



DENVER
BRANCH

March-April 2021 Newsletter

Executive Committee

President:	Kate Murphy
Treasurer:	Bruce Haefner
Program Chair:	n/a

President's Corner

A Cure for the Common Plague and Other Pandemic Improvements

Got the plague? Rub onions, herbs, and a chopped-up snake on the boils. Drink vinegar with arsenic, mercury, and ten-year-old treacle. Sit close to a fire, preferably in a sewer, to drive out the fever. According to a source from 1380, the doctors who recommended these cures “need[ed] only three qualifications: to be able to lie and not get caught; to pretend to be honest; and to cause death without guilt” (Jean Froissart’s Chronicles).

Thank goodness for medical advancements! Modern-day vaccines take an average of twelve years to develop, and the fastest vaccine development to date was in 1967 for the mumps—that one took four years. Researchers and developers knew they were facing impossible odds as they began to design a Covid-19 vaccine. But that’s the thing about humans: when faced with the impossible, we dig deep to find some spark of ingenuity, some “don’t you tell me I can’t do that” attitude kicks in, and we find a way.

In the spring of 2020, drug companies Moderna and Pfizer “decided to pursue a long-theorized but yet to be realized vaccine technology. This technology, known as mRNA vaccines, take a slightly altered approach to vaccination protocols. Instead of inoculating people with a whole—but altered—virus for which antibodies will be created against, they instead encode a messenger RNA (mRNA) with the information to produce the SARS-CoV-2 spike protein” (Brothers). The risk paid off, and both companies moved with lightning speed to Phase III of testing by July/Aug. Their trials produced an unheard-of-before 95% rate of effectiveness. Ingenuity pays off!

Board of Directors

July 2018-June 2021:	Nicole Guagliardo Jeannine Mortell Lauren Wasser
July 2019 – June 2022:	Polly Cox Bruce Haefner Kathleen Murphy Charles Thompson
July 2020 – June 2023:	Heather Anderson Cynthia Poinsett Emily Pool Tom Tafoya Michael Thornton

Committee Chairs

Finance and Governance:	Emily Pool
Membership:	Polly Cox

Education Program Coordinators

Teachers Learning	
Abroad UK:	Jeannine Mortell
Dr. Howard F. Beckley	
Writing Competition:	Nicole Guagliardo
Shakespeare Competition:	Lauren Wasser

Secretary/Administrator Cami Van Anne

ESU Denver Branch

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What does all this have to do with ESU-Denver, our membership, and our programs? Many of us are in the process of inoculation, reaping the benefits of our medical community's ingenuity and dedication. We are beginning to feel safe again—or safer, at least. Ingenuity has also been the key as we tackled our own problems with this year's programming. The Beckley Writing Competition went fully online, and we had fifty teens write to the prompt. Avoiding face-to-face interviews this year for TLAB, we were able to pull in a very qualified teacher from last year's interviews to attend Oxford, and now we await to see if their program will go forward. Using lots of available technology, the Shakespeare Competition alas won't be on stage, but the show must go on! And against all odds, we've dug deep and found a way to increase our membership by 12%.

In the coming months, look for more invitations from the national office to attend online talks, an invitation to attend our chapter's Shakespeare Competition online reception, and another reminder to get IN PERSON tickets to Colorado Shakespeare Festival's *The Odyssey* on July 25th, if it feels safe for you to attend. Still not sure if we can hold an Annual Branch Meeting, but it's under consideration.

Wishing you WELLNESS in the coming months,



Kate Murphy, ESU-Denver Branch President

Resources:

"Bitesize." BBC. <https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/guides/z7r7hyc/revision/4.2021>.

