



The Nashville Speaker

The English-Speaking Union
NASHVILLE BRANCH

Volume 7, Issue 2

Spring, 2009

Our Mission

The English-Speaking Union of the United States is committed to promoting scholarship and the advancement of knowledge through the effective use of English in an expanding global community.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

President

Richard H. Knight, Jr.,

Secretary

&

Membership Chair

Dr. Susan D. Sinclair

Treasurer

Lynne Siesser

Past President

&

Education Chair

Dr. Ann Cook Calhoun

Directors

Marilyn Beesley

Dr. Roger L. Burgess
H. Wallace Edwards, Jr.

Sandra Frank

Roupen M. Gulbenk

Phyllis Heard

Martin F. MacNamara III

Andrew W. Potts

Eugenia Tanner

Dr. C. Richard Treadway

Susan Walker

Dr. Theodore E. Wiltsie

Newsletter Editor

Lynne Siesser

2009 Overhill Drive

Nashville, TN 37215-3414

lsiesser@comcast.net

615-298-5659

www.esuus.org/branches/nashville

CHURCHILL!



The Nashville Branch is very pleased to announce that **Lynne Olson**, author of the best-selling *Troublesome Young Men*, will be the guest speaker at this year's Spring Banquet, to be held on **Thursday, May 7, at "Shadowbrook,"** the home of Mr. and Mrs. Nelson Davenport.

Seventy years ago, Nazi Germany invaded Poland and World War II began. By May of 1940, the "phony war" had apparently fizzled out, causing the delusional British Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain to say that "Hitler had missed the bus." Not quite. Within hours, the German juggernaut was rolling across the Lowland Countries on its way to the English Channel.

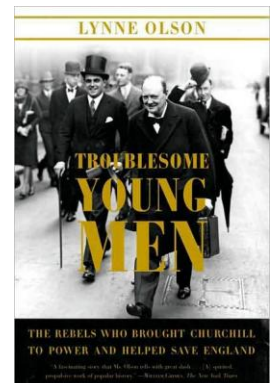
Still, Chamberlain hoped to hang on. There was a begrudging belief among the Conservative Party elders that Winston Churchill – now at the Admiralty – was best-suited to be the war prime minister, but Churchill was "damaged goods." He had "ratted" to the Liberals years before, only to "re-rat" to the Conservatives years later, and was now trusted by no one in power. He had been wrong on the question of Indian independence, and he had rashly supported King Edward's desire to marry the twice-divorced American, Wallis Simpson. When he criticized the Munich Agreement (1938) as an "unmitigated defeat," he was viciously maligned and isolated in the House and abandoned by all but his closest associates. There were serious questions about Winston Churchill's judgment.

However, there were, in the late 1930s, a handful of young Conservative MPs that were increasingly "troublesome." They began to question the policy of appeasement and, by May of 1940, they were openly defying the Conservative Party whips. Against all odds, these courageous dissidents brought down a government and elevated a discredited man – eventually, the "Man of the Century" – to the nation's highest office. This is their story.

Lynne Olson, a graduate of the University of Arizona, is a veteran journalist. In 1973, the Associated Press assigned her to Moscow, where she became the first woman correspondent assigned to that desk. Later, she covered the White House, and in the 1980s she began freelancing for various publications, including *American Heritage*, *Smithsonian*, *Elle*, *Glamour*, and many others. Ms. Olson is the author of *Freedom's Daughters*, and she and her husband, Stanley Cloud, are the co-authors of *The Murrow Boys* and *The Kosciuszko Squadron: Forgotten Heroes of World War II*.

[The Branch has acquired several copies of *Troublesome Young Men* and will have them available for purchase at \$20 per copy. Be sure to have Ms. Olson sign your copy.]

Please watch for your invitation in the mail.



THOUGHTS AND ADVENTURES*by Dick Knight, President*

What a year!

As we wind down for the summer months, I can't help but be satisfied by our many accomplishments over the last year. We opened the fall campaign by hosting Sir Francis Kennedy, a member of the House of Lords, at the annual New Members' Reception. Sir Francis spoke of his many years in the British Foreign Office. The reception, itself, was attended by almost eighty members and guests, an astonishing number for a Sunday afternoon event during football season. As always, Gerry and Ann Cook Calhoun were the perfect hosts.

