEADERSHIP

Casa Grande - Francene Haskins

(520) 836-9272

1268 E. Crown Circle, Casa Grande, AZ 85222

Cochise County - Billie Stockl

(520) 803-9285

3305 E. Mohawk Drive, Sierra Vista, AZ 85650

Email: bstockl@cox.net

Flagstaff - Need a Chapter Leader!

Contact: C&C Arizona Toll Free 1-877-535-3600

P. O. Box 22003, Flagstaff, AZ 86002

Green Valley - Peter Smith

(520) 648-8487

685 S. La Posada Circle GH 1604

Green Valley, AZ 85614

Email: peterd@laposadagv.net

NW Valley (Carefree, Cave Creek, Glendale, Litchfield Park, Peoria, Sun City, Sun City Grand, Sun City West, Surprise)

Irene Weitzman

(623) 214-6552

15187 W. Gunsight Drive,

Sun City West, AZ 85375-2928

Email: ireneweitz@aol.com

Phoenix/Scottsdale/Tempe

Membership Drive Meeting 6/30/07

Contact: Marshall Lindsay

(602) 493-0266

4233 E. Coolbrook, Phoenix, AZ 85032

Email: dwdchoice@hotmail.com

Prescott - Need a Chapter Leader!

Contact: Margot J. Champagne

(928) 776-3025

P. O. Box 3896, Prescott, AZ 86302-3896

MJCesq100@aol.com

Sedona - Deborah Darby

(928) 634-3237

Email:peacefulpassing@msn.com

Sun Lakes - Bob Wallace

(480) 802-4327

9306 E. Crystal Drive, Sun Lakes, AZ 85248

Email: joyrobwall@wbhsi.net

Tucson - Cherie Esser

(520) 825-2219

Email: jcbesser825@yahoo.com

Yuma - Need a Chapter Leader!

Contact: C&C Arizona 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

MARK YOUR CALENDAR: STATE CONFERENCE SCHEDULED FOR NOVEMBER 3, 2007

The suggested date for the State Conference is November 3, 2007, during National Advance Directives Week. It will be held in the Phoenix metroplex area. A committee has been formed to plan the State Conference. Bob Wallace will chair the committee. Cherie Esser volunteered to be on the committee with Bob and they need your help, too! **If you can help with planning or implementation of the State Conference please contact Bob at joyrobwall@wbhsi.net.**

~ CHAPTER NEWS ~

NORTHWEST VALLEY PRESENTATION

The Northwest Valley Chapter of Compassion and Choices Arizona hosted Dr. Loree A. Ratto who gave a talk entitled, "Triple A: Attention, Advocacy and Action at End-of-Life". Dr. Ratto says, "The event was superb. There was a room full of people and they asked great questions. My work with the terminally ill has taught me so much but primarily, the dying should be treated with respect and dignity. More than anything else the dying want to be in control of their last days and be heard. Profound thoughts and ideas can be captured in the last days if somebody is listening and attentive. Many times emotion interferes with the process so I find it helpful to have a "death mediator" or advocate if you will, not only to ensure the patient's rights as they pertain to health care, but to be the recipient of the final thoughts and words of the dying person and allow them expression of feelings, thoughts and attitudes. I love working with the C&C group because they are so intuitive and powerful when it comes to end-of-life care."



Dr. Loree Ratto

whom were first time attendees. Bob Wallace, President of the chapter and a retired philosophy professor, spoke on the topic, Compassion and Choices at the End of Life.

With all the blessings of modern medical technology and effective palliative care, Dr. Wallace pointed out that many persons still face great suffering and even additional end-of-life issues in this age of medicalized dying.

The development of hospice programs, the use of Advance Medical Directives, and improved medical therapies are some of the positive achievements in these last three decades but grave injustices, unnecessary suffering, and bitter controversies remain.

A brief discussion of the effects of the high-profile cases of Karen Ann Quinlan, Nancy Cruzan, and Terri Schiavo, illustrated some of these issues. The development of hospice programs, the use of advance medical directives, and improved medical therapies are some of the positive achievements in morally are no different from or, in some cases, morally inferior to assisted dying.

