



NEWSWATCH

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November 2022

**Next meeting: Holiday buffet on Tuesday, Dec. 6, at 11:45 a.m.
Bloomington Country Club, 3000 S. Rogers St.**

Retirees to celebrate holidays in style



On Tuesday, Dec. 6, retirees will gather in the beautifully decorated ballroom of the Bloomington

Country Club to enjoy a special holiday Hoosier buffet. A quartet from the Singing Hoosiers will provide holiday music. IURA President **Joyce Krothe** says, “We are looking forward to celebrating this special season with all of our members.”

Reservations had to be postmarked by Nov. 23. If you missed the deadline, you can email hospitality chair **Martha Smiley**, martha-smiley@att.net, to see if there have been any cancellations.

Marjorie Hershey shares thoughts on significance of 2022 midterm election

On Nov. 9, **Marjorie Hershey** spoke to the IU Retirees Association, meeting at the Peterson Room of the IU Foundation, about what happened in elections the day before, why it happened, and why we should care.

As a result of the election, the current unified control of the federal government will switch to the more common divided control. At the time of Margie’s talk, the Senate was too close to call. But in the House, even though their margin is far narrower than predicted, Republicans will chair all committees and set the agenda. Still, “the parties are so polarized that it will be hard to come to an agreement on anything,” she said.

Although the Freedom Caucus in the House is quite small – perhaps only 30 to 35 members – it will have an outsized influence, Margie noted. It strongly opposes compromise and strongly favors culture war issues: abortion, public education, LGBTQIA+ rights, and immigration. “It wants to change the direction of American society right now,” she said. Its goal is to repeal most of the legislation passed in the last two years.

A Republican majority in the House means the Jan. 6 inquiry will end and other investigations will begin. In reaction to what they consider federal overreach, Republicans likely will oppose raising the debt ceiling, the routine legislation that ensures the government can pay for obligations already



incurred. It is being mischaracterized as a blank check for new spending. If the debt ceiling isn’t raised, the Treasury department will be unable to pay bills, the government will be unable to stay open, and the credit rating of the United States will suffer.

Why did the Democrats fare as well as they did?

The current Congress has been remarkably productive, Margie said, and voters have seen the immediate impact of new legislation. The American Rescue Plan Act provided massive federal spending for pandemic relief and recovery, with the child tax credit reducing by half the number of children living in poverty. The Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act provides help for urgently needed highway and bridge repair. The Inflation Reduction Act, which will raise corporate taxes, promotes clean energy and

allows Medicare to negotiate some prescription prices.

In this election, as always, Margie said, the party in power seeks to preserve its advantage. “If you reduce the number of days of early voting or make it more difficult to vote by mail, it helps Republicans,” she said. Another example: With college-educated people likely to vote for Democrats, a college ID is not acceptable for voter identification in Texas and New Hampshire, but a hunting license is.

“Indiana continues to be a leader in limiting access to the polls and making elections difficult,” Margie said. This year people requesting absentee ballots had to include their driver’s license number or the last four digits of their Social Security number. This new requirement affects lower income people disproportionately. Because they are less likely to own cars, they are less likely to have drivers' licenses. Only a court ruling stopped a state law that would have allowed local election voter registration officials to purge voters whom an imperfect system identified as registered to vote in another state.

With a Republican supermajority in the legislature – the popular vote is about 58-59 percent Republican but the legislature is 75-80 percent Republican – gerrymandering means that few districts are truly competitive. The real election is the primary, where extremists rather than moderates are selected. This lack of competition may be why Indiana ranks in the lowest fifth in the country in voter turnout.

“Democracy is on the ballot in every election,” Margie said. “This is especially true when people refuse to accept a loss.” Democracy depends on election officials committed to fairness rather than partisanship. “Decibel level does not equal numbers,” she said. The burden of proof must be on those who assert the myth of voter fraud. During the question period, **Steve Gottlieb** asked, “Why do you say voter fraud is a myth rather than a lie?” Margie responded, “I avoid inflammatory language to as great an extent as possible.”

In introducing Margie, **Bill McGregor** observed, “Although retired, she is still dangerous.” Her commentary is sought, he said, because she “assiduously avoids magical thinking and pithy generalizations.” The rapt attention of nearly 80 retirees, half in person and half on Zoom, affirmed Bill’s description.

Recordings of this and other IURA meetings with a Zoom component are available on the Events page of the IURA website, iura.indiana.edu.

Retirees support United Way big time

The United Way Campaign for 2023 is underway and IURA members are a very important part of the effort. The goal for Indiana University is \$720,000. The table below shows the amounts donated or pledged through Nov. 15 for Indiana University and the amounts donated or pledged by IU Retirees Association members.

	Contributions	Persons Donating
Indiana University	\$428,754	413
IU Retirees	\$242,268 (56% of total IU contributions)	133 (32% of IU’s number of donors)

Clearly IURA members make a *big* contribution to the Indiana University campaign.



