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June/July 2026

20th Annual Homes Issue

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**SEPT. 19** vs **WESTERN KENTUCKY**  
**SEPT. 25** vs **NORTHWESTERN**  
**OCT. 3** at **RUTGERS**  
**OCT. 10** at **NEBRASKA**  
**OCT. 17** vs **OHIO STATE**  
**OCT. 24** at **MICHIGAN**  
**OCT. 31** vs **MINNESOTA**  
**NOV. 14** vs **USC**  
**NOV. 21** at **WASHINGTON**  
**NOV. 28** vs **PURDUE**

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## features



70

### 70 Black Barbershops & Beauty Salons: The Legacy Lives On

“We’re not just cutting hair, we care about all of you,” says Jay Thompson, owner of Razor’s Edge. In decades of segregation, barbershops and beauty salons were the places where Black people from all levels of society would gather, talk, argue, and share the trials (and secrets) of their lives. To a lesser degree, that tradition lives on.

*By Aaron B. Cohen, photography by Jim Krause*



76

### 76 Homes That Let the Light In: Where Windows Bring the Rooms to Life

In each of these three homes, windows aren’t just architectural elements but the foundation of the design. Large banks of windows invite in light, frame the surrounding landscape, and shape how each space is lived in day to day. There is a deliberate connection between the interior space and the encompassing environment.

*By Brittany Marshall, photography by Kendall Reeves and Jane Daniels*



Photo by Jane Daniels

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Twin brothers, 30, making an impact in our town; a noted physician, teacher, and humanist; and a young woman helping young and old are Bloomingtonians worth knowing.

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A knitter who makes tiny costume masterpieces; a B-town author pens ‘A New History of Lewis & Clark’; and Cicada Cinema finds a permanent home.

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Martinsville has a new upscale steakhouse; Turkuaz Cafe has new owners with an unusual history; and a recipe for Mexico’s traditional mole chicken.

### 40 Fashion/Shopping

Pillar Arts is empowering artists at two locations, in the Simon Mall and downtown at By Hand Gallery; and Critter Glitter has all the latest in fancy cat and dog attire.

### 44 Health/Fitness

Dementia Friendly volunteers offer help for caregivers dealing with a loved one’s dementia; and universal healthcare in America may be closer than you think, says our ‘The Doctor Is In’ columnist Dr. Rob Stone.

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The Conservation Law Center is protecting our land and water; and how you can help researchers study monarch butterflies.

### 52 Community

The Newcomers and Neighbors Club is a place where you can have fun and get involved; and Bloomington is having a mahjong moment!

### 56 Business/Finance

New hops have been discovered in Monroe County that could revolutionize beer brewing; and entrepreneur Peter Dvorak is back in town and he bought the iconic Batman Building.



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## What We Stand For & Against

When I started this magazine 20 years ago, it had four basic missions: To support local businesses, the arts, local charities, and diversity. What I decided not to cover in *Bloom's* pages were politics and religion. I've done okay on religion, but politics has been another matter.

I thought I would, in this column, tell you straight up what the magazine supports, what we're against, and what we believe in.

Why do this now after publishing 120 issues in which we and many contributors have written hundreds of stories and columns supporting our views all along? Because I believe we are at this moment on the verge of becoming a terrible, malignant, autocratic country. And I believe the saying, "The only thing necessary for evil to triumph is for good men to do nothing."

So, if you are likeminded, I hope you will speak out. And act out. And vote out. If you are not likeminded, well, *Bloom* is not required reading. Just don't pick us up. Or, conversely, read the magazine and write to us with your opinions. We'll print them. No need to throw rocks through our window.

Here goes.

### **We are for:**

- Freedom of speech
- Diversity, equity, and inclusion
- Fair elections
- Universal healthcare
- Equal pay for all
- \$15 minimum wage (at least)
- Separation of church and state
- Freedom of religion (or no religion)
- Checks and balances in government
- Department of Justice and FBI independence
- Term limits for Supreme Court justices
- Choice for women
- Support for the LGBTQ+ community
- Taxing the rich and corporations
- The right to petition for writ of habeas corpus



A 20-pound rock that came through our window a while ago.  
Photo by Rodney Margison

- Release of all the Epstein files and prosecution of pedophiles
- Unions
- SNAP benefits
- Public education
- Protecting natural habitats
- Ukraine
- Peace in the Middle East
- Death with dignity
- Support for refugees, asylum seekers, and illegal immigrants who have been in this country for years and have been good citizens and neighbors

### **Here is what we are against:**

- Civilians owning assault rifles
- Discrimination based on color, religion, ethnicity, or sexual preference
- Unnecessary wars
- The banning of books
- The Electoral College
- The Citizens United ruling
- Elected officials profiting from their positions
- ICE
- People having to experience homelessness
- Christian nationalism
- Billionaires

### **And here is what we believe in:**

- The Constitution
- That global warming is real and caused primarily by man
- That science is real
- That Black lives matter
- Vaccines
- Evolution
- That Joe Biden won the 2020 presidential election

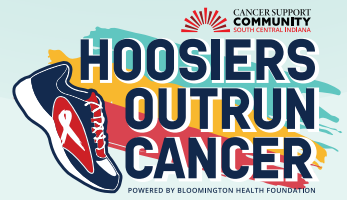
**Malcolm Abrams**  
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by Christie Popp  
Immigration Lawyer, Popp & Bullman, Attorneys-at-Law  
Member, Asylum & Refugee Committee of the American  
Immigration Lawyers Association



Sheriff Ruben Marté. Photo by  
Martin Boling

## Monroe County Sheriff Ruben Marté Fighting to Protect the Constitution

In 2020, I wrote an opinion article here in *Bloom* urging then-Sheriff Brad Swain to stop honoring ICE holds (also called detainees). Detainers are requests from Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) to jails, asking jails to hold suspected immigration violators instead of releasing them. ICE holds are arrests without a warrant, and they violate the Fourth Amendment of the Constitution, which protects us from arrests without probable cause and a warrant signed by a judge.

When jails hold people (citizens and non-citizens alike) without a warrant or probable cause that a crime was committed, the jails violate the Constitution.

ICE holds are arrests for civil violations, not criminal offenses, and they are not reviewed by a judge. The hold requests are typically accompanied by an administrative warrant, also not reviewed by a judge.

As a federal judge recently explained, “Civics lesson to the government: Administrative warrants issued by the executive branch to itself do not pass probable cause muster. That is called the fox guarding the henhouse. The Constitution requires an independent judicial officer.”

The year after my article ran, the Indiana Court of Appeals reviewed the constitutionality of ICE holds. In *City of Gary v. Nicholson*, the Court of Appeals heard a challenge to a “welcoming ordinance” that prohibited local law enforcement from honoring ICE holds. The Indiana Court of Appeals held that “the arrest and detention of a person conducted solely on the basis of known or suspected civil immigration violations violate the Fourth Amendment when conducted under the color of state law.”

The court added that even though jails may have ICE permission to detain a suspected immigration violator, the Constitution just does not permit it.

Nevertheless, despite multiple courts having concluded that ICE holds violate the Fourth Amendment; despite jails around the country being ordered to pay millions of dollars to individuals who were unlawfully held on detainees; and despite hundreds of United States citizens being mistakenly and unconstitutionally held for ICE, the State of Indiana has pushed forward new measures to force local jails to honor ICE holds.

This is not surprising. The GOP members of our General Assembly, the governor, and, most especially, Attorney General Todd Rokita, have

continually shown that they do not want immigrants (particularly brown and black immigrants) in our state.

These government officials have shown through their language and anti-immigration measures that they see immigrants as being inferior, inherently suspect, and potentially criminal, even though immigrants are far less likely than U.S. citizens to commit crimes. Immigrants, however and whenever they came here, are by-and-large good human beings who merely want a better life.

Todd Rokita has made it his mission to attack immigrants and anyone who advocates for immigrant rights. This is why Rokita recently targeted immigrant nonprofit groups and employers that employ large numbers of immigrants and threatened their closure if they did not comply with his odd information requests.

Two years ago, Rokita sued the Monroe County Sheriff, Ruben Marté, alleging that the jail policy—of not honoring hold requests without a judicially signed warrant—violated state law. State law at the time required government bodies to “cooperate” with ICE. This year, the GOP again passed another series of anti-immigration measures, one of which demands that jails honor ICE detainees.

Sheriff Marté understands the implications of honoring ICE holds. He knows that his job is not merely to keep the community safe, but also to uphold the Constitution. For this reason, he recently sued Rokita to stop the state from forcing the sheriff to violate the constitutional rights of his detainees.

The Bill of Rights was created to enshrine essential (inalienable) rights and to protect everyone from vagaries of unscrupulous government officials. Now, the Indiana government and Todd Rokita have decided that they are the arbiters of who merits the protections of the Constitution. This cannot be.

We should all fear a government that singles out a group of people and excludes them from essential protections and rights. Because once one group has been excluded, it becomes easier to single out other groups in the future.

I hope that Sheriff Marté will prevail—and I think he will—in his suit to prevent the state from forcing him to violate the Constitution. But my greater hope is that the rest of us will show equal courage in standing up to the Tyrant State and its desire to erode our inalienable rights and the rights of our immigrant neighbors. ✨



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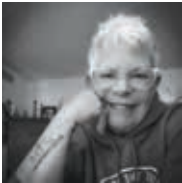
# contributors



**Brittany Marshall** WRITER: HOMES THAT LET THE LIGHT IN Brittany is a Bloomington native who lives in town with her husband and three children. After earning a bachelor's degree in communication and culture at Indiana University, she worked as a corporate public relations specialist before starting her own business as a freelance writer and communications professional.



**Kendall Reeves** PHOTOGRAPHER: HOMES THAT LET THE LIGHT IN A Bloomington native, Kendall has been a professional photographer more than 40 years. Well known for his photographs of people, places, and products, he opened Spectrum Creative Group in 1989. He now focuses mostly on nostalgia, Americana, and architectural photography.



**Jane Daniels** PHOTOGRAPHER: HOMES THAT LET THE LIGHT IN Originally from northern Indiana, Jane came to Bloomington to attend Indiana University. After working at Cook Incorporated and under Coach Bill Mallory in the IU Football office, she left the corporate world to pursue her love of photography, focusing on real estate and architecture.



**Aaron B. Cohen** WRITER: BLACK BARBERSHOPS AND BEAUTY SALONS Aaron Bloomeranged in 2024 after a long career in journalism and communications management for nonprofits in Chicago. In addition to writing and schmoozing at The Uptown, he loves cycling, hiking, kayaking, and listening to Turkish and other Middle Eastern music.



**Jim Krause** PHOTOGRAPHER: BLACK BARBERSHOPS AND BEAUTY SALONS Jim Krause is a photographer, documentary producer, and an instructor for 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.

## correction

In *Bloom's* April/May issue we listed the wrong address for the Fell Art Market. The correct address is 415 W. 4th St., Suite 3.

# Bloom

June/July 2026 Vol. 21 No. 4



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## 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](http://magbloom.com).

*Bloom Magazine* is published six times a year by Bloomington Magazine, Inc., P.O. Box 1204, Bloomington, IN 47402. Street address: 414 W. 6th St., Bloomington, IN 47404 Tel: 812.323.8959.

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# Bloom Wins 14 Journalism Awards

*Bloom Magazine* was the recipient of 14 awards presented by the Indiana Professional Chapter of the Society of Professional Journalists at the annual Best in Indiana Journalism Awards banquet held April 17 at 502 East Event Centre in Carmel.

In the category Business or Consumer Affairs Reporting, Elizabeth Ellis took first place for “Curry Auto Center Turns 110: Family Owned Since Day One!” Kristen Senz came in second in the same category with her story “Changing Careers in Mid-Life: 3 Bloomington Success Stories.”



Elizabeth Ellis

Aaron Cohen won top prize in Coverage of Race & Diversity Issues for the story “Headstone Unveiled: A Freed Slave Who Found Liberty and Dignity Here.” Longtime *Bloom* contributor Barb Berggoetz placed third in Feature Writing with her story “Animatronic Pets Delight Residents at Jill’s House Memory Care.”

Contributing photographer Jeremy Hogan captured four awards for his Big Picture feature, which appears in every issue of *Bloom*. His photograph “White Out” took first prize for Feature Photography, while “Bubbles Bursting in Air” came in second. Hogan’s “Bird Flu” and “How High’s the Water, Mama?” were awarded second and third place, respectively, in the News Photography category.



Jeremy Hogan

*Bloom* Managing Editor and Staff Photographer Rodney Margison took third place in Feature Photography for his photos in “Beautiful Faces, Extraordinary Lives’ Down Syndrome Calendar & Exhibit.”

In the category Medical or Science Reporting, *Bloom* took two prizes: Janet Mandelstam placed second for the story “The Battle to Reverse the Rise in Mental Illness Among Indiana Youth,” and Craig Coley placed third for “Dementia: Will It Happen to

You or Someone You Love?” Coley also took third place in Investigative Reporting for his story “‘Today in Bloomington’: A Fake Local News Site.”

*Bloom*’s Design Director, Rosalie Sherwood, placed third in Magazine Cover Design for her 2025 covers, and was runner-up in Design Other Than Cover for “The Battle to Reverse the Rise in Mental Illness Among Indiana Youth.”

\*\*\*

Congratulations to the *Indiana Daily Student*, cowinner of the Indiana Journalism Courage Award.

Also, noteworthy, WFIU/WTIU newsroom researcher Cathy Knapp was honored with the lifetime achievement award, Slaymaker Service to Journalism, which recognizes a person or organization for advancing the practice of quality journalism in the state. *Bloom* Editor and Publisher Malcolm Abrams received the award in 2018. ✨

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Charles Webb.  
Courtesy photo

## Former IU School of Music Dean Charles Webb Dies

Charles Webb, dean of the Indiana University School of Music from 1973 to 1997, died at his Bloomington home on April 13, 2026. He was 93. Under Webb's leadership, the IU School of Music became the top-rated music school in the country and gained renown throughout the world.

A brilliant musician and composer, Webb served as organist at Bloomington's First United Methodist Church for 62 years. After serving in the Air Force, Webb married Kendra McGibbon in 1958, and the couple moved to Bloomington so he could attend graduate school at IU. During his life, Webb received numerous local, state, and national awards and recognition. He also served as a judge at many international music competitions, including in Hungary, Italy, Japan, Warsaw, Paris, and London. Webb received the IU President's Medal and three Sagamore of the Wabash awards, Indiana's highest honor for meritorious service. He is survived by four sons, Mark, Kent, Malcolm, and Charles III, and 10 grandchildren.



