

Farmington Observer

Volume 89 Number 50

Monday, April 10, 1978

Farmington, Michigan

32 Pages

Twenty-Five Cents

'Right to die' debate heats up in Lansing

By LYNN ORR

The fear of spending one's last days kept alive by artificial means is reinforced by almost daily advances in medical technology.

That same fear inspires support of "Right to Die" legislation currently being discussed across the country. However a recent Michigan bill establishing the patient's right to refuse medical treatment has its critics—mainly the Right to Life proponents.

The legislation itself, introduced by State Rep. David Hollister (D-Lansing), has produced mixed feelings among lawmakers and constituents alike.

"The basic concept is good," says State Rep. Wilbur Brotherton (R-Farmington and Southfield) "but the problem is that the details of the bill make it difficult to support."

House Bill No. 5778 confirms the patient's right to accept or refuse medical treatment; provides for the appointment of an agent in the event of a patient's inability to communicate his wishes; ascertains criminal and civil liability; and provides for a "living will."

AS HOLLISTER describes it, the legislation guarantees patients' rights when decisions concerning life support technology come into play. "Decisions are made now by physicians, hospital committees, and such," he says. "The question is who's going to make them? This bill allows you to have a 'right to life' agent."

A living will, in which the writer leaves instructions for medical treatment in the event of incapacitation,



and/or the appointment of an agent to act in the patient's stead are lawful under the bill.

"It guarantees that a right that you have as a competent adult concerning health care is assured. You lose that right under current law when you are incapable of making a decision," Hollister explains.

Particularly in coma cases, the decision to continue life support medical treatment can be difficult for all involved, says Brotherton. With a living will that stipulates the end of such treatment after certain conditions are fulfilled, the attending physician and hospital would be free of criminal and civil liability when following will instructions, under the proposal.

That part of the bill has its merits, Brotherton says; but testimony at several public hearings and letters from constituents have convinced him of problems with the legislation.

"WHAT constitutes being unable to make the decision yourself? How long do you wait to determine if a person is incapable of making a decision? How long do you continue treatment of any kind? What problems will an agent have if he disagrees with family members?"

These are some of the questions Brotherton has heard raised about the legislation. Support and opposition have been split about 50-50, he says.

Opponents believe the bill is an opening of the euthanasia door. They wonder if the state could make a life-or-death decision in cases where the patient is a ward of the court.

Registered nurse Theresa Church of Farmington Hills is one opponent who has expressed her beliefs about the legislation.

"The bill would call for laymen to take on the responsibility that we pay our doctors for," Ms. Church wrote to Rep. Hollister. "How does a relative collect life insurance after a suicide? What is the difference between giving water and food to a patient and putting that same patient on a life-support machine?" she questions.

BROTHERTON BELIEVES one way to solve some problems concerning terminally ill patients involves the use of the hospice concept. In England and other European countries, terminally ill patients may go to such special nursing homes and/or learn to take care of himself at home and administer drugs for comfort.

Some live in one or two places on the east coast, and one hospital in the Detroit area is attempting to convert a wing for such a purpose," Brotherton explains. "But most doctors seem unwilling to admit that a patient is terminally ill."

The hard, cold facts of cash enter the picture as well. Just how much can a patient pay to linger on? That's a question not many persons want to think about, Brotherton says.

"One brave young woman testified about it. Her mother had died of cancer a year ago, and now her father was dying of cancer. Medical insurance had run out and the bills were mounting. It's a hard fact to face, but just how long do you continue expensive treatment?"

Senior citizens appear to support the bill, according to Brotherton, and the executive board of the American Association of Retired Persons (AARP) has issued a support statement.

Other groups supporting the bill include: the Michigan Council of Churches; State Commission on Aging; Department of Public Health; Department of Health and Medical Affairs; and various nurses' organizations.

The Statewide Health Coordinating Council (SHCC), a health planning system, also supports the bill.

Doctors are neutral, Hollister admits, while Roman Catholic hospitals oppose the legislation.

An Ingham County (Lansing) poll conducted by Democrats indicated 87 per cent of the 400 randomly selected respondents favored the bill, he adds.

