

NEWS



THE LAKE Okanagan Insurance Society has raised \$6,570 to support the Central Okanagan YMCA youth programs at the Silver Lake camp. The donation was raised from a golf tournament put on by the society at Michaelbrook Ranch in September. On hand for the cheque presentation were Nina Sampson, YMCA Silver Lake Camp director, and Brian Prodor, president of the Lake Okanagan Insurance Society. CONTRIBUTED

▼ ASSISTED SUICIDE

Ottawa sends signal government ready to engage in reforming law

"That's one small step for a man, one giant leap for mankind."



Those words, spoken by U.S. astronaut Neil Armstrong as he took the first ever step on the moon, are applicable to an announcement made last week by Canada's Health Minister Rona Ambrose.

Referring to assisted suicide, Ambrose reportedly announced: "I will take part in the conversation. It's an important conversation to have, and of course all of us have had these conversations around the kitchen table."

Ambrose's response marks the first step arguably having been taken towards a reformation of Canada's law on assisted suicide.

It is a law that has very, very deep roots, even deeper than the provisions contained within our Criminal Code enacted in 1892.

The Criminal Code wasn't the product of the careful and considered thoughtful debate of law makers. Rather, it largely enshrined prohibitions that had existed for centuries before in the "common law."

We inherited our "common law" from England, law that was

strongly influenced by a religion which saw suicide as a direct defiance of God's will.

Until 1823, English law provided that the body of a person taking their own life was to be placed at the crossroads of two highways with a stake driven through it.

Just like much had to be done to set the stage for Armstrong's first step on the moon, much has been done to set the stage for the federal government to find the political will to "take part in the conversation."

Most recently, we have the impassioned plea of Dr. Donald Low, a prominent Canadian microbiologist, in a video he recorded before his own death.

The "conversation" was within a hair's breadth of being forced on the federal government by the Supreme Court of Canada in the case brought by Sue Rodriguez.

Rodriguez was an ALS victim who challenged the law which threatened her ability to legally die with dignity.

It was by a slim majority of 5-4 that the law was not struck down by our highest court in September 1993.

Another lawsuit is making its

way up the court system, led in part by the now deceased West Kelowna resident Gloria Taylor.

I expect the federal government sees the writing on the wall that the next nine-judge panel of the Supreme Court of Canada considering the assisted suicide provisions will almost undoubtedly be striking them down.

Credit is owed to the mountain of efforts that have been made over the years by those pushing for the important "conversation" to occur.

Anyone interested in learning about the history of this issue and of that mountain of efforts should read a paper of the Parliamentary Information and Research Service that you can find on line by searching the publication number: 2010-68-E.

Just like all the engineering and resources that went into that first step on the moon, the mountain of efforts leading to our federal government entering into the conversation is finally paying off.

I just hope the conversation goes somewhere.

This column is intended to provide general information about injury claims. It is not a substitute for retaining a lawyer to provide legal advice specifically pertaining to your case. Paul Hergott is a lawyer at Hergott Law in West Kelowna.

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Mosquito Control Tire Recycling Program

Safely dispose of any old tires you have collecting water and sitting around your property! You'll help to reduce potential breeding habitat for mosquitoes and the potential spread of West Nile Virus.

The Regional District of Central Okanagan is sponsoring a free tire collection program this fall where you can drop off old used passenger vehicle or transport tractor-trailer tires (no agricultural tires, please) with or without rims between 10 am and 3 pm on the following dates and locations :



Saturday, October 19th
Okanagan College, Parking Lot #17
1000 KLO Road, Kelowna

North Glenmore Elementary School
125 Snowsall Street North, Kelowna

Sunday, October 20th
George Elliot Secondary School
10241 Bottom Wood Lake Road, Lake Country

Casorso Elementary School
3675 Casorso Road, Kelowna



If you have questions regarding the Tire Drop Off, mosquitoes, mosquito control or West Nile Virus please call 1-866-679-TIRE (8473) or email BWP@shaw.ca. Further information is also available at www.regionaldistrict.com/mosquitoes

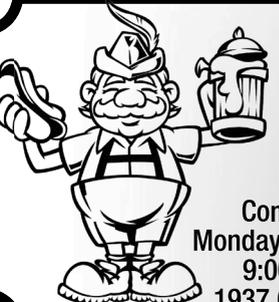
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