



Compassion & Choices Arizona

Compassion in Dying - End of Life Choices

Previous Issues at: www.choicesarizona.org

Spring 2011

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

P. O. Box 14556, Scottsdale, AZ 85267 * Email: info@choicesarizona.org * Web: www.choicesarizona.org

Dedicated to educating and expanding compassionate end-of-life choices for all Arizonans including the right of terminally ill adults to physician aid in dying as a fundamental civil right.

WELCOME ENCI LAJOS, NEW BOARD PRESIDENT

We would like to announce that Enci Lajos has been elected president of Compassion & Choices AZ. She was voted in by the board on March 5, 2011.

Enci was born in 1975 to a young Hungarian couple living in Transylvania, Romania, in the midst of the communist dictatorship of Nicolai Cseauscescu, into whose military her father was drafted. After constant discrimination and violent threats from Romanian soldiers and superiors, he escaped to other parts of Europe with the help of friends. He then obtained political asylum here in the United States, and six years later he was allowed to bring his wife and daughter here too, to experience the opportunities and freedoms that this great country offered. "The most amazing things to me when I first arrived were the grocery stores ...with the amount of delicious food, it was unbelievable! We were used to rations and lines to get the government-portioned food." While pursuing happiness in the free world, Enci grew up learning about and watching from afar the collapse of that communist regime and the execution of its dictator, and came to better understand history and the price of that freedom.

Growing up in Chicago and its suburbs, Enci attended several different kinds of religious and public schools, and values the variety of her educational and personal experiences. Learning English as a second language was a quick process at age six, but adjusting to American ways of life throughout grade



Welcome Enci

school with a strict ethnocentric Hungarian family was difficult at times. After high school, she went on to earn her bachelor's degree from Valparaiso University in north-west Indiana, where she majored in Psychology, with two minors – Human Aging & Development and Healthcare Systems

Once she attained the necessary tools and skills to enter the workforce she moved to Arizona and now lives with her boyfriend of 16 years (plus four cats) in their home in Phoenix. She plays guitar, sings and enjoys art, computers, nature and travel. She has worked as an ophthalmic technician for more than 10 years, and is active in several secular community groups and projects.

It was after one of the meetings of Americans United for Separation of Church and State that she had a long conversation with our former vice-president (now Board member-at-large), Margot Champagne, regarding death with dignity and its categorization as a 'separation of church and state' issue. Margot invited Enci to meet with the board, and the board offered Enci the opportunity of this leadership position after Billie Stockl resigned as President. Although Enci has not had experience in this capacity, she believes it is the right of the individual – not of government or religion – to have control over their own end-of-life choices, and is willing to put forth the effort to passionately serve this cause.

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 CONTACTS

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

Greater Phoenix Area — Enci Lajos
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Email: enci@arizonacor.org

Green Valley — Bill Haley
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Northwest Valley (Carefree, El Mirage, Glendale, Morristown, Peoria, Sun City, Sun City West, Surprise, Wickenburg, Goodyear, and Youngtown) — Irene Weitzman
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Sedona — Deborah Darby
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Email: peacefulpassing@msn.com

Tucson — Volunteer Needed

Please Call Your Local Chapter Representative if you have questions or comments!

Or contact the national Compassion & Choices offices at 1-800-247-7421

STATE LEADERSHIP

COMPASSION & CHOICES ARIZONA BOARD

President: Enci Lajos, Phoenix
Vice President: Volunteer Needed
Secretary: Irene Weitzman, Sun City West
Treasurer: Freda Anderson, Scottsdale

Members: Bob Wallace, Sun Lakes
David Brandt-Erichsen, Tucson
Margot Champagne, Prescott
Anne Mardick, Scottsdale

Newsletter Editor: Deborah Darby
Please send information for newsletter to
peacefulpassing@msn.com

Compassion & Choices Arizona Medical Support Board

Dr. Robert H. Furman
Dr. Harvey Turner
Dr. William J. Hall

Compassion & Choices Arizona Clergy Support Board

Julian Rush, BD, MDiv, STM, MA

Thank you, Billie

Billie Stockl served as President of the Board of Directors for the Fifth Freedom Foundation from November 11, 2004 to July 9, 2006 and President of the Board, Compassion & Choices Arizona from March 24, 2007 to February 8, 2011.



