



The English-Speaking Union

Education. Scholarship. Understanding.

ESU Annual Shakespeare Competition



2012 marked the 28th year for the Kansas City Branch's Shakespeare Competition. This Competition is designed to develop students' speaking and critical thinking skills while they explore the beauty of the language and the timeless themes in Shakespeare's works. By preparing a monologue and sonnet for public

presentation, students bring Shakespeare to life in their own way and learn to express his works with understanding, clarity and feeling.

This year's Competition had seventeen students competing for the coveted First Place Prize...thanks to the hard work and dedication of Dan Bukovac, our Director of the Shakespeare Competition and the Shakespeare Committee, Ben Martin and Debbie McArdle, who worked with the schools to encourage them to participate and give guidance on setting up the in-school competition--particularly for schools participating for the first-time. This year also marked another first--we had our first homeschool student participating in the Competition. The Heart of America Shakespeare Festival sponsored a competition for homeschool students.

The Heart of America Shakespeare Festival again generously donated a scholarship to the Shakespeare Exploration Advanced Camp as part of the prize for the First Place Winner. And, we are always grateful for the support of the K.C. Public Library for the use of their Plaza Branch facilities and their promotion of the Competition.



For an unprecedented third year in a row, a student from Olathe South High School, Olathe, Kansas, captured First Place. Elizabeth Hix, a senior at Olathe South, impressed the judges and captivated the audience with her performance of Viola from Shakespeare's *Twelfth Night* and her recitation of Sonnet No. 147. Carmen Ortiz from Piper High School, Kansas City, Kansas, won Second Place and Mark Carlson from St. Thomas Aquinas High School, Overland Park, Kansas, won Third Place. 185 Kansas City-area high school students performed in ESU Shakespeare competitions at their schools this year.

THE ENGLISH-SPEAKING UNION OF THE UNITED STATES
KANSAS CITY BRANCH

4581 Madison Ave., Kansas City, MO 64111

Tel: (816) 442-7007 • email: kansascity@esuus.org • website: www.esuus.org/kansascity

WE'D LIKE YOU TO MEET ... Elizabeth Hix



FRED BLOCHER | THE KANSAS CITY STAR

An extra credit endeavor grew into a love of Shakespearean lexicon for Olathe South senior Elizabeth Hix. She enjoyed creating a character for her sonnet performance.

FYI

COMMENTARY

KINKY ROMANCE IS A HIT

JENEE OSTERHELDT



JOSTERHELDT@KCSTAR.COM

Sexy or sick? That's the big debate over the indie book "Fifty Shades of Grey" by E.L. James that has taken over the Internet and suburban reading circles.

The book, the first in a trilogy, has been described as, err, well, "mommy porn." It follows the story of Anastasia Steele and Christian Grey. She's a graduating college senior, an innocent virgin. He's a young billionaire humanitarian who enjoys domination and bondage.

Sultry and taboo stuff for a best-seller, right? While erotic books have long been around, it's rare the genre sees mainstream success. But the ladies are loving "Fifty."

Mom blogs and romantic novel sites alike are making it a book club favorite among women.

It's hard to believe it started out as free: online fan fiction, largely inspired by "Twilight," but definitely written for adults. The dark romance became such a hit that the British author reworked it into three books, which were picked up by a small Australian-based publisher last year. It has sold more than 250,000 copies and has become largely popular as an e-book, recently earning the top spot on the New York Times e-books best-seller list.

The trilogy was acquired by Vintage Books, which will release new e-book editions of the trio today and paperbacks in April. Talks of a movie are under way. Think "9½ Weeks."

Like that movie, this book is not without its critics. Television host Drew Pinsky called "Fifty" unhealthy and likened it to Stockholm syndrome on his show last week. His wife and most of the women (including a clinical psychologist) on his show disagreed with him, calling it a romance fantasy.

But ask Vivien Jennings, owner of Rainy Day Books, and she agrees that books like these send bad messages to women.

