

BRANCH NEWS

Education. Scholarship. Understanding.

P.O. Box 758, Winter Park, FL. 32790-0758

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Monday, May 1

3:30 p.m. Refreshments; 4:00 p.m. Annual Meeting

Program will follow Annual Meeting.



THE ENGLISH SPEAKING UNION
CENTRAL FLORIDA BRANCH

The University Club Winter Park

Monday
May
1

Refreshments
3:30 PM

Annual General Meeting :
4:00PM

Guest Speaker immediately following the Annual General Meeting.

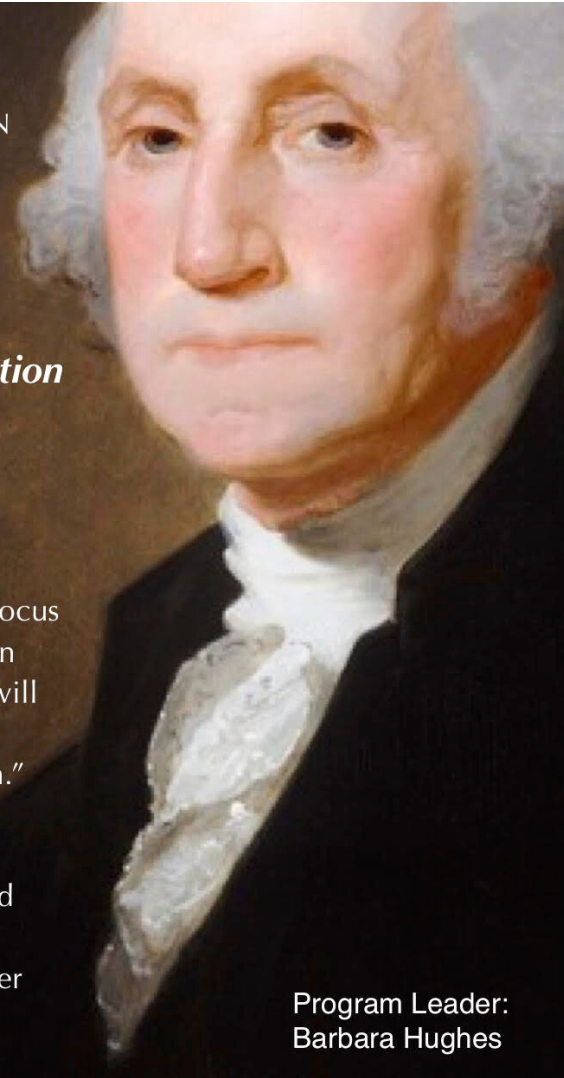
THE ENGLISH SPEAKING UNION
Central Florida Branch

Ed Larson
presents
Washington's Second Revolution

Countless narratives tell of Washington's role during the American Revolution or as the country's first President, but few focus on the pivotal six years in between which is exactly what Ed Larson will share in his presentation of "Washington's Second Revolution."

Ed Larson PhD. is the University Professor of History and Hugh and Hazel Darling Chair in Law at Pepperdine University, and Pulitzer Prize winning historian.

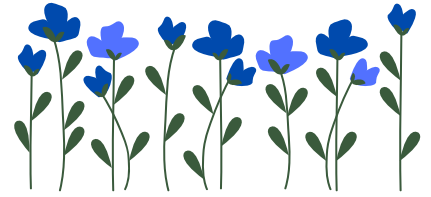
Program Leader:
Barbara Hughes





President's Message

May Day



Although I have never understood why May Day, that ancient and often lusty European celebration of the triumph of spring and the resurrection of nature, so quickly replaced SOS as the international distress signal, I think I know how it happened. While Morse code made SOS simple to send by telegraph, a wide range of voices and accents made the letters hard to distinguish from similar sounds once radios and telephones replaced the telegraph. Searching for an alternative, British radio operators monitoring the English Channel between the two World Wars apparently settled on “May Day,” simply anglicizing the French “m’aidez.”

While we all want a safe, easy distress call, I wish they had found another phrase, especially whenever I listen to the “Merry Month of May” songs by Shakespeare’s contemporary Thomas Dekker, by the first popular American song writer Stephen Foster, and by Irish folksingers. That is even more true when I watch Vanessa Redgrave as Guinevere in Camelot sing “The Lusty Month of May” as her knights and ladies pair off and slip into the woods.

