



THE ENGLISH-SPEAKING UNION OF THE UNITED STATES

Creating Global Understanding Through English

NATION'S CAPITAL BRANCH

DECEMBER 2007

News & Announcements

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AROUND TOWN - A LIVELY PREVIEW OF SEASONAL HIGHLIGHTS *An Entertaining Luncheon Roundup with WETA's Usual Suspects*

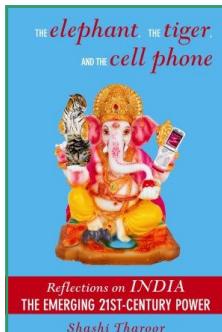
Looking for tips on how to make the most of the cultural enticements that will brighten this year's holidays? If so, you'll want to be with us for a fast-moving conversation with host **ROBERT AUBRY DAVIS** and his associates from **WETA** television: **JOE BARBER**, **BILL DUNLOP**, **JANICE GOODMAN**,

TREY GRAHAM, and **JANE HORWITZ**. Just as they do online and in witty comments on **TV 26**, these panelists will tell us who's coming to town, describe what they'll be doing and where, and offer "Best Bets" on the hottest tickets in theaters, concert



halls, museums, and other venues. This event has become an early-December staple at the **WOMAN'S NATIONAL DEMOCRATIC CLUB**, and we're pleased that our colleagues in that institution have once again opened it up to attendees from **ESU WASHINGTON**. As in the past, well-informed arts leaders will proffer sharp vignettes about coming attractions and entertain questions from grateful listeners.

A FORMER HIGH-RANKING UN OFFICIAL TALKS ABOUT INDIA *A Luncheon and Discussion with Author and Diplomat SHASHI THAROOR*



Over the last quarter-century India has moved from an impoverished and largely undeveloped country into a bustling, innovative power that can proudly claim to be the world's largest democracy. We're pleased to join our friends at the **WNDC** for a luncheon gathering with an award-winning writer who has given us five nonfiction books, among them a biography of Nehru, a collection of literary essays, **Bookless in Baghdad**, and three novels. **SHASHI THAROOR** is a journalist who has contributed articles, reviews, and opinion pieces to dozens of major periodicals, among them *Time*, *Newsweek*, and the *Washington Post*. He is also a

seasoned diplomat who came close to being selected to follow Kofi Annan in 2006 as Secretary-General of the **UNITED NATIONS**. He'll talk not only about his extensive **UN** experience but about his latest publication, **THE ELEPHANT, THE TIGER, AND THE CELL PHONE**, a survey of his homeland that will be available for purchase and for inscription by its eloquent and distinguished author.

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 5
*Cash-Bar Reception, 6:00 Dinner, 7:00
Program, 7:30 p.m.*
1526 NEW HAMPSHIRE AVENUE
Luncheon and Program, \$30

Mark Olshaker Becomes Executive Director

See Page 3 for a Message from the Author and Filmmaker Who
Succeeds JOHN ANDREWS as Head of the Nation's Capital
Branch of the ENGLISH-SPEAKING UNION OF THE U.S.

WASHINGTON REVELS OFFERS A SPECIAL DISCOUNT FOR ESU CONSTITUENTS

This year's WASHINGTON REVELS program is a 25th-anniversary special with an Elizabethan theme. **Will Kemp**, Shakespeare's

brilliant, irreverent clown, has just Morris-danced for nine days from London to Norwich. He'll now devise rustic amusements to enchant the Queen, soon to arrive on a royal progress to mark the winter solstice. Mischief and merriment ensue, with Renaissance music, rousing dance, a set of comic actors, and of course Good Queen Bess herself. A varied cast includes the **Renaissance Band** and a traditional Revels company of adults, teens, and children. For this performance tickets will be discounted **10%** for those who reserve as members of the **ENGLISH-SPEAKING UNION**. To register online at www.revelsdc.org, enter "ESU" as your code at checkout. To order by phone, call (202) 723-7528 and remind the booking agent about this generous-spirited offer.



SUNDAY, DECEMBER 9

Program at 5:00 p.m.

LISNER AUDITORIUM

21st and N Streets NW

For details visit www.revelsdc.org

A photograph showing two performers in Elizabethan-style costumes, one in red and one in white, interacting on stage.

A BABA LUNCHEON TO WELCOME THE NEW BRITISH AMBASSADOR TO THE U.S.

Thanks to the officers and directors of the **BRITISH-AMERICAN BUSINESS ASSOCIATION**, with which ESU WASHINGTON has co-hosted several gatherings in recent years, constituents of the **ENGLISH-SPEAKING UNION** are cordially invited to **BABA's** eleventh annual **CHRISTMAS LUNCHEON**. Ever a festive occasion, this year's toast to the holidays will feature remarks by Sir **NIGEL SHEINWALD**, KCMG, who arrived in October as Britain's new

AMBASSADOR TO THE UNITED STATES.