"It's sad because there are so many wonderful books out there with healthy messages about relationships and real intimacy,"

SEE JENEE | D2

FOR STARTERS

Immerse yourself in water awareness

World Water Day is Thursday, and a local nonprofit wants to help provide access to safe water and sanitation in Africa, South Asia and Central America.

"Waterorg fits well in Kansas City because it's a representation of who Kansas City residents are: caring and innovative people," says Erin Swanson, marketing programs manager for the nonprofit organization.

Almost 1 billion people lack access to clean water, while 2.5 billion don't have access to a toilet, Swanson says. "With this World Water Day event, we're getting the community involved in the work we're doing on a global scale."

So what can Kansas Citians do for World Water Day?

Buy jeans. Levi's Water-Less jeans require less water to make and have saved 172 million liters of water, according to store. levi.com/waterless.

Dine out. During World Water Week, today through Sunday, some local restaurants will participate in the UNICEF Tap Project. Patrons can donate \$1 for the tap water they would usually drink for free. Visit tapproject.org for participating restaurants.

Use less water. Challenge yourself to take a 5-minute shower instead of a 10-minute shower. The water in your toilet is cleaner than what almost a billion people have to drink, so we should conserve what we use, Swanson says.

Campaign online. Build awareness through social networking, start an online fundraiser, change your Facebook photo or Twitter background or send your suggested solutions or donations to Waterorg. | naswin@kcstar.com



FROM WATER.ORG

WORLD WATER DAY PARTY

What: Happy hour launch of KC's Young Water group in support of Water.org; free.

When: 5-8 p.m. Thursday

Where: Snow & Co., 1815 Wyandotte St.

Contact: Erin Swanson, eswanson@water.org; facebook.com/youngwater.org

NOT AFRAID OF THE BARD

Olathe South senior is heading to New York to vie in a Shakespeare competition.

By EDWARD M. EVELD
The Kansas City Star

"And frantic-mad with evermore unrest; My thoughts and my discourse as madmen's are..."

Elizabeth Hix loves those lines from Sonnet 147 by William Shakespeare. She certainly has spoken them enough. "Frustration and confusion," Elizabeth says of the writer's state of mind, "and anger."

It was just last December that Elizabeth, a 17-year-old senior at Olathe South High School, started performing Shakespeare, solo, first for a theater class assignment and then in English class.

That was before she heard of the

"It's not only through external action that communicates to the audience what's going on, you also have to convince them you're completely invested in it."

ELIZABETH HIX

National Shakespeare Competition sponsored by the English-Speaking Union of the United States.

Now she's in the thick of that contest. Off she'll go next month to New York to perform Sonnet 147 and a monologue from "Twelfth Night" — at the Lincoln Center.

"Extremely shocked, excited

and happy," says Elizabeth of what she considers an unexpected turn of events.

Elizabeth is an "English and theater person" who, like a lot of students, first encountered Shakespeare reading "Romeo and Juliet," which for her was in ninth grade.

She didn't think deciphering Shakespeare's words was such a struggle. She loved the sound of it, the eloquence.

"It's the language itself that I really enjoy," she says.

The Hix family moved to Olathe from Washington state a few years ago. Elizabeth's father, John, is the worship arts pastor at Vineyard Church of Overland Park. Her mother, Judith, stays at home. She has two younger brothers. Elizabeth's senior year is her first at Olathe South. She was an online

SEE HIX | D2

WEIRD NEWS

Instead of running the bulls:

In a tradition believed to have originated in the eighth century, the village of San Bartolome de Pinare, Spain, marks each Jan. 16 with the festival of Saint Anthony, commenced in style by villagers riding their horses through large fires in the streets ("Las Luminarias"). As horses jump the flames, according to belief, they become purified, demons are destroyed, and fertility and good health result. Apparently, no horses are harmed, and an on-the-scene priest blesses each for its courage.

