

SPECIAL EDITION

20TH YEAR

Bloom

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August/September 2025



Plus
20 REASONS TO
LOVE BLOOMINGTON

STUDENT LIFE
Through The **DECADES**

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VS. KENNESAW ST. SEPT. 6

VS. INDIANA ST. SEPT. 12

VS. ILLINOIS SEPT. 20

AT IOWA SEPT. 27

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AT OREGON

OCT. 11

VS. MICHIGAN ST.

OCT. 18

VS. UCLA

OCT. 25

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NOV. 1

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 ADDITIONAL MUSIC AND LYRICS BY ANDREW LIPPA
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features



108

108 The Best 20 Reasons to Love Bloomington

From our neighborhoods to our diverse local restaurants to the Trades District and IU Athletics, there are a lot of reasons to love Bloomington. Here are what we believe are the 20 best reasons—see if you agree.

By Carmen Siering



122

122 Student Life Through the Decades

Since 1825, when Bloomington hosted the first classes for what was then the State Seminary of Indiana, students have been coming to our community each fall. And since the dawn of photography, images have captured the activities of Indiana University students in town and on campus. Step into our time machine and catch a glimpse of student life—as it was then to now.

By Jim Krause, Rodney Margison, and Nicole Blevins; photography courtesy of Indiana University Archives

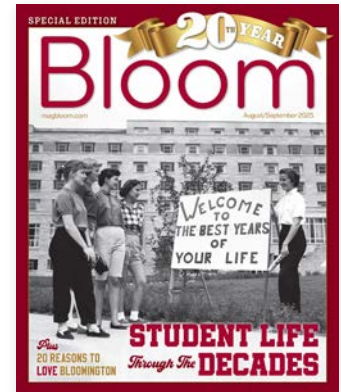


Photo courtesy of Indiana University Archives

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The chief of staff at IU Health South Region, an activist Unitarian Universalist minister, and an expert in local tourism are Bloomingtonians worth knowing.

36 Arts/Entertainment

Bloomington public radio station WFIU-FM is celebrating its 75th anniversary this year; and a local musician (and IU Athletics Hall of Fame swimmer) has recorded her first studio album in 10 years.

50 Food/Drink

A familiar face has returned to Malibu Grill on the downtown Square, but as co-owner (along with his wife) this time; and check out the recipe for Djerma that our "Dishes of the World" columnists are sharing from the Republic of Niger.

54 Fashion/Shopping

We asked the owners of Bloomington's women's boutiques to share with us three of their most stylish clients for this, the first in our two-part series on B-town's best-dressed women.

58 Health/Fitness

Meet the lifelong athlete who, at age 41, is an ultramarathon runner competing in five 100-mile races in six months this year; and an acupuncture studio in Nashville, Indiana, is providing treatment for symptoms of Alpha-gal syndrome.

62 Science/Education

After leaving IU 10 years ago to work at Purdue University, David Reingold is back—as the new IU Bloomington chancellor; and a Brown County High School program is providing students with real-world experience in the fields of computer machining, engineering design, and graphics.

69 Community

Did you know that racing pigeons can reach speeds of up to 50 mph and earn prize money of up to \$2.5 million? This Bloomingtonian has a flock of these winged racers; and a new headstone was recently unveiled for a freed slave who made Bloomington his home.

68 Business/Finance

A local car dealership is celebrating its 110th anniversary this year; and landlocked Bloomington is home to one of the world's largest scuba and snorkel gear businesses.



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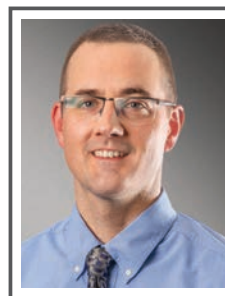
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editor's message

Dear Reader,

This Editor's Message appeared two decades ago in the first issue of Bloom. Bloomington has changed so much in the intervening years, but my feelings for the place have not. I hope you enjoy this bit of nostalgia and the entire issue which marks the beginning of our 20th year.

Malcolm



Young-ish Malcolm.

Welcome

Welcome to *Bloom Magazine*. Over the past nine months, many people have asked me why I came to Bloomington and what motivated me to start a magazine.

The short answer is a love affair. In May 2005, I came here for a visit and was charmed by this magical place—its quaint neighborhoods and vibrant downtown, its extraordinary cultural scene, its warm and friendly residents. By the third day of my visit, I was already out with a Realtor looking at houses. The only question was: What could I do here?

The answer should have been obvious. For nearly 30 years, I had been an editor in New York City. Making magazines is my passion. Still, it took some weeks after my return to realize that I had not seen a cultural/lifestyle magazine in Bloomington.

For several months while still in New York, I did research on Bloomington itself and 75 city magazines. Although Bloomington was small, I knew that there would be plenty to write about and an intelligent, sophisticated readership. But would the business community support a new bimonthly publication?

On Hallowe'en, I made the 14-hour drive from New York City. I rented a student apartment at the corner of 10th St. and Lincoln (that's a story for another time), and feverishly went to work. By early February, I was ready to begin making sales calls.

The response was overwhelming and immediate. In five weeks, I sold half the number of ads required to launch the first issue, and by deadline, 70 businesses had signed on. I hope that this magazine justifies their commitment.

About Bloom

Bloom is a real magazine—one that adheres to the principles and guidelines of the American Society of Magazine Editors. You will not find stories written by advertisers or advertisers receiving

preferential coverage. Without exception, all of the businesspeople I called on endorsed this policy.

I do not expect to get rich in Bloomington nor is that my ambition. My sole goal is to produce an excellent magazine—one that reflects the breadth and vitality of this special community.

Many people helped me on the editorial side. I would like to thank three in particular. The first is Carla Miller, one of the country's foremost designers. Carla holds a Masters of Fine Arts degree from Yale University and has designed magazines, corporate brands, and just about everything else. She not only created *Bloom's* beautiful look but named the magazine (My suggestion was Bloomington Life. How boring!). The second person to whom I am indebted is Dale Burg, both for her friendship and her tireless work on *Bloom's* behalf. And finally, there is Christine Barbour, whom many of you know from her years as a food columnist for the *Herald-Times*. *Bloom* would not be what it is without Christine's talent, enthusiasm, and unwavering high standards.

On the business side, I want to thank Mat Martin who helped get *Bloom* off the ground, and Pat Bailey, *Bloom's* part-time sales person, who has been an immeasurable help. Thanks, also, to the crew at Mediaworks for their efforts beyond the call of duty.

So, here it is, August 2006. A new school year is starting and I am comfortably settled in Bloomington—with a house and a little dog named Sophie, adopted from the local animal shelter. My love affair with Bloomington continues and the first issue of *Bloom Magazine* is now in your hands. I hope you like it. This is just the beginning.

Malcolm Abrams
editor and publisher



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by Emily Pike
Executive Director, New Hope for Families

The Bottom-Line Cause of Homelessness

I heard it again this week. Standing in line waiting for takeout, I fell into conversation with the dad of a new Indiana University grad visiting for the weekend. He asked if I'm from here, and I gave him my standard line—I came to Bloomington for grad school and accidentally never left. I found a job I love working at a local shelter for families impacted by homelessness. When he hears what I do, the conversation shifts, “Wow. Bloomington really has a homelessness problem, huh? It wasn't like that when I lived here in the '90s. Why are there so many homeless people in Bloomington?”

In my line of work, I hear this question a lot, and most people expect a long-winded, complicated answer, but I never give one. The story of how any one person or family becomes homeless is always long and complex and unique and full of cascading failures in broken systems, but the story of why so many people are homeless in a place is always one reason—housing.

It's no secret that Bloomington has an affordable housing crisis. People feel the pinch at every income level, but for those at the bottom of the economic ladder, it means living on the brink of catastrophe. A 2023 study from Regional Opportunities Initiative identified that more than 60% of renters in Monroe County spend more than 30% of their gross income on rent. When people are rent burdened, even a small setback can be the catalyst for a housing crisis, whether that is a job loss, a substance use disorder, an injury or illness, the end of a relationship, death of a family member, or as we so often see at New Hope, the birth of a child.

It can be easy to believe that homelessness is primarily caused by addiction, mental illness, or unemployment, but we know that geographically, housing cost is the strongest predictor of a homelessness problem. Places with affordable housing don't have

fewer people struggling with substance use disorders, mental illness, or joblessness; they just have housing that is affordable enough that most people aren't perched precariously on the edge of disaster, so when a crisis arises, it can more often be absorbed or adjusted for.

If we want to move the needle on homelessness, we need more affordable housing and a whole lot of it. We need lots of creative solutions that add low-income housing all over our community, not just outside city limits or in neighborhoods that are already primarily low-income. From a practical perspective, low-income households are far more likely than middle-income folks to be reliant on public transit, so living on a bus line is imperative. Thinking more systemically, we know that when we concentrate poverty geographically and socially, it is much more difficult for families to escape.

Fortunately, we live in a community with compassionate, thoughtful leaders, and a lot of very clever people are working on solutions all the time. One promising idea that I've heard discussed recently is converting some of the unoccupied first floor retail space in apartment buildings into affordable housing. It's going to take a lot of strategies to make the difference we need to see in our housing stock, but I hope this one is on the list. It stands out because it serves the dual purpose of creating new affordable housing while also economically diversifying some areas of our community, which we know reduces stigma and helps interrupt generational poverty. When we are able to achieve that kind of integration, we can meet everyone's needs a little better and more fully realize the kind of welcoming and equitable community we aspire to be.

AFTER 22 YEARS, OUR TEAM HAS GROWN SO MUCH, WE'VE EVEN ADDED A MASCOT.



Here's our starting lineup (left to right): Joni Chan, Financial Advisor; Jenna Dimmett, Executive Assistant; Malcolm Webb, Owner, Financial Advisor; Reese, Team Mascot; Nicole Keller, Operations Manager.

Approaching retirement? Talk to us to determine the total income you can expect and when and how you can retire.

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contributors



Jim Krause WRITER/PHOTOGRAPHER: STUDENT LIFE THROUGH THE DECADES Jim Krause is a photographer, documentary producer, and an instructor in the Media School at Indiana University. Jim teaches film and documentary production, graphics, and animation. When not working, he enjoys running, hiking, paddling, and sailing. He composes music and plays guitar in a duo with his wife, a cellist. In the summer months they live aboard their sailboat and sail in the Great Lakes or Pacific Northwest.



Carmen Siering WRITER: THE BEST 20 REASONS TO LOVE BLOOMINGTON Carmen is an independent writer and editor who has been contributing to Bloom since 2010. She was honored to serve as Bloom's managing editor, then executive editor, from July 2015 to November 2019. She and her husband, Greg, moved to Bloomington in August 2010. They know there are more than 20 things they love about their adopted city.



Nicole Blevins WRITER: STUDENT LIFE THROUGH THE DECADES From Auburn, Indiana, Nicole is a 2025 graduate from Indiana University and received a Bachelor of Arts in journalism. She recently placed as a writing finalist in the Hearst National Championships held in San Francisco in June. She is the summer editorial intern at *Bloom* and the summer news editor for the *Indiana Daily Student*. In the fall, she plans to travel to Charleston, West Virginia, for an internship with *Mountain State Spotlight*.

correction

On Page 77 of the June/July issue of *Bloom* we mistakenly provided the byline to the wrong writer. The advertorial for The Indiana Team was written by *Bloom* contributing writer Sophie Bird Murphy.

a sign for the times

Seven years ago, *Bloom* offered this free sign to businesses in the Bloomington downtown. We are offering the signs again. The wording is legal. If you would like a sign for your shop, restaurant, or place of business, you can pick one up at the *Bloom* office, 414 W. 6th St., Monday–Thursday, 8:30 a.m.–5:30 p.m.



Bloom

August/September 25 Vol. 20 No. 4



Founder
Editor & Publisher
Malcolm Abrams

Managing Editor
Rodney Margison

Executive Publisher
Cassandra Huskey

Editorial Intern
Nicole Blevins

Associate Publisher
Sydney Zulich

Design Director
Rosalie Sherwood

Writers

Chrissy Alspaugh
Jack Baker
Barb Berggoetz
Paul Bickley
Susan M. Brackney
Nanette Esseck Brewer
Aaron B. Cohen
Craig Coley
Peter Dorfman
Elizabeth Ellis
Janet Mandelstam
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Heather Ray
Scott Russell Sanders
Ethan Sandweiss
Lynn Schwartzberg
Kristen Senz
Rosalie Sherwood
Carmen Siering
Greg Siering
Douglas Wissing

Illustrators

Mike Cagle

Joe Lee

Photographers

Chrissy Alspaugh
Paul Baechtold
Martin Boling
Jane Daniels
Bobby Goddin
Jenn Hamm
Jeremy Hogan

James Kellar
Morgan Kraemer
Jim Krause
Kendall Reeves
Kathryn Coers Rossman
Sarah Slover

About Bloom Magazine

Bloom is an independent, free magazine whose target audience is Bloomington's adult population and visitors to the area. Published bimonthly, 12,000 copies are available at more than 200 local shops, businesses, hotels, and restaurants. For a complete list or to subscribe, visit magbloom.com.

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Response to Editor's Message "Missing Yogurt (the dog)" in the June/July issue.

What a beautiful story about Yogurt!

I especially loved: "Had a lot of wonderful dogs ... Yogurt wasn't one of them!"

JOHN WHIKEHART

I'm so sorry to hear this, Malcolm. Yogurt sounds like the best bad dog ever.

KAREN HELMING

Great story. As I get older I think I love dogs more than people.

ALISTAIR DUNCAN

Aww, I'm so sorry that Yogurt has passed. Dogs are the best; quirky as anything but our best friend.

SHERRY DUNBAR-KRUZAN

So sorry for this loss ... always so hard to let go of family animals ... and I suspect your description of Yogurt is both an accurate and loving eulogy.

MARTHA MOORE

So enjoyed your Editor's Message in the June/July issue about your dog Yogurt. Made me laugh and also reminded me of our dog Riot, who was also a rescue dog. Our dog trainer found him on the side of the road when he was just a puppy. He was 17 when we put him down June of last year. My wife, Liz, and I did the same process as you and Jenny did with Yogurt. That was a hard day!



Yogurt. Photo by Rodney Margison



Stolberg's dog Riot. Courtesy image

ERIC STOLBERG

A beautiful tribute to a "bad dog." I'm currently in the "up every night, 2-3 times a night" stage with my sweet 12-ish-year-old chocolate Lab, Ms. Roxy, and understand the exhaustion, and at some point will also feel the heartbreak.

BRANDI DERLETH HOST

Beautiful, this story of love and acceptance. Thank you so much for adoring the beautiful reality of that fuzzy life.

CYNTHIA BRETHEIM

So sorry to hear about Yogurt. We lost Walle a little over 4 months ago. He was dealing with Cushing's disease and dementia, so we know what you are going through. Try to remember the good times.

GARY BRIAN

I love this tribute! Every dog lover understands.

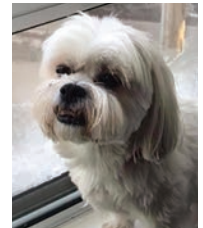
KATHY BRUNER

I'm sorry for your loss of Yogurt, who I just read about in Bloom. Although I'm not a pet guy, I can't shake the memory of our old cat Topper—the \$250,000 cat, who came with a house as a bonus. She died peacefully at home at 19 after making me nuts for years.

Reading your column helps me appreciate how much pets, even annoying ones like Yogurt and Topper, impact the lives of those who "own" (or are owned by) them.

AARON COHEN

Thank you for your letters. Your opinions are important to us. We read them all and print as many as possible. We reserve the right to edit letters for inappropriate content and length. Please be sure to include your name and address. Send your comments to: editor@magbloom.com or Editor, Bloom Magazine, P.O. Box 1204, Bloomington, IN 47402



Gary Brian's dog, Walle. Courtesy photo

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Bloom Goes Solar

Bloom Magazine has gone solar. With assistance from David Mann, founder and president of MPI Solar, and the City of Bloomington's Solar Energy Efficiency Lighting (SEEL) Grant, 20 solar panels were installed as part of *Bloom's* commitment to sustainability.

"We were supporting the local business, we were working with the City, we were able to make a change in the property ... it all kind of fit what we wanted to do," Executive Publisher Cassaundra Huskey says.

Solar power is seen as an investment that pays for itself over time, Mann says. It's also a way for individuals and businesses to be more independent from their utility providers.

Mann's long-term relationship as an advertiser with *Bloom* sparked a conversation about the City grant. The SEEL Grant is available to small businesses and non-profits within Bloomington city limits and requires an 8-kilowatt solar installation. Beginning in 2021 in response to Bloomington's Climate Action Plan, the City allocates \$300,000 annually to help fund the businesses' transitions to green energy, funding an average of 12 projects.

Jolie Perry, City of Bloomington sustainability program coordinator, says the grant is a way for the city to support the community's effort to meet its climate action goals.

"It's great they [*Bloom*] applied and were involved with the program and that the City can support a local business," Perry says.

Once *Bloom* was approved for the grant, MPI Solar attempted the install before realizing the roof needed to be replaced. Thanks to



MPI Solar installed 20 solar panels to *Bloom's* roof in May. Photo by Rodney Margison

direction from Andrea de la Rosa, the City's director of small business development, *Bloom* applied for and received a Bloomington Urban Enterprise Association (BUEA) Business Building Improvement Grant, which helped pay for nearly half of the cost of Rapid Roofing's replacement. Huskey says MPI Solar and Rapid Roofing "were wonderful to work with and are local businesses *Bloom* was happy to partner with." MPI Solar finished the solar installation in May.

"We were very grateful to be part of the process," Mann says. "I think it's a wonderful program, and I am thankful that we have a city government that recognizes the importance of green energy in our town." —Nicole Blevins

Bloom Billboards

During the month of July, *Bloom Magazine* had four billboards around town highlighting the kickoff of our 20th year of publishing. The billboards were located at Ind. 46 in Ellettsville; North Walnut, south of Interstate 69; South Adams Street, just south of West Kirkwood; and South Walnut, near Miller Drive.

Executive Publisher Cassaundra Huskey says, "*Bloom* is grateful to Adrian Adams, senior account executive with Lamar Advertising, who partnered with us to make this happen," through their initiatives focused on giving back to the community and for allowing *Bloom* to pay that forward by donating advertising space to Cancer Support Community South Central Indiana.





SARAH MOORE PHOTOGRAPHY

A CALL TO SERVE:

The McKinleys on Building a Healthier Bloomington

For Dr. Lee and Maria McKinley, retired healthcare professionals and lifelong Bloomington residents, service to others didn't stop with retirement. It simply took a different shape. After decades of practicing internal medicine and occupational therapy—often with a focus on mental health—the McKinleys have turned their attention to an even larger mission: Improving public health by bringing people together.

“The biggest issue we face locally isn't just a shortage of resources,” Lee explains. “It's someone to lead the charge to bring the right people to the table.”

As long-time supporters of Bloomington Health Foundation, the McKinleys believe the foundation is uniquely positioned to convene decision-makers, providers, and community members across sectors. They see this kind of leadership as essential—especially when it comes to breaking down silos between organizations and addressing long-standing challenges like mental health access and workforce shortages.

“We used to rely on the health system when public health issues emerged,” Maria says. “But that isn't their role now, and someone needed to fill it.”

Their call to action is rooted in decades of hands-on experience. From facilitating psychiatric care groups to pioneering Bloomington's first community-wide disaster drill, the McKinleys have always leaned into service. Today, their efforts are more focused on volunteering, fundraising, and helping to shape public health strategy through roles on local boards and initiatives like the Monroe County Health Equity Council.

They urge others to follow suit.

“You don't have to lead a big organization to make a difference,” Lee says. “Volunteer. Join a board. Help raise money for local efforts and keep those dollars here in our community. That's how we become more resilient—less dependent on political shifts or external funding.”

Maria adds that retired professionals in particular have untapped potential to

contribute. “Bloomington is full of smart, capable people who still want to make an impact. Let's harness that. There's so much we can do together.”

As BHF continues to convene partners across Monroe County to address mental health care access through its multi-year Mental Health Collaborative and beyond, the McKinleys hope others will see themselves as part of the solution.

“This is our home,” Maria says. “If we don't step up for it, who will?”



Sign up to get updates about the Mental Health Collaborative.



Bob Hammel.
Photo by Steve Raymer

Former Bloomington Sports Editor Bob Hammel Dies

Bob Hammel, a newspaper journalist for 52 years who worked the final 40 of those years at *The Herald-Times* and its predecessors, died July 20, 2025, at Bell Trace. He was 88.

Hammel came to Bloomington and joined the staff of what was then *The Daily Herald-Telephone* in October 1966 after stints at newspapers in Indianapolis, Huntington, Peru, Fort Wayne, and Kokomo, Indiana. In his career he won 21 Indiana Sportswriter of the Year awards, was inducted into multiple sports writing and athletic halls of fame, and covered five Olympic games, 23 NCAA Final Four tournaments, and 29 Indiana high school basketball tournament championships, among other major events. He authored or co-authored 14 books, and in 1996 was presented with Indiana's Sagamore of the Wabash award by Governor Evan Bayh. Among his closest friends were former Indiana University men's basketball coach Bob Knight and bestselling author and Bloomington native Michael Koryta.



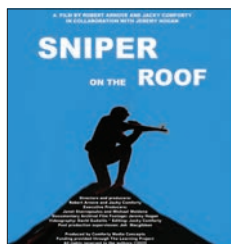
Pat Wilson.
Photo by Martin Boling

November 7 Rotary Toast to Honor Educator Pat Wilson

Bloomington's three Rotary clubs will honor local educator Pat Wilson at the Friday, November 7, Rotary Toast at Ivy Tech Community College Bloomington's Shreve Hall, 200 N. Daniels Way. Established in 2015, the annual event recognizes area leaders who reflect Rotary's motto of "service above self." In the first 10 years, it has raised \$390,000 for local charities.

Half of the proceeds from the 2025 Rotary Toast will go to Bloomington High School North's Habitat for Humanity chapter, founded by Wilson in 1998. The other half will benefit local charities championed by the three Rotary clubs. Recent projects include partnerships with Exodus Refugee Immigration, Friends of Lake Monroe, and Girls Inc.

Learn more about Pat Wilson in the June/July 2025 issue of *Bloom Magazine* at magbloom.com. Visit rotarytoast.com for more information on the event and to purchase tickets.



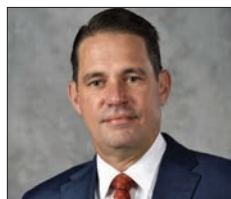
Courtesy image

'Sniper on the Roof' Documentary in Post-Production

Award-winning Bloomington filmmakers Robert Arnové, Chancellor's Professor Emeritus of Educational Leadership and Policy Studies at Indiana University, and Jacky Comforty, an internationally acclaimed documentarian and oral historian, are seeking funding to finish post-production and allow for a national and international distribution of a documentary film they are producing.

Sniper on the Roof: Academic Freedom in the Crosshairs stems from "an urgent concern for the future of Indiana University," Arnové and Comforty state on the project's GoFundMe page. "Our concern is how recent Indiana General Assembly legislation affects IU's institutional autonomy, shared governance structure, strong tenure policies, academic freedom, constitutional rights of free speech and assembly—and how the [President Pamela] Whitten administration has responded."

Learn more and donate at gofundme.com/f/sniper-on-the-roof-film.



Martin Pollio.
Courtesy photo

Martin Pollio Named 10th Ivy Tech President

Martin Pollio, who most recently served as superintendent of Jefferson County Public Schools (JCPS) in Louisville, Kentucky, is the new president of Ivy Tech Community College, effective July 1. Pollio earned his undergraduate degree from Indiana University, his master's degree from Eastern Kentucky University, and his doctorate from the University of Louisville. He worked for more than 28 years as an administrator and educator with JCPS.

Andrew Wilson, chair of the Ivy Tech State Board of Trustees and co-chair of its Presidential Search Committee, describes Pollio as a "results-driven, dynamic leader with immense heart and passion for students."



