

THE ENGLISH SPEAKING UNION: Creating global understanding through English.

# *ESU-LA's Annual Christmas Party*



The Annual ESU Christmas Party, held December 8, 2007 marked the start of the Holiday Season. The party was again at the home of Dr. Janice Sharp & Mr. Dane Hoiberg.

The fifty guests who attended the event were treated to Champagne punch and assorted hot and cold appetizers (prepared by Board members) and a Roast Beef dinner catered by Annabel. An assortment of pastries completed the delicious meal.

The fabulous entertainment was provided by Rebecca Rasmussen and Eric Castro who sang Christmas Carols, both traditional and modern. They were accompanied by Dr. Richard Weiss on the piano. Eric delighted the crowd by returning later in the evening to sing a selection from "Carmen"

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**The English-Speaking  
Union  
Los Angeles Branch**

The Los Angeles Branch Newsletter is published three times a year. The English-Speaking Union, established by Royal Charter, is a non-profit corporation dedicated to:

*Creating global understanding  
through English.*

**Membership Information**

Individual, family and corporate membership is available. For membership information visit our web site at:

**www.esula.org**

or write to:

ESULA, P.O. Box 40313,  
Pasadena, CA 91114

or

rebecca.esu@earthlink.net

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Rebecca Rasmussen

## *President's Message*

*-Jean Bruce Poole*

Dear Members .

First I want to wish you a happy New Year and I hope that 2008 will be a wonderful year for you and yours!

Next I want to tell you that your Los Angeles Branch is about to print a new roster of members. The last one we had is already three years old and is very out of date. This means that we will go to press with the members currently on our books, so, if you have not become a member and responded to the request from New York (National Headquarters) we will not include your name, address and telephone number in the new roster. This sounds very hard-hearted, so if you have any questions, please feel free to call our Branch Coordinator Rebecca Rasmussen at 626-296-2206 to check on your status.

In addition to the listing of members, there will be an array of useful information in the booklet, such as the by-laws, a list of branches throughout the world, ESU Programs and benefits and so on. So, please check on when you last sent in your membership. We don't want to lose you!

Next summer we are hoping to have a visit from a delegation of students and professors from the ESU in Romania. Florina Niculescu , Chairman of the Romanian ESU is hoping to bring a group of about 40 from Romania to attend a Summer School Program offered by Woodbury University in Burbank in August. We are planning to honor them and celebrate their arrival in Southern California with a pool party and barbecue. More about that, later.

We are reprinting in this newsletter an address made by William Miller OBE on the "State of the Union" which provides some interesting insight on the results of the survey of the organization does by the Vantage Group last year, how some of their recommendations have been implemented and where we are today.

Many thanks to Janice Sharp who has produced such a sparkling newsletter.

# HAPPY

# NEW

# YEAR

## Sign-up for Upcoming Events

**February 23, 2008, 10:00 am** Marlborough School, 250 South Rossmore Ave., Los Angeles,  
**Shakespeare Competition Semifinals**

The English-Speaking Union's Shakespeare Competition is a curriculum-based program designed to help high school students develop their understanding of Shakespeare and their ability to communicate that understanding. Through the program, students study, memorize and interpret monologues and sonnets in three qualifying stages: at the school, community and national levels.

A box lunch will be available at the Semifinals for \$10. All are welcome to participate in this fun event.

To sign-up contact Los Angeles Branch Coordinator Rebecca Rasmussen at [rebecca.esu@earthlink.net](mailto:rebecca.esu@earthlink.net) or for more information visit [www.esula.org](http://www.esula.org).

**March 9, 2008 5:30 pm** Caltech Athanaeum, 551 S. Hill Ave., Pasadena, CA 91106  
**Shakespeare Competition Finals**

Invitations will be sent out soon for this event. For more information visit [www.esula.org](http://www.esula.org).

**April 19, 2008, Time and place to be announced**

**Evelyn Wrench speaker-Kate Adie OBE**

We look forward to hosting Kate Adie OBE as the Evelyn Wrench speaker in April 19, 2008.