Jordan Patterson.  
Courtesy photo

## Secretly Group Celebrating 30 Years with Concert Series

Bloomington independent music company Secretly Group will celebrate its 30th anniversary in August with a three-night concert series named "What Comes After the Blues: Secretly 30 in Bloomington, Indiana." Since its founding in 1996, Secretly has grown into a leading international arbiter of independent music that includes the record labels Secretly Canadian, Jagjaguwar, Dead Oceans, and Saddest Factory Records.

The concerts will be held at venues essential to the story of both Secretly and Bloomington, beginning August 27 at The Bluebird with performances by Magnolia & Johnson Electric Co, Early Day Miners, and June Panic. On Friday, August 28, the Buskirk-Chumley Theater will host Sharon Van Etten, Kevin Morby, and Jordan Patterson, and on Saturday, August 29, the Granfalloon Concert Series at Switchyard Park will feature Durand Jones & The Indications, Jensen McRae, and Angela Autumn.

"Some of the most rewarding moments of the last 30 years have been with our artists, colleagues, and community in a single room," says Secretly co-founder Ben Swanson. Three-night passes for "What Comes After the Blues" are available at [magbloom.com/secretly30](http://magbloom.com/secretly30).

## Hoosier Youth Philharmonic Places First in High School Competition

Hoosier Youth Philharmonic (HYP), the combined orchestras of Bloomington High School North (BHSN) and Bloomington High School South (BHSS), placed first as the highest-scoring ensemble in the High School String Orchestra AA category at the 2026 Festivals of Music competition, held April 17 at the Kindig Performing Arts Center in Chicago.

Sixty-eight student musicians from BHSN and BHSS participated in the competition, led by Monroe County Community School Corporation (MCCSC) orchestra teachers and HYP directors Joshua Balogh and Christopher Herz.

"I am incredibly proud of how well the students performed in Chicago," Balogh says. HYP is the culmination of MCCSC's K-12 orchestra pathway, which begins with elementary strings and continues through middle and high school. "HYP is a great opportunity for students from both schools to come together," adds Herz. "It's important for students to feel that sense of community and that drive to perform to the best of their ability." ✨

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Andy Warhol, Flowers, Lithograph, Signed, 1964



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# The Big Picture Stormy Weather

Photo by Jeremy Hogan  
of *The Bloomingtonian*

March 22 was a record-setting hot day in Bloomington, with a high of 87°F. The heat was pushed out by a soaking storm and gusty winds, dropping temperatures to 45°F. Lightning lit up the clouds as the thunderstorm moved through the west side of town near Vernal Pike and Industrial Park Drive. This vantage point is one of the few areas in Bloomington where you can still watch a storm come in.

"In our town, **we like to know** the facts about everybody." —Thornton Wilder, *Our Town*

## Danielle Willis Helping Young & Old

by Janet Mandelstam

Danielle Willis is committed both to eldercare and to helping young girls realize their potential. Dynasty Haven, a home care service she founded, is helping aging seniors remain in their homes, and Strut to Success is helping teen and tween girls prepare for their future.

Willis, 35, grew up in Battle Creek, Michigan, and it was caring for a great aunt there that set her on her career path. Her aunt, she says "was declining, and when I was in high school, I would check in to see that she was okay and safe." At the time, Willis says, "I don't remember hearing about home care."

When her aunt eventually entered a nursing home, "I saw the care that she was getting and I became a certified nursing assistant." For a time, Willis worked in a memory care unit. "I was working a 2-10 [p.m.] shift," she recalls, "and the patients



Danielle Willis, founder of Dynasty Haven and Strut to Success, stresses the value of one-to-one connection. Photo by Morgan Kraemer

were put to bed right after dinner." That didn't seem right to Willis. "I got to talking to the patients, and they began to feel more comfortable."

What was missing in much institutional care, she says, "was that one-to-one connection with the patient." At the same time, "I started hearing about home care."

Willis earned a master's degree in social work from Indiana University and founded Dynasty Haven, which offers nonmedical home services across seven counties in southern Indiana. Services include companionship, memory support, and personal assistance such as transportation, meal preparation, and help with dressing. "What you get is that one-to-one connection," she says.

Willis is certified to train the caregivers at Dynasty Haven, "and all are dementia trained," she says. Clients are referred through word of mouth, senior living communities, and public agencies.

Last year Willis founded Strut to Success, which helps middle and high school girls "identify their strengths, find self-confidence and self-love, and be happy with their choices," she says. Through mentorship, the girls learn to set boundaries, manage stress, develop healthy habits, and build community connections.

On its website, the organization has this motto: "Every woman should own at least one pair of black patent leather pumps." Willis explains: "I always had a pair in my closet. When you put them on, you stand a little taller, and you feel you can accomplish anything."

Willis and her fiancé live in Bloomington, where she serves on the City's Commission on Aging. She says her four children, including two-year-old twins, "keep me pretty busy." ✨

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# The Sandweiss Brothers Community Contributors

by Craig Coley

Noah and Ethan Sandweiss, 30, are identical twins with kindred interests in history and community. Noah is manager of the City of Bloomington Historic Preservation Program. Ethan is a journalist for WFIU-FM/WTIU-TV. They come by their enthusiasms naturally: Their father, Eric, was a history professor at Indiana University, and their mother, Lee Ann, is a journalist and author.

“My parents taught me to be curious about the world,” Ethan says. Family vacations took them to places like the millennium-old dwellings at Mesa Verde National Park in Colorado and the Tuscany region of Italy. There Noah, the budding historic preservationist, was impressed by “cities that are accommodating the old and the new—buildings that people have been living in for centuries next to modern train stations.”

Ethan recognized his talent for writing early, freelancing while in high school for *Bloom* and *The Ryder*. His creativity also found outlets in illustration and theater. After graduating from Bloomington High School South, Ethan earned a degree in history at Reed College in Portland, Oregon. His work at a Portland community radio station introduced him to the feature reporting that he most enjoys. “It gives you a chance to explain the situation you’re reporting on rather than just reacting to the events of the day,” Ethan says.

Growing up, Noah recalls, he was an avid reader who was easily excited by things. After earning a bachelor’s degree in history and archaeology at IU, he went to the University of Leicester in England for a master’s degree in museum studies, later earning a master’s in historic preservation and conservation at the University of Vermont. He worked at IU’s Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology and as an architectural historian for the Indiana Department of Natural Resources before



(l-r) Ethan and Noah Sandweiss. Photo by Martin Boling

taking his current job with the City.

“This work is a great way to know and feel embedded in a place,” Noah says. “Everybody has memories of the places that matter to them and that make up a community. It gives you a real lay of not only the built environment, but also the landscape of memory.”

In recent years, the brothers have separately developed passions for creating tangible products with their hands—for Ethan it is pottery, while Noah gardens and builds furniture. Their relationship has entered a new phase since they returned to their hometown. “We grew apart and then came back together,” Ethan says. The brothers have formed a mutual friend group that meets at least weekly, often to play *Dungeons & Dragons*. “It’s funny how this community always manages to incorporate people who boomerang back here,” Noah says, “even if it’s not always in the same places where they were before.” ✨

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## OurTown

# Louis J. Calli Jr. Physician, Teacher, Humanist



Dr. Louis J. Calli Jr. Photo by Martin Boling

by Janet Mandelstam

By the time he was 6 years old, Louis J. Calli Jr. knew he wanted to be a doctor. His father, Louis Sr., practiced medicine in North Vernon, Indiana, from an office in the family home. “I was always watching him,” Calli says. “I would stand on a step stool watching him take out tonsils or set bones.”

So, it was no surprise that he headed to Johns Hopkins University for college and medical school and eventually became a cardiologist. But he interrupted his medical residency to return to North Vernon. “My dad was trying to establish a local hospital and he wanted me to come back,” Calli says. “I stayed for nine years” working as a general practitioner before completing his medical training.

Now 80, Calli is still teaching medical students, as he has for almost 35 years, and he’s still treating patients.

As adjunct clinical associate professor of medicine at Indiana University, he is teaching primarily first- and second-year students. “It allows me to teach humanism, which is in short supply these days,” he says. “Medicine is so technical that it’s easy to become a technocrat. The joy in medicine is the relationships you form. We are trying to teach them how to form those relationships with patients.”

One day each week Calli makes the 60-mile drive back to North Vernon to hold a cardiology clinic at the local hospital. “It’s my way of giving back to the town that raised me,” he says. “It’s a blessing to take care of people I grew up with or people who knew my dad.”

He has other ties to Jennings County as well: The Violet and Louis Calli Nature Preserve, which includes 190 acres of waterfalls, forests, and interpretive hiking trails. “It was my father’s farm,” Calli says, “and he left it to me.” He donated the land to the county in honor of his parents.

In 2003, Calli and his wife, Ann Marie Thomson, founded Giving Back to Africa, a nonprofit that educates and encourages young people in the Democratic Republic of Congo to become community leaders. By design, they are no longer part of the leadership of the organization, now called Malembe Rise. “We always intended it to be Congolese-run,” he says. Thomson currently is writing a history of the organization.

Calli, known to family and friends as Jim, and Thomson live on 6 acres of forest and fields near Ellettsville. “I enjoy taking care of the land,” he says. ✨

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# Althea Crome Knits Tiny Masterpieces



(above) The back view of one of Crome's *Sheep Farm* sweater series; (above right) *Nativity II* sweater; (right) knitted with silk thread, *Greek Gloves* are just 1 1/2 inches tall. *Courtesy photos*

Bloomington microknitter Althea Crome's work epitomizes the adage "small, but mighty." Crome began as a traditional knitter making baby booties for her children. She also built a dollhouse, which opened her door to the world of miniature art and miniaturists. In the early 2000s, Crome began knitting tiny clothing for dolls in period room boxes and attending trade fairs.

Since no tools existed to create work this

small (sweaters about 1 1/2 inches tall and micro versions that could fit into earrings), Crome developed her own tools. She uses thin, 0.01-inch surgical stainless steel needles and silk thread, sits under a task light designed for eyelash extension applications, and wears a double-layered magnifying glass. Her extreme, 80-stitch-per-inch pieces can take a year to create.

Tired of miniaturizing traditional patterns, Crome focused on her original designs: "I wanted to bring together people who make fine miniatures based on historic things and ... people who work in small scale conceptually." She began displaying her sweaters (sans dolls) as little sculptures in exhibitions and museums. Her inspirations often come from other artists, like Andy Warhol and Vincent van Gogh. The International Guild of Miniature Artisans has recognized her mastery.



Microknitter Althea Crome developed her own tools since none existed to create work so small. *Photo by Sarah Slover*

In late 2006, Crome's work attracted the attention of the creators of the stop-motion film *Coraline* (2009), who asked her to make garments for the lead character. While they sent her color samples, a concept sketch, and small body parts for the figure, Crome had great leeway, she says. Over the course of two years, she created 14 one-tenth-scale midnight blue sweaters with reflective, holographic thread, as well as different sized gloves (one slightly larger for close-ups). Writer-director Henry Selick called her work "scary good."

To see more of her work, visit [altheacrome.com](http://altheacrome.com). —*Nanette Esseck Brewer* ▶



(above) Ancient Greek Amphora I & II; (below) Warhol 2.0; (bottom) multiple views of Crome's Ancient Egyptian Cardigan.



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- July 21** Connor Lovelass
- July 28** Cottonpatch
- Aug. 4** Emma Richards
- Aug. 11** Claire Pendreigh and the Blue Ribbons
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# Sycamore Ridge Ceramics Studio

## A Serene Place for Hobby Potters



Unobtrusively nestled on 35 wooded acres which are now a forest reserve on Bloomington's east side, a 1950 mid-century modern house has become a communal artist workspace. Founded in 2017, Sycamore Ridge Ceramics Studio provides a calm, supportive environment for 10 local ceramicists.

The 2,300-square-foot house, purchased by Ted and Marilyn Bowie in 1956, was the childhood home of Jocelyn Bowie and her sister. When their parents died in 1995 and 2015, respectively, Jocelyn, who acquired the property, decided not to sell it. Although she and her husband, David Semmel, considered tearing it down and building a new structure, zoning issues and a new passion—making pottery—altered their vision.



While Jocelyn grew up surrounded by art—her father was an Asian art history professor—she did not pursue an art career or seriously make pottery until she was in her 50s. Shortly after retiring, she stumbled on the Bloomington Clay Studio (BCS) in the I Fell Building, where she learned ceramic techniques and enjoyed the fellowship of a community studio.

When BCS needed to find a new home, Jocelyn decided to rezone and

remodel her parents' house to meet their needs: bedrooms became studio spaces, living room a hand-building area, den a glazing room, dining room a ready room for pieces awaiting firing, and downstairs playroom a space for nine pottery wheels. Utility sinks were added to bathrooms, and an outside shed was built to house three kilns. A kitchen, patio, and deck provide areas to congregate.

Sycamore Ridge Ceramics Studio, at 2625 S. Smith Road, provides affordable, 24/7 studio space for dedicated hobbyists rather than



(left) Jocelyn Bowie. Photo by Martin Boling (above) Bone-dry greenware in the Ready Room (former dining room) waiting to be loaded into the kiln; (below left) a kiln full of member work, about to be fired. Courtesy images

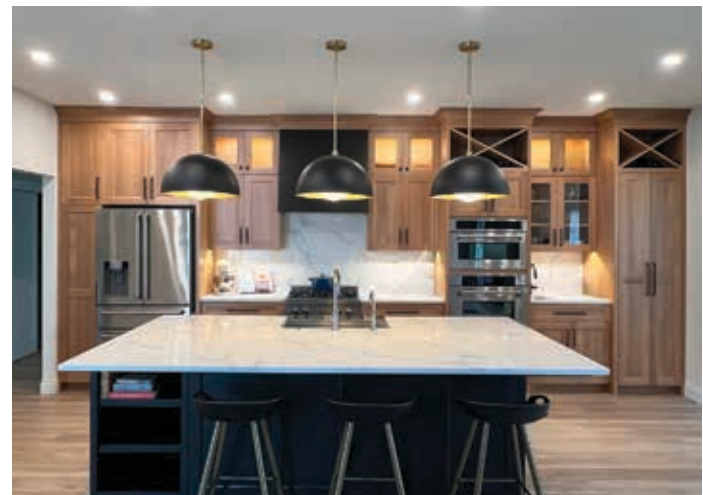
production potters. As Jocelyn explains, “A hobby potter is someone who is not trying to make a living. ... They’re making pottery because they love to do it.”