“At this time, I intend to continue with my local chapter activities. I am a Lifetime member of Compassion & Choices, so I'll still be getting the news. I know the Board of Directors will be in good hands. I truly wish you all the very best with future endeavors of Compassion & Choices Arizona.”

Sincerely, Billie Stockl

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: www.compassionandchoices.org

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

"How to Die in Oregon" Debuts on HBO May 26

"How to Die in Oregon" is an intimate, clear-headed but emotional look at how Oregon's Death With Dignity law plays out with real people. Made by a 27-year old film maker, Peter D. Richardson, the film focuses on people who are using the Death with Dignity law in Oregon to end their own lives.

"How to Die in Oregon" is not easy to watch. But it's impossible not to be drawn in and affected by this beautifully made documentary, which won the Grand Jury Prize at this year's Sundance Film Festival. It will debut on HBO on May 26, 2011.

For a trailer go to tinyurl.com/howtodieinoregon.

Chapter News

Northwest Valley Chapter

The Northwest Valley Chapter of Compassion & Choices AZ: Chapter Leader Irene Weitzman reports on the chapter meeting that was held March 7, 2011. Approximately 40-45 people attended, fewer than usual. Irene presented information about the Patients Right to Know bills passed in California and New York, and the victory in Montana. She then showed a 56 minute DVD called "Last Rights: Facing End of Life Choices." The attendees were fascinated and listened in rapt attention, according to Irene. A discussion followed lasting about 30 minutes. After the meeting several people told Irene that it was a good meeting. Even though the refreshments were store bought (their homemade cookies no longer available), the cookie trays were but a mass of crumbs! The next chapter meeting will be held on November 19, 2011.

Sedona Chapter

The Sedona Chapter is supporting the Sedona Community Center's ongoing workshops during which people discuss their end-of-life wishes and fill out the "Five Wishes" packet. Thanks to Sedona Chapter VP Susan Barrington for carrying on this important work and included Compassion & Choices AZ in marketing efforts. The next Five Wishes event is May 28 from 10 AM to noon. Call Susan Barrington at (928) 282-2834 to reserve your spot.

Your Chapter

What's up with your chapter? Please let us know so we can share it with other members.

Rest in Peace...*in Style*

Price just
lowered!

FOR SALE: SINGLE CRYPT IN MAUSOLEUM OF PEACE

A single crypt, located in the *Mausoleum of Peace* at the East Lawn Palms Cemetery, 5801 E. Grant Road, Tucson, AZ, was donated to Compassion & Choices Arizona.

Retail value includes a single crypt, Level 3, (\$6095), opening and closing of the Mausoleum space (\$995), a plaque monobar with the individual's name and dates inscribed (\$595), a vase to be permanently mounted under the monobar (\$95), and installation of monobar and vase (\$150).

Today's value is \$7,930 but we would like to offer this to you for a reduced total cost of \$3,000. We will pay the \$200 title transfer. Itemized costs were provided by Nathan Friend, General Manager, East Lawn Palms Cemetery. For more information about the cemetery, you can contact them by calling (520) 886-5561. This sale does not include funeral home expenses.

**For purchasing information, please contact Enci Lajos at (602) 301-9826
or via email at enci@arizonacor.org**

THANK YOU FOR YOUR SERVICE & GOODBYE

Cherie Esser

Cherie Esser was a long-time board member of Compassion & Choices AZ. According to former state board president, Billie Stockl: “Cherie did a great job supporting Our Board of Directors for many years. We'll miss her very much.”

Cherie Esser passed away on November 26, 2010, the day after Thanksgiving. She had been at the Amore Adult Care Home for about a month, where she got very good care. She liked everything there but the food: “Every night it's chicken, chicken, chicken!” Cherie mostly stayed in the great room (combination living and dining room) and watched the world go by. She had very little pain, but toward the end her lungs filled with fluid and she had a great deal of trouble talking, then even whispering. On Thanksgiving Day (the day before she died) she was writing notes to communicate...in perfect penmanship. Friday morning she was sitting in her easy chair in her room, and was alone about an hour. When the caregivers checked on her she had left us.

Her brother, Morgan Bilbo, had stayed with her for five weeks earlier this year, then came back (from his home in Texas) again in October. Cherie has been cremated and her brother will sprinkle her ashes in the same location where her husband Ted's ashes were placed.