As the BBC's chief news correspondent Adie became one of the best-known faces on television for her reporting from the major wars of recent years. They include the Gulf War, the conflicts in the former Yugoslavia, Albania, Rwanda, China and Sierra Leone.

Her coverage of the 1980 siege of the Iranian embassy brought her to prominence as one of the few women reporting difficult and dangerous stories at the time. Kate Adie became the BBC's chief news correspondent in 1989. She again came to the fore when covering the brutal suppression of the student uprising in Tiananmen Square.

Her work has won her an impressive array of awards and honorary degrees. Her honors include three RTS awards, the Bafta Richard Dimbleby Award, and the Broadcasting Press Guild's Award for Outstanding Contribution to Broadcasting. She was awarded an OBE in 1993.

Invitations will be sent out soon. For more information visit [www.esula.org](http://www.esula.org).

## FreeRice

FreeRice is a new website where you can take an English vocabulary test and earn rice for hungry people. An ingenious way to expand your knowledge of the English language while helping others. FreeRice is a sister site of the world poverty site, [Poverty.com](http://Poverty.com).

FreeRice has two goals:

- \* Provide English vocabulary to everyone for free;
- \* Help end world hunger by providing rice to hungry people for free.

This is made possible by the sponsors who advertise on this site. Whether you are the CEO of a large corporation or a street child in a poor country, improving your vocabulary can improve your life. It is a great investment in yourself. Perhaps even greater is the investment your donated rice makes in hungry human beings, enabling them to function and be productive. Somewhere in the world, a person is eating rice that you helped provide. You can check it out at: [www.freerice.com](http://www.freerice.com)

## The Newsletter Looks Great In Color...

You can see the newsletter in color by going to <http://esula.org> and opening a pdf file of the current, as well as past, newsletters. Of course, rather than receiving the black and white printed version you can ask Rebecca to send you the color Newsletter via email. That way you get the color version and save the ESU printing and mailing costs. If you no longer want to receive the black and white printed version (and only want the email version) contact Rebecca, our Branch Coordinator, at: [Rebecca.esu@earthlink.net](mailto:Rebecca.esu@earthlink.net).

## Thank You Geoffrey Shephard

Geoffrey Shephard has announced that due to personal reasons, he is resigning from the board of the ESU, effective January 1, 2008.

Geoffrey has served on the Board for seven years in various position including president, treasurer, secretary, regional chairman of the ESU--L.A. Branch.

Geoffrey's participation on the Board will be missed and we all wish him success in his new endeavors.

## 2007 ESU Annual Conference

The Annual Conference of the ESU of the United States was held October 31-November 4, 2007 in Richmond, Virginia. About 200 members attended the meeting representing branches of the ESU-US as well as members from ESU-Argentina; ESU-Austria; ESU-Canada; ESU-London; ESU-Mexico; ESU-New Delhi; ESU-Phillipines; ESU-Russia; ESU-UK; and ESU-Romania. Optional tours of Jamestown/Colonial Williamsburg and Richmond were offered before and after the main meeting.

Thursday November 1 morning was the ESU-US board meeting and Thursday afternoon focused on Shakespeare and featured sessions such as "Shakespeare And How To Cure It" at the Shakespeare Festival at Bolling Haxall House. A reception and welcome dinner were held in the evening.