Sudoku Puzzle

Sudoku is like a crossword puzzle, but uses numbers instead of words. The puzzle is a box of 81 squares, subdivided into 3x3 cubes of 9 squares each. Some squares are filled with numbers. The rest should be filled in by the puzzler.

Fill in the blank squares allowing the numbers 1-9 to appear only once in every row, once in every column and once in every 3x3 box.

One-star puzzles are for beginners, and the difficulty gradually increases through the week to a very challenging six-star puzzle.

Difficulty level 1 star



3/19

Saturday's Solution



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HIX: Her sonnet isn't 'lovey-dovey'

FROM D1 student her sophomore and junior years.

When her English teacher, Vicki Kohl, offered extra-credit points to students who competed in a Shakespeare competition at school, Elizabeth thought it sounded like fun. She performed a "Twelfth Night" monologue that she also had studied in theater class.

Result: first place out of 25 contestants. The win meant a spot in the regional Shakespeare Competition sponsored by the Kansas City chapter of the English-Speaking Union. Out of 185 high school students who initially competed, 17 got the nod to compete in February at the Plaza branch of the Kansas City Public Library.

"I had been quite sick right before the competition, which was pretty frustrating," Elizabeth says. "But I felt calm going into it. My primary motivation wasn't to win. I was just going to do my best. Of course I felt nervous when I was called onstage."

Result: another first place.

And an all-expenses-paid trip to New York for the national competition.

"Fortune forbid my outside might have charmed her!" That's Viola in "Twelfth Night," a comedy that turns on mixed-up identity. Viola, pregnant with a young man, has inadvertently drawn the romantic interest of Olivia, a countess.

In Act 2, Viola begins to realize this — and the pickle she's in.

"Basically it's Viola breaking out," Elizabeth says.

Viola's epiphanies make for a dynamic monologue, she says. Coaching and advice from Kohl and a few others helped her to better understand Viola and how to portray her, including the fact that she had realized Viola probably wasn't much older than Elizabeth.

Elizabeth figured she knew a thing or two about how emotional teenagers can be: "That was my basis for Viola's reaction to the break-out part." The sonnet, she says, was very different in tone and emotion, different from the play and different from other sonnets.

Not "lovey-dovey" at all, she says, Sonnet 147's narrator is torn. His "reason" is helpless against a love he knows he shouldn't pursue.

"The sonnets are stand-alones," Elizabeth says, "so you don't have any other information about this person. I had to create a character. He says he thought his love was bright and awesome, but she turns out to be dark as night! So I thought of his love as someone who broke his heart, and he can't get over it."

Elizabeth says she has learned that not just creating but inhabiting a character is crucial to performance. "It's not only through external action that communicates to the audience what's going on, you also have to convince them you're completely invested in it," she says.

At the national contest, Elizabeth will compete with 57 other regional winners. Those who make it to the second round in that contest will have to perform a cold reading of a selection chosen by the organizers.

"If I get there, that would be scary," she says.

The winner gets a full-tuition scholarship to the Royal Academy of Dramatic Art's Young Actors Summer School in London. Second place gets the same at the American Shakespeare Center Theatre Camp in Staunton, Va.

Elizabeth says she didn't watch any of the film versions of "Twelfth Night," including the 2006 loose movie adaptation with Amanda Byes, "She's the Man." She didn't want to subconsciously mimic another performance.

She wanted to make it her own. So far, so good. "I've been dreaming about going to New York since getting involved in theater in ninth grade," she says. "I can't even describe how excited I am."

To reach Edward M. Evelid, call 816-243-4442 or send email to evelid@kcstar.com.

DON'T LOOK TO WIFE FOR VALUATION

JEANNE PHILLIPS



DEAR ABBY

DEAR ABBY: I am an amateur playwright. Our local theater sponsors an annual playwriting contest. The prize isn't monetary, but something far more important to an author — a full-scale production of the play.

