

Opinion and Commentary Editor: Steve Lund | (262) 656-6283 | slund@kenoshanews.com

AIDS Center seeks to cut overdose deaths

LAUREL — To the AIDS Resource Center in Kenosha for getting involved in the battle to reduce overdose deaths of heroin addicts. The agency is training addicts how to use naloxone, a medication that can save those who overdose on heroin or other opiates. Unfortunately, heroin addiction and overdoses are increasing. But moves by the Wisconsin Legislature allow more people to access naloxone and shields those who provide it. Our local resource center offers a needle exchange program for addicts and now provides training on naloxone, two means to reducing the deaths of those who can't kick their drug addiction.

DART — To the city of Kenosha for not demanding that absentee downtown landlords keep up their properties. It's bad enough that many buildings have been empty for decades, but even the sidewalks aren't maintained. While walking down 58th Street it's easy to see two-foot-tall weeds growing out of the sidewalks. Summer is prime time for showing off downtown and the city should expect more from its property owners.

LAUREL — To the Kenosha Area Business Alliance and Downtown Kenosha Inc. for partnering with Joliet, Ill., for a review

DARTS AND LAURELS

of each other's city. Both cities are on an economic and community development mission. Getting an outside perspective on the progress being made is a good tool for judging whether efforts are beginning to pay off.

DART — To vandals who have recently added graffiti to the Southport Beach House and buildings at Poerio Park. Those responsible for these actions probably think they're just having harmless fun. Unfortunately, the city is on the hook for thousands of dollars worth of time and materials to restore the buildings. Anyone who can identify those responsible for this vandalism should call Kenosha Police.

LAUREL — To organizers and participants in last weekend's Relay for Life, which raised at least \$264,966. The event was hit by some tough weather on Friday night, sending everyone into the University of Wisconsin-Parkside's Sports and Activity Center. It's great to see that 957 participants and 83 teams came to the event and that the closing ceremony had especially strong attendance.

DART — To the federal government for providing free school meals to entire school populations if at least 40 percent of its students are already receiving free or reduced-price meals. We're all for providing meals for those who are in need. But by making the program universal, the government is digging into its precious funds to buy meals for many students who don't need the subsidy. In Beloit, Wis., every student will receive a free breakfast and lunch this year, even though 23 percent of them don't need the subsidy.

LAUREL — To the city of Kenosha for the work being done to build a seating area near the Washington Park Velodrome. This project is making use of some of the topsoil the city was given by Amazon from its building site. The city's long-term plan includes building an open air shelter for picnics and other events near the velodrome.

DART — To the 19-year-old Kenosha man who flicked a cigarette at a woman and started a kitchen fire last week. Fortunately, everyone was evacuated safely. This guy lacked judgment in being sloppy with his cigarette, putting himself and three others in danger.

The flip side of what goes on Facebook

BY GINA BARRECA

MCLATCHY-TRIBUNE NEWS SERVICE

Snapshots of people at their most miserable: That's what you don't see on Facebook.

But wouldn't it be fascinating? After all, real life is like seeing the reverse side of a perfectly executed needlepoint: it's messy, chaotic and it's often hard to see the big picture.

A friend introduced me to what he calls the Miserable Snapshot Theory of Life. As people upload daily, sometimes hourly, photographs of fabulous meals, beautiful children and astonishing vacations as evidence of our unimpeachably happy existences, his theory has increased in appeal.

What if, when we were much younger, we could have looked into our future and seen only the most pitiful moments? What would we have done then?

Here's my pitiful moment:

My husband and I drove across the country. We had a safe car, audiobooks and enough cash to stay indoors. We were ready for adventure.

Yes, parts of the trip were Facebook-pleeful: diners with perfectly crisp hash; a local rodeo in Montana; landscapes so stark we wouldn't have been surprised to see a triceratops walk across the road.

But then there was the night in northern California.

It rained hard all day and driving had been tough. We were going to try to make it further north, but decided around 7 to call it quits. We pulled into a small city and chose a small local motel since the plan was to get some serious sleep and leave early the next day.

Fair enough, right?

OK, so the room was a little worse than usual. For starters, it had a neon orange shag rug that had seen better days as far back as, say, 1972.

The room's only attempt at decoration consisted of faded clown prints, six of them, fully bolted to the walls — implying that other guests had attempted to steal them.

There were twin beds covered by nylon paisley bedspreads so slippery that it was nearly impossible not to slide off directly onto the shag rug, thereby becoming consumed by whatever ecosystem lived within its layers.

Seeing the expression on my face, Michael said, "I'll go get us some food."

The understanding was that I would unpack whatever we needed, open the wine and get our evening started. I looked around for those little plastic glasses usually on shelves in the bathroom. Not only were there no cups in the bathroom, there were no shelves.

