



NEWSWATCH

Vol. 2020-21 No. 6

February 2021

**Next meeting: 2 p.m., Wednesday, March 10
still via Zoom**

Think spring with Mia Williams

For the first March meeting in its history, the IU Retirees Association will host **Mia Williams**, IU's landscape architect. The meeting will take place via Zoom on Wednesday, March 10. Mia will talk about

her work, which ranges from designing flowerbeds to creating a master plan for an entire campus landscape. The range of challenges — which extends to gardening advice is what she enjoys most about her job.

“I will do an overview of campus beautification projects over the past

years,” she says, “and wrap up with a new campus quad project currently in design that will be constructed this summer.”

Mia finds a silver lining in the COVID epidemic. “People have turned to the out-of-doors for the relief that it offers humans on a very basic level,” she says. “Because of competition for its use as a safer place, people have had to organize and program exterior space more thoughtfully. That has helped realize the value of these spaces for more than just their beauty.”

Mia grew up in Bloomington, the daughter of famed printmaker **Rudy Pozzatti** and his wife, **Doti**. After earning a degree in English at IU, Mia headed to the University of Georgia, from which she graduated in 1992 with a master of landscape architecture degree. After working with a local design-build landscape contractor for four years, she joined the IU Architect's Office in 1996. She oversees landscape design on all IU campuses, a particular challenge during this past year.

Outside of work, Mia assists her parents and volunteers with local organizations. She is a member of the City of Bloomington Tree Commission. Her two daughters and two grandchildren (ages 6 and 2½) live in Denver.

In previous years the IURA has not met in March because the meeting would be held during the university's spring break, when retirees would be on vacation. But with COVID-19 and the cancellation of spring break, the board decided to offer a bonus meeting (and a bonus newsletter) to its members.

Changes to IU email are coming

IURA members who use IU email should pay extra attention to departmental email over the coming months. IU is upgrading its email infrastructure, in particular its Exchange servers. The changes are being rolled out department by department.

“You should receive email from UITS about the change both one week and one day before your account will be migrated to the new system,” says IURA Webmaster **Allan Edmonds**. “After you've been migrated to Exchange Online, you can access your email through a web browser such as Firefox, Safari, or Chrome, at <https://outlook.com/owa/iu.edu>. You can then deal with reconfiguring the email client (such as Apple Mail or Outlook) that you normally use. If you use a smartphone for email, that account configuration will also need to be updated.”

He adds, “Your new ‘return address’ for email will be of the form [username]@iu.edu. But email sent either to that address or to [username]@indiana.edu will be forwarded to your account, as it is now.”

Allan has created a webpage that focuses on issues most relevant to retirees:

<https://iura.indiana.edu/emailfaq.html>. He will update it as questions and suggestions are received.

Red Scrubs Scholarship supported



The IURA has contributed \$500 to the Red Scrubs Scholarship fund for nursing students on the Bloomington campus. When **Mary Lynn Davis-Ajami**, the School of Nursing's associate dean, spoke to the IU Retirees Association in January, she explained that

the Red Scrubs fund was created last fall to assist students with financial problems unique to their course of study at this time.

The nursing program requires some special financial outlay: for example, stethoscopes, CPR certification, testing and licensing fees, and the red scrubs themselves. During the pandemic, which threw into stark relief the importance of nurses, many part-time jobs on which students relied disappeared, making it harder for some to continue their studies.

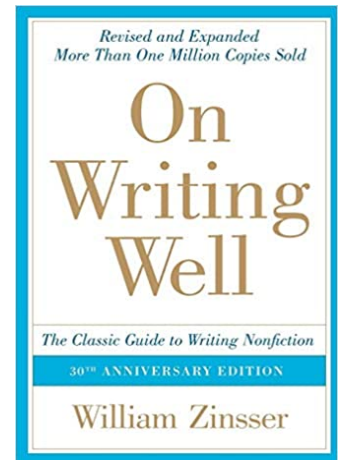
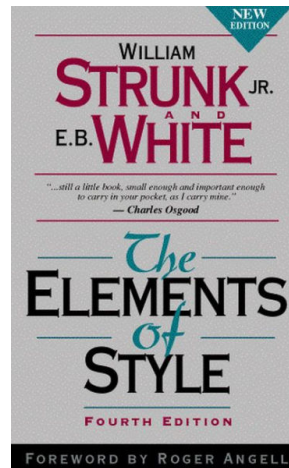
At its Feb. 3 meeting, the IURA board voted unanimously to contribute \$500 to the fund. As President **Charlie Matson** put it at the Feb. 10 meeting, "Retirees place great value in having more good nurses in the state of Indiana."

