

COURIER-JOURNAL

Southern Tier-Auburn Geneva

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Professor Asks

Why Doesn't Hospice Care Exist Now?

By Martin Toombs
Southern Tier Editor

Horseheads — Martin Schaefer, who is involved in the effort to establish hospice care in the Elmira area, poses the question "Why do we need hospice care?"

"Why do we have to come up with special legislation to provide the care that should be available to the terminally ill, he asks; "Why doesn't it exist?"

The answer lies in our society's view of death, Schaefer said, noting "people are afraid of the topic," citing the fact that many refuse to make wills as an illustration.

A further problem is that medical personnel are "so concerned about the prolongation of life" they are unwilling to admit defeat, and continue to treat a disease after the treatment is no longer effective, rather than concentrate on the patient's needs.

Schaefer, who teaches full-time at Corning

Community College and part-time at Elmira College, teaches courses in death and dying, and works with a bereavement support group in Corning. Interviewed at his Horseheads home, Schaefer noted that the lack of sensitivity to the needs of the dying patient is a problem, and he related that he has heard several "bad stories" from class members and from the bereavement group about the treatment terminally ill persons have received.

Schaefer is part of a group investigating establishment of hospice care for the terminally ill in Steuben, Schuyler and Chemung counties. He also was an instructor in the course this past summer given at St. Joseph's Hospital that taught hospice care of the terminally ill.

As Schaefer presents the case for hospice-style care, he often returns to his basic question: why isn't patient-centered care available for the terminally ill now?

Schaefer explains the

hospice philosophy: for a hospice, the question "What is it that will be best for the patient?" governs all decisions. That must come before consideration of what is best for the hospitals, government, or professionals, he said.

The question he asks when consulting with hospital personnel, he said, is "How would you like to be treated if you were terminal?"

Hospice care includes the dying person and his or her family; the scheduling of drugs in such a way as to eliminate as much pain as possible, while maintaining the patient's lucidity; and dealing with any other problems that the patient or family may have.

Providing the hospice care would be an interdisciplinary team, Schaefer said, and would involve constant consultation between counselors, pharmacists, doctors, nurses, patient and family.

When possible, care would be provided in a

person's home; Schaefer stated that "everybody has the right to die at home, but not everybody can." Those unable to remain at home could be cared for in a hospice facility, or in a hospice unit in a hospital. In any of the three situations, the staff would be trained to deal with the terminally ill.

There seems to be "enthusiasm" for hospice care in the region, Schaefer reported, and he hopes the elements will fall into place so that service can begin. But many legislative, funding, and regulation issues have to be resolved before hospice care will be available.

Currently 45 groups have applied to the state to be designated a demonstration project, with 15 scheduled to receive the designation. No one knows what not being selected will mean for the 30 others who applied, he commented.

The state has published guidelines for hospices, but Schaefer called them too vague to give groups seeking to establish the service much

information on how it will be run. "The problem is who is going to pay for this care," Schaefer said, noting the need for contracts with "third-party payors," private insurance companies, and with Medicare and Medicaid. Expectations are that hospice care will provide a savings over its usual alternative, hospitalization.

Other health planning issues will have to be resolved, he noted, such as possible de-certification of hospital beds if a free-

standing hospice is certified. "Hospitals have to be rightfully concerned" about developments in hospice care, he said.

As life expectancies increase, the number of persons dying from degenerative, progressive diseases has grown. The terminally ill need sensitive care, Schaefer said, reminding health planners and others that "cost containment is important, but the patient is more important."



Family Tradition

During its 50 years, St. Casimir's School building in Elmira has been the scene for the elementary education of succeeding generations of families. Above, two such families pause in front of the school. Left, Mrs. Mary Ann Wilcox helps her son find his way in the school she graduated from in 1964. Way is entering kindergarten. Mrs. Wilcox was preceded by her mother, Helen Congdon, who graduated in 1932. On the right, three generations try out the well-traveled steps. Anthony Wisniewski, a second grader, is helped by his father, Stanley, who graduated in 1956, and his grandmother, Leona, who graduated in 1923 from the building that preceded the current one.

Father McNamara Work On Corning May Be Re-Issued

Especially since the 1977 appearance of the widely-acclaimed bicentennial History of the Corning-Painted Post area by Thomas P. Dimitroff and Lois S. Janes, there has been an increased interest in the past of the Corning district. Evidences of this have been the reprinting of Millard F. Roberts' Historical Gazetteer of Steuben County and the forthcoming reissue, with index of Uri Mulford's Corning and Vicinity, 1789-1922.