~ WE NEED TO CHANGE THE LAW! ~

SEDONA CHAPTER PRESENTATION

Ilene Decker, RN, PhD, interim Executive Director of the School of Nursing at NAU examined some of the ethical/legal issues at the end of life, specifically Advance Directives and decision-making. Dr. Decker answered many questions on elders' perceptions and concerns about the end of life and addressed the reasoning processes used



to form preferences for treatment at the end of life. She has worked with elders living in a senior community arrangement in the Netherlands and also worked with nursing faculty who teach death and dying at a University program to determine cultural determinants of end-of-life care. Her 2005 paper on "Anticipated End-of-Life Treatment Decisions" concluded that the majority of elders surveyed prefer less aggressive medical treatment as they approach the end of life, preferring quality of life to artificial prolongation. If your chapter would like to hear from Dr. Decker, contact her at Ilene.Decker@nau.edu.

SUN LAKES CHAPTER PRESENTATION

The spring meeting of the Sun Lakes Chapter of Compassion & Choices Arizona was attended by 43 persons, several of

LEADERSHIP NEEDED!!

State Organization has Proclaimed that 2007 to Focus on Increasing Membership and Building New Leadership

If you live in the Prescott, Yuma, Flagstaff or Phoenix area and have a passion for Compassion & Choices, sign up to become a Chapter Leader. It is a privilege to support the work our state board is doing and an honor to represent this organization as a Chapter Leader. Generally all it costs you is some time. And the rewards are innumerable.

Editor's note: I resisted becoming Chapter Leader in Sedona for all the same reasons you resist. But once I made the commitment, a whole new world opened up. People began to tell me their stories about death and dying. That gave me the opportunity to tell them about the good work C&C does in that regard. Plus the added bonus of being able to tell my own stories, which, as you know is an important part of the grief process.

Once you become fairly well known in your community, the newspapers print your articles and editorials almost without fail, so C&C gets much needed publicity. We really need your support, so, please:

STEP UP! SHOW UP! SPEAK UP!

VOLUNTARILY STOPPING EATING AND DRINKING (VSED) AS A MEANS OF ENDING LIFE

By Deb Darby

C&C Board President, Sedona

I trained as one of the C&C Client Support Volunteers in March 2006. I was able to be an advocate for a client immediately upon the completion of the training and found the experience to be amazing.

My client had been bedridden for more than a year and her condition was deteriorating. She had the resources to have full-time caregivers and had quite a full life in terms of visitors and civic and social input, despite being home bound. She was, in short, a force of nature.

"It's a Happy Surprise!"

And she was also ready to die. Her children and her brother refused to discuss her death with her beyond making a few tiny concessions, i.e., finding out where she kept her will and reluctantly agreeing with her wish to donate her body for scientific research.

She called upon me to sit with her while she had the discussion with her son and her brother that she intended to voluntarily stop eating and drinking (VSED). They made it very clear that they did not approve, but she, with the support of her advocate, stood her ground, so to speak. My gentle but firm approach seemed to help them. I know it helped her.

First she threw a party that was attended by dozens of her friends. Surrounded by those in a festive mode, she toasted with champagne and laughed all afternoon.

Then, quietly, a couple of weeks later, she quit eating and drinking. We had many conversations and had both done our research. She knew what to expect, and, right on schedule, on her third day of the terminal fast, she hit a euphoric plateau that was wonderful to see. She called me three times that day; she also called her children one last time. She felt great, though quite thirsty. She was never hungry, though she was having difficulty sleeping.

I had convinced her to try a little of the liquid morphine that her Hospice Nurse had left for her a couple of days before and she, who had been getting by on a minor pain reliever, told me that the morphine was "wonderful." I asked her if it helped her sleep. She said, "No, but I don't care!" But from that point on, she was able to relax so that nature could take over. She soon began to nod in and out.