To write, first read, Koryta advises

To be a writer, first be a reader, mystery novelist **Michael Koryta** told retirees gathered for the Feb. 10 Zoom meeting of the IURA. Program Chair **Doug Porter** introduced Michael as "the local boy who did good." He has won the *Los Angeles Times* Book Prize, and his books appear on the *New York Times* bestseller list.

"My parents were such great readers that I can't remember a time without books," Michael said. "You read with your ear. If you haven't been read to, that's a greater challenge." His father and mother read him stories of the outdoors, of Native Americans and pioneer days. Michael reads about 100 books a year. He enjoys audiobooks, "hearing a really good narrator read a text I think I know."

Michael wrote his first story when he was 6 or 7. He has fond memories of the Young Authors Conference, which he attended as a youth. When he was 15 or 16, he walked into the office of **Bob Hammel**, seeking advice on writing. Bob gave him two books: Strunk and White's *Elements of Style* and William Zinsser's *On Writing Well*. (Bob used to buy these books at the annual Red Cross Book Fair to give to aspiring writers.)



Michael likened delving into these books to learning basketball fundamentals from Bob Knight. "Mystery and myth turns into craft," he said.

Bob and Michael have been friends ever since, and Michael invited Bob to be his interlocutor at the IURA meeting. Michael has honored his friend in his fiction by creating Hammel College, home of the Hammel Hurricanes, in Hammel, Maine. The two recalled years of regular lunches with the late IU history professor **George Juergens**, at which they discussed baseball, politics, and history.

On May 14 Warner Bros will simultaneously release *Those Who Wish Me Dead* in theaters and on HBO Max. Michael worked as a screenwriter for the motion picture and considers himself a bridge between the novel and the movie. But "the movie is a brand new structure," he acknowledged. "It's my book and their movie." A fellow writer gave him good advice about film adaptations, he said: "A novelist who doesn't like what Hollywood does with his book is like a guy who leaves a house of ill repute saying he didn't feel loved."

The day before the IURA meeting marked the release of Michael's novel *Never Far Away*. A book release is very different during the pandemic, he said: "When I finish a book, it's a year before it's published."

Talking with readers at book signings makes him look at his novel with fresh eyes. “This one doesn’t feel as real without that contact with readers,” he observed.

Asked about the writing task itself, Michael confirmed that he sets himself a schedule. “You have to honor putting your butt at your desk and carving out a mental space for writing,” he said. He writes at least 1,500 words a day — “with the knowledge that fully 1,000 of them will be cut.”

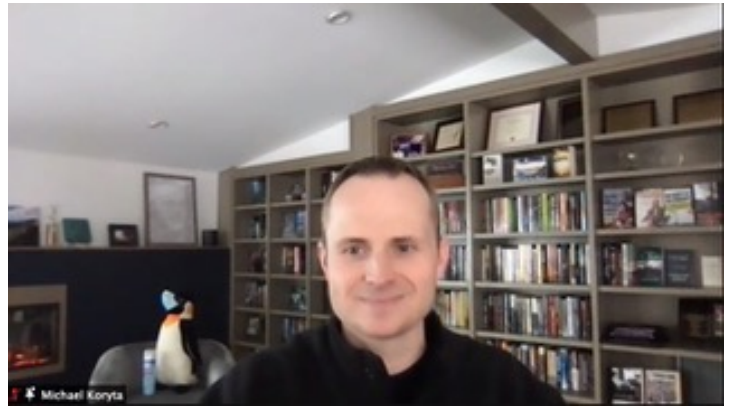
He comes up with many of his ideas while on an airplane, an option that has been unavailable during the pandemic. “Flying cuts out connectivity and creates a sense of detachment,” he noted. “And planes offer a unique cross section of humanity.”

Are there more worlds to conquer? Michael is attracted to biography and American history. “I’d love to do narrative journalism,” he said. “To thread that needle would be amazing.” He cited David Grann’s *Killers of the Flower Moon* as an outstanding example of a nonfiction book that marries mystery to history.

Michael credits his father, Jim, retired senior electrical engineer for IU’s physical plant, with the idea for the first novel he is publishing under the pseudonym Scott Carson. “When you grow up as the son of an engineer who’s worried about potential problems with an infrastructure that no one can see, you tune him out,” he confessed.

