NEWSWATCH

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**Next meeting: 2 p.m., Wednesday, February 12**

**Peterson Room, Showalter House, IU Foundation, SR46 Bypass**

**Education dean Gonzalez to describe Cuba then and now at Feb. 12 meeting**

**Gerardo Gonzalez**, dean of the IU School of Education, will give his personal reflections on Cuba when the IU Retirees Association meets at 2 p.m. on Lincoln’s birthday, Feb. 12, at the IU Foundation.

Fifty years ago, Gonzalez emigrated from Cuba as a child. In recent years, he has traveled to the island as part of people-to-people educational exchange tours sponsored by the IU Alumni Association. He will share photos from his trips and report on conversations he has had with ordinary citizens relating to Cuba’s current economic and political climate.



In 1973 Gonzalez earned a bachelor’s degree in psychology from the University of Florida. In 1978 he received a Ph.D. in counselor education and higher education administration from the University of Florida. He held various positions at his alma mater, as professor, department chair, and dean, before coming to IU in 2000. In 2012 he received an honorary degree from Ivy Tech. That same year *Hispanic Business* magazine named him to its list of the top 50 most influential Hispanics.

Recognized as an expert on alcohol and drug education, Gonzalez is also active in multicultural counseling and education issues. He has led IU delegations to South Korea, China, and Lithuania.

Take an armchair trip to Cuba in February, and soak up the sun vicariously.

**We did it! Retirees top United Way goal**

Retirees continue their winning record of generosity by once again exceeding the United Way goal. At the Jan. 15 IURA meeting, **Harriet Pfister** announced that161 retirees had pledged $131,773.32 to United Way for 2014. The goal was $125,000. There were 62 Vanguard givers, pledging $1,000 or more.

Given that the number of donors is down significantly from last year, it’s likely that the final figures will be even better as travelers and procrastinators sort through their mail and make their pledges.

Here is the IURA’s winning record:

***Year Goal Raised Contrib. Vanguards*** 2012 $100,000 $115,000 167 61

2013 $115,000 $137,000 224 64

2014 $125,000 $131,773 161 62

Instructions to givers: Raise one arm above head. Bend elbow. Reach backwards and apply pressure between shoulder blades. Repeat.

**Polar vortex holds McKaigs hostage**

**for four days at Indianapolis airport**

“We thought we were so smart. We arranged to be dropped off at the airport hotel on Saturday to avoid the bad weather coming in on Sunday. Our plane was scheduled to depart Monday morning. We finally got out of Indianapolis on Thursday.” That is how IURA President **Dick McKaig** summarizes his and wife **Maribeth**’s January adventure en route to their winter home in Litchfield Park, Ariz., near Phoenix.

With even food delivery services closed Sunday and Monday and the hotel offering only breakfast, the McKaigs, with no car and no restaurant, had to depend on vending machine snacks. By checkout time Thursday, Dick reports, “the manager declared a holiday bonus for all when I paid the room bill. We paid more for the hotel than the flight.”

The highlight of Day 2 of their captivity, Dick reports, was watching cars spin on the snowy off -ramp from I-465. Fortunately no one was hurt. On Day 3, Tuesday, Dick began his Hotel Hostage Diary. Excerpts follow.

***Hotel Hostage Diary Day 3***

*The sun rose in the morning with another day below zero. We remember fondly the free pizza the hotel provided last night. The vending machine meals are getting old. We have learned it is important to be near the front of the line when the complimentary cookies are set out in the afternoon. The free breakfast is a bonding time among hotel staff and the other hostages.*

*Yesterday 120 out of 140 flights were canceled. We did go the airport but were sent back to the hotel to continue our incarceration until a possible flight on Thursday. Escape back to Bloomington on the shuttle was also blocked when they discontinued service for the day*.