My client was someone I had known casually for several years and so I sat with her, climbing up into her bed, on the seventh day of her fast. She was propped up as usual (she always sat, rather than laid, in her bed). With my arm around her shoulder, I just held her. Twice she raised her head to speak to me. The first time, with a big grin on her face, she said, "It's heaven!" I didn't ask her to elaborate, but in a few moments she spoke again, saying with a giggle in her voice, "It's a happy surprise."

This from a woman who had forbidden me to speak of the after-life, telling me that she simply did not believe in life after death. Naturally I complied with her wishes, but I believe she got a preview of heaven. Whatever it meant, it was the final detail she needed. She went into a coma and died the next day.

Did she get a glimpse of the after life we all hope for? We'll never know for sure, but I prefer to think that she did. My life was changed forever by her experience and the tiny bits she could share with me. I was honored and privileged to share in her end-of-life journey.

I urge any and all of you who are interested in learning more about becoming Client Service Volunteers to contact the national C&C organization: Rebecca Cutter at RCutter@compassionandchoices.org. The training takes place over a long weekend and is well worth your investment of time and energy. The cost is minimal.

And even though I'm not currently serving as a CSV, if anyone wants to talk to me about the experience, I'll always respond promptly to email: peacefulpassing@msn.com.

~ WE NEED TO CHANGE THE LAW! ~

CALIFORNIA AB 374 FAILS!

Hotly contested legislation to allow doctors to prescribe life-ending medication to terminally ill patients was shelved Thursday in the California Assembly

Assembly Bill 374, patterned after the law in Oregon, lacked enough votes for passage and time was running out, with the California Assembly facing a Friday deadline for acting upon bills by its members.

"The people are there and the politicians aren't," said Will Shuck, chief of staff for Assemblywoman Patty Berg, a California Democrat who helped write the bill.

AB 374 is dead for the year. It could be resurrected in January, Shuck said, but he is not sure whether that will happen. A similar measure, one of the Legislature's most hotly contested, died in a Senate committee last year. This much-amended measure made it at least one step further.

"The people are there and the politicians aren't!"

This year's bill received a boost when California Assembly Speaker Fabian Núñez signed on as a joint author. But opposition remained intense.

The California measure would have allowed terminally ill patients with *less than three months to live* to request and ingest life-ending medication after diagnoses by two doctors and compliance with various other conditions.

Supporters described the proposal as creating a "compassionate choice" for terminally ill patients. Opponents blasted it as a devaluation of life and a form of suicide.

NEWS YOU CAN USE:

SHINGLES VACCINE NOW AVAILABLE

Tucson foothills resident - and long-time C&C supporter - Ruthie Steinberg wants to share her story with anyone who has ever had chickenpox! This article first appeared in the Arizona Daily Star.

Parts of Ruthie Steinberg's face are so sensitive that it hurts to touch them. She she bumps her head, the pain goes right through her, she says.

She has lost almost 20 pounds and some of her hair. What could cause such conditions, and more important, what can be done to prevent it?

Ruthie is suffering from post-herpetic neuralgia, which, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, is a severe pain that stays with about one in five people who have been stricken with shingles.

Shingles is a nerve-based, painful skin rash caused by the same virus that causes chickenpox. In fact, only people who have already had chickenpox are susceptible to shingles.

That's the bad news. The good news is that there is now a vaccine to prevent shingles. The new vaccine is recommended for those ages 60 and over...and Ruthie has made it her mission to tell everyone she knows. "It's worth every penny," she said.

Costs for the vaccine generally run from \$100 to more than \$200. Some of the cost may be covered by health insurance. Cost may be a deterrent for some people but Ruthie says, "It's not cheap, but even if it's \$1000, I would beg, borrow or steal! It's that painful."

Mildred Blackstone, special programs manager for the Arizona Department of Health Services, says that those who got the vaccine during the study (38,000 people over 60) had a 50% reduction in the occurrence of shingles and a 67% reduction in post-herpetic neuralgia.

Though the condition is not terminal, it is so painful that it is often accompanied by depression and, on occasion, thoughts of suicide. Ruthie says, "Don't let this happen to you. Get the vaccine!"

