

BRANCH NEWS

Education. Scholarship. Understanding.

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Central Florida ESU Presents

2024 National Shakespeare Competition

When?

Monday, February 26, 2024

3:30 p.m. Competitors Arrive

4:00 p.m. Curtain

5:00 p.m. Refreshments

Where?

Orlando Shakes Theater

812 East Rollins Street,

Orlando, FL 32803

Come Join Us!



CENTRAL
FLORIDA
BRANCH

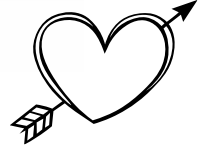


Come support the school winners from our Central Florida tri-county area! They will present their memorized monologues and sonnets as they compete for an opportunity to represent the Central Florida ESU Branch in New York!



President's Message

Leaping into February



If nothing else, 2024 promises to be an unusually interesting twelve months. This leap year will see the Olympics, a total solar eclipse, and what may be the most consequential presidential election of our lifetime. Before all that, however, on February 14 Ash Wednesday and Valentine's Day will share the same date for the first time since 1945. As a way of celebrating this convergence of Cupid and Christianity, why not experience the romance of visiting some of Florida's most striking churches?

We can begin with a pair of the state's most beautiful chapels right here in Winter Park which share a curious historic connection. Built in 1932, the Knowles Memorial Chapel was designed to fit the college's Mediterranean Revival style by America's most famous ecclesiastical architect, Ralph Adams Cram, who also designed New York's Cathedral Church of St. John the Divine. (Despite multiple chapels and churches, Cram said Knowles was his favorite.) The chapel's bell is the same one which called students to the college's first classes in 1885, and the wonderful Rose Window features Sophia or Wisdom, one of the few feminine representations of God in the Bible, surrounded by the seven liberal arts.

Less imposing but equally remarkable is the exquisite Tiffany Chapel interior at the Morse Museum. First shown at the World's Columbian Exhibition in Chicago in 1893, the site of Eric Larson's excellent book *The Devil in the White City*, the chapel was installed in Ralph Adams Cram's Cathedral Church of St. John Divine in New York. When Tiffany glass went out of fashion and St. John's did not want the chapel any more, Tiffany moved it to his home at Laurelton Hall on Long Island. After a major fire at Laurelton, Hugh and Jeannette McKean bought it and a massive number of other Tiffany works for the museum Jeannette had founded and named after her grandfather, Charles Hosmer Morse.

Appropriately sited on Church Street in Orlando, the Chapel at the Towers on the eighteenth floor of Lutheran Towers soars magnificently above the City Beautiful. Its organ is even more elaborate than the one at Rollins and you can enjoy a visit and the view at the free—something all ESU members love—monthly concerts organized by my friend Myra Winkler, which feature everything from the Bach choir and Orlando Philharmonic to Carol Stein and the Orlando Ballet.

President's Message, continued...

A short drive to Lakeland will take the modernists and post-modernists among us to Frank Lloyd Wright's Annie Pfeiffer Chapel at Florida Southern College. Instead of a steeple, this iconoclastic 1941 Prairie Style celebration of horizontal geometry, concrete, and repetitive patterns features a curious wire structure at its peak, a design students call God's Bicycle Rack. Wright's Chapel is the gem of a beautiful campus which includes the largest single site collection of Wright buildings.

If you are curious about the recent fascination with Florida's Carpenter Gothic Episcopal Churches, we have three excellent examples in Orange Country: All Saints in Enterprise, Christ Church in Longwood, and the Church of the Holy Spirit in Longwood. You can learn far more about these remarkable nineteenth-century buildings from our ESU colleague Phil Eschbach and the Florida Historical Society's "Florida Frontiers TV Episode 54" on YouTube.

When you are in the mood for a serious road trip, here are two other churches worth visiting. Florida's most interesting church is, oddly enough, a 12th Century Spanish Cistercian monastery named after the French abbot who co-founded the Knights Templar, St. Bernard de Clairvaux. William Randolph Hearst bought it in 1926, had it disassembled and shipped to New York, intending to add it to San Simeon (i.e., Citizen Kane's Xanadu). It remained in Brooklyn until two Floridians bought it, brought it to North Miami, and had it reassembled. Eventually it became an Episcopalian Church.

In Collier County, about 36 miles from Naples, is the planned community of Ave Maria built on streets that radiate out from the Ave Maria Oratory, one of our country's most interesting examples of twenty-first century ecclesiastical architecture. As part of a plan by Tom Monaghan, the founder of Domino's Pizza, to carve out of the Everglades a modern conservative Catholic enclave, the stunning stone, glass, and steel church, set on a plinth to raise it above surrounding buildings, soars 120 feet to evoke the sense of a European cathedral.

And to expand your sense of the ways physical structures can manifest the eternal, you can add to your list three other beautiful and fascinating religious spaces: The Boca Raton Synagogue; the Assalam Center Mosque, also in Boca Raton; and the Hindu Temple of Florida in Tampa.

Sláinte,

Socky O'Sullivan
President

Winter Dinner



On January 30, we hosted another wonderful dinner evening at the Winter Park Racquet Club. Our special guest entertainers were two of New Orleans most sought-after hosts, Quinn Peeper and Michael Harold.

