

# BRANCH NEWS

Education. Scholarship. Understanding.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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**THE ENGLISH SPEAKING UNION**  
CENTRAL FLORIDA BRANCH

presents  
**Elizabeth Cobbs**  
*The Hamilton Affair*

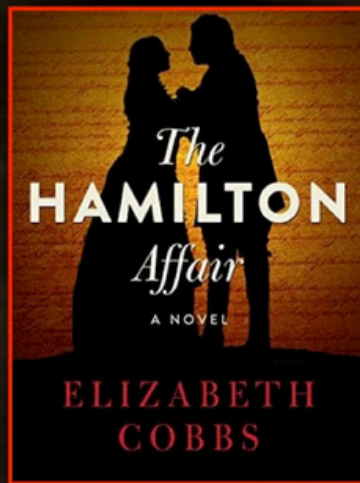
**MONDAY**  
**MAY 9**

\*\*\*\*\*  
**Refreshments**  
**3:30 p.m.**

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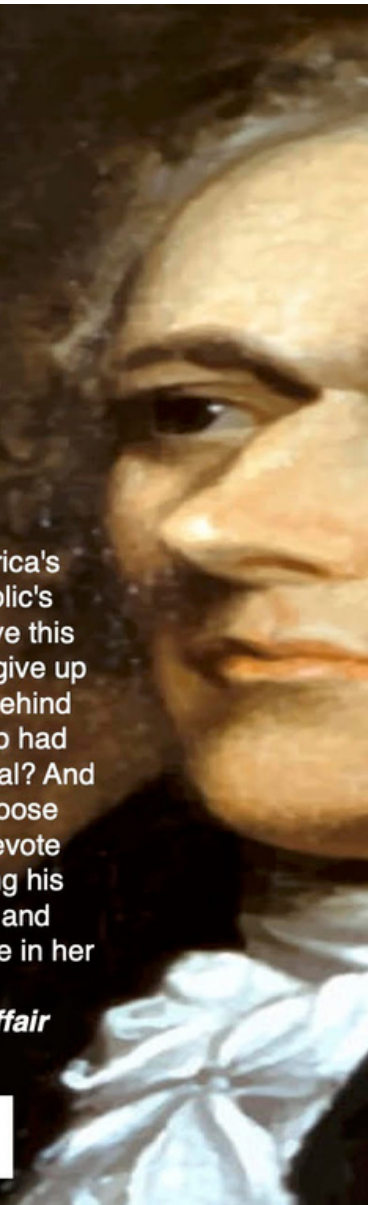
**Lecture**  
**4:00 p.m.**

Program Leader: Nancy Williams



The Hamilton Musical brought America's youngest founding father to the public's attention as never before. What drove this passionate, brainy man? Why did he give up his life to defend his honor, leaving behind seven young children and a wife who had supported him despite an awful betrayal? And why did Eliza Schuyler Hamilton choose never to marry again, but instead devote herself to public service and honoring his memory? Award-winning historian and novelist Elizabeth Cobbs brings it to life in her deeply researched New York Times bestseller: *The Hamilton Affair*

The University Club of Winter Park  
841 North Park Avenue  
Winter Park





Drey News

Drey Star



Barbara Ihns, 2015 Drey BUSS Scholar, was given a small grant this spring so that she and her fellow Seminole County ESOL colleague could present at the International TESOL Conference. It is a tremendous honor for Barbara to be chosen as a presenter at an international conference. She is now an international star in her profession! We are also patting ourselves on the back for supporting her. We are proud to have her as a former scholar and active member of our branch. She teaches Japanese at Lyman High School.

