

Dr. Death or a savior?

To some he is Dr. Death, to others he is a savior. Today, Dr. Jack Kevorkian is a convicted murderer who, at 71, is expected to serve the next 10-25 years in a Michigan prison.

From what I've read of Kevorkian over the past decade—a decade in which he claims to have conducted more than 130 assisted suicides—two very distinct images have emerged: He is both an eccentric and compassionate man.

Judge Jessica Cooper, however, felt otherwise.

Kevorkian injected Thomas Youk, a 52-year-old victim of Lou Gehrig's disease with a lethal dose of chemicals at Youk's request. It was for the second degree "murder" of Youk, who was wheelchair-bound, could barely move his arms or legs, and was afraid of choking to death on his own saliva, that Kevorkian was convicted.

Youk's wife, Melody, was allowed to speak at Kevorkian's sentencing hearing and she did not consider the doctor the monster Judge Cooper obviously did.

"My husband had come to the end of his life as he chose to view it," she said. "He was not depressed, he was not a victim. He requested Dr. Kevorkian's help and was grateful for it."

Her husband, who once raced cars, was reduced to a state where he could control only the thumb and two fingers on his left hand and was afraid that, eventually, he would be unable to activate Kevorkian's "suicide machine"—the device which the doctor had supplied to previous patients.

Kevorkian had been brought before the courts on assisting suicide charges four times previously and those cases ended in three acquittals and one mistrial. This time, however, he took a direct hand in a patient's death and had the audacity to provide

THIS
'N
THAT



John McGhie

videotape of it to 60 Minutes.

It was not the fact Kevorkian helped a man end his unbearable suffering that seems to have bothered both the prosecutors and the judge in this case, but the fact he had dared to boldly challenge current law.

Cooper, at the doctor's sentencing, warned Kevorkian the courts were no place for social or political campaigns and said, "You had the audacity to go on national television, show the world what you did and dare the legal system to stop you. Well, sir, consider yourself stop-ped."

Interestingly, a spokesperson for the anti-euthanasia group Not Dead Yet, said following the verdict, "At last the disabled will be safe from Kevorkian and will have equal protection of the law."

To hear her speak, it sounds as if Kevorkian was scouring hospitals looking for dying people to inject. In fact, it was terminally ill patients who sought Kevorkian's help.

It amazes me our society encourages us to show compassion towards terminally ill animals and yet dying human beings are denied the right to a death with dignity. A death of their choosing, without pain and suffering.

The euthanasia issue will not disappear with the incarceration of Dr. Kevorkian nor should it. I sincerely hope someone else will be able to follow the path he has blazed.