Sir Nigel joined the diplomatic service in 1976 and has served in Brussels, Moscow, and Washington. For the last four years he has been posted in London as **FOREIGN POLICY AND DEFENCE ADVISOR TO THE PRIME MINISTER** and as **HEAD OF THE CABINET OFFICE DEFENCE AND OVERSEAS SECRETARIAT**. A graduate of Harrow and of Balliol College, Oxford, Sir Nigel is

married, and he and his wife have three sons. Attendees will need to reserve by **December 3**, and they may do so by calling (202) 293-0010 or by e-mailing pkarhuse@babawashington.org.

MUSICOLOGIST IVAN MARCH OFFERS SAGE COUNSEL ON CLASSICAL RECORDINGS

To launch the 31st-anniversary edition of the world's best-selling handbook for audiophiles, the British lecturer, writer, and broadcaster who has enhanced our libraries with **THE PENGUIN GUIDE**

TO RECORDED CLASSICAL MUSIC will be here to talk about his latest update of a reference volume that has long been cherished as the definitive authority on its subject. **IVAN MARCH** launched

his career as a horn player. He studied at **TRINITY COLLEGE OF MUSIC** in London and at **ROYAL MANCHESTER COLLEGE**. Following a stint in the Central Band of the **ROYAL AIR FORCE**, he began performing regularly for the **BRITISH BROADCASTING CORPORATION**. He went on to travel with the **CARL ROSA** and **D'OYLY CARTE** opera companies. Mr. March is a well-known journalist and on-air personality, and he contributes articles and reviews to a number of periodicals, among them **GRAMOPHONE**, where he focuses primarily upon reissued versions of earlier recordings.

With the advent of the Internet and of satellite transmission, and with the proliferation of digital technology for downloading, transferring, and listening to various kinds of music, Mr. March has found that his knowledge is in greater demand than ever before. He'll talk about that and other topics during a **WNDC** luncheon that will permit attendees to purchase copies of his latest publication and get them inscribed by a versatile and globally recognized expert.

YULETIDE REVELRY AT THE ELEGANT HOME OF BRAXTON & DEBBIE MONCURE

Thanks to the warm hospitality of our Treasurer, **BRAXTON MONCURE**, and his wife **DEBBIE**, we're pleased to invite you to a jolly reception in one of Washington's most gracious residences. We hope you'll join us for holiday drinks and a light buffet. You'll have a chance to greet acquaintances in the **ENGLISH-SPEAKING UNION**, and among the well-wishers you'll meet are tutors from the branch and newcomers from other countries who are engaged in ESU's indispensable **ENGLISH IN ACTION** service. There is no set charge for this reception, but



SATURDAY, DECEMBER 22

5:00 to 7:00 p.m.

1614 FOXHALL ROAD NW

No Charge, but Donations Welcome

reservations are requested, and tax-deductible donations to help defray its expenses (approximately \$30 a person) and support ESU WASHINGTON's educational initiatives will be gratefully accepted, particularly from those who are enrolled in the branch at categories of membership that are lower than the **Contributor** level. We also encourage you to bring friends and loved ones who might be interested in affiliating with our association. As in the past, Mr. and Mrs. Moncure are underwriting many of the costs for this year's cultural and charitable activities, not only during the holidays but at other times, among them occasions when ESU visitors from abroad are taking part in summer Capitol Hill internships or touring the United States on exchange programs that bring them to our metropolitan area.

'SHOOT THE WIDOW': THE FIRST SECRET OF RENOWNED BIOGRAPHER MERYLE SECREST

We're delighted to join the WOMAN'S NATIONAL DEMOCRATIC CLUB for what promises to be a sprightly gathering with a British-born, Washington-based journalist who has been a finalist for the Pulitzer Prize and who was one of ten writers and scholars to be honored with a National Humanities Medal in 2006. According to *New Yorker* reviewer Louis Menand, "MERYLE SECREST

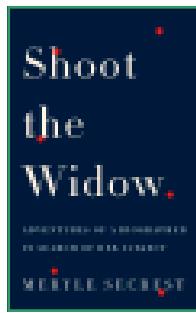
is a biographer who has nine lives so far, all of figures in the arts, including Kenneth Clark, Leonard Bernstein, Frank Lloyd

Wright, Richard Rodgers, and Salvador Dali." That's an impressive lineup, and it doesn't even include such luminaries as Bernard Berenson, Stephen Sondheim, and, most recently, art dealer Joseph Duveen, who furnished Andrew W. Mellon with many of the treasures that eventually found their way into his seminal collection for the NATIONAL GALLERY OF ART. So how did a talented researcher gather all the material she

needed to write about these fascinating subjects? That's the tale she tells in a memoir that draws its title from an assertion that the first rule of biography is "Shoot the widow." We'll leave it to Ms. Secrest to explain that advice, hoping that many of our constituents will be on hand to purchase books and get them inscribed by a highly engaging speaker.



