



COMMUNITY | B1

TOP OF THE CLASS

Teacher of the year uses music and creativity to get young minds moving



SPORTS | C1

OPENING STATEMENT

Holy Cross starts late, then rolls to victory

Burlington County Times

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\$2

NJ gas prices rising again

The tax rate will increase 4.3 cents to 41.4 cents per gallon

By David Levinsky
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TRENTON — Motorists in New Jersey will have to pay 4.3 cents more per gallon starting Oct. 1 under an automatic gasoline tax increase. The increase was announced

Thursday by the Department of Treasury and comes just two years after the state raised its fuel tax 23 cents to 37.1 cents per gallon, the first increase in the tax in close to three decades.

This year's hike is courtesy of the fine print in the same 2016 law, which requires the state to raise at least \$2 billion a year from its fuel tax to pay into the Transportation Trust Fund, the state's main

mechanism for financing highway and bridge repairs and mass transit projects.

Under the law, officials from the Treasury and Legislature meet annually to review the previous year's revenues and gas consumption to decide if the state rate needs to be raised to bring in enough revenue.

"The precise change in the gas tax rate is dictated by several factors, all of which

are beyond the control of the current administration," state Treasurer Elizabeth Maher Muoio said in a statement announcing the increase.

Gov. Phil Murphy inherited the gas tax law from his predecessor Republican Gov. Chris Christie. During his campaign, he spoke in support of the increase, arguing that it was needed to pay for needed transportation infrastructure fixes and improvements.

But he also expressed opposition to some parts of the law, notably an accompanying sales tax decrease that he called a gimmick and tried to reverse this year. His effort to restore the sales tax to 7 cents was rejected by the Legislature during budget negotiations.

Mahe Muoio noted that the gas tax remained flat in 2017 during Christie's final year in

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Remembering loved ones, offering hope

Families tell stories of those lost on International Overdose Awareness Day

By Kelly Kultys
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LUMBERTON — Chris Power wanted to be just like his brother Matt, who served in the Marines and started his own company after graduating from college.

The talented musician also wanted to be a better father to his son Carter, and was on the path to becoming a licensed EMT.

"He took that course — it was the first time they ever offered a full-time course (and a) majority of the people were police and firefighters and it was like 8 to 4 every day for seven weeks," said his dad, John Power, of Lumberton. "He passed that damn course and the proudest moment with him aside from when Carter was born was when he stood on the stage with all those guys and got his certificate."

But Chris didn't get the chance to pursue his career because of his struggle with addiction that started at 17 years old and ended at 23 in Florida on June 8, 2016.

"The world's getting cut short of a lot of talent and a lot of good people because of this problem and Chris was one of them," John Power said.

Chris Power was one of eight people in Burlington County who died from an overdose in June 2016. During that year, the county lost 96 people to an overdose, according to the New Jersey Attorney's General Office. In 2017, that number grew to 130, and through mid-August of this year 99 have succumb to addiction.

On Friday, Chris will be one of the thousands remembered on International Overdose Awareness Day, which includes two events in Burlington County.

Several nonprofits will partner to host a vigil at the Burlington County Amphitheater in Westampton. Beginning at 7 p.m., the event will feature local speakers, music and a candle lighting ceremony.



Donna Power, left, of Lumberton, holds her 5-year-old grandson, Carter Daniel Soupios-Power. His father will be remembered Friday during International Overdose Awareness Day after succumbing to addiction in 2016. [NANCY ROKOS / STAFF PHOTOJOURNALIST]

In Medford, the Adam O'Brien Foundation will host a vigil featuring a video of loved ones who have lost their lives, as well as music and resources for those struggling beginning at 6 p.m. at Indian Acres Trees Farm on Tuckerton Road.

The day of observation began in Melbourne, Australia, in 2001 thanks to Sally Finn, who worked for the Salvation Army, to remember lives lost to drug overdoses. Since then, the day has spread across the world, where every Aug. 31 community members, government organizations and nonprofits hold events to raise awareness about addiction

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From left, Donna Power, her son, Matt Power, husband, John Power, and their grandson, Carter Daniel Soupios-Power, will take part in International Overdose Awareness Day in honor of Chris Power. [NANCY ROKOS / STAFF PHOTOJOURNALIST]

Couple ordered to pay homeless Samaritan

Money from a GoFundMe campaign will be placed in a trust

By David Levinsky
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MOUNT HOLLY — A Superior Court judge ordered a Florence couple to turn over all remaining money from a GoFundMe account they created to benefit Johnny Bobbitt, the homeless man whose random act of kindness last year garnered global media attention and more than \$400,000 in donations.

Judge Paula Dow ruled in favor of Bobbitt's request Thursday for a temporary injunction barring Florence residents Mark D'Amico and Katie McClure from spending any more of the funds raised for him on the website GoFundMe. Her ruling gives the couple 24 hours to turn all remaining funds over to Bobbitt's attorney, who will hold it in trust until the legal dispute is resolved.

Dow also ordered a full accounting of how all monies contributed to the fund have been expended so far.