Since September three separate mailings have gone out – from United Way and the Office

United Way of Monroe County

of the Provost – to portions of the retiree community. However your information arrived, please indicate IURA in the “employer” line when returning your pledge so that the IURA can be recognized for your contributions. The easiest way is to go to the United Way webpage: <https://monroeunitedway.org>. Just click on the “donate now” button.

At the website you can make a single contribution or periodic contributions over the coming year. If you pledge directly from your IRA, your contribution reduces the amount of your Required Minimum Distribution that counts as taxable income.

If possible, please consider one of the Vanguard Leadership levels, which start at \$1,000. Thank you for helping the people of our community to thrive and reach their full potential.

— **Perry Maull**, IURA United Way representative

What do you value as an IURA member?

To better serve its members, the board is attempting to clarify why people join the IURA. Members attending the Nov. 9 meeting in person were asked to complete a questionnaire, outlining five possible reasons for becoming a member. The small sampling – only 24 questionnaires were returned – indicate that members most value keeping in touch with former colleagues and attending programs, closely followed by receiving the newsletter.

The fact that only people attending a program completed the questionnaire may very well have skewed the results. In the hopes of reaching a wider audience, the board is putting a similar questionnaire on the website, iura.indiana.edu. Members can copy the questionnaire, paste it into a Word document, and email it directly to iura@indiana.edu. Or you may, if you wish, complete the form below and return it to the IURA at P.O. Box 8393, Bloomington, IN.

How long have you been a member? (Guess if you don't remember exactly.)

- Less than three years
- Three to five years
- More than five years

Why did you become a member? Please rank from 1 to 5, with 1 being the highest.

- To keep in touch with former colleagues.
- To learn about retiree benefits.
- To keep in touch with the university.
- To receive the newsletter.
- To attend programs.

Your suggestions for IURA programs, activities:

How often do you read the newsletter?

- Always
- Most of the time
- Seldom

Please rank what you value in the newsletter, with 1 being the highest:

- Summaries of programs
- Announcements of future programs
- Updates on United Way campaign
- Articles about changes in retiree benefits
- In memoriam section (twice a year)

Your suggestions for other newsletter features:

About one-third of members choose e-mail delivery of the newsletter. Two-thirds receive it in printed form. Delays in printing and mailing mean that the mailed newsletter sometimes reaches members more than two weeks after it is written. The board is considering an online newsletter only, one that can include more photos and content than the present format allows. Please indicate your reaction below. You may check more than one answer.

- Despite its limitations, I prefer a printed newsletter.
- I would read an online newsletter.
- It doesn't really matter to me.

The December issue includes a printed annual membership directory, with names, addresses, telephone numbers, and email addresses of members. In order to protect privacy, this directory is not available in electronic form. Please respond below:

- I would like the membership directory to continue to be mailed.
- I have no objection to the directory being made available in electronic form.
- I don't use the directory and believe it could be discontinued.

The IURA website provides information about IURA programs and retiree benefits. It also archives past newsletters and includes links to programs that have been on Zoom. How often do you use the website?

- Monthly
- Several times a year
- I have never visited the website.

Since the pandemic began, the IURA has presented Zoom versions of its meetings whenever possible.

Have you joined a meeting on Zoom?

- Yes No

Do you wish future meetings to be Zoomed?

- Yes No

If you wish to make comments about IURA membership, programs, or publications for board consideration and/or inclusion in a future newsletter, please attach them separately.

Thank you for suggesting ways the IURA can serve you better.

IU Retirees Association
P.O. Box 8393
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Our partner organizations

The IURA partners with two other university organizations popular with retirees. For information about the programs of the Emeriti House, see www.emeritihouse.indiana.edu. For information about University Club, see uclub.indiana.edu.

A peek at coming attractions

Mark your calendar now for IURA meetings announced by **Tony Mescher** and **Joe Miller**, co-chairs of the IURA program committee.

Tuesday, Dec. 6 – celebratory holiday luncheon at the Bloomington Country Club

Tuesday, Jan. 10 – **Brad Cook**, curator of photographs for IU Archives, sharing some of his favorite images

Tuesday, Feb. 14 – **Bill Yarber**, Provost Professor in School of Public Health, senior scientist at Kinsey Institute, and senior director of the rural center for AIDS/STD prevention

The April 11 program is being finalized. A luncheon is being planned for early May.

Membership directory coming in December

The 2022-23 membership directory will accompany the December newsletter. **Doris Wittenburg**, IURA database manager compiles the directory each year. It includes names, addresses, telephone numbers, and email addresses of members. It is available only in printed form.

To verify your information or update your address, send a message to Doris at dwittenb@indiana.edu.

Judy Schroeder writes *Newswatch* eight times a year, August through April, except for February. Please send corrections and comments to her at jschroed@indiana.edu.

Please complete the questionnaire on the reverse side. Thank you.