*The computer e-mail from Southwest with the cheery title “your upcoming trip is just around the corner” rings hollow as I read it. With luck my brother and his wife will arrive tonight. He promises to bring new supplies to entertain us during our stay.*

***Hotel Hostage Diary Day 4***

*Temperatures are finally above zero. Planes are flying but there are no empty seats. We have boarding passes for tomorrow morning. Today a portion of the ceiling in the front lobby on the hotel collapsed and water poured into the lobby area from the fire sprinkler system. The fire alarm has been going off for the last 20 minutes. That might make a nap more difficult today.*

*Last night my brother took us to a real restaurant. The variety of food available was much better than the vending machine.*

***Hotel Hostage Diary Day 5 The Escape***

*We are sitting at the airport, and the plane awaits us at the end of the jet way. Warmth and bright sunshine ought to be only four hours away.*

*The shuttle ride went quickly except for the brief moment when the van got stuck at a corner. T-shirts memorializing the hostage situation should be available soon.*

**Cardinal offers reduced price to retirees**

Cardinal Stage is offering IURA members $3 off on tickets to any performance of its February production of *The Whipping Man*. The play will run from Feb. 7 to 22 at the John Waldron Arts Center, and the offer extends to all performances.

*The Whipping Man*, by Matthew Lopez, is a historical drama set in April 1865, at the end of the Civil War. A young Confederate officer returns to Richmond, Va., to find his family home in shambles. Two former slaves – one who raised him, and one who was raised with him – greet him. Together they wait for signs of life to return to the ruined city. The former slaves, who have taken on the household faith, share an improvised Seder to mark Passover with their former master. The three men discover that, although they are no longer tied by ownership, they remain bound by faith, family secrets, and the unsparing legacies of slavery.

The play, which will be directed by Randy White, Cardinal’s artistic director, won the New York Outer Critics Circle’s 2011 John Gassner Playwriting award. One of the most frequently produced plays in America over the last two years, it is two hours long, with a 15-minute intermission. It contains strong language but depicts no acts of violence on stage and is recommended for ages 13 and up. To receive the special rate, go to [www.cardinalstage.org](www.cardinalstage.org%20) and enter the promo code RETIREE or call 336-9300. The offer does not apply to previously purchased tickets.

**“We do what others won’t,”**

**Radio/TV’s Perry Metz tells retirees**

More than 50 years ago, Federal Communications Commission Chairman Newton Minow referred to television as a vast wasteland. It hasn’t improved. “The state of television today is lousy, and it’s your fault,” **Perry Metz** told the 35 retirees who attended the Jan. 15 meeting of the IU Retirees Association. IURA board member **Joan Curts** introduced Perry as executive director of radio/TV services and the general manager for IU’s NPR and PBS stations.

“We’ve set a very low bar and found ways to get under it,” Perry said. Most TV today is crime, weather, and sports; for news coverage we’ve settled for shouting rather than demanding in-depth reporting. “Guilty pleasures are OK,” he opined, “but not 24/7.”

In 1967 Congress passed the Public Broadcasting Act, creating the Corporation for Public Broadcasting and, eventually, the Public Broadcasting System. “We do what others won’t do because it’s hard to make money doing it,” Perry said.

The situation has worsened with the concentration of media ownership. Media outlets were once led by people who felt they had a public responsibility, but now these media are owned by corporations out to make a profit. When the Bingham family owned the Louisville *Courier-Journal*, Perry said, its profit expectation was 3 percent. The Gannett chain’s expectation for the *C-J* is 35 percent.

An example of assuming public responsibility is “State Impact Indiana,” a collaboration of WFIU and Indiana Public Broadcasting stations to explain the effects of state education policy on people’s lives. The program offers news and analysis of K-12 and higher education. WFIU was one of six stations nationwide to receive a grant from National Public Radio to develop such a series, with NPR paying half. “It’s not advocacy but explanatory journalism,” Perry explained. Even when the NPR grant ran out after two years, “we decided to stick with it,” he said. If you have questions about Common Core or A-F school ratings, check this site for clarification and explanation.

Perry believes local media will survive. He points to WTIU programs such as “Bloomington Remember When” and “The Spirit of” county series, which has featured Monroe and Brown counties. Like the “Save of the Century” video, about the West Baden Hotel, they continue to sell. A program soon to premiere is “Bill Cook: A Heck of a Ride!” “If there ever was a Renaissance person,” Perry said, “it was Bill Cook.”