The fall dinner banquet was a rousing success. More than eighty members packed Hillwood Country Club's Cumberland room for camaraderie, fine dining, and a Shakespearean performance by David Alford that was nothing, if not electrifying.

In January the Branch hosted Miss Hamara Arif of Manchester, England, the youngest Page Scholar in the history of the program. The Branch rolled out the red carpet for her, and she reciprocated by charming all of her hosts and hostesses. Joan Campbell, Roupen and Bitsy Gulbenk, and Phyllis Heard are especially commended for opening

their lovely homes to Hamara and members.

In February the Branch gathered at the home of Ted and Arlyn Cherney for outstanding hospitality, featuring the Russian art of our hosts and a fascinating program on English silver by Susan Sinclair. Ted and Arlyn emphasized that their house is always open, and we have reassured them that we will be back.

In late February the Branch and the Nashville Shakespeare Festival co-hosted the annual Shakespeare workshop at Harpeth Hall, where approximately fifty high school boys and girls spent a day sharpening their theatrical skills. What an uplifting experience for students and adults. This year, a number of members volunteered their services: Anne Guerra, Linda Walter, Emily Matthews, Donah and Roger Burgess, Lina Welborn, Sandra Frank, Phyllis Heard and your branch officers.

In March the Branch hosted the annual Shakespeare Competition at Belmont University, where about twenty high school students represented their schools in what is, arguably, the ESU's showcase event. The level of talent on display was extraordinary. In fact, this event is so highly entertaining that it really deserves to be promoted as a branch event. Next year, we will encourage more of our members to attend. The Regional Competition has to be seen – and heard – to be believed. I'd like to thank Gerry Calhoun, Susan Creagh, Derah Myers, Roxie Rogers and your branch officers for a job well done.

And now we come to the spring banquet, featuring Lynne Olson. This is not to be missed. Unfortunately, I have to miss it, because the National Park Service has hired me as a seasonal park ranger, and I report to Yellowstone on May 4 for twenty weeks. However, my chief executive officer (Linda) will be joining you for what should be a very exciting evening at the famous home of our good friends, Clara and Nelson Davenport. Linda and I are also meeting Lynne Olson for lunch in Washington on April 18, which will give me a chance to say all kinds of nice things about you.

My tenure as your branch president is over. I cannot thank you enough for your support. I have had the good fortune to work with a dedicated board, hardworking officers, and the most generous people with whom I have ever been associated. I encourage everyone to stick with the ESU. Civilization matters!

Wishing you all the very best,
Godspeed, Dick

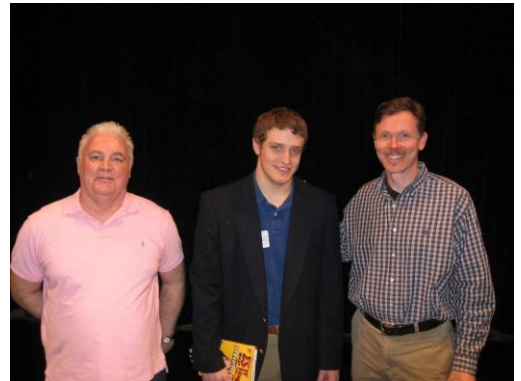


*Two Shakespeare winners,
Ricardo Beaird (Nashville School of the
Arts now at MTSU - 2008)
Tommy Harless
(Montgomery Bell Academy – 2009)*

TEACHING FELLOWSHIPS

The Branch is very pleased to announce that, for the second year in a row, it will be sending high school teachers to both Blackfriars Playhouse in Staunton, Virginia, and the Oregon Shakespeare Festival, Ashland, Oregon, for Shakespeare training. **Hugh Inman** of Franklin High School was selected for Blackfriars. His representative in the Shakespeare Competition was **Nicole Pavol** – Macbeth monologue. **Geneva Cook** of Blackman High School was selected for Ashland. Her student, **Erin Nolin** also did a monologue from Macbeth in the competition. They will be invited to the New Members' Reception this fall, where they will share their experiences with us.

