

BRANCH NEWS

Education. Scholarship. Understanding.

P.O. Box 758, Winter Park, FL. 32790-0758

Website: www.ESUus.org/centralflorida

Email: centralfl@ESUus.org

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Monday, April 3

3:30 p.m. Refreshments; 4:00 p.m. Lecture



**THE ENGLISH SPEAKING
UNION
CENTRAL FLORIDA BRANCH**

**MONDAY
APRIL
3**

**Refreshments
3:30 pm**

**Lecture
4:00 pm**

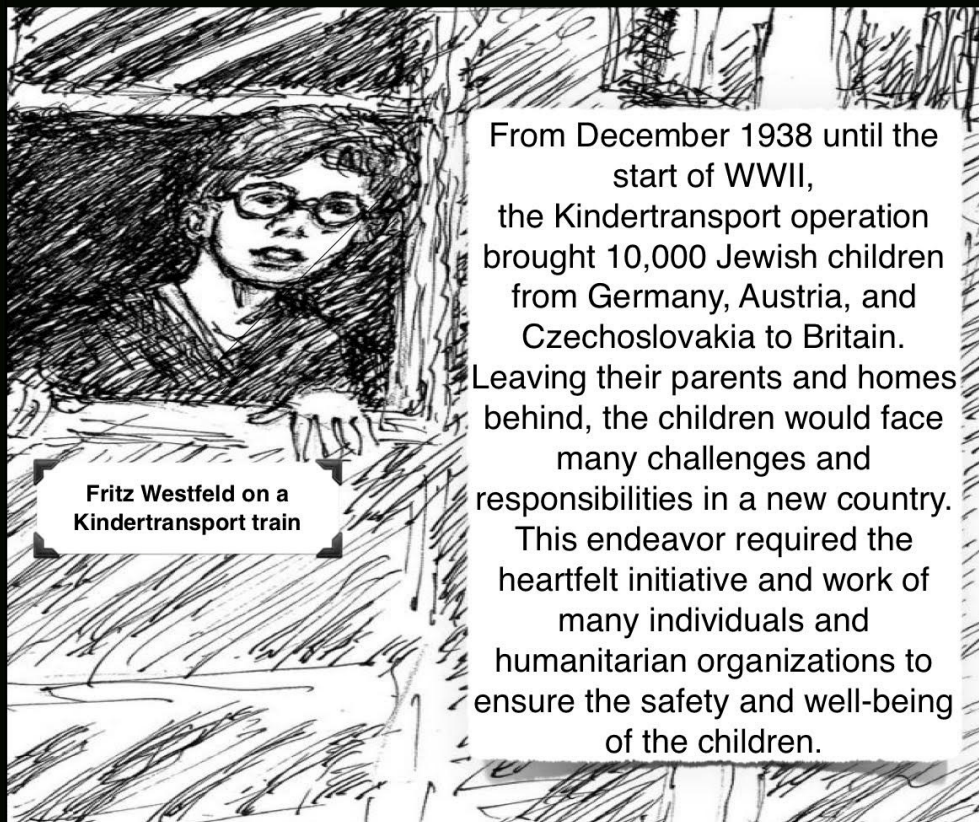
**The University Club
of Winter Park
841 N. Park Avenue**

**Program Leader:
Barbara Hughes**

Holly Mandelkern

Presents

Packing Their Bags: The Kindertransport to Britain



From December 1938 until the start of WWII, the Kindertransport operation brought 10,000 Jewish children from Germany, Austria, and Czechoslovakia to Britain. Leaving their parents and homes behind, the children would face many challenges and responsibilities in a new country. This endeavor required the heartfelt initiative and work of many individuals and humanitarian organizations to ensure the safety and well-being of the children.

Shakespeare Competition Results!



On February 20, 17 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, an additional prize to cover the cost of travel to New York City for the National competition, and a scholarship to Orlando Shakes’ The Young Company, which is valued at \$250.00. This year’s contenders made for difficult judging decisions. On the panel of judges this year were Anne Hering: Director of Education at The Orlando Shakespeare Theater, Donna Miller; former Program Coordinator for Orange County’s Language Arts, and Dr. Maurice “Socky” O’Sullivan: Kenneth Curry Professor of Literature Emeritus at Rollins College.





