

Suicide solution

An old tale tells how a magical genie released from his bottle at first obeyed his master's bidding, but then suddenly wreaked havoc.

The Supreme Court decision on Friday to allow doctor-assisted suicide in Canada brings this cautionary tale to mind.

The ruling can be welcomed, even applauded, for permitting something long advocated in this country: People who are terminally ill, suffering and mentally competent will in future be able to avail themselves of a physician's help in dying.

But the court went much further than this. In its momentous ruling, the court declared that adults of sound mind who are suffering intolerably and permanently— and that pain could be either physical or psychological— also have a right to a doctor-assisted death.

They do not have to be facing a terminal illness to be candidates for assisted suicide. Indeed, as far as we can tell, their condition need not even be life-threatening but only, in the court's words, "grievous and irremediable." Exactly what this means and who will be allowed to choose a doctor-facilitated death is still unclear — and this is troubling.

In our view, the court moved us in a fair and reasonable direction but ultimately took us far beyond our comfort zone and into hazardous territory. The door is open too wide. Many people have watched a loved one struggle with an excruciating, deadly illness and agonized over whether the morally right thing to do would be to allow that individual to choose a pain-free, doctor-assisted death. The Supreme Court said prohibiting this course of action is "cruel." Today, 84 per cent of Canadians agree such an end to life should be legal.

The Canadian Medical Association long opposed physician-assisted suicide but recently altered its position to acknowledge that on "rare occasions ... medical aid in dying may be appropriate."

On the matter of doctor-assisted suicide, the genie is out of the bottle. Our lawmakers need to tame it and make it work for us.

WEB POLL RESULTS

(Go to www.theifp.ca)

A local resident has won a share of a \$10 million lottery win. What would you do if you won the big lottery?

- Invest the money and live off the interest (40%)
- Pay off my bills; hopefully I'll have some money leftover (27%)
- Quit my job and travel the world (25%)
- Buy the Maple Leafs and build a better team (8%)

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THE INDEPENDENT & FREE PRESS

905-873-0301

Publisher: Dana Robbins

General manager: Steve Foreman

(sforeman@theifp.ca)

Retail advertising manager: Cindi Campbell

(ccampbell@theifp.ca)

Managing editor: Chris Vernon

(cvernon@metroland.com)

Distribution manager: Nancy Geissler

(ngeissler@theifp.ca)

Classifieds/Real Estate

Kristie Pells

(realestate@theifp.ca)

Classified Call Centre

1-855-415-8237

classified@theifp.ca

Accounting

1-866-773-6575

Editorial

Cynthia Gamble: News editor

(cgamble@theifp.ca)

Lisa Tallyn: Staff writer

(ltallyn@theifp.ca)

Eamonn Maher: Staff writer/sports

(emaher@theifp.ca)

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Letters to the editor

Thanks for the returned wallet

Thank you to the gentleman who so very kindly returned my husband's wallet last Thursday morning.

He found the wallet on 22 Sideroad just down the road from our home. My husband had placed the wallet on top of his car, went across the street to pick up our mail, and then promptly drove off.

I am so sorry I did not ask your name, but I am sure you know who you are. And, thank you again for your honesty.

Heather Kilian,
Limehouse

Army thankful for support

The Salvation Army Georgetown Community Church would like to thank the people of Georgetown.

With your help and support, we not only met, but surpassed our kettle fundraising goal.

We were also overwhelmed with the generous donations of new toys that were received.

Your generosity not only went a long way in brightening the lives of many local families, but will continue to help throughout the year.

We also want to say a big thank you to all the individuals, organizations, churches and businesses who supported us over the Christmas season and throughout the year.

Once again, we say thank you and God bless.

Darrell Jackson,
Major, Salvation Army

Jacob is a positive role model

On behalf of The War Amps, I would like to thank you for your article featuring Jacob Calvert (Jan.21), a local member of our Child Amputee (CHAMP) Program.

Jacob's zest for life is an inspiration to all. Through CHAMP, young amputees like Jacob are encouraged to adopt the "Winner's Circle" philosophy by accept-

ing their amputations and developing a positive approach to challenges.

Coverage like yours certainly helps to inform the public of the resources and programs available to child amputees. The War Amps receives no government grants and its programs are possible through public support of our Key Tag and Address Label Service. Your coverage will go a long way in helping to spread the word.

Danita Chisholm,
Executive Director, CHAMP Program
The War Amps

Letters policy

Letters must include the author's name, address and daytime phone number.

Anonymous letters will not be published. Letters should not exceed 150 words and may be edited for content and/or length. Publication is not guaranteed.

Email: cvernon@metroland.com
Mail or drop off: Independent & Free Press, 280 Guelph St., Unit 77, Georgetown, ON, L7G 4B1.

