Homeless Competition

**Contributor:** Matthew Rieger

**Informant:** Ryan Yohler

**Title:** Homeless Competition

**Semester:** Fall 2014

**Instructor:** John McDowell

**Consent:** Verbal - Provided

**Genre:** Joke – Inside Joke

**Text:**

MR: So tell me about that competition thing you have in the geology building?

RY: The homeless competition?

MR: Yea

RY: Uhh, well, we judge who is the most homeless at the end of the semester based on how you look and how much time you spent bumming around the building.

MR: How did it start?

RY: Well, a lot of the geology students have keys to the building and will pull a lot of all-nighters in the building when studying. So it developed into a joke that we were homeless trying to live in the geology building to study rocks. Then some of the professors got into it and it became a competition.

MR: Is there an award and who won?

RY: Not really, some years you get a rock like a geode. A professor won last year.

MR: What role does the joke serve the students do you think?

RY: Uhh I guess it’s just funny and provides an excuse to staying in that building for days.

MR: Thanks for letting me in on the joke.

RY: No problem.
Context:

Geology students have a large course load and require many hours of studying, because of this the department gives them all a key to the building in which they can come and go. Due to many of the students staying in the building for long hours into the night it became a joke that they were homeless.

Discussion:

The homeless competition provides the geology students an outlet to deal with the stress of studying for finals for their major. Due to the excessive amount of hours they have to spend inside the geology building this joke also provides a way to rationalize the time they spend. For example, “Oh yea I spent all of last night there competing for the homeless competition”, etc. This stress of finals and studying took on the symbolic form of an inside joke amongst the geology students and staff. It should also be noted that because the some professors are a part of the joke it will be passed down even when the current students have long since graduated.

Alha

Contributor: Matthew Rieger
Informant: Erik Bailey
Title: Alha Nickname
Semester: Fall 2014
Instructor: John McDowell
Consent: Verbal - Provided
Genre: Joke – Inside joke/Nickname

Text:
MR: Tell me about the time your friend misspelled that word on the bridge?

EB: Oh, yea, that one was pretty good. Uhh, well we were painting the bridge on Jordan near Read for a student organization on campus. He was painting on side of the bridge and was supposed to spell out the word “Alpha”. But for whatever reason he decided to do it backwards, like start with a then go to h, you know. So he completely missed p and no one noticed until he finished the entire word. He got so embarrassed he kinda had to walk off for a few mins before coming back. We all called him Alha that night and it just sorta stuck with him whenever we want to make fun of him for something. You want the picture?

MR: Oh yes definitely, and do you think the joke serves any purpose for him or yourself?

EB: I guess it’s just a way to make fun of him in a light manner. If he were to screw something up today for example I might say something like “oh nice one alha”.

MR: Cool thanks for telling me.

**Context:**

A student organization on campus was painting the bridge on North Jordan Ave near the office of admissions. Because the paint was permanent and red any misspellings or mistakes would be very apparent and hard to fix. One of the members made the unfortunate mistake of misspelling a simple word.

**Discussion:**

The nickname Alha provides the friends of the individual a way to make light of the situation without directly insulting the individual. It also provides this group of friends a way to reminisce about their experience and bond them as a group. Due to this event they can think back and remember their time together for many years to come. The stress of the mistake and embarrassment took on the symbolic form of a nickname as a way to deal with his mistake. It should be noted that the friends of the individual attributed his action with his new nickname thus making it a creative work of the group.
BG: One time, Purdue fans wanted to tell IU fans that they were number one. But they did not know how many fingers to hold up.

- 

MR: Hey, where did you hear that joke?

BG: I think my roommate told it to me a year back or so.

MR: Why did you tell it?

BG: I don’t know, it’s funny? We were making Purdue jokes and it’s the first one that came to mind.

Context:
A group of three friends were telling Purdue jokes while watching TV. They were on the topic of sports and IU before beginning to tell the jokes.

Discussion:
This Purdue joke provides students a way to bond and to feel a part of the Indiana University community through rivalry. Also, when a group of friends are taking turns telling jokes it provides each individual a way to feel accepted within the group. Apart from feeling individually
accepted it is also interesting to note that this joke is passed down from students to students and has existed in this form at Indiana University for some time. These types of rivalry jokes bring together Indiana University students by grouping IU students into one form as their university and demeaning their rivals which are also clumped as the collective identity of Purdue. It also provides students that have never met one another to interact by having the similarity of dislike for Purdue.

**Divorce Proceedings**

**Contributor:** Matthew Rieger

**Informant:** John Doe

**Title:** Divorce Proceedings

**Semester:** Fall 2014

**Instructor:** John McDowell

**Consent:** Not provided

**Genre:** Joke – Divorce Joke

**Text:**

JD: My wife got a divorce and split the house 50/50. She got the inside and I got the outside.

**Context:**

I overheard this joke in a lecture hall between a group of four friends. I was unable to hear the conversation preceding the joke. I unfortunately did not get the chance to interview the individual either.

**Discussion:**
I found this joke particularly interesting due to its origins from a student that was unlikely married or even divorced. Normally if this joke was told from someone married or divorced it provides a way to deal with the anxiety and stress of divorce proceedings and losing the individuals possessions. But because it came from a student it would not be dealing with this stress and the joke was likely told just to fit in with their group of friends by appearing funny. If I could have interviewed I would have asked what the joke provides the individual due to their likely lack of divorce status.