Friday morning featured a Branch Presidents' Breakfast attended by our Branch President, Jean Bruce Poole, followed by the Annual General Meeting. Lunch featured a welcome and introduction of speakers by Tony Pelling, ESU Conference 2007 Chair, and Keynote Speaker Lord Watson, of Richmond, who spoke on "Jamestown and the Voyage of English." Friday afternoon was devoted to a Plenary Session and sessions on ESU Projects and Programs. Patron Reception and members Reception were held on Friday evening. The Receptions were followed by Dinner with an Official Virginia Welcome from L. Douglas Wilder, Mayor, City of Richmond and Virginia Indian Tribes Ceremonial Drummers. The dinner speaker were Chief Kenneth Adams of the Upper Mattaponi Tribe and Dr. James Kelly, Director of Museums, Virginia Historical Society who spoke on "Jamestown 1607, Quebec 1608 and Santa Fe 1609: Three North American Beginnings." The Los Angeles Branch received an award honoring the branch which attracted the most new members last year. Saturday Morning featured a Churchill Symposium organized by the Virginia Historical Society "Churchill and America." Saturday afternoon was an International Panel Discussion "The ESU and the English Language". Saturday evening featured a Reception and Gala Dinner. The welcome was given by Ambassador Ralph Bell, Executive Director of the World Affairs Council of Greater Richmond, and the Keynote Speaker was Dr. You Shaozhong, Minister of Education, Embassy of the Peoples Republic of China in the USA. Sunday featured a General Plenary Session before the close of the Conference. Invitations were issued to the 2008 World Members' Conference in Edinburgh, Scotland by The English Speaking Union of Scotland by Hon. Brian Monteith, Honary President and John Duncan, Director General.

## Letter to Branch Presidents From William R. Miller OBE

"I believe that the 30 of you who attended the 87th Annual Conference in Richmond will agree that it was top notch. It was a forward-looking, invigorating program that reaffirmed the ESU to be a viable, healthy national organization and part of a growing international network. Our colleagues in the Richmond Branch under the able leadership of its President Ellen LeCompte and Conference Chairman Tony Pelling are to be congratulated on an extraordinary accomplishment.

The programs of the Conference were intellectually engaging and embodied the pursuit of our mission. The International Panel Discussion, "The ESU and the English Language," moderated by ESU of the Commonwealth Director-General, Mrs. Valerie Mitchell OBE, and featuring speakers from ESUs in nine other countries, was a powerful reminder of the breadth of this organization we love. The Symposium on Winston Churchill was a profound exploration of his relationship with America by two distinguished scholars as

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### *Yes, I want to join the ESU*

Name(s): \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Fax: \_\_\_\_\_

Membership:  Individual: \$65.00  Couple: \$95.00  Branch Patron: \$200\*

\*Branch Patrons attend all regular programs at no additional charge. Some special events may not be included

I enclose my check made out to *The English Speaking Union* **OR**

I prefer to pay by credit card- Visa  Mastercard  American Express

Card #: \_\_\_\_\_ Exp. Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Name as it appears on the card: \_\_\_\_\_ Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Please mail your completed application to: ESULA, P.O. Box 40313, Pasadena, CA 91114

*Your membership dues may be tax deductible. Please contact your tax advisor.*



*Continued from Page 1*

Other entertainment included the traditional Raffle with many wonderful prizes including gifts donated by Board members and gift baskets donated by Los Angeles Turf Club at the Santa Anita Race Track and Ye Olde King's Head Pub in Santa Monica. We thank them all for their generosity.

We also thank Gillian Campbell for her generous donation of the spirits for mixed drinks, the Board members for their donation of the appetizers and, of course we thank Denise Nighman for putting together yet another great evening, enjoyed by all.



## ***International Events***

### ***ENGLISH, INDIA & GLOBALISATION. February 18–19, 2008***

Organized by The English-Speaking Union of the Commonwealth in collaboration with The British Council, The British Council, Delhi, India

Speakers will include: The British High Commissioner, Mr. Richard Stagg CMG; The Lord Watson of Richmond CBE, Chairman Emeritus of the ESU; The Rt. Hon. Lord Howell of Guildford; Mr. Rod Pryde, Director British Council, India; Mr. Patrick Spottiswoode, Director, Globe Education

Sessions and lectures will include discussions on "English and the Rise of India's Economy," "Introduction to Democracy and Economy," "India's Entrepreneurs," "English and Education in India," "English and Diplomacy," "The History of India" and "The Culture of Indian Democracy."