Artists apply for membership, and members range from an IU graduate student to an octogenarian. Jocelyn provides clay at cost and doesn’t charge glaze or firing fees.

Learn more at [srceramicsstudio.com](http://srceramicsstudio.com). —Nanette Esseck Brewer

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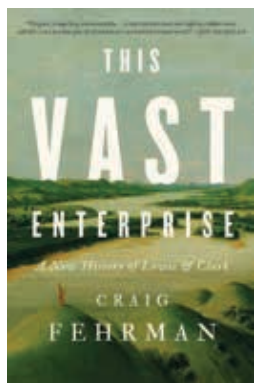


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# B-town's Craig Fehrman Authors 'A New History of Lewis & Clark'

Writing a “new” narrative about one of the greatest and most well-documented adventures in American history is no small undertaking, but Bloomington author and historian Craig Fehrman took up the challenge.



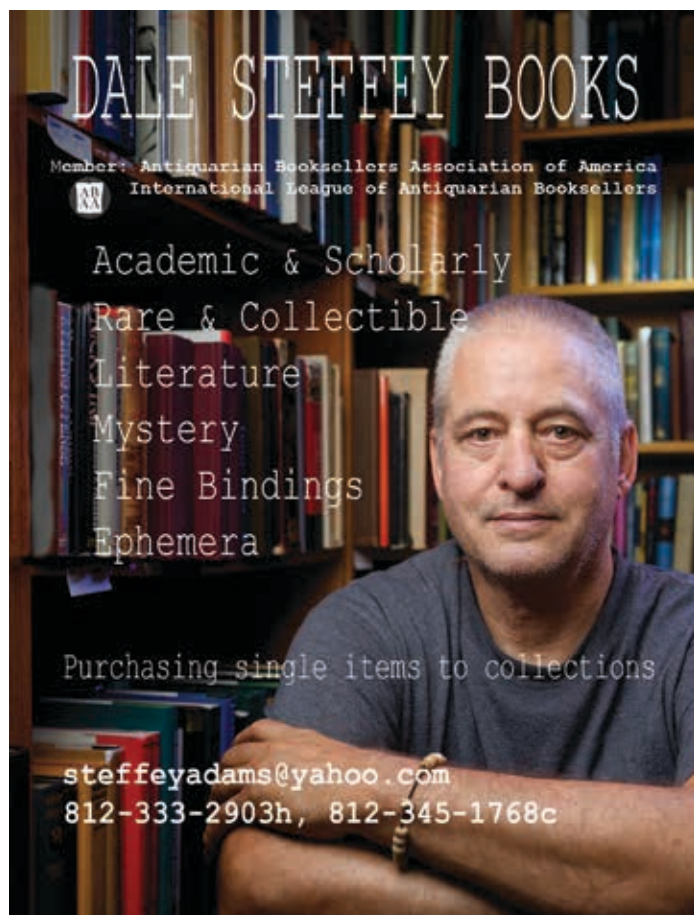
Written over the course of five years, *This Vast Enterprise: A New History of Lewis & Clark* (Avid Reader Press/Simon & Schuster, 2026) is a New York Times Best Seller that chronicles the two friends' journey from the Midwest to the foot of the Pacific Ocean from 1804 to 1807. Each chapter is told from a different pivotal person's perspective on the journey—including slaves and Native Americans—which Fehrman says was key to creating the sensation of time traveling for his audience.

“I wanted the reader to feel like they were in the canoe with Lewis ... and just experience life the way it felt in that time period,” says Fehrman. “It is a very human, very intimate narrative.”

As the father of two small children, juggling family responsibilities with the exhaustive research and writing of a narratively engaging historical account was challenging, Fehrman says. Half the 10 voices featured in



Author Craig Fehrman says he wanted readers of his new book, *This Vast Enterprise: A New History of Lewis & Clark*, to feel like they were in the canoe with Lewis. “It is a very human, very intimate narrative.” Photo by Katy Lengacher



this narrative are Native Americans, with one pivotal chapter about the Rocky Mountains told from Sacagawea's point of view. A map of upper Missouri and part of the Rockies drawn by then-Arikara tribal leader Piahito is featured in the back of the book. Fehrman interviewed current Clatsop tribal leaders in the Pacific Northwest to get a sense of their traditions and history to write the chapters told from Clatsop leader Coboway's point of view as accurately as possible.

“I could hear in their voices how much this history meant to them, but also the frustration of how it has been spun in ways that weren't true,” says Fehrman. “I had an obligation to do right by them while also following the facts.”

To give voice to key players with no written accounts such as York, a slave to Clark, Fehrman hunted up records of people in similar time periods and positions to get a sense of what they were feeling and thinking at the time.

“I found one account from a slave in Kentucky whose name was Lewis Clark but didn't include it in the book because I figured no one would believe it was his real name,” says Fehrman, laughing.

Fehrman also wrote *Author in Chief: The Untold Stories of Our Presidents and the Books They Wrote* (Avid Reader Press/Simon & Schuster, 2021). For more information, visit [craigfehrman.com](http://craigfehrman.com).  
—Elizabeth Ellis

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6. *Project Hail Mary (Movie Tie-In)* by Andy Weir
7. *People from Bloomington* by Budi Darma
8. *Hope Rises* by David Baldacci
9. *Agnes Aubert's Mystical Cat Shelter* by Heather Fawcett
10. *Remarkably Bright Creatures* by Shelby Van Pelt



## Non-Fiction Bestsellers

1. *Perfection! The Indiana Hoosiers' Journey to Their First-Ever National Championship* by KCI Sports Publishing
2. *Who Needs Friends* by Andrew McCarthy
3. *Everything Is Tuberculosis: The History and Persistence of Our Deadliest Infection* by John Green
4. *Never Daunted: Indiana's Perfect Run to the College Football National Championship* by *The Indianapolis Star/The Herald-Times*
5. *If I Don't Return: A Father's Wartime Journal* by Mark Hertling
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7. *One Day, Everyone Will Have Always Been Against This* by Omar El Akkad
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GRANFALLOON CONCERT SERIES  
AT SWITCHYARD PARK



## GRANFALLOON CONCERT SERIES AT SWITCHYARD PARK

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Saturday, June 20 at 7 pm: *Waxahatchee* (with Kathleen Edwards)

Saturday, July 18 at 7:30 pm: *Gillian Welch & David Rawlings*

Saturday, August 29 at 6 pm: *Durand Jones & the Indications* (with Jensen McRae and Angela Autumn)



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# Indiana Limestone Symposium For 30 Years Teaching Carving



(above) Beginner and more seasoned limestone carvers gather for the Indiana Limestone Symposium; (above right) Amy Brier, co-founder of the symposium, carves limestone by hand. Photos by Rodney Margison



The Indiana Limestone Symposium (ILS) celebrates its 30th anniversary this year, when 25 seasoned and beginning carvers will converge at Bybee Stone Company in Ellettsville for two weeks of education and practice in sculpting one of Indiana's prized natural resources.

The ILS will take place in two seven-day Art of Carving (AoC) sessions, June 7–20, outside near Bybee's employee parking lot.

The symposium supplies each AoC registrant with 8 cubic feet of limestone per session (1,200 pounds), a forklift, compressed air, electricity, and a pressure washer. Instructors offer technical guidance and help carving images. "Some do finish their projects in the two sessions," says Amy Brier, one of the instructors, co-founder of the symposium, and art department chair at Ivy Tech Community College Bloomington. Veteran AoC carvers typically create human figures, fountains, and abstract forms; beginners choose human faces, flowers, and little scenes.

AoC participants can carve anywhere from one to 14 days. Concomitant sessions include Carving by Hand for Adults and Kids (separately) and Stone Letter Carving.

"Working in limestone," Brier says, "you don't have to carve with a grain, and there's no sanding or polishing. It's soft, an easy stone to carve, and its color catches the light well. Limestone is America's building stone—it holds our memory."

Brier had worked as a limestone carver on the continued construction of New York City's Cathedral of St. John the Divine. She came to Bloomington to earn an MFA so she could teach and to live near limestone quarries, "But there was no stone carving instruction in Bloomington," she says. She met with sculptor Frank Young, then Bloomington Area Arts Council's executive director, and with Bybee Stone's permission, the two staged the first symposium. "Five carvers participated. It rained. We stood in mud up to our ankles and we had a great time."

The public may attend the symposium on Thursdays from 1–5 p.m. and June 14 at 5 p.m. for the 30th anniversary party.

Says Brier: "The symposium is a noncompetitive, congenial, and a supportive environment, and people surprise themselves with what they can do."

Visit [limestonesymposium.org](http://limestonesymposium.org). —Paul Bickley

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# Pop-Up Cicada Cinema Finds a Permanent Home

Cicada Cinema, Bloomington's only volunteer-run, nonprofit, community movie theater, embraces the slogan, "You get more out of life when you go out to a movie!" As a growing part of the city's downtown cultural scene, Cicada is switching from a pop-up model to establishing their first permanent theater.

Cicada began in October 2016 when a group of five local cinephiles purchased 60 theater chairs from an Indianapolis church, projection equipment, and a movie screen to show films at The Void, a DIY warehouse venue. When the building was torn down two years later for Switchyard Park, they started



(l-r) Nathan Brewer, Josh Brewer, Derek Navardauskas, Liz Sullivan, and Rachel Gressley are part of Cicada Cinema's dedicated volunteers who bring the movies to Bloomingtonians. *Courtesy photo*

screening films nomadically around Bloomington—in coffee shops, bars, parking lots, city parks, art galleries, and even other theaters. Their mission is to exhibit underseen, underscreened, and underrepresented films.

While Cicada initially programmed about one film per month, last year they screened more than 80 movies. Over the past decade this small grassroots group brought 299 movies to town, ranging from new art house releases and remastered classics to animation and genre films, and partnered with 45 community groups, including the Ryder film series, various Indiana University departments, and the City of Bloomington. They have served an audience of more than 10,000 people.

In addition to screenings, Cicada has hosted conversations with visiting actors, directors, and musicians, including Jesse Eisenberg, Rick Sebak, Mike McCarthy, Claire Rousay, John Paizs, and Swamp Dogg.

Despite their success as a pop-up, changing locations, hauling equipment, and showing a film only once has proved challenging. Co-founder and acting theater manager Josh Brewer notes, "It long seemed a bit unsustainable to continue that model. It's a lot of logistics, coordinating with different venues ... so we knew that we needed to look for a permanent space." After searching for a year, they located usable space in an industrial building at 615 N. Fairview St. on the Near Westside, just north of Butler Park. Designs for the 1,600-square-foot space include a 65-seat tiered auditorium with surround sound, lobby, concession area, and accessible parking. Cicada plans to open its theater in late August but will program free Movies in the Parks through the summer.

Learn more at [cicadacinema.com](http://cicadacinema.com). —*Nanette Esseck Brewer*



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# Turkuaz Cafe: New Owners Who Escaped from Kabul



Farid Amiri, co-owner of Turkuaz Cafe. Photo by Morgan Kraemer

In early 2024, Chef Shafik Nawab, longtime owner of Turkuaz Cafe on East 3rd Street, passed the baton to Afghan couple Farid Amiri and Nargis Orokzai. Having Turkish ancestors, Amiri says he knows the Turkish scene well. “I thought I could make a difference here,” he says. “Restaurants are hard work, but you need to challenge yourself.”

Renovations began. The popular floor seating area now features an oversized Afghan rug under the soft lighting of a Turkish chandelier. Dining at one of the regular tables may give you a view of the updated open-ish kitchen.

Amiri was also quick to revamp the menu—streamlining options, adding descriptions, and even including some phonetic transcriptions. “Pide,” the Turkish flatbread, for example, is pronounced *pee-deh*. He also refined the traditional red lentil soup recipe. “It’s a simple combination to respect the lentil: black pepper, mint, fresh garlic, and salt,” he says.

Amiri’s wife, Orokzai, accepted her own challenge; she now owns the tea shop next door, Kabul Corner. The couple’s life of running side-by-side Afghan-owned cafes sounds like a dream. But it wasn’t easy to achieve.

When the Taliban regime regained control of Afghanistan in 2021, the couple was among thousands of people attempting to flee Kabul, the capital city. With the help of contacts Amiri made while working in international finance, they were able to escape to France and then Germany, where they had close friends. While there, Amiri reinstated a deferred scholarship to Wake Forest Law School and was granted a student visa, while Orokzai was only granted a dependent visa, which allowed her to come with Amiri to the U.S. but restricted her from academic studies. Later with the help of the Indiana University Refugee Task Force, she was able to study at the O’Neill School of Public and Environmental Affairs, where she received a master’s degree.

After Amiri graduated from law school, he joined Orokzai in Bloomington and soon took over Turkuaz Cafe. “For the first year owning the restaurant, we worked closely together,” says Amiri. “We both learned how to make everything from scratch.

“The good thing about Turkish cuisine is that it’s not as spicy as some other cuisines. It’s comforting but also light and healthy.”

Visit [turkuazcafe.square.site](http://turkuazcafe.square.site) for more. —Heather Ray



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# bloomington & vine

BY JACK BAKER



## Make a Vacation of Trying New Wines

I'm no different than you, probably. I have favorite wines that I drink regularly, sauvignon blancs and pinot gris, Rhônes and cabernet sauvignons. But after a while I get bored and begin looking for something different. That doesn't mean I've given up on a wine, just that I'm taking a vacation.

And that's what I'm recommending for you. I want you to try some wines that are new to your palate, some you wouldn't normally try. Let's walk down the store aisle and select some alternative white wines. In a later article we'll look at some reds.

For example, here's a chardonnay that isn't oaked. Oak gives wines caramel and

butterscotch. Take it away and you have pure chardonnay, a wholly different drink. For a California version, try Joel Gott; for the Oregon version, try Chehalem.

And here's a sauvignon blanc with different extraction. The cool climate and limestone soils of the Loire Valley in France produce steely wines with green apple and pear. Taylor Swift has been spotted drinking one—a Domaine de Terres Blanches Sancerre. If you want to be like Tay Tay ...