I have won this prize four times — more than any other writer in the history of the contest. But it's my family impressed? Not at all! My wife told me she thinks I write everything the same way and have simply repeated myself four times. Her put-downs are deeply hurtful.

I am up in years. It's unlikely I will ever again win this prize. So how do I respond to such indifference? What do you do when you feel you have accomplished something important and the response is, "So, what else is new?" — Looking for Validation in Florida

DEAR LOOKING FOR VALIDATION: My hat's off to you. That you have won this prize more than any other writer in the history of the contest is a notable achievement, and one that's not likely to be matched for a long time — if ever. Take your well-earned bow in the spotlight and accept that the less you look to your wife for validation, the happier your life will be.

It's about trust

DEAR ABBY: About a year ago, my fiancée, "Jayne," reconnected with her childhood friend through Facebook.

"Christine" is gay, unattached and very attractive. She has a great personality, and everyone who meets her seems to be attracted to her. Jayne and Christine have had overnighters together. I have asked my fiancée if Christine has ever made advances toward her and she said no. I want to

believe her, but part of me is wary.

They are now planning to go on a trip for a few days to an island. Jayne says that she loves me and that I have nothing to be jealous about. Am I being naive? What should I do? — Left Behind in New Jersey

DEAR LEFT BEHIND: Believe it or not, gay people are capable of platonic friendships with members of the same sex, just as straight people can have platonic relationships with people of the opposite sex.

The bottom line question is, do you trust your fiancée? If the answer is you're not sure, then you should rethink the engagement.

Moocher brother

DEAR ABBY: My brother has systematically taken over my parents' lives for the past 20 years. He uses his depression and agoraphobia as an excuse not to lead his own life. He lives on government disability payments, and the majority of his support comes from my parents, whom he lives with and mooches off of. He doesn't help them around the house or contribute in any way. He refuses to get treatment for his disorders.

How can I help my parents finally be free of him? They are fast approaching 70 years old. Talking to my brother is useless, as he becomes extremely hostile and threatens to kill himself. My parents deserve some rest at their age. — Anonymous in New York

DEAR ANONYMOUS: At the rate they're going, your parents may not get the rest they deserve until they're in the great beyond.

Unless they are willing to take a stand and make living with them conditional upon your brother getting counseling and medication for his mental illness, nothing will change.

Write Dear Abby at www.DearAbby.com or P.O. Box 69440, Los Angeles, CA 90069. © 2012 Universal Uclick 3/19

JENEÉ: E-book form keeps the cover hidden

FROM D1 she says. "But the buzz surrounds a book like this that sends the wrong message to young women."

Jennings doesn't believe in censorship, so she will order a few copies to keep in the store. But she's considering suggesting people read a few pages in store for free before they spend their money on it.

With so much hype in the webosphere, I finally decided to read this book. On my iPad, I think the power to download and read it anonymously helped propel this book's on-line sales. No one can see the cover when you're on an e-reader.

But just what is it that has fueled the word-of-mouth popularity?

It's not the writing. E.L. James is no Erin Morgenstern, whose fantasy-powered novel, "The Night Circus," drew flocks of readers last year. Still, the allure of "Fifty Shades of Grey" cannot so simply be reduced to the steamy sex scenes.

I've never read much of the genre, so as I tried to figure out what is driving this "Fifty" phenomenon, I decided it's equal parts fantasy and sheer curiosity.

With so many people talking about a dominant-submissive "love story," which started out as Twilight-hard fan fiction, women want to know what's it all about. And I have to be honest — despite the clunky prose, James does cause one to turn the page. Just this week, I've sped through two of the three books.

I can't say it's because I'm suddenly a fan of S&M love stories. Frankly, it's not exclu-

sively about that, which is likely why so many different women are reading it. And for the record, I don't agree with Dr. Drew. I don't find this book harmful to women. It's a gross overstatement to compare it to Stockholm syndrome.

Yes, there are unhealthy parts of this fictional relationship — creepy control issues and problems with trust and communication. Keyword: fictional.