TUESDAY, JANUARY 8
Cash-Bar Reception 11:30 Lunch 12:30
Program 1:00 p.m.
1526 NEW HAMPSHIRE AVENUE
Luncheon and Program \$30

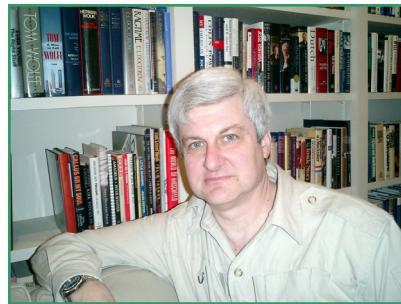


All of this is by way saying that I cannot conceive of many more important or potentially significant organizations than the ENGLISH-SPEAKING UNION. I take the Nation's Capital Branch and its mission very seriously. So I want to begin my tenure by thanking my predecessor John Andrews for suggesting that I consider succeeding him, and thanking the search committee and the Board, in turn, for taking my candidacy seriously. John has been my close friend and mentor for many years, and my own goal for ESU WASHINGTON is to build upon the solid foundation he has laid and the numerous alliances he has forged.

President Gerry Kauvar and I have had extensive discussions since my appointment was announced, and we are both eager to lead this institution to the next level and restore the influence and glory that are part of its august tradition. This means, we hope, more and increasingly more diverse programs, a greater amount of outreach, a higher level of funding, and a much bigger membership.

I'm sure you can anticipate the next sentence.

The only way this aspiration will be achieved is if each of us pitch in on a large scale. We can make ESU a prime component of our region's cultural scene, to our own benefit and to that of all the people we affect. But we have to want it. Otherwise we're just one of numerous competitors for the hours and dollars of a wide number of busy and oft-approached Washington residents. In this effort, Gerry wants to revitalize all of our committees — development, education, hospitality, programs, and so forth — and both of us urge you to volunteer for participation in any activity that interests you, and wherever you think you may be able to have an impact. I assure you, your involvement will be more than welcome.

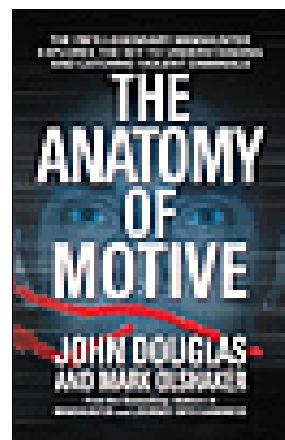


A Note from Mark Olshaker

In the fall of 1985 I happened to catch an episode of *The New Twilight Zone*. Being a huge fan of the Rod Serling original, as well as a friend and disciple of its late and justly revered creator, I didn't often bother with what struck me as exploitative knockoff. Yet this particular episode, entitled "Wordplay," left me chilled to my core, even though there wasn't an ounce of blood, or so much as a hint of the supernatural, anywhere in the show.

It concerned a businessman and family man played by Robert Klein, who, in the course of a normal week, gradually finds ordinary words replaced, one by one, with other words or sounds that make no sense. For example, as he goes off to work one morning he hears a neighbor call his cat an "encyclopedia"; then at the office he encounters a colleague who states that "You can't teach old dogs new trumpets." There are more and more of these oddities, and as the story progresses the protagonist becomes increasingly alienated from his surroundings, until eventually all he hears from anyone is gibberish. By the end even his wife is a stranger, and he himself is reduced to the status of a pre-verbal child, clutching in anguish his toddler's primer on the ABC's, though by now it's three other letters he'll be required to learn from scratch.

As I feel my way forward you can expect the occasional (or more frequent) misstep. For some time I expect to be asking more questions than I answer, and I will be calling John regularly. But gradually you should begin to see differences and changes in this newsletter, and perhaps even in the running of the branch. That is only natural. John and I are both professional writers by trade, each with his own unique style, and that in itself is one of the benefits of the supple language we all speak. I'm pretty sure I won't be able to make every program sound as enticing as John does, so each of them will be forced to stand solely on its own merits. If, with your help and guidance, I can live up to John's energy, passion, and enthusiasm, however, I think we'll soon be headed in the right direction.



So any ideas, critiques or suggestions you may have, let's hear them. And please bring your friends along with you. There may never have been a time in the ESU's rich and storied history when its mission was more vital than it is right now.