And here are chenin blancs I'm hooked on at the moment: dry, savory, acidic Famille Bougrier Vouvray from the chalky limestone soil of France's Loire Valley; Badenhorst

Taylor Swift drinks this steely sauvignon blanc. *Courtesy photo*

Secateurs citrus, pear, and acid chenin blanc from South Africa; and Pine Ridge Chenin Blanc + Viognier white blend, a medium-body honeydew melon and stone from California's Central Valley. Try one with me.

Let's wander over to the Riesling section and look for a dry one. Riesling is normally too sweet for my taste, but a bone-dry Australian Pewsey Vale Vineyard, with its lime, honey, and smidge of diesel (yes, diesel), or a Washington State Chateau Ste. Michelle dry Riesling suits very well.

Not far from the Riesling shelves are the Austrian. We should try a Domane Wachau grüner veltliner, a dry Austrian medium-bodied wine, fresh with acid and traces of lime, grapefruit, and herbs.

A little-known wine in the U.S. that deserves more attention is torrontés from Argentina. Crios torrontés is a dry, medium-bodied wine with a floral nose. It is similar to muscat, crisp with sharp acid, tropical flavor nuances, and minerality.

Another South American wine worth your attention is made high up in the Elqui Valley of Chile. Mayu Winery makes Pedro Ximenez, a crisp, dry, medium-bodied wine with minerality, lime zest, and green apple notes. But don't be confused. This Pedro is not the Pedro of sweet sherries in southern Spain. Its terroir is just below the high-and-dry Atacama Desert.

So, take a vacation. Branch out. You can always go back home. And I will drink to that. ✨





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# 1915 Steakhouse

## New Upscale Eatery in Martinsville

by Heather Ray

Martinsville's new high-end restaurant, 1915 Steakhouse, opened last October after a three-year renovation of the historic building at 290 E. Morgan St. Owner Javier Ayala-Lopez purchased the 6,000-square-foot space with a vision for a dining destination.

Upon arrival, guests choose their own milieu: an intimate fine dining experience under the brick archways of a closed-off dining room or the speakeasy-meets-sports-bar area with an extensive collection of spirits and a menu featuring hand-crafted cocktails. Then there's the outdoor lounge with a view of brick murals and neighborhood gardens, complete with patio couches and fire pits.

Whichever the guests choose, the menu is the same. For dinner, General Manager Amber Arthur says, "Our signature is the tomahawk steak. It's not just the flavor of the cut. It's the presentation. It's stunning." But not everything has to be an over-the-top experience. "We have a big lunch crowd. Especially on the patio. People seem to enjoy the option of coming in for a quick Wagyu burger or smash burger," she says.

Arthur, who has experience serving as general manager for several chain restaurants in the area, says, "I've never had the privilege of working with this level of quality before. So much of what we make is made in-house from scratch. And everything is made fresh to order."

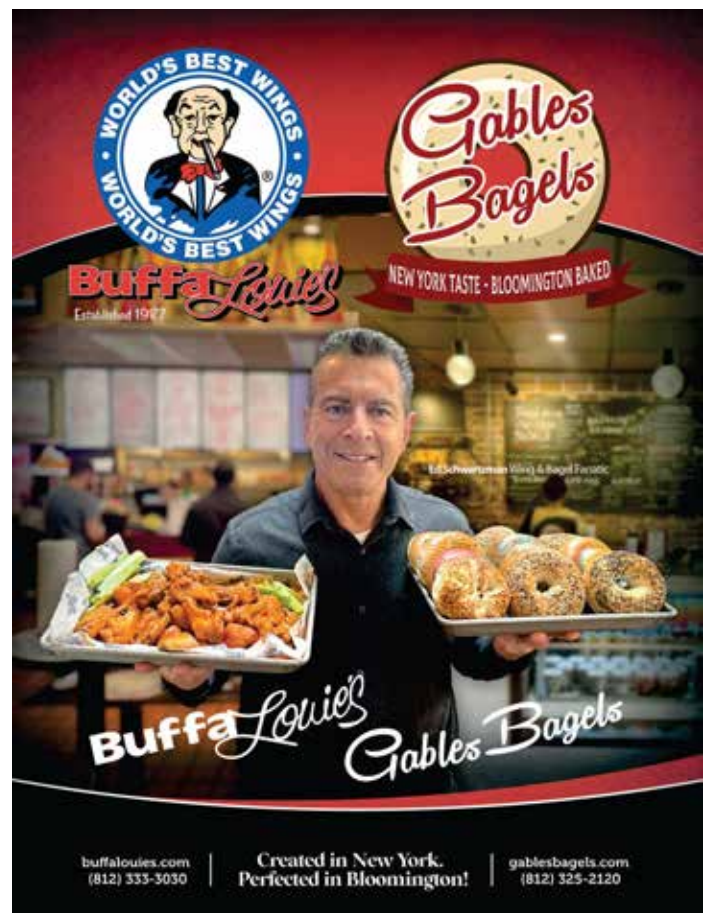
The history of the building adds to the experience, she says. "Construction for this building started in 1915 (hence the name). It was a car dealership and service area for years before transitioning into a machine shop dedicated to wartime production." She explains that the outer walls are original. The interior bricks are all refurbished from Martinsville buildings. The dining room features historic photographs of Martinsville. The chandeliers, lanterns, and ball lamps, however, are a personal touch from the owner. They're from his hometown of Puerto Vallarta, Mexico.

"[Alaya-Lopez] is big on giving back to the community," says Arthur. "That's why we sponsor so many events in town, especially ones that bring live music to the area." The restaurant has started hosting live musicians on weekends. Arthur is hoping to do more themed events this summer, like tiki nights, wine and canvas, and maybe cocktail workshops. "We're all working really hard to bring this destination scene to life," she says. ✨



Amber Arthur, general manager of 1915 Steakhouse in Martinsville.

Photo by Morgan Kraemer





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# 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 eighth installment in *Bloom*, Nick and Kathy prepared mole, the national dish of Mexico, the country immediately south of the United States, with a population of more than 130 million people.

This dish is a wonderful *mélange* with Native American and Spanish roots. Mole ("mulli") was first mentioned by the Spanish in the 16th century, but mole recipes only became common starting in the early 19th century. A key ingredient is chocolate, made from the cacao bean. Cacao originated in South and Central America, was domesticated by 1500 B.C., and was used by the Olmecs, the Inca, the Toltecs, the Maya, and the Aztecs.

Famous Mexicans include revolutionary figures Pancho Villa and Emiliano Zapata, artists Diego Rivera and Frida Kahlo, and director Guillermo del Toro. Famous Mexican-Americans include Nobel Laureate Luis Alvarez (Physics), Supreme Court Justice Sonia Sotomayor, astronaut Ellen Ochoa, four-star general Richard Cavazos, actor Anthony Quinn, actress Selma Hayak, musicians Richie Valens, Trini Lopez, Carlos Santana, Selena Quintanilla, Linda Ronstadt, and the bands Los Lobos and Los Lonely Boys.



Mole, the national dish of Mexico, pairs well with a Mexican beer and music by Los Lobos, says our pair of columnists. Courtesy photo

## MOLE

### Ingredients

#### *For simmering chicken*

4 chicken drumsticks  
4 bone-in skinless chicken thighs  
1/2 white onion, sliced  
1 garlic clove, crushed  
1 celery stick  
2 parsley sprigs  
8 cups of water  
Salt to taste

#### *To simmer, then put in blender*

15-ounce can tomatoes  
1 white onion, sliced  
1 garlic clove  
1 toasted corn tortilla (browned lightly in a dry skillet)  
1/4 cup raw almonds  
1/4 cup raw peanuts  
1/4 cup raisins

#### *Mole sauce*

5 cups chicken broth (from simmering chicken)  
1 jar (8.25 oz) Dona Maria mole  
1/2 tablet Mexican chocolate (brand names include Abeullita, Ibarra, Taza, etc.)  
1/4 teaspoon ground cinnamon  
1/4 teaspoon ground anise seed

#### *Garnish*

Toasted sesame seeds  
Chopped cilantro

### Directions

1. Simmer chicken with 1/2 white onion, garlic, celery, parsley, and water for 45 minutes. Keep chicken on a warming plate and keep the strained chicken broth.
2. Put tomatoes, one white onion (sliced), one garlic clove, and one toasted corn tortilla, the almonds, peanuts, and raisins in a pot, cover with water, and simmer for 10 minutes. Strain the mixture, keeping the solids, and then blend the solids in a blender into a thick sauce, adding some broth if necessary.
3. Combine the blended sauce with 5 cups of the reserved chicken stock, the Dona Maria mole sauce, the Mexican chocolate, the ground cinnamon, and the ground anise. Bring to a boil. The sauce should be the consistency of a thick gravy. Add some more broth if too thick. Add some cornstarch (mixed with a bit of water) if too thin. Add salt to taste.
4. Add chicken to the sauce and simmer for 10 minutes.
5. To serve, garnish with toasted sesame seeds and chopped cilantro.

This dish pairs well with a Mexican beer (with a lime slice) and music by Los Lobos. ✨

fashion/shopping

# New Leadership at Pillar Arts Working to Empower Artists



by Aaron B. Cohen

Bloomington already has a reputation as an arts town. Danielle Bruce and her colleagues at Pillar Arts say they are working to make it even better.

Bruce is the new president of Pillar Arts, which formerly was called Arts Alliance of Greater Bloomington.

“The new name denotes something foundational, something strong,” she explains. “It reflects our intention to further empower artists. They’re entrepreneurs, and we can provide resources while helping them understand how to run a business.”

Bruce exudes enthusiasm about the organization’s mission: “to strengthen and sustain the arts by connecting artists, cultural organizations, and artistic endeavors with patrons and the community.”

The Arts Alliance Center at College Mall is the organization’s hub; at 8,500 square feet, it’s the largest contemporary commercial art gallery in Monroe County. And last year Pillar Arts acquired By

Hand Gallery in Fountain Square. Both spaces showcase handcrafted ceramics, fiber art, jewelry, photography, woodwork, glass, paintings, and more.

The Alliance Center also hosts workshops, performances, and events by local and regional artists.

Creativity is one foundation of a thriving arts culture. Income and financial stability for artists and art organizations also are critical, says Charles R. Pearce, Pillar Arts executive director.

“We’re a revenue forward organization,” he says. “Arts are better if your mission can meet an economic test.” That means connecting artists with patrons and reducing reliance on grants.

Pearce is proud that the retail gallery spaces are making Pillar Arts a “profitable nonprofit” and that the organization’s financial success does not come at the expense of the artists.

“The commission on sales is only 15%, which is the lowest anywhere,” he says.

Membership in the 501(c)(3) organization costs \$25 to \$45 a year ▶

(l-r) Minka Wiltz, Danielle Bruce, Charles R. Pearce; (below) handcrafted jewelry on display; (below right) one of the multiple exhibit spaces in Pillar Arts, Monroe County’s largest contemporary commercial art gallery. Photos by Morgan Kraemer





(above) The 8,500-square-foot space includes ample room for this “public piano;” (below) an eclectic mix of cards, prints, and ceramics.

depending on category. Benefits include reduced performance space rental fees, gallery display consideration, an artist directory, and marketing and public relations support.

To advance that effort, Pillar Arts has applied for a grant from the Readi 2.0 Arts and Culture Initiative, funded by the Indiana Economic Development Corporation in partnership with the Indiana Arts Commission. “Our vision is a creative arts hub in the former *Herald-Times* building, with communal workspaces, workshops, and a café,” Bruce says. ✧



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# Critter Glitter

## A Shop for the Well-Dressed Pet

by Rosie Piga Pizzo

During a time when Donna DuPuis had three dogs and eight cats, she found herself wanting to buy every cute outfit and accessory she found for them.

DuPuis then decided the next best thing would be to own a store featuring stylish pet fashion, so she opened Critter Glitter in February 2025.

Located at 118 S. Rogers St., the shop features fashionable pet clothing, collars, jewelry, hats, and socks. For the humans, merchandise includes

jewelry from Paparazzi, tiaras, and pet-themed clothing and accessories. DuPuis refers to the front of the boutique as “furry fashionistas” and the back as “fabulous you.”

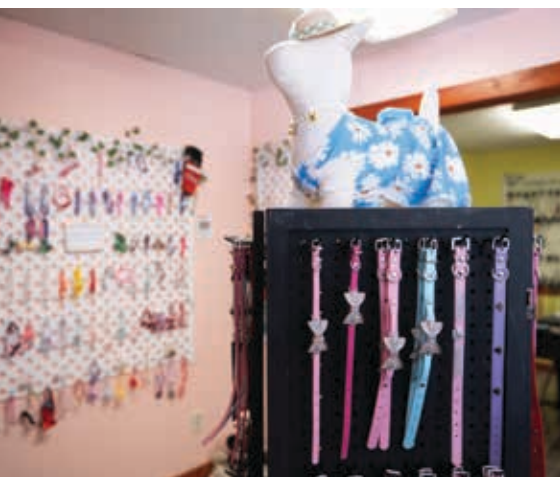
A deeper reason to open Critter Glitter stemmed from a previous career in the entertainment industry as a songwriter and performer. “I faced a lot of judgment and got tired of it,” she says. “There’s enough negativity in the world.”

As a result, she makes every customer feel welcome and seen. “Everyone is special, and I want them to feel special when they come in,” she says.

She says customers appreciate her bold and specialized pet fashion that can’t be found in big box stores. DuPuis keeps her prices affordable with most items \$20 or less. She says, “If I can bring you happiness with something you couldn’t afford elsewhere, then I’ve made your day by offering it for less.” ▶



Donna DuPuis opened Critter Glitter in February 2025. Photos by Sarah Slover



Some “furry fashionista” items include collars with sparkles, pearls, and bows; tiny hats; rompers; and more.





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Kitty-inspired sunglasses and bag.

DuPuis encourages customers to bring their pets to try on clothing. She recalls a young couple, visiting from the state of Washington, who wanted their dog to be a part of their wedding ceremony. “The dog tried on several things, and they found the perfect little suit,” she says. DuPuis also works with Susan Gaw out of Indianapolis, who creates custom outfits for \$40, particularly for larger breeds.

Customers’ pets have become their own form of advertisement for Critter Glitter, according to DuPuis. “They love parading their pets around with outfits from my shop, and I get a lot of word of mouth because of that.”

Critter Glitter’s hours are 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. Monday through Saturday, or shop online at [critterglitter.com](http://critterglitter.com). ✨

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# 'Connecting Neighbors' Offers First-Hand Help for Dementia

by Susan M. Brackney

Growing older has its challenges. Growing older with dementia can be more challenging still. "Sometimes what you need is just to talk to somebody who's been in your shoes who can tell you what helped them," Dayna Thompson says. Thompson has worked in dementia care for more than a decade and chairs Dementia Friendly Bloomington.