**A thank you in Barbara's words:**

*Christine and I would like to share with you our recent experience presenting at the International TESOL Conference in Pittsburgh.*

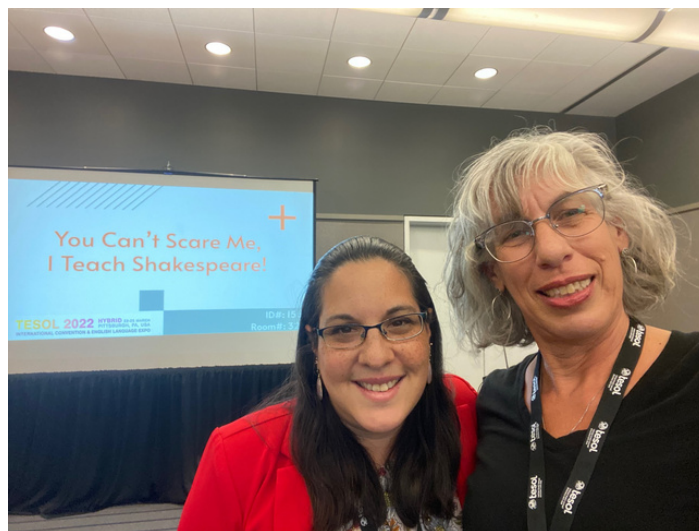
*Our one-hour 45-minute workshop, "You Can't Scare Me, I Teach Shakespeare," was the culmination of two years of work, and we are proud of how well it went.*

*As you may remember, we were originally accepted to present a workshop in Denver in 2020 entitled "Reviving Real and Rigorous Literature for High-Impact Learning." That session was cancelled, and we reapplied and presented an online version last year. The feedback from that led us to this year's topic, which in a nutshell provides teachers with a 'toolbox of techniques' for teaching Shakespeare or any literature in engaging and effective ways. Our handout was literally in the shape of a toolbox; the drawers each held a strategy or technique.*

*Christine and I are grateful to have been supported by the Central Florida Branch of the English Speakers Union, as well as by our principals Mr. Frasca, Mr. Hunter, and former principal Mr. Rice.*

*We are still glowing from this experience, having represented Seminole County Public Schools well with our innovative and dynamic workshop. We both look forward to sharing new techniques and strategies with our ESOL and WL colleagues, both in the district and throughout the Orlando area and state of Florida.*

Sincerely,  
Barbara



At the International TESOL Conference,  
Pittsburgh, March, 2022.

L to R: Christine Pierce, Barbara Ihns



Drey News

## The Adult Literacy League, E-SU Grantee

They came as clients - to improve their situations in a community where they were a “foreigner.” They lacked functional language, cultural knowledge and skills in the jobs available to recent immigrants. Claudia from Venezuela and Carolina from Ecuador came to the Adult Literacy League for help in improving their English speaking and writing skills so that they could assimilate into American life. Today they are two of the but five full-time employees of the League. It was a matter of being in the right place at the right time, but more than that, it was the acceptance and encouragement they had hoped they would find. Both of them were professional women in their home countries, with earned life skills and a professional resumé. Executive Director of the ALL, Gina Solomon, and her staff recognized and valued those skills and gave them a chance to make a difference for others on the same journey.

Claudia came to ALL to improve her spoken and written English, but she was a quick learner who had an obvious talent in interpersonal skills. Right place and time took over, as ALL was in need of a bilingual part-time receptionist. She was hired and was thriving in that position, quickly improving her confidence and language skills when the part-time bookkeeper announced her impending retirement. Gina recognized an opportunity to redesign the office organizational chart, eventually moving Claudia into a new administrative position of Office Manager. She absorbed the bookkeeping duties after training with the retiring bookkeeper. It is a steep learning curve for her, but ALL faith in her is helping her gain new confidence and skills. She is thriving as a talented member of the ALL team.

Entered Carolina, who had been a Master Sommelier in Ecuador, needing help writing a resumé so she could break into that profession in Central Florida. She was bilingual and highly personable, but she needed more practice with her English skills. As the staff was trying to help her polish her resumé, it dawned on them that Carolina was a perfect fit for their open receptionist position. She is using her own improving language skills and easygoing personality every day to encourage other ALL clients. She is at the front desk and on the phone, often the first reassuring voice and face new clients have encountered.