Left to Right: Casey Kerr, Delaney Polk, James Helsing

Casey Kerr from Lake Nona High School took First Place with a portrayal of Bottom from A Midsummer Night's Dream and Sonnet 81 under the direction of their teacher, Ms. Jennifer Gautier. Second Place went to Delaney Polk from Windermere Prep. Delaney was coached by her teacher, Ms. BambiEllen Fadoul, on her depiction of Lady Macbeth from Macbeth and Sonnet 144. In Third Place was James Helsing who was trained by his teacher, Ms. Marie Gentile, at Boone High School.

New to the competition in 2021 was 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 2023 recipient of the Richard Burbage Award is long-standing sponsor Kristopher Kahn of Cypress Creek High School. The final award given this year is 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." This year's winner is Malaki Headrick of Avalon Private School.

After serving 27 years as either the Shakespeare Competition Coordinator for the Central Florida Branch of the ESU, or an Assistant Coordinator, Ginger Bryant completed her final year of service in her rewarding role. Brett Carrier will be seamlessly stepping into the role for the 2024 Shakespeare Competition. We wish Casey Kerr the best of luck in New York City at the national competition this April.

Ginger Bryant, Shakespeare Chair



Branch Winner and Team Teachers
Left to Right: Jennifer Gautier, Casey Kerr, Gail Chase

Dedicated to Shakespeare



As indicated on the 2023 Shakespeare Competition logo, it is an exceptionally special year, the 40th Anniversary of this nationally recognized celebration of The Bard! In recognition of this accomplishment, the Central Florida Branch has donated \$5000 to become a Gold Sponsor for the 40th Anniversary of the Shakespeare Competition.

Of course this monetary contribution pales in comparison to the 27 years of tireless devotion donated by our own **Ginger Bryant**, the true focus of this article. The incalculable hours she spent composing emails, paying painstaking attention to details, and bringing to fruition flawless competitions year after year are a treasure the Central Florida English-Speaking Union will always cherish. As she retires from the ESU Board, leaving behind her legacy as Shakespeare Competition Chair, we wish the best for this magical lady. Her excellence will surely continue to spread sparks of innovation along her path. She already aligns her English Department at Lake Highland Preparatory, produces astounding magical performances as the founder of the Orlando Chapter of David Copperfield's Project Magic, and builds commissioned miniatures that we could only imagine creating in our most vivid dreams. Ginger, we thank you for sharing your magic, and in the words of our ESU President, "We look forward to watching your future triumphs."





President's Message

April: The Poet's Month

The Romans named their fourth month *Aprilis*, probably building on the verb *aperire* (i.e., to open) to recognize all the trees and plants blossoming this month. It has long been a time for beginning our annual transition from winter to spring, a time when our medieval ancestors removed the heavy woolen and leather clothing they were sewn into and took their annual baths.

After enduring the challenge of winter, spring is a time of hope and dreams. Most of us know Count Basie's brilliant 1955 recording of *April in Paris*, based on the song Vernon Duke wrote for the 1932 Broadway musical *Walk a Little Faster*. (Count Basie's recording is in the Grammy Hall of Fame.)

I have always suspected that the song took its inspiration from Robert Browning's lines, "Oh to be in England/Now that April's there," from his *Home Thoughts from Abroad*, written after he eloped to Italy in 1846 with Elizabeth Barrett. The English writer Laurie Lee celebrated the month at home in his poem *April Rise*: "If ever I saw blessing in the air/I see it now in this still early day."

Like almost all writers, Browning and Lee echo Shakespeare, who was both born and died this month. In Sonnet 98 he balances lamenting and longing—Shakespeare did a lot of both—"from you I have been absent in the spring,/When proud pied April dress'd in all his trim/Hath put a spirit of youth in everything."

That spirit Shakespeare invokes is the impulse driving Chaucer's pilgrims in his *Canterbury Tales*. In the poem's prologue, the first great English poet describes at length the way the end of winter and beginning of spring affect all nature, including us. Restlessness rules. As more birds migrate back from abroad and sing all night, humans lie awake and dream of travel. Of course in Chaucer's day, long before the advent of Boeing 737s and Viking River Cruises, that longing to see *straunge strondes* (foreign shores) and *sondry londes* (different countries) usually involved pilgrimages, like the one his pilgrims make to the site of Thomas á Becket's martyrdom at Canterbury Cathedral.

