

Longer life comes with chronic, lingering conditions

"Because I could not stop for Death — He kindly stopped for me," wrote poet Emily Dickinson. When Dickinson died in 1886, Americans lived, on average, less than 50 years.

Most deaths came quickly at home with little medical intervention. Most came from accidents, infection or childbirth.

Today we have significantly reduced death from those sources. Instead, death now often comes from lingering, chronic conditions battled by significant and expensive medical interventions.

It has been a good trade — today the United States overall life expectancy average stands at its highest level ever, 77.6 years. But, still,



hospice services inc.

- end-of-life care

death stops for us all.

Hospice Services Inc. has joined the national "It's About How You LIVE" campaign to encourage those in our area to make informed decisions about their end-of-life wishes — before a crisis hits.

The LIVE campaign encourages individuals to make informed decisions in advance. LIVE stands for:

- Learn about options for end-of-

life services and care.

- Implement plans to ensure your wishes are honored.
- Voice your decisions

with family, friends and health and spiritual care providers.

- Engage in personal or community efforts to improve end-of-life care.

Too many Americans today have not thought through how they would want care decisions made if they can't make those decisions themselves.

As a result, loved ones are left

guessing, feeling guilty, or, as the Schiavo situation illustrates, in conflict over those decisions.

The national LIVE campaign is sponsored by the Caring Connections program of the National Hospice and Palliative Care Organization, with support from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation.

Hospice is a key end-of-life service. Surveys continue to show people know little about Hospice, even though last year it helped over one million Americans live their last months and weeks with dignity, comfort and compassion.

Hospice interdisciplinary teams of health care professionals and trained volunteers provide pain

management, symptom control, emotional and social support and spiritual care for patients, and their families, coping with life-limiting illness.

But most Americans do not know, for instance, that hospice costs are paid by Medicare, Medicaid in most states and most private insurance plans and HMOs.

Hospice Services Inc. and Caring Connections are committed to improve end-of-life decision-making and access to quality care.

Information and resources about end-of-life issues are available locally from Hospice Services Inc. or on a national level at www.caring-info.org or by calling the Caring Connections HelpLine at 800-658-8898.

Death will stop for you whether you are prepared or not. We encourage you to "LIVE" — Learn, Implement, Voice and Engage. Make decisions for your end-of-life wishes today and share those decisions with each person who might be involved when that time comes. Be prepared — for yourself and for the sake of those you love.

Written by Sandy Kuhlman, executive director of Hospice Services Inc., Box 116, Phillipsburg, Kan. 67661. Contact her or Julia Schemper at 800-315-5122. Hospices serves northwest and northcentral Kansas and has been providing end-of-life care for more than 23 years.

'Buzzwords,' acronyms become pet peeves for reporters, publisher

We all have pet peeves. But I have found myself gaining some new ones in the four years I have worked at *The Goodland Star-News*, things that I never encountered in any of my previous jobs.

For one, certain "buzzwords" are tremendously overused. I think there must be some sort of language fad where certain expressions become "The Thing" to say.

One that I've discovered bothers our publisher is "24/7." Everyone says it — it's quick, it's easy, and after all, we are in a 24/7, fast-paced society that needs to speed things up for convenience. At least, that's our story, and we're sticking to it.

We have a reporter who would like to choke the next person to say "news media" and is bugged to no



sharon corcoran

- just for fun

It's like when you hear something is "awesome," and you think, "Wow! It must really be something else!" But then you're around a teenager who says "awesome"

10 times in the same sentence, and you realize everything is awesome, and it's not so spectacular anymore.

Another buzzword that drives me crazy is "initiative." Every time someone or some group starts something new, it's an initiative.

When someone tells me their group is starting a grassroots initiative, it takes all the restraint I can muster not to say, "Aren't we all?"

I've gained a pet peeve I would never have thought I'd have. I be-

gan this job a person fairly accepting of, and sometimes even liking, acronyms. I'm not sure whether the boss' pet peeve is rubbing off or if they bother me so much now because I've been inundated with acronyms, especially ones I can't even track the words they stand for.

I have received press releases that had almost as many acronyms in them as words. And some of them I could not find a group of words the acronyms stood for, and when I called the people who sent them, they didn't know either.

Keep in mind, normally, I like acronyms. After all, who wants to say "the Young Men's Christian Association"? YMCA is so much easier. And since a song back in the '70s guaranteed that we would all

know what that means, it works.