There was, however, another clown print.

I decided to drink the wine regardless of beverage holders.

My husband returned to find his wife sitting on a nylon paisley bed drinking cheap wine directly out of the bottle while gazing stupefied at Bozo.

In a falsely cheerful voice, he announced, "The only thing I could find to eat was potato salad."

"Where did you get potato salad where there was no other food?" I asked.

"There was a deli, it was closing, and I didn't like the look of the cold cuts."

I started rifling through the paper bag for napkins and cutlery. There were napkins, but no spoons, knives or forks.

"Michael," I asked, "how are we supposed to eat this?"

"What do you mean?" he said.

"There are no implements," I pointed out.

In a phrase I at first didn't understand, Michael said, "I have a shoe horn." He looked enormously pleased with himself.

Then I got it. So we sat at the end of our respective beds, passing the bottle back and forth along with the plastic container of potato salad as we shoveled food into our mouths with a shoehorn.

If you had told me when I was a kid, "Honey, you're gonna spend an evening sitting in a cheap motel eating potato salad with a shoe horn and staring at a clown print in silence," would I have really worked so hard in college?

I used to think I'd like to see my future: "Oh, if only I could fast-forward a little bit and see where I end up. That will give me motivation to do well and be all that I can be!"

Right.

We have to choose those snapshots carefully. None of them are representative: it's all about context.

When we left the next morning, our drive took us through fields of orchids. Had we not stopped the night before, we would have driven past them in the dark.

A picture might be worth a thousand words, but you choose your words and your pictures carefully. And always pack a shoehorn.

Gina Barreca is an English professor at the University of Connecticut, a feminist scholar who has written eight books, and a columnist for the Hartford Courant. She can be reached through www.ginabarreca.com.

VOICE OF THE PEOPLE

Bad choices on taxes will haunt Wisconsin

Cutting taxes is not a good deal. The current leadership in Madison pat themselves on the back for cutting taxes. I think Wisconsin will be haunted by these poor choices.

Democrats want to eliminate waste, but not shirk our duties. Democrats like Mary Burke have a better grasp of the big picture of taking good care of our state.

I want our university system to be world class and remain viable for local kids to afford.

I want local public schools not to suffer like the past three and a half years under Act 10. School workers should be well paid and have outstanding health insurance, as all workers should.

Roads need to be tended to. I want the thin white line at the edge of the county highway on dark wet nights. I want a clean bathroom at the rest stop when I'm on vacation.

We have money to dredge the harbor for the wealthy boat owners, we should have money for free and reduced lunch for poor kids. I want a healthy environment to be a top priority. All these things cost money and they are all worthy of that expenditure.

Even if you don't have children, or own a car or boat, spending tax money wisely makes Wisconsin wonderful. That's good for business too.

I see Scott Walker and his party like a kid who buys a car and neglects all the upkeep and maintenance. Don't applaud someone like that.

Dean Hervat
Kenosha

Tax cuts would make business climate better

They wonder why in Democratically held states businesses are fleeing the overburdening regulations and taxes to friendlier tax climates. Liberals believe business exists only to extract profits from to redistribute wealth.

They demonize all companies that choose to move in order to survive a nearly 40 percent corporate tax to support this. The corporate tax rate must be lowered in order for American business to compete on the world stage. Businesses will then have more revenue to hire and raise wages instead of the government squandering it.

Of course this goes against all critical thought of the left. Their policies decrease the workforce and force jobs overseas. Their unionista way of thinking destroyed the manufacturing sector in Wisconsin and this country. Luckily the private sector has stepped in to curb this effort.

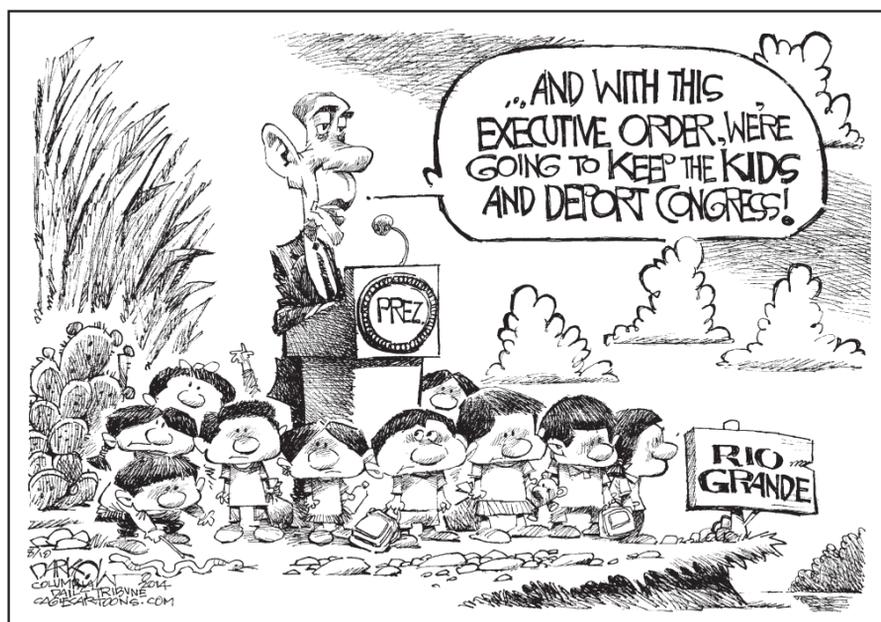
If American companies are to survive and the workforce participation rate is to expand tax rates must be lowered for a stronger business environment.

