

BRANCH NEWS

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Website: www.ESUus.org/centralflorida

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Shakespeare Competition



February 21, 2022

4:00– 5:30 p.m.

Orlando Shakes

Please join us on **Monday, February 21**, for the annual English-Speaking Union's Shakespeare Competition. This year we are returning to a live format for competition with events beginning promptly at 4:00 p.m. Our venue for the event is **Orlando Shakes**, and we will be complying with their COVID protocol. *Face masks are required* for all of those who enter the building, regardless of vaccination status.

This year, 20 competitors will present their memorized monologues and sonnets as they compete for an opportunity to represent the Central Florida ESU Branch in New York. For 2022, the National Competition in New York will be held in a hybrid format. The semi-finals, as in 2020 and 2021, will remain virtual via recorded performance from our branch champions. However, the national finals will be held during a live competition in New York City on the weekend of April 23-26, 2022. Only the top 10 finalists will travel to New York City for an exclusive and fun-filled weekend.

The Central Florida ESU panel of judges for this year will be Anne Hering: Director of Education at Orlando Shakes, Donna Miller: former Program Coordinator for Orange County's Language Arts, and Dr. Maurice "Socky" O'Sullivan: former Professor at Rollins College. Come rank your personal favorites and see how your votes compare with the judges' deliberation. Refreshments will be served in the lovely outdoor Darden Courtyard on property, under an air-conditioned tent. We wish our 20 contestants from three counties the best of luck!

–Ginger Bryant, VP Shakespeare Competition

Winter Dinner Highlights

"It was one of the best ESU dinners ever!" says Barbara Hughes while recalling the evening of delightful food, company, and entertainment!



Daniel Edelen & Devin Johnson,
UCF Jessie Drey
Scholars

UCF scholars, Devin Johnson and Daniel Edelen, were our honored guests at the ESU Winter Dinner. As our first Jessie Drey UCF Scholarship recipients, they represent yet another way that the Central Florida ESU is supporting passionate educators!



(left to right) Daniel Edelen, Curtis Proctor (UCF Director of Advancement College of Community Innovation and Education), Barbara Hughes, Devin Johnson, Socky O'Sullivan

Lake Nona High's Shakespeare Competition 2021

by Reta Jackson, Scholarship Chair



When Gail Chase, the head of Lake Nona's Theater Department, called and asked me to be one of the judges for the ESU Shakespeare Competition, of course I said, "Yes! I'd love to be back in high school." I did forget that meant being at school by 7:00 a.m. since classes begin at 7:15 and I live in Altamonte Springs. Then, when I arrived, the size of the school and the sheer number of students pouring into the campus, over 3,500 kids, was astounding. Gail met me at the entrance and ushered me through the halls to a room that had breakfast waiting: coffee, juices, bagels, fruit, and other goodies; then, she introduced me to four other judges. I was surprised to find that 90 students had memorized a Shakespearean Sonnet and a Monologue to showcase their acting/

interpretive skills. Jennifer Gautier, another ESU former Drey Scholar and AP English teacher, was working with Gail, also a Drey Scholar, to organize this Competition.

Each judge had a room with about 18 students, eagerly awaiting their chance to perform with the hope of being chosen to represent Lake Nona at the Regional Competition, which is held at the Lowndes Shakespeare Center in Loch Haven Park. Gail and Jennifer gave each judge a folder with the names of the students in his/her room, a copy of each student's monologue/sonnet, and the rubric that comes from the National ESU's program. Students also requested the judge's opinions about the performance.

After introducing myself, I called the first student's name and the performances began. Only one student in my room had any trouble with remembering the lines of the chosen work. When she stumbled over her words, another student prompted her from his memory. At the end of each performance, fellow students enthusiastically applauded each person; there was an outpouring of support for each other. I took notes on the rubrics and chose my winner and runner-up to turn in.

Gail appeared and escorted the students and me to the school's auditorium, which is double the size of my former school. All the competing students and the classes of Gail and Jennifer were seated as the audience. A table was set up for we five judges with pen and paper for judging the finals. They then called the names of each winner and runner-up from the five judges to line up on stage. The students pulled numbers from a box to establish who would perform first, one through ten. I was so impressed not only with the ten performances but also with what was an amazingly polite and supportive audience of these students' peers. They cheered each of the ten enthusiastically as the finalists performed from *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *Taming of the Shrew*, *Hamlet*, *Macbeth*, *Henry VI*, and *Titus Andronicus*. We judges then retired to a room and discussed who would best represent the school.

Lake Nona High's Shakespeare Competition 2021, continued

Gail and Jennifer explained to the audience of students how much they care about ESU's programs since both of these teachers went to London on an ESU Scholarship. They also informed the students that they could come to the Regional Competition to support Lake Nona's winner at Loch Haven's Shakespeare Center. We appeared and gave our decision in writing, and Gail announced the winner and runner up, giving out certificates and flowers. I had many students come to talk about their performances, asking for advice and thanking me for coming.

