

# Cancer takes life of ‘princess’; services planned Wednesday

By Kathryn Burke

*The Goodland Star-News*  
A brain tumor took the life of Brian and Janda Linin’s little princess, 5-year-old Brianna Danae Linin, on Friday.

Brianna liked princesses. Her dad, Brian, said on one of her last trips, a Make a Wish Foundation vacation, she talked to and collected the signature of almost every princess at Disney World in Orlando, Fla.

“She just loved that,” said her dad, chief financial officer at the Frontier Equity Co-op.

Brianna didn’t quite make her sixth birthday. Born on April 20, 1999, in Shawnee, she was a kindergarten student at West Elementary.

Her family learned that she had cancer June 9 at Children’s Hospital in Denver.

Brian said they noticed their daughter had a weakness on her right side and in her right foot and leg.

He said she later developed some facial drooping, a clear sign that something was wrong.

Her parents took Brianna to the doctor, and after some blood work, she was taken to a neurologist, who ordered a Computed Axial Tomography, or CAT scan. The scan revealed a mass in her brain that turned out to be a tumor.



Linin

“That was devastating to see the scan,” Brian said, adding they learned more and more about the tumor as her treatment progressed.

He said doctors told the family that the type of brain tumor was very aggressive and probably only started growing a few months before she was diagnosed.

Over the next six months, Brian said, Brianna underwent two surgeries, chemotherapy

and radiation.

Except for a few one- or two-week periods, he said, she was in treatment.

While in Denver, the family stayed at the Ronald McDonald House and low-cost apartments for children with cancer.

“It’s pretty much a way of life,” he said, spending time in the homes and meeting other families that were going through the same ordeal.

In between hospital visits, the family took trips to the Denver Botanical Gardens, the Colorado Railroad Museum, the Alpine Slide at Winter Park and more.

Brian said although Brianna lost her hair and sometimes tired easily because of the treatments, her personality stayed sunny.

In January, he said, Brianna got sick again, and after scans, they

found the tumor was growing.

He said after considering the options, including some experimental treatments, the family decided Brianna should spend her last days at home. They came back to Goodland and sought help from Hospice Services.

“The hospice service was just outstanding,” he said, adding they not only helped to keep Brianna comfortable, but they helped the family prepare for the loss. “Everything they did was perfect.”

In the month after she stopped treatment, Brian said, she continued to play and even attend school two or three days a week.

Last week, she took a turn for the worse and was admitted into the Goodland Regional Medical Center. She was given pain medication and died on Friday, March 4.

“This last week was pretty tough,” he said.

Sunday, a scheduled benefit auction for Brianna went ahead despite her death. Auctioneers and others donated their time, and lots of people turned out.

Brian said the family was touched by the support.

“I’m in awe at how our community is just great,” he said. “Our community has just been here and surrounded us with support.”

Brianna was a member of Pleasant Home Church north of Edson. Her mother, the former Janda

Halstead, is a daycare provider and a graduate of Leadership Sherman County.

Her family includes her sister, Annika Linin of the home; her grandparents, Dana and Mary Kay Halstead of Shawnee, and Brent and Ginny Linin of Goodland; two aunts, Kim Linin and her husband Rich Devlin of Leawood, and Lisa (Steve) Kernicky of Shawnee; an uncle, Rick Halstead and his wife Jill of Lenexa; three great-grandmothers, Esther Linin of Goodland; and Daisy Halstead of Flat Top, W. Va.; and Helen McNally of Pittsburg; and eight cousins, Cameron, Casey, Cailey, Carissa, Ashley, Ryan, and Kelsi.

Services will be at 10:30 a.m., Wednesday, March 9, 2005, at the United Methodist Church in Goodland, with Pastor Charlie Busch and Dr. Chet Ross officiating. Burial will follow in the Goodland Cemetery.

Visitation will be from 4 to 7 p.m. today at the Koons Chapel.

Memorials may be made to the Brianna Linin Memorial in care of the chapel, 211 N. Main, Goodland, KS 67735-1555.

“I’ll miss just everything about her ...” Brian said, “just her smile. She was one of a kind. She was just a little angel. It’s hard, the thought of her not being here anymore.

“I’m thankful that we had the time that we had with her.”

## Read Across America Day



Blake West, vice president of the Kansas National Education Association, the state teachers’ union, read to students West Elementary School on Wednesday. He visited the school to celebrate Read Across America Day, a special day to promote reading that normally falls on or around Dr. Seuss’s birthday. Photo from West Elementary

# Loss of Goodland graduate touches his old friends

By Kathryn Burke

*The Goodland Star-News*  
The life and lessons of a Sherman County high school graduate will always be an inspiration to those he left behind.

Alan Trachsel, 68, Adelaide, Australia, a 1954 graduate of Sherman Community High School, died on Sunday, Dec. 26, at his home, but old friends like Norman House and family like his brother, W.J. Trachsel, will keep his memory dear.

“He lived like he was dying,” said House, borrowing a line from Tim McGraw’s hit song . “That should be his theme song.”

He said Trachsel lived life to the fullest because of four years he spent as a child in Denver hospitals battling tuberculosis.

W.J. said doctors had trouble fig-



Trachsel

uring out what was wrong with his brother at first, and he went through several hospitals including National Jewish in Denver.