Summer Reading

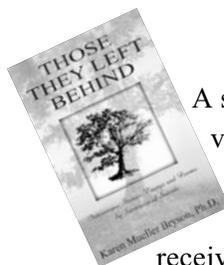
READ ANY GOOD (DEATH AND DYING) BOOKS LATELY?

Several people have asked us to review their books on the topic of death and dying. We am doing so in this newsletter and hope that other members will forward reviews of their favorite books on the topic for us to use in future newsletters.

~ WE NEED TO CHANGE THE LAW! ~

Those They Left Behind

by Karen Mueller Bryson, Ph. D.



A sometimes searing look at the stories survivors tell when their loved ones commit suicide, this is a challenging book to read.

Bryson asked for stories and she received dozens which she categorizes as:

Survivors of Multiple Suicides; Sons and Daughters; Mothers and Fathers; Spouses and Significant Others; Siblings; Other Relatives and Friends; and Stories, Essays and Poems.

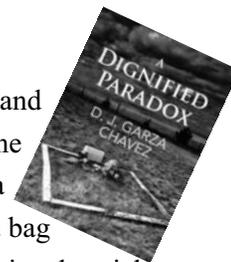
Not surprisingly, some of these people took their own lives because they were in pain caused by terminal illness. One tricked her physician into giving her Phenobarbital. No doubt these people would have benefitted from a change in the laws for assisted dying.

Each story is only a few pages and the book can be digested slowly over a period of time. The book is available on Amazon.com.

~ WE NEED TO CHANGE THE LAW! ~

A Dignified Paradox

by D. J. Garza Chavez



An interesting mix of culturally acceptable and totally illegal methodologies of death, the flow of this novel wanders a bit, but it has a big heart. The back cover says it all: "Put a bag lady, a bunch of deadly herbs and a dysfunctional social worker all together and there is bound to be trouble in the end. Of course, endings are Fringe's specialty. She comes from a long line of midwives. This lineage is not known for midwifery during birth, however. It is known for midwifery in death." It is also available on Amazon.com. You'll find this strange little book a bit on the "lighter side" on the topic of death.

...continued on page 7

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

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Individual Membership (one year): \$45 | <input type="checkbox"/> Life Membership for Individual: \$450 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Couple Membership (one year): \$60 | <input type="checkbox"/> 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)

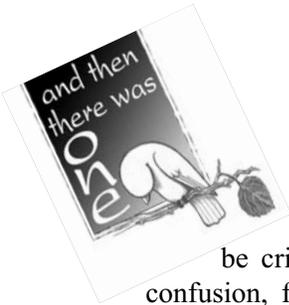
To join online: <http://compassionandchoices.org/>

*Any questions regarding membership should be directed to the National Office at 1-800-247-7421 (ask for "membership").
Our state no longer handles membership issues.*

**If your chapter would like to have Arizona State District 29 Representative Linda Lopez, our C&C 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 Linda's calendar appointments.**

***Linda will speak at the Membership Drive on June 30 in Scottsdale
and at the Compassion & Choices Arizona
State Conference in November***

...and then there was one
A Tactical Survival Workbook
Following the Loss of a
Spouse, Life Partner or Loved One
by Charlotte Fox



Many experiences with death and dying can be crippling at best...but add lack of preparation, confusion, financial devastation, family feuds, exploitation of the survivor and a variety of other challenging circumstances into the mix and you have a situation that may be paralyzing.

This workbook has been designed not only to help plan— if not prepare—for your demise, but is also helpful to all who are faced with the overwhelming task of sorting through the pieces while grieving the loss of a spouse or other loved one. Many will find it an extremely useful tool for trusted friends and family members who want to help but don't quite know what to do.

By using the step-by-step checklists and fill-in-the-blanks format in this workbook, you can reduce or eliminate most of the disorganized frenzy and unintended consequences that follow the death of a loved one—making the transition easier for the survivor(s).