THE ENGLISH-SPEAKING UNION
OF THE UNITED STATES
Creating Global Understanding Through English
NATION'S CAPITAL BRANCH

Post Office Box 58068 Washington, DC 20037-8068

Since 1920, when it originated in response to a parallel organization that had been established two years earlier in Britain, the ENGLISH-SPEAKING UNION OF THE UNITED STATES has endeavored to foster social and cultural cohesion through the resources and traditions of a language that has become increasingly indispensable as a means of international communication. Through a diverse array of offerings, some of which are shared with audiences around the world through radio, TV, and the Internet, ESU WASHINGTON seeks to advance an exalted mission.

Churchill's Role in Iraq

To mark the 133rd anniversary of Sir Winston's birth, the WASHINGTON SOCIETY FOR CHURCHILL is hosting a dinner at 7:00 p.m. on Saturday, December 1, in the OLD EBBITT GRILL (675 15th Street NW). Entrées include chicken and salmon, and the speaker will be ROBERT ROSENBLATT, a former reporter for the *Los Angeles Times*. His topic will be "Present at the Creation: Churchill and Iraq." For details about this event, you should call Mrs. Doris Weisman at (703) 255-2579. To reserve space at \$70 per person, please send her a check by November 26, addressing it to 153 East Street NE, Vienna, VA 22180-3615.

Thanks for Your Generosity

Everyone associated with the ENGLISH-SPEAKING UNION is enormously grateful for your willingness to facilitate its offerings with your support. The ESU now girdles the planet, with a stately London address at DARTMOUTH HOUSE near Berkeley Square, and those who take part in any of its local, regional, and national communities are nourished by a vibrant global network.

In an effort to keep our members alert to the broader dimensions of the ENGLISH-SPEAKING UNION, we now offer everyone who affiliates with the ESU at the Contributor level or above a colorful periodical, *ESU NEWS*, which comes out six times a year from our international headquarters in Mayfair. If you're not yet receiving it but would like to do so, you may upgrade an existing membership or open a new one with a call to (202) 234-4602.

Through an enticing assortment of edifying events, and through such enterprises as an annual *SHAKESPEARE COMPETITION* for secondary-school students, a variety of *FELLOWSHIP AWARDS* to encourage substantive exploration in academic and artistic settings, and a volunteer-based tutoring service, *ENGLISH IN ACTION*, for those who aspire to better command of a tongue that is not native to them, ESU WASHINGTON is dedicated to extending a precious legacy. To help sustain this legacy, and to enjoy all the benefits of association with a vibrant international community, all you need to do is supply the information requested in the form to the right and submit it by post, phone, fax, or e-mail. Below are the ENGLISH-SPEAKING UNION's membership categories.

SUBSCRIBER (Individual \$75, Dual \$100)

Local and national ESU publications, e-mail notices about upcoming events, and full participation in every aspect of a global organization

CONTRIBUTOR (Individual \$125, Dual \$150)

All SUBSCRIBER-level benefits plus 1 coupon to be used at a regular ESU event (that is, one priced at \$40 or less), plus 6 issues a year of ESU NEWS from London

DONOR (\$250)

All CONTRIBUTOR-level benefits plus 2 additional coupons to be used at regular events and 1 coupon for a special occasion (that is, one priced at more than \$40)

BENEFACTOR (\$500)

All DONOR-level benefits plus 4 additional coupons for regular events, 1 more coupon for a special occasion, and recognition in print materials

PATRON (\$1,000)

Free admission for 2 persons to all regular events, 4 coupons for use at special occasions, and recognition in print materials

SPONSOR (\$2,500)

All PATRON-level benefits plus free admission for up to 4 additional guests at all ESU gatherings

Response Form

I wish to renew or enroll in the ENGLISH-SPEAKING UNION at the \$_____ level. I wish to make a tax-deductible donation to the ESU of \$_____ to support its educational and cultural endeavors. I've used the second address listing below for a holiday gift membership.

For December 4 ('Around Town'), please reserve space(s) at \$30.

For December 5 (Shashi Tharoor), please reserve space(s) at \$40.

For December 11 (Ivan March), please reserve space(s) at \$30.

For December 22 ('Yuletide'), please reserve space(s) at no charge.
Please accept \$_____ as an optional, fully tax-deductible donation.

For January 8 (Meryle Secrest), please reserve space(s) at \$30.

My check for \$_____ to the ENGLISH-SPEAKING UNION is enclosed.
Charge MC_Visa _____ (____ / ____).

Name _____

Address _____

City, State, Zip _____

Phone, Fax _____

E-Mail _____

Name _____

Address _____

City, State, Zip _____

Phone, E-Mail _____

Please visit us online, and check for calendar updates, at www.esuwdc.org