The talent represented by the students of Lake Nona is impressive, and the dedication of Gail Chase and Jennifer Gautier, as well as the hard work of teaching and organizing ninety students learning Shakespeare, simply amazed me. The parents and community of Lake Nona are certainly fortunate!



“Great literature provides insight into our shared humanity, enabling students to build their own ‘emotional intelligence,’ which is greatly needed today.”



ESU
Member Spotlight

Those are the words of Barbara Ihns, a 2018 Central Florida E-SU Globe Theater T-LAB scholar. Barbara teaches *English for Speakers of Other Languages* at Lyman High in Altamonte Springs.

In addition to learning the vocabulary and structure of our language, Barbara's students are expected to read, discuss and analyze literature at an academic level. But she did not see the traditional ESOL curriculum working to achieve that goal. The literature they were reading was failing her students because the focus was just on improving their basic skills, not on acquiring the sophisticated academic skills that they needed to succeed in *all* of their studies. Epiphany! Her students should be reading and studying Shakespeare and other seminal literature which provides academic rigor.

ESU Member Spotlight, continued

The real value, however, was not in academic learning, but in providing unique opportunities to foster student growth in *emotional intelligence*. Pair the normal stress of learning in a language other than your own, with the stresses of living through a pandemic, and many more students are struggling with mental and emotional health these days. Discussing and writing about complex characters and plots in challenging literature provides a “safe space” for students to explore solutions to their own problems.

After her Globe experience, Barbara pursued her own professional growth, collaborating with longtime colleague, Hagerty High ESOL teacher Christine Pierce, to learn more about stretching their skills to encompass crisis issues while continuing their mission to educate. In March 2020, they were accepted as workshop presenters at International TESOL (Teachers of Students of Other Languages) in Denver, but COVID canceled the convention. In 2021, they presented **Reviving Rigorous Literature in the ESOL Classroom**, but it was on the ZOOM platform, and “not the most satisfying.” Attendee feedback, however, brought them full circle to Barbara’s Globe studies. When asked, “What scares you the most to teach,” the overwhelming response was **Shakespeare!**

Using the toolbox of techniques she learned at The Globe, the workshop has morphed into **You Can’t Scare Me, I Teach Shakespeare!**, which Barbara and Christine will present in March at TESOL in Pittsburgh. They have been given a prime slot on Day One of the convention, proof of the professional esteem they have earned. Our Education Committee has granted Drey funds to pay their TESOL registration fees. We are grateful and proud that we can support one of our own TLAB scholars. This is exactly what the Drey Endowment is for!

Barbara: “...none of this would have happened had I not been graciously awarded a Globe Fellowship in 2018...There is a clear timeline from what I learned there to how I processed and applied that knowledge, to how I am sharing now, representing Central Florida on an international stage!”

thank
you

Barbara,
the Central Florida ESU
appreciates how you have
taken your experience and
utilized it to further support
teachers everywhere!

Program Schedule 2021-2022

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

Monday, February 21, 2022, 4:00-5:30 p.m. — Shakespeare Competition at The Orlando Shakespeare Theater, Margeson Stage.

Annually the Central Florida ESU sponsors a Shakespeare Competition for Orange, Seminole, and Osceola county students in grades 9-12. Each winning student at his or her own school memorizes and presents a Shakespearian sonnet a plus a twenty-line monologue from one of the plays. The Central Florida winner is then given an all-expense paid trip to New York to compete in the National ESU Shakespeare Competition. The first place winner in New York is given a scholarship to study at the British American Drama Academy the following summer.

Monday, March 7, 2022, 3:30-5:00 p.m. — Carly Collier, Royal Collection Trust, London "Victoria and Albert as Art Collectors"

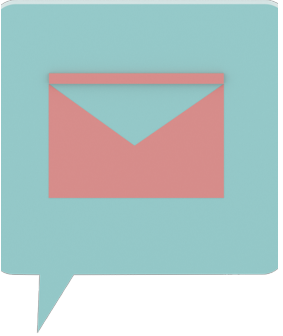
Monday, April 4, 2022, 3:30-5:00 p.m. — Jana Mathews, Rollins College - "Guy Fawkes Day"

Monday, May 9, 2022, 3:30-5:30 p.m. — Professor Elizabeth Cobbs, author - *The Hamilton Affair* - Our Annual General Meeting will precede our guest speaker, Professor Elizabeth Cobbs.

If you missed any of the ESU National Happy Hour Online Series, please remember that they are all available at
<https://www.esuus.org/esu/activities/happy-hour/previous-events/>

Also, you can view any of our recorded Central Florida Branch Programs at
<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCHSbTEUXk8z13quMw34MHSQ>

Branch Business



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In Memoriam



Dr. William "Bill" Munsie
passed away January 27
A member since 1996

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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**

P.O. Box 758

Winter Park, FL 32790-0758

Website: www.ESLus.org/centralflorida
Email: centralfl@ESLus.org