

# EDITORIAL

## The right to die

Once, a powerful judge who sat on the Superior Court in Quebec ruled that a 25 year-old woman could have her life support respirator disconnected. That decision, in favor of the woman's right to die has brought forth legal, ethical, and moral dilemmas.

The woman, Nancy B., is paralyzed from the neck down with Guillane-Barre syndrome. Her quality of life cannot necessarily be described as human because she can no longer feel sensations, and she has lost all motor skills. All she can do is think and watch T.V.

Nancy B.'s court case revolved around her assertion that the removal of her respirator would not be the cause of her death, but rather that she would die from the consequences of her illness.

So the issue boiled down to who has the jurisdiction over ending someone's life. Is it the patient, the doctor, the judge or society. Deciding whose responsibility it is requires a reconciliation between the rights of the individual and those of society.

Nancy B.'s predicament shows us that the natural evolution of humanity does not guarantee quality of life. Sometimes living is the most painful and inhumane thing.

But that assessment is a difficult one to make. The best thing to do is to allow a person to die. But would giving this right out freely to anyone who judges that they can no longer go on would lead to a miscarriage?

Certain guidelines, until now, have been considered the rules for euthanasia. The most important being that the patient be terminal within a short period of time with no possible medical recourse.

The problem arises with people like Nancy B. or others who are afflicted with diseases which leave them bedridden indefinitely. Technology can keep them alive, when perhaps the best thing it could do would be to let them die.

It is difficult to have one definitive solution to this problem. Each case has its own story and merits. So where does that leave us. Apparently at the mercy of a paternalistic judicial and moral system. It may appear like a bad compromise to have such stringent safeguards, but without them we also might have Dr. Kervorkians offering their services to anyone willing to pay.

Marie-France LeBlanc



**LETTERS** The **Dalhousie Gazette** welcomes letters to the editor. Letters should not exceed 300 words in length and should be typed and double-spaced. The deadline for letters is Friday noon before publication. Letters may be submitted on Mac or IBM-compatible 3.5" disk.

### Letter from Spryfield

To the editor:

Well, after attending Dal for four years (this is my fifth), I'm finally upset enough about an article to write about it. The piece I'm referring to is "How Dal (Dis)Functionz" in the Nov. 21/91 issue.

To summarize my comments, get down off your high horse.

I hate to break the news to you, but you aren't the last Defenders of Western Democracy. Inciting violence (Molotov cocktails indeed) is the usual way to get yourself written off as a fringe group and lose almost all of the respect you once had. Maligning the CFS as being "restrained by liberals" smacks of even more bias than I usually associate with this publication and, I'm sure, members of SUNS will not appreciate the "misdirection" comments.

The characterization of the Provincial Government is totally unfair. Stating that the money from education goes to pave roads in Tory ridings is incorrect. I know — I live in what was Senator Buchanan's

riding, and some of the roads out here are absolutely horrible. I would be interested in seeing your proof of this allegation. One more governmental note: as any good political science or Canadian history student can tell you, the only person on the list of Federal representatives who can be addressed as "Rt. Hon." is Mulroney, as only Prime Ministers and ex-Prime Ministers can be addressed as such. I may be wrong — the Governor General might be addressed as this as well.

Finally, guys, where does the government money for education come from? Taxes. Government is not a bottomless money pit. I'll bet that you also complain about how people in Canada are over-taxed. Personally, I'd rather, to use words from this piece, be screwed up front for tuition than be screwed indirectly for the rest of my life.

Sean Smith

### Don't trust the press

To the editor:

Once again I find myself sitting at my computer at-

tempting the colossal task of correcting misinformation spread about the Canadian Federation of Students. The culprit this time, Jeff Harrington in his article "Fear and Loathing at the CFS National." (Nov. 28).

I am perfectly willing to admit CFS' shortfalls and there are many but I can not take statements like, "what passes for a student movement," and "any success CFS has had — and that isn't much" lightly. Perhaps Mr. Harrington has not noticed that there is no GST on tuition, that the weekly allowance for student aid has increased to \$85, that the employment centres on campuses remained open long after they were scheduled to close, that the SEED employment program is existing now when it hadn't for four years. All a direct result of CFS lobbying.

If Mr. Harrington would have taken the time while in the national Office to actually observe the happenings of a regular work day he would have noticed the many phone calls from the media, Ministers, opposition critics and organizations. All asking for

CFS' advice, comments, research, etc. All tapping in to that National Student Voice that obviously Mr. Harrington does not hear.

This past general meeting was very stressful and at times unpleasant, but I was also very satisfied with the amount of work and the quality of work that did get done. If Mr. Harrington expected the general meeting to be one big happy party I think it is his idea of a student movement that needs adjusting.

This article only reaffirms my distrust in the press and their ability to record events accurately. In his reference to "so-called special interest groups" (the term actually being constituency groups, Mr. Harrington must feel that being a student of colour or being a student with a disability is just a special interest and nothing to be taken seriously). Mr. Harrington forgets the Fine Arts Constituency Group. Perhaps he should have been paying more attention to what actually occurred at the general meeting instead of getting stuck on the gossip wheel.

In his account of the Acadia

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