I doubt women read this book and want to mimic the bad stuff anymore than they wanted to marry a vampire or run off with a wolf post-"Twilight." It's a fun escape from reality, like so many popular books.

For me, reading the series is like catching an episode of "Keeping Up With the Kardashians" during one of the E! marathons. You're both mortified and intrigued by the glamour and dysfunction. Sometimes, you can't stop looking.

I keep reading because I now want to know what is going to happen to Anastasia as she becomes captivated by Christian's world and he learns to love. And I am curious about Christian's life story. He was born to a crack whore, abused by her pimp, adopted by wealthy do-gooders and lost his virginity at 15 to a woman who made him her submissive.

I don't know if I hate or love the story. I'm not done yet. But what I can say with certainty is so far I find it 50 kinds of crazy.

Jeneé Osterheld's column runs in FYI on Monday, Wednesday and Saturday. To reach her, call 816-234-4380 or email josterheldt@kcstar.com. "Like" her on Facebook at facebook.com/jeneeink.

ENTERTAINMENT BRIEFS

Get your CW ... now

After studying the viewing behavior of its young audience, the CW television network has switched strategies and is no longer delaying the online release of such popular shows as "Gossip Girl" and "The Vampire Diaries." CW said last week that it would begin making episodes of its prime-time series available several hours after their initial television broadcast. The move illustrates how television companies are moving to adapt to rapid changes in technology.

"Consumers have been telling us that they want the ability to watch their shows whenever and where ever they are," said Rick Haskins, CW executive vice president of marketing and digital programs. "If we don't listen to them, we will be missing an opportunity."

'Closer' time

The seventh and final season of "The Closer" will complete its run with six episodes beginning July 9. TNT announced last week.

The series has had a long farewell — star Kyra Sedgwick's decision to end the series with season 7 was announced back in December of 2010. The timing of these six episodes is no accident, though; it's timed to coincide with the premiere of the "Closer" spin-off, "Major Crimes," starring Mary McDonnell and several other "Closer" alumni, which will begin immediately after the final "Closer" episode Aug. 13.

Meanwhile, an update of "Dallas" will premiere on TNT June 13, with Larry Hagman reprising his role as J.R. Ewing.

Rihanna for the defense

People have been scratching their heads over Rihanna's musical collaboration with Chris Brown, but says it "made sense" and it's "innocent."

Brown appears on a remix of her song "Birthday Cake," and she appears on a remix of his "Turn up the Music." Their musical union is noteworthy because Brown beat up Rihanna three years ago and is still on probation for the assault. Rihanna says it was her idea for Brown to appear on her song because he's "the hottest R&B artist" right now. He then asked her to be on his song.

She says the partnership allowed fans to come together, adding, "There shouldn't be a divide. ... It's music, and it's innocent."

She made the comments to Ryan Seacrest on his radio show on KIIS-FM in Los Angeles. [Compiled from Star news services]

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HEAL A TROUBLED MARRIAGE

DEAR BILLY GRAHAM: The only reason my husband and I stay together is for the sake of our children. But now they're both having emotional problems, and I know it's because of the tension between us. Wouldn't it be better for us to go ahead and split? — T.N.

DEAR T.N.: Divorce was never part of God's original plan, and one reason was because he knew the deep hurt and emotional damage it could cause — not just for us, but for our children. No wonder the Old Testament declares,

BILLY GRAHAM

"I hate divorce," says the Lord God.... So guard yourself in your spirit, and do not break faith" (Malachi 2:16). God gave marriage to us, and he meant for it to be a source of security and happiness. And it can be, when we seek his will about our marriage

and allow his love to fill our hearts. That's why I urge you not to give up on your marriage, but to do all you can to repair and restore it.

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Advertisement for CINEMARK featuring various shows like 'THE PALACE ON THE PLAZA', 'MERRIAM', and 'THE SESS'.