We have 9 million fewer people working right now who are able since this president took office. He shrugs his shoulders and tells us this is the new normal.

This president would rather pay you not to work, keep you on the taxpayer dole and voting Democratic. We circle the drain sinking deeper into fiscal disrepair and government run socialism. Taxes increase and personal wealth decreases, hmmm.

When will enough be enough? I fear until the whole country resembles Detroit it will not change.

Bill Cheney
Salem



Kids discover stereotyping early

BY AMY GARRIGAN

SPECIAL TO THE KENOSHA NEWS

It is back-to-school time and that means going shopping. As I flip through catalogs and store flyers, I see one gender stereotype after another.

It is assumed that boys prefer to wear shirts in primary colors with ferocious animals or sports themes. Girls apparently like pastel colors, cute animals, and ballerinas.

This is probably not a surprise to anyone who has shopped for kids' clothing in recent years. The nursery rhyme claims that little girls are "sugar and spice and everything nice," so obviously that is what their clothes should look like.

Since becoming a mom to two little girls, however, I look at these catalogs differently. They are not just selling clothing. Intentionally or not, they are inviting children and their parents to buy into a world-view that perpetuates gender stereotypes.

It is interesting for me to watch my oldest daughter who, for now, seems to be uninfluenced by these stereotypes. She happily gets dressed up for parties and wears clothes from the girls' section of the store. However, when we walk by the boys' section, her eyes pop out of her head as she sees the cool shirts with trucks, sharks, and pirates.

At 2 she could name every Thomas the Tank Engine character and at 6 she can tell you more about sharks and other predators than you might ever care to know. She knows that not all of her interests are represented in the girls' aisles. We have talked about how silly it is that stores do not realize that girls like those things too. Eventually, however, I fear the social pressure to conform will outweigh the encouragement from her dad and me to pursue all her interests.

Some might say we should just buy my daughter the boys' clothing and stop worrying about it. Often we will buy whatever item she likes. However, I feel that does not address the larger problem that in 2014 the adults of this world still divide kids' toys, clothes, and activities into boy and girl categories.

I believe that kids' interests are much more diverse than adults generally acknowledge. By dividing a catalog by gender and then offering certain designs to only boys or girls, we suggest a much more limited set of interests. I feel we are asking kids to conform instead of challenging them to see themselves, and their friends, in new and different ways.

It might be easy to write all this off by

SUNDAY MORNING WITH ...



Amy Garrigan's column runs four weeks on Sunday as part of "Sunday Morning With ..."

saying that stores sell what people will buy. This is where the story gets interesting to me. Through the power of social media, perhaps a new chapter in children's clothing is being written.

A few weeks ago, Lands' End put out its back-to-school catalog. In it, the boy T-shirts were described as "mighty" and they had science-themed designs, including a T-shirt with the words "NASA crew" complete with NASA logo. The girl T-shirts were described as "adorable" and had images of a dog wearing a tutu and sequined hearts. There was no NASA crew T-shirt for girls.

As a result, a New Jersey mom posted a letter to Lands' End on its Facebook page stating that once her mighty and science-loving daughter found out that Lands' End did not think she was interested in being part of NASA's crew, she would no longer be shopping at their store.

The company was flooded with comments from other liked-minded girls and their parents. People asked: Why can't we encourage a boy's love for horses or flowers? Why do we say little girls can grow up to be anything they want to be, but assume only boys want a NASA crew shirt?

How hard is it to have a kids' T-shirt section of the catalog where all the designs can be sold together without any assumptions of who will prefer a certain design? The company responded within weeks and is now offering the NASA crew design in girls' sizing.

The hundreds of comments suggest that many parents want this gender stereotyping to end, and for now, Lands' End seems to be listening. This is a small step, but I hope it pays off, as I am sure many other retailers are watching.

My youngest daughter, who happens to love sequins and sparkles, currently wants to be a pilot. I have not found an airplane T-shirt for her yet. Retailers, are you listening?