

OPINION

Burlington County Times

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OUR VIEW

And now for some good news ...

Every day seems like just another cycle of shootings, stabbings, name calling, political posturing and people just badly behaving. Is it really this grim? No, it's not. If you are starving for good news, it's out there. Here are a few stories you might have missed in the past week, and today, the Fourth of July, is as a good a time as any to remind us of what we as Americans do best:

• This spring, two Medford Boy Scouts led dozens of volunteers in separate projects to get the nonprofit YMCA Camp Ockanickon ready for its annual summer camps. Jacob Delancy, with Troop 20, helped clean up debris at one of the Medford camp's beaches, spread 25 tons of new sand near the swim and playground areas, built a canoe rack, and constructed a "lost and found" display. Dan Smith, with Troop 26, built and installed benches for fire pits in three locations at the boys' camp.

• Virtua's new Pediatric Mobile Services Unit made its first visit to Burlington County, offering services to the community at the Tabernacle Baptist Church on Second Street in Burlington City. The Evesham nonprofit program, which debuted early last month, provides developmental and dental screenings, oral health education and flu shots to children in infancy through age 5, as well as lead poisoning education/screening information and other community resources. "We're going to go to more urban or rural and impoverished areas and increase access to developmental screenings, dental screenings and blood screenings, and things like that," said Maria Emerson, director of the Pediatric Early Intervention Program. The mobile unit will return to the church on July 26 and may return regularly on the fourth Thursday of each month.

• A few weeks ago, a homeless Florence woman and her three children were given shelter for two weeks at the Prince of Peace Lutheran Church in Evesham. They and two other families were given beds, showers and food at the church's temporary shelter as part of Interfaith Hospitality Network of Burlington County's shelter program for homeless families with children under age 18. Local churches volunteer to give the families food and a place to stay while they work with the IHN to find housing and/or employment. Churches typically take in families a few times a year on a rotating schedule, but Prince of Peace came through in an emergency situation. The church has about a dozen regular volunteers who help cook dinner for the families, ensure they have clean bed linens, play with the children and stay with them overnight. Guests have access to a kitchen, bathroom with shower, social hall, library and children's playroom. The mother of three is a full-time student at Rowan College at Burlington County studying nursing. With the help of the network, she recently landed a job at Bancroft NeuroRehab in Cherry Hill and expects to find housing through the Burlington County Community Action Program.

• An Addiction Resource Center was launched in New Jersey by the nonprofit Addiction Policy Forum for those seeking treatment for addiction. It provides a confidential phone line for callers and a website that features resources broken down by each county. The phone number is 833-301-HELP (4357) and is available Monday through Friday from 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. Callers can speak with addiction counselors, licensed clinicians and peer recovery support advocates to assess the person's situation.

WRITING US

We welcome Letters to the Editor, Vents and Views, and Guest Opinions that are mindful of civil discourse. Example: Don't call out fellow writers by name. Letters should not exceed 250 words; Guest Opinions, 600 words; Vents, 40 words. Include your name, hometown and a daytime number. We do not accept thank you letters, poetry, classroom assignments, replies to replies, letters to third parties, consumer complaints, or organized campaigns. Repeat writers should cover new ground. Limit: First consideration given to those who haven't been published in previous 30 days. Documentation or sources might be required. Email: letters@thebct.com or vent@thebct.com



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Disability claim process is heartless

After major surgery last October, a friend reminded me in January, after I was cleared to return to work, that I could file for state disability insurance for the 12 weeks I was out, since I had SDI deducted from my paycheck. I started the online process on Jan. 13.

My SDI claim was denied since it was filed more than 30 days after the deadline (why is there a deadline?) and I didn't show "good cause" for the delay. My sole concern after my life-threatening surgery was, frankly, surviving it, then pain relief and returning to work. I appealed the denial in writing, which led to a phone interview with an appeals judge. My wife and I presented our case, being that we were terrified after yet another harrowing surgery and recovery for me; a disability claim was just not on our radar, regardless of whether I had filed any claims in the past. The judge, while "sympathetic," denied my appeal, saying my reasoning was not "compelling" enough. What could be more compelling? (I was strangely paid by SDI for the first three weeks of my leave.)

I am writing this to caution other claimants who may not be as dogged as I, but at the same time are probably more in need of disability payments: Be aware of the 30-day deadline, and be prepared for the heartlessness of the SDI decision process.

I am also asking that the SDI department and the elected officials who enact laws creating these claim deadlines take a long, hard look at their policies and seek to remove roadblocks to people filing legitimate claims.

