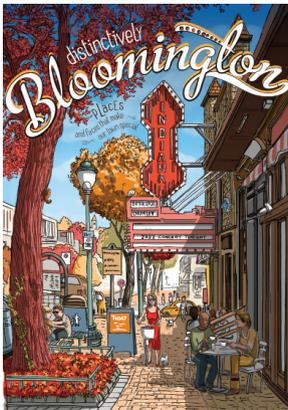


publisher's message



Stay Another Day



It has long been my perception that for a local retail business or restaurant to really be successful, it must attract visitors. There are just not enough people or money in our town to support all of our good businesses otherwise.

This is especially true when you consider that local enterprises must compete for the indigenous dollar with national chains (and their billions spent on marketing) as well as online purveyors. When you think about it, we are fortunate to have as many good local businesses as we do.

The reason, of course, is Indiana University. Apart from the retail businesses that thrive by catering to students, most others gain support from the flow of well-heeled visitors who come here to see their kids and to attend sports events and alumni gatherings.

There are two nice things about these folks: Most come two, three, four times a year or more, and most prefer authentic Bloomington experiences. Given a choice, they'd rather eat at Nick's than Chili's and shop at Relish over Target.

On the whole, these visitors are more sophisticated than the average Joe, and if they are coming from a big city, Bloomington prices look downright quaint.

While I applaud every effort to market Bloomington as a vacation destination and as a convention site, I believe our strongest strategy for putting additional dollars into the local economy is to get those already coming here to spend more.

Imagine the impact if, when they visit Johnny at IU, his parents, grandparents, and siblings would stay just one more day. Now multiply that impact by thousands.

Which brings me to our new publication, *Distinctively Bloomington*. It is a beautiful ad book that will appear around town and in nearly 1,000 local hotel rooms beginning in August. I borrowed the idea for the book from Louisville, Kentucky, where it was found in rooms at the amazing hotel/art gallery 21C.

You've never seen anything quite like the Louisville book (and if you'd like to see it, give me a call or send an email). It's a community piece about pride and character. It's warm, it's welcoming; it makes you want to spend time enjoying Louisville. *Distinctively Bloomington* will do the same for our town. We will make our book just as good or better—a gift that visitors will use during their stay and take home to plan their next trip here. Maybe even spending an extra day taking in the sights, shopping, dining, seeing a play.

To further encourage visitors to take advantage of all our town has to offer, the August/September issue of *Bloom* will feature "The Best Things to Do and See in Bloomington." While *Bloom's* readers primarily live in and around Monroe County, thousands of visitors read us as well—particularly our August/September editions. So, this story is aimed at them, although I'm sure residents will also find some surprising ideas in it. If you have a suggestion, please send it to me.

We have an extraordinary community here. Part of *Bloom's* mission is to get that word out to one and all.

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