



NEWSWATCH

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**Next meeting: 2 p.m., Wednesday, April 9
Peterson Room, Showalter House, IU Foundation, SR46 Bypass**

Writing the novel within him: Ken Beckley to describe *Knuckleball*

When retirees gather at 2 p.m. on April 9 at the IU Foundation, **Ken Beckley**, longtime H.H. Gregg spokesman and former president of the IU Alumni Association, will talk about how he came to write *Knuckleball*, the novel he published in 2012.

Knuckleball is the story of a young pitcher in rural Indiana who goes on to a successful career in public relations. Only as an adult does he learn of the knuckleballs his mother endured. According to the book jacket, “An unforeseen gift for his 50th birthday changes everything forever.” Ken will talk about the process he followed in writing the book and will issue a challenge to attendees.



A native of Lynnville, Ind., Ken played 4-H baseball and began sports casting with a broomstick microphone. After graduating from IU in 1962, he began a career in broadcasting that took him to Terre Haute, Asheville, N.C., and Indianapolis, where he was a news anchor on Channel 6. For seven years Ken was IUPUI's first fulltime director of university relations.

He left to become executive vice president at H.H. Gregg. During his 17 years there, he became a familiar face as spokesman for the company. For five years he was president and CEO of the IU Alumni Association. In 1998 he participated in the Dodgers fantasy baseball camp.

A member of the Indiana Broadcasters Hall of Fame, Ken is the recipient of IU's Distinguished Alumni Service Award.

A = April + annual + amendments

As part of the annual meeting of the Indiana University Retirees Association April 9, three people will be elected to three-year terms on the board. According to IU Vice President **John Hobson**, an amendment to the bylaws will also be proposed.

Don Weaver chairs the nominating committee, which includes **Wayne Craig** and **Shirley Pugh**. Board members whose terms are expiring are **Dick McKaig**, **Harriet Pfister**, and **Jim Schellhammer**.

IURA explores retiree benefits with HR

Thanks to the IURA and its benefits committee, Human Resources is developing a new information booklet for retirees and possibly designating a staff member to develop and keep current a database of relevant retiree benefits.

In 2012 the IURA established a fringe benefit committee to examine the provisions of the Anthem Blue Medicare Supplement (“Medigap”) policy that is offered to IU retirees. **Bruce Jaffee** agreed to chair the committee, which included **Rosemary Dever**, **Margaret Joseph**, and **Iris Kiesling**. “There was concern that some of the provisions of the plan were opaque and the plan was not presented very effectively to new retirees,” Bruce reported

The committee's suggestions to the HR staff were well received, and the board expanded the committee's duties, asking it to review all benefits provided to retirees. Although the HR website, <http://www.indiana.edu/~uhrs/benefits/retirestatus.html>, defines who has official retiree status and describes some benefits and other sites list other benefits, the committee found, Bruce notes, that “there is no single source, either in print or online, that provides full service to retirees.”

Acting on the committee's recommendation, the IURA board in February asked HR to improve its information in these areas and to identify a staff member to be a point of contact for retirees and to represent their interests when policies and programs affecting them are being considered.

Bruce and IURA Vice President **John Hobson** met with **Dan Rives**, associate vice president for human resources, on March 5, with IURA President **Dick McKaig** joining by telephone from Arizona. Dan shared an early draft of a new information booklet that is to be printed and distributed this spring. "It will include information about HR-related benefits for retirees such as life insurance, health insurance, tuition assistance, the new eldercare services, and contact information about other benefits outside of HR, such as social security," Bruce said.

At present, no one on the HR staff "has explicit responsibilities to be a point of contact for retirees," the IURA board resolution points out. "Dan supports the addition to his staff, tentatively a three-quarter-time appointment, to serve as a knowledge base for retiree benefits and information," Bruce said. He added that Dan was receptive to suggestions that included more frequent communication between the IURA and him or his successor.

"Several of the items in the resolution by the Executive Committee refer to issues outside of HR, ranging from access to computer software to parking," Bruce pointed out. He is in discussion with Provost **Lauren Robel**, he said, "about having the option of accessing campus emails and IU Alert messages, and consistency in policy between faculty and staff."