Panel Discussions will follow, including "An ESU For India" chaired by Mrs. Valerie Mitchell OBE, ESU Director-General. The final session will be on "Dialogue and Debate," and will include contributions from ESU Debators. The Conference will include receptions to be held at the British High Commission & The British Council. Cultural programs will include a tour of New Delhi "the crowded, colorful and unruly heart of India," a trip to the Taj Mahal, Agra, a visit to Ranthambore National Wildlife Park and a tour of Jaipur in Rajasthan. Rajasthan is said to be unequalled for its heritage, culture, safaris, sand dunes, lush green forests and wildlife.

Please note that the registration deadline for this conference is fast approaching! For information on programs, accommodations and tours and registration materials, please contact: Katie Brock, Head of International & Cultural Programs at The English-Speaking Union, Dartmouth House, 37 Charles Street, London W1J 5ED, Tel: 020 75291563, Fax: 020 7495 6108, Email: [katie\\_brock@esu.org](mailto:katie_brock@esu.org)

### ***GLOBALISATION & LANGUAGE -- UNITY IN DIVERSITY, May 20, 2008***

Organized by The English-Speaking Union of St. Petersburg, Russia, St. Petersburg State University, School of International Relations, St. Petersburg, Russia.

Speakers will include: Mr. Tony Brenton, Ambassador of the United Kingdom to the Russian Federation; The Lord Watson of Richmond CBE, Chairman Emeritus of the ESU; The Rt. Hon. Lord Robertson of Port Ellen KT GCMG; Professor Ludmila Verbitskaya, Rector of St. Petersburg State University.

Sessions and lectures will include discussions on "Cities of Globalization," "The Role of English as the Language of Globalization" and "Universities -- Agents of Globalization and Cultural Diversity."

Panel discussions will follow, to be chaired by Mrs. Valerie Mitchell OBE, ESU Director-General, and The Lord Watson of Richmond CBE, Chairman Emeritus of the ESU.

Pre-conference cultural programs will include visits to the Peter and Paul Fortress, the Hermitage Museum, Peterhof, the St. Petersburg Legislative Assembly (Mariinsky Palace), the British Consulate General and a Reception at the British Council.

For information on programs, accommodations and tours and registration materials, please contact: Katie Brock, Head of International & Cultural Programs at The English-Speaking Union, Dartmouth House, 37 Charles Street, London W1J 5ED  
Tel: 020 75291563; Fax: 020 7495 6108; Email: [katie\\_brock@esu.org](mailto:katie_brock@esu.org).

### ***ESU WORLD MEMBERS' CONFERENCE, EDINBURGH, SCOTLAND, "Creating an ESU for the Modern World." September 15 – 18, 2008***

Organized by The English-Speaking Union of Scotland, Assembly Rooms, Edinburgh, Scotland. Speakers will include: Sir John Bond, Chairman, Vodafone Group Plc; David Crystal OBE, Author, Editor and Professor of Linguistics at the University of Bangor; Sir Richard Billing Dearlove KCMG, OBE, former Chief of the Secret Intelligence Service; Sheila Dow, Professor and Director of the Stirling Centre for Economic Methodology at the University of Stirling; Jon Dye, Chairman, the Scottish National Committee of the ESU and Governor, ESU of the Commonwealth; Lord Hunt of Wirral MBE, Chairman, The English-Speaking Union; Sir Christopher Meyer KCMG, Chairman of the Press Complaints; Mrs. Valerie Mitchell OBE, Director-General, ESU of the Commonwealth and Secretary-General, ESU International Council; The Lord Watson of Richmond CBE, Chairman Emeritus of the ESU; Sir Robert Worcester KBE DL, Governor, ESU of the Commonwealth

Sessions and lectures planned include "Educational & Exchange Programs of the ESU," "ESU Activities with Young People," "Cultural Diversity within an International Organization," "Challenges facing the ESU: Membership, Funding, Resources, etc.," "Comparing Notes & Problem Solving: Current Activities & Challenges," "The Place of the ESU in the Modern World," "Raising Profile: Getting English Talked About, Not Just Talked." There will be several pre and post-conference tours of Edinburgh and Scotland available, including a golf day at the famous Dukes Course at St. Andrews and distillery visits. A group return cruise on the Queen Mary II for American ESU members, sailing on September 21, is also planned. (If you are interested in the Queen Mary sailing on September 21, 2008, contact [Carole@cloudninetvl.com](mailto:Carole@cloudninetvl.com)).

