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THE SALEM NEWS

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T.G.I.F
What's up this weekend

Salem's Juneteenth jam fest

Salem's free Juneteenth celebrations include the third annual Jam Festival on Friday, June 19, kicking off at 11:30 a.m., in Charlotte Forten Park at 289 Derby St. with a keynote by History Alive's Sarah Parker Remond reenactor on what would have been Remond's 200th birthday. Then participate in a public reading of Frederick Douglass' famous speech on the meaning of the Fourth of July to a slave. Check out the city's full schedule at: www.salemma.gov/m/NewsFlash/Home/Detail/384

Beverly Arts Fest

Beverly Main Streets hosts the 23rd annual free Arts Fest downtown on Saturday, rain or shine, from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Join thousands on Cabot Street for a day of shopping, live music, local food, and fun family activities. Crafters' wares and pre-loved art, great food from vendors, trucks and restaurants. Best to bike or take public transit as parking is limited. Learn more at: <https://www.parkbeverly.com/> Then visit: <https://bevmain.org/events/arts-fest-beverly/>

So long styrofoam!

Salem and Beverly are partnering again to host a Styrofoam Collection Day, a drive-through event on Saturday, from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m., at the Community Life Center, 401 Bridge St., Salem. Must have valid ID proving residency of Salem or Beverly. Stay in your vehicle and have items ready to unload. Questions? Email Alisa Cherkasova at acherkasova@salem.com. Learn more at greensalem.com.

Peabody Essex Museum is free!

On Juneteenth you're free to celebrate this historical day through art, music, and movement at PEM, 161 Essex St., Salem, with artist-led community circles of reflection, conversation, with joyous live music in the Main Atrium, followed by an electrifying outdoor drum and dance performance by Black Experimental Arts Theater at 4:30 p.m. in Armory Park. All are welcome. Learn more at: pem.org

Celebrate Dad

Bring Dad to Appleton Farms Saturday, noon to 5 p.m., for a Father's Day weekend event with seasonal wood-fired pizza, local beer, wine and cider, local BBQ, and live music. Appleton will be slinging its famous pies. Notch Brewing will be serving up beer, wine, and cider, with barbecue from Fat Belly Food Truck and sweet treats from DownRiver Ice Cream. Enjoy music from Orville Giddings and Gravity Rising. For more details and tickets, go to <https://thetrustees.org/event/447280/>.



COURTESY PHOTO

On June 7, the third annual Helmet Awareness Ride for C.J. (Mercier) was held at Western Cycle in Danvers. Thanks to four donors, a total of 25 bicycle helmets were given out to local residents. Twenty years ago, Mercier was seriously injured after getting hit by a speeding car while riding his bicycle without a helmet on. Three years ago, a donor purchased a new adaptive bike for him, which he used for the event, and rides all over town.

Comeback kid

20 years after near death crash, Mercier back to riding, inspiring others

By Jamie Pote
Staff Writer

DANVERS — Nearly 20 years ago, C.J. (Cameron Joseph) Mercier didn't know if he would get to live another day, so the thought of getting back on a bicycle again was the furthest thing from his mind.

On June 30, 2006, he was struck by a speeding vehicle while riding his bicycle — without a helmet — which eventually led to him undergoing seven brain surgeries.

He was 14 years old at the time and besides suffering traumatic and severe brain damage, he lost vision in his right eye, lost use in his right arm, had to re-learn how to walk, read, and speak again. He was hospitalized for five months.

Now, as a 34-year-old who recently got back on a new adaptive bicycle purchased by an anonymous donor, he had a message for those who attended the Helmet Awareness Ride for C.J., earlier this month at Western Cycle in Danvers.

"(Donors) please give more helmets out," he said.

The generosity of four donors enabled the distribution of 25 helmets to children during the third

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COURTESY PHOTO

During the June 7 Helmet Awareness Event, C.J. Mercier (right) joins up with his friend and the event organizer Bryan Labell before the two went off for a ride with the other 40 residents who attended.

Congressional hopefuls square off in debate

By Christian M. Wade
Statehouse Reporter

SALEM — Democrats running in the wide-open 6th Congressional District race shared their plans Wednesday night for lowering the state's high cost of living, addressing the housing crisis and standing up to the Trump administration.

Democratic Rep. Seth Moulton's decision to run for U.S. Senate has created a rare opening in the North Shore congressional district — which includes most of Essex County and eight towns in Middlesex County — and a crowded field of six hopefuls are vying for the party's nomination.

The winner of the Sept. 1 primary will face Republican Micah Jones, an Essex lawyer and U.S. Army veteran, in the Nov. 3 midterm election. Jones



CHRISTIAN M. WADE/Photo

The candidates running for Seth Moulton's vacated congressional seat take the stage for a debate.

is running unopposed.

At Wednesday night's forum, hosted by Salem State University's Frederick E. Berry Institute of Politics, candidates were peppered with questions by moderator Alison King on key issues for the Democratic party and the district's next representative in Congress.

A key issue in the debate was bipartisanship. The Democrats were asked whether

they were willing to work with Republicans in Congress on issues of common interest and concern such as housing and regulating artificial intelligence platforms.

Dan Koh, a former Biden administration official, said if Democrats take back the House and Senate in the midterm elections they should push through their agenda in Congress, not be looking to work with Republicans. He

said "now is not the time to be playing tag team with MAGA."

"I don't really care what the people who voted to defund our schools, defund our food, or take away our health care, think about the Democratic agenda," he said. "If there's good legislation on housing that Republicans want to vote with us on, great. But it is our time to take our country back."

State Rep. Tram Nguyen, of Andover, said Democrats will still need to "work with people across the aisle" to get legislation passed, even if they win back both chambers during Donald Trump's last two years in office.

"I'm willing to work with anyone is willing to work with me to deliver the priorities for this district," Nguyen said, noting that she has worked with GOP lawmakers on bipartisan bills during her four terms in the state House

of Representatives. Mariah Lancaster, a Salem veterinarian and former State Department official, said Democrats will need Republican votes in Congress to forward their agenda.

"Whether that's renewable energy projects or investing in climate resiliency, all of these things will take Republican votes, especially in the Senate," she said. "To assume that we won't is just ignorant."

Lynnfield attorney and businessman John Beccia said Democrats are "right to be angry" about the Trump agenda, but they still need to "get things done" by working across the political aisle with Republican lawmakers.

"We've got to work together on a bipartisan basis," he said. "There's a time to fight and a time to find common ground."

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