The order was the latest twist in what was previously a feel-good story that inspired thousands of people worldwide to contribute to Bobbitt's benefit after learning about his good deed.

Bobbitt happened upon McClure after she ran out of gas on an Interstate 95 exit ramp in Philadelphia last fall. Bobbitt told her to wait in her car and walked a few blocks to a gas station, where he used his last \$20 to buy her a red gas can.

McClure didn't have the cash to pay him back, but she returned a few days later with her boyfriend, Mark D'Amico, to give Bobbitt some money,

See COUPLE, A2

NEWS

LOTTERY

Lotteries
New Jersey
5 Card Cash:
J♣-J♦-Q♠-2♥-8♠
Pick 3: 5-7-9, Fireball 8
Pick 4: 0-5-3-8, Fireball 8
Cash 5: 2-9-16-22-28, Xtra 5
Pick 6: 22-30-38-41-42-47, Xtra 2
Midday Pick 3: 7-8-0, Fireball 0
Midday Pick 4: 1-3-2-6, Fireball 0

Pennsylvania
Cash 5: 7-9-19-26-36
Match 6: 8-16-43-47-48-49
Pick 2 Day: 0-7, Wild 6
Pick 2 Evening: 0-9, Wild 6
Pick 3 Day: 3-4-7, Wild 6
Pick 3 Evening: 8-9-1, Wild 6
Pick 4 Day: 6-7-5-6, Wild 6
Pick 4 Evening: 1-2-1-7, Wild 6
Pick 5 Day: 6-6-8-1-5, Wild 6
Pick 5 Evening: 8-1-3-7-2, Wild 6
Treasure Hunt: 8-9-14-24-29

Multistate
Cash4Life (8-30-18)
5-45-50-52-53, Cash Ball 1
Powerball (8-29-18)
25-41-53-57-67, Powerball 12
Mega Millions (8-28-18)
3-20-33-34-41, Mega Ball 20

ONLINE POLL

Thursday's results: Do you think gas prices will drop after Labor Day?
A.) Yes: 47%
B.) No: 53%

Today's question: Do you think schools should open before or after Labor Day?
A.) Before
B.) After

Vote online at burlingtoncountytimes.com

CORRECTION

Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley's name was misspelled in Thursday's edition.

Spice up your culinary life.



A section to chow down on.
FOOD
In Wednesday's paper.

HOPE

From Page A1

and remember those lost.

Giving Support

It's also a chance to give grieving families a place to go, said Christine Hoff, of Mount Holly. Her niece, Shelby Katilus, of Lumberton, died two days after Chris at the age of 22.

Katilus, a straight-A student who graduated high school early, turned to heroin after being prescribed Xanax for sleep deprivation following the lost of her child to spina bifida, Hoff said.

"She blamed herself and then she just spiraled out of control," Hoff said.

Hoff and her sister, Shelby's mother, tried support groups for grieving families, but no one there had lost someone to an overdose.

"I was up late one night and I was just — I was kinda just Googling things," she said. "I typed in overdose and I came across the international overdose awareness, which started in Australia so I went through their website and I found that there was two events — one in Forked River, and one in Washington Township (Gloucester County). And I was like, you know what, I think I want to go."

For Hoff, it's an opportunity to grieve. "The event that I went to in Gloucester County was



Evesham resident Stephen Kavalkovich, who struggled with addiction, hosts a podcast called Rescue the Rescuer. (KELLY KULTYS / STAFF PHOTOJOURNALIST)

just seeing so many people and looking around and we're all there for the same reason," she said.

After attending, Hoff was inspired last year to start an event in Burlington County through a group she created called "Shouting4Shelby" to bring families together who need support.

"There's so many hurting families because once your person is gone, that whirlwind, everything stops," she said. "It just stops."

Chris' mother, Donna Power, knows that pain well. She was consumed by constant worry of where her son was while she took care of her grandson Carter and her other children Matt and Lauren before Chris' death.

"It's kind of like a club you don't want to be in,

and the members really are the only ones who get it and who understand," she said.

The events offer families the chance to remember who victims were before their addiction overtook them. For Donna Power, those memories include Chris' time with his family.

"He tried, he really tried hard," she said. "His whole goal was to change his life for his son."

"He wanted to be a good father. He wanted to go into the military — he idolized his brother. He was really a very good person, he tried very, very diligently as we did as a family and it was too overwhelming at the end of the day."

For Hoff, it reminds her of the day her niece survived being born prematurely.

"This was a

three-month premature twin who was 2 pounds, 9 ounces, who had a rough start from the beginning, who needed a blood transfusion, who once outside the womb, she thrived, she grew," Hoff said. "She was comical, she had a sense of humor and a half, she would just come up with any joke. Her personality was through the roof."

A glimmer of hope

At their event last year, Hoff invited Stephen Kavalkovich, of Evesham, to read Shelby's story. Kavalkovich was just beginning to share his story of addiction and recovery to help others still struggling.

He plans to return this year to show how his life has turned around.