Mindy Besaw.
Courtesy photo

Mindy N. Besaw New Director of IU Eskenazi Museum of Art

The new director of the Sidney and Lois Eskenazi Museum of Art at Indiana University brings more than 20 years of curatorial and museum leadership experience to the position, with a focus on innovative exhibition design, expansive storytelling, and academic collaboration. Mindy N. Besaw succeeds interim director Mariah Keller, who held that position since August 2024. Besaw will oversee all facets of the museum's strategy, operations, and engagement, including exhibitions, collections, teaching partnerships, and public programming.

Prior to IU, Besaw served as director of fellowships, research, and university partnerships and curator of American art at Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art in Bentonville, Arkansas, where she curated major exhibitions that examined wide-ranging narratives in American art. She has also championed initiatives that center on underappreciated artists and voices. "Mindy is a visionary leader whose curatorial excellence and collaborative spirit make her an exceptional choice to lead the [museum], says IU Bloomington Provost Rahul Shrivastav. ✨



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*Certified by the Indiana Department of Education



The Big Picture

Bubbles Bursting in Air

Photo by Jeremy Hogan
of *The Bloomingtonian*

Dozens of entries filled the streets of Bloomington to celebrate America's independence during the annual July 4 Parade. Among the participants were emergency vehicles, politicians, local celebrities, clubs and fraternal organizations, businesses, musicians, nonprofits, and more, including these two youngsters showing their patriotism and playing with bubbles.





Peaceful 'No Kings!' Protest Draws Large Turnout

On June 14, the Monroe County Courthouse provided the backdrop for Bloomington's "No Kings!" protest against President Donald Trump and the military parade to celebrate the U.S. Army's 250th anniversary held the same day in Washington, D.C. The parade also coincided with Trump's 79th birthday.

More than 2,000 protesters filled the courthouse lawn and spilled over to surrounding sidewalks and streets, making it one of the largest protests in Bloomington since the early 1970s. It was one of an estimated 2,100 "No Kings!" events held in all 50 states and involving millions of participants.

Photos by Jeremy Hogan, Dawn Johnsen, and Christine Barbour



No Kings Rally on Downtown Square





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Brianna Solola IU Health South Region Chief of Staff

Brianna Solola is a bona fide Bloomerang. "This isn't my first experience living in Bloomington," the recently returned Bloomington resident explains. "I was here for undergrad from 2011 to '15." After earning a degree in health care management and policy from Indiana University, Solola left Indiana only to find her way back a decade later. Since October, she has served as IU Health South Region chief of staff.

"In my role, I spend most of my time primarily in Bloomington, but I do also spend some time in our other areas—as far south as Paoli and Bedford and as far north as Martinsville ... and even Indianapolis sometimes for system meetings," she says. In part, she connects the dots between operations in 11 counties.



Brianna Solola has served as IU Health South Region chief of staff since October 2024. Photo by Morgan Kraemer

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"I'm responsible for having a really good understanding of what our teams across the system are working on," she says. "As a result, if there are gaps or functional teams that can learn from one another, it's my responsibility to help ensure that teams across the system are aligned and ultimately achieving our goals."

Growing up, the Munster, Indiana, native was surrounded by health care professionals. Her Chicagoan mother was a physician's assistant and her Nigerian-born father was an OB/GYN. "I remember going to the hospital with him back in the day," Solola says. "It's funny, I say 'back in the day' because things really have changed. But, as little kids, my sister and I—we'd be able to come into the hospital and hang out in the doctors' lounge and wait for my dad to finish up delivering

babies or seeing patients. That would not be the case nowadays, but I would say that definitely impacted me."

When she's not working, Solola is often still on the move. "We have family all over the world," she says. "My siblings—I'm one of four—and each of us lives in different states and provinces." Solola frequently travels for family events. "One of the bigger trips I took recently was to South Africa earlier this year with my mother and sister."

Closer to home, Solola fits in long walks whenever she can. "In the last 10 years, I've lived in larger cities—city walking I love," she says. "The B-Line Trail is my go-to."

"I've just been really thrilled to reconnect with the community and look forward to what's to come," she concludes.

—Susan M. Brackney

Susan Frederick-Gray

Activist

by Brittany Marshall

In St. Louis, Missouri, Susan Frederick-Gray grew up in a Unitarian Universalist church, unaware her early faith would one day lead her to the frontlines of immigrant justice.

After earning a molecular biology degree from the University of Wisconsin-Madison and studying world religions in India, she entered Harvard Divinity School in 1998. A decade later, she became minister of the Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Phoenix—just before Arizona passed SB 1070, one of the harshest anti-immigration laws in the U.S.

The law's impact was immediate and personal.

"Our congregation had undocumented members," she recalls. "In 2010, six of us chained ourselves to the jail gates to stop Maricopa County Sheriff Joe Arpaio from conducting raids. We knew it was risky, but our goal was to protect our community."

That protest helped trigger a Department of Justice investigation, eventually leading to federal civil rights cases against Arpaio.

"It was a moment of profound clarity," Frederick-Gray says. "When you're in ministry, your job is to protect people's dignity, safety, and worth. And that work doesn't stop at the church door."

Her bold activism drew national attention. In 2017, she made history as the first woman elected president of the Unitarian Universalist Association. Just weeks into the role, she was on the ground in Charlottesville, Virginia, during the deadly white supremacist rally.

"I was the only president of a national denomination who showed up," she says. "I felt like it was critical to be there—not just in word, but in body. Ministry is about showing up in the hardest places."

During her six-year presidency, she expanded staff diversity and launched UU the Vote, mobilizing more than 2 million voters by 2020. "That work was about reclaiming democracy and participation—making sure people knew their voices mattered."

After her presidency, she returned to congregational ministry, this time here in Bloomington. She was drawn to the Unitarian Universalist Church's robust social justice work and supported by 11 active task forces addressing issues such as affordable housing through Habitat for Humanity, hunger and homelessness, democracy, reproductive justice, and LGBTQ+ rights.

"The Midwest matters," she says. "The rise of fear-based rhetoric and racism has eroded our public institutions. I care about how we change that narrative—how we reclaim the public good."

Her acceptance is unwavering: "If you're an immigrant, refugee, undocumented ... if you're gay, straight, bi, ace, trans, nonbinary, queer—you are welcome here." ✨



Susan Frederick-Gray has spent her life fighting for the Unitarian Universalist Church's mission to protect marginalized communities. Photo by Martin Boling

An advertisement for Dale Steffey Books. The background is a man with short grey hair, wearing a grey t-shirt, sitting in a library with bookshelves behind him. The text is overlaid on the image in a white, typewriter-style font. At the top, it says "DALE STEFFEY BOOKS". Below that, it lists affiliations: "Member: Antiquarian Booksellers Association of America" and "International League of Antiquarian Booksellers". The main text lists categories: "Academic & Scholarly", "Rare & Collectible", "Literature", "Mystery", "Fine Bindings", and "Ephemera". At the bottom, it says "Purchasing single items to collections", followed by the email "steffeyadams@yahoo.com" and phone numbers "812-333-2903h, 812-345-1768c".

Laura Newton Tourism Maven



In March, Laura Newton, assistant director of Visit Bloomington, received a Distinguished Service Award from the Indiana Tourism Association in honor of her 37 years in the industry.

“I was nominated by my coworkers,” says Newton, who started her career at Visit Bloomington as a college intern. “It was a total shock and total surprise ... I was very appreciative. The organization members work tirelessly to make sure people understand how important tourism is to our state economy, so it was nice to be in front of my peers and get this award.”

Newton, who grew up in Fort Wayne, Indiana, moved to Bloomington in the 1980s to attend Indiana University. “I never left,” she says. “I was one of the lucky ones. When my internship was done, the timing was right that I was hired for a full-time position.”

Since then, Newton has served Visit Bloomington in various capacities, including stints in community relations, convention sales, and sports sales positions.

Laura Newton was awarded an Indiana Tourism Association Distinguished Service Award after serving 37 years in the local tourism industry. *Photo by Martin Boling*

As assistant director, she manages six of the organization’s nine employees as they work to promote Bloomington, encourage tourism, and engage with visitors to the community.

Newton credits her professional success to supportive mentors, tireless coworkers, and an encouraging boss. “We have a really smart, energetic team here,” she says. “We’re really good about bouncing things off of each other.”

Over the years, Newton’s work has involved launching marketing campaigns, giving tours, analyzing website data and demographic information, traveling to state and national convention trade shows, helping with local events like the Indiana Heritage Quilt Show, manning a booth at IU’s freshman orientation, and more. “I love that my days aren’t stuck in front of a computer,” she says. “I’ve worked with so many wonderful partners. Our community is filled with people that work really hard and try to make this a great place to work and play.”

Passionate about volunteerism, Newton often sits on local boards and currently serves as secretary for Bloomington Meals on Wheels. “We’re so lucky to live in this town,” she says. “I couldn’t be more proud, more excited, or more dedicated.”

—Sophie Bird Murphy

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MCCSC Students Chart Their Own Pathways to Success



MONROE COUNTY
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Alexis Harmon. Photo by Martin Boling

As the new school year begins at the Monroe County Community School Corporation (MCCSC), Alexis Harmon, assistant superintendent for curriculum, instruction, & assessment, reflects on the many pathways available to students as they prepare for their futures.

“We try to engage kids in their interest areas and help them understand how their learning feeds into creating our community of citizens,” says Harmon. “We really want to be thinking at all levels about college and career.”

To help guide this process, MCCSC offers ample opportunities for students to explore their areas of interest, gain hands-on experience, consult with advisors and coaches, earn college credit, and more. “It’s so important that they know all the opportunities available to them, and that they’re able to really hone in on the things they’re passionate about,” says Harmon.

Across all four MCCSC high schools and its career center, students have access to 26 different career and technical education pathways, 34 dual credit courses, and 41 advanced placement (AP) courses that help them prepare for future educational and professional endeavors.

One way MCCSC students can earn college credit is through the Indiana College Core (ICC), a block of 30 credit hours that meets general education requirements and transfers to any post-secondary Indiana public institution. “That’s two years [of college credit] under their belts,” says Harmon.



Sean Borneman. Photo by Martin Boling

Sylvia Richardson, a senior at The Academy of Science and Entrepreneurship, says the ICC will prepare her to understand the structure of college classes as she considers a bachelor’s degree in zoology. “It will introduce me to what it’s like to communicate with a college professor, look over a syllabus, and keep up with work,” she says. “By doing ICC, I will also be completing college classes before I go.”

Richardson also plans to take three dual enrollment classes at Ivy Tech Community College–Bloomington this year.

Sean Borneman, a 2025 graduate of Bloomington High School South (BHSS), took numerous AP classes during high school, earning high scores on his AP exams that will translate to college credit at Carnegie Mellon University this fall. There, Borneman plans to major in quantum physics with a minor in artificial intelligence—two professional pathways he explored through dual credit classes, internships, and extracurricular activities at BHSS.

“I do what I do because I find it interesting,” says Borneman, who authored six scientific papers, presented at numerous conferences, and completed two internships in quantum physics and machine learning while a student at BHSS. “I tried to take high school as a chance to learn what I liked and what I was interested in. I explored a bunch of different areas.”

Borneman's internships with professors at Purdue University and the University of Alabama were made possible by MCCSC's Senior Internship Program, during which students can either travel to local businesses for hands-on experience or work remotely. These internships, as well as work-based learning experiences through Hoosier Hills Career Center, give students insight into the day-to-day responsibilities of their prospective careers.

At Hoosier Hills, programs in welding, automotive technology, construction, fire science, health sciences, early childhood education, and more help students earn certifications and connect with industry professionals. "That really gives a lot of opportunities for students," says Harmon, who adds that certifications springboard graduates into their careers by increasing their employability.

Daniel Thomas, a recent Hoosier Hills welding student, finished his core credits at the Bloomington Graduation School before starting the welding program at Hoosier Hills. He chose welding in honor of his late grandfather, a hobby welder who first introduced Thomas to the craft. "It was always something I was fascinated in," Thomas says. "[My grandfather] passed away before I got to middle school, so this has been my way of feeling like I'm making him proud."

Through Hoosier Hills, Thomas was able to work full time while finishing school. In May, he was awarded a Student Excellence Award in recognition of his accomplishments. "It was basically about taking my Hoosier Hills experience and turning it into a career. I was honored. It was an amazing thing to receive," says Thomas, who credits his instructors at Hoosier Hills with teaching him the value of hard work and connecting him with his union. "It's nice to know there's some security for the future. Before Hoosier Hills, how to get there was kind of shadowy. It was hard to see how I was going to get where I wanted to be."

To help students identify industries they're interested in, MCCSC middle and high school students have access to counselors and career coaches, says Harmon. These individuals work with students to help them set goals and make realistic plans to achieve them. "Every middle school student takes a class called Preparing for College and Careers, which is going to provide them with information about what it means to go to college," Harmon adds.

Additional college and career preparedness offerings include an annual college and career fair, Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) information nights, and workshops for parents on the professional and educational pathways available to their students.

Harmon credits voter support for MCCSC's 2023 referendum for making many of these opportunities possible. The referendum covers expenses like tuition for dual enrollment and dual credit classes, AP exams, and some Career and Technical Education exams. "The referendum is ensuring that students are meeting the goals they have for themselves, and that we're able to support them," says Harmon.

As the school year begins, students and families are encouraged to explore the many career and college pathways available to them in MCCSC schools.

Visit mccsc.edu. —*Sophie Bird Murphy*



Daniel Thomas (second from left) receives his Student Excellence Award. *Courtesy photo*

Jenn Cristy's First Album in 10 Years And Her Tina Turner Tribute Show



(above) Tina Turner performs in Wantagh, Florida, on October 1, 1997, during her *Wildest Dreams* Tour. AP photo by Robert Bell/INSTARimages; (right) Jenn Cristy performs during one of her Tina Turner tribute shows. Courtesy photo



by Paul Bickley

"It feels absolutely insane to complete my first studio album in 10 years!" says Bloomington pianist, singer, and songwriter Jenn Cristy. "Here I am at 46 putting new songs into the world. I haven't been this excited about anything for a long time."

To be released this fall, *Right Where I Should Be* (self-produced), will be Cristy's seventh album and includes 11 tracks of rock-pop-soul rockers and ballads. The title track was inspired by Cristy's discovering at age 40 that her birth parents were musicians and athletic (in 2022, Indiana University inducted Cristy into its Athletics Hall of Fame for swimming) and that they loved her and didn't want to give her up. Most of the album registers Cristy's relationships with family, friends, and the world as she sees it today. One song reflects on some of the "healing I've done from abusive relationships in my past."

The former John Mellencamp band singer and multi-instrumentalist created this album differently: "I'm older, more mature. My writing is now more like journaling and sculpting out

the songs. In the past, I wanted to be on the radio. I wanted success. This writing is from my gut. I want people to connect with this."

On September 20, Cristy will perform her tribute to the Queen of Rock and Roll, *Simply the Best: A Tribute to the Music of Tina Turner*, at the 400-seat Brown County Playhouse. "I've always felt a kinship with Tina," Cristy says. "She experienced some serious abuse early in her life, found herself and healed—then thrived! Although my experiences weren't as harsh as hers, I've had my share, have found myself, and have healed. But I try to focus on our shared love of performing and of our audience."

Songs will include "Proud Mary," "What's Love Got to Do with It," "The Best," and Turner's cover of the Beatles' "Help!"


"It's a party celebrating Tina Turner," Cristy continues. "It sold out last year. There are sing-alongs, dancing is encouraged, and the louder the audience is the more I lose myself in the night."

Visit jenncristy.com to purchase tickets for *Simply the Best* or her music. ✨

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OF FIGARO**

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Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart



SEPT 27, 28; OCT 3, 4

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ET LES
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An opera by
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Jonathan Dove



FEB 13, 14

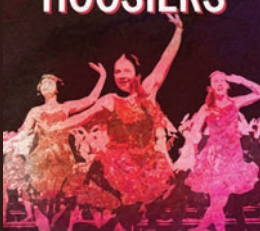
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An opera by
Jules Massenet



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**SINGING
HOOSIERS**



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MAR 28

SPRING BALLET



APR 3, 4

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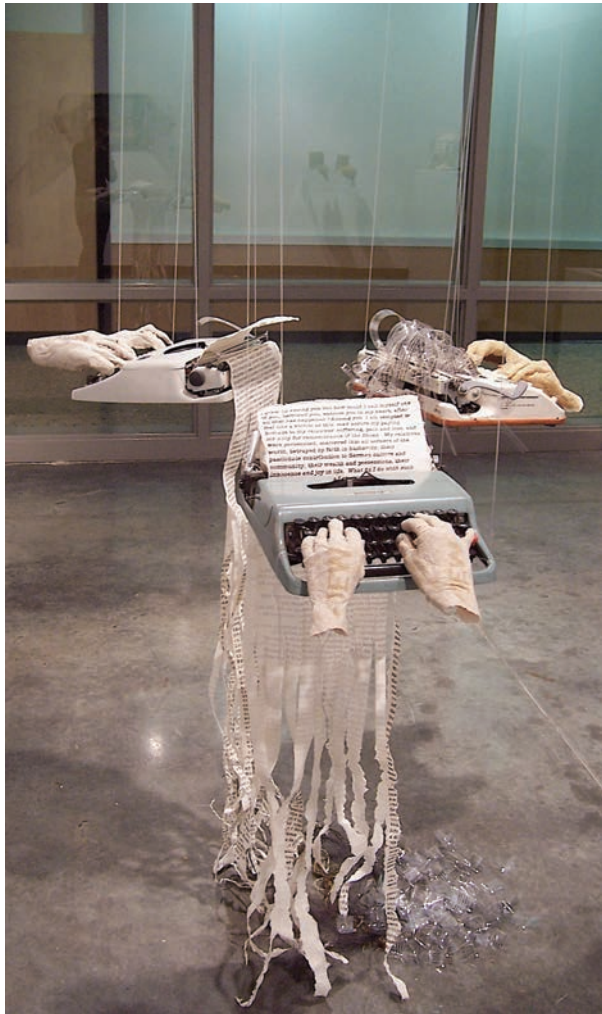


MAY 2



Karen Baldner

Multidimensional Artist

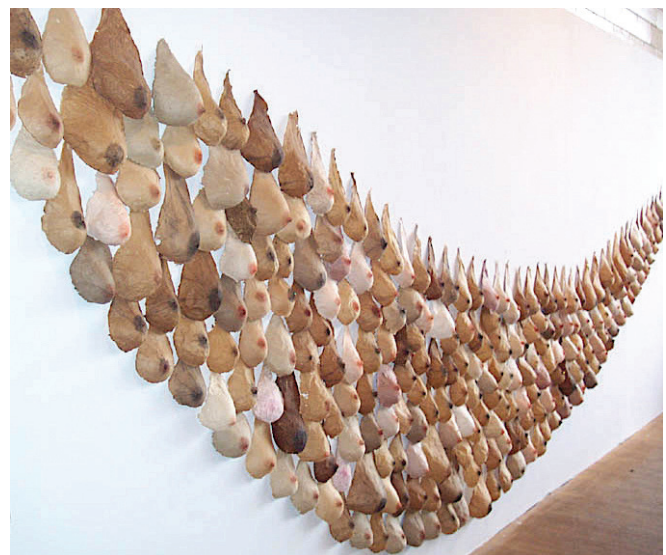
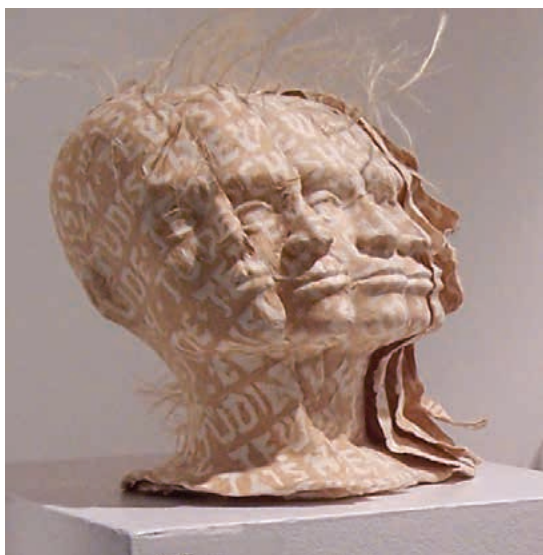


Artist Karen Baldner brings a multicultural perspective to her work. She was born in the U.S. but spent her formative years in Germany before following her brother to Indiana University where she studied printmaking and learned handmade papermaking. Interested in moving beyond 2D forms and wanting to tell broader narratives, Baldner took a bookmaking workshop in Germany on a Fulbright Grant. Her practice now includes creating prints, sculptures, drawings, letterpresses, artists' books, and installations—often in combination.

Much of Baldner's work references both personal and ancestral trauma. Reflective of her German heritage and deaths of Jewish relatives in the ►



(this page) Baldner's work often reflects her German heritage and the death of Jewish relatives in the Holocaust. *Courtesy images*





Artist Karen Baldner's practice includes creating prints, sculptures, drawings, letterpresses, artist's books, and installations. *Photo by Morgan Kraemer*

Holocaust, Baldner often explores the effects of war as embedded in a place: "How blood-soaked the ground is." Maps and human hair frequently serve as symbols of remembrance. A recent work incorporates hair samples from descendants of those lost due to complications of COVID-19 arranged in a grid of the Indianapolis street map. In 2022 she created a Holocaust Memorial for Bloomington's Congregation Beth Shalom centered around the Jewish practice of placing stones on graves. Duality flows through her work, not only as related to her dual identity, but also through an internal tension—a "vibration of energy"—between elements.

"I am interested in the jarring juxtaposed to the beautiful—the terrible in life walking hand-in-hand with the very pleasant, euphoric experience," Baldner says, adding that she wants her images to be enigmatic.

Baldner has taught at the Herron School of Art + Design at IU Indianapolis for 26 years and serves as its co-director of the Religion, Spirituality, and the Arts program. She has been involved with several collaborative projects, including the Jewish/German Dialogue Project, In War 1940-, and Bloomington Breast Project.

Learn more at karenbaldner.com.

—Nanette Esseck Brewer

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The 2025-26 Constellation Theater Season



With eight different productions, the 2025–2026 performance season for Constellation Stage & Screen will feature a mix of mysteries, world premieres, family shows, and Tony Award–winning musicals.

***Next to Normal*, September 4–21, Waldron Auditorium**

The season kicks off with the Tony Award– and Pulitzer Prize–winning musical *Next to Normal*, which explores themes of mental health, family, and resilience, put to a rock music score.

***You're a Good Man, Charlie Brown*, November 1–16, Waldron Auditorium**

The first show in the Constellation for Kids series honors the 75th anniversary of the *Peanuts* comic strip. *You're a Good Man, Charlie Brown* brings the beloved *Peanuts* characters to life for this hour-long performance. The final Sunday performance will be sensory-friendly.

***A Christmas Story: The Musical*, December 11–January 4, Waldron Auditorium**

Constellation's annual holiday musical for 2025 is *A Christmas Story: The Musical*. Based on the iconic film set in 1940s' northern Indiana, the show follows young Ralphie Parker in his pursuit of his dream Christmas gift, a Red Ryder BB gun.

***An Act of God*, December 18–30, Waldron Firebay**

For the first time, Constellation will present an additional holiday show for adults only. *An Act of God* is a comedy in which God delivers a new set of commandments for the contemporary world.

***Séance: The Board Awakens*, January 29–February 15, Waldron Auditorium**

This audience participation production was written by and stars Rob Zabrecky, a two-time Stage Magician of the Year and the resident séance specialist for the Magic Castle in Hollywood, California.

***The Da Vinci Code*, March 26–April 12, Waldron Auditorium**

Bloomington will host the Indiana premiere of *The Da Vinci Code*, adapted from the bestselling novel in which the curator of the Louvre is found murdered under mysterious circumstances, prompting an investigation by a symbologist and a cryptologist who reveal a deadly conspiracy.

***Finn: A New Musical*, May 1–17, Waldron Auditorium**

Finn: A New Musical introduces Constellation's new, immersive theatergoing experience for children: The PB&J Café: A Dinner Theater for Kids. Young theatergoers will enjoy a meal during the show and leave afterward with autographs from their favorite characters. *Finn* is a coming-of-age story about a young shark following his dreams, with themes of inclusivity, love, and self-acceptance. The final Sunday performance will be sensory-friendly.

***Another Revolution*, June 4–21, Constellation Playhouse**

Another Revolution will close Constellation's mainstage season. The new drama set in 1968 follows two graduate students from opposing scientific disciplines on the campus of Columbia University, who are "caught at the intersection of science and social upheaval."