Brothers, Will. "A Timeline of COVID-19 Vaccine Development." Biospace. <https://www.biospace.com/article/a-timeline-of-covid-19-vaccine-development/>. Dec 03, 2020

Colorado Shakespeare Outing



As Covid restrictions ease, we are eagerly looking forward to in-person opportunities to socialize with other ESU Denver Branch members. Please join us for the

Sunday evening

July 25th 2021, 7:00 PM

**Performance of
Colorado Shakespeare
Festival's
The Odyssey by Homer**

As in years past, members will gather prior to the performance for a picnic on the lawn

Although the deadline for group ESU tickets has passed, you can still purchase individual tickets directly by contacting the ticket office at:

**<https://cupresents.org/ticket-info/> or
303-492-8008**

WRITING COMPETITION RECAP

This year the Beckley Writing competition had a surprising number of entrants, 46 high school students from all grade levels, from all around the Denver area. This year the entire competition took place virtually, which wasn't ideal, but the level of enthusiasm was impressive considering these authors are living through a pandemic. The prompt asked students to discuss the virtues of on-line communication and learning versus in-person communication and learning. Overwhelmingly the students saw the possibilities of on-line learning, but absolutely preferred being with their friends and teachers and are struggling with this new format more than adults might assume.

The essays were graded by ESU Denver members and all readers were impressed with the thoughtfulness and passion displayed in all of the essays, so much so that it was difficult to choose our top five essays. Our winners received scholarship monies and our top place writer also received a course at Lighthouse Writers. It has been a difficult year, but reading these essays gives one a sense that the future is hopeful with these creative, insightful, young people leading us. Coming soon to the Denver website: videos of this year's winners reading their submissions.

First Place: Talia; Denver East High School

Second Place: Danielle; Eaglecrest

Third Place: Tristan; Denver East

Honorable Mention: Maimouna; Overland

Honorable Mention: Maya; Eaglecrest

INTRODUCING 2021 TLAB FELLOW



TRAVEL AND
LEARN ABROAD

The 2020 summer TLab Program was one of the casualties of Covid restrictions forcing Denver fellows, Heather Anderson and Tom Tafoya, to delay their travels. Fortunately, the the 2021 programming is anticipated to proceed as scheduled. A third fellow, Millicent Ambroggio will join Heather and Tom as they study abroad this summer.

Millicent is in her 15th year teaching secondary English Language Arts. She has been a Nationally Board Certified Teacher since 2008, and has been fortunate to teach in a variety of school districts and states (Colorado, Maryland, Virginia and Pennsylvania). She now teaches at Littleton High School, an International Baccalaureate World School. When she is not teaching, Millicent and her husband, Luis, keep busy with their four sons and two dogs hiking, skiing, and road-tripping (Pre-Covid). Millicent is looking forward to studying Old/Middle English and Jane Austen at Oxford this summer.

Shakespeare Competition

We will be hosting a Shakespeare Competition Virtual Reception to meet the 2021 participants – Look for the Zoom meeting invite to come.

Recommended Reads



ESU Member and TLab Coordinator, Jeannine Mortell shared her pick for an audio book must listen: *Hamnet* by Maggie O'Farrell 2020 Random House Audio and Knoff publishers

You would think that in October 2020, when trying to escape screens full of politics and pestilence, a novel about the Black Death would be the last thing I'd be listening to. But I discovered a great escape in Irish novelist Maggie O'Farrell's *Hamnet*. While placed in Shakespeare's Stratford and tracing the death of his 11 year old son, the novel, albeit realistic and well researched, doesn't pretend to be historical fiction. Instead it reimagines the life of Anne Hathaway (Shakespeare's wife) and centers on her experiences both as a captivating young woman and as an intuitive, compassionate mother. Simultaneously, the narrative traces the hours surrounding Hamnet's death, capturing the boy's spirit and the impact of his short life on his family.

O'Farrell's prose style creates an almost dreamlike aura, truly transporting you to the past, while firmly embracing the sensitivities of contemporary readers. Shakespeare lovers will recognize the subtle nods to his work--twins who switch genders to prank others and Hamnet's misfit nature--but the novel doesn't trade on tropes too often. Instead it subtly celebrates the complexities and beauties of human nature, our capacity for love and perseverance, with some of the same timelessness as the bard himself. Note: I listened to the novel on Audible to give my eyes a break. Ell Potter's narration coincided with the general feel of the writing and made for a pleasant listening experience.