That scene in Camelot perfectly captures the spirit of the pagan May Day festivals, dedicated to fertility and the promise of summer. Originally an agricultural holiday celebrating the return of crops, it became a prime opportunity for young people to come together, feast, dance, and engage in other activities the young dream of during long, dreary winters. Most of us have seen images of young suitors smiling at each other as they gather flowers and dance around a Maypole.

A number of Christian leaders quickly recognized that those erotically charged May Days often ended, four weeks later, in June brides. To shift attention from the physical to the spiritual, early Church leaders decided to dedicate May to the Virgin Mary. Then they developed religious celebrations for the young that emphasized Mary’s purity, organizing elaborate processions for excited children and amorous teens that ended in crowning statues of the Virgin with the flowers that once surrounded Maypoles.

President's Message, continued...

Once Russia and China, two traditionally conservative cultures, became communist nations, they transformed May Day into a celebration of workers. Their inspiration came from a series of union demonstrations in Chicago that began on May 1, 1886, demanding an eight-hour work day. On May 4 police fired into the crowd, killing and wounding a number of people. Eight anarchists, allied with the union members, were arrested and four later executed after highly questionable trials. The labor movement in the U.S. memorialized the events by naming May 1 International Workers Day.

Recognizing the restlessness of young people that inspired the original pagan May Days, both Russia and China used International Workers Day in an attempt to channel a festival of awakening sensuality into a ceremony of Marxist nationalism, parading ICBMs and goose-stepping military units in place of Maypoles and dancing maidens.

Even as I grow older, I still prefer songs and dances to nukes and the Russian Wagner Group's paramilitary ex-cons. Since May is named after Maia, the goddess of growth, daughter of Atlas, and mother of Hermes, perhaps this is the perfect time for all of us to imagine new ways we can grow as individuals and a community.

Sláinte,

Socky O'Sullivan
President

Check Out These ESU Membership Perks!

- Two complimentary tickets for ESU members for a Senior Matinee of your choice
- Complimentary tickets to TYC performances
- Complimentary tickets to the Shakespeare With Heart performance
- Introductory rate discounts on a Season 7 Subscription (Limit: Two per member)



Scholars Reunion 2023



Socky O'Sullivan,
Central Florida ESU Branch President

The Sheraton North's Irish Pub, the An Tobar, set the stage for Central Florida's Drey Scholars Reunion on Wednesday, March 29th from 5:00-7:00 p.m. Jan McClure and Reta Jackson greeted scholars and Board members with name tags and free drink tickets. The Sheraton donated a generous platter of fruits, crackers, and cheeses while the Branch provided charcuterie boards and barbecued wings. President Maurice (Socky) O'Sullivan gave the scholars a welcome, calling teachers the true heroes of Florida. The new scholars: Bryan Boggiano, Jonathan Jackson, Olivia Mindermann, and Greg Wedel met former scholars who shared their travel stories and tips for an easy transition into London or Edinburgh, Scotland's culture. Donna Miller, Elaine Laegeler, Nancy Williams, Barbara Hughes, Gilda Gomez and Debra Williams were seen enjoying conversations with teachers like Jennifer Gautier, Matthew Nash Brown, and Sally Marjama. Judging by the noise level in the Pub, a good time was had by all.



Olivia Mindermann and her husband

From Left: Matthew Nash Brown, Kristina Thompson, Bryan Boggiano, Greg Wedel, Jennifer Gautier





CENTRAL
FLORIDA
BRANCH

Nominating Committee Recommendations for Executive Board 2023-2024

Members: We will vote for our 2023-2024 Board Members at our May 1, 2023 meeting.

"Any member shall have the right to make additional nominations from the floor at the Annual General Meeting, but they shall be submitted only with the pre-approval of the nominee. Such nominations must be duly seconded."