For information on programs, accommodations and tours and registration materials, please contact: [www.esuworld2008.org](http://www.esuworld2008.org) or go to "[https://www.travelodge.co.uk/find\\_a\\_hotel/hotel.php?hotel\\_id=353](https://www.travelodge.co.uk/find_a_hotel/hotel.php?hotel_id=353)" for travel and accommodation information.

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well as Churchill's granddaughter, the Hon. Celia Sandys. The presentations on Jamestown by historian Dr. James Kelly and The Lord Watson of Richmond CBE, who introduced his book, *Jamestown*.

The *Voyage of English*, was enlightening, putting our future global work into historic perspective. The Shakespeare Festival not only showcased the ESU's own connection with The Bard through our National Shakespeare Competition and British University Summer School Fellowships, but also included a thought provoking panel discussion and eleven youngsters from St. Petersburg Russia regaling us with sonnets and a scene from *Twelfth Night*.

The three plenary sessions that comprised the Annual General Meeting provided opportunities to hear from the Implementation Task Force on its recommendations, drawn from the organizational audit conducted last year; to consider changes to the National by-laws that would effect those recommendations; to elect new members to the National Board; to hear reports from the officers and committees; and, most importantly, to hold serious discussions. I opened the first session with some thoughts on the State of the [English-Speaking] Union, a copy of which I've enclosed with this letter. [attached to the newsletter as an Insert]

Concerning the Implementation Task Force, as I advised you in March, ESU President Emerita Doe Thornburg of Chicago convened the Implementation Task Force to analyze the report on the ESU organizational audit prepared by The Vantage Consulting Group. You'll recall that the report cited the ESU's enormous potential given the strong commitment and talent of its membership, its impressive collection of educational programs, its rich history and, judging by its Board's decision to undertake this audit in the first place, its willingness to adapt to changing realities. Major shortcomings that the consultants cited were inadequate communication throughout the organization and the need to draw upon the rich talent pool of members and leaders throughout the country. In their report to the AGM, the Task Force praised the ESU management for restructuring the staff to include a Deputy Director with a specific charge in communications and particularly communications to the Branches. They reported that they had presented to the Board, this past May, 12 recommendations for immediate action. Among these was the establishment of Standing Committees which would draw in members not only from the National Board but also from across the country. Seven of these committees were already in existence and include members from 20 Branches, but the Task Force recommended institutionalizing these and five others as permanent Standing Committees.

Concerning the National by-laws, during the summer, Board Member Leland Selby Esq. was asked to convene a committee to prepare amendments to the by-laws that would accommodate the Task Force recommendations approved by the Board. The committee's recommendations came before the first session of the Annual General Meeting. However, a motion from the floor proposed that no action be taken on the interim amendments until a comprehensive review of the by-laws could be undertaken. The motion farther noted that this review should include an opportunity for Branches to recommend changes for the by-law committee to consider in their review. This motion had considerable support from members present and a vote on this motion resulted in its approval. Judge David Williams of New Orleans, who had worked on the interim committee, had agreed prior to the conference to chair the permanent by-law committee and I have pledged to apprise Judge Williams of the sense of the meeting and to see that the comprehensive review proceeds in time for the amendments to be voted upon at the next Annual General Meeting which will take place in Edinburgh on September 15, 2008. I am enormously grateful to Mr. Selby for his initial work on the by-laws and to Judge Williams for agreeing to see it through.

Our new Treasurer, Hollister Sturges, reported on the finances of the year just completed, saying that the financials show a substantial increase in the financial health of the ESU nationally, total net assets having increased by approximately 10% largely due to favorable investment performance and the success of the Margaret Thatcher Lecture. A full copy of the audited figures is posted on the ESU website, [www.esuus.org](http://www.esuus.org).

