



Save the Turtle

Since our last issue came out, Bloomington has lost at least two more businesses to the recession: Smith-Holden Music, after 47 years in operation, and The Dunn Inn, a bar and restaurant, after only one year. Sadly, we are in danger of losing even more good locally owned enterprises. One in particular has me really worried: Wandering Turtle Art Gallery & Gifts, located on the north side of the courthouse Square.

What would make this loss especially painful is the contribution that Wandering Turtle and its owner Jaime Sweany make to Bloomington as a whole and especially to our arts community.

For the Turtle is a lot more than just a retail store. It sells the work of more than 130 local artists and the CDs of just about every recorded musician in town. Jaime was instrumental in establishing Gallery Walk, now an institution downtown, and since moving from North College around the corner to 116 W. 6th St., her shop has formed a small “gallery row” with neighbors pictura gallery and Gallery North. The Turtle also presents live performances on its small stage and special shows of individual artists.

In other words, this one little store does it all. Wandering Turtle is the retail heart and soul of Bloomington’s artistic community. Without it, many artists will have no place to regularly show and sell their work—a devastating blow to the artists and to the city that prides itself on being a mecca for creativity.

What can you do? Splurge: Buy a work of art by a local artist. Purchase Wandering Turtle gift certificates when friends’ birthdays roll around. Do a healthy portion of your holiday shopping at Wandering Turtle.



(above) Wandering Turtle owner Jaime Sweany. Photo by Steve Raymer (below) The display case outside Wandering Turtle. Photo by Lynae Sowinski

We are all going to look back in regret if this wonderful place—Downtown Bloomington, Inc.’s Business of the Year 2009—takes a final bow.

Note: Congratulations to *Bloom* columnists/contributors Christine Barbour and Moya Andrews. Christine’s book *Home Grown Indiana*, written with Scott Hutcheson, won the 2009 Best Books of Indiana award for “non-fiction creative instructional.” Moya’s book *Perennials Short and Tall* was a runner-up for the award. Congratulations also to Indiana University Press, publisher of both.

Malcolm Abrams
editor and publisher