President: Socky O'Sullivan, *continuing*

Executive Vice President: Jan McClure, *continuing*

VP Endowment: Barbara Hughes

VP Communications: Brett Carrier, *continuing*

VP Membership: Gilda Gomez, *continuing*

VP Programs: Nancy Williams, *continuing*

VP Scholarship: Reta Jackson, *continuing*

VP Shakespeare Competition: Brett Carrier

Treasurer: Jackie Abrams, *continuing*

Deputy Treasurer: Joe Sabora

Secretary (Appointed): Rebecca Van Horn

Nominating Chair (Appointed): Elaine Laegeler

Directors 2023-26

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Cindy Abeel

Kristina Thompson

Directors 2022-25

Jim Fitch

Michele Levy

Glenda McClure

Directors 2021-24

Sharyn Jontz

Deborah Williams

Joseph Bostwick

Past President: Barbara Hughes

Parliamentarian: (Open)

Annual Reports 2022-2023

Communications Report - submitted by Brett Carrier, VP Communications

The Communications Committee has successfully published and distributed the 2022-2023 Yearbook, as well as a total of nine monthly newsletters.

Our newsletter distribution platform transitioned from Peer360 and is currently being handled by Mailchimp, a marketing automation platform which offers seamless integration with our graphic design program, Canva. MailChimp data indicates that 2022-23 ESU newsletters produced open rates which surpassed industry standards.

Furthermore, the committee routinely sent numerous email program reminders to members as well as notifying press and local news outlets of major branch accomplishments and events. The committee continues to manage and update additional web presence through the ESU website and Facebook page.

Nominating Report - submitted by Elaine Laegeler, Nominating Chair

The Nominating Committee met informally via email to finalize the slate of nominees accepting positions on the 2023-2024 ESU Central Florida Branch Board. A slate of nominees was prepared and submitted to the current board members for approval. After board approval, the slate was published in the April newsletter to inform the branch membership that they could submit nominations from the floor at the May meeting with the approval of those being nominated. Final approval of the slate will be given by a vote of the membership at the May meeting.

The Nominating Committee consists of Frank Barber, Gilda Gomez, Sharyn Jontz, Joann Palmer, Diane Sandquist, Barbara Hughes, Past President, Socky O'Sullivan, President; and Elaine Laegeler, Chair.

Annual Reports, continued

Education Report - submitted by Jan McClure, VP Endowment

The 2022-23 Education budget returned to more of our traditional grant lineup this cycle. After the restrictions of the Covid era, which saw extracurricular activities grind to a halt in the schools for the last two years, three of our longtime grants were back: The Battle of the Books in both Orange and Seminole Counties and the Orange County Media Specialists (Librarians) Media Festival. We continued grants for The Orlando Shakes summer camps for middle and high school students and the Adult Literacy League, both of whom were able to maintain their full menu of services through the Covid years, mostly reinventing themselves by adding virtual opportunities for their clients. Orlando Shakes will be returning to in-person camps in the summer of 2023, while the Literacy League has had a successful year by being more accessible to clients through the virtual activities that allowed them to serve their clients during the Pandemic. We kept Crealde School of Art in our contingency budget for the second year to support their Story Tellers project, but we didn't fund the activity as Crealde was unable to recruit enough participants. The money went back into our general Contingency Fund, enabling us to make additional funds available to the Scholarship and Program committees. The University of Central Florida College of Education continued to distribute the 2022 \$100,000 gift of the Jessie Drey Memorial Scholarships. There are now three years left to distribute \$20,000 in scholarships per year to the teaching professionals seeking graduate degrees.

We left money available for additional grant requests during the year, but none were received.

Recent grantees are being offered the opportunity to apply again for the 2023-2024 cycle with a Grant Application/Review form we have designed (required by ESUUS). The Education Committee will review any grant requests received before the June Board Meeting and in time for the final budget approval in September.

Total Budgeted for education projects: \$63,290 Total spent: \$31,645

Annual Reports, continued

Membership Report - submitted by Gilda Gomez, VP Membership

During the program year 2022-2023, the Central Florida Branch received applications for 25 new members. Guests were given membership applications contained in the ESU brochure at all meetings. The total membership includes 181 single members and 42 couples. From September 2022 through April 2023, attendance at branch meetings averaged 60 members and guests. The Shakespeare Competition had an attendance of 60.