President's Message Continued...

Colleges and universities, even those in the Sunshine State, have learned what Chaucer revealed, which is why we encourage our students to take a spring break and go somewhere, ideally far away, to release all that “spirit of youth” repressed even during our relatively mild winters.

Many twentieth-century poets have been far less kind to April. T.S. Eliot opens his most famous poem, *The Waste Land*, with the line, “April is the cruelest month”; and the New Jersey poet-physician William Carlos Williams titled one of his poems *April Is the Saddest Month*. Perhaps the bleakest of all is Silvia Plath, best known for her novel *The Bell Jar*. In the diaries written before her suicide in 1963, she describes herself constantly oscillating between “apple pie happy” and smothering despair. The latter clearly dominated when she began her poem *April 18*, “the slime of all my yesterdays/rots in the hollow of my skull.”

Happily, we are in a new century. Since one of the wonderful things about free will is that we have freedom of choice, I will almost always prefer re-reading the vision of April in Chaucer or listening to *April in Paris* by Count Basie, Sarah Vaughan, or Josephine Baker. As usual, the lad from Stratford was right, for April does put a spirit of youth in everything.

Sláinte,

Socky O'Sullivan
President



In Memoriam

*Former Chairman of the English-Speaking Union
of the United States and Congresswoman, Pat Schroeder,
passed away on March 13.*

The New York Times states, "In a long career in the House and armed with a barbed wit, she helped win legislation on family leave, pregnancy discrimination and other progressive causes" (Seelye).



CENTRAL
FLORIDA
BRANCH

Nominating Committee Recommendations for Executive Board 2023-2024

Members: We will vote for our 2023-2024 Board Members
at our May 1, 2023 meeting.

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

President: Socky O'Sullivan, *continuing*

Executive Vice President: Jan McClure, *continuing*

VP Endowment: Barbara Hughes

VP Communications: Brett Carrier, *continuing*

VP Membership: Gilda Gomez, *continuing*

VP Programs: Nancy Williams, *continuing*

VP Scholarship: Reta Jackson, *continuing*

VP Shakespeare Competition: Brett Carrier

Treasurer: Jackie Abrams, *continuing*

Deputy Treasurer: Joe Sapora

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Nominating Chair (Appointed): Elaine Laegeler

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Sheryl K. Stansberry

Cindy Abeel

Kristina Thompson

Directors 2022-25

Jim Fitch

Michele Levy

Glenda McClure

Directors 2021-24

Sharyn Jontz

Deborah Williams

Joseph Bostwick

Past President: Barbara Hughes

Parliamentarian: (Open)

Program Schedule 2022-2023

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

Monday, April 3, 2023, 3:30-5:00 p.m.

Speaker: Holly Mandelkern

“Packing Their Bags: The Kindertransport to Britain”

Monday, May 1, 2023, 3:30-5:00 p.m.

Speaker: Ed Larson

George Washington’s Second Revolution.

Our Annual General Meeting will precede our guest speaker, Ed Larson



Good news! In case you missed any of the terrific *Happy Hour* talks, they are available online.



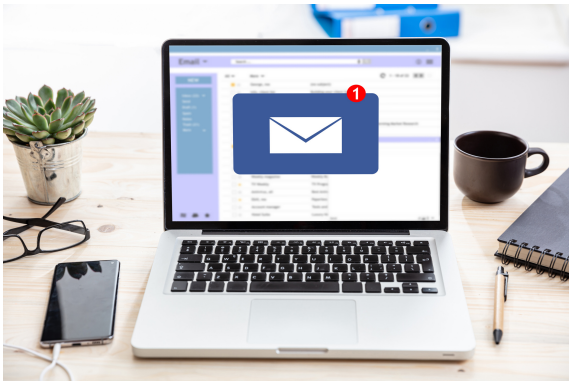
Check them out at www.esuus.org/esu/activities/happy-hour.



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Branch Business



If you have any contact updates or questions concerning Branch emails, please email us at esucentralfl@gmail.com.

Monthly newsletters are delivered through email unless you notify us at esucentralfl@gmail.com that you would like to receive a hard copy.

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education and
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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 for more information.

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

P.O. Box 758

Winter Park, FL 32790-0758

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