For more information and tickets visit seeconstellation.org. —Rodney Margison

Artists for Climate Awareness Using Art to Educate & Inspire

Art can be an agent for change. That is what a group of local women at a watercolor workshop envisioned in the fall of 2021 after the United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP26) had released its projections on the rate of global warming. Feeling the need to act, artists Carol Rhodes and Jacqueline Fernette started a non-profit organization to raise awareness about the issue.

In March 2022, they formed Artists for Climate Awareness (ACA). Partly inspired by Katherine Hayhoe's book *Saving Us: A Climate Scientist's Case for Hope and Healing in a Divided World*, Rhodes notes that ACA has always been non-partisan. She says she sees art as a dialogue starter about a potentially difficult subject, and that "the language of art gives us a way to talk to people."

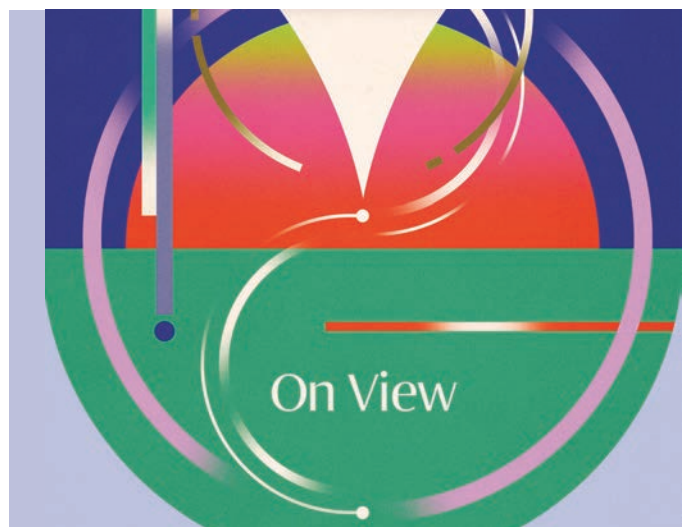
Although comprised of artists, ACA's mission is primarily educational: "We use art to educate, inspire, and empower people to act promptly, both personally and communally, to reverse environmental destruction and initiate the Earth's healing," Rhodes says.

To facilitate this goal, the group organizes six to eight programs per year, including an annual juried Earth Day show with

submissions from the ACA membership that includes more than 100 artists and art supporters from 13 states. Many of their images focus on plants, animals, and landscapes that may at first seem innocuous until you read the artists' statements about how their work relates to climate change.

While not an environmental organization, ACA partners with groups like the Sierra Club, Sassafras Audubon Society, Sycamore Land Trust, and Center for Sustainable Living. They also collaborate with Indiana University student groups and participate in community events such as Lotus Blossoms, Fourth Street Festival of the Arts & Crafts, and Paint Bloomington. Most ACA programs happen at Pillar Arts in College Mall and at Ivy Tech Bloomington, though they have sponsored events in locations from Chicago and St. Louis to Santa Cruz, California, and Rwanda, Africa.

Learn more at artistsforclimateawareness.org.
—Nanette Esseck Brewer



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Dale Cochran

Card Maker Extraordinaire



Since 85-year-old Dale Cochran was a child, his life has revolved around art. His sister was an artist and influenced his passion for painting. When he attended Georgia State College, now Georgia State University, it didn't offer an art degree, so he chose English and ended up with more art credits than English by the time he graduated.

Cochran, who moved here several years ago to be with his son, spent his career selling paintings and designs of Georgia wildflowers and birds, never anything he hadn't seen with his own eyes. He has been recognized for his work twice in the Georgia Watercolor Society National Show and the Artist Atelier National Juried Show held during the Atlanta Olympics in 1996. He spent years designing theater sets and exploring other realms of art, but he is most proud of his yearly, hand-cut Christmas cards.

"Each one of these cards means something to me," he says. "I think they are the best example of my artistic ability."

For 60 years, Cochran has created and cut original designs and sent 35–40 cards to his friends as gifts. Each card takes about an hour to make, depending on its complexity. Today, his mailing list consists of about 17 people.

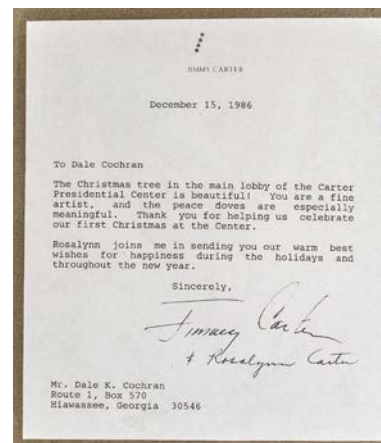
The first card he made was for a project in college in 1960. He resumed his practice in 1964 with silkscreen prints of his own

designs. In 1969, he started hand cutting cards made of watercolor paper, with each design having a bird theme.

His intricate designs attracted attention and he was invited to decorate the first Christmas tree at the Jimmy Carter Presidential Library in 1986. The tree was filled with 100 hand-cut doves of three different sizes, all made by Cochran.

The Museum of Modern Art in New York bought two of his designs and put them in its Christmas catalogs. Two banks in Georgia bought his designs for their own display.

"I'm not in this to make money," he says. "I just want people to see my cards." —*Nicole Blevins*



(right) Dale Cochran has spent his entire life as an artist and designer, but he is most proud of his hand-cut Christmas cards; (above) in 1986, Cochran decorated the first Christmas tree at the Jimmy Carter Presidential Library. The Carters wrote and signed a thank you letter to Cochran; (elsewhere on this page) examples of Cochran's Christmas cards.

Photos by Rodney Margison



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'Beautiful Faces, Extraordinary Lives' Down Syndrome Calendar & Exhibit

Rosalie Sherwood, co-founder of Down Syndrome Family Connection, has worked with photographers since 2009 to create the organization's annual calendar, titled "Beautiful Faces, Extraordinary Lives." This year, she looked to a coworker for an extra-special project.

Sherwood, freelance design director for *Bloom Magazine*, approached photographer and Managing Editor Rodney Margison with an idea: creating photographs for the calendar and then springboarding the sessions into his first solo photography exhibition during Down Syndrome Awareness Month in October.

"Rodney and I both have a good combination of dreamer plus reality," Sherwood says, adding that she had the idea, and Margison had gallery experience. "It was just a good fit. We have a good camaraderie."

Examples of the photos that will be on display in the October photo exhibition "A Little Extra Love" at Fountain Square Mall: (right, top, l-r) BJ and Jakob; (far right, top) Eli; (right) Betsy; (far right) Adam; (below) Brianna. Photos by Rodney Margison



They agreed on the title "A Little Extra Love," and Margison invited models to bring someone or something they cherish to the photo sessions. In 20 hours across three days, 45 models posed with siblings, a best friend, toys, parents, dogs, guitars, sports uniforms and equipment, and pictures. They laughed, danced, played around, and joked with each other.

"There seems to be something on that extra chromosome that makes them love to be on stage and to perform, sing, do karaoke, and to be in front of the camera," Sherwood says. "It was interesting to see what people

chose to bring, and to have some extra individuality come into the photos."

Opening the same night as Gallery Walk Bloomington, Margison encourages the community to stop in, saying, "These are portraits of people with beautiful souls, and they bared them wide open for us."

"A Little Extra Love" will be hanging at Fountain Square Mall all month, with the opening reception from 5 to 8 p.m. on Friday, October 3. Calendars will be available during the opening reception. — *Linda Margison*

WFIU-FM Celebrates 75 Years of Broadcasting



John Bailey is the broadcast operations director for WFIU-FM. *Courtesy photo*

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by Barb Berggoetz

Radio is an intimate medium, says John Bailey, broadcast operations director for WFIU-FM public radio.

“People use radio habitually. They listen to the same programs every day, they tell us. It’s an everyday-at-this-time-thing—something people know they can count on,” says Bailey. “They know our hosts. You have one person talk to you in your ear. It’s a much more personal experience.”

The close relationship with the audience and its appreciation for WFIU’s content—deep and serious news coverage and classical and jazz music—are among reasons for its 75 years of operation, adds Bailey, a 15-year veteran of both WFIU and WTIU-TV, which anchor Indiana Public Media.

“That loyalty has been astonishing to us,” Bailey stresses.

WFIU, which broadcasts from the Indiana University Bloomington campus to 20 counties in south-central Indiana, was one of the first FM stations in 1950, two decades before National Public Radio’s founding. WFIU, one of 90 NPR original charter members, operates in partnership with IU Jacobs School of Music.

To celebrate its anniversary, WFIU will air from August through October several themed programs from its archives and specials featuring oral history interviews with station alumni. Listeners can hear classical programming, jazz, and news talk and information programs at 6 p.m. on Sundays and other times.

The celebration culminates with an open house from 4 to 7 p.m. October 1, at the IU Radio-TV Building. Visitors can meet WFIU personalities and tour the station.

WFIU’s longevity also has been possible, Bailey says, because of listeners’ financial support since its first membership drive in 1976 and “robust support” from licensee IU to help expand WFIU’s coverage area.



Eleanor Roosevelt joins a WFIU broadcast on January 14, 1950. *Photo courtesy of Indiana University Archives*

But he recognizes recent state and federal cuts to public broadcasting are likely to restrict WFIU services. State cuts will reduce the station’s budget by 5%, and federal action may cut another 15%.

“We’ll have to make some hard choices,” Bailey says.

But he added, “Our anniversary party is going to be a birthday party, not a funeral. We’re looking forward, and we’re celebrating all the good work that has been done and the work that is ahead of us.” ✨

June Bestsellers at Morgenstern Books

Fiction Bestsellers

1. *Lost Man's Lane* by Scott Carson (A.K.A. Bloomingtonian Michael Koryta)
2. *James* by Percival Everett
3. *The Women* by Kristin Hannah
4. *Shady Hollow* by Juneau Black
5. *Funny Story* by Emily Henry
6. *Bride* by Ali Hazelwood
7. *Intermezzo: A Novel* by Sally Rooney
8. *Throne of Glass* by Sarah J. Maas
9. *Dune (Dune Chronicles, Book 1)* by Frank Herbert
10. *Iron Flame* by Rebecca Yarros



Non-Fiction Bestsellers

1. *College Girl, Missing* by Shawn Cohen
2. *Murdle: Volume 1* by G.T. Karber
3. *The Book of Delights* by Ross Gay (Bloomingtonian)
4. *The Creative Act* by Rick Rubin
5. *The Demon of Unrest* by Erik Larson
6. *Killers of the Flower Moon: The Osage Murders and the Birth of the FBI* by David Grann
7. *Everything I Know About Love: A Memoir* by Dolly Alderton
8. *The Serviceberry* by Robin Wall Kimmerer
9. *The Body Keeps the Score: Brain, Mind, and Body in the Healing of Trauma* by Bessel van der Kolk, M.D.
10. *Atomic Habits: An Easy & Proven Way to Build Good Habits & Break Bad Ones* by James Clear



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'An Evening with Groucho'

Funny for 9-Year-Olds & Up



An Evening with Groucho premieres August 16 and 17 with shows at 2 and 7 p.m. at the Constellation Playhouse. Courtesy image

by Janet Mandelstam

Frank Ferrante was 9 years old when he saw his first Marx Brothers movie, and it changed his life.

"I was exhilarated," he says. "I was a shy kid, educated by nuns, and I thought Groucho was so funny, such a rule breaker, such an irreverent comedian. I went to the library and started reading about him and about comedy. Groucho turned me on to the arts and to performance."

That early encounter with the Marx Brothers ultimately led to a 40-year career performing as Groucho. Now Ferrante is bringing his one-man show, *An Evening with Groucho*, to Bloomington for four performances on August 16 and 17. The show is being produced and sponsored by Krista Detor's The Hundredth Hill retreat to benefit the Jewish Theatre of Bloomington (JTB).

Ferrante was a 22-year-old drama student at the University of Southern California when he performed *An Evening with Groucho* as a senior project. In the audience was playwright Arthur Marx, Groucho's son, who soon cast Ferrante to portray his father in the 1986–87 Off-Broadway production of *Groucho: A Life in Revue*. And Ferrante's career was launched.

While also working as a theater actor, director, and playwright, Ferrante has performed as Groucho more than 3,000 times. "My goal is to do the show in all 50 states," he says. With performances in Rhode Island this summer, he will notch number 47. "I'm still missing North Dakota, Alaska, and Hawaii."

Ferrante says every show is different. "I do some routines from Marx Brothers movies; I sing songs that Groucho sang in the movies, and a third of the show is improvised with the audience."

Each Jewish Theatre production is preceded by a fundraiser. *An Evening with Groucho* supports the revival of Arthur Miller's *The Price*, which will open the company's 20th season in November.

"I have been wanting to get a comedian" for one of the theater's fundraisers," says Darrell Stone, JTB's producing artistic director. "The world could use some humor right now, and Groucho is timeless." ✨

'An Evening with Groucho'

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John Bailey Is Back at Malibu But This Time as the Owner

When John Bailey started as a busboy at J. Arthur's restaurant (now Malibu Grill) in 1986, he never expected to someday be the owner. But, earlier this year, Bailey and his wife, Jennifer, bought Malibu Grill and the building. "I'm still pinching myself to see if it's real," he says.

Bailey, 62, recalls a day early in his career when a kitchen manager, a bar manager, and some of the wait staff didn't show up for work. Bailey jumped into action, filling as many roles as possible. "That's when I knew I was cut out for this industry," he says. He left in 1992 to help J. Arthur's open the Malibu Grill concept in Indianapolis. A year later, J. Arthur's made the transition to Malibu Grill Bloomington, and by



John Bailey and his wife, Jennifer, bought Malibu Grill and the building earlier this year. Photo by Rodney Margison

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Buskirk-Chumley Theater
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SEP 21

John McCutcheon

Unitarian Universalist Church of Bloomington



DEC 7

Carrie Newcomer

Unitarian Universalist Church of Bloomington

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1994 Bailey was back in town, serving as general manager and then managing partner.

In late 2016, however, Bailey left Malibu and moved with his family to Tennessee. Eight-plus years later, John, Jennifer, and their three children say they are happy to be back in Bloomington. "We're very thankful to the previous owners—the Coombes family—and Indiana University," says Bailey. "I studied management at IU, and it very much prepared me for this role."

Little has changed at the restaurant since Bailey left. In the bar area, his legacy is reflected in wall-to-wall photos of smiling guests, while numerous signed athletic jerseys add to the vibe. In the dining area, amid the banana leaf murals, are historic photos of Bloomington's downtown square. The space holds many special memories for Bailey—it's where he met Jennifer in 1997 and where they held their wedding reception in 2002.

The Baileys intend to uphold and elevate the integrity of Malibu's from-scratch kitchen, where they don't use pre-marinated meats and they make their own dough, focaccia, and salad dressings.

To preserve the menu's reputation for having something for everyone, Bailey says they are tinkering with new options for plant-based protein. "We're local, independent, and unique, and we take great pride in what this place is capable of doing," he says. —Heather Ray



DISHES of the WORLD

BY KATHY SCHICK & NICK TOTH

Archaeologists and Co-Directors of The Stone Age Institute



Photo by Rodney Margison

Flag and globe from Vecteezy.com

Passionate chefs, husband and wife Nick and Kathy have traveled the world, experiencing many rich cultures and cuisines. Recently, they embarked on a four-year culinary odyssey: Every weekend, they are cooking the national dish of one of the world's 193 countries.

For this third installment in *Bloom*, Nick and Kathy prepared Djerma, a chicken stew, and the favorite dish of Nijerois, the citizens of the Republic of Niger, a landlocked country of 25 million in west Africa.

DJERMA (Chicken stew with vegetables and peanut butter)

Ingredients

- 1/4 cup cooking oil
- 3 1/2 pounds bone-in chicken thighs, skin removed
- 1 onion, sliced
- 2 garlic cloves, minced
- 1 1/2 tablespoons sweet or smoked paprika
- 6 fresh or canned Roma tomatoes (chopped, then pureed)
- 1 teaspoon dried thyme
- 1/2 teaspoon curry powder
- 1 bay leaf
- 3 crumbled bouillon cubes
- 2 sliced carrots
- 3 tablespoons chopped parsley
- 1 teaspoon minced chives
- 6 tablespoons smooth peanut butter
- Salt and pepper to taste

Directions

1. In a large skillet or Dutch oven, sauté the chicken thighs in the oil on medium heat until they are browned on all sides.
2. Remove the chicken and sauté the onions in the same cooking vessel.
3. In a food processor or blender, puree the chopped tomatoes with the garlic
4. Put the chicken, onion, and pureed tomatoes and garlic in a Dutch oven or large pot, adding the paprika, curry powder, bay leaf, and crumbled bouillon cubes.
5. Bring to a boil, turn down the heat, and then simmer for about 30 minutes.
6. Add two cups of water as well as the parsley, carrots, and chives. Cook 5–10 minutes until the carrots are tender.
7. Remove a cup of the stew liquid and mix with the peanut butter; then pour back into the pot. The peanut butter will help thicken the sauce.
8. Salt and pepper to taste, and remove the bay leaf. Garnish with chopped parsley. The djerma is traditionally served over steamed rice.



Courtesy photo

We used bone-in chicken thighs (with the skin removed) so that they don't fall apart during cooking, and we use more peanut butter than some recipes call for. (We actually want to taste the peanuts!)

We were recently visited at our Stone Age Institute by three archaeologists from Niger, and we (with some trepidation) prepared this dish in their honor. They gave it a "thumbs up"!

The Republic of Niger is a landlocked nation in west-central Africa, bordered by Libya to the northeast, Chad to the east, Nigeria to the south, Benin and Burkina Faso to the southwest, Mali to the west, and Algeria to the northwest. Its capital is Niamey, situated along the Niger River. Much of the country is part of the greater Sahara Desert.

Did you like this recipe? Send *Bloom* a photo of your finished dish to have it featured on our social media accounts! Email rodney@magbloom.com.



Guide to Cool Wine Cocktails for Summer

It's hot and I'm thirsty for something cold and satisfying. Time for a cold cocktail with some friends on the back patio. Here are some late summer ideas for cool afternoon drinks.

Prosecco is a versatile wine. Its bubbles and light acid make it ideal for drinking alone or for making summer cocktails. Combine it with Aperol and it's an Aperol spritzer; with Campari and it's a Campari spritzer. Both are sharp, bitter, sweet, and refreshing on a hot summer afternoon. Combine it with peaches to create a Bellini, or with crème de cassis to make a kir. And where would brunch be without that combo of prosecco and orange juice, the mimosa?



Prosecco is a versatile wine, says Jack Baker. A combo of prosecco and orange juice makes the classic mimosa. *by istock.com/Darwin Brandis*

Champagne is more high toned than prosecco but equally versatile. Replace the prosecco in a kir with champagne and you

have a drink fit for a king, the kir royale. Dash a few drops of bitters on a sugar cube and cover with Champagne and you have a Champagne cocktail; add it to vanilla berry syrup, blood orange juice, cognac, or gin, and it's a French 75.

Rosé is another wine that, in its still and bubbly versions, can cool a summer day. Replace the Champagne with rosé wine and the French 75 becomes the lighter French 75 rosé cocktail. Combine it with vodka, lemon juice, and some simple syrup, and it's a rosé cooler; with tequila, simple syrup, and lime juice, it's a light rosé margarita.

Sangria is red wine, usually a Spanish garnacha or tempranillo, with fresh fruits, triple sec, and brandy. It's mixed one day and served the next so it can meld and improve overnight. A lighter version can be made by substituting rosé wine for the red wine.

Vermouth is a red or white wine dressed up with a secret recipe of herbs and spices. While dry white vermouth is normally used with gin in martinis, and red with gin and Campari in Negronis, there is a myriad of cocktails that use one vermouth or the other. The Americano combines Campari and soda water with red vermouth; the Manhattan combines it with bourbon or rye whisky; the Rob Roy with scotch whisky.

Brandys, such as cognac and Armagnac, begin as wines, but undergo one or more distillations that transform the ingredients into new aromas and flavors and increase the alcohol level. The brandy alexander is a simple mix of brandy, crème de cacao, and cream. The sidecar is brandy with orange liqueur and lemon juice. The Vieux Carré is a New Orleans take with cognac, sweet vermouth, Bénédictine, and bitters.

So there we are, a menu of cocktails when wine itself won't quite do. And I will drink to that. ✨



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fashion/shopping

Part 1 of a 2-Part Series

Six of B-town's Best-Dressed Women

By Brittany Marshall

Fashion Writer

This season, boutique owners of Mirth Market and ALIBI are celebrating the women who embody their vision, not just for their fashion choices, but for the way they use style to express identity, confidence, and purpose.

Whether bold or minimalist, funky or refined, each look tells a story of self-expression and pride.

This is the first in a series. In the next issue of *Bloom*, Tivoli and Mainstream Boutique will be featured.

Mirth Market

At Mirth Market, fashion isn't about trends, it's about artistry and authenticity, say co-owners Amanda Hyde and Kelly Jennings. The partners curate a thoughtful collection of clothing from regional and European designers, attracting a wide range of women—from Indiana University faculty to creative professionals and out-of-town visitors.

Mirth recently spotlighted three longtime customers as “Best Dressed Women,” honoring their signature approach to personal style. Each woman's wardrobe reflects a dynamic mix of influence, purpose, and creativity, says Jennings.

“They're not afraid to take risk or blend the unexpected,” says Hyde. “That's what makes their style so compelling. These women are confident, creative, and joyful in how they get dressed.”



Marilyn Walker, 61—Health Insurance Agent

Classic, Polished, Elegant

In a pleated ombre dress and matching jacket by Alquema, paired with a metallic clutch and block heels, Walker brings polished elegance to everyday dressing with color and class, says Jennings.



Karen Pacific, 74—Retired Educator & Co-Owner of Artful Blooms

Boho, Retro, Artist-at-Heart

Wearing a printed mesh top by AMB Designs, barrel pants by PORTO, and combat boots, Pacific blends boho and punk with fearless flair—her artistic spirit reflected in every layered look, says Hyde.

Sung-Mi Im, 60—Pianist & Professor at Indiana University Jacobs School of Music

Modern, Funky, Minimal with a Twist

Modern minimalism meets playful color in Im's high-low tunic by Gershon Bram, lime green Chalet pants, resin jewelry, and woven leather heels, a look as creative and composed as her music.



ALIBI

In Bloomington's Renwick Village, ALIBI boutique offers more than shopping, it offers styling as a form of self-discovery, says owner Stephanie Topoligus. She treats her shop like a gallery, carefully curating pieces with longevity and artistry. Her customers aren't interested in fast fashion, she says. They want clothes that align with their lives, values, and evolving sense of self.

Topoligus's styling approach is personal, offering suggestions tailored to specific events or moods, and often hand-selecting items for customers in advance. "There's a lot of trust between us and our customers. We're helping them build wardrobes they'll live in," says Topoligus.

Alyson Norrick, 49—Senior Director at Novo Nordisk

Professional, Smart, Versatile

Norrick's smart and versatile style shines in a tailored two-piece knit set by Veronica Beard, refined enough for work, yet easy to remix for the weekend. She likes to blend Audrey-Hepburn polish with Gwen Stefani edge, favoring pieces that work from office to weekend. She enjoys looking effortless in her clothes and aims for classic but not outdated.



Dana Cherkala—Social Maven

Vibrant, Social, Statement-Driven

Dressed in a lively green print top and matching skirt from Marie Oliver, Cherkala's joyful, statement-driven style reflects her outgoing personality and love of standout fashion. Known for her colorful, standout pieces, Dana dresses for travel, dinners, and hosting events, and appreciates elevated casual looks, including joyful prints, bold colors, and statement-making separates.



Niki Rolen, 49—Writer & Owner of Mamma Chick

Edgy, Intentional, Rock 'n' Roll Cool

Edgy meets intentional in Rolen's teal leather minidress by Amanda Uprichard, with rocker-chic sophistication from a woman who knows what she likes and wears it with confidence. Rolen gravitates toward clothes that are "slightly peculiar," but often dresses casually with premium denim and vintage tees from MadeWorn. ✨

Gypsy Biker Bling: A Unique Little Shop in Fountain Square

Hidden away in the lower level of Fountain Square Mall is Gypsy Biker Bling—a fine and fashion jewelry boutique catering to the masculine and feminine, blending bohemian soul with biker grit.