Not all ALL clients are immigrants. An astonishing percentage of American-born citizens are illiterate. Take the case of Brittani, a young woman who had been denied an education by an ignorant and abusive family - right here in Orlando. She was already in her early adulthood

## *The Adult Literacy League, continued*

and had never been to school a *single day in her life*. She was invisible. No one in our community saw her. She couldn't read, write, add or subtract. She had never had a home, living the temporary motel life of South Orange Blossom Trail. Babysitting for her family that kept adding children, she had never had a job either. ALL has been helping her now for a few years. She has learned enough basic skills to hold a job, starting with Walmart stocking, advancing to a sales position at OLD NAVY, and eventually at Orlando Health at Dr. Phillips, her current employment. ALL mentors helped her to navigate the available community help, and she qualified in a first-time home-buying program through Orange County. With tutoring, she passed the Drivers' License exam and the GED and has saved enough money to buy a car. Almost as important, she has learned that she has friends who care about her.

You can make a difference in our community by offering your encouragement and skills to mentor an Adult Literacy League client. After a 3-4 hour online training, offered on Saturday mornings or a weeknight, if you decide to participate, you will be matched - one to one - with a mentee. You can choose a specific person and situation or task, reading, writing, math, GED prep, resumé prep, or cultural experiences. You may choose a virtual or in-person relationship. If you do meet, it will always be in a public, neutral location. ALL assists in finding available community venues. For instance, The Mayflower, where several of our E-SU members live, has a community room where mentors have met with clients.

E-SU is currently supporting the ALL with a \$5000 annual Drey Endowment grant. Your personal involvement is very much within the Drey vision and mission. Check the website: [www.adultliteracyleague.org](http://www.adultliteracyleague.org). Click on the "Get Involved" link. There is an information form there. The Program Director will contact you.

## *E-SU Shakespeare Competition Update*



Raina Grabowski wowed Central Florida Branch audiences with her portrayal of Juliet, and that depiction of the character was enough to eventually secure her a well-deserved spot in the Top Ten competitors in the 2022 ESU National Shakespeare Competition. Congratulations to Raina for working her way to the top and representing the Central Florida Branch so well! We are all so proud of her hard work and professional performance. Raina is the recipient of a scholarship to the Young Company at Orlando Shakes for the Summer of 2022. We look forward to supporting Raina in her Orlando Shakes performance in *Measure for Measure* as well.



CENTRAL  
FLORIDA  
BRANCH

## The English-Speaking Union Central Florida Branch

### *Nominating Committee Recommendations for Executive Board 2022-2023*

Members: We will vote for our 2022-2023 Board at our May 2022, meeting.

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

**President:** Socky O’Sullivan

**Executive Vice President:** Jan McClure

#### Vice Presidents:

**Communications:** Brett Carrier

**Endowment:** Jan McClure

**Membership:** Gilda Gomez

**Programs:** Nancy Williams

**Scholarship:** Reta Jackson

**Shakespeare Competition:** Ginger Bryant

**Treasurer:** Jackie Abrams

**Deputy Treasurer:** Joe Sapora

**Secretary:** Open

#### Directors:

**2022-2025** Jim Fitch

Michele Levy

Glenda McClure

**2020-2023** Sharyn Jontz

Deborah Williams

Joseph Bostwick

**2019-2022** Reta Jackson

Ginger Bryant

Sheri Hjelm

**Parliamentarian:** Open

**Past President:** Barbara Hughes

## ANNUAL REPORTS 2021-2022

### NOMINATING COMMITTEE

The Nominating Committee met formally March 21, 2022, to finalize the slate of nominees accepting positions on the 2022-2023 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, President; Socky O'Sullivan, Executive Vice President; and Elaine Laegeler, Nominating Chair.