Matt Pey
Bordentown Township

Opioid patients can't fight it alone

On July 4th, millions of Americans will come together to celebrate the signing of the Declaration of Independence, a historic testimonial against oppression that still inspires people around the world.

Today, millions of Americans are confronting another kind of oppression — opioid addiction. At Relievus, we see the effects of this horrible epidemic every day. It has destroyed families, ruined lives, and even led to a historic decrease in lifespan among sectors of the U.S. population.

According to recent reports, in 2016, 11.5 million people misused prescription opioids, and over 42,000 died from an opioid overdose. Roughly 40 percent of those deaths involved a prescription opioid. But the impact isn't limited to opioid abusers. Another report puts the economic impact

of each opioid overdose death at about \$800,000.

It's important to understand that people who abuse opioids are not weak or inferior. They simply are trying to deal with their pain. Eventually this pain becomes difficult to manage until it begins affecting quality of life.

Weaning patients off opioids is an important step. But managing pain takes an intense, multifaceted approach. Most need social support, behavioral therapy and/or individual counseling. They cannot do it alone. It will take a united and coordinated front.

On this Fourth of July, let us reignite the spirit of American courage and community. Let us work to create a new dawn of independence from the oppression caused by the abuse of opioids and other drugs.

Dr. Young J. Lee
Board-certified anesthesiologist and pain specialist
Relievus
Lumberton

Tebow done in by lack of talent

Tim Tebow was an outstanding college quarterback and a devout Christian. He was drafted by the Denver Broncos to play professional football. But a conspiracy was afoot. In his June 28 letter to the editor, Andrew Roscoe intimated that because of Tebow's belief, "The media elitists and the absolute treachery of political correctness obliterated his career."

It's a good thing the elitists and their fellow travelers targeted only Tebow. Otherwise, the Eagles might not have won the Super Bowl. Eagles coach Doug Pederson said, "I can only give the praise to my lord and savior, Jesus Christ, for giving me this opportunity." Super Bowl MVP Nick Foles said, "All glory to God."

The cover of his new book shows him on a football field pointing to the sky.

Denver, Philadelphia, New York and New England hired Tebow and then got rid of him. None of the other NFL teams offered him a job. Here's why: In 2012, the last year he played, Tebow was rated the 57th best quarterback in a league of 32 teams — a benchwarmer at the very edge of the bench. The only thing that obliterated his career was his performance, not a reaction to his faith.

Believe me, if Tim Tebow was a good quarterback, he would have played, even if he followed Satan. But only for Dallas.

Rob Weiss
Mount Laurel

Crude conduct of Hollywood media

The conduct, foul language and irresponsibility of the Hollywood media is

incredible, beginning with the disgusting comment by Samantha Bee about President Donald Trump's daughter. No one on the other side ever made such a vile comment about an Obama family member or the Clintons' daughter.

Advance to the latest two nitwits: Bill Maher, a failed comedian and news commentator, hoped that the economy goes in the tank to get rid of Trump by impeachment. I did not vote for or support Barack Obama, but I hoped he would improve our economy. He failed. And over-the-hill actor Robert De Niro used a crude expression regarding the president. Then the true insult: issuing an apology the next day.

These types of liberals would rather see our people suffer bad economic times, lose their jobs and perhaps their homes than wait out the next two years and try again. Lowest unemployment in modern history, highest percentage of minorities with jobs, wars winding down, and perhaps peace in North Korea after 11 U.S. presidents failed.

Also, take note how liberal companies Amazon and Starbucks reacted financially when their bottom line was threatened by the tax-crazy City Council of Seattle. That is why when a company does actions I disagree with, I don't buy their products. No Starbucks, Nike or Amazon in my household.

Russell R. Regn
Mount Holly

Can't get around foreign car tariffs

Fourth of July car commercials are traditionally just a background distraction during backyard barbecues. But this year, you might want to pay attention. President Donald Trump is considering imposing big tariffs on foreign cars, which would increase their sticker prices by thousands of dollars.

Think you can get around these tariffs by buying a Ford? Think again. Tariffs on foreign goods give domestic producers a buffer to raise their prices. Witness the skyrocketing prices of U.S. steel following Trump's tariffs on foreign imports.

Perhaps higher car prices are worth it if they boost domestic manufacturing? That premise is faulty because higher prices reduce demand and cost jobs. Not to mention the consequences to domestic exporters from the retaliatory tariffs they'd spur. That's why no domestic car company supports them.

Two choices: Give up your Fourth of July weekend to buy a new car before prices jump. Or call your member of Congress and demand legislation to rein in Trump's trade war-mongering.

Jordan Bruneau
Senior policy analyst
Republicans Fighting Tariffs.
Washington, D.C.