

mike leonard



Big Changes—For Bloomington and Me

If I wrote that I've been thinking a lot about Heraclitus (535-475 B.C.E.) lately I'd be lying through my fingers because I only learned his name a few minutes before starting this column.

I have been pondering his famous quote, "The only constant in life is change," however, in no small part because I've moved my act from the newspaper on the south side of the city downtown to *Bloom*. And while the changes involved in that are too numerous to quantify, I will note that it's pretty cool to work in an office where the regular occupants include a sweet little beagle/dachshund mix named Sophie, and Winston, a happy little French canine whose breed I can't pronounce.

While the advent of fall semester always brings a seismic change to the easy-going pace of summers in Bloomington, there seem to be more changes taking place than normal—so many that "the new normal" has become a cliché that should not be uttered without an eye-rolling response.

I seriously doubt that the city will be over its tizzy about the summertime installation of parking meters in downtown Bloomington by the time you read this. They are bothersome, to be sure, but so is parking in every city of any size.

Bloomington's downtown is as vibrant and booming as I've ever seen, as more new student housing in close proximity puts more students on the streets. If you haven't checked out the new student housing on Bloomington's near northwest side, prepare yourself for a jaw-dropping sight. The new Park on Morton development makes downtown's Smallwood look, well, small.

Not one but two new hotels are going up downtown, including a Hyatt bordering the B-Line Trail that will significantly change the look and feel of that section of the city. Talk about change. In the previous century, that area bordered what was known as the levee, a rough-and-tumble region where bars and brothels thrived.

A redesign and renovation of the streetscape of Walnut Street south of Third is revitalizing that part of downtown and will continue to evolve with the city's new bus transportation hub going up at Third and Walnut as well.

IU continues to build-baby-build, with a stylish new residence hall up and running on Rose Avenue and the handsome new Jacobs School of Music practice facility providing an eastern gateway into the campus arts district. Over the coming year, a new academic building will rise up in the central part of IU's campus between the Herman B Wells Library and the Radio and Television Building: the new School of Global and International Studies.

And, finally, the long-vacated eyesore of a former grocery store has been razed and replaced by a beautiful and greatly welcomed Bloomingfoods in the Elm Heights neighborhood.

Change is a constant here. And while it imposes challenges, it's better than stagnation.

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