



# THE ENGLISH-SPEAKING UNION OF THE UNITED STATES

*Creating Global Understanding Through English*

NATION'S CAPITAL AREA BRANCH

SEPTEMBER 2003

## *News & Announcements*

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## **RENOWNED ECOLOGIST OFFERS THE GLOBE A SOBER WARNING** *A Fresh Reminder from LESTER R. BROWN that Good Planets are Hard to Find*

A respected leader, and a prolific author who has been described by *The Washington Post* as "one of the world's most influential thinkers," LESTER R. BROWN will be joining us once again to introduce and sign copies of his latest volume, *PLAN B: Rescuing a Planet under Stress and a Civilization in Trouble*. The last time he addressed an ESU gathering, in January of 2001, his remarks were nationally telecast by C-SPAN2.

Mr. Brown is the recipient of 22 honorary doctorates. He has also garnered such prestigious laurels as a 1986 MacArthur "genius" award, the 1987 United Nations Environment Prize, and the 1994 Blue Planet Prize (carrying a purse of \$500,000) for his exceptional contributions to a discipline in which the stakes are enormous. In 1974, with support from the Rockefeller Brothers Fund, Mr. Brown founded the WORLD-WATCH INSTITUTE. Its annual *STATE OF THE WORLD* reports are now available in 30 languages and are viewed by many, including prominent heads of state, as our most authoritative guides to the health of a fragile biosphere. In May of 2001, after becoming chairman of the WORLD-WATCH board, Mr. Brown established a new issue-oriented think-tank, the EARTH POLICY INSTITUTE. This is his second book under its auspices.



**THURSDAY, OCTOBER 2**

*Optional Cash Bar 11:30  
Lunch 12:30 Program 1:00*

**1526 NEW HAMPSHIRE AVE.**  
*One Block North of Dupont Circle*

**ESU Members - \$28  
Non-Members - \$35**

## **SPEAK THE SPEECH: SHAKESPEARE'S MONOLOGUES ILLUMINATED** *A Delightful Morning with SAMI PLOTKIN, Author of an Acclaimed Guidebook*



We invite you to join us for a memorable presentation by an actress, screenwriter, and gifted teacher who'll provide some entertaining and edifying tips on how to derive maximum pleasure from the most challenging works in the dramatic canon. Trained in London under the tutelage of the Royal Shakespeare Company, SAMI PLOTKIN and her colleague RHONA SILVERBUSH have produced a volume that Sir Derek Jacobi describes as "a fabulous book, gloriously packed with information." Kevin Spacey dubs it "a great, amusing, and helpful resource" that will be especially useful to "anyone interested in breaking down the barriers of Shakespeare's text, meanings, and interpretation."

Thanks to publisher FARRAR, STRAUS & GIROUX and to OLSSON'S BOOKS & RECORDS, copies of *Speak the Speech* will be available at a discount for purchase and for inscription by the author. And thanks to the hospitality of ST. ALBANS SCHOOL and to the kind generosity of the MORRIS AND GWENDOLYN CAFRITZ FOUNDATION, we're able to make this workshop available free of charge to teachers, students, and other theater-lovers.

*SEE THE BACK PANEL FOR DETAILS AND FOR AN ORDER FORM.*

**SATURDAY, OCTOBER 4**

**10:00 a.m. - 12:00 noon**

**ST. ALBANS SCHOOL  
AT WASHINGTON CATHEDRAL  
Wisconsin at Massachusetts**

**Admission Free  
But Donations Welcome**

## National News

### THE ESU'S ANNUAL CONFERENCE FOR 2003 TO OCCUR IN PROVIDENCE IN NOVEMBER

All members of the branch of the ENGLISH-SPEAKING UNION OF THE UNITED STATES that serves the Nation's Capital region are urged to consider a journey to Providence in mid-November for the ESU's 2003 NATIONAL CONFERENCE.

