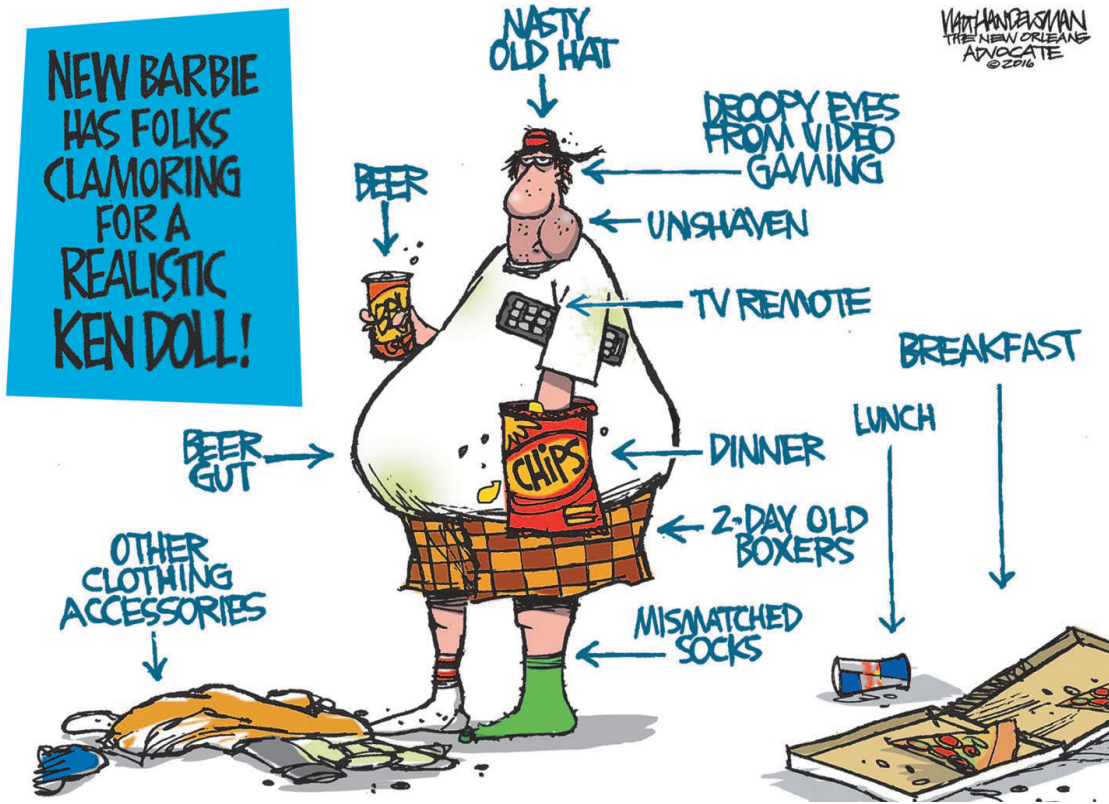


O P I N I O N



Letters to the Editor...

The Nugget welcomes contributions from its readers, which must include the writer's name, address and phone number. Letters to the Editor is an open forum for the community and contains unsolicited opinions not necessarily shared by the Editor. The Nugget reserves the right to edit, omit, respond or ask for a response to letters submitted to the Editor. Letters should be no longer than 300 words. Unpublished items are not acknowledged or returned. The deadline for all letters is noon Monday.

To the Editor:

Is there a plan for the mud pit between Bi-Mart and Ray's? It would be really easy to put a road there where everybody drives.

Bruce Berryhill

To the Editor:

It's nothing short of a miracle that a tiny kitten survived being abandoned in a box in freezing temperatures ("Sisters resident rescues abandoned kitten," *The Nugget*, January 26, page 1).