The problem comes when everyone starts forming acronyms for their groups and projects before anyone has even heard the full name. When several groups have the same acronym. And when groups only a few people know about try to use acronyms like they are so universal everyone would know.

Do you know what DBE stands for? Would you believe Dame Commander of the Order of the British Empire? Or Departmental Budget Estimate? Or Design Basis Earthquake? If you use acronym finder on the Internet, you get 14 possibilities. Clearly, everyone should know what you mean when you say "DBE."

A coworker's husband works for

the National Weather Service, which is under the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA). She says he has told her NOAA stands for the National Organization for the Advancement of Acronyms.

I guess they abbreviate too much too — it's a common problem that we are working to stamp out. We're starting a grassroots initiative, the GSNISOUA, the *Goodland Star-News* Initiative to Stamp Out the Use of Acronyms.

Please join our efforts to stop the FBI's need to investigate the CIA's rendezvous with the AMVETS, NASA and CARE to use RFDI, CRM and ERP to join forces with OPEC and the PSP in the 21st century A.D.

Students can win prizes with letters to authors, telling how books influenced them

Elementary, middle school and high school students can win cash awards and gift cards by writing letters to their favorite authors, telling how their books have affected them.

The Center for the Book at the Library of Congress, along with the Kansas Center for the Book of the State Library of Kansas, and Target stores are sponsoring the Letters About Literature program.

Kids in grades 4-12 can write let-

ters to favorite authors, living or from the past, whose books have affected their lives. The students then submit their letters to LAL 2006, Competition Level (indicate I, II or III), Box 609, Dallas, Pa. 18612.

Level I is grades 4-6, Level II is grades seven and eight, and Level III is grades 9-12. Recommended lengths are 100-250 words for Level I, 250-500 words for Level II and 500-750 words for Level III.

Entries must be postmarked by Dec. 1; winners will be announced in March.

The top essayists on each level will receive a cash award and a \$50 gift certificate. The first-place winners from Kansas will advance to national judging.

Two national winners will be selected on each level. Target will send the six national winners and their two parents or guardians to Washington to attend the National

Book Festival next fall.

They will read their winning letters during the festival and will tour sites in the capital. Each will receive a \$500 gift certificate. National winners will be contacted in April.

More information and sample letters are available at the Center for the Book on the Library of Congress web site at loc.gov/letters.

The contest is open to students of public, private or homeschool programs. Youngsters are urged to pick a fiction or non-fiction book, short story, poem or speech (no song lyrics)

they have read and about which they have strong feelings.

They are asked to consider how the characters, conflict or setting mirrors their lives, what strengths or flaws they share with a character in the book and what surprised them about themselves while reading the book.

Students are urged to write a letter that is less formal than an essay or research paper and that speaks honestly and uses their natural voice, rather than to flatter the authors.

A past winner expressed how "The Joy Luck Club" by Amy Tan led to a better understanding of her relationship with her mother and a better appreciation for what she has. Another winner said "A Child Called 'It,'" by David Pelzer gave her an appreciation for her foster parents and a realization that she can become anything she wants.

A middle school student in Colorado said Charles Lindbergh's flight across the Atlantic, as recounted in "The Spirit of St. Louis," helped him to rise above depression.

Tour of Last India Raid sites planned in Oberlin

The Oberlin Arts and Humanities Commission will sponsor a tour of sites from the Last Indian Raid on Kansas soil on Sunday, Sept. 25, with local historian Calvin Ufford as narrator and guide.

The group will visit sites southwest of Oberlin where the Northern Cheyenne Indians came through Decatur County on Sept. 28, 1878, killing 17 settlers.

A contemporary account re-

ported: "All settlers were hopeful and happy in the thought of having a home of their own, with no thought of danger for them and theirs, when, like a bolt of lightning out of the clear sky, came the massacre of Sept. 30, 1878, by Dull Knife's band of Cheyennes."

The tour will help kick off Mini Sappa events sponsored by the Decatur County museum the following weekend.

Those planning to attend are asked to meet at the Last Indian Raid Museum at 12:45 p.m. Mountain Time to load the bus. The group will return about 3 p.m. for refreshments.

Make reservations by Friday, Sept. 23, by calling Ella Betts at (785) 475-3329 or Mary Henzel, (785) 475-3329. Admission is by arts and humanities season tickets or can be paid individually.

Sherman County Household Hazardous Waste Collection

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