Scholarships - submitted by Reta Jackson, VP Scholarships

The following are members of the Scholarship Committee for this year: Reta Jackson (Chair), Gail Chase, Jan McClure, Donna Miller, Fran Morrissey, Kristina Thompson, and Greg Wedel. I want to thank each of these members for their dedication and hard work, reading the applications and spending their Saturday mornings discussing and interviewing candidates. We would also like to welcome Jayne Leach to the Committee for next year.

Committee members met in July and rewrote the requirements for the Teachers Learning Abroad Scholarship program. I emailed this information to Alice Uhl in our New York office, and she published it as part of the application process. Also, I wish to thank Brett Carrier, Communications Chair, for designing flyers to advertise the programs we sponsor.

The five Drey Scholars presented a wonderful program September 21, 2022, sharing their adventures at Oxford University, University of Scotland, and the Globe Theatre in London at our first SCHOLARS REUNION AND REPORTS, which included teachers from the area interested in participating in the Teachers Learning Abroad (TLAB) program. A question and answer session ended the program, followed by a light supper.

January found the Committee interviewing new candidates for TLAB and naming five scholars to be honored February 5, 2023 at the Scholars Reception. They will represent our Branch this summer at the Globe's Teaching Shakespeare through Performance program and the University of Edinburgh's academic programs that coincide with the International Fringe Festival. We wish them safe travels and superior learning experiences.

Annual Reports, continued

Programs Report - submitted by Nancy Williams, VP Programs

Program Committee Members: Nancy Williams (Chair), Frank P. Barber, Barbara Hughes, Sharyn Jontz, Elaine Laegeler, Michele Levy, Socky O'Sullivan, Ovid Vitas

Speakers and Performers

Between September and May each year, Branch members enjoy one of the most outstanding speakers and performers series in Central Florida, bringing in dignitaries, artists, and performers from across the United States and abroad. The meetings are usually held at the University Club of Winter Park in late afternoon or evening and are preceded or followed by refreshments /social hour. Two or three dinner meetings are also held each year in other locations.

Recent speakers and performers have included:

- September: Professor Bowen of UCF spoke on Churchill and Spain in WWII.
- October: We enjoyed dinner at the Winter Park Racquet Club and entertainment by vocalist, Michael Andrew.
- November: Professor Richard Aldous of Bard College presented "The Iron Lady and the Gipper" How the iconic friendship between Thatcher and Regan ended the Cold War.
- December: Members delighted in a special three part presentation on the Evolution of Christmas! Program leaders in order of presentation: Patrick Powers, Ann Hellmuth, Michelle Levy
 - Part I: Why Christmas Is Celebrated on the Winter Solstice, by Patrick Powers.
 - Part 2: Customs of a Victorian Christmas Thanks to Prince Albert and Charles Dickens, by Ann Hellmuth.
 - Part 3: Commercialization of Christmas by Department Stores, by Michelle Levy
- January: We savored dinner at the Racquet Club and entertainment by pianist, Gloria Cook.
- February: Our Shakespeare Competition was held at Shakespeare Theatre. It was hosted by Ginger Bryant in her farewell presentation for this position and for which she received a standing ovation from parents, professionals, and student present.

Annual Reports, continued

Programs Report continued.

- March: Our speaker was Barbara Perry of UVA. Her topic was The Kennedys in England, From Fairytale to World War II, and she also covered information from her book *Rose Kennedy: The Life and Times of a Political Matriarch*.
- April: Holly Mandelkern presented a program on Kindertransport of 1938-39. This dynamic lecture included poems and songs and was extremely moving.
- In May our speaker, Ed Larson, will be lecturing on George Washington's Second Revolution.

I would like to give special recognition and appreciation to Ovid Vitas and his wife for their marvelous posters and Barbara Hughes for her tireless help with our dinner programs. Also, I would like to express my gratitude to my fellow Program Committee Members who have made it possible for our Branch to have engaging and stimulating programs throughout this past year.