In response to a question about local news, Perry pointed to “Indiana Newsdesk,” a half-hour program that airs Fridays at 6 p.m. on WTIU. “If that goes well, we may expand it to daily,” he said.

Perry regards public broadcasting as “a service that helps stitch our fractious parts together.” His rapt audience asked for clarification of acronyms. The Corporation for Public Broadcasting, Perry explained, is the administrative body that oversees everything. NPR is radio; PBS is television. America Public Media is a syndicate, as is Public Radio International.

To **Bruce Jaffee**’s question about the financing model, Perry said that 30 to 40 percent of public broadcasting stations in Indiana are operating in the red: “Of 17 stations in the state, about half are in real financial difficulty.” At Indiana University government contributions pay for about 20 percent of the operations, and “the university hasn’t raised its support but it hasn’t taken it away either.” Members contribute 23 percent of the budget, and corporate and community support is steady.

“Downton Abbey,” Perry said, is the most popular show ever on PBS. It cuts across generations and is the darling of the 20s set. *[Editor’s note: That explains the annoying blond cousin.]* Before the “Downton Abbey” phenomenon, “Antique Roadshow” was the most popular PBS program. The NewsHour has a “steady but older audience,” even older than the average PBS show. The website PBS.org has a much younger audience, with an average age of 40. They are whiter and more affluent and educated than the population as a whole. NPR audiences mirror the population.

Where will media technology take us? Perry said the answer is both frightening and exciting. “We will experience even more change that we have seen to date,” he predicted. In the next 10 to 12 years, your phone, TV, radio, CD and DVD players all may be gone, replaced by a master computer that runs your house. Look also for the end of privacy. “Today’s students not only don’t seek privacy,” he observed, “but they run from it.” The spread of gaming will turn education into games you play on the computer. He pointed to the success of the Khan Academy, an online site that delivers free online education to anyone anywhere, with tutorials on a wide range of subjects stored on YouTube.

Asked about the new Media School -- the merger of the School of Journalism and the departments of telecommunications and communications and culture -- Perry sees advantages and disadvantages. The advantage is that media are converging. The disadvantage is that the new school could wipe out the national reputations of existing entities. “It will be a real leadership challenge,” he said.

**IU Retirees Association Nonprofit Org.**

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**Permit No. 2**

Perry concluded his presentation with a premium, and Dick Dever was the winner of an autographed Garrison Keillor DVD. Thanks to the generosity of **Jo Daron**, **Joann Dodd**, and **Kate Kroll**, all who attended the meeting at the IU Foundation were awarded a premium in the form of tasty fruit and cookies.

**No newsletter in February; no meeting in March; mark April and May on calendar**

IURA Vice President **John Hobson** announced at the Jan. 15 meeting that, while the board is considering changes to the bylaws, the IURA will continue its tradition of not meeting in March. For that reason, the next newsletter, announcing details of April’s meeting, will come to your mailbox in March.

On Wednesday, April 9, at 2 p.m., IURA member **Ken Beckley**, former president of the IU Alumni Association, will speak of his foray into fiction with his book *Knuckleball*.

The academic year concludes with the annual pitch-in dinner at the IU Foundation on May 14.

**A chance to meet with local legislators**

IURA Vice President **John Hobson** announced at the Jan. 15 meeting that IURA members are invited to the IU Bloomington Legislative Forum on Friday, Jan. 31, from 7:30 to 9 a.m. at the DeVault Alumni Center, 1000 E. 17th St. The breakfast is complimentary.

This annual forum, sponsored by Hoosiers for Higher Education and the Monroe County chapter of the IU Alumni Association, offers an opportunity to meet and hear from area legislators about issues affecting IU, Bloomington, and the state of Indiana. Please register at <http://myiuaa.com/legislative>. Registration deadline is Jan. 26. Address questions to Lizzie Conkle at <hhe@indiana.edu>.

**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>.