"What we're really trying to focus on with our Connecting Neighbors program is just having that neighbor who can meet you where you are," she continues. To that end, Connecting Neighbors volunteers serve as sounding boards who can also connect people with potentially helpful dementia-related resources.

The program developed in response to feedback from those in the dementia community. "Particularly when they might not have a diagnosis yet or they have just received a diagnosis," Thompson explains, "people may not know who to ask or where resources might be or even what to ask for."

Connecting Neighbors is intended to bridge those gaps. Having launched in January, the program itself is still very new with one match-up so far. A man navigating early-stage dementia has been connected with a married couple with plenty of dementia-related experience. "We have a [volunteer] who has been living with dementia herself for a while and has figured out a lot of great strategies for living well," Thompson explains. "I thought she would



Dayna Thompson chairs Dementia Friendly Bloomington. Photo by Morgan Kraemer

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be a great person for him to talk to. Her husband goes with her mostly because he's her driver, but also to be support for her if there are things that she feels like she's forgetting that he might like to add."

Connecting with others in this way can benefit everyone involved. "There's so much research out now about the importance of social engagement on brain health," Thompson says. "People are recognizing that it's just as important as physical exercise."

"There's a lot of life to be lived after dementia, and, if you have the right supports in place, you can continue to live a meaningful and engaged life," Thompson adds.

To learn more about the Connecting Neighbors program email [daynathompson812@gmail.com](mailto:daynathompson812@gmail.com). ✨



# The DOCTOR Is In

BY DR. ROB STONE

## Healthcare for All!

Today we are closer to universal healthcare than America has ever been. I'm serious—hear me out.

This November 2026, it's *plausible* that Democrats will take control of the U.S. House of Representatives. In January of 2027, there is a *likelihood* that a Democratically controlled House will aggressively move to counter President Trump, including impeachment, while it remains less likely that impeachment would lead to conviction. Either way, in 2028, it is *plausible* that Democrats will win control of the White House and both houses of Congress, and that in 2029, healthcare for all legislation will pass. We can have universal care starting in 2030.

According to the Commonwealth Fund's health survey, reported in 2023, the United States, among high-income countries, has "the lowest life expectancy at birth, the highest death rates for avoidable or treatable conditions, the highest maternal and infant mortality, and among the highest suicide rates." And yet, healthcare spending has remained far higher in the U.S. than in other high-income countries, all of which have universal healthcare coverage. Their plans don't allow for-profit insurance companies and private equity takeovers. Economists and the U.S. Congressional Budget Office believe eliminating them would cut at least 30% of healthcare spending. That's enough savings to take care of everyone and have money left over.

We can afford to take care of everyone. We are spending plenty of money. That makes getting to universal care much easier than it would be otherwise. Dr. Alan Sager at Boston University School of Public Health has written a book, *The Easiest*, which begins: "*Affordable high-quality healthcare for all is the easiest problem to fix in the*

*United States. Not easy, just easier than any of the others—because we already spend enough. And the most strategic, because unless we fix healthcare, we won't be able to find the money to address the others.*"

Even though the arguments in favor are persuasive, people throw up their hands and say, "It will never happen! The insurance companies are too powerful."

Healthcare is easy compared to the enormity of fixing climate change, which is killing us, literally. Do we give up on working to save our planet because it's "impossible"? No.

We know healthcare can be done because every other wealthy democracy has figured it out. Medicare has been taking care of the oldest, sickest, and most expensive of us since 1965. Medicare can be expanded to start at birth. When Medicare was created in 1965, they implemented it in one year. This was before computers. They literally did it with index cards.

Meanwhile our market-based system is designed to produce profits, not health. It's the profiteers, the for-profit insurance companies, including Medicare Advantage, pharmacy benefit managers and private equity takeovers—all things that none of our peer countries allow.

Our market-based system is in market failure. We can't keep trying to tinker with "reforms" or incremental fixes.

The solution is elegantly simple: Disrupt the market by eliminating the middlemen. It's called disintermediation. Like what Uber or Airbnb or Amazon did to their markets.

Simple but not easy, because there is a lot of money at stake. But that's why it is so important. We can't afford not to. Healthcare for all: everybody in—nobody out. What are we waiting for? \*



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MAGAZINE

# Conservation Law Center Protecting Land and Water

“There was a hole in the conservation community,” says Christian Freitag, executive director of the Conservation Law Center (CLC). Land trusts and other nonprofit environmental organizations were fighting to preserve land and water resources, “but many couldn’t afford sound legal advice.”

To fill that hole, W. William Weeks founded CLC at Indiana University in 2005 to provide free legal counsel to conservation organizations primarily in Indiana and the Midwest, although recent projects have taken the center’s staff of attorneys, advocates, and educators as far away as Africa.

Today, CLC projects fall into three main categories: land conservation,

water, and biodiversity.

Since its founding, CLC has protected more than 30,000 acres, including the Busseron Creek Area near Terre Haute. Busseron, Freitag says, “was one of the wildest places in Indiana. We were the main nonprofit behind putting the money together to buy the 4,000 acres. It is now owned by the state and open to the public.”

The second focus is water and wetland conservation, improving water quality, and managing water resources sustainably. That includes work along Indiana’s Lake Michigan coastline. “The Indiana dunes were surrounded by heavy



Christian Freitag, executive director of the Conservation Law Center.  
Photo by Sarah Slover

industry,” Freitag says. “We led efforts to prevent privatization of the dunes. We sued the state to take over the beaches, and they are now public beaches.”

The third focus of CLC’s work is biodiversity. One project took staff to Costa Rica to study habitat preservation for a species of macaw. Another took them to Africa. In Tanzania, where, for example, elephants could raid a farm, “we were asked to research laws affecting human-wildlife contact,” Freitag says.

Closer to home, CLC is working on conservation of the Indiana bat, an endangered species.

The center also runs an environmental law clinic at IU’s Mauer School of Law, with a focus on conservation. “The students work with us on our projects,” says Freitag. They even accompany CLC staff on foreign projects. “It’s a great opportunity for the students,” he says. “Most won’t go into environmental law, but they will be more sensitive to environmental issues. Teaching really is at the core of what we do.”

IU provides the students, tech support, and office space for the center, but its conservation projects are funded by foundation grants and private donations.

—Janet Mandelstam

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# Citizen Scientist

BY SUSAN M. BRACKNEY

## Better News for Monarch Butterflies? Help Researchers See the Full Picture

You might notice a few more monarch butterflies this summer compared to last, and researchers need your help to better understand why.

Monarch butterfly populations have been in free fall since the 2000s, but a recent World Wildlife Fund–Mexico report may offer a glimmer of hope. Scientists analyzed changes in the amount of forest cover in the specialized areas of Mexico where monarch butterflies overwinter and determined that nine hibernating colonies occupied 7.24 acres of forest in 2025—up from just 4.42

acres during the previous year. That amounts to an estimated 64% increase in their population size.

In part that may be due to a decrease in the amount of forest degradation caused by illegal logging, forest fires, and drought, among other factors. But there is another side to this equation. When the



A monarch butterfly nectaring on a cleome flower. Courtesy photo

Eastern North American monarchs migrate northward to Bloomington and beyond, they rely on milkweed and nectar-rich flowers along the way. For the last several years, conservation-minded gardeners, landscapers, and the lay public have added native flowers and milkweed to give migrating monarchs a boost. Those efforts might finally be paying off.

Researchers with the Xerces Society for Invertebrate Conservation have been monitoring monarch butterflies as they stop to fuel up on floral nectar during their migration. The group’s Monarch

Nectar Plant Database includes eight years’ worth of observational data submitted by monarch butterfly experts across the U.S. In the hopes of generating a larger and more robust dataset, however, members of the public are now encouraged to submit their own monarch nectaring observations.

“Given the plight of the monarch butterfly, we need

this data more than ever to guide habitat restoration and protection quickly,” notes Ray Moranz, a pollinator conservation specialist with the Xerces Society for Invertebrate Conservation.

### How It Works

You don’t have to have a green thumb or a garden to participate, but you will need access to a decent camera and an internet connection. If you spy a monarch butterfly sipping nectar from a flower, snap a good photo. Should you happen to miss getting the shot of the butterfly as it feeds, no worries. In that case, snap separate photos of the butterfly and its nectar source.

Next, open the Monarch Nectar Plant Database survey online at [magbloom.com/monarch-database](http://magbloom.com/monarch-database). You’ll be asked to upload the relevant photos along with your name, email, the specific location of the flower as well as the plant species—data about native plants are most valuable.

Not sure which plants are native? Visit [magbloom.com/plant-guides](http://magbloom.com/plant-guides) to consult regional native plant guides which highlight many of the most common nectar-rich natives. You can also email additional notes and data to [nectarformonarchs@xerces.org](mailto:nectarformonarchs@xerces.org). ✨



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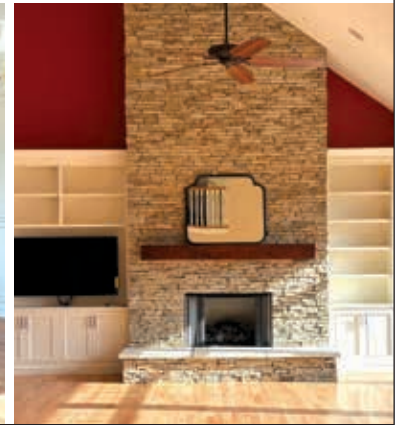
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## To Understand Autism Don't Rely on TikTok

I have worked with the Indiana Institute on Disability and Community (on the campus of Indiana University) since July 2017. Without question, my favorite part of the job is doing class visits and talking to students who may want to work in fields related to serving kids and adults with autism and developmental disability.

I talk about my personal, lived experiences of autism and/or other diagnoses, but I also discuss clinical manifestation, supports and services, co-occurring conditions, and

more through real-life stories and examples. However, one thing I do mention prior to every visit is that I am not a licensed physician or provider. I am an adult on the spectrum and can only comment on my individual experience.

Students may share that they saw a video of someone with autism on TikTok or YouTube, for example, and may ask if I have had a similar experience. I don't mind such a question. Social media has a massive hold on our society, particularly teens and

young adults. I would also estimate that most students I speak to do not have an autism diagnosis and may not be relatives or caregivers to someone with the disorder. They are trying to gain an understanding of what the world of autism may entail in a way that is accessible to them.

Where I think social media platforms may cause harm lies in their tendency to showcase content depicting individuals with fewer support needs. That's opposed to those who may be diagnosed with severe or profound autism who require 24/7 care and support, are either minimally verbal or nonverbal, may have little understanding of danger, or experience co-occurring intellectual disability, self-injury, and other behaviors.

According to an April 2023 report from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, more than one in four individuals with autism in the U.S. is diagnosed at the level of profound autism.

In an August 2023 paper titled "The Reach and Accuracy of Information on Autism on TikTok," researchers examined the top 133 videos associated with the #autism hashtag that provide informational content on autism. They coded each as accurate, inaccurate, or overgeneralized based on current clinical knowledge surrounding autism. Only 27% were found to be accurate, while 41% were classified as inaccurate and 32% as overgeneralized.

If all future providers have seen is a TikTok video, that tends to be a skewed and infinitesimal glimpse of just one person's life with autism.

I tell students that if they want to learn how to fold their bedsheets faster, go to TikTok. If they want to learn how to make cute designs in their coffee, go to TikTok. If they want to learn how to teach their dog to spin in the air and catch a Frisbee, go to TikTok. But if they want to learn about autism or any branch of medicine, go to a library or a peer-reviewed academic journal.

Accuracy matters. Understanding the whole picture matters. Current clinical research matters. Funding for services throughout the lifespan matters. All these things matter a lot more than the number of likes for a two-minute video.

To inquire about a potential speaking engagement, email Adria at [anassim@iu.edu](mailto:anassim@iu.edu) or Nora Loechel, director of strategic communications, at [nloechel@iu.edu](mailto:nloechel@iu.edu). \*

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# B-town Newcomers & Neighbors Club

## How to Make Friends & Get Involved



by Craig Coley

For adults who move here at any stage of life, the Bloomington Newcomers & Neighbors Club can help them form friendships in their new community. The club has more than 25 interest groups ranging from dominoes to hiking to breakfast groups. “It’s a very good way to make new friends and get acquainted with the community and get involved in things that interest you,” says George Korinek, 87.

Korinek and his wife, Mary, were retired when they relocated to Bloomington in 1998, drawn to the opportunities to attend concerts offered by the Indiana University School of Music. They learned about the Newcomers club about a year later and quickly joined groups that gathered for golf, bridge, and dinner parties. “Almost everyone that we are friends with today are people we met through membership in the club,” Korinek says.

When it started in the 1980s, the club’s early members were mostly women who had recently moved to town with young children. It later opened to people who had lived here for some time but found themselves wanting connection. Today the group has more than 200 members and hosts four annual events. It organizes excursions to places like



(above left, l-r) Newcomers members Dennis Patterson and George Korinek at the club’s Spring Fling dinner at Oliver Winery; (right, top) Ramona Pound and other members gather together at one of the club’s luncheon meetings at the American Legion; (right, l-r) Heidi Reiter and Susan Montgomery at the Canasta group. Photos by John DePaemelaere

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French Lick and also serves as an umbrella for groups that gather to craft, discuss books or topics, and play card games.

Most of today’s members are of retirement age. Many join after a major life change such as divorce or death of a spouse. “A lot are joining because all of a sudden they find themselves alone,” says Ramona Pound, the club’s publicity and communications coordinator.

Others, like Heidi Reiter, came to be closer to their adult children and grandchildren. Reiter and her husband, Ron, relocated from Ohio in 2013. “I was busy babysitting my grandkids,” Reiter says. “I told my husband, ‘We need to start meeting some people our own age.’” Playing pickleball at the YMCA, they met people who were members of the Newcomers club, attended the summer picnic, and become members themselves.

Learn more at [bloomingtonnnc.com](http://bloomingtonnnc.com). ✧

# B-town Is Having A Mahjong Moment!



(left, l-r) Marcy Neiditz, Lisa Thomassen, Sonia Cohen, and Debra Kloosterman begin a new game of mahjong; (right) each player needs their own mahjong set, which includes 166 tiles, dice, racks, scoring chips, and a carrying case.  
Photos by Jim Krause



When Sonia Cohen bought a house in Bloomington after years in Chicago, she needed more than an address to feel at home. She needed to play mahjong.