Famous in New Orleans for their gracious and elaborately themed dinners and parties, the pair entertained us after our delicious dinner with their four-hand classical piano playing and a video presentation highlighting their unique New Orleans home and their beautiful coffee table book, *Classical Shindig*.



Both gentlemen are accomplished in so many arenas: Michael as a busy lawyer and owner of an attorney placement firm and Quinn as a practicing OBGYN physician, as well as both being classical pianists! The pair are very well-known for their many philanthropic endeavors in the New Orleans area and beyond, and Quinn just happens to be the National Chairman of the ESUUS!

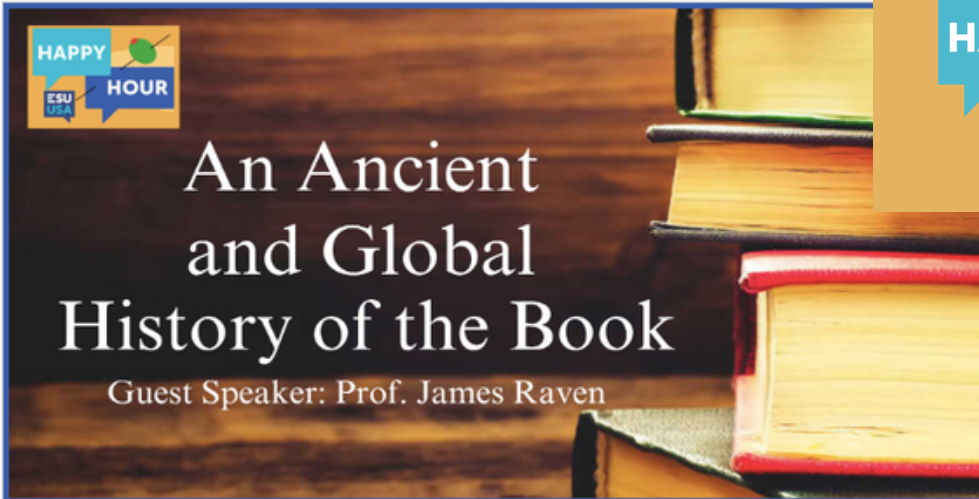

Branch Winter Dinner continued...

As a surprise to our members who attended the dinner, our Branch bought everyone there an autographed copy of *Classical Shindig*. While Michael and Quinn had already signed all of the books early that day, they graciously stayed after the book distribution to personalize books and chat with members.



Upcoming ESU Programs

Wednesday, February 7, 2024 at 4 PM (ET)



An Ancient and Global History of the Book

Guest Speaker: Prof. James Raven



HAPPY HOUR

ESU USA

Register for and watch previously recorded Happy Hour programs at <https://www.esuus.org/esu/activities/happy-hour/>



THE ENGLISH SPEAKING UNION
CENTRAL FLORIDA BRANCH

MONDAY MARCH 4

Refreshments 3:30 pm


Lecture 4:00 pm

The University Club of Winter Park
841 N. Park Ave
Winter Park, Florida

Program Leader
Elaine Laegeler

Christopher A. Snyder, Ph.D.

The Gatsby's Oxford
Americans in the City of Dreaming Spires
1904 - 1929



F.Scott Fitzgerald had been dreaming of Oxford long before he wrote his greatest novel, *The Great Gatsby*, in 1924. Oxford and the medieval aesthetic can be seen throughout his writings, Dr. Snyder will highlight some examples of this as well as the experiences of Americans from the first Rhodes Scholars to T.S. Eliot and other famous writers—J.R.R. Tolkien, C.S. Lewis, Evelyn Waugh, chasing the spirit of the Middle Ages down Oxford's cobbled lanes.

Christopher A. Snyder, Ph.D., is a Faculty Fellow, Professor of History, and Director of British Studies at Mississippi State University. Senior Academic Visitor, Oriel College, University of Oxford (2023)

Program Schedule 2023-2024

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

Monday, February 26, 2024, 4:00-5:30 p.m.

Shakespeare Competition at The Orlando Shakespeare Theater,
Margeson Stage. 4:00 p.m. Program at Orlando Shakes with
refreshments served at 5:00 p.m.

Monday, March 4, 2024, 3:30-5:00 p.m.

Christopher A. Snyder - "The Gatsby's Oxford:
Americans in the City of Dreaming Spires, 1904-1929."

Monday, April 1, 2024, 3:30-5:00 p.m.

Gary Prager - "Lawrence of Arabia." The End of Ottoman Rule and the
Making of the Modern Middle East.

Monday, May 6, 2024, 3:30-5:00 p.m.

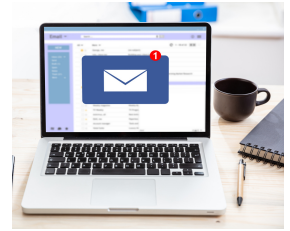
John Stewart- "Thomas Jefferson." A Virginia Cavalier in King Arthur's
Court.

*Our Annual General Meeting will precede
our guest speaker, John Stewart.

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. Please notify us at esucentralfl@gmail.com if you prefer a hard copy.



Central Florida ESU NEWS!



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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.**

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