



NEWSWATCH

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December 2023

**Next meeting: 2 p.m., Wednesday, January 10
In person at the IU Foundation and on Zoom**

Astronomer to offer guidance for sole chance to see total solar eclipse



When retirees gather on Jan. 10 for their first meeting of 2024, they will learn all about the April 8 total solar eclipse from Catherine Pilachowski, Distinguished Professor and Daniel Kirkwood Chair of Astronomy. This once-in-a-lifetime eclipse is expected to draw up to 300,000 people to Bloomington, which is in the center of the path of its totality.

Although the eclipse will last only about four minutes, occurring shortly after 3 p.m., IU classes have been canceled on April 8. The last time a total eclipse could be seen in Bloomington was 1869.

Professor Pilachowski served for more than 20 years on the scientific staff of the NSF's NOIRLab in Tucson. A fellow of the American Association for the Advancement of Science and a past president of the American Astronomical Society, she is much in demand as a speaker. People who have heard her at Mini University, Emeriti House, University Club, or elsewhere have been uniform in praising her presentations.

IU has established a website, eclipse.iu.edu, to announce live performances, learning guides,

special events, and specialty menus, as they are developed.

Holiday luncheon a huge success

On Tuesday, Dec. 12, a delightfully sunny day, more than 80 retirees gathered at the Bloomington Country Club to enjoy cuisine and camaraderie. The only point of disagreement was as to which entrée was superior: the Angus pot roast or the fried chicken. The apple, berry, and peach cobblers, with enormous ice cream balls, were also applauded.



Joanie Curts and Sue Talbot compare entrées.

The event was so well received that IURA Vice President **Perry Maull** has reserved the room for Wednesday, Dec. 11, 2024.



Beckie Owens, Anita Douglas, and Doris Wittenburg welcomed retirees to the banquet room. **Allan Edmonds** was the photographer. **Perry Maull, Tony Mescher, and Doug Porter** served as parking guides. Special thanks to **Jim**

and **Joyce Grandorf**, who took responsibility for the room charge.



Ruth Cord, Martha Lenthe, Carl Lenthe, and Edmund Cord: We should have had a trombone-trumpet duet!



Among members attending the luncheon were Vivian Winston, retired accounting faculty member, now an IU trustee, and retired head athletic trainer Kip Smith, a member of the National Athletic Trainers Hall of Fame.

More photos are available on the IURA website.

There's still time to support United Way

At the Dec. 12 IURA luncheon, **Jim Grandorf** announced that pledges to the 2023 United Way campaign are lagging. IU Bloomington has set \$710,000 as its goal, with retirees pledging nearly half – \$330,000 – of the campus's total commitment. Retiree pledges to date stand at \$211,000, and the university as a whole has firm commitments for \$485,000.

“The pledge drive continues through February 28,” Jim announced, “so there is still plenty of time. When you make your pledge, please designate IURA on the IU department line.” If you have misplaced your form and need another, contact Jim, jgrandor@iu.edu, or IURA United Way liaison **Perry Maull**, pjmaull@indiana.edu.

The United Way of Monroe County is now officially the United Way of South Central Indiana. In addition to Monroe County, it serves Brown, Greene, Lawrence, Orange, and Owen counties. It's possible to designate contributions to a specific county. A donor may also designate an agency or agencies to which the funds are to be directed.

Make doing taxes your superpower!

AARP TaxAide is looking for volunteers to help people, mainly seniors, who find filing their tax returns a daunting task.

The IRS and AARP train volunteers in both federal and state tax law. New volunteers work with experienced preparers to be sure that returns are accurate. All materials, including laptops and training materials, are provided by AARP.

Your time commitment can be as much as several hours a day for two or three days a week or as little as a few hours one day each week. At least one week's training in January is required. The tax season runs from the beginning of February through April 15.

TaxAide operates in two locations in Monroe County: the downtown Monroe County Public

Library and the Endwright East Active Living Community Center in College Mall. IURA database manager **Doris Wittenburg** coordinates the MCPL site, while Jeannette Smedberg coordinates the Endwright site.

Both locations offer free tax preparation service on a first-come first-served basis. At both locations, several tax preparers work together during scheduled walk-in hours (Mondays, Tuesdays, and Fridays at the MCPL, Mondays and Fridays at the Endwright Center). No prior knowledge or experience is required.



If you are interested, please visit www.aarpfoundation.org/taxaidevolunteer or contact Doris, dwittenb@indiana.edu, or Jeannette, jtbsmedberg@gmail.com.

What to give a dearly beloved child

In Indiana your contribution to a child's College Choice 529 account is eligible for a state income tax credit of 20 percent, up to \$750 for an individual or \$1,500 for a couple filing jointly. Contributions grow tax-deferred, and distributions are free from federal and Indiana state taxes if used for qualified higher education expenses. Those expenses can be incurred at nearly any public or private two- to four-year college nationwide – be it a college, university, graduate or technical school – as long it is accredited in the U.S. Nine different investment options are available.

Each state operates its own 529 plan and makes its own rules so that maximum contribution levels vary across states. Annual contributions of up to \$17,000 (\$34,000 for a couple filing jointly) are exempt from the IRS gift tax.

While there are virtually no restrictions on who may open a 529 account, the investment is a particular favorite of parents and grandparents.

**IU Retirees Association
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Treats in store for next semester

Caty Pilachowski's presentation on the solar eclipse is featured on Page 1. But that's just the beginning. Program Chair **Tony Mescher** has announced an interesting and varied assortment of programs for the remainder of the semester.

On Feb. 14, Chad Priest, who holds two nursing degrees from IU, will discuss disaster preparedness and emergency management. Formerly CEO of the American Red Cross-Indiana, Chad is now vice president of the organization's largest division, which includes the Southeast and Rocky Mountain areas. Chad is a former student of IURA President **Joyce Krothe**.

A bonus program is being offered members in 2024. The IURA ordinarily doesn't meet in March, but next year will be an exception. Beth Cate, IU's widely known expert on the U.S. Supreme Court, will speak on March 13. "The Supreme Court's decisions are becoming more interesting," Tony observed, "and Beth will offer us her insights."

On April 10 Glenn Gass, Jacobs School professor emeritus, will present a program he is in the process of developing. It will commemorate the 60th anniversary of the Beatles' debut in the U.S. Two days after their Feb. 9, 1964, appearance on "The Ed Sullivan Show," a telecast that attracted some 73 million viewers, the Beatles gave their first live

concert in the U.S. at the packed Washington Coliseum.

These programs are all on the second Wednesday of the month, at 2 p.m. in the Peterson Room at the IU Foundation. They also will be on Zoom.

John Schilb, now head of the IURA hospitality committee, is planning a special gathering for May. Look for details in future newsletters.

Your membership directory is enclosed

Included with the December issue of *Newswatch* is the annual membership directory, compiled by **Doris Wittenburg**, IURA database manager. The directory contains information for the IURA's 370 members.

Telephone numbers and email addresses appear for people who included them with their membership form. Couples with different last names are listed under both names.

Because the directory is for members only, it is not being distributed in electronic form. It is being mailed with the newsletter, even to those who have requested email delivery of *Newswatch*. Email delivery will begin with the January issue. Directory corrections should be sent to Doris at dwittenb@indiana.edu. **Judy Schroeder** writes *Newswatch* itself. Please send corrections to her at jschroed@indiana.edu.