Kavalkovich's podcast, Rescuing the Rescuer on

Mental Health Radio Network, is up to 45 episodes and counting. He's been invited to speak at various events across the country, including one in Knoxville, Tennessee, and another in the Chicago suburbs this month.

"I would have never thought a year ago sitting here in the same room what would happen a year later," he said.

Almost 500 awareness overdose events were held across the globe last year and even more are planned this year, according to the official website.

For Kavalkovich, attending events allows him to spread hope to those in addiction and families battling every day.

"We're sick of seeing people dying. We're sick of seeing the destruction that this thing is doing to our nation, our world," he said. "I do see a lot of local organizations trying to collaborate with everybody and get everyone involved together."

For others, the events are a chance to keep their loved ones close and keep their memories alive.

"That's one of the things that's so hard about it is the fact that he was so young," Matt Power said of his brother. "That's the real kicker about it, because it's not like he's lived the entirety of a life and it's just a natural thing — it's such an unnatural feeling and an unnatural realization that you kind of come about, even two years later."

COUPLE

From Page A1

food and clothes as a thank you.

Wanting to do more to help, McClure and D'Amico created an online GoFundMe page to raise money for the good Samaritan. The couple thought the page might raise enough money for Bobbitt to afford a few months of rent on an apartment and some clean clothes and other amenities, but the story ended up going viral as more and more people began donating.

According to the most recent accounting, slightly more than \$402,706 was raised from 14,347 individual contributors.

But things have turned ugly between the trio in the ensuing months, with Bobbitt, who is once again homeless, alleging the couple have mismanaged the money raised and possibly spent some of it on themselves. He filed a lawsuit Tuesday alleging that the couple have committed fraud and refused to turn over the money raised for him.

McClure and D'Amico have denied any wrongdoing or misuse of the money and say they are afraid Bobbitt might use the remaining money to buy drugs for himself and his brother.

Neither Bobbitt, nor McClure or D'Amico were present at the hearing Thursday before Dow in the



Ernest E. Badway, attorney for Mark D'Amico and Kate McClure, makes a point in Burlington County Superior Court in Mount Holly. (ELIZABETH ROBERTSON / THE PHILADELPHIA INQUIRER VIA AP)

Olde Historic Courthouse in Mount Holly.

During the hearing, Bobbitt's attorney, Chris Fallon, of the law firm Cozen O'Connor, said Bobbitt received no more than \$75,000 from the fund and that most of that was used to purchase a truck and a camper for him to use. Neither the vehicle or the camper were registered in his name though and that the money raised for Bobbitt has been commingled into McClure's and D'Amico's personal accounts.

The vehicle and camper have since been sold, according to Bobbitt's attorney.

Fallon said Bobbitt has "fallen off the wagon a few times" and is receiving treatment for drug addiction but that he has been given no access to the money raised specifically for his benefit. He said the temporary injunction was needed to ensure the remaining funds are protected.

"All this money that 14,000 people contributed, once it's gone, it's gone for good. Then everyone loses except the defendants," Fallon said.

Attorney Ernest Badway, of Fox Rothschild, who is representing McClure and D'Amico, said the couple has given Bobbitt more than \$200,000 of the money raised and done everything they can to help him, including taking him to treatment and making appointments for him to meet with lawyers and financial advisors to handle the money. He said Bobbitt never showed up.

The couple also allowed Bobbitt to live with them in Florence for several months, and also permitted his brother and several homeless friends to live there too.

"They tried to help this man ... The idea that my clients are the bad guys is completely not true," Badway said, adding that both McClure and D'Amico have received death threats



Johnny Bobbitt gained worldwide attention when he used his last \$20 to fill up the gas tank of stranded motorist Kate McClure in November 2017. (DAVID SWANSON / THE PHILADELPHIA INQUIRER VIA AP)

due to the recent publicity about the dispute.

Dow ruled in favor of granting the injunction, explaining in court that she felt compelled to protect Bobbitt from irreparable harm, as well as the interests of philanthropy and the more than 14,000 people who donated to the charitable cause.

The judge also expressed concerns about the money being commingled with McClure's and D'Amico's personal funds, a fact that she said appeared to be undisputed.

She said the facts of the case "cry out" for the money to be removed and frozen in trust and she ordered it "pulled out of the pillow cases" and turned over to Cozen O'Connor to hold in trust until the case is settled or a final ruling made.

Badway objected, noting that McClure and D'Amico planned to file a counterclaim against Bobbitt alleging that he stole "thousands of dollars" worth of property

from the couple during his time living with them and that they have repeatedly said they would consent to an audit of their accounts and the spending from the contributions.

Dow's order calls for an accounting of the spending to be completed and turned over to the court within the next 10 days or so.

Badway declined to comment after the hearing.

Fallon and his co-counselors told reporters afterwards that the defense's claim that some \$200,000 was expended on Bobbitt was "outrageous" but that they were pleased the judge ruled to protect the remaining funds.

"The money will be placed in our trust account for protection, and in 10 days or so we'll get an accounting ... We'll know tomorrow how much is left," he said.

Fallon said Bobbitt is currently receiving assistance from three "guardian angels" who are helping him obtain drug treatment and find housing.

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