Overflowing with gemstones, handcrafted designs, and one-of-a-kind fashion, the shop is a blend of natural history and artisan craft. Each piece is a miniature story from the earth, shaped by time and skill, says the shop owner, known simply as Gypsy Biker.

The artist behind the name says she took a winding road from Florida's coastline to Bloomington's artsy core. After moving to be closer to family, a casual conversation with her sister lit the spark that became her calling.

"My sister Lori and I were talking one day. She told me the value of turquoise was going up because so many of the mines are closing. I just thought that was interesting," she recalls.



Gypsy Biker, owner of Gypsy Biker Bling—a fashion boutique catering to the masculine and feminine, blending bohemian soul with biker grit. Photo by Rodney Margison



That curiosity quickly turned into a passion and she began studying stones, learning to identify their origins by color and matrix.

"You can look at a piece and tell where it came from. It's like every stone has its own fingerprint," she says. Holding up a pendant, she adds, "This one is from the No. 8 Nevada mine. That mine is closed, so any turquoise from there is valuable."

Her personal collection soon took over the garage. "It started as a little stash, then the whole garage was full of jewelry tables and displays," she laughs. "People started complimenting me, so I thought, why not start a business?"

Her biker roots helped shape the brand. She launched a YouTube channel to document motorcycle-ride fundraisers and pop-up shops alongside her partner, Hurricane, and opened her first storefront seven months ago.

Today, Gypsy Biker Bling boasts more than 8,000 pieces—necklaces, rings, body jewelry, cufflinks, boutique clothing, and designer purses. About 80% is handmade; the rest is vintage.

"Stainless steel is big for bikers—it doesn't tarnish or scratch. I carry skulls, dragons, military pieces—things people won't see anywhere else."

She adds, "I love anything ocean-themed—shells, spiny oyster, abalone, pink conch. I like to carry pieces people haven't heard of."

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Visit gypsybikerbling.com. —Brittany Marshall

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Acupuncturist Offers Treatment For Symptoms of Alpha-Gal Syndrome



Leah Roark says this area of the Midwest is a hot spot for contracting AGS, which is an allergy to mammal products contracted through a Lone Star tick bite. Photo by Rodney Margison

by Elizabeth Ellis

For those with symptoms from Alpha-gal syndrome (AGS), relief is possible locally.

Leah Roark, owner of Nashville, Indiana-based Roots of Healing Acupuncture, recently introduced the Soliman Auricular Allergy Treatment (SAAT) to her practice for clients with symptoms of AGS—an allergy to mammal products contracted from a Lone Star tick bite.

“This area of the Midwest is a real hot spot for contracting AGS,” says Roark. “I was able to obtain my certification directly from SAAT creator Dr. Nader Soliman at his center in Rockville, Maryland, in April 2024.”

About 20 years ago, Soliman determined different allergens in the body related to various points in the ear, similar to Chinese medicine reflexology practices that identify triggers in the body based on areas of the foot. Roark uses a combination of homeopathic tinctures and manual muscle testing to confirm the presence of the allergen. A special “point finder” utilizes the body’s natural electricity to confirm the precise point on the ear where Roark should place the hair-thin acupuncture needle.

Since April 2024, Roark has treated 75 people with about an 80 percent success rate of patients being able to consume red meat comfortably again, and 10 percent reportedly having their symptoms lessened.

“I treated a lady who was fume reactive—she couldn’t even go into a restaurant cooking mammal products, and if she consumed any she would go into anaphylactic shock,” says Roark. “I would never suggest she try to eat meat again, but after the SAAT treatment she is no longer reacting to the fumes.”

Roark’s career began when a local acupuncture treatment significantly helped a knee injury she sustained as an undergraduate at Indiana University. After obtaining her acupuncture license in Sarasota, Florida, she opened her business in September 2010 and welcomed her daughter that December. Roark’s passion and drive has paid off—Roots of Healing will celebrate 15 years in business in September.

“I love when people tell me their health issue has gone away, or they feel so much better mentally, physically, or spiritually,” says Roark. “They say when you find something you love you don’t work a day in your life, and I have always felt that way with my work.”

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Jean Sherfick: Life-long Athlete And Ultramarathon Runner



Being an athlete has always been a central part of Jean Sherfick's identity, and it continues to be at the heart of her connection to the Bloomington community.

Sherfick, 41, is a Bloomington native coming from what she calls "a long generational line of townies." Her great-grandfather, John Hetherington, was Bloomington's mayor from 1926–1930, and her mother, Claire Schaffer, played basketball for Indiana University in the early 1970s and coached at Bloomington High School South.

Sherfick has been a lifelong athlete: as a kindergartener who started in track and field to burn off energy, a state champion high jumper for Bloomington South, and a heptathlete for IU. Her work life has continued on that athletic path as a health coach, a yoga instructor, and a trainer and director of operations at Orangetheory Fitness.

The new loop trail at Griffy Lake Nature Preserve is one of Jean Sherfick's favorite places to train, she says. Sherfick is an ultramarathon runner who is competing in five 100-mile races in six months this year. *Photo by Morgan Kraemer*

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Sherfick took up distance running in her early 20s after the birth of her first child, saying, "I ultimately started running for fitness, but what I quickly learned was that it was also time to be by myself ... and to get away from the stress of life." But as her distances increased and she began running ultramarathons—races ranging from 50K (31 miles) to 100 miles—she realized even long, isolating races had community at their core, both in the camaraderie out on the trails and in everything that it takes to get to the starting line.

Her training regularly includes early morning runs with a friend for companionship and accountability. And as an athlete who is competing in five 100-mile races in six months this year, her season is sponsored by local businesses and managed by lifelong friend Nattie Meador. With a full-time job and family, she recognizes training and racing are made possible through the support of her parents and friends. "I can take on this challenge because of these people," she says.

Since ultramarathons involve trail running, she is also grateful to have training options nearby, pointing out her favorites at Paynetown State Recreation Area, Yellowwood State Forest, and the new loop at Griffy Lake Nature Preserve.

Sherfick reflects on her life in Bloomington, noting, "Once an athlete, always an athlete." But she is also quick to give credit to those who have supported her long athletic career. "The reason I do this is because of the community. The Bloomington community is the reason I started and can keep going." —*Greg Siering*



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New IU Chancellor David Reingold Back Home in Bloomington



David Reingold becomes the first Chancellor of IU Bloomington since the position was discontinued in 2006. He spent 18 years at IU in the School of Public and Environmental Health before he moved to Purdue University in 2015. Photo by Sarah Slover

by Janet Mandelstam

When he became chancellor of Indiana University's Bloomington campus in June, David Reingold said it was like coming home.

He spent 18 years at IU in the School of Public and Environmental Health before decamping to Purdue University in 2015.

Reingold, 56, returns to Bloomington as chancellor, a position that has not existed for almost two decades. It was revived now, Reingold says, because "higher education has gotten substantially more complicated over the past 20 years, and the campus has

grown substantially, too, so it makes a lot of sense to have more leadership bandwidth."

Among Reingold's responsibilities are finance and administration, physical facilities, enrollment management, and, he says, "the educational mission of the campus, as well as engagement with the community both here in Bloomington and in the surrounding counties."

Some of these responsibilities, he says, have shifted from the university president to the chancellor, others from the provost, who will continue to oversee academic affairs.

But Reingold says his first job is listening and learning. He is re-familiarizing himself with the campus and exploring the new things that were just getting started or didn't yet exist when he left 10 years ago.

"The Hamilton Lugar School was in its infancy; the Media School was in its infancy; the Eskenazi School of Art, Architecture & Design hadn't yet come into being."

Reingold returns to Bloomington at a time when, among other challenges, universities are feeling political pressure to eliminate many diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) initiatives. He acknowledges "some changes as a result of the federal environment and some policy changes at the state level, but Bloomington as a community and Indiana University Bloomington as a campus have always been open to everyone, and I'm confident that it will continue to be so.

"This campus has seen its fair share of external events that tested the leadership,"

he says. "I'm reminded of the 200-plus years of history at this campus from its early days, through the tumultuous period of the Civil War, the two world wars of the 20th century, and the civil rights era." Through all those periods, he says, "the campus emerged stronger, more vibrant, and more determined to pursue its mission of advancing educational opportunity. So count me as among those who feel optimistic about our future, whatever headwinds or turbulence might exist today."

Reingold first came to Bloomington in 1996 after earning a doctorate in sociology at the University of Chicago. He rose through the ranks to become a full professor at the School of Public and Environmental Health and then, after 18 years, "I decided to head to that other public university in the state" as dean of the College of Liberal Arts at Purdue.

One of the things he is listening for in Bloomington is a connection between the traditional fields of the social sciences, humanities, arts and the high technology world of the 21st century. That connection was the focus of his 10 years at Purdue. The university created Cornerstone, a program that recognizes the ongoing significance of the humanities and social sciences and has been replicated in 85 other colleges and universities. "And we launched new degrees in artificial intelligence that are a partnership between the philosophy department and the computer science department."

Reingold has now spent a total of 30 years in Indiana, "but Bloomington has always been home to me," he says. "I met my wife here; both of our children were born here, so it's just a terrific feeling to be back." ✨



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Autism & Disability JOURNAL

BY ADRIA NASSIM



Autism Resources Available On Indiana University Campus

It's been reported in recent months that the prevalence rate for autism spectrum disorder has once again climbed even higher. What used to affect an estimated one in 36 children five years ago now affects one in every 31.

Parents and professionals who use the phrase "autism doesn't end at 18" are right, it doesn't. Autism spectrum disorder is still more broadly recognized in children, largely because of the push for early screening and identification as well as the broader

availability of services to children as opposed to adults. However, the idea that the diagnosis grows with the child is starting to be more widely recognized and accepted, not only in the medical community but also in the field of postsecondary education.

Several universities around the country now offer programming specific to the needs of students with autism, including Marian University in Indianapolis, Rutgers University in New Jersey, and Kent State University in Ohio.

Here at Indiana University, classes are soon to be back in session and the halls of Hoosier Nation will be bustling again. While IU has yet to roll out a full-fledged autism support program, it does offer some support to students with autism. Here are a few:

Students on the Spectrum (SOS) Group and Faculty and Staff on the Spectrum (FSOS) Group:

These clubs are primarily self-directed and offer opportunities for students, faculty, and staff with autism to foster social connections on campus. Club meetings take place at the Indiana Resource Center for Autism (located at 2810 E. Discovery Parkway) and a virtual option is available for those unable to attend in person.

Neurodiversity Coalition:

The coalition is a group of students, faculty, staff, and community members who support initiatives to make the Bloomington campus more inclusive of the needs of those with neurodiverse brain function, including those with Tourette's syndrome, autism, ADD/ADHD, dyslexia, and others. For information, email neurodiv@indiana.edu.

Wellness House:

Located at 625 N. Eagleson Ave., Wellness House offers several spaces for students to relax and take a break. They have four drop-in wellness rooms, including a Quiet Room, which features beanbag chairs and a selection of fidget toys, as well as fun kinetic sand; a Fireplace Room with a private study table flanked by a large fireplace; a private meditation space; and a Collaboration Space with art supplies, games, and puzzles, as well as two reservable spaces for meetings. Please note that the drop-in wellness rooms are closed for the summer until August 17. Summer hours for the Wellness House are 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Friday.

Accessible Educational Services:

Located in Eigenmann Hall 001, this office works to help set up accommodations for IU students with qualifying disabilities or medical conditions. Office hours are 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Friday. Email iubaes@iu.edu for more information. ✦

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Eagle Manufacturing: Providing Real World Experience at Brown County H.S.

From processing orders to creating merchandise, students at Brown County High School (BCHS) in Nashville, Indiana, are responsible for every aspect of Eagle Manufacturing, a student-run business that provides products and services in four areas: computer numerical control (CNC) machining, engineering design, graphics production, and graphic design.

According to advisor Dean Keefauver, screen printing is the most popular area, and students can produce 400 T-shirts an hour. Eagle Manufacturing not only serves the local community but has customers in Arizona, Florida, Michigan, and Wisconsin.

BCHS students are required to choose from four Graduation Pathways classes—graphics, machinery, engineering, and business—and each can lead to Eagle Manufacturing. Students then submit a résumé and application for positions within Eagle Manufacturing for the next school year.

“We want to be as real world as it can get,” advisor Chris Townsend says, “with real-world consequences and real-world expectations, so they’re ready to go into the workforce or post-secondary education.”

BCHS has a student population of just under 500, and 47 students comprised the work force behind Eagle Manufacturing for the 2024–25 school year, with 70 expected for 2025–26.

“So far during the school year, students only receive course credits,” Keefauver explains, adding, however, that they are paid during summer internships. “We are hoping in the future to be able to pay students a stipend during the school year as well.”

“The beauty of this program is we have the entire spectrum of students involved,” Townsend adds. “We have kids who want to run the machines, and we have kids who want to study spreadsheets.”

A large poster in the classroom titled “Department Workflow” illustrates the different areas in which students can gain experience, from marketing and sales to graphics and manufacturing to logistics and finance. Students may have specific roles but all adhere to the “Expectations, Values, and Philosophies” that are the backbone to every role within Eagle Manufacturing.

“Even if they never touch a CNC machine again in their lives, the ‘Expectations, Values, and Philosophies’ will stay with them,” Townsend says.

Eagle Manufacturing began in 2018, and Townsend says they are just beginning to see the post-graduation impact, citing students who immediately have been able to secure employment at machine shops in Indianapolis or study engineering at the Rose-Hulman Institute of Technology in Terre Haute, Indiana, or at Purdue University.

“We’re doing what’s best for kids and anyone who shares those values,” Townsend says. “We want to build pathways for kids and build mutually beneficial partnerships.” —*Rosie Piga Pizzo*



(top) Landon Scott uses Eagle Manufacturing’s automatic screen-printing press to print designs onto tote bags; (above) Assistant Manufacturing Manager Asher Stringer operates the controls of a computer numerical control (CNC) Mini Mill, which is designed to machine small parts using computer-aided milling, turning, and cutting; (below, l-r) advisors Chris Townsend, Cheyenne Dinsmore, and Dean Keefauver. Photos by Rodney Margison





Citizen Scientist

BY SUSAN M. BRACKNEY

Global Bird Collision Mapper Report Bird-Building Collisions

Walk around the base of many buildings—especially tall ones with large windows and buildings near mature trees—and you’re bound to find some feathery corpses. Bird-window collisions are one of the leading causes of death for birds, and migratory birds are at particular risk. Indiana University’s Tulip Tree Apartments, Eigenmann Hall, and Luddy Hall are just a few of the Bloomington-area spots connected to bird-building collision deaths, according to Global Bird Collision Mapper.

This citizen science project is operated by Fatal Light Awareness Program (FLAP) Canada, a registered Canadian



A bird died outside Luddy Hall as a result of a bird-building collision, a pattern at risk particularly for migratory birds. *Courtesy photo*

charity working to protect migratory birds relative to the built environment. To date, Global Bird Collision Mapper data has been put to good use. “There are all kinds of research studies, ranging from scavenging rates to population statuses of certain species—you name it,” Michael Mesure, executive director and co-founder of FLAP Canada, says. Collected data even has been used to influence bird-friendly building design standards.

Interestingly, the Bird Collision Mapper began as a retooled version of an app that a company called Esri Canada originally developed to map the number and location of backyard hockey rinks. “Esri Canada was trying to find another home for this app that would serve a greater purpose,” Mesure explains. “So, it was modified to accommodate bird-building collisions.”

Getting Started

To contribute your own bird-building collision reports, download the “ArcGIS Survey123” to your mobile device. The app is available for both Android and iPhone. Next, visit birdmapper.org and scan the QR code provided there in order to add the “Report a Collision” survey to your app. (You’ll only need to do this once.)

After that’s done, you’ll be able to enter bird-building collision reports as a guest user. Want to be able to edit, delete, or track all of your collision reports? In that case, you’ll want to create a free user account and log in before entering collision data. When reporting a bird-building collision, you can submit (optional) photos as well as notes about the bird’s condition and location. (And, if you prefer not to enter the exact address of the collision site, you can simply mark the nearest street intersection on the map instead.)

Global Bird Rescue Week

Although you can report bird-building collisions year-round, you might also want to participate in the annual Global Bird Rescue event set for September 22–28. “We ask members of the public or a team of individuals to go out into their community and actively look for birds colliding with buildings,” Mesure says. During that week, participants enter their reports into the Global Bird Collision Mapper. “Our goal is to have these different individuals and groups document and rescue as many birds as they can over that seven-day period,” he adds. ✖

11th Annual Rotary Honoring Pat Wilson Bloomington Rotary Toast

Pat Wilson, founder of the most active high school student Habitat for Humanity chapter in the world, will be honored Friday, November 7th at the 11th Annual Bloomington Rotary Toast at Ivy Tech’s Shreve Hall.



During her 18 years as the Bloomington High School North faculty sponsor of the group, Pat’s students built 15 homes. Pat, who retired after 43 years as a Bloomington teacher in 2016, has received many awards and honors. Through her commitment to education, young people and volunteerism, she exemplifies Rotary’s motto of service above self. Event proceeds benefit the Bloomington High School North Chapter of Habitat for Humanity and other charities supported by Bloomington’s Rotary Clubs.



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Davis Academy of Music

Music Lessons and More



(l-r) Emily and Craig Davis, owners of The Davis Academy of Music, sell and rent musical instruments and provide music lessons for all ages. “We’ve coached over 350 students in the time we’ve been open, and that number keeps growing,” Emily says. *Photo by Rodney Margison*

by Susan M. Brackney

If learning to play the banjo is still on your bucket list, it’s not too late. That goes for voice lessons, piano, guitar, drums, and more. “For almost any instrument you could think of, we’ve got a coach who is specialized and able to instruct in that,” says Emily Davis.

In 2019, she and her husband, Craig, opened The Davis Academy of Music in downtown Bloomington. Doubling as a music shop, the academy—at 336 S. Walnut—sells and rents musical instruments, too. “We’ve coached over 350 students in the time we’ve been open, and that number keeps growing,” she notes.

The musical pair originally met while attending New York University. “My degree from NYU is in voice performance,” Davis says. She also holds a Master of Fine Arts in acting from Indiana University. Craig Davis earned a Doctorate in music from IU’s Jacobs School of Music.

Aside from music lessons for all ages and experience levels, the academy offers musical summer camps for kids ages 8 to 14. Most recently, they’ve held a Disney Descendants-themed musical theater camp and a Taylor Swift camp. There, Swifties learn drums, keyboarding basics, and pop vocal tips. “Then, we have a songwriting workshop carved out for the students, and they get to sing whatever Taylor Swift song they love in our final showcase,” Davis explains.

The school hosts four student concerts annually and boasts an event space which seats 50. “Folks can rent that out for their own events if they’d like to,” she says. “We especially love when kids rent it out for karaoke birthdays, because they just get to sing all day, eat cake, and have fun.”

For older students looking for their own group experience, the academy also launched the “Join a Band” initiative. “That’s been a great way for adult students who are enrolled in lessons to learn to play an instrument in a group setting,” Davis says. After months of practice, the first “Join a Band” group performed a Beatles tune at their recital.

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Local Autism and Neurodevelopmental Evaluations Available at IU School of Education

At the Indiana University School of Education's Learning and Developmental Evaluation Clinic (LDEC), clients of all ages receive high-quality neurodevelopmental evaluations that can lead to life-changing diagnoses for autism, ADHD, mental health, learning differences, and more.

Founded in 2023, LDEC has helped clients from Bloomington and surrounding communities receive diagnoses that pave the way for everything from behavioral support for toddlers to academic accommodations for students and a greater sense of understanding and self-compassion for adults. LDEC Director Maryellen Brunson McClain, a licensed psychologist and associate professor at IU, says the reasons for being evaluated are as varied as the diagnoses themselves, but the goal is always the same: for clients to walk away with peace of mind and a plan for the future.

Although neurodevelopmental evaluations are already available in larger cities like Indianapolis, Louisville, and Cincinnati, McClain says having a clinic in Bloomington allows clients to bypass long waitlists and minimize the time spent on lengthy commutes. "We wanted to provide a service for those families that might not be able to drive to the more urban areas," she says.

To conduct these evaluations, McClain and Clinical Training Director Anna Merrill work alongside graduate students earning their doctorates in school psychology, counseling psychology, or clinical science at IU. For a flat, private-pay fee of \$1,500, these clinicians tailor the assessment process to each individual client. No referral from a primary care provider is needed. "Knowledge is power," says Merrill. "You can go to Google or you can go on social media, but nothing can replace the relationship and the process of actually working with someone who's an expert in the field to help you get your questions answered."

Merrill, also a licensed psychologist and visiting clinical assistant professor, says this supportive environment is part of LDEC's "neuroaffirming" approach, which sets clients up for success in all areas of their lives by viewing them as holistic human beings. "If we're doing a good job, clients should walk away feeling that this process was therapeutic," she explains. "We can now say there's a name for what's going on here. Your brain works differently. That process can be incredibly empowering for a family, for a child, for a teenager, for a young adult."

In addition to children and families, many LDEC clients are IU students seeking academic accommodations through



(l-r) Clinical Director Anna Merrill and Director Maryellen Brunson McClain with the IU School of Education's Learning and Developmental Evaluation Clinic. Photo by Martin Boling

the Accessible Education Services (AES) office. These accommodations might include additional time on tests, recorded lectures, or written rather than verbal instructions for assignments. "The university will work with you to get you those accommodations, but you have to have formal documentation of a diagnosis," says Merrill, who adds that scholarships available through AES have provided funding for evaluations to 10 low-income IU students. "That's what a lot of students are missing."

For select LDEC clients, the clinic's licensed psychologists also offer therapy geared toward neurodiverse individuals. "Our clinicians are trained in that whole neurodevelopmental piece, so we have some students that are coming to our clinic for therapy because it's a better fit than what they might be able to find out in the community," says Merrill.

In the future, Merrill and McClain hope to see LDEC increase access to gender-affirming and LGBTQ+ care, provide more bilingual evaluations and resources, and invest in partnerships with allied professions like speech pathology and social work when providing services. "I want to get to a place where we can reach all the pockets of this community and make them feel like this is a safe place where they can feel heard," says Merrill. "We're in a time right now where mental health awareness and neurodiversity awareness are up, and people want this information."

Visit education.indiana.edu/ldec. —Sophie Bird Murphy

community

Headstone Unveiled A Freed Slave Who Found Liberty & Dignity Here

Robert Allen Anderson was born into slavery in 1847. Following the Civil War, he found liberty, life, and, ultimately, dignity in Bloomington, where on Sunday, June 29, Anderson's new headstone was unveiled at the Covenanter Cemetery.

Dozens of attendees representing Anderson's descendants, the African American community, the Bloomington Reformed Presbyterian Church, and others came to hear Anderson's story and participate in the unveiling and libation ceremony.

In African and African American culture, pouring libation shows respect to ancestors and elders, explains Oyibo H. Afoaku, who conducted the ceremony to honor Anderson—who died June 4, 1928—and all those who endured slavery.

Bloomington historian and documentarian Elizabeth Mitchell was the force behind identifying Anderson's unmarked grave and transforming it into an homage to the man she described as: "An individual whose life was forged in bondage, yet whose spirit endured beyond the chains. Once a slave, he is now remembered as an ancestor, a community member, and a symbol of resilience.

"This headstone will stand as a quiet sentinel, a monument, not just to one individual, but to countless others whose memory has yet to be reclaimed," Mitchell continued. "This headstone of a former slave will restore a measure of dignity long denied and remind all of us that history, though at times is buried, will always find its voice."

Anderson's first master was his biological father, who traded his 3-month-old son for a \$50 wagon. As a teenager, Anderson was sold again for \$500. Once free, he arrived in Monroe County as one of its first Black settlers and bought the land just north of the



(above) Elizabeth Mitchell, Bloomington historian and documentarian, led identifying and honoring Anderson's unmarked grave; (below) Anderson's family gathered at the Covenanter Cemetery where his new headstone was unveiled on June 29. Photos by James Kellar



(top) In 1922, Anderson described his ordeals in a letter, "Tales of Slave Days," published in the *Bloomington World Record* newspaper, saying, "I had enough of slavery and the scenes of those days. So I left." (above) Part of Anderson's letter, "Tales of Slave Days," is inscribed on the back of his headstone.



cemetery at the intersection of East Hillside Drive and South High Street. His descendants still live there today.