The IURA has published a list of retiree perks and benefits, including such items as parking, Recreational Sports membership, and technology account eligibility. You may download the list, recently updated by webmaster **Suzann Owen**, by going to the home page of the IURA website, <http://www.indiana.edu/~iura>.

IU Libraries Mary Popp describes retiree benefits, procedures

When an IURA member asked whether retirees have access to the IU Libraries online resources, the question reached **Mary Pagliero Popp** at a propitious moment. Mary, who retired at the end of January as associate librarian of research and

discovery services, has invested considerable effort, both before and after retiring, to describing library policies and procedures for retirees. Her description of benefits has been posted to the IURA website. After she has added campus-specific details, it will be added to the UITS KnowledgeBase, accessible at <http://kb.iu.edu/data/dddx.html>. This link provides information about technology resources for retirees.

To summarize, Mary says, "Your IU network ID, the one you used to access university resources such as OneStart and your IU email account, still works. You may use it to log in to library-owned computers, to connect to these resources from off campus through your library's website or through IUCAT, and to access many library services." She points out that "these privileges include using online databases, electronic journals, and electronic books as well as checking out books."

What if you aren't an "official" retiree? Some IURA members, after all, are spouses of deceased faculty and staff, and others don't qualify because they worked part time. "Access to library subscription databases, books, and journals online and in print is available to anyone who visits an IU library in person," Mary explains. "Ask at the library circulation desk for a [free computer account](http://www.libraries.iub.edu/index.php?pageId=7551) (<http://www.libraries.iub.edu/index.php?pageId=7551>) to use library-owned computers during your visit." With a valid Indiana driver's license or state ID, you may also get a borrower's card to check out books and other materials.

Blizzard of '78 stranded Belth at IMU

In January's *Newswatch*, **Dick McKaig** described how he and **Maribeth** were held hostage for four days at the Indianapolis airport by the polar vortex. Dick's account brought back vivid memories to **Joe Belth**, emeritus professor of insurance.

During January 1978, Joe recalls, a snowstorm that prevented his getting out of the driveway of his home kept him from getting to his 8 a.m. class. When, a week or two later, he heard that a blizzard was on its way, Joe was determined not to miss his Thursday morning class again. That Wednesday afternoon, he says, "I checked into the IMU without even a toothbrush."

After a delightful dinner at the Tudor Room and a good night's sleep, Joe was at the cafeteria when it

opened. It opened late, however. A second sign of trouble came when no hot food was available. “I was munching on my cold cereal when I heard someone at another table saying classes were canceled,” Joe recalls. “I told him he had to be mistaken because IU had never canceled classes because of weather.” Joe was wrong. The blizzard of ’78 had arrived.

“I was not able to leave the Union until Sunday,” Joe says. But he used his time to good advantage. Wandering around to see what was going on, he found a prep class for a state licensing exam for aspiring real estate appraisers. The late **George Bloom** was leading the class, and Joe sat down to learn something about how to appraise real estate.

“When I finally checked out of the IMU, they charged me only for the first night,” Joe recalls. Although he received no credit for the meals he bought at the cafeteria, “at least I did not have to live off food from vending machines,” he says.

May 14 pitch-in to feature lively music

Put Wednesday, May 14, on your calendar for a rousing finale to the academic year. The IURA will gather in the Peterson Room at the IU Foundation for its annual potluck at 5 p.m. After-dinner entertainment will be provided by Hoosier Darling. Featured in the March 16 *Hoosier Times*, the quartet also performs as Gozpel Gurlz and makes quarterly appearances during WFHB’s Firehouse Follies. Hoosier Darling will release its first CD March 28.

Gonzalez describes Cuba then and now

Cuba today is incredibly dilapidated and decaying, but when it opens up, it will change with lightning speed. **Gerardo Gonzalez**, dean of the IU School of Education, got this impression when he returned to Cuba recently. Gerardo described his experience to nearly 50 people at the Feb. 12 meeting of the IURA.