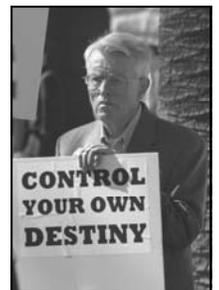


Reverend Marshall Lindsay, 1929—2011

by Margot Champagne

Compassion & Choices Arizona mourns the death of our former board member, Reverend Marshall Lindsay, who died peacefully on February 23, 2011. Reverend Lindsay was born in 1929 to Scottish immigrant parents in Detroit, Michigan. He had a long and fascinating life (reference Arizona Republic obituary, online, for 2/27/11), more recently having founded and built the hugely successful Methodist congregation in Sun Lakes, Arizona. He supported death with dignity issues for many years, serving on our board from 2004 to 2007.

I first met him at an international death with dignity conference in San Diego in January 2003 and knew right away I had the privilege of talking with a compassionate and scholarly person. Thereafter over the years, I could hardly mention a book I was reading that he had not already studied. His ministry reached out far beyond his own church to support people and issues in need including Planned Parenthood. Two of our Compassion & Choices board members attended his memorial service and it is fair to say that the huge sanctuary at Paradise Valley UMC was packed. One of the messages of his life for Compassion & Choices AZ (as the board was reminded at our March 5, 2011 meeting) was to never give up, never stop working relentlessly and stubbornly on the things you believe in. He leaves his widow of 49 years, Nancy Lindsay, his son and daughter and four grandchildren. The family suggests that memorials be made to Sun Lakes UMC, Paradise Valley UMC, or Hospice of the Valley.



At the 2004 Rally



PROGRESS ON OUR EFFORTS TOWARD CHANGING

It has been a very active legislation session and although it's not over yet, the following are some highlights of what has transpired this year:

Arizona SB1447 – A bill aiming to give terminally ill patients the right to be informed about their full range of legal treatment options, including the risks and benefits as well as the right to refuse treatment all together, failed to get a hearing. At the moment there are only two states, California and New York, which have laws requiring physicians to disclose this information.

Hawaii HB1383, SB803, HB113 – Several bills were introduced in an effort to enact an Oregon-style death with dignity law, but none were able to gain traction. Strong opposition from organized religious and right to life groups were a deciding factor in the bills being shelved.

Idaho SB1070 - A bill that makes assisting a suicide a crime overwhelmingly made it through the Idaho Senate and House and was signed into law by the governor. This is not the first time Idaho has moved to pass restrictive legislation concerning end of life choices. A law passed last year allows healthcare practitioners to refuse to honor a patient's treatment wishes, including those expressed in an advance health care directive, when the healthcare professional has moral or religious objections.

Montana SB 116 – A well orchestrated plan by Compassion & Choices paid off with the defeat of SB116. For those unfamiliar with the Baxter v Montana case, Compassion & Choices filed a lawsuit in 2007 challenging the Montana State Constitution, arguing that its rights to privacy and dignity clauses included the right of a competent, terminally ill Montanan to obtain a prescription for a life-ending medication. The lower court agreed, but its decision was immediately appealed. In 2010 the Montana Supreme Court vacated the lower court's finding, but ruled that absent a statute specifically prohibiting physician aid in dying, physicians would not be prosecuted for writing a prescriptions for their com-

petent, terminally ill adult patients. SB116, was aimed at amending the existing criminal statutes to make the writing of a prescription a felony, but it failed to make it out of committee.

New Hampshire HB513 – In 2010 an Oregon Death with Dignity style bill was soundly defeated by a vote of 242-113 and this year's reintroduction of that bill did no better. The internal mechanism that determines if a bill "ought" or "ought not" to be heard resulted in a 234 to 99 defeat. When bills like this one are continually defeated (this was the fifth attempt in New Hampshire), it gives opponents the opportunity to claim the defeats are "proof" these bills are not welcome and provides politicians with an excuse not to support future efforts based on the unpopular nature of such bills.

Oregon HB2016 – Despite 13 years of success with Oregon's Death with Dignity Act, the law again is being challenged, this time by a group of legislators who want to require a mandatory psychiatric evaluations for patients who wish to use the law. Under the current law, which includes over a dozen safeguards designed to prevent abuse, such evaluations are only deemed necessary if the primary care physician or the consulting physician (who must confirm the terminal diagnosis) believe the patient's request is motivated by coercion, depression, or if they question the patient's ability to make an informed decision. As in the past, Compassion & Choices is vigorously defending this attack against the law.