But *The Chill*, which will be released in paperback in March, is inspired by what can go wrong within just such an infrastructure. The New York City water system relies on faraway reservoirs, aqueducts, tunnels, and dams, he said, offering great potential for catastrophe. Stephen King calls *The Chill* “one terrific horror/suspense/disaster novel,” and Michael Connelly described it as “an eerie dive into the murky depths of the supernatural.”

Why is Michael adopting a pseudonym for novels of the supernatural? “There’s something freeing about publishing a book when no one knows your name,” he said. Besides, “people want you to do one thing. They put you in a box.” With a pseudonym, he said, he can “silo the supernatural,” leaving Michael Koryta “for your run-of-the-mill murder and mayhem.”



From his Maine office, Michael Koryta talked with nearly 60 retirees on Feb. 10 by way of Zoom.

Asked for his literary influences, he named Cormac McCarthy, citing his ear for rhythms in language. Of Michael Connelly, he said, “His style is the absence of style. He keeps a light hand on the wheel.” He also mentioned Stephen King, Raymond Chandler, and Dashiell Hammett. He cited the “bristling energy” of Dennis Lehane, and he marveled that some of his literary heroes have become his friends.

Webmaster **Allan Edmonds** has posted video links to past Zoom meetings on the Events page at iura.indiana.edu. A video link of the February meeting is available at <http://bit.ly/IURAKoryta>.

Jim Madison speaks to our partners

Last October, when the IU Press published his latest book, *The Ku Klux Klan in the Heartland*, IURA member **Jim Madison** found himself in the land of Zoom. Without having to drive, he has been speaking throughout the state to organizations and clubs. He spoke to the University Club on Jan. 28 and to the Emeriti House on Feb. 8.

For information about the programs of our partner organizations, see uclub.indiana.edu www.emeritihouse.indiana.edu

Live art show planned for April

The Emeriti House and the IURA are sponsoring a Zoom Show and Tell of the artwork members have created. Plan to join on Friday, April 30, from 3 to 5 p.m. **Beau Vallance** and **Wendy Bernstein** will co-moderate the event. **B.J. Irvine** chairs the art exhibit committee. The March newsletter will include more information.

IU Retirees Association
P.O. Box 8393
Bloomington, IN 47407-8393

Nonprofit Org.
U.S. Postage PAID
Bloomington, IN
Permit No. 2

The news just keeps getting better

“Congratulations to all of you for your support of the community,” **Jim Grandorf**, co-chair of the IURA’s United Way team, told retirees on Feb. 10. The January newsletter celebrated retirees surpassing the lofty \$275,000 goal for the 2021 United Way campaign and setting a new record for generosity.

But the news just gets better. The numbers speak for themselves:

Year	Goal	Pledged	Contrib.	Vanguards
2021	\$275,000	\$296,571	237	109
2020	\$250,000	\$279,463	235	110
2019	\$190,000	\$280,833	233	103
2018	\$210,000	\$255,955	233	104
2017	\$170,000	\$188,210	219	87
2016	\$145,000	\$172,503	201	79
2015	\$135,000	\$153,000	195	69
2014	\$125,000	\$131,773	161	62
2013	\$115,000	\$137,000	224	64

Vanguards are those who pledge \$1,000 or more. Retiree pledges make up 38.8 percent of IU’s total of \$764,452.

In What Retirees Want: A Holistic View of Life’s Third Age (2020), Ken Dychtwald and Robert

Morison state, “Americans 65 and older ... account for 17% of the total population and 38% of net wealth.” They continue: “A strong sense of purpose keeps retirees more active, healthier, and happier. They believe that retirement is the best time to give back, and they are generous. Although often portrayed as self-centered, it turns out Boomers are the most charitable generation in history — in terms of both volunteer time and money. They account for over 40% of money donated and hours volunteered to charities and causes.”

Joining Jim on the IURA United Way team are **Perry Maull** and **Eileen Schellhammer**.

About this newsletter

Newswatch is published eight times each year (nine in 2021), August through April. To correct your address, please contact **Doris Wittenburg**, database manager, at dwittenb@indiana.edu. For comments or corrections, please contact **Judy Schroeder**, editor, at jschroed@indiana.edu.

Founded in 1975 as the IU Annuitants Association, the IURA welcomes all retired faculty and staff and their spouses or partners. It is supported entirely by membership dues and receives no university funding.