The ancient Chinese board game known as mah-jongg, which first became popular in America more than 100 years ago and is now known by its Americanized name mahjong, is experiencing a resurgence according to *The Wall Street Journal*.

“It’s a way to form community while having fun,” Cohen explains. “You get to know the people you play with week after week. It gives me a boost.”

For Cohen, finding a game was easy. For years, her sister, Deb Kloosterman, has hosted a “mahj” group in her home. Cohen joined that group and another that meets informally at the Bloomington Country Club.

Lunch or snacks are part of the draw, but “the game’s the ‘thing,’” Cohen says.

Mahj sets are tactile, complex, and often have provenance. Many aficionados, including Cohen and Kloosterman, inherited sets from their mothers. American mahjong sets include 166 tiles, dice, four racks, scoring chips, and a carrying case. There are four players per game; groups usually have multiple games going at once.

Each player needs their own set and the Official Standard Hands and Rules Card issued annually by the National Mah Jongg League, which standardized the American game in 1937 and now has over 350,000 members.

Older women were the stereotypical American mahjong players, but that’s

changing fast. In Bloomington younger women are taking the scene by storm.

Trish Smith makes it her business to help learning the game “feel less intimidating and a lot more fun.” A certified instructor, she has taught more than 250 people to play.

Aubrey Williams, who learned from Smith, is spreading the mahj gospel—“the tactile

feel, the sound of the tiles, the lovely ritual”—to millennials. She now plays with 20- to 80-somethings and has taught her husband and 8-year-old son to play.

“Playing has become almost an obsession,” she says.

Watch for upcoming Mah Jongg events at Oliver Winery, Heartwork Brewing, and other venues. Visit [mahjinbloom.com](http://mahjinbloom.com) for information on learning the game, events, and more. —Aaron B. Cohen

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# Dave Askins at City Hall

of B Square Bulletin



## City Employees Beware Your Chats Can Get You 86'd

If you work for the City of Bloomington and exchange apparently derogatory messages with a coworker on a government channel, you can both be fired for them a few years later.

That's one conclusion based on records requests made by *The B Square Bulletin* after two City employees were fired in mid-February.

Based on City records, both of their firings were based on messages they appear to have exchanged only with each other,

which the City determined to reflect a pattern of Google Chats that were "not professional, nor in the best interest of the City of Bloomington."

The first of the Google Chats was sent in June 2023, which was more than 2 1/2 years before they were fired. The final Google Chat was sent in June 2025, more than six months before they were terminated.

For readers wondering how Google Chats could fall under government control, the City uses Google Workspace as a way for

employees to manage their documents, email, and internal messaging.

According to the City's termination letters, officials "became aware" of the Google Chats on February 9. The termination letters are dated February 10, which is one day later. That turnaround reflects urgency and efficiency.

The stated reason for the termination was that the employees "used language and expressed sentiments towards members of the public that were inconsistent with the City's values ... and were about persons with whom the employees were asked to work."

Still a mystery is why someone with administrative privileges decided to look at the record of Google Chats, sometime around February 9. It seems like there's no written record of the reason. The City claims that no records matched *The B Square's* request for "emails, memoranda, messages, or other communications requesting, directing, authorizing, or discussing the search, review, or export of Google Workspace communications" related to the two employees.


The City also claims that no records matched *The B Square's* request for any general written policies that address when and under what circumstances City personnel may search or review employee communications and who is authorized to conduct such searches.

Google Vault is a tool that lets organizations search employee accounts. In the log files for Google Vault, which *The B Square* requested, there are some searches for the communications by the two employees in October 2025, but nothing else until February 11, 2026. That's two days after City officials say they discovered the offensive Google Chats.

After IT produced some additional records that provided no additional clarity, I asked Bloomington Mayor Kerry Thomson to review the matter. Her response, in part: "We do not discuss personnel matters; therefore, we will not share information clarifying how the chats were discovered."

That's a clear takeaway: If you work for the City of Bloomington, the words you type on a government system may be retrieved a couple years later and used to fire you, and nobody has to explain how or why they got access to what you wrote. ✨

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# New Hops ‘Discovered’ Here Could Revolutionize Brewing



by Michael G. Glab

The plant alongside Mike Baker’s shed might appear to be a weed. But he discovered it could be the start to a valuable commercial crop.

That crop is a new, unique variety of hops, born from a “mother” plant that was brought from England some 150 years ago. Baker discovered the plant soon after he and his wife, Bev, purchased Clearview Farm, northwest of Bloomington, in 1979. He paid no attention to it until his friend, Indiana University evolutionary biologist Michael Wade, saw the plant 40 years later.

Wade’s son, Travis, had recently started a genetics testing company with one of Wade’s postdocs, Doug Drury. Travis and Drury took samples of the plant for analysis. “We were humoring my dad,” Travis says. “Then it turned out to be a way bigger thing than we first thought.”

Drury found that the plant was a variety of hops but, Travis adds with a laugh, one that “did not exist yet.”

The plant matched none of the American hops cultivars known at the time. And since Indiana is not hospitable for hops growing—it’s too hot and humid in the growing season—the plant was in an unlikely location.

(l-r) Travis Wade and Mike Baker, co-founders of CV Hops LLC. Photo by Martin Boling

Yet, Baker’s hops plants were thriving, having evolved to flourish in this area. And they may be a game changer for Indiana growers.

Around that time, Yakima Valley in Washington state, the center of American hop-growing, was experiencing unprecedented heat and its hops were being suffused with wildfire smoke. As a result, the domestic hop-growing industry had been searching for new homes.

Travis and Drury created several new strains from Baker’s “mother” plant. They and Baker formed a company, CV Hops LLC, to patent and market one that they named CV-12.

CV-12 yields large hop cones and produces them the first year of planting, both qualities unheard of in other hops cultivars. It’s also unusually resistant to disease, fungus, and pests.

The company (Drury has since dropped out) now partners with Sandy Ridge Farms in Michigan to sell the plant to growers, and Hanley Hops of Indianapolis to sell the processed hops to brewers. The hope is that CV-12 will kickstart a new American hop-growing center in Indiana.

Bloomington Brewing Company has produced two test batches of beer using CV-12. Baker and Wade have staged tastings at Lennie’s Brewpub, with positive results. “People really liked it,” Baker says. “It was very fruity. And it didn’t have bitterness.”

For more information, visit [cvhops.us](http://cvhops.us). ✨



CV-12 produces large hop cones in the first year of planting. Courtesy photo



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A photograph of Angela and Herb Caldwell in an art gallery. Angela, a woman with short grey hair, is standing and smiling, wearing a black sweater with a colorful sun-like pin. Herb, a man with glasses, is sitting in a red leather chair, also smiling, wearing a grey blazer over a blue and white checkered shirt. The background shows a gallery wall with several framed artworks.

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**—Angela and Herb Caldwell**  
*The Herbert and Angela Caldwell  
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*Photo taken at the I Fell Gallery, where Angela is a resident artist.*

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# Developer Peter Dvorak Is Back And He's Bought The Batman



Real estate developer Peter Dvorak's Pinnacle Asset Management recently purchased The Batman at West Kirkwood and South Madison St. Photo by Martin Boling

by Kristen Senz

Before the 2008 financial crisis, real estate developer Peter Dvorak lived on the fourth floor of The Kirkwood apartments downtown. Outside his window, a historic city landmark just down the block drew his eye and his imagination: The Batman.

Built in 1895 by John Waldron Sr. as a wedding gift for his daughter Mary and son-in-law, attorney Ira Batman, the Victorian-era home beckoned Dvorak, with its distinctive turrets and imposing presence on West Kirkwood. He'd already preserved and renovated the Allen Building, which houses The Uptown Cafe, and the Buskirk-Showers Mansion on North Walnut.

"I really like historic properties, far more than new construction," says Dvorak, 58, whose Bloomington-based Pinnacle Asset Management recently purchased The Batman, a major step in rebuilding his business after the mortgage crisis led him to file bankruptcy.

"I lost everything," he says, recalling how the unraveling began when key lender National City Bank started calling in loans across a portfolio then totaling more than 5 million square feet of commercial space spread over six states. He says felony allegations that he sold unregistered securities stemmed from interpersonal disputes and were dismissed with prejudice and later expunged. Dvorak moved to Naples, Florida, where he remarried, raised a family, and worked to rehabilitate his credit. "I'm in the early stages of a comeback," he says.

The same can be said for The Batman. After two years and 82 auctions, the antique store formerly housed there and owned by the late Dennis and Nancy Garrett, has now been emptied of furniture, art glass, and other assorted treasures, including a copy of the first-ever issue of *Playboy* and a full-size horse-drawn sleigh, which was removed from the attic by crane. A few remnants of the building's

earlier uses as a funeral home and, later, union offices, remain.

Dvorak intends to preserve the historic character of the building while bringing the interior up to modern standards. He's considering potentially expanding the footprint to house commercial space and hasn't ruled out a residential unit or two in the upper floors.

Dvorak is pleased to be back in Bloomington and back in the real estate game. In Florida, after the financial crash, Dvorak says he became the largest franchisee of CPR Cell Phone Repair nationwide, owning 22 stores, which he has since sold. "I discovered that my passion is real estate, not retail," he says. ✧



The Batman was built in 1895 by John Waldron Sr. as a wedding gift for his daughter Mary and son-in-law Ira Batman. Photo by Rodney Margison

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# Stahl Home Center Now Open on the West Side

Ty Osborne wants customers visiting his expanded and relocated Stahl Home Center to have an enjoyable outing—not just a shopping jaunt for a piece of furniture.

“I want to make this a true experience,” says Osborne, who reopened the nearly 60-year-old family furniture business in January. “We want to connect with our customers and have them enjoy their time with us.”

He has big plans for the 88,000-square-foot showroom, including an indoor walking track, café, and movies playing with immersive sound systems in showroom furniture displays. “It blows my wildest dreams out of the water,” he says.

The center, which leases the former At Home store site at 3175 W. 3rd St., is more than four times larger than the previous 20,000-square-foot Stahl Furniture & Mattress at 515 S. Walnut. Osborne closed his business there in late 2025, seeking a better and bigger location.

“I love this location,” says Osborne, 58, whose son,



Ty Osborne, owner of Stahl Home Center, says plans for the new 88,000-square-foot showroom “blows my wildest dreams out of the water.” Photo by Martin Boling



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Dylan, 29, manages the store. “I couldn’t be happier. If I was a little younger, I’d do cartwheels,” he jokes. Osborne’s late father, Gary, and brother, Wade, who now lives in Florida, previously owned Stahl.

Stahl carries a wide range of dining room and bedroom suites, sofas, sectionals, mattresses, La-Z-Boys, massage chairs, entertainment centers, office furniture, and Amish-built furniture from Indiana and Ohio. Osborne says he has 7,000 recliners, mostly La-Z-Boys—the largest Midwest inventory.

“With the additional space, our inventory on the floor increased four times,” he says, explaining he previously kept more pieces in a warehouse. The store now also offers some less expensive furniture, along with mid-range and upper-end pieces, he adds.

Osborne expects the walking track to be ready by June or earlier, so people can shop and get in their steps. Later, he intends to open a café with snacks and drinks.

For more information, call 812-955-9827 or visit stahlfurn.com. —Barb Berggoetz



Left to right:  
Patricia Cox, Dawn Craft,  
Ilene Schaeffer, Jean Emery,  
Laura Hash

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# WOMEN IN BUSINESS

The women in this section either own and operate their own business or have been chosen by their employer as an exceptional and appreciable contributor to their team. Here are their stories.



Kristi Gibbs. Courtesy photo

[kristigibbsrealty.com](http://kristigibbsrealty.com)

## Kristi Gibbs, Realtor Kristi Gibbs Realty

As a real estate agent in Bloomington and the surrounding areas, Kristi Gibbs has built her business, Kristi Gibbs Realty, on relationships first. Most of her clients are either returning or referrals, which she says speaks to the level of trust and consistency she strives to provide in every transaction.

“Having the right approach matters; I focus on helping sellers position their homes effectively and advising buyers on how to compete in a thoughtful and informed way,” she says, adding that real estate is more than simply buying or selling a home. “It requires strategy, market knowledge, and the ability to guide clients through important financial and life decisions, especially in a market that continues to shift.”



Gibbs says she works alongside an incredible team of women, each with her own role in supporting clients and ensuring every detail is handled with care, which enables her to provide the highest level of service to new and returning clients.

“Being a woman in business, to me, means creating a career that reflects both professionalism and purpose. I value building long-term relationships, supporting my clients beyond the closing table, and staying connected to the community I serve.”

—Linda Margison

## Michelle V. Thomas, Attorney Whitney Snyder, Paralegal Like Law Group LLC



Attorney Michelle V. Thomas and paralegal Whitney Snyder with Like Law Group LLC know that elder law can be complicated and difficult to navigate, especially when it comes to paying for long-term care or deciphering complex estate plans and Medicaid benefits.

When aging clients face decisions about estate planning or long-term care—or when children are suddenly tasked with finding care solutions for aging parents—Thomas and Snyder strive to make the process easier—and they start by listening.

“We want to make sure that clients feel supported and heard,” says Thomas, a lifelong

resident of Bloomington. “We strive to provide compassionate care to our clients and families during complex emotional situations.”

With a combined 31 years at Like Law Group, Thomas and Snyder have vast experience helping their clients achieve the best outcomes. They both take time to share that experience and gain insights through camaraderie with other women in the community who practice estate planning and elder law or are otherwise in elder care professions.

“You can count on these women to brainstorm ideas and discuss care solutions,” she says, adding that they are all supportive of each other. —Linda Margison



(l-r) Whitney Snyder, Michelle V. Thomas.  
Photo by Martin Boling

[likelawgroup.com](http://likelawgroup.com)

## Michelle Richardson, Owner & Lead Photographer Richardson Studio

At Richardson Studio, owner and lead photographer Michelle Richardson offers luxury portrait sessions to help doctors, lawyers, real estate agents, medspa owners, and other women in business capture what makes them—and their businesses—special.

Richardson—who founded the award-winning Richardson Studio with her husband, Jeff, in 2007—has been a photographer for 30 years. She stepped into the lead photographer role at Richardson Studio in 2021. Her luxury portrait sessions include professional hair and makeup, up to four outfit changes, and a positive environment that helps clients relax, feel pampered, and be themselves.