Education Chairman George Ray reviewed the ESU's educational programs and reported on the charge to his committee to develop a public speaking project for the ESU of the US Membership Chairman Eileen Knollman reported on membership statistics for FY07 and outlined several membership-building initiatives.

Ruth Ann Willsey of the Tulsa Branch described the very successful workshop for teachers the Branch cosponsored with the Folger Shakespeare Library and Richard Biernacki, President of the Monmouth County Branch, outlined steps his Branch has taken to bring in new members.

While the Conference was a celebration of the past, specifically the founding of Jamestown and the importation of English to America, it was most definitely reflective of the ESU today, as we stand poised to reposition our programs and energies as English expands as a global language. The Conference reaffirmed the common commitment of the ESU's Branches and Board - and certainly this Chairman - to increasing global understanding through English, strengthening us as we look ahead. I am grateful to all of you for your personal commitment to this cause."

Sincerely,  
William R. Miller OBE  
Chairman Enclosure

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**SAVE THE DATE**

**February 23, 2008**  
**Shakespeare Competition Semifinals**  
 10:00 am, Marlborough School, Los Angeles

**March 1, 2008**  
**Theatrical Coaching Session for Shakespeare Competition Finalists**  
 Marlborough School, Los Angeles  
 1:00 p.m. - 3:00 p.m.

**March 9, 2008**  
**Shakespeare Competition Finals**  
 Caltech Athanaeum, 5:30 pm

**April 19, 2008**  
**Evelyn Wrench speaker-Kate Adie**  
 Time and place to be announced

**May 2-3, 2008**  
**Art of Teaching Shakespeare" Follow-Up Workshop**  
 May 2 at A Noise Within, Glendale.  
 May 3 at location TBD

**May, 2008**  
 Speaker, time and place to be announced

**July 7-18 (Tentative), 2008**  
**Shakespeare At the Huntington-Teacher's Workshop**  
 Huntington Library, San Marino

**July 18 (Tentative), 2008**  
**Teacher Reception**  
 Huntington Library, San Marino

**September, 2008**  
**Garden Party**  
 Time and place to be announced

**September, 2008**  
**World Members' Conference**  
 Edinburgh, Scotland

**November 9, 2008**  
**Guy Fawkes Night Celebration**  
 Time and place to be announced

**STATE OF THE UNION ADDRESS**  
**by**  
**William R. Miller OBE,**  
**Chairman to the Annual General Meeting of**  
**The English-Speaking Union of the United States**  
**Friday, November 2,2007**

Four years ago in the Reform Club in London, Tony Pelling presented an idea to me and to Lord Watson about marking the 400th Anniversary of the establishment of the first permanent colony in the New World in Jamestown, Virginia. Tony, who is a visionary leader here in the Richmond Branch and, I'm happy to say, also on the slate to be elected to our National Board this morning, reasoned that this anniversary, so important to the history of the United States, has a unique resonance for the English-Speaking Union. It was the first time that the English language traveled en masse beyond "that sceptered isle" - the beginning of a process that would be repeated over and over in the years to come and an exportation that would eventually take on a life of its own. To the point where it is now the common language of the global village and, to lift phrasing from Lord Watson's marvelous book *Jamestown: the Voyage of English*, it is spoken by more people as an acquired language than as a first language. But you'll hear more at lunch today.

This conference, though, whose potential Tony and Alan and (I like to think) I saw from the start, kept becoming more and more of an opportunity for the ESU of the United States to build on the momentum that the National Board set into place last year at this time in commissioning an organizational audit as part of strategic planning for the future.

This meeting, which was spawned to commemorate something about the past, became something very much about the future. In Hebrew there is an expression, *Dayenu*, which means "it would have been enough" and this describes what the combination of Tony Felling and Lord Watson could accomplish with this kind of gathering. But when Ellen LeCompt, our Secondary School Exchange Alumna and President of the Richmond Branch, entered the picture, the bar was raised considerably. From the beginning, all of us have seen this meeting as a watershed opportunity for our organization. The process begun in the analysis undertaken by the consultants we engaged last year was not intended to be an end in itself or a diagnosis of the status quo, but rather a chance for all of us in all sectors of the ESU to spend time thinking about how we ourselves see this organization; why we value it; what it can mean to this society; and what it has to do to get there.