- Elaine Laegeler, Chair

### SCHOLARSHIP COMMITTEE

This has been another unusual year for our TLAB scholars because of the Covid pandemic. I have been in contact with the ESU's National Office in New York and am happy to find that Alice Uhl has returned to head up the TLAB program. She has kept the Scholarship Committee updated throughout the year as well as communicating with our five scholars, who were selected back in 2020. Each scholar has resubmitted their applications to Oxford University, the Globe Theater program in London, and University of Scotland in Edinburgh, and all have been accepted, eager to finally fly the pond to experience the Teachers Learning Abroad programs this summer. We are looking for an invoice from New York sometime in early May so that the Drey Scholarship monies can now be distributed to pay for their expenses. As Alice told me, keep your fingers crossed that no new variant shuts down our programs for this summer.

The Scholarship Committee met on a Saturday morning in January and after discussion decided to keep the required Scholars Report Program. We hope that our membership will support our Drey Scholars by attending the program where they report on the experiences the scholarship provides. We will also advertise this program to local schools so that interested teachers can attend and ask any questions that arise. I want to thank the members of the Committee for their time and dedication to the ESU TLAB program.

This year Scholarship also participated in forming the new Scholarship program with the University of Central Florida. After working with the University and holding meetings of careful discussion, our Central Florida Branch of ESU has donated \$100,000 to establish scholarships for experienced teachers pursuing Masters degrees over the next five years. The first recipients of this new program were honored at our banquet in January.

- Reta Jackson, Scholarship Chair

## ANNUAL REPORTS 2021-2022, continued

### DREY ENDOWMENT

In 2021-2022 the Drey Endowment supported:

**Programs.** Includes speakers' fees/expenses, University Club rentals, hospitality expenses at meetings.  
**Budgeted: \$24,808 Total spent: \$20,097**

**Shakespeare Competition.** Includes ESUUS entrances fees, printing, publicity, judging and local awards.  
**Budgeted: \$9,320 Total spent: \$8,655**

**Communications.** Includes branch newsletters and yearbook (annual directory), website maintenance, archives, support for these tasks.  
**Budgeted: \$10,000 Total spent: \$5,054**

**Scholarships.** Normal expenses have still suspended, due to COVID program cancellations for summer, 2021.  
**Budgeted: \$25,450 Total spent: -0-**

**Education.** Grants made from the Drey Endowment this year.  
**Budgeted: \$132,410 Total spent: \$126,396**

**Contingency.** Money spent on board-approved expenses incurred after budget approval.  
**Budgeted: \$16,012 Total spent: \$1,437**

**Total Drey Policy Budget: \$218,000**

**Total Spent: \$161,639**

**(Programs, Scholarships, Education, Shakespeare, Communications, Contingency)**

- Jan McClure, VP Drey Endowment

### COMMUNICATIONS COMMITTEE

The Communications Committee has successfully published and distributed the 2021-2022 Yearbook, as well as a total of nine monthly newsletters. Our newsletter graphics have been updated through the use of a more robust graphic design program and feature the Centennial logos currently used by ESU National. Peer360, our email communication platform, helps to track and report our email readership, and our general email "open" rates surpass industry standards. Numerous email reminders are sent to members at least one week prior to that month's meeting. Furthermore, the committee has established a Facebook Page, maintained the branch's local website, and sent out press releases to notify local news outlets of branch accomplishments and events.

- Brett Carrier, VP Communications



## ANNUAL REPORTS 2021-2022, continued

### HOSPITALITY COMMITTEE

The hospitality budget for the year is \$5,040. So far, we have only spent \$3,500 for the programs through April. Refreshments were provided by George's Café. Judy was regularly assisted by Lorre and Chris Davis and Steve Bertha throughout the year with additional assistance as needed.

- Judy Beck Bertha, Hospitality Chair

### MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE

During the program year 2021-2022, we received applications for 20 new members. Invitations were sent to sponsors of the Shakespeare Competition to attend the remaining 2022 programs. Guests were given membership applications at all meetings. Our total membership includes 174 singles and 38 couples for a total of 265. We also include in our membership 15 scholars. From September thru April attendance averaged 60, with over 70 attending the Shakespeare Competition. Membership brochures were available at the Orlando Opera event sponsored by ESU and the Winter Park Library.

