

—Slug:.....COMM-0842.bratt.turn_it_up_sale
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—For section.....News
—Format.....News - byline and dateline
—Dateline.....Brattleboro
—Article Number:.....42652

Notes from editor (not for publication):

HEADLINE ELEMENTS:

####BEGIN HED####

An analog survivor in a digital age

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Manager buys Turn It Up, a music store that has been a
fixture of downtown Brattleboro

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TEXT BODY:

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Are you searching for a copy of an old Elton John album,
some DVDs of *The Sopranos*, or perhaps something by someone
more contemporary, like Taylor Swift?

The best place to find both new and old vinyl, compact
discs, DVDs, and even cassette tapes is Turn It Up! at 85 Main St.
in Brattleboro. The store has been part of downtown since 2003

11 and is now entering a new chapter, as longtime manager Carson
12 Arnold officially became the store's owner earlier this week.

13 Chandra Hancock and Patrick Pezzati opened the first
14 Turn it Up! store in Northampton, Massachusetts, in 1995, with
15 the focus on bargain-priced music and, later, DVDs.

16 On Nov. 24, 30 years later to day, they sold the
17 Northampton store, along with their other stores in Montague
18 and Brattleboro.

19 The time was right for Pezzati and Hancock to step back.

20 "Chandra, my wife and business partner, was hit by a car
21 three years ago," explained Pezzati. "She's OK, though still
22 struggling with pain. But we realized that we have things we
23 want to do outside of the business while we're physically able
24 to."

25 The prospect of someone experienced like Arnold taking
26 over the business made the decision easier.

27 "He's been part of the Turn It Up! family since he was
28 buying music as a 10-year-old when we first opened," said
29 Pezzati. "He was hired in Brattleboro about a year after we
30 opened there. He's 40 now, and it's a logical next step for him."

31 With 21 years of experience managing the Keene store
32 before it closed in 2018 and the Brattleboro store for a decade,
33 Arnold continues to approach the job with enthusiasm, enjoying
34 working with the customers and helping them find the recording
35 or movie they are looking for.

36 "Customer loyalty is the reason the stores have endured
37 for so long," said Arnold. "The company has been open for 30
38 years, and we still have many of those same people coming in
39 and shopping today."

40 In addition, he credits employees past and present, who
41 have been committed to keeping physical media relevant every
42 day and bringing their creativity and enthusiasm into the stores.

43 "Without both of those parties we might not be here
44 today — and I am grateful for all of them," he said.

45 Being based in a community that values music and the
46 arts has also proven beneficial.

47 **Challenges, surprises, and ...**

48 **vinyl?**

49 Arnold has faced plenty of challenges to navigate over
50 the years. Soon after he started the job, the music industry
51 underwent massive changes with the advent of streaming
52 services, leading to the closure of many independent record
53 stores and major chains like Tower Records and Virgin
54 Megastore.

55 Sales of new CDs at Turn It Up! were also starting to
56 wane, so they adapted by beefing up their DVD and used CD
57 collections, keeping prices low, and adding other music-related
58 merchandise. It was an approach that worked.

59 But nobody could have predicted what happened next:
60 the resurrection of interest in vinyl records, which were
61 essentially phased out when the CD explosion occurred in the
62 '80s.

63 “That market was always there but more discreet,”
64 Arnold said. “But then, all of a sudden, in 2011, you started to
65 see more young people buy Neil Young and Janis Joplin LPs, and
66 the rest is history.”

67 The interest in vinyl continues, as does a recent uptick in
68 CD sales.

69 Consumers, especially younger ones, seem to appreciate
70 owning an actual physical product.

71 “A lot of customers who are getting into vinyl are also
72 then getting into CDs soon after,” said Arnold.

73 “We find people are balancing their listening habits more
74 — there is the music they feel that they should stream, and then
75 there’s the music they want to own ‘forever’ and have on their
76 shelf,” Arnold said.

77 The store carries a wide selection of new and used vinyl
78 and continues to sell used CDs at prices that have hardly
79 changed since 1995.

80 Turn It Up! remains open seven days a week, on
81 weekdays from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m.; Saturdays, they stay open until
82 6 p.m. And they are open on Sundays at noon. The hours will
83 increase over the holidays.

84 Pezzati has agreed to serve as a consultant for the next
85 five years and will even cover some shifts in the Brattleboro store.

86 The most significant change that Arnold plans to
87 implement in the store can be summed up in one word: more.

88 Customers can expect to see more and newer inventory
89 as he rotates products among stores. He also plans to increase the
90 number of new CDs and vinyl and to offer more memorabilia in
91 the shop, including posters, lunch boxes, T-shirts, and books. He
92 additionally promises some "cool surprises."

93 "I also hope to continue to have some in-store
94 performances. We just had a few electronic sets in the store for
95 the downtown Circuits In The Woods event, and that was a blast,"
96 Arnold said.

97 However, Arnold is not planning on changing things up
98 just for the sake of change.

99 "I'm not interested in re-doing things that are already
100 working quite well," he said. "Patrick and Chandra built an
101 amazing company, and I plan to honor that going forward."

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BIO/COATTAIL:

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