Attendees will stay at the PROVIDENCE BILTMORE, a newly renovated downtown hotel which is sometimes referred to as the "Grand Dame" of the fascinating city it adorns. Everyone will be encouraged to attend dinners on Thursday evening the 13th at BROWN UNIVERSITY, on Friday evening the 14th at the magnificent FEDERAL RESERVE RESTAURANT, and on Saturday evening the 15th at the HOPE CLUB, a jewel that dates from 1875. They'll be



free to explore area attractions on their own, of course, but they'll also be able to sign up for an optional guided tour by the RHODE ISLAND HISTORICAL SOCIETY on Sunday afternoon the 16th.

This year's theme will be *THE ESU PARTNERSHIP: HOW TO STRENGTHEN AND SUPPORT IT*. The first business session will be scheduled for Friday morning the 14th, and the final one will occur on Sunday the 16th.

There will be workshops for branch officers, for delegates with a special interest in educational initiatives such as the NATIONAL SHAKESPEARE COMPETITION and the enrichment activities that augment this endeavor, and for ESU members who'd like to ponder ways to generate more publicity for branch activities.

For further information about the Providence gathering, including details about conference reservations (at \$320 per person), hotel arrangements, and travel options, please get in touch with **Owen Brennan** of the New York office at (212) 818-1200, who will be happy to provide flyers, registration forms, and other materials, or with the local branch office at (202) 234-4602.

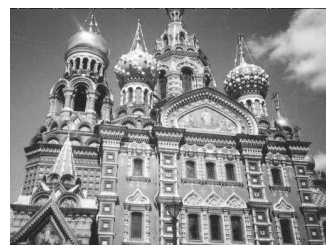
## International News

### WILLIAM L. RENFRO ATTENDS THE WORLD MEMBERS CONFERENCE IN ST. PETERSBURG

In late June and early July a dedicated member of our Board of Directors, **William L. "Ren" Renfro**, joined executive director **Alice Boyne** of the national office to represent the English-Speaking Union of the United States at the 2003 ESU WORLD MEMBERS CONFERENCE. This convocation drew more than fifty

delegates from thirty-five countries around the globe, and it took place in the exquisite metropolis that Peter the Great founded three centuries ago as Russia's window to the West.

Hosting the proceedings, and greeting everyone in the name of the ST. PETERSBURG ESU, was **Margarita Mudrack**, that association's resourceful and eloquent president. She'd put together an outstanding menu of cultural offerings that featured receptions, dinners, a river cruise, special excursions to the HERMITAGE and other architectural gems, and a Beethoven concert by the ST. PETERSBURG PHILHARMONIC ORCHESTRA. For the logistics of the convention, and for meticulous attention to the needs of her guests, President Mudrack was ably assisted by a cadre of high-school and college



students, most of whom were affiliated with her INTERNATIONAL FRIENDSHIP HOUSE at the UNIVERSITY OF ST. PETERSBURG and all of whom were impressive in the fluency with which they communicated in the language that had brought the conferees together.

The University awarded an honorary degree to **Lord Watson**, who chairs the English-Speaking Union from its international center at DARTMOUTH HOUSE in London. After he accepted the latest of many accolades, this engaging leader spoke about the pivotal role of a global discourse at a period when social cohesion and conceptual understanding have become increasingly difficult to sustain.

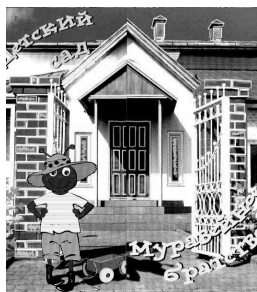


The most important development at the gathering was a decision by the INTERNATIONAL COUNCIL to draft and approve a new governing document, which is now known as "The St. Petersburg Constitution." During the course of its deliberations the Council received reports from all of the national ESUs that were on

hand for the festivities, observing as it did so that the English-Speaking Union now boasts approximately 44,000 members, forty percent of whom reside in the United States (11,000 plus) or the United Kingdom (4,500 plus). The Council took pride in the fact that most of the organization's recent growth has occurred in countries where English is a second language, with former Soviet states and former members of the Warsaw Pact leading the pace.

After five days in St. Petersburg, conference delegates took an overnight train to Moscow. From there half of the group, including director-general **Valerie Mitchell** of the London headquarters, proceeded to Mongolia for a launch of the ESU's latest national office. The delegates who remained in Moscow visited Leo Tolstoy's estate, Yasnaya Polyana, in Tula. There they met the novelist's great-great-grandson, Vladimir, who graciously escorted them through a creative pre-school that he'd established to benefit children of the estate's employees.