Last year, after he was diagnosed with emphysema, W.J. said, he told

Alan he was going to National, a Denver hospital specializing in lung problems. He said Alan joked that the hospital should have named a room after him. When W.J. signed in for his appointment the nurse asked if he was Alan.

“I didn’t know they kept records back that far,” he said, adding that Alan got a kick out of hearing about the mix-up.

Alan Trachsel told a story, House said, about overhearing the doctor tell his father he might not make it through the night. He said Trachsel wanted to jump out of bed and de-

clare that he wasn’t dead yet.

“It was touch and go there for a while,” said W.J.

House believes the near-death experience set Trachsel’s life-long philosophy of enjoying life.

“Because he came so close to death, he valued life so high,” he said.

Trachsel’s life began on Sept. 12, 1939, born in Goodland to Walter J. and Foresta (Briggs) Trachsel. He attended school in Edson through grade school when he was hospitalized for tuberculosis. Even before that, his mother died of multiple sclerosis.

He returned to Goodland for high school, where House met him in a vocational agriculture class. House said the class went on field trips and visited Trachsel’s farm once, where they saw one of the first sweep-blade plows. He remembers arguing that the one-way plow, the sweep’s predecessor, would never be replaced, while Trachsel was sure the sweep was the implement of the future.

“The sweep plow is everywhere now,” House said, “and the one-way is in the ditches. (Trachsel) was optimistic and he could see the future.”

After high school, the two friends went on to Kansas State University, where they joined the fraternity Acacia.

One year, House said, the fraternity tried to pledge a man with a nearly 4.0 grade point average to boost the group. He said everyone was excited until they met the potential brother, who was lacking in social skills. When the rest of the fraternity wanted to kick the new pledge out, House said, Trachsel stood up for him. He said Trachsel argued that no one needed the help of a fraternity more than the pledge. The speech changed the atmosphere, he said, and the pledge turned out to be a real asset.

“This is why he, probably more than any other fraternity brother, influenced our attitudes,” House said.

In college, House said, Trachsel took a group of friends north in an

old car to spend the summer in Alaska. He said they drove the whole way.

“That was just how he lived his life,” he said. “He didn’t worry about what all could happen to him along the way.”

Although they were good friends, House said, they did fight physically and mentally sometimes.

“I never recalled besting Alan in an argument or a debate,” he said adding he always won in physical contests.

Because Trachsel spent so many years in the hospital, he said, he had little endurance.

“My lungs were better than his,” he said, but since Trachsel didn’t mind losing, winning wasn’t as satisfying for House. “It soon became obvious to me that beating Alan was not fun at all.”

After college, Trachsel went into the Army, serving 1 1/2 years in Vietnam. After his discharge, he

traveled in southeast Asia before ending up in Australia where he met and married Helen Meadmore.

In Adelaide, the couple opened a restaurant called the Lovely Lady, which developed into a successful chain.

“He was a very successful businessman,” House said, adding that the chain employed 400 people.

W.J. said the restaurant sells pancakes and crepes for dinner in an upscale atmosphere.

Trachsel’s success, he said, led him to contribute back to the fraternity, earning him the “Order of Pythagoras” after his death. He said the fraternity will work to raise \$25,000 in his name for scholarships to Kansas State.

A year before his death, Trachsel was diagnosed with multiple myeloma, a type of cancer. W.J. said he seemed to do well with chemotherapy at first, but the cancer took over.

## correction

A story on the District Spelling Bee in the Friday, March 4, issue of *The Goodland Star-News* reported that winner Dane Frazier is in the fourth grade. Frazier is in the sixth grade North Elementary. This was a reporting error.

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The Goodland Star-News will

*correct any mistake or misunderstanding in a news story. Please call our office at (785) 899-2338 to report errors. We believe that news should be fair and factual. We want to keep an accurate record and appreciate you calling to our attention any failure to live up to this standard.*



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Drs. Morrison & Wahlmeier, Colby, are pleased to announce the opening of their eyecare office in Goodland. Dr. Wahlmeier is committed to bringing professional, patient centered vision and eye health care to Goodland area patients. Beginning March 7th, Dr. Wahlmeier will be available to see patients in the Goodland office on Mondays and Wednesdays and office hours will be maintained Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Appointments may also be scheduled with Dr. Wahlmeier in the Colby office on Tuesdays, Thursdays and Fridays.

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## student of the week



**Name:** Craig Mason  
**Parents:** Jeff and Nona Mason

**Grade:** Senior  
**Age:** 18

**We’ve nominated this student because:** Craig has emerged as a leader on X-Pressos. He helps to push the group to get better each day.

**Student Comment:** My favorite aspects of school are musicals, pep band, X-Pressos and just hanging out with my friends. I will always remember the

stupid yet fun things we did.

**Activities involved in at school:** FCS, Stuco, X-Pressos, National Honor Society, cross country, track, jazz band and the musical.

**My choice of movies, books, and games:**

Favorite movies are Gladiator and Ladder 49. Favorite game is Monopoly.

**After I leave Goodland High School I intend to:**

Go to the University of Kansas majoring in Aerospace Engineering and getting a minor in music.

**And 10 years from now, I think I’ll be:** happily starting a family and working hard at the job of my dreams.

**Favorite Quote:** “Be the change you wish to see in the world.” Gandhi

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