“I love taking care of people and making them feel good,” says Richardson. “When they come

in my door, I want them to be at ease ... Then I can capture the real them and show them being fun, real, and approachable—all the things they need to showcase for their business.”

Whether a client is starting a new endeavor or just looking to refresh their image, Richardson says luxury portraits help them connect with their ideal audience and elevate their personal brand on websites, social media, and other marketing materials.

Richardson Studio also offers sessions for families and high school seniors. Visit [richardsonstudio.com](http://richardsonstudio.com).  
—Sophie Bird Murphy

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Michelle Richardson. Courtesy photo

[richardsonstudio.com](http://richardsonstudio.com)

## Tiffany Norris, Founder/Owner Jennifer Moore, Chief Operations Officer Alternative Care Solutions LLC



(l-r) Tiffany Norris, Jennifer Moore. Photo by Jim Krause

[altcaresolutions.com](http://altcaresolutions.com)

What began as one woman's dream of helping people remain safe, supported, and independent at home has grown into an organization that has served thousands of families across south-central Indiana.

Tiffany Norris founded Alternative Care Solutions LLC in Bloomington in 2013, fulfilling a need for non-medical, in-home care. Clients can receive short-term support—such as after an injury or surgery—or ongoing care. Services range from companionship, medication reminders, light housekeeping, and transportation to helping with daily activities, such as bathing and dressing.



The company also offers respite care, giving family caregivers time to rest and recharge.

ACS now has nearly 400 employees spread across nine locations.

“Alternative Care Solutions has grown from our primary location in Bloomington to open branch locations in Martinsville, Paoli, New Albany, Bedford, Terre Haute, and Columbus,” says Chief Operations Officer Jennifer Moore. “We have also started sister companies in Mitchell and Lafayette.”

Norris and Moore, who have more than 46 years of combined experience in the healthcare industry, see their work as a vocation. They are passionate about providing high-quality care that allows clients to maintain freedom and independence, and they wish more people in Indiana understood both the continuum and value of home care.

“A few hours a week of support

can keep someone safer and more independent for much longer and may help prevent emergencies,” Moore emphasizes. “You can start small. Home care is not all or nothing.” For example, ACS can manage some of the personal tasks like bathing and toileting that can strain relationships. Importantly, Moore explains that clients are able to “stay in their own homes and maintain control over their own routines.” This allows both the client and family members to preserve their independence. Then if there is a crisis—like a fall or hospital stay—trust has already been established, which reduces anxiety for everyone.

Moore stresses that when choosing an in-home care provider, families should ask about communication and supervision, background checks and training for caregivers, and backup plans for when a regular caregiver is unavailable. She adds that while some clients pay out of pocket, ACS can help families to identify some surprising assistance options such as veteran benefits, Medicaid waivers, or existing private insurance plans.

That guidance reflects the company's broader goal of making home care feel less overwhelming and more accessible for families navigating difficult decisions. “In an industry full of questions, ACS strives to be the solution,” Moore says. —Kristen Senz

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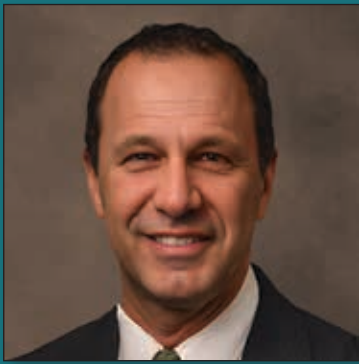
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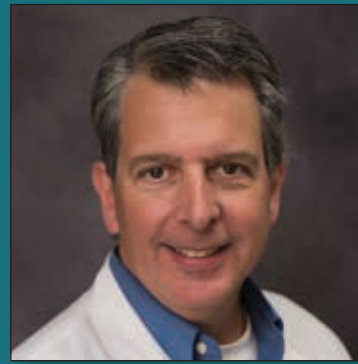
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**BY AARON B. COHEN**

*Photography by Jim Krause*

*“This is the barbershop! The place where a Black man means something! Cornerstone of the neighborhood! Our own country club!”*

—Eddie the Barber in the film *Barbershop* (2002)

Need a plumber or electrician, dentist or lawyer, doctor or mechanic? Forget Angie’s List, just ask Angie. As in Angela Carter, owner of Angela’s Ebony Hair Designs and Barbershop. Or ask her brother, Aaron Brown, who owns Razor’s Image—or Jay Thompson, owner of Hoosier Barber Shop. Turns out these Bloomington stylists know practically everyone.

“We’re not just cutting hair. We care about all of you,” says Thompson. “Not just what’s on top of your head, but about the person inside it.”

Barbershops and beauty salons have historically been important institutions in the everyday life of Black communities. In decades of segregation, they were the places where people from all levels of society would gather, talk, argue, and share the trials (and secrets) of their lives. Only the Black churches could challenge their significance.

Times have changed and so have Bloomington’s Black barbershops and beauty salons. Still, remnants of those good/bad old days live on. ▶



## THE LONG SHADOW OF RACE

Black barbering in Bloomington hearkens to a time when people of color couldn't get their hair cut along with whites, says Thompson.

Back in the day, a Black barber could only cut white hair in his barbershop. He would have a chair at home where he would cut the hair of Black men. Whites wouldn't get their hair cut in the same shop as Blacks, says Thompson.

"When I first came to Indiana University in the '70s, Black guys weren't even getting their hair cut by professional barbers," recalls Earl Singleton, retired IU law professor and a client of Thompson.

"I still don't see Black men going into white barbershops," adds Vivian Bridgwaters, retired corporate executive, civic leader, and great-granddaughter of Preston E. Eagleson, IU's first Black football player in the 1890s. (Bridgwaters also was a moving force behind changing the name of Bloomington's Jordan Avenue to Eagleson Avenue.)

Endemic racism also impacted hair styles. "Growing up here, racial pressure slowed the acceptance of natural hair among Black girls," Bridgwaters says. "Historically, if you wanted to be employed, you had to go with a certain look or you wouldn't be hired. Now there's freedom; you see all types of hairstyles. It's no longer a requirement to try to look white."

That said, "in some areas we're running backward," she laments, and racism is "still a thing. ... There's a supposition that the way God made you isn't OK. You should feel free to do what you want and be accepted for what you bring to the party based on your intelligence and ability."

Aaron Brown says he was the city's only professional Black barber in 1998 after graduating from Bloomington's Hair Arts Academy (now a Tricoci University of Beauty Culture campus) and receiving his license.



Aaron Brown has owned and operated Razor's Image for 15 years.

"I started cutting only Black hair at my sister's [Angela Carter's] shop. In a town that's predominately white, I needed to learn both," he realized.

That was his intention when Brown bought Razor's Image in 2011. Initially he says he had "issues" with some whites who came into his shop. "It was never physical, but once I took over, some people would walk in and then walk right out, or say, 'I'm not getting my hair cut here!'"

## EUGENICS AND REDLINING

Once upon a time and not so long ago, Bloomington's Black community was centered and largely confined to the Near West Side, recalls Don Griffin, owner of Griffin Realty, former Bloomington Deputy Mayor, and a 2023 mayoral candidate.

"People loved their community. But laws both written and unwritten enforced racial segregation. If your area was redlined, the banks weren't lending,"

he says. (Redlining was a discriminatory practice to deny loans, insurance, and more to people living in minority neighborhoods.)

In addition, eugenics—a pseudo-scientific belief that some people, including people of color, are inferior and should be sterilized—was a factor in Bloomington. David Starr Jordan, IU president from 1885 to 1891, was a prominent eugenicist (thus the change of the street name in 2020).

"Back then a lot of people here were associates of Jordan," Griffin explains. "They made covenants and restrictions based on eugenics, which meant 'No Blacks' in many areas."

Such practices restricted employment opportunities for Blacks and other racial and ethnic minorities. Thus, barbering and hairstyling, services that could be provided at home, became a pathway to an income, a profession, and a future. ►

## BLESSING AND CURSE

In a scene in the 2005 movie *Beauty Shop*, about a Black hairstylist who opens her own shop, a Black customer is shocked when she comes in and is directed for the first time to a white beautician: “When did y’all get to be so integrated around here?” she exclaims.

That’s how it is now in Bloomington, says Beverly Calender-Anderson, retired director of community and family resources for the City and a founder of Bloomington United, an anti-hate, pro-unity group. “The Black salon is no longer exclusively for Blacks.”

Given that the old days were a checkerboard of good and bad, the question arises: What has survived—for better and for worse? Where is the line between good riddance and sweet nostalgia?

Griffin recounts how the Near West Side, Bloomington’s historic Black neighborhood, changed since the ’70s, leading to the dissolution of the tight-knit Black community.

“The parks got better, downtown got nicer, the Civic Center moved to its current location, we got the [Bloomington Community] Farmers’ Market and the B-Line Trail, and all that changed the demographics. The area became a hotbed for people who are white and upwardly mobile,” he says.



Realtor Don Griffin says the Black barbershop still provides a space where “you can talk about anything.”

Barber Jay Thompson embraces the positive changes that have come with greater racial openness. Compared to other places where he’s lived, he finds Bloomington “different” when it comes to racism.

“I’ll be here until I die because I love it here. I’m around everyone. I couldn’t do it anywhere else,” he explains. “Today or any day, I’ll cut for people of all backgrounds. Anywhere else in the state, I would be considered a Black barbershop. All my customers would be African Americans.

“In the old days, if I had six Black guys here and a white guy would come in, it would be like, ‘Whoa, am I supposed to be here?’ Who would have a business and cater to one race? I want everyone to feel comfortable. Our customers are our family.”

Says Realtor Griffin, “It’s still a Black-owned space, and a lot of what goes on in there is similar

to when all Black people were there. Now, it’s more than Black community—it’s community! You can talk about anything. And we still kid around!”

Bridgwaters calls integration both a blessing and a curse—a blessing because it has allowed advancement for Blacks, enabled diversity, and enabled all groups to come to know and understand each other to a degree.

“The curse is this,” she explains. “When we were segregated, we saw doctors, vets, lawyers, teachers, etc. right in our neighborhood. And they influenced the culture of the neighborhood. You see less of that role modeling as things have been diluted.”

“Progress has sort of broken up the connectivity of the Black community, which was in the past much more cohesive,” adds Calender-Anderson. “There was a time when every Black person went to Second Baptist Church or Bethel African ▶



For Beverly Calender-Anderson, Black barbershops and salons are trusted communities.

Barber Jay Thompson cuts hair for people of all backgrounds, including Michael Cassidy, Uptown owner. (See page 70.)





Methodist Episcopal Church, but now there are more church experiences. People are not in the same places; there's no one place where people gather."

The COVID-19 pandemic killed the walk-in culture, claims Thompson. Prior to the pandemic, people arrived without an appointment and waited to be served. "It was difficult at times, but people were far more focused on the conversation," he says.

Thompson laments what he views as declining communication skills and the number of people he views trying to tune out.

"A lot of younger people have trouble interacting. With some college kids, there's no conversation at all! They'll show me a picture of what they want, and that's the last interaction."

*Black barbershops  
and salons are  
the 'pub' of the  
Black community.*

### EVOLUTION OF COMMUNITY

Overall, segregation fostered a strong Black community.

"When I think of beauty salons and barbershops, I think of trusted communities," says Calender-Anderson. "Historically, for Black people, those shops—along with churches—have been safe spaces and the places to get information and share experiences."

"Growing up, barbershops were really important places," reminisces Earl Singleton, the retired law professor. "I have vivid memories of going with my best friend and his father. All these Black men were sitting around talking about stuff that Black dudes talked about, that even as a young Black man I didn't know people talked about!"

"The communities I've existed in have been predominantly white," he reflects, "but, at the same time, I was motivated not to let my cultural bond dissipate. For many Black people, it always made a difference for us to blend in, assimilate if you will with the broader community, but also maintain ties to the Black community."

"Black barbershops and salons are the 'pub' of the Black community," says hairstylist Angela Carter. "My clients talk about their kids, their situation, without being uncomfortable. We had years of great times. We're still a fellowship and still need these places."

For Bridgwaters, the comfort in community she finds in Carter's salon is visceral—"a sense of exhale and relax," she says. "A place where you don't have to be 'on.' The music is what you want to hear. Gospel, R&B, people sharing the news of the community. And you feel at home. You meet friends there. We laugh and talk."

For Calender-Anderson, the beauty shop "isn't home, but it's homey," which she finds especially important for women. "The salon is a place where it's OK for women to be vulnerable. You don't go prim and proper. You go to spend some time, and a lot of that is talking and playing.

"For people who live in a town where it's difficult to see yourself [i.e., other Blacks], it's about connections. It's a chance to see what's going on in the community, what issues are happening. When I was working, I would tell people what events were coming up, then the beautician would tell others, and so the word spread throughout the community," she says. ►



Black barbershops and beauty salons are places of fellowship and "[we] still need these places," says Angela Carter.

## LOOK GOOD, FEEL GOOD

*“Something as simple as a little haircut could change the way a man felt on the inside.” —Eddie the Barber in the film Barbershop*

At the end of the day, the story of barbershops and salons is about what makes humans tick. Looking good is one of those things.

“If my hair is done properly, I feel like I can take care of the rest of me. If my hair is out of whack, the rest of me is out of whack,” Calender-Anderson says. However, she continues, “I won’t say my hair defines me; if I lost it, I’d find another way.”

Jay Thompson counts among his customers several men, Black and white, who could be defined by their *lack* of hair. Singleton, who is bald, says he never went to a barber in Bloomington until friends urged him to visit Thompson. It was a revelation what a little attention to appearance could do for how he felt.

“Jay’s an artist,” Singleton says. “The first time I went to him, I looked in the mirror and said, ‘That’s what I’m talking about! This is cool.’”

Seeing also was believing for Calender-Anderson.

“When I first came to Bloomington one of my biggest trepidations was finding a place to do my hair. So, I stood at the bottom of the escalator at College Mall and waited until I saw a Black woman who had nice hair, and that’s how I found Angela [Carter]. And then it happened to me when someone at The Chocolate Moose asked me where I got my hair done.”

Referrals remain a sustaining force for Aaron Brown, who says that in a college town, “Word of mouth, along with social media, is everything. This is a competitive business, and people want to see your personality.”