Vermont H274 – Modeled after Oregon's Death with Dignity Act, the bill was introduced on February 17. Vermont's current situation is unique in that it has a Democratically controlled House and Senate, as well as a Democratic governor who has expressed support for aid in dying. While this bodes well for a possible success, we remain cautiously optimistic given the fact that while there are 44 co-sponsors for the bill, a recent poll showing public support at 64% and a just released poll among physicians showing 61% support, no hearing date has been scheduled. The session ends in less than a month.

EDITOR'S CORNER: TRANSITIONS

We always welcome your comments and questions at peacefulpassing@msn.com.

This newsletter seems to have a “transitions” theme.

Arizona lost two staunch supporters with the recent passing of Cherie Esser and Marshall Lindsay. And our state board has entered a new phase, with a new president who brings a youthful energy!



Your Editor, Deb Darby

When I became the Chapter Leader in Sedona in 2005, it was after I had attended only **one meeting**: a nice presentation wherein the speaker, John Abraham gave a little history of our organization and spoke passionately of the need to change the jargon from “assisted suicide” to “physician assisted death”. I agreed. Interested, I stayed to volunteer. Next thing I knew I was not only on the board, but had also been elected president! It has worked out pretty well, even though I was a newbie when I jumped in at that level.

And now we've got Enci Lajos, another “newbie” who has stepped up to take a responsible position in an organization that was, until recently, new to her. We are most grateful to Enci and look forward to her leadership and the energy it generates.

So thank you, Enci, for helping us with this transition. Looking forward to knowing you!

It's much easier to die when the time comes if you KEEP your affairs in order rather than waiting until the last possible moment.

SIERRA VISTA SAYS “NO THANKS” TO CATHOLIC INTERVENTION IN HEALTHCARE

Recently Sierra Vista Hospital, in rural Southeast Arizona, abandoned its affiliation with the Catholic Carondelet Health Systems. One year into a two-year trial period, reality apparently hit home. The hospital board could no longer ignore daily picketing by concerned citizens, growing discontent of physicians barred from delivering high quality medical care and mounting evidence that strict doctrinal enforcement undermines a community's trust in its medical provider. An informative PBS story four days prior may have influenced board members as well. (See note below for the link.)

“Compassion & Choices supporters were especially concerned that end-of-life wishes be heeded and honored. Thus, we enthusiastically join Cochise Citizens for Patient Choice in celebrating this victory for quality care and patient self-determination. I hope this signals the start of a trend among hospitals to avoid mergers binding them to religious doctrine,” says Compassion & Choices Executive Director Barbara Coombs Lee.

If you'd like to see the PBS report on this intriguing and complex topic, a ten-minute video can be viewed at: tinyurl.com/sierravistahospital.



Compassion & Choices AZ
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Dedicated to educating and expanding compassionate end-of-life choices for all Arizonans including the right of terminally ill adults to physician aid in dying as a fundamental civil right.

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 that we will prepare and mail to your constituency!

Send info to: info@choicesarizona.org

In Australia, Support for “Voluntary Euthanasia”* at 85%

Support for voluntary euthanasia in New South Wales is running at 83 percent, with only 10 percent of people implacably opposed, according to a new poll commissioned by advocates Dying with Dignity NSW.

The result, which puts the NSW on a par with the rest of Australia in acceptance of doctor-assisted dying for people suffering intractably with no chance of recovery, shows the level of support unchanged since the last survey two years ago.

It comes after the *Herald* newspaper reported on the case of Sydney woman Loredana Alessio-Mulhall, a sufferer of advanced multiple sclerosis, who said she would seek euthanasia in the Netherlands within a year because she was unable to do so here.

A member of the New South Wales Parliament, MP Cate Faehrmann, who will introduce a private member's bill seeking to legalize euthanasia during the next Parliament, said its availability as a last resort could be a comfort even to people who ultimately did not seek it.

"Many people have spoken of the peace of mind of having it there," said Ms Faehrmann, referring to jurisdictions where the practice is legal.

Oregon and Washington state in the United States currently have laws in place allowing patients to choose the time of their death toward the end of life. Other states and their progress toward changing the laws can be seen on Page 6 of this newsletter.

*** Compassion & Choices prefers and supports the term: Physician Assisted Death**