In 1922, Anderson described his ordeals in a letter, "Tales of Slave Days", published in the *Bloomington World Record* newspaper, saying, "I had had enough of slavery and the scenes of those days."

"This is very relevant to what's going on [today]," says Erin Carter, an Anderson descendent who worked with Mitchell on the project. "My hope is that this work creates a ripple effect in this community to recognize and honor unheard stories of other Black people and people of color who have contributed to Bloomington history."—Aaron Cohen

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Big-Time Pigeon Racing in Bloomington! Who Knew?

by Aaron Cohen

When you imagine something worth \$3 million, a 1-pound pigeon probably isn't your first thought. Yet a champion bird can command that lofty sum, says Richard Mellinger of Bloomington. Prize money for races can range from thousands to \$2.5 million.

Mellinger knows about pigeons. Now retired, while working as a stockbroker and estate planner, he not only helped people feather their own nests but also learned to breed and train race-winning birds.

"I love these pigeons," says Mellinger, who usually keeps some 40 birds under his wing. "And I love competition."

As do the birds.

"The bird has the will to win, like a racehorse. I don't know why, I don't know how," he says.

The birds' homing instinct, which drives a pigeon to return to its loft, is the prime factor. The ability to find home over great distances mystifies researchers (Indiana University's Midwest Center for Biodiversity is a center for studying migratory birds).

The relationship with the trainer also is key. "The bird has to trust you. It's like training a puppy; pretty soon it bonds," he says.

Breeding a racing pigeon begins with two nesting adults. The female usually lays two eggs, which incubate for 17 to 19 days. After the tail and feathers are fully formed by day 28, the adult male drives the baby from the nest and teaches it to survive.

Mellinger begins training by taking the baby pigeon 3 to 4 miles from home and releasing it. Eventually the bird will find its way back to its loft, with food as the reward.

"They learn the first 20 square miles by themselves. I increase the distance as training progresses; eventually the bird is ready to race," he says.

The first race might be 150 miles, with the distance increasing as the bird

matures. Mellinger won't strain his birds with overly long races (some are up to 500 miles), as a racing pigeon can fly 60 mph and will attempt to cover the distance in one day.

Reflecting on racing culture and his own achievement in the sport, Mellinger recites a simple adage: "Everybody wants to succeed. Not everybody wants to prepare to succeed. I prepare." ✨

Richard Mellinger taught others and himself how to breed and train race-winning pigeons. Photo by James Kellar



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Police Chief and Fire Chief Friends Since High School



(l-r) Roger Kerr and Michael Diekhoff have known each other since high school, and now they serve as fire chief and police chief, respectively. Photo by Rodney Margison

When Bloomington Mayor Kerry Thomson appointed a police chief and fire chief in January 2024, she was adding the latest chapter in the surprisingly parallel lives of Michael Diekhoff and Roger Kerr.

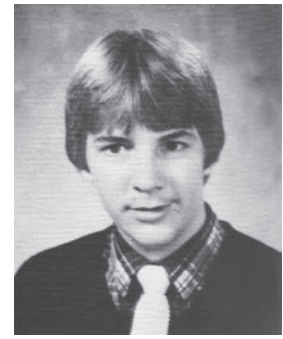
Ask Diekhoff, 59, whom the mayor reappointed, how long he's been on the police force and he says, "37 years." Ask Kerr, 60, a career firefighter, about his service in the department and he says, "37 years."

The chiefs have known each other since they became friends at Bloomington High School North, graduating in the class of 1983. Then it was off to Indiana University. "It turns out that our parents had rented parking spaces at IU," Kerr says, "and we parked next to each other as freshmen."

Diekhoff always planned to be a policeman. "I had a cousin who was a policeman, and I thought it would be a way to help people in a crisis." He earned a degree in criminal justice at IU while also attending the Indiana Police Academy.



Roger Kerr, BHSN '83.
Courtesy photo



Michael Diekhoff, BHSN '83.
Courtesy photo

Kerr says he didn't grow up thinking of being a firefighter. "I wanted to be a cattle rancher." But a family friend was a fireman, "and that set me to thinking about it."

And then, says Diekhoff, "we progressed through the ranks." Each has seen changes in his department over the years. "While Bloomington has its share of violent crime," Diekhoff says, "the biggest change is in homelessness and people with mental health issues. And there's a lot more technology."

At the fire department, Kerr says staffing "has increased significantly, and the quality of equipment the city now has is second to none." The department also has increased the number of safety inspections it conducts.

Today, the chiefs "talk on a professional level two or three times a week," says Kerr. "And we are at a lot of events together," adds Diekhoff. But away from their offices, Kerr says, "Mike is flying balloons, and I'm raising cows."

Diekhoff is a certified hot air balloon pilot whose companies offer balloon rides for the public and also manufacture balloons.

As for Kerr, he's still pursuing that childhood ambition. "After work," he says, "I go home and raise a small herd of cattle in southwest Monroe County." —Janet Mandelstam

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Local Hockey Star Dassel Oliver Heading for Notre Dame to Play

Dassel Oliver, 20, left for Nebraska to play for the Lincoln Stars in 2021. He will return to Indiana to play for the University of Notre Dame.
Courtesy photo



by Greg Siering

Bloomington native and hockey phenom Dassel Oliver, 20, has been skating and playing hockey for as long as he can remember. When he left Bloomington in 2018 to play hockey in Chicago as an elite 13-year-old, he knew he was chasing a dream, but he didn't think that path would bring him back to Indiana to play for the University of Notre Dame.

During his time playing in Chicago as a young teen, Oliver was accompanied by his mother, Kathleen, but when he moved to Nebraska in 2021 to play for the Lincoln Stars of the U.S. Hockey League (USHL), he had to quickly learn to be independent. He says, "It was a lot different than normal high school life. I did online school for my junior and senior years. It was definitely quite the change of pace—not being with my parents, not seeing my brothers at all. Living out there was really fun, but it was a really different life."

A 5-foot-9-inch, 188-pound forward, Oliver's hockey skills blossomed in Lincoln. After a few slower years that included some injuries, he shined in his 2024–25 season, notching 26 goals, second on the team, and playing a leadership role as the Stars set several new franchise records.

USHL is the top junior league where hundreds of National Hockey League professionals played as amateurs. This past year alone, 195 graduates of the USHL were on NHL opening day rosters.

Oliver is now heading to Notre Dame. During his recruitment, he quickly saw the school as his new home, saying, "The campus was amazing, and the whole package the school offered—the sports, the student body, and the academics—I couldn't really ask for more. And three hours away from home. I was really excited and took it in a heartbeat."

He looks forward to studying business analytics, with plans for a post-hockey career in business, where he can follow in the entrepreneurial footsteps of his parents, Bill and Kathleen, founders of Oliver Winery.

Both on the ice and off, Oliver says he is excited to be returning to Indiana—which he describes as "a cool full circle." ✨



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Progress Report on New Beacon Center

by Craig Coley

Beacon is in the final stretch of fundraising for a new facility that will bring together and expand the services it provides to people experiencing homelessness. Called Beacon Center, it will be built on West 3rd Street, just south of Rose Hill Cemetery. Executive Director Forrest Gilmore says the nonprofit is waiting for one final funding source to be approved, and that construction may begin as early as this fall.

Founded in 2000, Beacon operates several programs and facilities in Bloomington. These include a 40-bed overnight shelter on South Rogers Street and Shalom, a day shelter on South Walnut where guests receive services ranging from meals to showers to rehousing assistance.

On any given day, roughly 350 people experience homelessness in Bloomington, about 60% of them women and children. This number has remained fairly constant—in 2016, for example, it was 340. Traci



The new Beacon Center when built will provide services to people experiencing homelessness. On average, about 350 people experience homelessness in Bloomington on any given day. *Courtesy rendering*

Jovanovich, who co-chairs Light the Way, the fundraising campaign for Beacon Center, explains, “The reason people feel like the population of the homeless has grown is

because the mental issues have gotten worse, especially with the opioid crisis and fentanyl,” making them more visible.

About 75% of the \$21 million project cost has been raised, and \$4.2 million of this came from more than 300 community members. Von Welch, who co-chairs Light the Way, says the widespread support demonstrates the community’s commitment to confront homelessness.

At 45,000 square feet, Beacon Center will include space for expanded services, including a health clinic. Centerstone, the nonprofit mental health provider, will offer therapy and case management. The Bloomington Police Department’s resource officers and social workers will have offices on site. The kitchen where breakfast and lunch are prepared will serve as a job training kitchen, where people can become certified in food safety protocols and then be connected with local employers.

The overnight shelter will have 50 beds in semi-private rooms. The second floor will have 20 apartments for long-term housing of people with disabilities and five apartments for people who work at the center in lieu of rent. “Between the employment center, the work exchange apartments, the training kitchen, and also a classroom, we’ll have a lot of really nice resources for people to improve the quality of their lives,” Gilmore says.

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Change of Leadership At Boys & Girls Clubs



Leslie Abshier (left) is the new CEO of The Boys & Girls Clubs of Bloomington, taking over for Jeff Baldwin (right), who is leaving after 18 years. Photo by Sarah Slover

After 18 years as CEO for the Boys & Girls Clubs of Bloomington, Jeff Baldwin is passing the baton to Leslie Abshier, the clubs' former vice president of resource development and an experienced leader in the nonprofit realm. "Let there not be

a doubt that Leslie is the right person for the job," says Baldwin, who is currently contracted for 10 hours a week to help with the shift in leadership.

"Jeff's staying active and engaged to make the transition smooth and successful," says Abshier. "The biggest thing is building trust with the relationships he built. For years, people thought of Jeff when they thought of the Boys & Girls Clubs, but I think now they're going to think of the high-quality programs we run."

Baldwin is celebrated for raising \$11 million to renovate the original 1956 Lincoln Street Club and building the Ferguson Crestmont Club and the Kenworthy Administration Center. During his time, the organization went from serving around 180 kids a day to accommodating more than 700 kids daily at three locations, plus Camp Rock at Lake Lemon. The annual fee of \$20 per child includes transportation to after-school

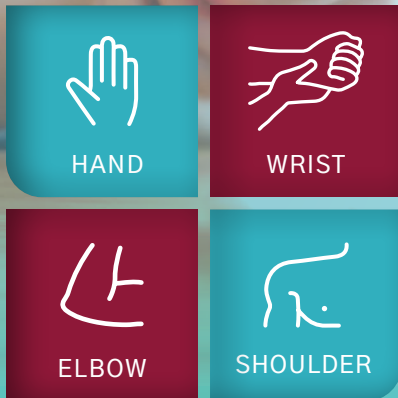
programs, healthy snacks, and access to nearly 70 specialty programs, like cooking and music.

According to Baldwin, that's not even his No. 1 accomplishment. "How we responded to COVID was incredible," he says. His team met daily to establish safety protocols and within one month's time, they were back to serving children, including families of first responders and health care workers. He also launched a supply drive, working with the Bloomington Housing Authority and volunteers to get groceries to families in need.

Abshier shares that same commitment to the community. She's already looking for partners to support mental health for kids, workforce development for teens, and family support groups.

"The story of Jeff is that he changed the reputation of the club," says Abshier. "He came in with a bigger vision for families in the community." —Heather Ray

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El Centro Communal Latino Turns 25

El Centro Comunal Latino is celebrating its 25th anniversary this August. Since its founding, the nonprofit organization has been a resource for Latinos in Bloomington to access information, find help, and be part of the community.

El Centro—located in room 206 of the Monroe County Public Library—was started by a group of women in the late 1990s who realized over lunch one day that they were already helping Latinos in the Bloomington community, explains Lillian Casillas, El Centro founder and board member. “All of us had been asked at one point or another to act as an interpreter or to help someone who was new to the community,” she says, explaining that they all had information from their own experiences that could help people find comfort here.

Under its original name, La Central Latina, Casillas and the other founding members began to formally share their knowledge with those who needed their help. They quickly realized that keeping everything on a volunteer basis was not sustainable, so in 1999 they began the process of becoming a registered nonprofit. In 2003, the

organization was renamed El Centro Comunal Latino—symbolizing their goal of being the resource center for the Latino community.

Throughout its 25 years, El Centro has helped people navigate situations such as unemployment, finding childcare, doctors and health insurance, enrolling their children in school, or finding an English tutor. They host occasional group learning sessions, but their work is largely done by individually helping each person.

El Centro also works with other local organizations, including La Escuelita Para Todos—a program that provides reading and writing instruction in Spanish for children in kindergarten through sixth grade—and has an affiliation with the Indiana Minority Health Coalition.

“El Centro can act as a conduit, not only in moments of crisis, but also moments when you just want to find out what’s happening in the community,” Casillas says, explaining that El Centro also helps people find things to get involved in, such as soccer teams, volunteer opportunities, and theater groups.

Visit El Centro on Facebook. —Lily Marks





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Dave Askins at City Hall

of B Square Bulletin



Out with Lawyers, In with Librarians For Public Record Requests—Please!

The *B Square Bulletin's* relaunch is intended to put it on a path to becoming Bloomington's "local paper."

Since *The B Square's* return in early March, I have sometimes been reminded of the reason why I shut down late last year: I was tired of covering the dysfunctional government of this place. I'm glad that besides governmental dysfunction, there are plenty of great things that happen here, which is the job of the "local paper" to report.

One of those things is *Bloom* beginning its 20th year of publishing this magazine. If you say "two decades" it sounds even longer!

But the name of this column includes "City Hall." So here it goes.

Two recent Thomson administration actions seem to have taken the administration itself off guard.

One was a decision to reject two proposals for development of Hopewell South, and instead to follow a path involving pre-approved construction plans for smaller, local developers. The administration effectively broke the news on a Friday with the release of a redevelopment commission meeting agenda for the following Monday. But late in the day Monday, Bloomington Mayor Kerry Thomson herself was still not certain: Could she legally tell the press the names of the developers, let alone provide copies of the proposals?

Even as a non-lawyer, I know the answer to the question: Yes. But I didn't receive copies until mid-morning on Tuesday.

But the proposals had been received at least six months earlier. Why didn't

the Thomson administration release the proposals in February, instead of June?

Another Thomson administration action involved a decision to file a lawsuit against the owners of Crawford Apartments over conditions of the permanent supportive housing property. The City announced its decision in a late Tuesday news release, glossing over some details. On Thursday, I made a records request of the City for copies of the lawsuits.

The same lawyer who filed the Crawford lawsuits is also in charge of responses to records requests. But instead of just sending me copies on Thursday, he sent me a message suggesting that I could get copies of the lawsuits faster either by creating an account on the state's court system, or by asking the county clerk for them, given that the clerk is the "official keeper" of the records.

While it's true that anyone can create an account for the state's online court records system, it is only licensed attorneys who have access to filings in cases that are not their own.

While it's true that the county clerk can also respond to records requests, the county clerk charges \$1 a page. I asked Thomson herself to intervene, which she did, and by Friday I had the records.

To save herself future interventions, I think Thomson should move the job of responding to records requests out of the legal department and assign it to someone who is trained in library science. Librarians have the right reflexes—their job is to get the people's information to the people as fast as possible. ✧



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Bloomington Community Band

Making Music Since 1978



The Bloomington Community Band, founded in 1978, has 55 to 60 members and performs about eight free concerts from May to December; (right) the band performs at public events and venues, including the upcoming Fourth Street Festival of the Arts & Crafts on August 30. Photos by James Kellar

Phyllis Solnzeff started playing saxophone in fourth grade. She didn't stop until graduating from high school in Bloomington.

"I took to the saxophone quickly," she says. "I was the only kid in the class who was big enough to carry it," Solnzeff recalls about elementary school.

But when she was 28, she saw a newspaper article about the Bloomington Community Band and called founder and former leader Gary Wiggins about rehearsals. "I went that first night, and I've been going ever since,"

Church and annually perform about eight free concerts from May to December. No auditions are required. Members pay \$35 dues annually for expenses.

"Most have played in high school bands, and our band provides an opportunity for adults to make music," says Doug Davis, publicity manager and tuba player. "We play basically what a high school band would play, but we don't march," he adds, chuckling.

The band performs show tunes, Broadway melodies, marches, and pieces written for bands—songs like "Amazing Grace," "Stars and Stripes Forever," "Music Man," and more. "It's community-friendly music people like to hear," adds Davis, who didn't play for 30 years after college before joining.

Directed by Dominic Thompson, the band performs at public events and venues. Upcoming performances are at the Fourth Street Festival of the Arts & Crafts on August 30, Switchyard Park on September 21, the Buskirk-Chumley Theater for an October 31 Halloween concert, and College Mall for a Christmas concert on December 7.

People join for many reasons, but mostly because they love playing and providing music for the community, says Davis.

"I like playing in a group. It's more like a family," explains Solnzeff. "I like to see how the audience reacts. When they clap a lot at the end, that lets us know they are really enjoying it. It's a public service, but it's a lot of fun."

For more information, visit bloomingtoncommunityband.org.

—Barb Berggoetz



she says. "I wanted to give it a try because I really enjoy playing."

Solnzeff, now 74, is typical of many community band members who eagerly returned to performing after a long hiatus. The volunteer concert band, founded in 1978, has 55 to 60 members ranging from late teens to 86 years. They rehearse 7 to 9 p.m. on Mondays at Bloomington Free Methodist

People join for many reasons, but mostly because they love playing and providing music for the community, says Doug Davis, publicity manager and tuba player. Photos by James Kellar



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My Sister's Closet Reaching Out To the Community for Support

"Compassion through fashion" is a phrase Sandy Keller, executive director and founder of My Sister's Closet, uses to describe the nonprofit organization that has been empowering women in need since 1998.

While the My Sister's Closet boutique attracts customers with its high-quality, gently used clothing and accessories for all occasions, the nonprofit is a crucial component of funding client services that help women out of situations related to poverty, homelessness, and domestic violence.

"Lives change quickly," Keller says. "This is about getting women back on their feet, helping them become stable again, and getting back on the road to self-sufficiency."

Next year, the boutique and all its client-centered services will have a new

location. Because its current lease ends in June 2026 due to the expansion of the Monroe Convention Center, My Sister's Closet found a new space and purchased the building at 1204 W. 2nd St. The building will be renovated and expanded, and to cover those costs and the cost of moving, My Sister's Closet has a fundraising goal of \$2.1 million.

"For 27 years, we've been self-sufficient, but now we're reaching out to the community, sharing the work we're doing, and asking for help so we can continue," Keller says.

After renovation and expansion, the building will have a child-care center, a climate-controlled area to store off-season clothing, and client training areas away from shoppers for privacy. Along with clothing, undergarments, and hygiene



Sandy Keller, executive director and founder of My Sister's Closet, says the organization helps 200 women a year, especially those who are facing situations relating to poverty, homelessness, and domestic violence. Photo by Morgan Kraemer

products, My Sister's Closet will continue to provide women with counseling, mentoring, and training, so "clients are seen as credible, reliable, and respectable," Keller says. "We help women take their story and tell it to employers so it makes sense, and they see you as the best candidate and someone they're going to hire."

Keller says My Sister's Closet helps 200 women a year, and most of them have two or three children, so its impact goes far beyond the woman in front of them. "Research shows that the mother is the one parent kids look to for guidance," Keller says. "Breaking the cycle of poverty means stabilizing the mother, and then the future success of their children will be greater."

To learn more about My Sister's Closet and how to contribute to the Relocation Fund Campaign, go to sisterscloset.org.

—Rosie Pigo Pizzo

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Curry Auto Center Turns 110 Family Owned Since Day One!



Cary Curry is the current owner of the country's oldest family-owned Buick dealership at 110 years old. Curry's son, Joseph, will soon assume the business, marking the fifth generation of ownership. *Photos by James Kellar*

For local car dealership owner Cary Curry, the key to business success, he says, boils down to quality attention to three major groups: employees, customers, and the local community.

Curry Auto Center turns 110 this summer, making it the oldest family-owned Buick dealership in the country. Curry's son and current co-owner, Joseph, will soon be taking the reins, marking the fifth-generation of ownership since 1914 when Curry's great-grandfather, W.S., sold the first Buick in Indiana. A farmer by trade, W.S. was fascinated by the invention of the automobile, and in 1915 he opened the dealership. The "Curry Buick Company" sign can be seen on the original building on West 7th Street, now recognized as a historical monument. In 1970, Curry's father, Richard, helped transition the growing business to 2906 E. Buick Cadillac Blvd., where it has remained.

In April 2008, GM tapped Curry to add Chevrolet models to the lineup—right before the U.S. economy crashed that August, and with GM filing for bankruptcy shortly thereafter. With his workforce pulling together and collectively making sacrifices, Curry was able to retain his entire staff.

Then COVID-19 landed on March 20, 2020. Listening to state leadership advising only essential businesses to



In 1915, the Curry Buick Company opened. The original sign from the building on West 7th Street is now recognized as a historical monument. The business moved to East Buick Cadillac Boulevard in 1970.





(above) A frame documenting the family's ownership is displayed on the wall inside Curry Auto Center; (left, l-r) Cary Curry and his son, Joseph, are the fourth and soon-to-be fifth generation owners of Curry Auto Center.

be open and balancing the needs of his 100 employees, Curry made the difficult decision to close for two weeks—which extended to eight weeks total before business resumed. During that time, everyone continued to receive a paycheck.

“I made a personal sacrifice to care for the people who have cared for me and who have made our company,” says Curry. “I’m in my 50th year here at the dealership and I have never asked anyone to give up what I didn’t give up, and that’s kept us strong.”

Curry credits his team of technicians and apprentices for keeping the collision and repair center humming to sustain the dealership through its ups and downs.

Current challenges include anticipating the future of electric vehicles and navigating federal government tariff mandates, but Curry says it is nothing compared to what has come before.

“What I am most proud of is that I have wonderful employees that care about our customers, and we care about the community in its ever-changing landscape.”

—Elizabeth Ellis

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Deep Blue: Purveyor of Snorkel & Scuba Gear In Landlocked B-town



David Morgan owns one of the world's top snorkel and scuba gear wholesale and retail businesses. Photo by Morgan Kraemer

When it comes to business, David Morgan dives right in. Morgan, 78, is marking 25 years since founding what today is one of the world's top snorkel and scuba gear wholesale and retail businesses.

"It's all about relationships. That's what's made my business and my life successful," Morgan muses. "Living in the Caribbean for 20 years, I learned the business inside out, made the right connections, and saw opportunities that others didn't."

His break came when he recognized the need for innovation in the rental market, where substandard equipment predominated.

"We urged resorts and other rental shops to invest in products that would stand up to re-use, reimagined and improved each component, and created a whole new product line: masks, fins, vests, etc. It was a no-brainer," Morgan says. Innovations included metal buckle components instead of plastic; less brittle snorkel tubes; replaceable mouthpieces; bright colors and 'rental' printed on everything to reduce theft; rubber floating fins to prevent loss; and different color blades for each size to make fitting faster.

The strategy worked. Eventually Deep Blue Gear became the exclusive provider of rental and retail snorkeling equipment to Sandals Resorts, Princess Cruise Lines, Disney Cruise Lines, and others.

"We have the benchmark product in an industry that's based on tourism," Morgan says. So, it was fitting that in 2024, Tourism Corporation Bonaire recognized Morgan's contribution to the island's underwater world with its Platinum Ambassador Award.

While conjuring images of bright blue skies, azure waters, endless beaches, and gleaming cruise ships, Morgan's heart remains planted in landlocked Bloomington, he says. An avid gardener, walker, and hiker, Morgan says he loves living and doing business here. "A third of the U.S. population is within a 500-mile radius, which is great for our retail business [which operates out of a 10,000-square-foot warehouse in town]," he says.

"In today's world it's not where you live that counts, it's where you lived," he says. "My industry knowledge is based on decades of experience that's still valid today."

—Aaron B. Cohen



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Tom Winger, president and director of operations at Winger Construction. *Courtesy photos*



Travis Vencel, development director at Sullivan Development.



Chris Smith, RE/MAX broker/owner and City of Bloomington plan commissioner.