He doesn't expect legislative action until after the November election, but that may work to the proponents' advantage, he says.

"We hope to make it a campaign issue and use the delay to our advantage," he adds.

Lutherans seek Bond School use

By LYNN ORR

An ethical question will confront the Farmington School Board in the next few weeks.

The superintendent of Detroit Lutheran Schools has made an offer to lease a portion of Bond Elementary School, a building closed by the district a few years ago. The board's Building and Sites committee refused to consider the offer of \$45,000 rent per year until the board answers the philosophical question—can the district afford to lease a building to a competing educational facility?

A parochial high school in the northern section of Farmington Hills could draw students away from the Farmington public schools, thus contributing to the declining enrollment problem and ensuing decrease in state aid, according to Trustee Helen Prutow.

In other words, the district conceivably could lose more money than it gains.

The board will consider the ethical at the April 18 meeting, where ethical as well as legal questions must be answered.

DISTRICT ATTY. Robert Kelly isn't sure the district can refuse to rent to a particular institution. The problem of discriminating comes into play. Trustee Richard Wallace is opposed to the leasing of buildings in such cases, but he hasn't decided about possible sales.

Other problems could be created if the district agreed to accept the Lutheran school's offer. "Farmington becomes obligated for transportation, support services (such as reading and speech therapy), and other social services for those students," Supt. Lewis Schulman explains.

As a state institution, the district bears the responsibility for providing many services to students in the district. Currently the district provides education for children and youth at Sarah Fisher and Boys Republic. Social services are provided as well.

HOWEVER, while the district can collect state aid for those students, it remains questionable whether the district could collect funds for students attending a private school when support services are provided as stipulated under the law.

"More is at stake here than a simple matter of finances," declared Trustee Anne Struble at last week's board meeting. She said she would be discussing the matter further at the next meeting.

The Lutheran school's offer includes renting the first floor of the old school building located on Thirteen Mile west of Orchard Lake Rd. for \$45,000 per year. The offer also stipulates part-time use of the multi-purpose room and payment of utilities by the Lutheran school.

and communications center. •Report on a letter from Lison Shepherd regarding an alley behind Williams Office Center, 2961 Grand River.

•Presentation by the Oakland County Road Commission regarding proposed modifications of Grand River between Haynes and Tuck.

•Consideration of a request by the Drakeshire Lanes, Inc., 3500 Grand River to transfer all the stock from the liquor license from the shares of Felix Rosenzweig to the existing stockholders Nathan Harris and Leonard Herman.

•Consideration of the necessity of a hearing to establish a special assessment district for road improvements on Stonewood Court.

•Consideration of an introduction of an ordinance regarding school property control.

•Introduction of an ordinance amending uniform traffic code in regards to the operation of motor vehicles on school property.

•Consideration of vacating an alley south of the land owned by the Michigan National Bank, designated as lots 68-78, "Builders Park."

•Report by City Clerk Floyd Cairns concerning the petition regarding the RCE-1 zoning ordinance.

•Consideration of an agreement with Farmington to furnish a single a single court facility for the 47th district.

•Consideration of a city wide dust control special assessment district.



Easter is still ahead, on April 30 to be exact, for those in the Eastern Orthodox tradition. These colorful eggs, decorated by Dianne Gedrich.

idge, are part of the tradition. (Photo by Les Raebel.

Orthodox Christians mark Easter with colorful eggs

Many of the pastel eggs left by the Easter Bunny have by now found their way into salads and garnishes, but a starring role is still ahead for some of the loveliest creations of the Easter season.

They are the Pysanky, the brilliantly-colored raw eggs that have since long before the birth of Christ been part of the lore of the Russian and Ukrainian peoples.

Many residents of this area, including those who attend St. Mary's Ukrainian Orthodox Church in Southfield, will celebrate their Easter on April 30.

Before that, they may be trying their hand at the ancient art of Pysanky—using wax and stylus to cover eggs with bright and symbolic designs.