This beautifully illustrated, 124-page, eight-sectioned, three-ring-binder workbook, includes helpful information such as:

- * An eight-page checklist to help walk the survivor through the first few hours, days, weeks and months following their loss.
- * An explanation of how estates pass in the State of Arizona, and your rights as a survivor.
- * An explanation of all end-of-life documents, together with the following end-of-life forms: Living Will; Durable Health Care Power of Attorney; General Durable Power of Attorney; Do Not Resuscitate Order (for the terminally ill); Anatomical Gift.
- * Forms and form letters to help the survivor organize his or her finances and do what they can to preserve their estate.
- * Forms to help the survivor plan for his or her future, and information to simplify the process for their survivors.
- * Numerous tips and suggestions for both the survivor and the helpful friends of the survivor.

This workbook is the result of collective efforts of professionals who are pillars of their respective communities. Those who have lovingly contributed to this workbook include: an attorney, a financial planner, a funeral home owner, a doctor, a retired registered nurse, a graphic artist, and a Deputy Sheriff from the Coconino County Sheriff's Office.

The author, herself a widowed survivor who faced many challenges when her husband died unexpectedly will hold your hand via this workbook as you navigate the complicated maze ahead.

EDITOR'S CORNER

SPEAK OUT!
TELL YOUR FRIENDS!
(AND EVERYBODY ELSE!)



Deb Darby

Can it be that our worthy cause is beginning to find its place in our world? Have we reached the critical mass that is necessary to bring out the fact that doctors can - and have been - helping people die via terminal medications? I admit to being a bit of an optimist (for example, I believe we'll pass an Oregon-style law within five years), but with Jack Kevorkian back among us, the focus is more intense than ever, and people are finally unafraid to speak.

For example, a friend of mine recently told me that when Kevorkian went to jail, he said, "Good!" A practicing Catholic and a staunch Republican, he felt that physician assisted dying was just wrong, plain and simple. Period.

Yet when we discussed the infamous Dr. Death's release from prison my friend told me that, in the intervening eight years, he had come full circle and now agrees completely that we each need to have the right to die as we feel we should, including physician assisted death.

Another friend who works in healthcare told me that while she's still unable to understand our cause fully, she knows for a fact that pain relief is greatly improved because Kevorkian brought the topic of dying in pain to light in his own dramatic way. "They now view pain as a vital sign," she told me. "We are far more aggressive in treating pain in both terminal and non-terminal patients because of changes in the past eight years."

I hope that each of you is speaking up, talking to your friends with the passion that we all hold for the right to die. I've had some C&C members tell me that "you've got to be careful who you talk to..." but I disagree. If we only talk to those we know agree with us, we'll never be able to speak our truth to those who don't see our side of the story.

Preaching to the choir is not very effective in terms of contributing to changing laws and attitudes. The two people I refer to above were both totally opposed to our cause and now one has come around completely and the other has come to respect my viewpoint, even if she doesn't quite understand my passion for the right to die.

So please talk to your circle of influence. Let them know how important it is that we change the law.

STEP UP! SHOW UP! SPEAK UP!

UPCOMING MEETINGS & EVENTS!

SATURDAY, JUNE 30 FROM 10:30 TO 12:00 NOON AT THE MUSTANG LIBRARY IN SCOTTSDALE. Membership Drive. Representative Linda Lopez (D), District 29, Tucson, AZ, will be speaking about her legislative efforts to-date, and the need to build membership so that our voices are heard loud-and-clear in the state of Arizona.

Other guest speakers are Roland Halpern, who will give an overview of our National organization and Compassion & Choices Arizona board president, Billie Stockl, who will present "Why I joined Compassion & Choices Arizona".

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 3, ARIZONA STATE CONFERENCE (LOCATION TBA)

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

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 Check your Renewal Date

SEND YOUR RENEWAL TODAY!

Membership
Compassion & Choices
PO Box 101810
Denver, CO 80250-9911

THANK YOU!

20070125

ctr=G

Jane Doe
123 Smith Street
Anytown, AZ 86002



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