



Where Do Story Ideas Come From?

In the classic movie *The Odd Couple*, one of the ditzy Pigeon sisters asks the fastidious Felix Unger, a TV news writer, where on earth he gets his ideas. Flummoxed, Felix (played by Jack Lemmon) can only answer, “From the news.”

Sometimes I feel like Felix. People ask me all the time where we get our ideas for the stories in *Bloom*. I can only think to respond, “From Bloomington.”

Many of our story ideas come from you, the readers. You stop me on the street, in line for bagels, at plays and concerts and sporting events, heck, even in the men’s room. You send letters and e-mails and call on the phone, and you send suggestions via someone you know who knows me or via someone who knows someone who knows me. (By the way, this makes me feel very popular.)

I also get story ideas from what I hear and see around town, from the many writers, photographers, artists, and designers who contribute to the magazine, and from my wife Jenny, a Bloomington girl.

When we first began publishing, some people expressed doubt that there would be enough interesting material to sustain the magazine. After all, they said, Bloomington is not New York. You might run out.

Let me assure the doubters that there is no shortage of material in this town. In fact, the problem is quite the opposite: there is so much to cover it’s hard to keep up.

So, where did the ideas for the stories in this issue germinate?

Our cover story on the Farmers’ Market originated with Daniel Orr, a *Bloom* reader and owner/chef of FARMbloomington. About a year ago, unsolicited, on Monday mornings Daniel began e-mailing me the pictures he had shot over the weekend. A talented am-

ateur, Daniel likes to photograph barns and country scenes and food—especially food. Seeing that he had pictures of the Farmers’ Market through the seasons, I asked him to send me everything he had.

Daniel sent 1,800 pictures. I might mention that it was not an easy task narrowing them down to the 27 we used.

Our story on old cars was Tom Coleman’s idea. Tom is the retired chair of the IU School of Fine Arts and an MFA grad of Yale, 1963. In his New Haven days, he was best friends with the father of the New York graphic artist who designed *Bloom*. When I moved here, she gave me Tom’s number, and I was invited to the house for dinner. In the garage, Tom proudly showed me his 1934 Ford.

For an old journalist like me, the Marie Goth feature was a no-brainer. Seeing her stunning portraits at the Brown County Art Guild in Nashville and hearing of her unusual relationship with fellow artist Varaldo Cariani, I was irresistibly drawn to this romantic tale.

And then there is our 20 Questions subject Arbutus Cunningham, a character-and-a-half who inhabits the airwaves Saturday mornings on WFHB. The first time I heard Arbutus, I thought, “Who is this wild woman with the incredible voice?” Then I saw her perform at a Krista Detor Christmas show, and I became an Arbutus fan of the first order.

So, if you have an idea for a *Bloom* story, drop me an e-mail (editor@magbloom.com), stop me in the street, speak to me in the bagel line, come up to me at intermission. In the men’s room, however, I prefer not to be interrupted.

Malcolm Abrams
editor and publisher