

Who Remembers... Words & Music?

Here is another installment in our *Who Remembers?* series. You can browse previous articles by using the search bar on the right or by clicking **here**. These articles are strolls down memory lane. In some cases the buildings, but new businesses have replaced them. In other instances, the buildings or even the properties have been razed. Instead of a building, it may be a TV show, personality, or commercial that no one longer exists. Either way, it can't stop us from taking the Memory Lane stroll!

As always we would rather this be a discussion. No one knows this area better than those who grew up here! Please, leave constructive criticism, feedback, and corrections. We'd love to hear your anecdotes. Please share!

Words & Music was a local institution that provided atmosphere, staff with astounding musical knowledge and all the music you desired at a very affordable price. One wouldn't even think of any of the other local music chains – there was only one place to shop: Words & Music at 12 Fairhaven Commons Way, in Fairhaven.



Stacking and organizing cassette tapes was just a FUN weekend activity –

*just keep a pencil
handy!*

Owner John Lopes didn't just sell CDs, cassette tapes and records. He also offered collectibles, games, sports and non-sports trading cards, and memorabilia. One of the things he offered that generated a lot of the initial buzz when he opened his flagship store in 1987: used media. It was a chance for those of us who were broke to get access to our favorite bands. Broke one week and didn't have the \$10 for a brand new cassette of "Seasons In The Abyss"? Get it used for half that! The songs on both cassettes sounded the same, and the few extra bucks meant you could buy a second cassette for what it would have cost for a brand new one.

Lopes offered the same with his movies and some of the collectibles. It didn't take long for word of mouth to make 'Words & Music' THE place to go in Fairhaven. It didn't take long for the rest of the South Coast to get wind. Having a place jam packed with fellow music lovers milling about made an atmosphere that was almost akin to "hanging out." Besides, John and his crew were some of the easiest going people you would meet. You never had the feeling that they were "customer service." It felt like you were visiting your friend while he or she is working.

The genius behind this is that wallets open up when you feel relaxed, comfortable and amongst friends. One of the fondest memories I have of John is that he would get so excited about new releases – he **remembered** what you had bought in the past and when you walked in he'd rush to tell you about it. "Joe, Testament's newest album "The Ritual" just came in. Alex's solos are sick!" Then John would proceed to rip open a brand new cassette and pipe it through the P.A. system for me to sample – which meant it would land in the "used" section, but he just didn't care.

It wasn't unusual for a release day to come around and a bunch

of us would load up a car and head to Words & Music. We would hang out for a good 30-45 minutes, buy what we came for and then some, before piling back into the car and spending the next few hours cruising and listening to all our new music – likely cruising “the Ave.” Ah...those were the days.



You could find popular, obscure and live music for CHEAP.

I missed the whole reason for Words & Music's relocation to State Road in North Dartmouth. Not sure if rent was too high, Lopes felt he would prosper better in a higher trafficked area, or something else. Surely, some reader knows. Regardless, the move turned out to be the beginning of the end. The Dartmouth location just didn't have that same vibe, mojo or huzzah. It had lost its charm and simply wasn't the same.

I believe that they closed their doors permanently some time in 2011, leaving us with music chains and department stores. Yes, the music industry has been moving more and more into digital, but for some of us there is something nostalgic about buying an album, cassette tape or CD. For others they are collectibles – for us it's “normal.”

Now we are doomed to the chain stores where we have no name, the music piped through the P.A. is typically muzak, and the customer service person is part of the turnover cycle and is replaced with each passing week.

I miss having a name, seeing the passion, hanging with friends and mostly the cruising that followed. I'd love to do that

again.

What is it that you remember most about Words & Music? What do you miss? Did you stop going when it relocated to Dartmouth? Why? If Words & Music reopened back in its original spot would you go?
