

SEPTEMBER 6, 2008

THE ELI NEWSLETTER

ENGLISH LANGUAGE INSTITUTE AT FLORIDA INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITY

ELI's Masquerade Ball



STUDENT SPOTLIGHT

ABDULLAH ALKATHLAN AND MOHANNAD ALMOSA

Abdullah Alkathan and Mohannad Almosa, two Saudi Arabian students, who have been friends since middle school, arrive in the United States 5 months ago. They have shared with us a number of stories, anecdotes, and laughs from their mutual experiences in this country.

Although Abdullah and Mohannad arrived together in the United States, their recollection of the same events are told from very different perspectives. Abdullah describes his arrival to the United States as a smooth one: "The Saudi embassy made everything easier for us. They sent someone to pick us up at the airport. The next day they took us to the embassy, gave us informative lectures and important contact information." On the other hand, Mohannad clearly remembers the nuisance of waiting at the airport: "I waited at the airport for three hours to get through security. I didn't see a reason for that."

The culture shock continued on their first day at the English Language Institute. Abdullah and Mohannad agree that the greatest difference between the two cultures is being in a classroom with women for the first time. Abdullah shares his experience on the first day of class: "I had forgotten to bring a pen the first day. Seeing that the girl next to me (whose name I won't mention) had three pens on her desk, I kindly asked to borrow one. Even though she had two other pens to share, she said 'no'! For a moment, I was grateful that we didn't study with girls in Saudi Arabia. Later, I found out there was a miscommunication between us!" His opinion on co-ed classrooms has drastically changed, joking that it is "the best reason for perfect attendance." The custom of tipping in the United States can be confusing to anyone who comes from a culture where tipping doesn't even exist! At first, Mohannad was very confused by this practice and remembers an embarrassing scenario: "When I was in Washington D.C., a taxi driver got upset with me and I didn't understand why! I had no idea that I had to tip taxi drivers." Today, they get a good laugh at the many surprises they were *not* prepared for!

Abdullah and Mohannad traveled to the United States to improve their English and apply for Master's degree programs in their fields. Abdullah has a bachelor's degree in Electrical Engineering and Mohannad in Architecture. They are currently in the process of studying hard for the TOEFL, preparing for the GRE and researching the application process for their specific degree programs. Besides Abdullah's career goals, he also hopes to change any negative perceptions or misconceptions that people may have about Saudi Arabia.

Abdullah and Mohannad have come a long way over the past five months and are comfortably settled in their own house with two other housemates, Turkey (also from Saudi Arabia) and Hugo Adriaola from Chile. The four men claim to get along perfectly except for one thing: "The only disagreement we have is over the air-conditioning temperature," said both Abdullah and Mohannad. Abdullah and Mohannad joke about how each of them have a specific role in the house: "Hugo keeps us Saudi's from speaking Arabic and forces us to practice our English; he also speaks Spanish, which is useful in Miami. Turkey is the house's chef; if he doesn't cook, we will eat Dominoe's pizza for 2 weeks! I wash the dishes and am in charge of 'public relations'," says Abdullah. Mohannad is in charge of keeping the house clean and organized. Mohannad sees irony when he recalls how little he knew about chores upon his arrival: "The first time I was going to wash my clothes, I had to call my mom!"

Abdullah and Mohannad will complete their Master's degrees in the United States, but they will be returning to Saudi Arabia in September for Ramadan. They are both very excited to see their families and friends very soon.



Abdullah and Mohannad with friends from Saudi Arabia.



Mohannad and Abdullah with roommates Hugo and Turkey. They were each voted different superlatives by their fellow classmates.

South Beach:

The Holocaust Memorial, Miami Beach Botanical Garden & Lunch

The ELI students from level 4 conversation got to South Beach at 9:00am on Friday, August 8th to enjoy an out-of-the-classroom event. The majority of the students had never been to South Beach and were excited to see what the rave was all about. The itinerary was to visit The Holocaust Memorial. Many students learned new, yet horrifying, facts about the Holocaust. Many students were moved while others were shocked. All of them, however, paid their respects with silence as they walked through the memorial grounds.



After the class discussion, the day cheered up when Monica (from Italy) and Maria Elena (from Spain) shared the dance moves they had learned at FIU's Salsa night. They showed off their moves and event got other students to join them dancing while Cyd from Puerto Rico played music on her iPod. After a few laughs, they collectively decided that it was time to eat! The class walked to famous Lincoln Road and ate a Mediterranean lunch at Pasha's. Although the day was hot, it was a great learning experience for all.