In 1948, St. Mary's Church of Corning published Father Robert F. McNamara's study, "A Century of Grace, St. Mary's Church, Corning, New York, 1848-1948." Although by intent this 284-page book was a readable "biography" of the Catholic mother-church of the district, it was also a local history in

Scholarship Awarded

Elmira — Laurie Mills, a second year student in the School of Radiologic Technology at St. Joseph's Hospital, has received a scholarship.

Ms. Mills, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Kenneth Mills of Cherrywood Manor, Elmira, was presented with a \$500 award from the New York Radiologic Society by Dr. George Spence, radiologist at St. Joseph's Hospital.

The 1978 graduate of Odessa-Montour Central School, will graduate in October, 1980, from St. Joseph's School of Radiologic Technology.

the broader sense because it integrated parish life with the social and economic background of the whole community.

Based on church and community research that took almost a decade to compile, it was the most important publication issued on Corning's past between Mulford's book (1922) and the Dimitroff-Janes volume. Long since out of print, A Century of Grace has become a collector's item.

The book was termed by John Tracy Ellis, dean of American Catholic historians, "A first-class centennial story of a northern New York parish." When it first appeared, the late W. Allen Underhill, publisher of the Corning Leader, called it "a very valuable and memorable contribution to all phases of Corning's life, religious and civic." It has served as a standard work of reference and is often cited as such in the Dimitroff-Janes work.

Now, several people have inquired about the possibility of a second edition. Father Michael C. Hogan, St. Mary's pastor, has decided on a limited re-issue of 250 cloth-bound volumes, if enough prepaid subscribers have ordered copies by Oct. 15 at the special pre-publication rate of \$12. (On publication, the book will be sold for \$15).

The author is Father Robert F. McNamara, professor of church history at St. Bernard's Seminary, the author of four books, including The Diocese of Rochester, 1868-1968, Father

McNamara, a native of Corning and former member of St. Mary's parish, has had a continuing interest in the history of the Genesee country, and his home town in particular. He was first president of the Corning-Painted Post Historical Society (1947-48), a promoter of Corning's centennial observance (1948), and for two years a contributor to the Leader of a series of local historical vignettes written under the pen-name of The Old Chronicler.

Technicians Graduated

Hornell — Three students of the St. James Mercy Hospital School of Radiologic Technology received diplomas during a program Aug. 24 at the Ponce DeLeon Restaurant.

Rita Matacale, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. George Matacale of Canisteo, received an award given annually by the E. R. Squibb Company, to the student with the highest average for the two-year course. The award was presented by Mrs. Kathie Brownell who received the award in 1978.

Other graduates were Claire Hockenberry, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Donald Hockenberry of Hornell, and Paul T. Roy of Hornell.

Sister Margaret Ann, educational director, introduced the graduates, who then received their diplomas from Dr. Edward Auringer, school medical director.

Sister Mary Rene, hospital administrator, extended

Mrs. Richard C. Ward of St. Mary's parish is chairman of the republication project.

Anyone wishing to have a copy of this collectible classic should promptly send a check for \$12, plus \$1 per copy to cover mailing, to Century of Grace, St. Mary's Church, 155 State St., Corning, N.Y., 14830. If the project is undersubscribed by October, the funds will be returned to the subscribers. Otherwise, copies should be available by Christmas.

congratulations on behalf of the Board of directors and the hospital staff, and encouraged the graduates to continue their excellence in technical ability and patient concern in their special area of health care. William Connors, associate administrator, gave the invocation.

St. Joseph's, Weedsport

Weedsport — Harry Gray has been elected president of the Parish Council at St. Joseph's parish here.

Jack O'Neil was elected vice president and Thomas Daly secretary, according to Father Elmer W. Heindl, pastor.

In other action, the council approved a plan for ministry of lector training, commitment and commissioning; adopted the Religious Education schedule and heard reports on renovation progress.

Hypertension Seminar Scheduled Tonight

Elmira — "Hypertension — the Hurra Time Bomb" will be the topic as the "To Your Health Seminars" resume for the fall at St. Joseph's Hospital. Dr. Dominic Romeo, cardiologist, will address the subject and then answer questions.

The seminar, Wednesday, Sept. 5, at 7:30 p.m. in the Doctors Meeting Room at St. Joseph's, will afford an opportunity to learn about hypertension, or high blood pressure, and preventive measures to avoid its toll.

Sponsored by the Community Relations Committee of the Development Council of St. Joseph's, the series will include an "Update on Arthritis, Cause and Treatment," in October, presented by Dr. Michael V. Sobel; "Ethics of Life Support," by Dr. Joseph

Calderone and Father Cyril Guise in November, and "Lung Disease," with tri-county pulmonologist, a specialist in lung disease, Dr. Earl P. Robinson in December.

Reservations for the free-of-charge sessions may be made through the Community Relations Office at St. Joseph's, 733-9137.

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