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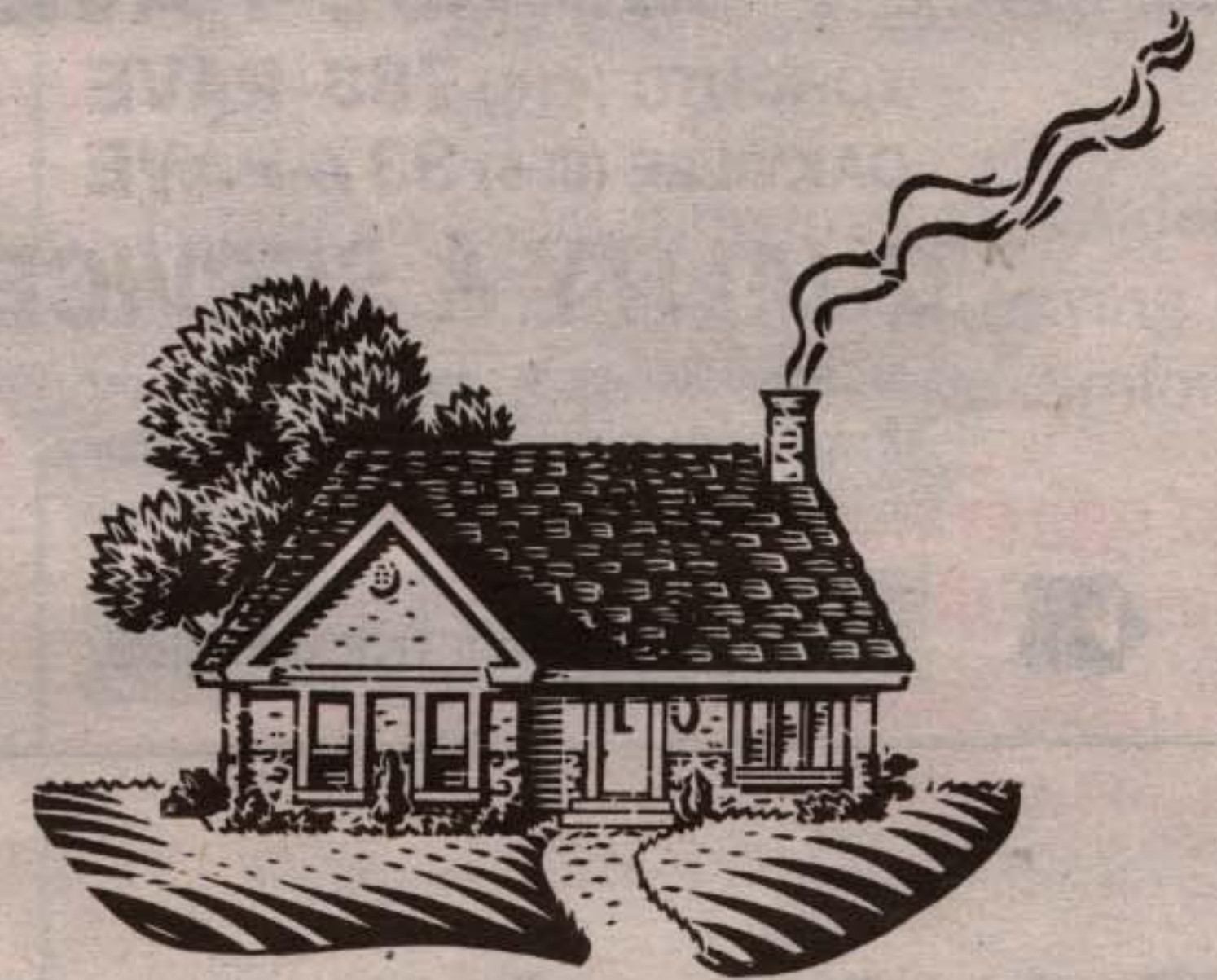
TEAM	DATE	TIME	COACH
MINOR NOVICE	Mon. Apr. 19	6:00 p.m.	J. Paige
NOVICE	Mon. Apr. 19	6:15 p.m.	C. Wells
MINOR ATOM	Mon. Apr. 19	7:15 p.m.	I. Dunbar
ATOM	Mon. Apr. 19	7:30 p.m.	P. Larose
MIN. PEEWEE	Tue. Apr. 20	7:25 p.m.	J. McLeod
PEEWEE	Tue. Apr. 20	7:40 p.m.	G. Leblanc
MIN. BANTAM	Mon. Apr. 19	8:30 p.m.	M. Quincey
BANTAM	Mon. Apr. 19	8:45 p.m.	D. Syvret
MIDGET	TO BE ADVISED		

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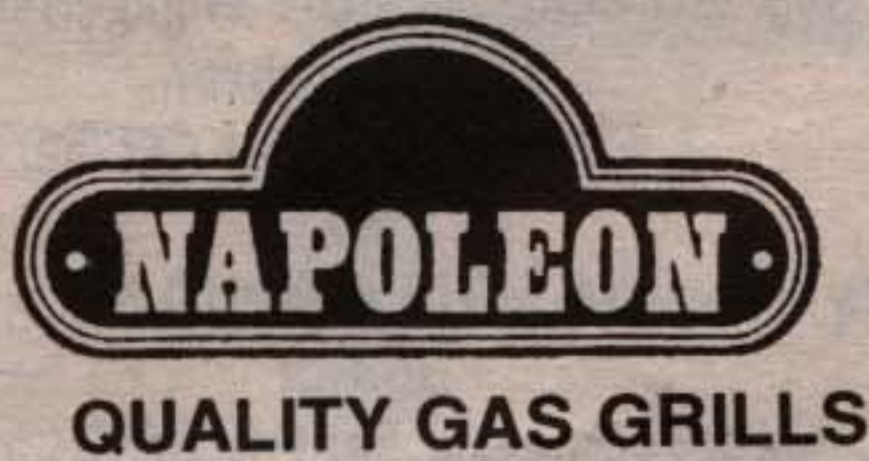
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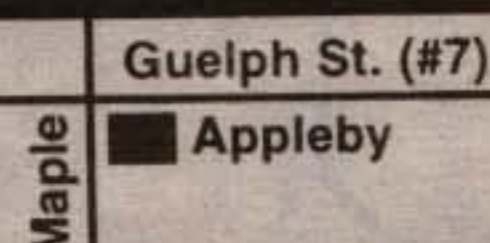


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