

2011

Celebrating the People of Bloomington



Rudy Pozzatti Artist

Internationally renowned fine art printmaker and co-founder of Bloomington's Echo Press, Rudy Pozzatti might have become a doctor if not for a chance encounter when he was 17.

As a child, Pozzatti, 86, developed a keen interest in drawing. With a scholarship to the University of Colorado, however, he imagined he would study medicine until the head of the art department saw his portfolio and declared, "You're going into art."

In 1952, Pozzatti received a Fulbright Fellowship that enabled him to travel to Italy, where the art and architecture made an impression. "I've never been the same since," he says.

In 1956, Pozzatti was invited to apply for a position teaching printmaking in Indiana University's Department of Fine Arts. Bloomington has been his home base ever since.



Photo by Steve Raymer



Photo by Cliff Doerzbacher

Michael Cassady Restaurateur

Michael Cassady, 61, always had an interest in cooking. Early on, he learned the basic kitchen skills that allowed him to work as a cook while attending Indiana University. A political science major, he graduated with no plan for his future.

"I thought I'd maybe go to law school or something," Cassady recalls. Then, in 1976, a Bloomington friend convinced him to open a restaurant and the Uptown Cafe was born. "This was right at the time when food was starting to take off and there was a new respect for chefs and restaurants," Cassady says.

Despite never having played the sport, he also helped ignite the Bloomington soccer scene, serving as president of two youth programs and managing a local men's team.

The Uptown Cafe is now in its 45th year.



Photo by Shannon Zahnle



Photo by Steve Raymer

Amy Brier Stone Carver

In the age of digital modeling and 3-D laser printers, working with a hammer and chisel may seem "kind of archaic," admits stone carver Amy Brier, 51. But it's precisely this connection to human origins that makes her craft compelling.

Brier, a native of Rhode Island, discovered carving while studying in Italy. She came to Bloomington for graduate school and, since finishing her M.F.A. in 1996, she has directed the Indiana Limestone Symposium, a summer workshop she co-founded to offer training and community to both beginners and experienced carvers.

Brier's architectural work adorns façades from Indiana University's Simon Hall to The Jewish Museum in New York City, and has been shown in museums around the state and in Austria and Germany.



Douglas Wissing (right). Courtesy photo

Douglas Wissing Scholar/Author

Douglas Wissing's career as an award-winning journalist has seen his work featured in *The New York Times*, *The Washington Post*, and *National Geographic Traveler*. The self-described "half scholar, half adventurer" recently spent 10 weeks embedded with an Indiana National Guard unit in Afghanistan, which culminated in numerous articles and a 15-part series for Indiana Public Radio.

Wissing's Indiana roots run deep—he is a descendant of French fur trappers who settled in Vincennes in the 1720s. "I'm as Hoosier as you get," says Wissing, 61. His curiosity has taken him to Tibet to research and write a book, and on roads all over the state to write another, *Scenic Driving Indiana*.

Wissing continues to write books and articles, including for Bloom Magazine.



Photo by Cliff Doerzbacher

Ger Duany Lost Boy of Sudan Now Actor and Model

During the three years that Ger Duany attended Bloomington High School North, he did his best to fit in. But no one knew how far apart he felt from his family—he hid the horrors that had brought him here. "That chapter of my life, I tried to close it," Ger says of his childhood.

Now that he's made a name for himself as a model and actor, Ger, 33, feels ready to revisit his time as a "Lost Boy of Sudan" with a documentary about his life—*Ger: To Be Separate*—reliving memories of a decade of war, displacement, famine, even serving as a child soldier.

"This is personal healing for me," he says of the documentary. "This is how I find peace."

Duany starred with Reese Witherspoon in *The Good Lie* and appeared with Dustin Hoffman in *I Heart Huckabees*.

Don Fischer Sportscaster

For the past 38 years, Don Fischer has been the voice of Indiana University football and basketball. He's done play-by-play for more than 1,600 games, hosted weekly coaches shows, and anchored a daily radio program. He's won nearly every sports broadcasting award, including being named Indiana Sportswriter of the Year 25 times.

