

## Highlights

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# The ELI Weekly

*The Weekly Newsletter of  
the English Language Institute  
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## Midterms

*No trip this week, folks!*

This coming weekend, Saturday, February 24<sup>th</sup>, there is no scheduled ELI trip. We have this break from trips because many ELI classes will be having Midterm Exams next week, and we want to give you plenty of time to study. Our next trip will be on Saturday, March 3<sup>rd</sup>, to **the I-75 Super Flea Market**. Details will be on the Activities Board and in next week's *Weekly*.

## Notes from the Office

- **Student Mail**—There is quite a bit of mail in the student mailbox. It's the smoke-colored (not black, as previously reported) tray immediately to the right of the door to the ELI Main Office, Room 315. Be sure to check from time to time to see if you have anything in!
- **Lost and found**—If you are missing any items, or if you find anything in the classroom that obviously belongs to someone, we do keep a lost and found box in the Main Office.
- **Class Attendance**—Remember, your attendance is very, very important. Your teachers are taking note of both your absences and your tardies in every class every day. Many students are already having some issues with absence; if you're not sure of your absences, you

should check with your teachers to make sure you're not going over the limits.

## Birthdays

The following are ELI Birthdays for the week of February 23-March 1:

Students:  
None this week!

Staff:  
February 26: Channelle Strammer

## Manners and Culture

*Q: Why are the books changed every semester? Who decides what books to use? If the teacher doesn't use the book, why do we have to buy it?*

A: Goodness! What an interesting bunch of questions. Well, Patti (our Assistant Director and Academic Coordinator) is the ultimate voice in choosing the books that we use. She gets reviews from the teachers each semester, and she also consults with Noreen for Listening/Speaking books and with me for Reading/Writing and Grammar books. We have to change the books every semester because there is often a chance that a student may repeat a level—this is particularly true at our

lowest and highest levels. Now, as to your last question...we do have to supplement books in most cases. It would be rather dull and uninteresting to use nothing but the book all the time in most classes. Teachers are, however, supposed to be using the books at least some on a regular basis.

*Q: Why is Thanksgiving Day so important to American people?*

A: Most cultures have their big family holidays, and this one is ours. In this country, with so many religions and cultures mixed together, Thanksgiving is the one true feast day which is simply American. It's just a day that's set aside to reflect on the good things in our lives. One doesn't have to belong to any one cultural group or religious background to enjoy it. This fact definitely shows up in our annual travel habits. More people fly, take trains or buses, or drive to be with family during this holiday than any other in the US. We even feel that it is important here at the ELI...every year, we have a Thanksgiving celebration with our ELI family, in which everyone brings some food to share, and we give thanks for all of our wonderful ELI friends.

*Q: Why isn't there a schedule or itinerary for student progression?*

A: There is. But it's based on what students are capable of producing and understanding...not on artificial time constraints or social promotion. Language learning is a process that requires hard work and dedication on the part of the student; sitting in class and saying that you've done that already does not mean anything if you can't apply it. We can't open your heads and pour in language or take a big hypodermic and inject you with language on some sort of schedule. You folks are human beings—not robots. There are no shortcuts.

*Q: How many international students study at UF?*

A: According to the UF International Center, exactly 3,921.

*Q: What is the traditional food in the US?*

A: This country is so large and diverse with so many cultural backgrounds and traditions that there really is no one single American food. Sure, fast food was started here, but that is only about 60 years old. We do have lots of regional cuisines. There is a tradition of wonderful seafood dishes in the Northeast, for example. In the South, we have lots of dishes that have been handed

down for generations; fried chicken is pretty much a southern invention. New Orleans, Texas, San Francisco, Chicago, and New York are all famous for certain dishes that combine old and new and some international traditions. One thread that does seem pretty common in American (and in most European) cuisine is that we do seem to eat a lot of bread with our meals.

The following are 2 very closely related questions with one answer:

*Q: Why do American people leave their families at 18?*

*Q: Why aren't American people close to their families?*

A: We are close to our families. It's just that our definitions of how to show it and the things that are important to us in how we live our lives are different from many other cultures. In the American psyche, one of the principal values held is a fierce devotion to independence and individuality. This is reflected, obviously, in how we conduct our lives once it's time to leave the nest. We have a drive and a need to establish ourselves as individual contributing members of society; this means, to many of us,

establishing an identity separate from our parents and from our siblings. This does not mean that we do not love these people—or that we don't want to spend time with them or be around them—just look at the airline schedules and prices on Thanksgiving (the biggest family holiday of the year). We talk to our families, share our thoughts and dreams and accomplishments, and generally have a good time with them. Just not all the time!

*Q: Why do the library people assume that you know everything about checking out books, using the computer, etc.?*

A: That's pretty much how our educational system works in general. People assume you know a lot unless you ask questions and tell them that you don't. The folks in the library are very glad to help you whenever you have any questions!

### Quote of the Week

Real integrity is doing the right thing, knowing that nobody's going to know whether you did it or not.

—Oprah Winfrey



**UF** UNIVERSITY of  
**FLORIDA**

English Language Institute

PO Box 117051

315 Norman Hall

Gainesville, FL 32611-7051, USA

Phone: (352) 392-2070

Fax: (352) 392-3744

Email: [StudyEnglish@eli.ufl.edu](mailto:StudyEnglish@eli.ufl.edu)

Webpage: [www.eli.ufl.edu](http://www.eli.ufl.edu)