The 2024 Regional Opportunity Initiatives housing study suggests that Monroe County has a significant shortage of affordable housing for non-student residents, with the cost of a single-family home being prohibitive to ownership in relation to income. Aware of the challenges, local developers are attempting to offer creative solutions to the problem in a variety of ways.

Tom Winger

When owning a home is out of the question, young families want something as much like a home of their own as possible, away from student housing. To that end, Tom Winger, a third-generation developer, tackled the Wick Lifestyle Apartment Homes project off South Rockport Road. Wick offers ranches and townhomes as large as 2,550 square feet with four bedrooms and three and a half baths, emphasizing, “Your own front door. No neighbors above or below you.”

However, Winger’s real passion is providing a door to home ownership. Working alongside his father on Winslow Farms in the 1980s, he was inspired by the enthusiasm of first-time home buyers. “Home ownership is the No. 1 way that generational wealth happens,” Winger explains. He was also on-site during development of the Sweetbriar neighborhood in the ‘90s, with homes selling for \$96,000 to \$136,000, and now running between

\$275,000 and \$350,000. “That’s what gives you a leg up in life; you buy something and it becomes more valuable.”

However, today, a number of factors make it difficult for developers to build affordable housing in Monroe County. Winger’s own Southern Meadows at Clear Creek (SOMO) originally had a higher-density plan that would have resulted in entry-level pricing, but the plan was denied in favor of traditional single-family houses at around \$442,000. So Winger looked for other options to make his passion a reality, and Greene County welcomed him. Homes in one of his new projects, WestCott near WestGate@Crane Technology Park, start at \$243,500, and the location is forecast to provide the kind of “leg up” Winger was hoping for.

Travis Vencel

Even so, with the right support from Bloomington officials, high-density development still offers a means of getting to lower prices within Monroe County. Sullivan Development collaborated with Ridge Group contractors last year to purchase the Sudbury Farm, an undeveloped 140-acre land parcel off South Weimer Road, which has a planned unit development (PUD) in place for mixed-residential development opportunities.

“There hasn’t been anything in Bloomington close to this size in 20 years—creating a district supporting 4,300 units

well served by Bloomington transit,” says Travis Vencel, development director at Sullivan Development. Such high density doesn’t come without complications and detractors, but Vencel asserts that, “nationally, the trend is moving away from big estate lots and houses to much more compact urban form.” Given the lack of large land tracts in Bloomington, this kind of density is seen as a promising answer to the housing shortage for all price ranges.

Vencel explains, “It’s a difficult and delicate balancing act between the need for housing, cost of housing and infrastructure, protection of the environment, and community interest. All these things must have some flexibility because the days of Bloomington developing a flat piece of property that has no environmental features and easy access to infrastructure are gone.”

However, this parcel currently sits undeveloped due to significant infrastructure updates that need to be completed—water, sewer, and roads that go through the site.

“It’s very costly and the city is requiring it all be done up front.”

Still, Sullivan Development is preparing to break ground in 2026. “Lifting a community with housing stock means providing modern, quality housing across the entire market range,” which is something this PUD could accomplish. ▶

Chris Smith

When options are slim in Bloomington, many would-be homeowners look to Ellettsville, Indiana, with its close proximity and local government proactively pursuing growth opportunities. One such opportunity has been seized by Chris Smith. A RE/MAX broker/owner, and City of Bloomington plan commissioner, Smith is a civil engineer by trade with a background in historic conservation projects, home restoration, and commercial and housing development. Versed in the green building movement and new urbanism, Smith has worked in and alongside City of Bloomington Planning and Transportation for 25 years.

“Zoning ordinances have gotten heavy duty—full of causes and good intentions but layered with multiple people writing code for best practice, incorporating what they think is fulfilling a need but adding significant limitations and cost,” said Smith.

In 2023, Smith was inspired to create a municipal build project in Ellettsville on a 118-acre Harman Farm land parcel, developing 135 lots of affordable housing units and shared spaces to help expand the ever-growing community.

“Ellettsville is young from a planning and zoning standpoint, and their master plan zoning ordinance was rewritten to support their vision to grow the town. The utilities, fire, street, and planning departments and the town manager have been eager to work together,” said Smith.

The municipal construction, expected to begin this year, will accommodate single-family townhomes in the mid-\$200,000 to mid-\$300,000 range, and a village center with a structured commercial downtown for desired live-work environment. The Harman Farm development is walking distance to Edgewood Public Schools and will be close by to a future Boys and Girls Club.

As Monroe County residents face obstacles to housing, so do the local developers who, with a desire for collaborative solutions, are attempting to engage with government officials to provide choice in home availability. Whether that means offering stepping-stone rentals and exploring alternative locations or increasing density with mixed-use communities, developers like Winger, Vencel, and Smith are focused on the goal of building communities that feel like home.

—Brittany Marshall

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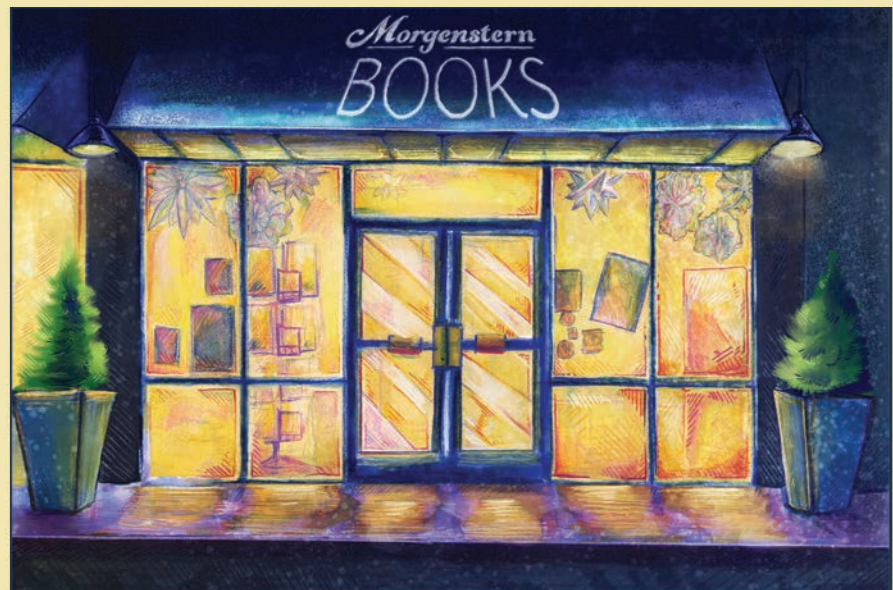
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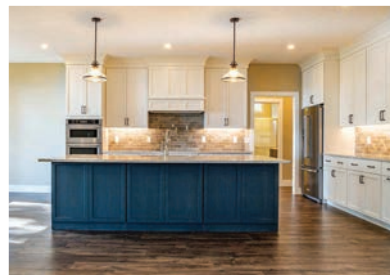
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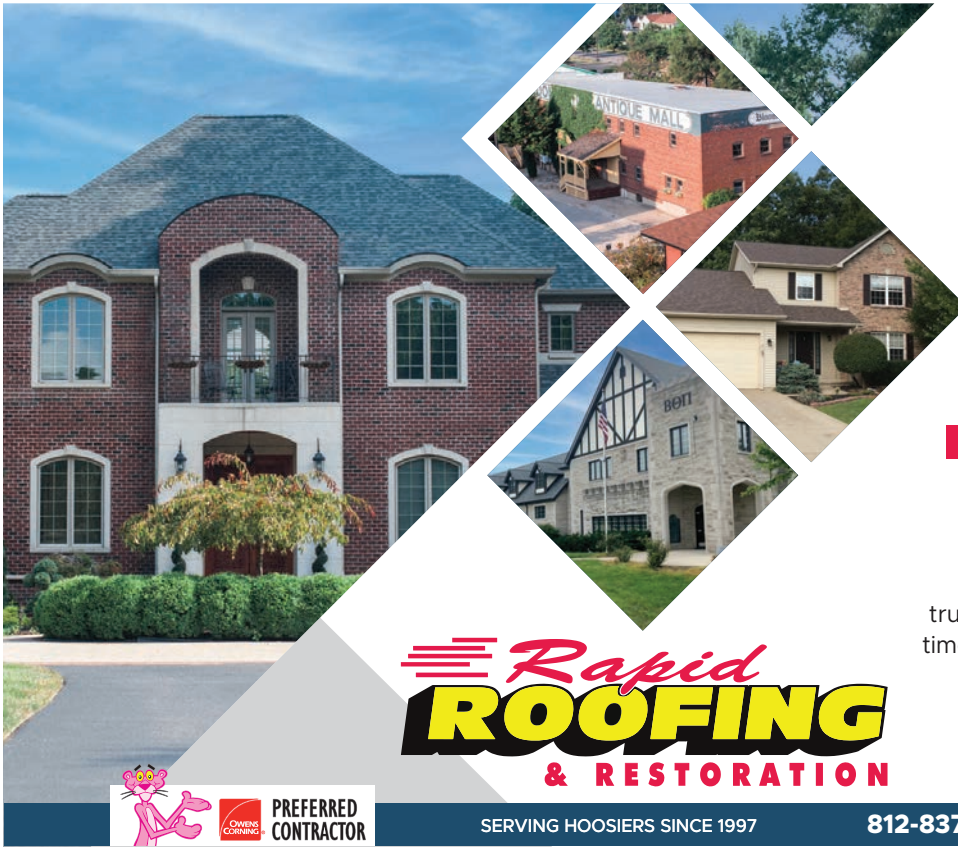


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Their specializations are in storm restoration, roofing, siding, and gutters, and they handle all aspects of damage to homes or businesses after Mother Nature has wreaked havoc on the community once again. They are detail-oriented and always provide a

full cleanup at job sites, which is made easy by modern technology such as the Equiptor and the "Catch-All" netting system to keep properties protected.

Additionally, if a customer suspects storm damage, they provide a free inspection to determine if there's enough damage to submit an insurance claim. If there is, the insurance agency will assign an adjuster to inspect the damage alongside a Rapid team member who will help the homeowner navigate the claim process and paperwork. Team members always seek to maximize their client's coverage and help them return to living comfortably in their home as soon as possible.

In addition to repairs, property owners wanting to give their home a new look or add value can contact Rapid Roofing to replace a roof, siding, or gutters. Roof replacements are also a convenient time to address any insulation and ventilation issues that might exist, which will help your house breathe, saving the life of your shingles and creating a more energy-efficient home.

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(l-r) Sandy Haan-Cottrell and Wayne Cottrell. Courtesy photo

customer service have earned them ongoing referrals and the opportunity to serve multiple generations of families. They take pride in their work and the trust placed in them by their community, and they truly believe everyone deserves a little R&R.

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This could include building thermostats into bookshelves, color-coordinating vents to blend into the walls or floors, installing floating bathroom vanities, selecting attractive plumbing fixtures that elevate the appearance of the home, and more. "Choosing fixtures that reflect personal style and meet functional needs creates a space that feels both personal and practical," says Nettleton, who hopes clients walk away from their experience with HFI feeling genuinely supported.

"At HFI, we will do whatever it takes, as one team, to make a difference by being leaders in mechanical and building solutions," she adds. "We actively live our values, culture, and traditions by caring for each other and our communities for the benefit of all."

Visit harrell-fish.com —*Sophie Bird Murphy*

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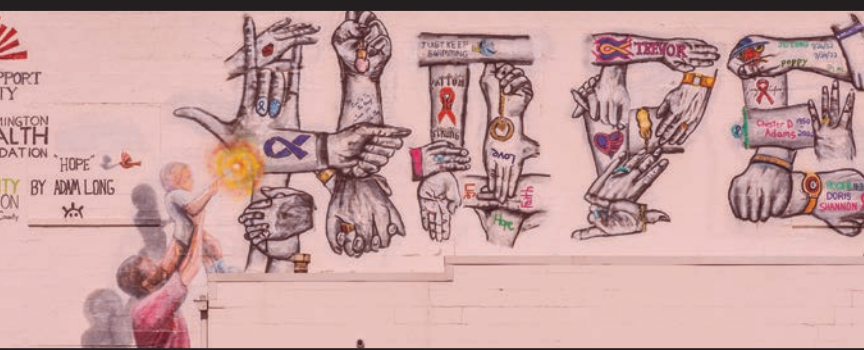
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The Best 20 Reasons to Love Bloomington

By Carmen Siering

There are soooo many reasons to love Bloomington. In fact, when Bloom turned 5, our big story in the issue was “50 Reasons to Love Bloomington.” Then when the magazine turned 10, the large feature in that issue was “100 Reasons to Love Bloomington.”

Here, as we begin our 20th year, we resisted the temptation (and the challenge) of proposing 200 reasons. Instead, we have picked the best to share with you.

So, here they are—the best of the best 20 reasons to love this incredible place we call home.

—the editor





(above, l-r) Filmmakers David Anspaugh and Angelo Pizzo call Bloomington home. Photo by Shannon Zahnle (right) So does internationally touring singer-songwriter Carrie Newcomer. Courtesy photo

1

Arts & Literature

You might be surprised to learn that Bloomington is home to some of the country's bestselling writers, award-winning entertainers, and internationally renowned musicians.

Among our townspeople are Angelo Pizzo and David Anspaugh, screenwriter and director respectively of such legendary films as *Rudy* and *Hoosiers*.

Writers seem to find Bloomington particularly appealing. *New York Times* bestselling author Michael Koryta, 42, is a Bloomington native whose latest novel, *Departure 37*, is published under a pseudonym—Scott Carson. To date, Koryta has 23 novels under his belt—19 under his name, four as Carson.

Indiana University has given Bloomington a number of authors. Feminist scholar and professor emerita Susan Gubar's most recent book is *Grand Finales: The Creative Longevity of Women Artists*, retired professor Scott Russell Sanders has published more than 20 books for adults and children, and creative writing professor Samrat Upadhyay's novels are set in his homeland of Nepal. IU poets Ross Gay and Adrian Matejka are both National Book Award finalists. Matejka served as the Indiana State Poet Laureate in 2018 and 2019.

We also play host to an eclectic group of musicians, from hammer dulcimer virtuoso Malcom Dalglish to internationally touring singer-songwriters Krista Detor and Carrie Newcomer. And, as is befitting a Rock & Roll Hall of Fame recipient who was recognized for his contributions to heartland rock, John Mellencamp lives here, too.



(l-r) Bloomington poets Ross Gay and Adrian Matejka are both National Book Award finalists. Photo by Jeff Richardson

2

IU Jacobs School of Music

The Indiana University Jacobs School of Music is arguably the best music school in the nation. Instructors include Grammy Award-winning violinist Joshua Bell and seven-time Grammy-nominated trombonist Wayne Wallace. With more than 1,500 students, it has launched the careers of countless performers, scholars, and music educators across the globe.

The Jacobs School offers more than 1,100 performances each year, ranging from solo presentations to fully staged operas and ballets. Many of those are held at the Musical Arts Center—the MAC. It has the second-largest stage area in the country, surpassed only by New York's Metropolitan Opera, on which it is modeled.

The Amazing Adventures of Kavalier & Clay, the first co-production between the Jacobs School and the Met, debuted in November 2024 at the MAC. Commissioned by the Met, the new opera is based on the Pulitzer Prize-winning novel by Michael Chabon. After its premiere at IU, the opera opened the 2024–25 season on the Met stage in New York City.

For more information, visit music.indiana.edu. The current schedule of events and performances is available at music.indiana.edu/news-events/events/. ▶



In 2024, Macey Rowland played the title role in the Indiana University Jacobs School of Music presentations of the baroque opera *Alcina* by George Frideric Handel. Photo by Samantha Smith, courtesy of the IU Jacobs School of Music

3

Museums & Galleries

Museums and galleries are among the must-see things to do in Bloomington. Indiana University has a multiplicity of offerings.

- The Sidney and Lois Eskenazi Museum of Art features artistic treasures from Africa, the South Pacific, and the Americas, as well as an extraordinary collection of modern and contemporary art.
- The Lilly Library houses more than 400,000 rare books, approximately 150,000 pages of sheet music, and 7.5 million manuscripts.
- The Kinsey Institute’s library, archives, and art collection has preserved more than 2,000 years of human sexual history, and the Kinsey Institute Gallery offers rotating exhibitions.
- IU Cinema offers theatergoers a glimpse into our historical past with luxurious seating, historic Thomas Hart Benton murals, and period details reminiscent of cinema’s heyday.

The T.C. Steele State Historic Site is located midway between Bloomington and Nashville, Indiana. Guided tours of Steele’s home—the House of the Singing Winds—and his Large Studio, are available, and many of Steele’s landscape, still life, and portrait paintings are on view.

One of Bloomington’s wonders is the WonderLab Museum of Science, Health, and Technology. This award-winning museum allows children of all abilities to discover science through interactive, hands-on exhibits that entertain while they teach.



The Sidney and Lois Eskenazi Museum of Art at IU. Photo by Mike Waddell

(below) A scene from the opera *Trouble in Tahiti* performed by the Jacobs School. Photo by Samantha Smith, courtesy of the IU Jacobs School of Music (below, right) In a co-production with the New York Metropolitan Opera, IU hosted the debut performances of *The Amazing Adventures of Kavalier & Clay*, based on the Pulitzer Prize-winning novel by Michael Chabon. Photo by Sarah Slover, courtesy of the IU Jacobs School of Music



Clash Gallery is just one of many smaller art galleries in Bloomington. It is located at 120 E. Kirkwood. Photo by Rodney Margison



The Monroe County History Center, 202 E. 6th St., had a 2024 exhibition of senior cords from area high schools and IU. Photo by Rodney Margison

The Monroe County History Center collects, preserves, and interprets the county’s past. Visitors are encouraged to peruse the center’s permanent and rotating exhibits and use its library for research.

The city is replete with galleries offering an interesting mix of fine arts, crafts, and other artistic expressions. Among them are Backspace Gallery, By Hand Gallery, Clash Gallery, Grunwald Gallery, I Fell Gallery, Juniper Art Gallery, Pictura Gallery, and John Waldron Arts Center. ▶



Not only is The Elm, 614 E. 2nd St., consistently voted near the top of *Bloom's* best restaurants list, readers have chosen it for best atmosphere two years running. Photo by Brick Kyle

4 Restaurants

From our renowned chefs to our expansive array of authentic ethnic fare, Bloomington cooks up a rich local food culture. Whether you're looking for the perfect steak or a vegan experience, Bloomington restaurants have you covered.

Visitors might be surprised to learn that Bloomington is a mecca for those seeking global flavors. The city has nearly 100 local restaurants representing 17 different countries. You can find menus inspired by Afghani, Burmese, Chinese, Greek, Indian, Indonesian, Italian, Japanese, Korean, Latin American, Mexican, Thai, Tibetan, Turkish, Uyghun, and Venezuelan cuisine.

But Bloomington isn't just about food. The city is well-known for its local libations. Oliver Winery opened in 1972 and is the state's largest winery. Bloomington Brewing Company, which opened in 1994, was one of the state's first craft breweries. Cardinal Spirits opened in 2015, and is a source of locally distilled whiskey, rum, vodka, gin, brandy, and liquors. And Friendly Beasts Cider Company, which opened in 2017, makes ciders that are pressed from Indiana apples from family farms, then fermented and blended locally.



The Wild Beet Spinach salad, shown here with ahi tuna added, is one reason why Lennie's was voted the best place to go in Bloomington for salads. Photo by Rodney Margison

BLOOMINGTON'S 10 BEST RESTAURANTS

Results from *Bloom's* second annual restaurant survey in 2025

1 The Uptown Cafe

For 49 years, The Uptown has set the standard for consistency both in quality fare and in service. And perhaps never has the restaurant been more popular than right now for breakfast, lunch, dinner, and brunch. Under the ownership of Michael Cassady and son Galen, The Uptown was voted "Best" by a huge margin.

2 C3

Now in its 11th year, C3 has a strong following of discerning diners who relish this elegant, chic bistro in Renwick's Village Center. Open for dinner only and featuring what many say is the finest cocktail bar in Bloomington, regulars laud its sophisticated vibe.

3 The Elm

To dine at The Elm is an experience like no other in Bloomington. The lightness of being in this airy, beautiful, soft space is complemented by expert service and eccentric offerings that encourage diners to "branch out." Open for dinner Tuesday-Saturday.

4 Lennie's

Lennie's has been a town staple since 1989, and even changes of ownership and location haven't dimmed the affection locals feel. Their specialty is gourmet pizza, but there's something for every palate at Lennie's—a little Mexican, a bit of Asian, a touch Middle Eastern, on occasion Cajun, and even Canadian.

5 Samira

How many cities Bloomington's size have an Afghan restaurant? Not many, for sure. A fixture on the downtown Square since 1989, Samira's cuisine is classic Middle Eastern, but with its own inimitable flavors. Lamb is a mainstay, as are beef, chicken, and vegetable dishes, served in an elegant, remodeled space.

6 Osteria Rago

Just like so many restaurants in Naples, Italy, Osteria Rago is hidden away in an alley, out of sight of main thoroughfares. But locals found it (behind Nick's English Hut in an 1880s carriage house) and discovered authentic Italian dishes and Neapolitan wood-fired pizzas. Osteria Rago opened in 2018 and was an almost immediate hit. Open for lunch and dinner (make a reservation).

7 Taste of India

With curries, dosas, vindaloos, kebabs, biryanis, tandooris, seven kinds of naan, and a complete vegetarian menu, Taste of India has cuisines of both north and south India. Open seven days a week with a bountiful lunch buffet.

8 FARM Bloomington

Perhaps the most "Hoosier" of Bloomington's restaurants, FARM has a down-home feeling in its décor, famous biscuits, legendary garlic fries, and Indiana specialties prepared by Chef Daniel Orr. Since 2018, serving lunch, dinner, and weekend brunch.

9 Chef's Table

While every other restaurant on this list is well-known and has been around for a while, Chef's Table, this 2-year-old hole-in-the-wall eatery in a west-side strip mall, is a revelation. Its legion of fans rave about its soups, salads, sandwiches, and desserts. Who knew?

10 Janko's Little Zagreb

Steak and Zagreb's are pretty much synonymous in this town. For 40 years, Janko's has been offering up sumptuous steaks, chops, kebabs, and spicy hot meatballs. Legend has it that Billy Joel pronounced his Janko's steak the best he'd ever eaten. So have legions of others.

5 Shopping



Tivoli, located in Fountain Square Mall across from the Monroe County Courthouse, is a popular boutique with styles for women of all ages. Photo by Richardson Studio

Goods for Cooks, 115 N. College, is Bloomington's one-stop-shop for gourmet foods and everything imaginable for the kitchen. Photo by Rodney Margison



Also located in Fountain Square Mall is Andrew Davis Clothiers, featuring high-end casual, dressy, and formal men's apparel and footwear. Photo by Rodney Margison



Bloomington is home to a variety of local retailers. From modern clothing to vintage togs, independent booksellers to antique dealers, and so much more.

Distinctive specialty shops include:

- Andrew Davis (101 W. Kirkwood) features high-end casual, dressy, and formal men's apparel and footwear.
- Bonne Fête (112 W. 6th St.) offers an eclectic mix of goods, from self-care products to home décor, candles, greeting cards, and more.
- The Briar & The Burley (101 W. Kirkwood) specializes in luggage, leather goods, pipes, cigars, and motor sports memorabilia.
- The Frock (118 S. College) is a bridal boutique offering original styles in a range of sizes with private appointments available.
- Goods for Cooks (115 N. College) stocks everything for the kitchen, plus wines and gourmet foods.
- O'Child Children's Boutique (101 W. Kirkwood) offers gifts, clothing, and toys for babies and young children.

Book lovers can shop at a number of independent retailers, including:

- Book Corner (100 N. Walnut)
- Caveat Emptor Used Books (112 N. Walnut)
- Morgenstern Books (849 S. Auto Mall Road)
- Vintage Phoenix Comics (114 E. 6th St.)

Local shops for women's fashions include:

- Alibi (1535 S. Piazza Dr.)
- Mainstream Boutique (215 S. Walnut)
- Mirth (101 W. Kirkwood)
- Tivoli Fashions (101 W. Kirkwood)

Antique shops for those who love the hunt:

- Bloomington Antique Mall (311 W. 7th St.)
- Jeff's Warehouse (424 S. College)
- Stella's Place Furniture (4904 S. Rogers St.)