Shakespeare Competition Report

- submitted by Ginger Bryant, VP Shakespeare Competition

On February 20, 2023, seventeen students from the tri-county area arrived at Orlando Shakes to participate in The English-Speaking Union's annual Shakespeare competition. Contestants were vying for the opportunity to win \$1,000.00, an additional prize to cover the cost of travel to New York City for the National competition, and a scholarship to Orlando Shakes' The Young Company, which is valued at \$250.00. Casey Kerr from Lake Nona High School took First Place with a portrayal of Bottom from *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and Sonnet 81 under the direction of their teacher, Ms. Jennifer Gautier. Second Place went to Delaney Polk from Windermere Prep. Delaney was coached by her teacher, Ms. BambiEllen Fadoul, on her depiction of Lady Macbeth from *Macbeth* and Sonnet 144. In Third Place was James Helsingher who was trained by his teacher, Ms. Marie Gentile, at Boone High School.

Annual Reports, continued

Shakespeare Competition Report continued.

On the panel of judges this year were Anne Hering: Director of Education at The Orlando Shakespeare Theater, Donna Miller; former Program Coordinator for Orange County's Language Arts, and Dr. Maurice "Socky" O'Sullivan: Kenneth Curry Professor of Literature Emeritus at Rollins College. The 2023 recipient of the Richard Burbage Award is long-standing sponsor Kristopher Kahn of Cypress Creek High School. Named after one of the most famous actors at The Globe Theatre, this award celebrates the work and dedication of teacher sponsors who have managed year after year to keep their students engaged, their involvement in our competition ongoing, and our audiences enriched. The final award given this year was The Love of the Bard Award. This award requires a teacher nomination and is an award given annually to one student who, "Exhibits determination, grit, fortitude, and a true passion for Shakespeare's works." This year's winner was Malaki Headrick of Avalon Private School.

Casey Kerr will represent the Central Florida ESU Branch at the 40th English-Speaking Union National Competition in New York on April 24, 2023. The first prize at the national level will be a full scholarship to the British American Drama Academy's Mid-Summer Conservatory Program in Oxford, England (including tuition, transportation, food, and accommodations).

Congratulations, Casey!

The Central Florida ESU is incredibly proud to be sending our Shakespeare Competition branch winner, **Casey Kerr**, to New York for the National Shakespeare Competition Finals on April 24, 2023!

You can watch the competition **from home** by registering with the button below.



Program Schedule 2022-2023

All programs are on Mondays at the University Club of Winter Park unless otherwise indicated.

Monday, May 1, 2023, 3:30-5:00 p.m.

Speaker: Ed Larson

George Washington's Second Revolution.

Our Annual General Meeting will precede our guest speaker, Ed Larson



Good news! In case you missed any of the terrific *Happy Hour* talks, they are available online.

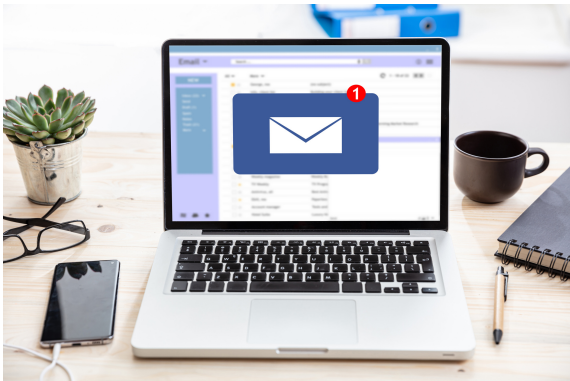
Check them out at www.esuus.org/esu/activities/happy-hour.



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Branch Business



If you have any contact updates or questions concerning Branch emails, please email us at esucentralfl@gmail.com, or contact Brett at 407-443-4859.

Monthly newsletters are delivered through email unless you notify us at esucentralfl@gmail.com that you would like to receive a hard copy.

Evolve education and impact lives. Join the ESU!

THE ENGLISH-SPEAKING UNION CENTRAL FLORIDA BRANCH Membership Application

- I wish to become a member of the English-Speaking Union, Central Florida Branch.
- I wish to renew my membership of the English-Speaking Union, Central Florida Branch.

Please send a check for \$45 (single membership) or \$60 (couple membership) to the **English-Speaking Union, 144 East 39th Street, New York., NY 10016.**

Name and Spouse's Name _____

Address _____ City _____ State ____ Zip _____

Phone, Fax, and Email _____

Visit the E-SU Central Florida website at www.E-SUus.org/centralflorida for more information.

**The English-Speaking Union
Central Florida Branch**

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