The Gonzalez family left Cuba in February 1962, when he was 11. When Gerardo returned in May 2012, leading a delegation of alumni under a people-to-people exchange sponsored by the IU Alumni Association, it was his first time back in 50 years. When he led another delegation in October 2013, he found remarkable changes in just one year. He sees further change on the horizon under Cuban President Raúl Castro.

People are exceedingly poor, Gerardo said. The average monthly pay is about 400 pesos, equivalent to \$25. The Soviet Union was subsidizing Cuba. The disintegration of the USSR meant the island nation had to find a new way to get hard currency. In response, the government has created a double economy, with a currency specifically for foreign visitors. Tourists exchange their foreign currency for cucs (Cuban convertible currency). One cuc equals 24 pesos. People with access to cucs have an opportunity to accumulate wealth. Cuba, one of the last socialist republics, now has two classes: those with access to cucs and those without.



Gerardo shared a photo of a street vendor. A professor of informatics, this man earns around 300 pesos a month. He can make three times as much selling trinkets by the side of the road. With an IU insignia plus a Kentucky T-shirt, his income may rise even faster.

To bring in cucs, private homes are being converted into B&Bs. Ecotourism is thriving, Gerardo reports. Up until last year the only way to own a car, to have its title, was for it to be pre-1959, so Cuba is the place to see cars from the 1950s. Car owners, who used to salvage parts from discarded Soviet vehicles, now buy parts on eBay.

Gerardo believes that Raúl Castro is far more of a pragmatist than an ideologue. Private enterprise is beginning to compete with the government stores, where Canadians, Germans, Spaniards, and Latin Americans shop with their cucs. Cuba attracts people from “everywhere but the United States,” he says.

All schools are public and have a national curriculum – “which comes with a heavy dose of ideology,” Gerardo observes. Students do very well on

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standardized tests. In fact, Cuba trades teachers and doctors to Venezuela in exchange for oil. Both the University of Havana and the Instituto Superior de Arte have international reputations.

Religious freedom is beginning to happen, Gerardo believes. “The official position of the government is that they don’t suppress religion,” he says. The largest religion is Santeria, which is indigenous to Cuba. It combines elements of Roman Catholicism with the West African religion brought to the island by slaves.

After the meeting, while sampling delicious treats provided by **Fran Bell, Susan Jones, and Gerry Miller**, retirees exchanged plans to join Gerardo if a future people-to-people educational exchange occurs.

Lincoln’s advice apt for retirees

With the most recent meeting of the Retirees Association falling on Feb. 12, Vice President **John Hobson** was inspired to share advice from Abraham Lincoln on the 205th anniversary of his birth: “In the end it’s not the years in your life that count. It is the life in your years.”

The end of an era: Marker to step down

Volunteers often find they have lifetime tenure when they take on a responsibility. A shining example of this phenomenon is **Gerald Marker**, who has served as the IURA database manager since 2007. Gerald has announced that **Gary Ingersoll** will take

over as database manager, beginning with the next academic year.

Gerald has compiled the IURA mailing lists, both electronic and snail, for every mailing since 2007. He has arranged for the printing and mailing of every newsletter during that time, and he even wrote the newsletter in 2010-2011, when Judy Schroeder waited for someone else to step forward as editor. He also has put together seven membership directories and attended numerous board meetings.

Now it is time for Gerald to take the IURA logo seriously and sit down in that rocking chair. Thank you, Gerald.

About this organization, newsletter

Founded in 1975 as the IU Annuitants Association, the IU Retirees Association welcomes all retired faculty and staff and their spouses or partners. Although the IU Foundation generously hosts our regular meetings, the IURA receives no university support and operates entirely on membership donations.

Newswatch is published eight times each year, August through April, except for February. To correct your address or be removed from the list, please contact database manager **Gerald Marker**, marker@indiana.edu. Gerald also has extra copies of the 2013-2014 membership directory, available exclusively to members. **Judy Schroeder** writes *Newswatch*. Send corrections or comments to her at jschroed@indiana.edu.