- Gilda Gomez, VP Membership

### SHAKESPEARE COMPETITION

On February 21, 2022, sixteen 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, and a chance to represent the Central Florida Branch of the ESU in this year's National online format. Raina Grabowski from University High School took First Place in the Shakespeare competition with her portrayal of Juliet from Romeo and Juliet and Sonnet 46 under the direction of her teacher, Mr. Keith Traver. Raina advanced and placed in the Top Ten for National. Second Place went to Kaylin Aguirre from Freedom High School. Kaylin was coached by her teacher, Mrs. Angela Kahn, on her depiction of Julia from The Two Gentlemen of Verona and Sonnet 12. In Third Place was Laila Mahler who was trained by her teacher, Ms. Susan Lilley, at Trinity Preparatory School.

The three judges for the Central Florida Branch competition were 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: Professor Emeritus at Rollins College. Ms. Susan Lilley was also the recipient of the Richard Burbage Award. 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 of the day 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." Kaylin Aguirre from Freedom High School was the recipient of this \$100.00 award.

- Ginger Bryant, VP Shakespeare Competition

## ANNUAL REPORTS 2021-2022, continued

### PROGRAM COMMITTEE

Program Committee Members: Nancy Williams (Chair), Frank P. Barber, Barbara Hughes, Sharyn Jontz, Elaine Laegeler, Nick Leo, 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:

**Professor Patrick Allitt:** Great Eccentrics of the Victorian Era

**Edward Korry:** What Byron, Winston Churchill, Nehru and Benedict Cumberbatch Have in Common: An English Public School

**Fall Dinner at The Winter Park Racquet Club** - Entertainment: Michelle Mailhot, vocalist.

**Dr. Wolf Burchard,** Curator British Galleries, St James Palace-Britain's Prime Royal Residence

**Professor Socky O'Sullivan:** Strange Bedfellows

**Winter Dinner at The Winter Park Racquet Club** - Entertainment: Ricky Sylvia and The Buzzcatz

### Shakespeare Competition at the Orlando Shakespeare Theater

Annually, our E-SU Branch sponsors a Shakespeare Competition for Orange, Seminole, and Osceola County students, in grades 9-12. The winner is then given an all-expense paid trip to New York City to compete in the National E-SU Shakespeare Competition.

**Carly Collier:** Royal Collection Trust, London - Victoria and Albert as Art Collectors

**Professor Jane Mathews:** Guy Fawkes Day

Our Central Florida Branch also co-sponsored, with Opera Orlando, a special lecture on Verdi and Rigoletto by world -renowned opera expert Fred Plotkin.

As I am writing this report, there is one program ahead, as our grand finale and year-end annual meeting in May:

**Professor Elizabeth Cobbs:** The Hamilton Affair

I would like to give special recognition and appreciation to 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.

- Ovid Vitas, Program Committee



You can check out any past National Happy Hours talks  
by visiting the following link

<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>

## A Warm Welcome to Our Newest Members:



*Rob and Ann Beck  
Jan Bowman  
Donna Gropper  
Mary Kent  
Donald and Maureen Schaefer  
Keith and Krista Traver*



## In Memoriam

*Carolyn Martin  
A member since 2012  
Died April 21, 2022*

# Program Schedule 2021-2022

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

**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.

## Branch Business



If you have not been receiving Branch emails, please check your spam folder. You should also add the following email address to your contacts to ensure delivery - [webletters@peer360.com](mailto:webletters@peer360.com). If you have any email address updates or questions concerning Branch emails, please email us at [esucentralfl@gmail.com](mailto:esucentralfl@gmail.com).

**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](http://www.E-SUus.org/centralflorida) for more information.



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

P.O. Box 758

Winter Park, FL 32790-0758

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