Artist Diane Gedrich recently showed school children the method that has been used for centuries to make Pysanky. The design is placed

on the egg with a stylus dipped in hot beeswax. Then the egg is dipped in dye and the parts covered with wax remain uncolored.

"You start with the lightest color and work to the darkest," she said. "You put on design, then dip, then let dry, then put on more wax and dip again."

Pysanky eggs are raw and the process uses cold water and very strong dye. You don't eat them, but let them dry. They last a long time.

Designs are symbolic. When the art began in the centuries before Christ, there were representations of objects in nature, flowers, trees and animals, and each had its meaning. The evergreen tree, for example, symbolized eternal youth and good health.

When the Christian church adopted the spring festival, the pagan symbols underwent a metamorphosis and became religious.

So the eggs are decorated with crosses representing Jesus, triangles that symbolize the trinity and continuous patterns circling the circumference to represent everlasting life.

The difference in the timing of the western church's Easter and the Orthodox Easter was explained by the Rt. Rev. Michael E. Barja of St. Michael Russian Orthodox Church.

He said the canon of the Eastern church requires that the day of resurrection be celebrated after the vernal equinox and after the Jewish Passover.

The second requirement is not per year, so the western and Orthodox Easters are separated by five weeks.

Which leaves plenty of time for the enjoyment of Pysanky.

Farmington man is victim

Police probe shooting

An unidentified suspect in a April 1 Redford shooting is still being sought by Redford police while his victim lies in poor condition at Botsford Hospital.

Dennis Socolovitch, 19, of Farmington, was shot in the mouth with a small handgun about 2:45 a.m. that Saturday while he and a friend were driving west on Grand River near Telegraph.

The passenger, Dale Liske, also 19, of Farmington, told Redford police there was a confrontation between their car and another that was driving alongside it.

Sgt. Edwin Oswald says the driver of the second car pulled to the left of

Socolovitch's car and leaned across his passenger to fire one shot at the Farmington man.

The bullet lodged in Socolovitch's neck.

By this time, the two cars had traveled across Beech Daly near Woodworth and Grand River.

Oswald said Socolovitch then stopped the car and Liske ran out for help. Socolovitch himself flagged a car down and was taken to Redford Community Hospital. The same day he was transferred to Wayne County General Hospital.

Oswald says Socolovitch was transferred to Botsford Hospital on Friday

upon the request of his family, whose doctor is affiliated with the hospital.

The suspect's car is described by police as a white 1967 Pontiac GTO with no license plates. The car is reportedly in good condition and has chrome wheels.

Oswald says Liske could not identify the driver of the car but did describe his passenger. He is a white male in his early 20s, with long black hair pulled back in a pony tail, and a thick black beard and mustache.

Police are still investigating and would not release details of the case until the Friday following the shooting.

Hills council meets

The Farmington Hills City Council will conduct its regular meeting at 7:30 p.m., April 10 in chambers at the Farmington Hills city administration building, Eleven Mile and Orchard Lake Road.

The meeting will open with a public hearing to considering the cost of paving a road in Lincolnshire Estates subdivision number 2-3.

Other items under consideration are:

•Special report by the Farmington Hills Historical Commission.

•Consideration of a resolution by the Oakland County Emergency Medical Service Executive Committee regarding the decision to select William Beaumont Hospital as a medical con-

•Consideration of an introduction of an ordinance regarding school property control.

•Introduction of an ordinance amending uniform traffic code in regards to the operation of motor vehicles on school property.

•Consideration of vacating an alley south of the land owned by the Michigan National Bank, designated as lots 68-78, "Builders Park."

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North students talk Kiwanis

Three North Farmington High students will be speakers at the April 18 luncheon of the North Farmington Kiwanis Club.

Bob Atkins, Dan Deighton and Greg Hughes attended the 1977 summer conference of the Fellowship of Christian Athletes under the scholarship of the Kiwanis Club. The students' summer FCA experience will be the lunch topic.

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DON'T BE LAZY

Put your time to good use. Instead of sitting around during the evening, trek on down to the adult community education program at the old Ten Mile School and enroll for a class. But you'd better hurry, classes start this evening. To see what is offered turn to page 2A