Mr. Renfro emerged from his time in Russia with a fresh burst of enthusiasm for the ESU and its mission, and he is now preparing to help the branch arrange for a Washington component to the next **WORLD MEMBERS CONFERENCE**, which has been scheduled for New York City in October 2004. He's also recommending other initiatives, among them an expanded international posture for the National Capital's ESU community, and closer relationships with its ESU counterparts in other regions of the world.



## *English in Action*

Does becoming acquainted with a visitor from abroad, or helping a foreign-born student, appeal to you? If so, you should ponder the idea of becoming involved in one of the most gratifying pursuits a civic-minded volunteer can experience. **ENGLISH IN ACTION** is a one-to-one tutoring service in which ordinary people get together for relaxed conversations. One will be an adult with normal proficiency, but no special training, in the use of spoken and written English. The other, typically, will be a recent immigrant to the U.S., a high-school or college student from overseas, or a professional (employed, perhaps, by an embassy or a multinational business) who understands the rudiments of English but seeks the skillful ease a native speaker of our tongue takes for granted.

Under the usual format an **ESU** tutor meets once a week with another adult for an hour or so of enjoyable give-and-take at a mutually convenient time and location. It's by no means unusual for tutors and their charges to develop lifelong friendships and significantly enhance one another's appreciation for diverse cultures. And because **EIA** pupils are expected to have a

basic grasp of English before they apply for instruction, tutors are not required to possess formal teaching credentials.

**ENGLISH IN ACTION** has been provided by our branch of the **ESU** for more than twenty years, and it has assisted hundreds of newcomers as they've learned to cope with the expectations of a society quite distinct from their own. **EIA** has enhanced their self-assurance and enabled them to obtain better positions, both in the U.S. and in their countries of origin, and it has immeasurably enhanced the quality of their lives. At the Bell Multicultural School, for example, a number of non-native students who've become **EIA** alumni have earned college and university scholarships and proceeded to highly fulfilling careers.

In recent months we've had an influx of more than fifty new students. We've also welcomed a number of new tutors, who generously lend their time and considerable talent to **EIA**. We're immensely grateful for their efforts, but we can always use reinforcement from others who can extend a helping hand.

If **ENGLISH IN ACTION** sounds like your cup of tea, please get in touch with **EIA**'s director, **Diana Nicholson**, at 4600 Connecticut Avenue NW, 723, Washington, DC 20008. You can reach Mrs. Nicholson by telephone at (202) 966-3921. You can also be put in touch with her by means of a call to (202) 234-4602.

## *Coming Attractions*

### **A WASHINGTON CATHEDRAL CONCERT BY THE CHOIR OF ST. PAUL'S IN LONDON**

At 7:30 p.m. on **SUNDAY, OCTOBER 19**, the **ESU** will welcome members and their guests to a special concert at **WASHINGTON NATIONAL CATHEDRAL**. This event will be sponsored by the **CATHEDRAL CHORAL SOCIETY**, and it will put the spotlight on the **CHOIR OF ST. PAUL'S CATHEDRAL IN LONDON**, directed by **John Scott**. We've reserved two blocks of seats for the occasion, some in the Front Nave (which will be available to our constituents for \$50 rather than the usual \$55), and others in the Mid Nave (which will go to our group for \$35 a ticket rather than the usual \$37). See Page 4 for an Order Form.

### **WHOSE SOIRÉE NOW? A LATE-OCTOBER PARTY AT THE HOME OF GRAHAM DOWN**

We're grateful to branch president **A. Graham Down** for opening up his charming Georgetown domicile at **1650 32ND STREET NW** for a Hallowe'en-e'en reception on **THURSDAY, OCTOBER 30**, from 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. **ESU** members and their guests are encouraged to come in costume if they wish. They're also welcome to bring children to a gathering that will be designed to put everyone in a jolly mood for the weeks that usher in the holiday season. Food and drink will be abundant, and the price will be a modest \$25 per person. See Page 4 to order.