The kitten's siblings weren't as lucky, a grim reminder of the dangers faced by cats outdoors. During the cold winter months, cats often suffer from frostbite and exposure, and are maimed or killed by fan blades when they crawl up into engines seeking warmth. Year-round, they also face dangers posed by infectious diseases, parasites, dogs, wildlife, and

the scariest predator of all, humans. Cats are often poisoned, shot, or set on fire by cruel people.

Kittens are especially vulnerable; 75 percent of kittens born outside are dead before they reach six months old.

Please, never let your cat outside unattended. If you suspect a cat is lost or homeless, bring her to a reputable open-admission shelter. If your local shelter does not accept stray cats, urge it to reverse this cruel and misguided policy. Shelters' refusal to take in cats — an alarming "no kill" trend — leads to the abandonment of animals like this kitten and her dead siblings.

Cats are domesticated animals — they cannot survive on their own and need our help.

Teresa Chagrin
Animal Care & Control Specialist
People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA)

Sisters Weather Forecast

Courtesy of the National Weather Service, Pendleton, Oregon

Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday	Monday
Rain/snow 40/27	Mostly cloudy 41/24	Mostly cloudy 45/30	Partly sunny 43/23	Mostly sunny 45/24	Sunny 44/na

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Drugs kill — a mother's grief

By Norine Rae
Guest Columnist

Editor's note: Ian Doyel Davies was a 2006 graduate of Sisters High School.

On June 23, 2015, I lost my beautiful son, Ian Doyel Davies, to a heroin overdose. Some of you may not be aware of how serious of a problem drug abuse has become in our nation. The National Drug Threat Assessment (NDTA) released new statistics, which should not be ignored. Yet, many Americans continue to go about their daily lives not realizing the enormous impact drugs have and how they are affecting our society on every level.

Families and communities are hurting because of this epidemic. Even if you don't have a loved one who is struggling with an addiction to drugs or alcohol, I am certain you know someone who is. According to the NDTA, in 2014 drug overdoses contributed to (46,471) American deaths. That is more than those who have died from firearms (33,636) or car accidents (35,369). And I am certain that drugs and alcohol were an influence in many of the lives lost due to firearms and car accidents as well.

Heroin is epidemic! According to TheVerge.com, the CDC reported heroin is five times cheaper than prescription opiates. The most prevalent users are Caucasians between 20-29 years of age; my son was 27. But heroin does not discriminate; it kills at every age, ethnic group, social and economic group. And it isn't just heroin, prescription opiates kill and are often the culprit that leads people to heroin.

My son broke his leg, and was given an opiate derivative which led to his addiction. Honestly, I don't know all the details, as with many who struggle with addictions there are secrets. Often we are unaware of how serious of a problem

they have — even though we know there is a problem — because the user doesn't want us to know due to the shame that usually gets ahold of the addict. So much is hidden. They want us to be proud of them and see only the successes in their lives. This seems to be a common thread in the stories I hear.

With young people dying, literally every day, and so many being exposed to these devastating drugs, what can we do?

Believe me; when it reaches your doorstep it is truly heartbreaking! How can we make a difference?

First, I believe it comes with awareness. We need to wake up. With so many of our youth dying from drug addiction we cannot, should not, continue to ignore this issue. I'm not even sure how I can make a difference. Perhaps it starts with me writing this article, and warning young people. My heart is grieved that I lost my wonderful son, and I long to warn young people and their families to not stay silent.

For those of you who have children who are struggling, my prayers go out to you. Love your kids well and try to get them the help that they so desperately need. Let's not allow shame to stop us from speaking up and getting help for those we love.

Affordable professional medical help, greater education, and stricter laws for drug dealers are necessary to win this battle. We are truly fighting a monster that is devouring our youth and wreaking chaos in our society.

If you have a family member who struggles with prescription drugs, alcohol, street drugs, or need I say heroin, please take it seriously. It may be too late for my son, Ian, but I know he would want me to warn you. He would want you and your family to enjoy life, free from addiction to drugs or alcohol.

Opinions expressed in this column are solely those of the writer and are not necessarily shared by the Editor or The Nugget Newspaper.