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What became of abandoned local courses?

SPORTS, 1B

The METROWEST DAILY NEWS

TUESDAY, MAY 24, 2022 | METROWESTDAILYNEWS.COM

PART OF THE USA TODAY NETWORK

FSU grads told: Ask tough questions

Politico's Jonathan Lemire urges help in fighting disinformation

Zane Razaq
The MetroWest Daily News
USA TODAY NETWORK

WORCESTER — Cheers overwhelmed boos on Sunday, when Framingham State University's commencement speaker, journalist Jonathan Lemire, told graduates "truth is in jeopardy now."

"We can all do our part to save it," said

Lemire. "No matter what political party, no matter which candidate you support."

Speaking at the DCU Center in Worcester, Lemire, the White House bureau chief at Politico, recounted his time covering former President Donald Trump — from his now-famous trip down a golden escalator to announce his presidential run to the Jan. 6, 2021 insurrection.

The crowd broke into jeers and then

applause, as Lemire said the former president pushed misinformation to promote the falsehood he won the 2020 presidential election.

"The disinformation, to be clear, it didn't begin with Trump," Lemire said. "But he threw gasoline on the fire. The undermined trust and his big lie has put our democracy in the most tenuous

See FSU, Page 2A



Framingham State University graduates file into the DCU Center in Worcester for the commencement ceremony on Sunday.

ZANE RAZAQ/METROWEST DAILY NEWS

READY TO ROLL



ABOVE: Wally Blackburn, 5, pretends to rev up on a Hudson Police motorcycle during the annual Touch-a-Truck event at the Hudson Department of Public Works/Hudson Police Headquarters on Municipal Drive on Saturday. This was not Wally's first time on a bike as his father, Jason Blackburn, owns a motorcycle.

RIGHT: Nolan Bastien, 5, of Hudson, wears the cap of Hudson officer Wendy LaFlamme as he sits behind the wheel of a cruiser.

PHOTOS BY KEN MCGAGH/DAILY NEWS AND WICKED LOCAL



Retailer knows to target the trends

Showcase to open at Natick Mall with products seen on TikTok, Instagram

Abby Patkin
The MetroWest Daily News
USA TODAY NETWORK

NATICK — If trending products on Instagram or TikTok tend to catch your eye, Showcase — one of the Natick Mall's latest additions — may be one to watch.

The Canadian retail brand, which specializes in trending products from social media and pop culture, announced plans earlier this month to open a store in the mall in July as part of its U.S. expansion.

Showcase, which calls itself the "home of the hottest trends," features a wide variety of products on its website, from colorful toys to electronics, novelty candies, essential oils infused with reiki crystals, and plenty more.

It's "as seen on TV" meets the TikTok era, or — as Showcase calls it — "retail-tainment."

The company has a growing audience on the social media platform, where the hashtag #ShowcaseMadeMeBuyIt has nearly 65 million views. Showcase's own TikTok page boasts more than 205,000 followers.

Showcase uses algorithms and artificial intelligence to identify trending products, according to a recent press

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The exterior of a Showcase store. The Canada-based retailer specializes in products that have gone viral online or on TV. The company plans to open a Natick Mall location this summer. PROVIDED PHOTOS/SHOWCASE

Showcase

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release. From there, viral products can go from concept to shelf in 53 days, on average, with some launching in as little as 16 days, according to the company.

"We're probably one of the most dynamic and fast-changing retailers out there, because our product assortment changes on a real-time basis based on pop culture trends and primarily driven by social media," Showcase CEO Samir Kulkarni said Friday in a phone interview.

Customers might see "the next big thing and the hot new trend" on social media one night and find it in a Showcase store the next morning, he said.

Showcase trend stores are designed to be interactive, with the majority of products on display so customers can try them before buying.

"It really is the fun of discovery; you walk into a Showcase store and you don't know what you're going to find next," Kulkarni said. "And the idea behind our trend stores is that they're extremely fun and interactive, so you can walk into a store and try a candy out or try the latest beauty gadget, or see a

really cool collectible Squishmallow (stuffed toy) that you've been looking for."

In addition to its 109 Canadian stores, Showcase expanded into the U.S. in 2019 with 10 stores in the Northeast.

Now the company is gearing up to open 27 new stores on the East Coast this summer, including the Natick Mall location. Other upcoming Massachusetts locations include the Burlington Mall, Holyoke Mall, Peabody's Northshore Mall and Braintree's South Shore Place. Kulkarni said the company is also rolling out same-day delivery through DoorDash.

He said Showcase targeted the country's best malls, partnering with larger mall owners such as Simon Property Group and Brookfield Properties, which owns the Natick Mall.

The stores' assortment of products change regularly, and customers will find that most of the products available on Showcase's website will also be in stock at the stores, Kulkarni said.

"What you see today may be completely different than what you see tomorrow," he said.

Abby Patkin is a multimedia journalist for the Daily News. Follow Abby on Twitter @AMPatkin. She can be reached at apatkin@wickedlocal.com.

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Inside a Showcase store, customers will find a wide variety of trending products, from toys to electronics and unusual snacks.

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