## WHAT’S NEXT?

*“I’ll be cutting hair as long as the Lord allows.” —Barber in Joe’s Bed-Stuy Barbershop: We Cut Heads, Spike Lee’s first feature film, which was his 1983 master’s thesis at New York University*

“I thought I would die being a hairdresser; it was my passion,” says Carter. As a woman of deep faith, the future—and the Lord—are leading her into ministry. She currently is an associate pastor at Resurrection Life Ministries in Mitchell, Indiana, and wants to do ministry full time.

Brown, meanwhile, hopes to teach barbering full time in the future. “I’ve mentored kids for the last six years and it’s very satisfying,” he says. “One of my mentees just got his license and will be working here full time starting tomorrow.”

He says he is pleased that the state of Indiana in 2024 established an apprenticeship program, which subsidizes registered barbers and cosmetologists to train students.

Thompson’s future plans echo those of the barber in Spike Lee’s film: “I’ll cut to my last day,” he says. Perhaps it’s his clients’ secrets that keep him fully engaged: “They know that what they tell me stays with me. The rule of the barbershop is, what you hear or say stays at the barbershop.” ✨



Jay Thompson trims up Charles Greer at Hoosier Barber Shop.

Angela Carter concentrates on Jeannette Parrott's hair at Angela's Ebony Hair Designs and Barbershop.



# HOMES

## That Let the Light In

Where windows bring the rooms to life.

by Brittany Marshall | Photos by Jane Daniels & Kendall Reeves



Natural light often defines how a home is experienced, and in each of these residences, windows aren't just architectural elements but the foundation of design. Large banks of windows invite in light, frame the surrounding landscape, and shape how each space is lived in day to day. Whether overlooking wooded acreage, capturing expansive views, or carefully preserving sightlines, these homes share a common thread: a deliberate connection between the interior and environment. The result is not only visual, but experiential, where spaces feel open, grounded, and connected to their surroundings.





The exterior of the Gavin residence reflects the home's understated character and strong connection to its wooded setting.

## Our Story Lives Here

Photos by Jane Daniels

A welcoming entry balances sculptural décor, layered texture, and expansive windows that draw the outdoors inward.



Located in the well-established Bittner Woods neighborhood is a 3,500-square-foot residence reflecting a thoughtful balance of design, function, and personal history. Purchased by Becky and Mike Gavin in 2016, the home stands out for its expansive windows and the natural light that fills the main living spaces, an element around which the entire design revolves.

“When we walked past the entryway into the main living space for the first time, I was immediately wowed by the windows and the views out back,” says Becky. “The windows are the home’s best feature and really set the tone for the house, so the main living area and fireplace is my favorite place to be.” ▶



(l-r) Michael, Becky, and two of their grandchildren.



Layered textures, warm wood flooring, and expansive windows reinforce the home's balance of comfort and openness.

That first impression remains central to the home's identity. Large rear-facing windows flood the living room with light, while carefully selected furnishings preserve those sightlines. Two sofas, swivel chairs, and ottomans are arranged around a Bella Bella coffee table to encourage both conversation and connection to the outdoors. The swivel chairs allow occupants to turn

toward the windows, reinforcing the home's relationship with its surroundings.

"It was really important to me to choose low-profile pieces so they wouldn't block the windows," says Becky, a professional interior designer. "I always start with a furnishing layout first, thinking about the focal points and how the room will function." ▶

The main living area centers around the fireplace, one of Becky Gavin's favorite spaces in the home.





Floor-to-ceiling windows frame the dining area, allowing seasonal views to become part of the interior experience.

The home aesthetic leans modern with an eclectic edge, shaped by years of collecting. Many furnishings were brought from a previous residence, with each piece mapped out in advance using a 3D home modeling app to ensure a cohesive fit. Layered throughout the home are secondhand finds, local artwork, and Mike’s photography, elements that ground the space in memory and community.

“I like when a home feels like it’s been built gradually, not installed all at once,” says Becky.

Even small details reflect a designer’s eye: a custom laminate refrigerator blends seamlessly into the kitchen while offering a distinctive, understated finish. ▶

(opposite page) The upper TV room’s expansive windows continue throughout the secondary living spaces, reinforcing a constant connection to nature, while the original grass cloth wallpaper reflect the home’s past.

(below, left) The lower-level living area introduces softer tones and layered seating while maintaining abundant natural light; (below) the kitchen’s highly functional oversized island surrounds the custom laminate refrigerator.







Original grass cloth wallpaper in the upper TV room reflects the home's past, while newer additions, including a pressed mica feature wall in the primary bedroom, introduce texture and light reflection. Cheetah print stairs lead down to the lower level and Becky's office, where she runs her interior design business. The home office is decorated with self-installed peelable wallpaper chosen for its calm neutrality and tactile interest. ▶



(top) The primary bedroom balances warmth and simplicity, with layered textures and soft natural light; (above) the bedroom's pressed mica feature wall introduces texture and light reflection; (left) the master bath features enough space for both Becky and Michael to get ready.





(above) Original architectural character and collected furnishings reflect the homeowners' eclectic yet intentional design style; (below) cheetah print stairs lead down to the lower level and Becky's office; (right) the home office pairs functionality with texture and personal detail, displaying Becky's interior design skills; (bottom, right) even the entrance from the rear deck is warm and welcoming.



Over the years, updates such as a partial kitchen remodel to open the main living space, a screened-in porch addition, and structural adjustments have improved functionality, she says.

"This house holds our history. It's not just where we live, it's where our story lives." ✳





Nestled within nearly 18 wooded acres, the Rowe residence was designed to feel fully integrated into the landscape.

## “Exactly What We Needed”

Photos by Kendall Reeves

Set within 17.8 wooded acres overlooking Lake Monroe, Jennifer and Tom Rowe’s home reflects a deep appreciation for its natural surroundings. Purchased in September 2016 as an undeveloped property, the land initially held plans for a much larger residence. Instead, the couple completed what was intended as a guest cottage in November 2018, only to discover it was the perfect size for their primary residence.

“We thought this cottage would be temporary, but it turned out to be exactly what we needed,” Jennifer reflects.

At just over 1,800 square feet, the home is intentionally open, with minimal interior walls defining the main living room, kitchen, and bedroom. The openness is amplified by the soaring ceilings and windows, one of the home’s most defining features. ▶

White oak ceilings, exposed steel beams, and expansive windows define the home’s open concept living space.



“I always think about how a space moves ... how you cook, how you gather, how you walk through it.”

Upper windows are fixed to maximize natural light, while lower awning-style windows open outward, allowing for airflow even during rain. In the bedroom, this same window combination creates a cross breeze, while maintaining uninterrupted views.

“Light was one of the most important things to me, so we made the windows as large as we structurally could,” she says.

Surrounded by trees and open sky, the expansive windows frame the landscape in every direction, changing scenery from early spring when the woods fill with daffodils and dogwoods, dense summer greenery, to the quiet evenings where you can see every star, says Jennifer. ►



(above) Jennifer and Tom Rowe inside the home they originally envisioned as a guest cottage, now thoughtfully adapted into the primary residence.

(left) The screened-in porch extends the living space outdoors, offering uninterrupted views of the trees in every season.

(bottom, left) Views of Lake Monroe and the surrounding wooded acreage reinforce the property's sense of quiet seclusion.

(below) Locally-sourced stone comprises the two-sided fireplace wall, which brings texture and warmth to both the main living area and the screened-in porch.





(above) Designed with minimal interior walls, the main living area allows natural light to move freely throughout the home; (below) salvaged barn wood cabinetry warms the kitchen and contrasts with the white oak.



Throughout the home, white oak floors and ceilings reinforce the continuity, and the material palette and décor reflect their craftsman-inspired approach. Locally sourced stone, cut and shaped on site, is used in both the fireplace and exterior siding on the property, while salvaged barn wood has been incorporated into the custom kitchen cabinetry.

Exposed steel beams create a statement paired with structural insulated panel (SIP) construction, an uncommon approach in residential builds at the time. The result is a highly insulated, efficient structure. Outdoor living plays an equally important role. A screened-in patio with a fireplace extends the home's main living space. ▶



Carefully placed windows bring softness and light into the private living quarters, which connect to the screened-in porch for expansive views.

Awning-style windows allow for airflow and natural light while maintaining privacy within the shower space.



The primary bathroom combines clean lines, natural textures, and functional simplicity within the home's Craftsman-inspired aesthetic. ▶





(above) The detached workshop extends the property's functionality while echoing the home's material palette and architectural style; (left) native-style landscaping and container gardening help to maintain the connection between the modern home and its wooded surroundings.



Beyond the home itself, the property is equally intentional. The first structure completed was a large workshop, designed not only as a functional space for work and hosting, but as a staging area for the build. With two-story ceilings, reclaimed materials, and large garage doors, it is a central hub for projects, tools, and long-standing personal pieces, including a butcher block surface salvaged from the couple's first business location in Moline, Illinois, and an extensive gallery of framed federal- and state-issued duck stamps. Additional structures include a greenhouse, detached garage, and garden areas.

"Some people adjust to a space, but some of us get the chance to create one that's completely our own." ✨



(top) The workshop reflects the Rowses' hands-on approach to design and building, while providing a unique gathering space that opens to the outdoors by raising the glass garage doors; (above) framed federal- and state-issued duck stamps are exhibited on the walls of the workshop; (right) an expansive deck provides plenty of seating for outdoor dining and relaxing; (below) additional structures throughout the property support gardening, storage, and the evolving needs of daily life on the land.





## A Home of Curated Spaces

Photos by Kendall Reeves

Set at the end of a cul-de-sac in Spicewood and unfolding across nearly 8,000 square feet, Susan and Scott Slaven's home is both an architectural statement and a deeply personal environment. Influenced by the principles of Frank Lloyd Wright and designed by architects Bill Schick and Richard Hartung, the residence is rooted in its landscape, with windows and glass playing a central role in how the home is experienced. ►



(opposite page, top) The approach to the Slaven residence unfolds gradually through terraced landscaping, native plants, and layered architectural forms; (opposite page, bottom left) expansive windows, layered rooflines, and rounded architectural forms create a continuous connection between the interior and wooded surroundings; (opposite page, bottom right) stonework, terraced patios, and multiple stairways extend the home's architectural rhythm into the surrounding property.

(right) A white grand piano graces the music room, just inside the entranceway; (right, below) dramatic ceilings, collected artwork, and richly toned materials establish the home's cinematic sense of arrival, surprisingly accented by John Mellencamp's Ridley motorcycle.

Terraced stonework, layered landscaping, and a bridge-like entry over a multilevel water feature create quite a procession to guide visitors inward. Mature trees frame the property, while expansive glass surfaces begin to hint at the interior experience, one defined by light, movement, and a sense of retreat.

"We wanted the exterior to feel layered, almost like it grew out of the landscape," Susan explains.

Immediately inside the main entranceway, a white grand piano holds court in the music room among pieces of plush seating beneath a sculptural wood ceiling. Nearby, an unexpected focal point—a motorcycle once owned by John Mellencamp—is displayed as an object of both personal and cultural significance. Together, the elements establish the home's design language: refined, expressive, and unapologetically individual. ▶



(l-r) Susan and Scott Slaven inside the home that reflects decades of shared history, travel, design, and rediscovery.



The home continues to present itself in a sequence of curated spaces. “The house was designed to unfold as you move through it, not all received at once,” says Susan. “There’s a rhythm to the way the spaces connect, especially with how they open to the outdoors.”

Susan’s eye for composition is apparent from glass installations, sculptural lighting, and richly textured finishes that create distinct rooms. In the formal dining space, velvet seating and a luminous fixture introduce polished elegance, while more relaxed areas incorporate warmth and ease without sacrificing visual interest.

“I think of each room as a composition; balance, texture, and contrast all have to work together,” says Susan. “I’m drawn to things that feel a little unexpected, pieces that create a moment.” ▶



(top, left) Blue velvet seating and a sculptural chandelier anchor the dining room with softness and contrast; (top, right) curated furnishings and collected pieces reflect Susan Slaven’s instinct for creating spaces that feel both expressive and lived-in; (above) the primary suite introduces richer tones and softer textures, creating a more intimate atmosphere within the home; (below) the kitchen balances warmth and functionality through expansive prep surfaces, wood cabinetry, and integrated entertaining spaces.





(above) Curved glass walls extend the intimate dining area outward, creating one of the home's most recognizable architectural moments; (right, top) custom millwork, layered materials, and filtered light reinforce the bathroom's highly curated composition; (right, bottom) a raised soaking area and asymmetrical windows introduce sculptural intrigue into the primary bath suite.



The master bedroom is defined by rich materials, dark slatted ceilings, and warm wood tones. Adjacent, the boutique-style dressing room space includes custom cabinetry and mirrored ceilings. The master bath includes dual vessel sinks within custom millwork, and frosted glass panels etched with organic motifs. ▶

(below) The boutique-inspired dressing area features reflective surfaces, textured walls, and custom storage solutions; (below, right) rich finishes and sculptural furnishings give the primary bedroom a boutique hotel atmosphere.





The indoor pool pavilion was designed as a year-round destination, filled with skylight illumination and expansive sightlines.

One of the home's most striking features is its indoor pool pavilion, a soaring space defined by timbered ceilings, skylights, and carefully orchestrated sightlines, complete with a large hovering wall of monstera plants, full bar, massage chairs, and sauna. Overlooking the interior pool, a curved glass dining nook offers a more intimate, elevated vantage point.

"The pool room changes completely at night, with the reflection and lighting making it feel almost cinematic," says Susan. ▶



(left) The circular bar mimics the rounded architectural features of the Slaven home, while the ocean-themed accents blend perfectly with the aquatic atmosphere; (below) a curved, glass-enclosed loft overlooks the pool area, providing a unique dining nook.





Integrated wellness spaces, including a built-in sauna, reflect the homeowners' emphasis on comfort and retreat.



Playful details and layered textiles bring personality and warmth into the guest suite.

The media room combines bold color, comfortable seating, and personal aviation- and astronaut-themed collections gathered over the years.



(below, left) Suspended glass installations bring movement and color into the stairwell, reflecting the Slavens' appreciation for art and travel; (below, right) collected artwork lines the stair hall, turning a transitional space into a personal gallery.



What ultimately defines the home is not its scale, but its narrative. Susan and Scott's shared history, rooted in aviation, travel, and an eventual reunion after being married to one another previously and then reconnecting years later, infuses the house with meaning. Their life experiences are reflected not only in the objects they've chosen, but in the way the home has evolved over time.

"Our life together is really woven into this house. It reflects where we've been and how we found our way back." ✨

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