*Pictured: Malcom Morrison, 2008 recipient of the Blackfriars grant,
Tommy Harless, 2009 regional winner of the Shakespeare competition and his theater director,
Cal Fuller, all of Montgomery Bell Academy.*



The fellowships are funded by the very generous contributions of our members. Contributing to our Education Fund this year were: Donah Jean & Roger Burgess (*In Honor of Roger's Aunt, Miss Mirah Mills*) * Ann & Gerry Calhoun * Joan Campbell Arlyn & Ted Cherney * Lew Conner * Marion Couch * Joan & Maclin Davis * Missie & Wallace Edwards * Bill Engel Genevieve Farris * Marilyn & Ren Fels * Nancy Griswold * Anne & Bob Guerra * Bitsy & Roupem Gulbenk Jean & Dick Hart * Phyllis Heard * Bill Henderson * Joanne Knight * Linda & Dick Knight * Jean Litterer * Alyne Massey Emily & Robert Mathews * Anne Marie & Martin McNamara * Nan & Neil Parrish * Katherine Puckett Betty & Charlie Robison * Carol & John Rochford * Marlin & Bill Sanders * Elaina & Ronnie Scott Marilyn Shields-Wiltsie & Ted Wiltsie (*In Memory of Mildred Gulbenk*) * Lynne & Bill Siesser * Jane Stone * Charlotte Summers Jane Tarkington (*In Memory of Fred Tarkington, Jr.*) * Vicky & Bennett Tarleton * Mary Thompson * Jane & Richard Treadway Susan & Otey Walker * Charles White * Mac Whiteman * Jane & Tom Yount

ROGER'S LETTER SAYS IT ALL WHEN YOU THINK OF ESU EDUCATION PROGRAMS

American Friends of Chantilly, A Not-for-Profit Philanthropic Association in support of The Arts

Wednesday, February 11, 2009

Hon. Richard H. Knight, Jr.
President, English Speaking Union, Nashville Branch
167 Charleston Park
Nashville, TN 37205

Greetings Richard:

Enclosed is a small check to help fund the Shakespeare programs of the English Speaking Union, Nashville Branch.

This modest contribution honors my beloved Aunt, Miss Mirah Mills. From 1935 to 1955, Dr. Mills chaired the English Language Department of Morningside College, a small (1,200 students) Methodist institution in Sioux City, Iowa.

In addition to English literature, Dr. Mills' most popular classes explored the life and works of William Shakespeare. A widely recognized Shakespeare scholar, she must surely have been an English Speaking Union member.

Through her lively pedagogy, many young people learned to respect and love Shakespeare, joyfully reciting lines and presenting plays before a variety of audiences. I was one of those students.

Richard you would certainly not be able to print more than her name and title, if you do that, but I wanted you to know about this remarkable western Iowa woman. She was never able to visit England, but made the language glow just the same. That's why I am glad to be a member of ESU and on your board.

Most cordially, *Roger L. Burgess*

Thanks for your leadership!

Volunteer opportunities with the English Speaking Union.

- | | | |
|--|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Host a tea or reception | <input type="checkbox"/> Host an overnight guest | <input type="checkbox"/> Present a program |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Suggest a program | <input type="checkbox"/> Assist at an event | <input type="checkbox"/> Serve on the Board |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Make telephone calls | <input type="checkbox"/> Provide transportation | <input type="checkbox"/> Serve as an officer |

Please volunteer to Lynne Siesser Hm: 298-5659 Wk: 936-1457 lsiesser@comcast.net

Upcoming Events

Spring Banquet,
Shadowbrook, 5397 Rawlings Road, Joelton
Thursday, May 7, 2009

Cricket Match
Nashville Occasionals v Paget's Marauders
Pontotoc Farm, 1407 Old Hillsboro Road, Franklin
Sunday, May 10, 2009

Inside This Issue

Spring Banquet	Page 1
President's Column	Page 2
Picture Gallery	Page 3 & 4
Teaching Fellowships	Page 5
Donors	Page 5
Volunteering	Page 6