After visiting the memorial, the class walked over to enjoy the vitality of Miami Beach Botanical Garden. While enjoying the breezy walk, the class settled in a gazebo to discuss the impressions that the Memorial left on each of them. Some students shared new facts, while others simply shared their emotions. One student from Japan, Tomoko, mentioned that she actually saw a more shocking site when she visited actual concentration camps in Germany.



Students' Responses:

What was your impression of the Holocaust Memorial?

"The mass murdering of approximately 6 million Jews during the Holocaust is a frightening thought. Whenever I learn about the Holocaust, visit a memorial or watch Schindler's List, I try to understand the pain and suffering of the Jewish people. I have never been able to fully comprehend "why" it all occurred. At the memorial, I learned more information reading the wall panels. I also felt an eerie sensation while looking at the black and white images on the walls."

-Romy Milla

What is your interpretation of the sculpture of Love and Anguish?

"The sculpture of Love and Anguish is the most important, yet shocking, part of the Holocaust Memorial. To me, it represents the beginning of new life and a new generation. When we can understand how terribly painful the Holocaust was to those who were victims, it gives me a sense of hope that it will never happen again."

-Marisol Rivera

IDIOMATIC EXPRESSIONS

COMPLETE THE IDIOMS WITH WORDS FROM THE WORD BANK.

WORD BANK

BLIND BUSY CLEAR CUNNING FRESH
LIGHT OLD QUIET SLIPPERY STUBBORN

AS _____ AS AN EEL.

AS _____ AS A BEE.

AS _____ AS A DAISY.

AS _____ AS A FEATHER.

AS _____ AS A BELL.

AS _____ AS A FOX.

AS _____ AS THE HILLS.

AS _____ AS A MULE.

AS _____ AS A BAT.

AS _____ AS A MOUSE.

Ask your teachers how to use
these other English idioms

KILL TWO BIRDS WITH ONE STONE

IT COSTS AN ARM AND A LEG

A FREUDIAN SLIP

A SOCIAL BUTTERFLY

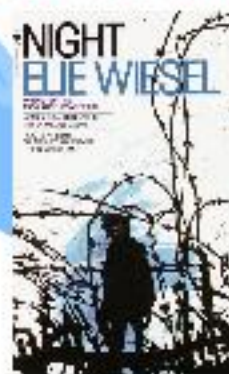
GIVE SOMEONE A TASTE OF THEIR OWN MEDICINE

ACTIVITIES

MAROOSH

On September 5th 2008, the ELI is going to Maroosh, a Mediterranean restaurant in Coral Gables that serves fine Mediterranean cuisine. There will also be a belly dancing show. We will meet at 8:00pm. Please sign-up in LC 204. Guests are welcomed.

BOOK RECOMMENDATION



MEMORABLE QUOTE

"An eye for an eye makes the whole world blind."
-Mahatma Gandhi

REMINDER

Scholarship Deadlines are approaching:
Applications: Due 3 weeks before end of term
Documentation: 2 weeks before end of term

Applications are available in LC 101.

AGREEMENT (BY SIGNING THIS FORM YOU AGREE TO BE ADMITTED TO THE ELI AND TO PARTICIPATE IN ALL ELI ACTIVITIES AND TO FOLLOW ALL ELI RULES AND REGULATIONS.



THE ELI NEWSLETTER IS A BI-WEEKLY PUBLICATION OF THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE INSTITUTE THAT UPDATES STUDENTS ON UPCOMING SOCIAL EVENTS, IMPORTANT DATES AND STUDENTS' WRITTEN WORK. IT ALLOWS ELI STUDENTS TO PARTICIPATE IN ITS PUBLICATION PROCESS. IT ALSO INCLUDES NEWS, TRIVIA, QUOTES, JOKES AND OTHER FUN ACTIVITIES.

YOU MAY E-MAIL SUGGESTIONS TO CRISTINA MARTINEZ AT NEWSLETTER.ELI.FIU@GMAIL.COM.

THE ELI NEWSLETTER IS PRODUCED BY ELI FACULTY MEMBER AND STUDENT ACTIVITIES COORDINATOR, CRISTINA MARTINEZ, AND APPOINTED ELI STUDENTS.