Yet the two-time Hall of Famer's career nearly ended as soon as it began when he was a 21-year-old calling his first high school football game in 1968. "I set broadcasting back 45 years; I was horrible," says Fischer, now 65. "I simply wasn't prepared."

Play-by-play remains Fischer's lifelong passion. "Calling games allows me to feel connected to a team and to a sport, to be part of something bigger than myself," he says.



Photo by Shannon Zahnle



Chad Rabinovitz and Joanne Woodward. Photo by K. O'Rourke

Chad Rabinovitz BPP Visionary

Chad Rabinovitz came to Bloomington in 2009 as the producing artistic director of Bloomington Playwrights Project (BPP), bringing with him five years of experience as artistic associate at a playhouse in Westport, Connecticut.

Rabinovitz, 30, says he was drawn to the BPP because of its mission to produce new plays. "There are very few places like this in the country," he says. "The first thing I did when I got here was call Joanne."

Academy Award winners Joanne Woodward and Paul Newman were longtime residents of Westport and involved with its theater. "They came to every one of my shows," Rabinovitz says. "Joanne's support of my career is a large reason why I'm here in Bloomington."

Rabinovitz revived the BPP, re-doing and purchasing the building while selling out every performance for years.

Gerry Sousa Choral Director

According to family folklore, a 3-year-old Gerry Sousa climbed atop a table at his father's company picnic and led everyone in an impromptu choral singalong. Fifty-five years later, a grown Sousa still has that spark.

Sousa has devoted his life to directing musical movements as a choral conductor and champion of the arts. In 1989, he became the music director of the Bloomington Chamber Singers.

Under Sousa's direction, the Bloomington chorus of 70 amateur singers has brought to life works from masters including Bach, Haydn, and Mozart. "For me, it's been a real privilege, because I've been able to do some of the real great music in the repertoire with outstanding forces," Sousa says.

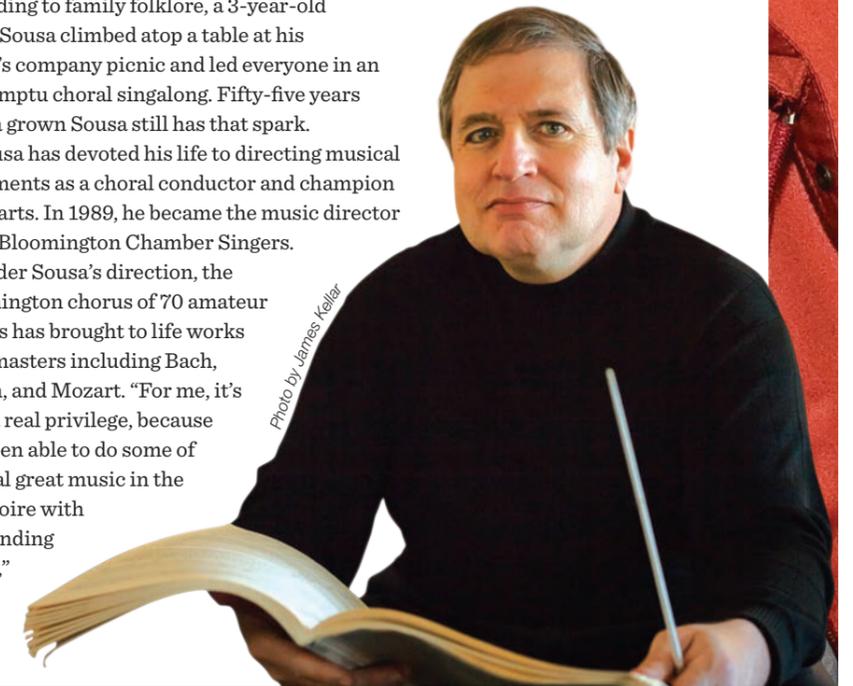


Photo by James Keller

Comfort food,
Creole attitude.



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