

## Highlights

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# The ELI Weekly

*The Weekly Newsletter of  
the English Language Institute  
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## Paynes Prairie *Outdoor Fun*

Join us for a morning of walking through nature trails at Paynes Prairie Preserve State Park. The park is known for its outstanding wildlife viewing opportunities including bison, cracker horses and cattle, alligators, sand hill cranes, and over 270 bird species. The principal physical feature of the preserve is a 16,000 acre freshwater marsh/wet prairie.

**When:** Saturday, February 20<sup>th</sup>

**Where:** Meet at Norman Hall garage at 10:00am. The Language Assistants will drive you to the park.

**Bring:** \$2 for the entrance fee, comfortable shoes for walking the trails and a camera for taking pictures of the amazing wildlife!

## Notes from the Office

- **Spring Break and I-20s**  
Spring break is only two and a half weeks away! If you plan to leave the US *at all* during the break—even on a cruise or a day trip to Canada or Mexico—please remember to come to the office to have your I-20 signed so that you won't have trouble getting back into the country!

- **Student Mailbox**—Don't forget to check the student mailbox in the main office from time to time. There is mail for some returning students already.

## The Next Trip

Next weekend, we will be headed for **Wall Climbing at Lake Wauburg South** right here in Gainesville. Details will be on the Activities Board and in next week's *Weekly*.

## Birthdays

The following are ELI Birthdays for the week of February 19-25:

Students:  
February 23: Hamdan AlAmeri  
February 23: Ilane Silva  
February 24: Fahad Alghamdi

Staff:  
None this week!

## Manners and Culture

*Q: Other than scrambled, how can I order my eggs in a restaurant?*

A: Fried, sunny side up (not turned and yolk unbroken and liquid); fried, over easy (turned and lightly cooked on the yolk side); fried, over medium; fried, over hard; hard boiled; soft boiled; poached (broken open and cooked in a little bit of water); and various types of omelets.

*Q: Why is public transportation poor in most American cities?*

A: With the exception of the very large cities in the Northeast and Upper Midwest (which for the most part have excellent transportation systems), our cities are very young. They didn't really grow to be large until after the invention of the automobile. And in some cities that had streetcars at the turn of the 19<sup>th</sup> into the 20<sup>th</sup> century, it was actually cheaper to build roads than to maintain the streetcars at that time. So, our cities grew up around the use of the automobile, and the vast distances were easiest to cross by superhighway once that was established. Now, we are discovering the need to change the system!

*Q: I'm curious about commercials, I often see one brand compared with the other rival brand and they mention the exact rival brand name and I think kind of ignore them.*

*How it can be possible? Does anybody get upset about it?*

A: Quite possibly. But it's perfectly legal. The only rule within the law is that you can't make false or unproven claims about either your own product or the rival product. For example, you can say that in a blind taste test, your product was tastier than the other product—but you have to actually have the test results to back that claim up.

*Q: Why don't people here use an umbrella when it's raining?*

A: A lot of us do. Heck, I even bought an extra big one because this winter has been an unusually rainy one. However, there are a lot of optimists and forgetful people and people who just don't check the weather before they leave their homes. And, I'm sure there's even a small minority of people who simply like to get wet.

*Q: Is the rumor true that American girls don't like foreign guys?*

A: I don't know for sure from personal experience. I'm an American guy, so I can't quite put myself in either shoe. I can tell you, though, that over the 16 years I've been here at the ELI, I have seen American guys dating female ELI students, I have seen American girls dating male ELI students, and I've even seen a couple of examples of American guys dating male ELI students and of American girls and female ELI students dating. All of this is in addition to the many ELI students I've seen dating each other! So, I'd say from observation alone that it's just a rumor, or at least an incorrect overgeneralization.

## Grammar

*Q: Which one is correct, "It's me" or "It's I"? When I am knocking at the door, should I say "It's me" or "It's I"?*

A: This is one of my favorites. First of all, we would never, ever make the contraction with "I". It would be "It is I." However, this conundrum gets to the heart of what we call

**prescriptive** grammar vs. **descriptive** grammar and how silly the arguments can get.

The correct statement, according to the strict older rules of grammar, is "It is I." However, the vast majority of native speakers of English have abandoned that structure, in favor of "It's me." What this means is simply that it is an example of how language changes over time. The error eventually becomes the rule. Sure, you can say, "It is I." But you're going to sound like there's something wrong with you unless there's a very strict older grammar person on the other side of that door.

## Quote of the Week

We are the music makers. And we are the dreamers of dreams.

--Roald Dahl

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