ESU's 100 Stories for 100 Years

Once upon a time...I became a member of the ESU, and it affected my life in some wonderful way. We are calling for small stories about a memory you have with the ESU—an event you attended and enjoyed, a way the ESU has helped you see the world a little differently, or perhaps a conversation you've had with another member that sticks in your mind. We would love to publish your story in our ESU-Denver Newsletter throughout this next year and then forward it to the national office to possibly be entered into the national book collection of 100 stories to celebrate ESU's 100 years. National's call is on the following page.

Below is wonderful example of an ESU story shared by Kate Murphy:

After receiving the phone call from Michael telling me that I had been selected for the BUSS scholarship (now TLAB program) in 2016, I immediately called my family. My mother and father were overjoyed and proud of me, which felt wonderful. My brother kept expressing his astonishment and big-brother-protective-wariness. "They're paying for the whole thing? This isn't some scam?" He came over the next day in a more reasonable, accepting mood. As we both leaned on the kitchen counter, he asked, "In your teaching career, wouldn't you actually consider this The Pinnacle—to be selected to take classes at Oxford? I know you've made a difference in kids' lives, but isn't this your personal finest academic moment?" I considered and said, "Well, yes, it is." Then in teasingly big brother fashion, he added, "It's all downhill from here!" I can safely say, thank goodness it has NOT been downhill. The BUSS program enriched my teaching content and opened my eyes to different, better teaching styles. My circle of friends increased to include people around the world. My confidence grew as a person and traveler. And my appreciation for language's healing power solidified. ESU has made me a better human. ~ by Kate Murphy, ESU-Denver Branch President

Some helpful prompts for writing your own stories might be:

- I remember when...
- When I was part of the XXXXX ESU committee, we...
- Through ESU, I traveled to...
- Because of ESU, I have met...
- A long time ago, I did XXXXX with the ESU...
- Just recently, the ESU has given me the opportunity to...
- I love that my skills at XXXX are useful to the ESU in this way...
- et cetera, et cetera, et cetera

Your story does not need to be long (mine was only 199 words), or it CAN be long. Accompanying photos would be wonderful! The most important thing is that, like the sparkle from a diamond, ALL facets and perspectives reflect the beauty of our ESU organization. If you want some extra support as you write, please contact Kate at katemurphy@earthlink.net or (303) 579-4195. I would love to help you find your voice.

Send your story (email OR real mail) to:

ESU Denver Branch
5930 S. Cimarron Way
Littleton, CO. 80123
denver@esuus.org

100 Years
100 Stories



For 100 years, The English-Speaking Union of the United States has been supporting cross-cultural education through leadership and scholarship in the English language. In our centennial year, we wish to celebrate the people who galvanize this organization: You. Whether you are a student, alumni, volunteer, patron, member, or otherwise, we want to hear your most memorable moments with the ESU. Regale us with stories from your favorite event, introduce us to a lost piece of branch history, impart wisdom you've learned through working with our programs, or simply make us laugh with a charming story. Your stories will become part of the ESU virtual time capsule - a website which stitches our individual stories together to form a centennial snapshot of the English-Speaking Union's impactful legacy.

Entries can be made in one of the following categories:

Written word (narrative story, poem, etc.)

Photograph with accompanying description

Video

All entries should pertain in some way to the English-Speaking Union, but we encourage you to craft whatever story you'd like. Please submit all entries by May 17th using the [100 Years, 100 Stories Form](#). Each entry will be considered for our '*Outstanding Story*' award. There will be three finalists per category, with one winner per category selected. Selected winners will have the opportunity to present their story at the 100 Years, 100 Stories Event in June 2021 (details forthcoming). The winning stories will be featured as the homepage of the 100 years, 100 stories time capsule website.

When submitting, please follow these guidelines:

- **Written submissions should be kept under 1500 words.**
- **Photographic submissions should be kept under 1GB, with their accompanying description not exceeding 500 words.**
- **Video submissions should be kept to a maximum of 3 minutes.**