For vintage looks and home décor, check out these shops with new, used, and unique items:

- Bloomington Thrift Shop (220 S. Madison St.)
- Cherry Canary Vintage Clothing (214 W. 4th St.)
- My Sister's Closet (404 W. 2nd St.)
- Office Clothier (111 E. Kirkwood)
- Opportunity House (907 W. 11th St.)
- skullznbunnies (101 W. Kirkwood)
- SLCT Stock (208 N. Walnut)
- Textures Uncommon Gifts & Goods (222 N. College)



Constellation Stage & Screen is Bloomington's largest theater company with eight productions in its 2025–2026 season, ranging from small new works to full-blown musicals, including an annual holiday family musical and two shows in its Constellation for Kids series. *Photo by Zach Rosing*

6 Live Theater

From small stages to large auditoriums, theatergoers have plenty of options when it comes to watching live performances in our city.

The largest local theater company in town is Constellation Stage & Screen, which features a mix of original plays and musicals, established works, family-friendly classics, and shows for young audiences. Constellation also runs year-round education programs for students of all ages, including summer camps, workshops, after-school programs, and student-only weekday matinees.

Off Night Productions is a nonprofit, women-led theater company producing contemporary theater and music on the off nights (Sunday-Tuesday) of the traditional performance week. Off Night's aim is to tackle the issues and limitations it sees in the theater industry by extending the traditional performance week, and prioritizing female and non-binary leadership.

The Jewish Theatre of Bloomington was founded in 2005 and is the only Jewish theater in Indiana. It presents plays that reflect the Jewish experience but also focus on universal issues of the human condition that are accessible to a wide audience.

Resilience Productions' tagline is "History reclaimed, stories retold, theater revealed." The brainchild of Gladys DeVane, Elizabeth Mitchell, and Danielle Bruce, Resilience was founded in 2016 to bring little-known Black history to the stage.

Stages Bloomington Theatre Company has been offering children and teens year-round theater arts education and performance opportunities since 2006. Stages produces three to five performances a year, geared to family and adult audiences.



Off Night Productions is a new, women-led theater company that produces performances on off nights of the traditional performance week. *Courtesy photo*

The all-volunteer, nonprofit Monroe County Civic Theater, created in 1986, is well known for its Shakespeare in the Park performances and for its warm welcome to aspiring thespians, regardless of experience.

Eclipse Productions is a nonprofit theater company with a mission to provide opportunities for professional advancement to local and emerging artists, and to offer affordable, immersive theater experiences for mature audiences.

The 3,200-seat Indiana University Auditorium opened in 1941 and houses the Daily Family Memorial Collection of Hoosier Art, the IU Auditorium Organ, and the Thomas Hart Benton murals. It presents national tours of Broadway shows, well-known musicians, comedians, and classical performers. ▶

In 2024, Off Night Productions staged *Steel Magnolias*. *Courtesy photo*





7 IU Athletics

There's more than the usual excitement around Big Ten sports at IU this coming season. For good reasons:

Coach Curt Cignetti led IU football to a program- record 11 wins and eight Big Ten victories last season in his first year as head coach.

New basketball coach Darian DeVries comes in untried and untested as a Hoosier, but he has the opportunity to put his brand on the team: The program brought in 10 transfers, one freshman, and retained two walk-ons from the 2024–25 roster. One of the transfers is DeVries' son, Tucker.

IU soccer has always been, and continues to be, a powerhouse, holding eight NCAA championships and 104 tournament wins. Equally impressive is its crowd appeal. Every year since the NCAA began tracking men's soccer attendance in 2001, the IU program has

ranked among the highest in average or total attendance.

It's not hyperbole to say that IU swimming is legendary. Swimmers like seven-time Olympic champion Mark Spitz, six-time Olympic medal winner Lilly King, and coaches like James "Doc" Counsilman have created a culture of success. IU swimmers and divers have won 121 medals at the Olympics, and have accounted for 241 Olympic berths, representing 26 countries.

IU Athletics supports 24 varsity sports. In addition to those already mentioned, these include women's cross country, field hockey, basketball, golf, rowing, soccer, softball, tennis, track & field, volleyball, and water polo. Men's sports include baseball, cross country, golf, tennis, track & field, and wrestling.

(left) Curt Cignetti led the Hoosiers to an 11-2 record and a first-ever berth in the College Football Playoffs during his first year as head coach; (above) Teri Moren, center, is the all-time winningest coach in Indiana women's basketball history. This will be her 12th season leading the Hoosiers.
Photos courtesy of IU Athletics



The 65-acre Switchyard Park features a skateboard park and an outdoor stage to host live music performances. Top photo by StockVizions/Shutterstock.com; bottom photo by Rodney Margison

8 Parks

The City of Bloomington Parks and Recreation Department manages 2,342 acres of property, including 34 parks, 27 playgrounds, a golf course, an ice arena, two outdoor pools, three community centers, 13 ballfields, 22 tennis courts, 19 basketball courts, and more than 30 miles of trails.

When it comes to getting and staying active, Bloomington makes it easy. There are public tennis courts at the Winslow Sports Complex, Bryan Park, Southeast Park, and Sherwood Oaks, plus tennis *and* pickleball courts at RCA Community Park, Switchyard Park, Park Ridge East, and Hopewell Commons. Plus, the City maintains Cascades Golf Course—three nine-hole courses which can be combined to create three separate 18-hole configurations.

Want to hang out with your dog? Visit Ferguson Dog Park. This 18.7 acre park includes two fenced areas, one for large dogs, one for the little guys.

Switchyard Park, on the city's south side, also has dog parks for both large and small dogs. The 65-acre park features tennis, pickleball, and bocce ball courts, a skateboard park, a

picnic shelter, and a playground that includes hillside slides, interactive music equipment, and face-to-face parent-child swings. There's also a splash pad! From April to October, Switchyard Park is home to Food Truck Fridays, a time to sample local food and hear local music.

You can also catch outdoor concerts (and movies) at centrally located Bryan Park. The park is popular for its wide-open spaces, walking trails, and a toddler playground. During the summer months, swimmers flock to Bryan Park pool, complete with water slides.

The city's newest park is Hopewell Commons, located adjacent to the B-Line Trail just west of the Seminary Square Kroger. The park includes a log scramble play structure, shaded picnic tables and bench swings, a small performance stage, ping-pong tables, and temporary pickleball courts. ▶





(above) Brown County State Park in nearby Nashville, Indiana, has two lakes, hiking and mountain bike trails, two campgrounds—one traditional and one equestrian—and much more; (right) Lake Monroe is the state's largest body of water, and a popular destination for outdoor activities of all varieties. *Photos by Rodney Margison*



9 Nature Abounds

Whether you're looking to spend a day hiking or want to really get out and rough it, Bloomington's location near the 200,000-acre Hoosier National Forest, Yellowwood and Morgan-Monroe state forests, Cedar Bluff Nature Preserve, and McCormick's Creek and Brown County state parks makes getting back to nature easy. These wilderness areas offer adventure any way you like it, from hiking and trail running to backpacking and camping. And Brown County State Park's mountain bike trails are considered among the best.

Nearby Lake Monroe is the state's largest body of water. Locals and visitors enjoy boating, fishing, waterskiing, and swimming on its more than 10,000 acres.

The City of Bloomington Parks and Recreation Department offers milder forms of adventure in town.

On the far north side of Bloomington is the 1,220-acre Griffy Lake Nature Preserve. While swimming is prohibited in the 109-acre lake, the Indiana Department of Natural Resources has stocked it with bluegill, redear sunfish, largemouth bass, channel catfish, and crappie. The park offers a private boat launch, and rents kayaks, canoes, and stand-up paddleboards. Wapehani Mountain Bike Park, on the city's southwest side, was the first mountain bike park in the state.

The City parks department also maintains seven fitness trails with paved or gravel surfaces, eight multi-use trails with paved surfaces for walking and biking, and seven hiking trails with natural surfaces.

10 Our Neighborhoods

Bloomington is made up of an eclectic assortment of neighborhoods, each with its own distinctive architecture and atmosphere.

Prospect Hill is considered to be Bloomington's oldest subdivision, platted and annexed to the City in 1893. The architecture of the district represents various high styles popular between 1890 and 1925, including Queen Anne, Free Classic, and Period Revival.

Elm Heights, located between Bryan Park and the IU campus, has a mix of grand old homes and student rentals, and represents the greatest concentration of architect-designed homes in the city.

McDoel Gardens has a wealth of 1920's and 1930's bungalows and kit homes, while neighborhoods like Sherwood Oaks, on the city's south side, and Hyde Park, on the southeast side, feature the large lawns and quiet cul-de-sacs common to

contemporary subdivisions.

The Near West Side was designated a Historic District in December 2022, but has been on the National Register of Historic Places since 1997. Largely developed between 1850 and 1948, the neighborhood features examples of Queen Anne-style homes as well as smaller Bungalow/American Craftsman homes, among others.

Bloomington's newest neighborhood, Hopewell, is still under construction, but its first component, Hopewell Commons—a 2.5-acre playground located at 332 W. University St. along the B-Line Trail—was unveiled in April. Hopewell is being developed on the former site of the Indiana University Health Bloomington Hospital, and city leaders envision the new neighborhood as one with truly public spaces for all to enjoy. Hopewell Commons is the embodiment of that ideal. ▶



Bloomington is home to a number of unique neighborhoods including the Near West Side, which has been on the National Register of Historic Places since 1997. *Photo by Cassandra Huskey*

11 Diversity

As the home of Indiana University, Bloomington welcomes international students and faculty to its campus. Still, for a city of just 82,000—which includes that student population—our city has a remarkably diverse population.

Take a stroll downtown and you're just as likely to encounter people from China, Africa, Tibet, Brazil, India, and dozens of other countries as you are hometown Midwesterners.

The city's neighborhoods include longtime residents and new arrivals; young, middle-age, and elderly couples; college students and retirees; proud members of the LGBTQIA+ community; and families of many ethnic backgrounds.

Bloomington is also home to people of nearly every religious persuasion. We have a synagogue and a Chabad House



The Islamic Center of Bloomington and mosque provides a space for the city's Muslim population to worship and fellowship. *Photo by Stephen Sprout*

catering to the city's thriving Jewish population, the Islamic Center of Bloomington and mosque, the Tibetan Mongolian Buddhist Cultural Center and Kumbum Chamtse Ling Monastery, a Baha'i Center, and dozens of churches of nearly every Christian denomination.

The really good news is that Bloomington is a place where people of all ethnic, racial, and religious backgrounds can live, work, and play together in harmony.

Bloomington is a melting pot of diverse cultures, faiths, ethnicities, and identities. *Illustration by Mike Cagle*



12 Charities & Social Safety Net

Since its incorporation in 1990, the Community Foundation of Bloomington and Monroe County has granted \$50 million to more than 400 local nonprofit organizations.

Some of the nonprofits making the most impact include:

- Beacon, an antipoverty organization dedicated to aiding and empowering people experiencing extreme poverty, especially hunger and homelessness. Founded in 2000, Beacon has become the largest nonprofit housing provider in Monroe County.
- New Hope for Families, founded in 2011 as the only emergency housing solution in Monroe County that keeps families intact. In 2015 it opened an early childhood care and education program.
- Middle Way House provides emergency shelter, a 24-hour help and crisis line, on-scene advocacy, support services, and transitional and permanent housing solutions for survivors of domestic violence, sexual assault, and human trafficking.
- Bloomington Refugee Support Network assists families who fled violence in their home countries as they adjust to life in our community, helping them address urgent medical and trauma concerns, reacquire job skills, raise their children, and practice their faith in safety. ▶



(top) New Hope for Families provides housing for families impacted by homelessness. In 2015 it opened an early childhood care and education program. *Photo by Martin Boling* (left) Habitat for Humanity of Monroe County has housed more than 890 people, including 510 children, in the past 36 years. It builds an average of 8–10 homes each year. *Photo by Stephanie L. Sanchez/Shutterstock.com*



13 Local Music Scene

Bloomington has a well-deserved reputation as home to a vibrant music scene. From dedicated concert venues like Indiana University’s Musical Arts Center to local bars, live music can be found all over town.

Built in 1922, the Buskirk-Chumley Theater is one of the city’s oldest entertainment venues. Rumor has it Hoagy Carmichael and his band, The Collegians, once performed there. Now local, national, and international musical artists perform on its stage.

Downtown bars offer a variety of entertainment. The Back Door, Bloomington’s only queer bar, hosts live music plus drag, burlesque, and cabaret shows. Or check out Blockhouse Bar. It’s one of Bloomington’s favorite underground live music venues—and it’s located literally *below* The Back Door.

The Bluebird, which has been around since the 1970s, has played host to a number of artists early in their careers. It’s still a great place to discover up-and-coming artists, or to catch local and regional acts.

Indie artists and bands can be found at The Bishop, and Max’s Place offers live music several nights a week. Max’s Place is also one of the few places in town to offer an open mic night.

Other live-music venues, especially on weekends, include Metal Works Brewing Company, Orbit Room, The Tap, and The Sinkhole.

For more information on performances, check on each venue’s social media or web site.



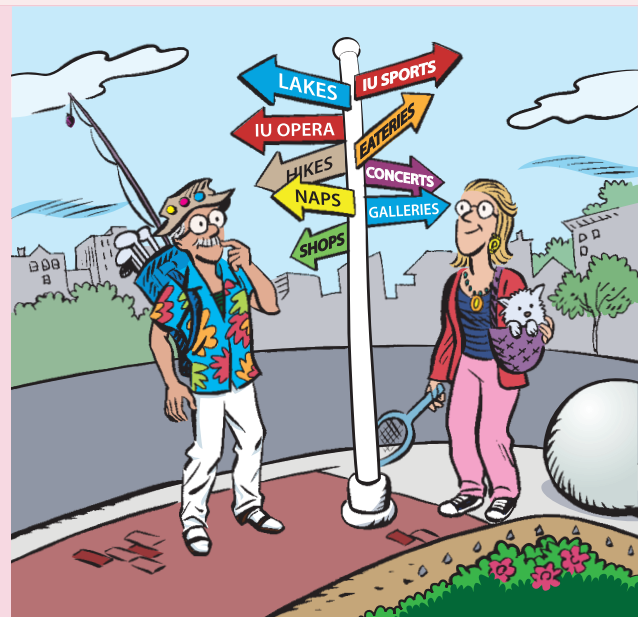
(top) Bloomington native Hank Ruff is a regular performer at The Bluebird, which has been hosting up-and-coming as well as local and regional acts since the 1970s; (above) the Buskirk-Chumley Theater is one of the city’s oldest entertainment venues. *Photos by Rodney Margison*

14 A Great Place to Retire

There’s no doubt that Bloomington is a popular retirement spot. It’s so popular with IU alumni, there’s even a name for those who return: Bloomerangs! The reasons are obvious. From high-quality health care options, a nearby international airport, and a low cost of living compared with major metropolitan areas, Bloomington has a lot to offer.

Culturally, Bloomington is a treasure, with near-daily recitals at the IU Jacobs School of Music, high-quality theater performances, numerous art galleries, and a world-class art museum.

There are plenty of outdoor activities, too, including city parks and paths, nearby state parks, the Hoosier National Forest, and Lake Monroe, the state’s largest. Add to that lifelong learning opportunities at IU and Ivy Tech Community College Bloomington, Big Ten sports, and plenty of excellent restaurants, and it’s no wonder so many retirees decide to call Bloomington home. ▶



There are a number of reasons that Bloomington is a great place to retire. *Illustration by Mike Cagle*

15 Festivals

There's barely a month without a festival in Bloomington. If you love art, music, comedy, or just getting lost in a crowd, there's something nearly every weekend in our fun-loving city.

The 11th annual Bloomington Pridefest, ranked by Thrillist as the best college town Pride in the nation, will be held **Saturday, August 23**, in the streets of downtown Bloomington. Visit bloomingtonpride.org.

Over Labor Day weekend (**August 30–31**), the city hosts the juried Fourth Street Festival of the Arts & Crafts. Since 1977, art lovers have strolled the streets to peruse the works of 100 artisans, plus enjoy live music, poetry readings, and storytelling. Visit 4thstreet.org.

The 32nd annual Lotus World Music & Arts Festival will be held **September 25–28** at multiple locations, bringing the world to Bloomington. The festival has showcased performers from more than 120 countries and regions in indoor and outdoor venues across the city. Visit lotusfest.org.

The Kiwanis Indiana Balloon Festival will take place **September 26–27** at the Lawrence County Fairgrounds in nearby Bedford, Indiana. The festival features



Yacouba Sissoko and SIYA, of Mali, perform at the Buskirk-Chumley Theater for the 2021 Lotus World Music & Arts Festival. Photo by Jim Krause

hot air balloons, helicopter rides, and pyrotechnic skydivers. Food and drinks, including a wine and beer garden, are available. Visit [Kiwanis Indiana Balloon Fest on Facebook](https://www.facebook.com/KiwanisIndianaBalloonFest).

Indiana University's Little 500 brings more than 25,000 fans to Bill Armstrong Stadium each April to cheer on their favorite teams. This legendary race inspired the 1979 Academy Award-winning film *Breaking Away* and drew a surprise visit from then-presidential candidate Barack Obama in 2008. Visit iusf.bloomington.iu.edu.

Granfalloon is an annual celebration of art, ideas, and community inspired by Hoosier author Kurt Vonnegut Jr. Presented by the IU Arts and Humanities Council, most 2025 programming occurred in

June. Events included music and theater performances, film screenings, readings, exhibitions, and more—most free to the public. Visit granfalloon.indiana.edu.

The Limestone Comedy Festival is one of the Midwest's top standup showcases. The annual three-day event, held in May, features world-renowned talent and up-and-comers. Information at limestonefest.com.

Situated as we are in the heart of nation's limestone capital, it's fitting that the Indiana Limestone Symposium is held in nearby Ellettsville every June. The event draws stone carvers—novices to experts—from across the country for up to two weeks of hands-on workshops. Learn more at limestonesymposium.org.

16 Location

Situated in the rolling hills of southern Indiana, Bloomington is a beautiful place to live, but it's also a great place to start from when you want to visit other places!

Head out in any direction and in less than an hour you'll find yourself someplace interesting.

Going north, you can take in Indianapolis Colts, Indiana Pacers, and Indiana Fever games, visit the Indianapolis Museum of Art or the Indianapolis Children's Museum, or catch a plane at the Indianapolis International Airport. Who knows where you might end up?

Head east and you'll find quaint local shops and galleries in Nashville, Indiana, a town with a history of talented artists. Nearby is beautiful Brown County State Park. A tad further east, you'll find Columbus, Indiana, one of America's top 10 architectural sites, boasting 70 notable buildings and public art installations. And in Orange County to our south is the fabulous, restored French Lick Resort, with the famed West Baden Springs and French Lick Springs hotels, spas, casino, and championship golf courses.

In less than two hours you can be in Louisville, home of the Kentucky Derby; in less than three, you can be walking through the beautiful Cincinnati Zoo and Botanical Gardens. And four hours takes you to Chicago, St. Louis, and Nashville, Tennessee.

All that talk about location, location, location is true, and you won't find a much better location than Bloomington!



Nashville, Indiana, a 30-minute drive from Bloomington to the east, is filled with quaint shops and galleries. Photo by Shannon Zahrlie



Beyond public school, there's further diversity. Whether it's for the younger set at places like Bloomington Montessori School or the Children's Corner Cooperative Nursery; charter schools such as The Project School; or Harmony School, the independent K-12 school that breaks the mold when it comes to education, it seems that, no matter what you're looking for in education, Bloomington's got it.

Learning opportunities outside the classroom abound as well, from programs at Monroe County Public Library to the classes, shows, museums, and galleries on the IU campus.

With so many ways to explore, play, and learn, it's easy to see why Bloomington is an exceptional place to raise a family!

(top) Parents, community members, and Monroe County Community School Corporation staff, faculty, and administrators welcome students to Fairview Elementary School on the first day of classes. *Photo by Jeremy Hogan* (below) Templeton Elementary, on the city's south side, recently installed a \$3.3 million state-of-the-art, accessible playground with rope courses, carousels, swings, a climbing wall, and more. *Photo by Kathryn Coers Rossman*

17 A Great Place for Families

Families take many different forms, and those with children find Bloomington especially appealing. This is a place where youngsters are encouraged to attend concerts, visit museums, and eat at restaurants alongside their grownups.

The city offers plenty of kid-oriented activities, too, from kids' programming at the FAR Center for Contemporary Art to exploring the wonders of science at WonderLab Museum of Science, Health and Technology. There's also recreational fun, including swimming at Bryan Park or Mills pools in the summer and skating at Frank Southern Ice Arena in the winter.

As for education, there are plenty of choices.

Monroe County Community School Corporation (MCCSC) offers five high school platforms: two traditional high schools, Bloomington North and South; Hoosier Hills Career Center; Bloomington Graduation School; and the Academy of Science and Entrepreneurship. MCCSC also offers preschool programs for children ages 6 weeks through 5 years at two licensed centers, and preschool programming at 12 elementary schools for 3- and 4-year-old children.



Bloomington offers ample opportunities to de-stress, exercise, and self-care, making it the perfect place for balanced living. *Photos by Martin Boling*



18 Work-Life Balance

While there is no way to measure something as intangible as work-life balance, people who live in Bloomington have a head start because, according to experts, they have the right ingredients at hand.

College towns are often among the least stressful places to live, according to the *Huffington Post*. That's because universities tend to provide stable employment with decent wages and reasonable work hours. In addition, many Bloomington residents report a positive quality of life, noting a strong sense of community, a vibrant art and theater scene, plenty of parks and paths, and good schools for their children.

All stress can't be avoided but reducing it can help. Bloomington offers plenty of ways to do that, including ample opportunities and places to exercise or get out into nature, as well as services dedicated to stress reduction and overall wellness, such as massage therapy, yoga and meditation classes, counseling services, and even a salt cave.

Put it all together, and it looks like Bloomington is a great place to balance living, working, *and* playing. ▶



The Mill opened in 2018 and now has more than 350 members, most of whom are working remotely. *Photo by Martin Boling*

19 The Trades District

Imagine concentric circles and you'll have an easier time understanding the relationship between Bloomington's 65-acre Certified Technology Park (CTP), the 12-acre Trades District within the CTP, and The Mill, a coworking and business incubator space within the Trades District.

The establishment of the CTP in 2005 signaled Bloomington's commitment to fostering economic development, attracting investment, and supporting high-tech businesses.

The Mill was the first venture within the Trades District. It opened in 2018, and now has more than 350 members, most of whom are remote workers. The Mill provides training, coaching, and access to capital, all within a cooperative atmosphere.

Long envisioned as a hub for innovation, the Trades District has begun building on the success of The Mill. New developments include construction of The Forge, a 22,000 square-foot sustainably designed building that will provide class-A office space, and The Kiln, a 100-year-old building repurposed into a collaborative workspace housing four local businesses.

Future projects could include the addition of a boutique hotel, and the construction of up to 1,000 residential dwellings, including single-family homes, townhouses, and multi-family units.



Bloomington is a college town, and more than half of our population is made up of the students who attend Indiana University. Bloomington residents who work at the university are well aware that the student population is directly responsible for their livelihoods. But, in truth, students support nearly every business in the city, from shops and restaurants to bars and bakeries.

Students also help the community in less obvious ways. One way is through IU's community engaged learning programs. Approximately 250 classes and more than 5,000 students take part each year. It's a win-win situation, with students getting hands-on experience and community partners getting free help through initiatives such as after-school programming for kids or up-to-date IT assistance.

Being a college town is a boon in many ways, but maybe one of the most important things is one of the least tangible—college students help keep us young! ✖

20 Students



Indiana University students make up more than half of Bloomington's population and support nearly every business in the city, from shops and restaurants to bars and bakeries. *Top photo by Rodney Margison; Bottom photo courtesy of the Indiana University Student Foundation*



Photo © The Trustees of Indiana University

STUDENT LIFE *Through The* DECADES

By Jim Krause, Rodney Margison & Nicole Blevins

Photographs courtesy of Indiana University Archives

Hey, Bloomington, here we go again. For about the 200th time, we welcome students back to town—this year nearly 50,000 of them! Some locals groan about increased traffic and too-busy restaurants, but mostly folks are happy to put out the welcome mat. Students are, after all, Bloomington’s *Heart and Soul*, and the town wouldn’t have grown into an artsy, prosperous, and diverse community without them.