The process of the Vantage consultancy included 64 interviews; visits to six Branch communities; consultations with focus groups in two Branches and group meetings in New York, two of the Branches and at the Annual Conference last year. The process itself generated thoughtful deliberation among all those engaged, not only on short term problems, issues and annoyances, but also on some of the bigger, more fundamental questions: Why does the ESU exist? What does it do? What are its values? And, how will the world be improved and changed if the ESU succeeds in what it has set out to do? The follow-up questions, of course, are: How do others see us? And how well do we tell our story? The Vantage written report to the National Board was distributed to all Branches this past spring. The report, while flawed in many ways, did serve to sketch some aspects of the blueprint that will chart the ESU of the future. A Board Task Force prioritized twelve recommendations from the report for immediate action which were approved by the Board in late May. You will hear more about these recommendations later in this meeting, and work on these has continued apace throughout the summer.

In addition to continuing with the process of strategic planning, the National organization has carried on pro-

grams and projects, many in partnership with the Branches, that have added to the luster of the ESU as a whole. You have seen a glimpse of our National Shakespeare Competition which, once again, was an inspirational undertaking and which, for the first time, can be seen on the internet; we mounted a splendid Margaret Thatcher Lecture featuring the CEO of AIG, Sir Martin Sullivan. Lady Thatcher told me this past summer how much she enjoyed the concept of the series named for her and the excellence of those who have delivered her lecture. Sir Martin's speech was superb and I would recommend that you read it in its entirety on our website. I personally made a small contribution to that internet posting by translating for the American readers several lines of Cockney rhyming slang that Sir Martin included in his speech. And in the line of showcase programs carried on, I would be remiss if I did not include the conferral of the Ambassador Book Awards this year. The winning authors, most of whom attended the award ceremony, spoke movingly of the power of the written word - so perfectly reflecting the mission of the ESU - and helped our ESU audience to remember the ambassadorial role that written English can play as we create global understanding through English.

So, in planning this meeting, we and the enormously talented team here in Richmond sought to celebrate our past and the past of this English; to showcase the work that we do; to remind ourselves of the lessons of leadership taught through the life of Winston Churchill, who called himself an English-Speaking Union; and to gaze into the future of this language and the English-Speaking Union of the United States which, as Chairman of the ESU's International Council, I am convinced is tied to the expansion of the ESU into more than 50 countries around the world. I believe that this aspect of the organization offers a dynamic that will hold huge potential for educational and cultural programming and for membership recruitment and retention. We are privileged to have representatives from nine ESU countries here with us to share their perspectives in this common work. You will hear about symposia being planned as well as a launch of a new ESU and, of course, of the World Members' Conference next September in Edinburgh.

A good number of our members attended ESU launches in Chile, Moldova and Mexico City over the past few years and we hope that the number of American members attending such launches will grow in the future. I was pleased that the President of our New Orleans Branch, Dr. Quinn Peeper, joined me and Alice Boyne in Tokyo last month for this year's International Council Meeting. That meeting, which coincided with the tenth anniversary of the ESU of Japan's National University Debating Competition, was an extraordinary example of what can be accomplished by the ESU to help the successor generation to master this language with a view toward its being a useful tool in international communication and understanding. After the meeting, I visited the Shanghai International University along with Valerie Mitchell and Lord Watson and was, of course, once again struck by the exponential growth of English, about which you will hear more from Dr. You tomorrow night. With the English language central to its mandate, the English-Speaking Union is inextricably connected to one of the most dynamic forces on the planet - this growth of English usage. To fail to exploit the opportunities which that growth can bring would be a monumental waste. We in the English-Speaking Union of the United States intend to use that energy to change the lives of people in this country and around the world by equipping them with this marvelous tool - the English language. This past year has been about positioning ourselves to do so and this meeting is about refocusing ourselves for the tasks ahead.