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CIES Nole News

The Weekly Publication for the FSU Center for Intensive English Studies



Groundhog Day is Ahead!

Seeing how much longer winter is going to last

If you look on a calendar for the first week of February, you'll notice that Tuesday February 2 is called Groundhog Day. This is a holiday that is well-known by Americans, but it is mostly a fun holiday.

A groundhog is a mammal that lives in the ground and is related to the squirrel. They are found in colder places, and they spend the winter months **hibernating**. People developed a **legend** over the years which said that groundhogs could predict the weather.

It is believed by many that if the groundhog emerges from the ground on February 2nd and sees his shadow, then there will be six more weeks of winter. However, if the groundhog doesn't see his shadow, then there will be an early spring!

Groundhogs do not live in Florida, but there are some towns in the northern part of the United States and Canada where the town will gather in the morning and watch a groundhog leave his hole in the ground. This is a tradition that dates back hundreds of years and is still celebrated by many.

Groundhog day isn't a very serious holiday, but it is a holiday that is

uniquely found in America and something that many children find fun. (Based on the recent **blizzards** and cold winter weather, the groundhog will probably predict six more weeks of winter this year!)

Getting to Know Angel Rios

As a student here at CIES, we know that it can be difficult for you to meet and get to know all of the teachers here. However, there is one person that almost every student knows, and that is Angel Rios. Angel is a very **demanding** teacher in the classroom, but outside of class he is willing to spend time with CIES students and be there as a friend and mentor for many. Unlike most other CIES teachers, Angel wasn't born in the continental United States; he's from Puerto Rico. Even though Puerto Rico is a part of the United States, Angel's first language is Spanish. He came to the United States while he was in school and he graduated from high school in Orlando. He first came to Tallahassee in 2001 as a Florida State student. Angel has many diverse interests, but he specialized in languages (English, French, and Spanish) as well as education. He worked for three years teaching advanced students at Rickards High School. Angel loved his time teaching high school, and he is still in contact with many of his former students. However, Angel admits that teaching high school was very challenging and

stressful at times. In 2004, he married his wife Christina, who is almost as crazy as he is. They have been through many adventures together, and you will sometimes see Christina at CIES events. Several years back Angel and Christina adopted three young boys. Their



children, Ethan (7), Lucas (6), and Elian (5) are growing up fast and are very, very, VERY energetic. "Having three boys that close in age is a challenge," Angel says, "but

I love every minute of it." Angel's kids come to many CIES events, and they love meeting new CIES students! (If you're the kind of student who is shy about speaking, Angel's kids will make you have a conversation with them!) Angel is the **glue** that holds CIES together, and he is in charge of myCIES, Blackboard, and he makes sure all the students get their schedules at the beginning of the session. Angel recently had a serious illness back in fall, and he was missed very much by everyone at CIES. He is an important part of our CIES family, and he was honored with the Phillip R. Fordyce teaching award back in December. If you don't know Angel yet, chances are you will very soon.

Nole News Proofreaders

A special thanks to both **Lisa McClellan** and **Sana Mcharek**. They read and edit every issue of the Nole News since the editor will often make many mistakes! 😊

Culture Question

Question: Is it ok to ask someone how old they are?

Answer: This is a challenging question. When people first meet, they often make **small talk**. Small talk is a great way to get to know someone, and it is also a good way to practice your English. Small talk topics include the weather, sports stories, jobs, and areas of study.

When talking to younger college-aged students, asking about age really isn't that important. Most people will not mind telling you how old they are. However, you would probably most often ask a college student 'what year are you' and they would respond with freshman (first year of college), sophomore (second

year), junior (third year), or senior (fourth year). Most Americans start college when they are 18, and they graduate when they are 22. Asking what year someone is in will help you figure out his or her age.

However, it is not a good idea to ask an older person this question. It is especially considered inappropriate to ask a woman her age. Americans will often learn manners lessons growing up, and one of the most important lessons is to "never ask a woman her age." This is true for many men as well. Some people don't like being reminded that they're getting older, so it is best to avoid the topic of age, especially if the person you're speaking with is older.

Language Question

Question: Is it ok to say the sentence: "I have been at CIES since two months ago?"

Answer: No. Although William Shakespeare and older English writers could use 'since' and 'ago' in the same sentence, this is something not found in modern English. 'Since' is used with the

present perfect tense, whereas 'ago' is used with the simple past.

Examples:

I have been at CIES since August.

(**present perfect**)

I arrived here five months ago. (**simple past**)

One useful hint. If your sentence contains both 'since' and 'ago', you can probably rewrite it using the preposition 'for.'

Examples: I have been at CIES since two months ago. (**INCORRECT**)

I have been at CIES for two months. (**CORRECT**)

Quote of the Week

Make the most of the best and the least of the worst.

- Robert Louis Stevenson

Center for Intensive English Studies

634 West Call Street

Tallahassee, FL 32306-1127

Phone: (850) 644-4797

Fax: (850) 644-7417

Email: cies@admin.fsu.edu

www.cies.fsu.edu

www.facebook.com/CIES.FSU

Nole News Editor: Andrew Wilson



strength. skill. character.

This week's vocabulary:

hibernate (verb) – to sleep for a long period of time (done by some animals during the winter)

legend (noun) – a story or belief that goes back many years (often an imaginary or fictional story)

blizzard (noun) – a bad storm with snow and lots of wind

demanding (adjective) – someone who expects people to do a lot of hard work

glue (noun) – a substance that is used to hold or bind things together

small talk (noun) – information conversation; talking in a non-serious way