A Walk Through Time



Sarah Parke Morrison was the first female IU graduate in 1869, and became its first female faculty member in 1873.

BEGINNINGS—THE FIRST 100 YEARS

State Seminary of Indiana was established in 1820, and construction began in 1822 on the first two buildings—the Seminary Building and Professor's House, located between West 1st and 2nd streets and South College and Morton Street. Sarah Parke Morrison was Indiana University's first female student, enrolling in 1867. Later she returned as IU's first female faculty member. Morrison Hall is named in her honor.

IU moved from Seminary Square to the new Dunn Woods location in 1885. Limestone, readily available from nearby quarries, became the favored building material.

Just like today, IU students had a passion for sports. Students ran track and played baseball and football.

Preston Eagleson was the first Black student on an IU intercollegiate sports team, as well as the first Black student to receive an advanced degree, earning a Master of Arts in Philosophy. Eagleson Avenue (formerly Jordan Avenue) is named in his family's honor.



The 1895 football team, including Preston Eagleson (front row, second from left), the first Black student on an IU intercollegiate sports team and the first to receive an advanced degree.



These two formally attired women from 1913 are standing in front of Franklin Hall, completed in 1907.

Basketball was a new sport, invented in 1891, but IU got into the game with its first varsity team in 1901. And the *Indiana Student* newspaper was first published in 1867; it was renamed the *Daily Student* in 1899, and in 1914 it became the *Indiana Daily Student* (IDS).

When not in class or studying, students always made time for entertainment. Going out on the town often included a visit to the Book Nook in the Gables building (now the location of BuffaLouie's).



The 1900-1901 men's basketball team: (sitting, l-r) Phelps Darby, team captain Ernest Strange, Jay Fitzgerald, Alvah J. Rucker; (standing, l-r) Thomas Records, Charles Unnewehr, Ernest Walker, and Coach James H. Horne.



The 1899-1900 board of editors for *The Daily Student* newspaper.



Students in 1922 listen to concerts via wireless, heard almost every evening over the university radio operated by the physics department. Students shown here are listening to Italian soprano Amelita Galli-Curci from a performance of the opera *Lakme*.

A group of students pose at the Sunken Garden on campus, a former limestone quarry converted into a scenic green space. Jordan Hall (now the Biology Building) and its greenhouse now reside in that space.

1920s— THE ROARING '20S

The decade arrived with the university celebrating Centennial Week, marking the 100th anniversary of its founding. Elsewhere, it was a decade of post-war economic prosperity in the U.S. and Europe, a time that brought about the Jazz Age, radio broadcasting, the rise of the automobile, and more. Fittingly, IU's School of Commerce and Finance—to be renamed the Kelley School of Business in 1998—was established in 1920, and the School of Music started in 1921—it was renamed the Jacobs School of Music in 2005.

Memorial Stadium, then located where the Cox Arboretum is now, off East 10th Street by the Wells Library, was completed in 1925 and hosted the first IU vs. Purdue Oaken Bucket football game, which resulted in a scoreless tie. In 1927, IU student and musician Hoagy Carmichael composed his iconic melody “Stardust” at the Book Nook.



Future IU president Herman B Wells (center) is shown in this detail frame from a larger Founders Day photograph from 1922.

IU senior ladies enjoy the outdoors in 1921 in front of the IU Student Building, also known as the Francis Morgan Swain Student Building; former IU first lady Swain organized a women's league and campaigned for the new building for female students in 1901. *Courtesy photo*





(above) Musician and IU grad Hoagy Carmichael performs the piano at the The Book Nook in late 1934 or early 1935; (below) students in a 1937 home economics class are drawing designs.



(above) Students on roller skates take a break from fun on campus in 1938; (left) inside the IU bookstore in 1937; (below) the 1930 golf team shows off the latest in golfing fashion.



1930s—The Great Depression

As the Great Depression began to take hold of the country, the area's limestone industry crumbled. IU, however, remained relatively steady with Federal Relief Programs aiding in the university's stability. A construction boom saw the addition of Bryan Hall, Myers Hall, Forest Hall, the Music Building, the Auditorium, and in 1932 the completion of the Indiana Memorial Union (IMU), which included a cafeteria, bookstore, men's grill, and colonial tea room.

In 1932, the IU wrestling and track teams were NCAA champions, and the men's cross country team followed suit in 1938, the same year that Herman B Wells was named the university's 11th president.



Hundreds of IU students used to arise before dawn on Saturdays and Sundays and travel by bus to the Crane Naval Ammunition Depot where they assisted in the war effort to sort used shells so they could be refilled and reused.



Marine Lt. Harold Hayes (right) gives the Marine Corps Oath to (l-r) Leonard Alford, Maurice David, and John I. Murray at the Memorial Circle in the Indiana Memorial Union, March 7, 1942.



IU's three refugee students, (l-r) Joan Curtes, Bill Armstrong, and Lotte Lederer (later Mrs. Hugh G. Freeland) along with another foreign student, Margo Souers (right).

1940s—World War II

By the time 1940 arrived, IU's wartime efforts were already in gear. The university offered courses in cryptography and radio operations, and the State Police Recruit School, which was held on the IU campus from 1936–1975 as the precursor to the Indiana Law Enforcement Academy, began teaching courses in espionage, sabotage, and subversive activities. By 1940, more than 1,200 IU students were registered for the draft.

Between 1940 and 1944, the male student population fell from 3,580 to 830. Dances and homecoming events were suspended, and by July 1942, North Hall (now Cravens Hall, part of Collins Living-Learning Center) had been converted into a naval training hub for 1,200 Navy yeomen.

By the fall of 1945, however, campus activities returned to normal with new veterans adding significant growth to the university population.

The decade also saw IU winning the first of its five NCAA men's basketball championships in 1940, and the completion of the IU Auditorium in 1941. In 1945, the School of Health, Physical Education, and Recreation (HPER), the Department of Speech, and the Department of Radio were all established, and IU won the Big Ten football championship.

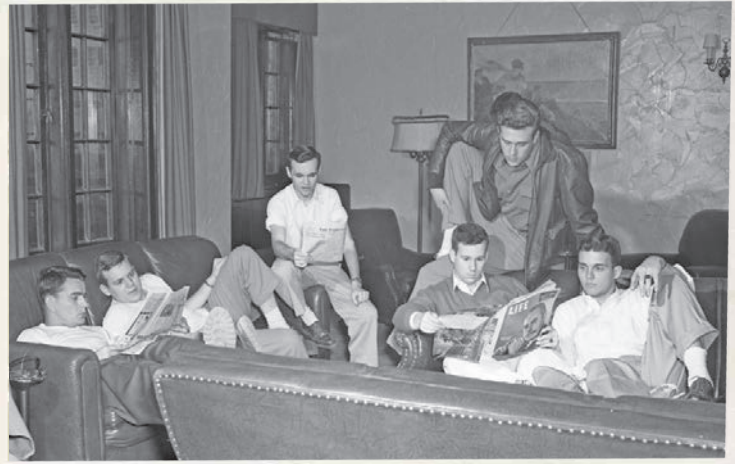
Alfred C. Kinsey created the Institute for Sex Research—later to become the Kinsey Institute for Research in Sex, Gender, and Reproduction—and Bill Garrett became the first African American to play basketball at IU in 1947. In 1949, the women's residence halls were desegregated and George Taliaferro became the first African American to be drafted by an NFL team.

George Taliaferro became the first African American player to be drafted by a National Football League team in 1949.





Students gather in one of the women's dorms, smoking cigarettes and working on homework in 1947.



Fraternity brothers gather in the Kappa Sigma house in 1949.



Students in costumes attend the Fine Arts Department's annual Christmas Party in 1945.

Students at the 1948 Fall Carnival fundraiser as part of the Campus Chest Drive.



Female students snag a male in what was then the Jordan Field, Indiana's first athletic grounds used by the football, baseball, and track and field teams, on Sadie Hawkins Day in 1948.



A nearly nude male model holds his pose while students in a 1945 sculpture class work on their art pieces at the School of Fine Arts.





(above) Students grab a bite to eat at The Gables restaurant in 1952; (right, l-r) Wendell Gish and Barbara Blackburn pose for a Philip Morris cigarette ad at The Gables. The ad appeared in the April 2, 1954, edition of *The Indiana Daily Student*.

Philip Morris was there ...

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CALL FOR PHILIP MORRIS

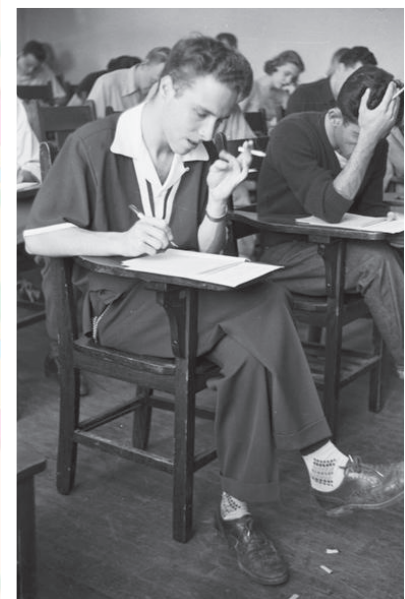
REGULAR KING-SIZE

1950s—The Postwar Boom

Exemplifying the way traditional gender roles were being emphasized in the postwar years, a 1953 college recruitment video, *Your Daughter at I.U.*, was created and marketed to parents of prospective female students. It highlighted traditionally female professions such as nursing, teaching, and positions related to the home and domestic work.

Dances were big at IU in the '50s, with a number of formal and informal dances to attend. The most formal of them all was the Junior Prom, held at the Men's Gymnasium (now the School of Public Health Complex.)

IU Press was established in 1950, and in 1951 the first Little 500 bicycle race was held at the old Memorial Stadium. Teams of men raced 50 miles—or 200 laps—around the track. Women at the time were relegated to supporting roles, such as decorating the teams' pit areas. Eventually, women got to race in their own "Little Little 500," which later transformed into the "Mini 500" in 1955, but the women raced tricycles, turning it into a joke. It wasn't until 1988 that women began their own Little 500 and raced actual bicycles.



A student smokes at his seat while taking a final exam in 1952.



Students from Thailand arrive at the Bloomington Airport in 1955.



Move-in day, 1958.



(above) Students stand in line for class registration in 1959; (right, l-r) Rita Kuny, Barb Buskirk, and Joyce Mosley in their Morrison Hall dorm room.



(above) The South Hall Buccaneers "TRENDS" team gets the trophy (and a kiss) for being the winners of the first Little 500 bicycle race in 1951. Team members are (l-r) Glen Wilson, Bob Moore (kissing Joyce Hilgemeier), and Russ Keller; (below) students take a cruise through campus to celebrate IU winning the Big Ten basketball championship in 1958.



(above) Hanging out in the laundry room at Wells Quad in 1959. (below) cheerleaders and fans at a pep rally prior to the October 26, 1956, football game against Northwestern University.





(above, l-r) Connie and Guy Loftman during an October 31, 1967, protest when U.S. Secretary of State David Dean Rusk arrived on campus; (right) protesters both for and against the Vietnam War demonstrate during an appearance by Rusk (lower left with arm and hand stretched out); (below) avid basketball fans wait outside the IU ticket office to buy tickets to the Hoosiers' 1961 basketball game against Ohio State University.



1960s—SOCIAL & POLITICAL UPHEAVAL

In 1961, the IU men's swimming team won the first of 20 consecutive Big Ten championships. Later in the decade the team won the 1969 NCAA championship, led by Mark Spitz, who won 13 Big Ten, eight NCAA, and 12 AAU championships for the Hoosiers between 1969 and 1972, along with two gold medals for the USA in the 1968 Olympics and another seven in the 1972 Summer Games.

The rise in international students rose significantly throughout the 1960s as the university sought to transform into an international hub. However, despite institutional policy aimed to promote diversity, international students often experienced racism and xenophobia on campus and around town.

Activism rose on the IU campus as it did at universities around the country, fueled by the Vietnam War, civil rights, tuition hikes, sexism and women's rights, and racism. In 1968, more than 50 African American students participated in the Little 500 sit-in to protest racism and segregation in the charters of campus fraternities and sororities. After three days, all but one fraternity had agreed to comply with their demands and the Little 500 was able to begin.



(left) Judy K. McCorkel is crowned Arbutus Queen by IU President Herman B Wells, dressed as Santa. Over her right shoulder is Neale Moosey, who McCorkel later married; (right) buying books at the IMU Bookstore in 1960.



1970s—Protests & Pop Culture

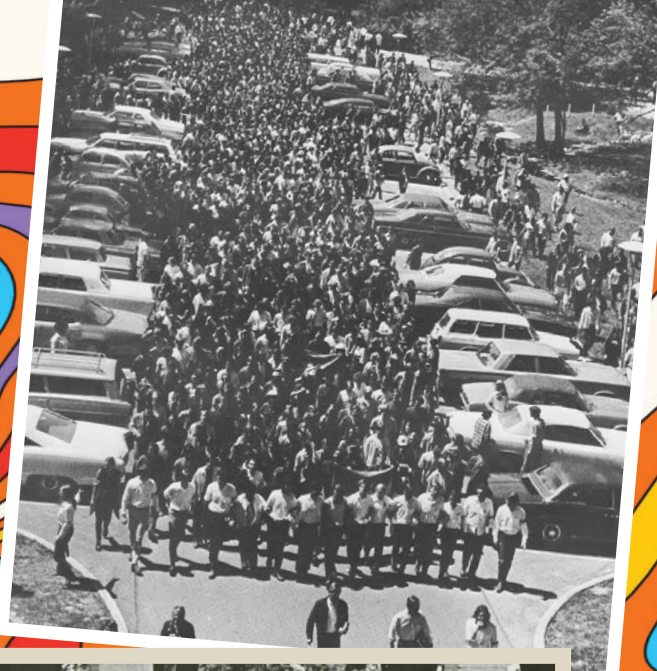
Activism continued as the '70s rolled in, and on May 6, 1970, the largest student protest in IU history took place, prompted by President Richard M. Nixon's announcement of the U.S.'s involvement in Cambodia and the Kent State Massacre. Nearly 10,000 IU students were estimated to have participated in the peaceful protest, which began as a rally at Dunn Meadow and ended with a parade through campus.

On the same day, at a Founders Day celebration in front of around 600 honor students, the freshman speaker, Jody Lanard, expressed her disapproval of the Cambodian invasion and walked out, followed by around half the students in attendance. IU President Joseph Sutton announced at the event that he was "extraordinarily proud of the IU student body (for its peaceful expressions of dissent)."

The 1960s activism also led to the 1973 formation of the Black Culture Center, which was renamed the Neal-Marshall Black Culture Center in 2002 for the first African American man, Marcellus Neal, and woman, Frances Marshall, to graduate from IU. Also in 1973, La Casa/Latino Cultural Center was created to serve as an advocate between the university and the Latine community.

In 1971, the Musical Arts Center and Assembly Hall, among other buildings, were completed. Popular rock and pop musical acts made appearances at IU throughout the '70s, including Chicago, Elton John, the Beach Boys, the Eagles, and Elvis Presley—twice.

IU went Hollywood in 1978 when the movie *Breaking Away* was filmed on campus and around town, prominently featuring the Little 500. IU alum Steve Tesich won an Academy Award in 1979 for the screenplay.



(from top right) Nearly 10,000 students peacefully protested President Richard M. Nixon involving the U.S. in Cambodia and the subsequent Kent State Massacre, gathering first at Dunn Meadow before marching across campus; members the Gay Liberation Front (Gay Lib) in 1972; one of five "witches" who interrupted a speech by U.S. Sen. Gaylord Nelson's at Dunn Meadow on April 22, 1970, throwing pills representing birth-control pills at him; in 1978, the film *Breaking Away*, starring (l-r) Dennis Quaid, Daniel Stern, Dennis Christopher, and Jackie Earle Haley, was filmed in and around Bloomington. Photo courtesy of 20th Century Fox

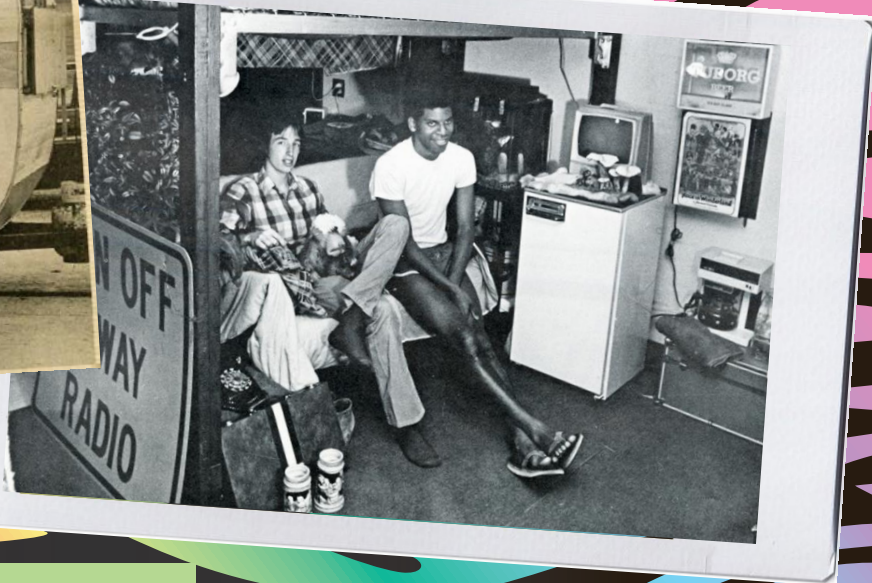


(top) Members of Alpha Kappa Alpha sorority in 1972; (above) actor Kevin Kline (r) graduated from IU in 1970; (right) Elvis Presley performed at Assembly Hall twice in the 1970s, including this show in 1977.





(above) Sophomore Julie McCowan gets ready to roll as she puts on roller skates in front of the new Roll 'Um Easy skate rental on East Kirkwood in 1980; (right) Shawn Parks and Mike Duke live on the 10th floor of Briscoe Quad "with all the luxuries of home," including two skybeds, extra carpet, and their own extension to the phone shared with another room.



1980s—Growth & Diversity

In the early 1980s, IU had a reputation for being a “party school,” but it also had a great reputation academically, with the university being recognized for having top-ranked schools in music, business, informatics, and more. Growth continued on campus with the 1981 opening of the Little 500/ Soccer Stadium (later to be renamed Bill Armstrong Stadium) and the IU Art Museum, designed by renowned architect I.M. Pei. And Sample Gates, the now iconic unofficial entry to the university and exit into downtown Bloomington, were completed in 1987.

Also in 1981, 200 School of Music students traveled to New York City and presented the American-premiere production of *The Greek Passion*, the first performance by a university company at the Metropolitan Opera House.

Asian American student enrollment increased in the 1980s and by 1984 comprised 1.2% of the student body. That prompted the 1987 creation of the Asian American Student Foundation and the first Asian American Studies course in 1989. The number of students identifying as Asian has continued to rise, reaching more than 9% in 2020.



(above) Two students share the card catalog in the Wells Library in 1984; (left) celebrating Indiana's 1981 NCAA basketball championship, this group of students ride around town on top of a Dodge van.





1990S—SOCIAL ISSUES AND EVENTS

The first IU Dance Marathon, to raise money for Riley Hospital for Children in Indianapolis, was held to honor Ryan White, who gained national attention when his Kokomo, Indiana, school district banned him from attending classes after contracting AIDS from a contaminated blood transfusion. White died from complications of AIDS in the spring of 1990, right before he was to attend Indiana University. To date, the annual IU Dance Marathon has raised more than \$56 million for Riley.

The IU School of Music graduate program tied for first place with Eastman and Juilliard in 1994's *U.S. News and World Report* rankings.

The Gay, Lesbian, and Bisexual Student Support Services office—the LGBTQ+ Culture Center since 2017—also opened in 1994. The following year, the nationwide Lambda 10 Project was founded at IU to provide educational resources about LGBT issues related to fraternity and sorority experiences.

In 1996, the Dalai Lama visited IU, where his brother, Thubten Jigme Norbu, was a professor. Norbu also founded the Tibetan Cultural Center in Bloomington.

The IU men's soccer team continued its dominance by winning the team's fourth and fifth NCAA Championships in 1998 and 1999.

(starting top to bottom, l-r) Computers in 1996 were large, slow, and bulky, but were a benefit to students who used them at Wells Library; students gather around a 1991 issue of the *Indiana Daily Students* with a front-page story about a Dunn Meadow protest against the Gulf War; the 1994 women's volleyball team leaps into the air during a photo session; the IU men's soccer team won its fifth NCAA Championship in 1999, finishing with a 21-3 record; the a capella singing group Straight No Chaser originated at Indiana University in 1996—this photo is from 1997.



(above) Members of IU's LGBTQ+ community march in the 2003 homecoming parade; (below) a special visitor at the 2008 Women's Little 500 was then-presidential candidate Barack Obama; (bottom) native Hoosier and Bloomington resident John Mellencamp greets students after performing his song "Our Country" before the 2006 homecoming football game against Michigan State University.



2000 to Present—9/11, COVID-19, Protests, and More

In 2000, the School of Informatics is founded, the first of its kind in the nation, and in 2001 IU is named *Time* magazine's College of the Year. It was one of numerous high rankings the university achieved in the decade.

On the morning of September 11, 2001, life began as normal on campus, but as news spread of the tragic events in New York City, Washington, D.C., and Pennsylvania, many professors opted to cancel classes. A somberness and an uncertainty about what would happen next spread across campus while students and faculty joined together in small groups to watch broadcasts of the day's breaking news.

Diversity and inclusion programming increased post-9/11, with a surge in interest in Islamic studies and interfaith understanding. Emergency systems were expanded, rapid alert programs were established, and a greater emphasis was placed on support for and access to trauma support.

The IU Cinema, which then-IU President Michael McRobbie said he hoped would become one of the campus' most important cultural facilities, is dedicated in 2011.

In recent years, IU students have weathered historic events including the COVID-19 pandemic that began in early 2020 and essentially shuttered the university, forcing events such as those related to IU's ongoing bicentennial celebration to be cancelled. Students and faculty participated in classes remotely via Zoom, and athletic events were held without audiences.

Emerging from the pandemic in 2021, Pamela Whitten was appointed to be the 19th president and the first woman president of IU through a controversial search process. Three years later in 2024, the IU Bloomington faculty, unhappy with her leadership, overwhelmingly passed a vote of no confidence.

Days later, students filled Dunn Meadow in a pro-Palestine protest that resulted in the Indiana State Police joining the IU Police in arresting a number of protesters for violating an hours-old change to the terms of use for Dunn Meadow, traditionally a free-speech zone for student protests.

Also in 2024, Bloomington and IU were in the narrow path of totality for a rare solar eclipse that drew thousands of visitors to the area from throughout the country. All in-person classes were cancelled for that day, April 8, so students and faculty could experience the event. A celebration was held at Memorial Stadium featuring famed Star Trek actor William Shatner.

The 2024 IU football team broke a number of records under new head coach Curt Cignetti, who led the team to an 11-2 record and the College Football Playoffs (CFP) for the first time ever. The Hoosiers' only losses on the year were to Ohio State and Notre Dame, the two teams that later competed for the CFP National Championship. ✱



(clockwise from above) COVID-19 shut down the campus in 2020, and masks were required in public—even Hoagy Carmichael's statue on campus followed the new rule; (l-r) Derek Sikorski and Jo Wrig are still masked up for COVID-19 during an astronomy class after students returned to campus for the 2021–2022 school year; a student talks on her cell phone in 2005 while taking a break at the Arboretum; in April 2024, IU and Indiana State Police clash with pro-Palestine protesters in Dunn Meadow. Photo by Jeremy Hogan





In our 20th year publishing *Bloom Magazine*, we wish to thank all the local businesses who have advertised with us since our inaugural issue. With your support, we survived the great recession and a devastating pandemic, and never missed an issue.

Personally, it is the honor of my life to live in this wonderful community and be able to tell its many stories.

Thank you.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Malorie". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long, sweeping underline.

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