



# Psycho? Logical? Bulletin

THANKSGIVING EDITION

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## Survivor Round 2:

### It's Not *What* You Know, It's *Who* You Know...

Last month we asked our intrepid Survivor contestants to complete 20 incomplete sentences, buy us ice-cream, and be kind to people across campus. The TSSC has now evaluated their responses, and we have decided that one out of three isn't bad. Not surprisingly, the contestants focused on the incomplete sentences, and they were seen walking the halls of Baker with paper in hand and huddling together to share information. Word reached us that they even tried to hack into the TSSC's computer system. The prize for the winner? Immunity from eviction in the forthcoming month. Also at stake? Each contestant cast a vote to evict one person – who would be cast away to live on an island with Tom Hanks.

For starters, let's list some of the most amusing answers. Among the TSSC's favorite were "Psychology has 5 tough guys", "7 graduate students have a winning personality" as well as "7 Graduate Students have a weight problem", "2 assistant professors are boys", and finally, "23 committees in our department with super attitude!" As amusing as these were, they were not, as you might imagine, correct. For those of you who wish to know the "real" answers, they are below:

1. 5 Assistant Professors in the Psychology Department.
2. 3 Unisex Restrooms on the 3rd Floor of Baker Hall.
3. 3 Heads of Department since 1983.
4. 18 Stairs on the 3rd Floor.
5. 3 Faculty whose first name is David.
6. 2 Erins in the Graduate Program.
7. 4 Feet of Water in the Giant Eagle Auditorium after the Great Flood of 2004.
8. 7 Unmarried Faculty in the Department.
9. 56 Million buys a Business School at CMU.
10. 9 Departments in this College.
11. 2 Jims in Computer Support.
12. 23 Characters in our Web Site Address.
13. 2 Assistant Professors are British.
14. 41 is the total of the Department Reception Phone Number.
15. Psychology has 5 Training Grants.
16. 20 Books in the Display Case on the 3rd Floor.
17. 7 Grad Students have a Web Page.
18. 1 Job Opening for an Assistant Professor in Development Psychology.
19. 8 Faculty under 46.
20. 12 Psychology Survivors in the Survivor Challenge this Month.

The scores were variable but mostly impressive. Specifically, four people scored 20 out of 20. They are Brooke Feeney, Marlene Behrmann, Roxanne Thrush, and Elisabeth Ploran. To be completely honest, the TSSC wasn't expecting this outcome and hadn't thought of a tie-breaker. But we have now. What is it? **Come to the Department Party on December 8th to see it play out live.**

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# More on Psychology Survivor

## Now to the tough stuff.

The contestants each cast one vote for eviction – and it was clear that some alliances have formed over the last month. Surprisingly, students and faculty appear to have joined forces. If you're a contestant without an alliance, **beware: your days are numbered**. So, to the vote. A number of folks, including Brooke, Ken, Dara, and Roxanne all received one vote. Gary received two. However, one person was voted for eviction by 6 people. The reasons they gave included "because he recruited me for the Survivor Challenge," "because this contest is one small step along his path to world domination, and the tiniest little preventative measure I can take to make this world a safer place is good enough for me," and "because he lives in the coolest part of town." However, our favorite was "because the TSSC is forcing me to vote for someone, and he seems to be the strongest, most likely survivor in the competition. XXXX, just remember....it's only because you're the best - and if you need to seek vengeance, I'd like to direct you to the TSSC".

## So, who is the first contestant voted out of Survivor Baker Hall?

**Erik Thiessen**. You were perceived as the biggest threat and, as one contestant put it, "you are new". Our condolences go out to you Erik. Life is hard for Assistant Professors in Western Pennsylvania.

## Now to this month' challenge.

Below is a list of questions that **each contestant is required to complete by Dec 3rd**. There are no right or wrong answers; however, every answer provided must be the name of someone in the competition. As a reminder, their names are to the left – and you will notice a late entrant: Kathy Majors.

The questions are simple. Just give the name of the contestant that you think best fits the question, and send your answers to [are\\_you\\_the\\_psychology\\_survivor@hotmail.com](mailto:are_you_the_psychology_survivor@hotmail.com). Then, turn up to the Department Party to see the challenge continue live. Whoever wins the challenge will have immunity from the next vote, which will also happen at the party. It's going to be fun!!!

- Who is least likely to buy a Porsche?
- Who is most likely to wear the same underwear on two consecutive days?
- Who is most likely to vote for the Republican candidate at the 2008 election?
- Who is least likely to shop at Whole Foods?
- Who is least likely to talk to you in the 3rd floor corridor of Baker Hall?
- Who is most likely to leave Baker Hall to go home after 6 pm.
- Who is least likely to enjoy the movie "The Incredibles"
- Who is most likely to read the New York Times on a daily basis?
- Who is most likely to have a subscription to Playboy?
- Who is least likely to watch a Steeler's game?
- Who is most likely to get lost in Pittsburgh?
- Who is most likely to bungee jump?
- Who is most likely to pick up a hitchhiker?
- Who is most likely to finish off a large order of 'O' fries?
- Who is most likely to relocate to Tanzania?
- Who is least likely to have ever seen the inside of the Panther Hollow Inn?
- Who is most likely to try to avoid paying their taxes?
- Who is most likely to know how to knit?
- Who is most likely to consume more than 3 Starbucks beverages a day?
- Who is least likely to keep a bottle of 'spirits' in the file cabinet?

### Psychology Survivors

1. Beau Stephens
2. Brooke Feeny
3. Dara Stern
4. Edward Lemay
5. Elisabeth Ploran
6. Gary Lupyran
7. Ken Kotovsky
8. Marlene Behrmann
9. Nick Yeung
10. Roxanne Thrush
11. Shervin Bazmi
12. Kathy Majors

### Voted Out

1. Erik Thiessen

**Who Will be  
Next?**

# Department Holiday Party

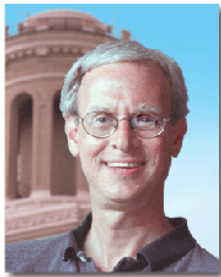
Wednesday, December 8

Department-wide Meeting,  
Giant Eagle Auditorium, 4:30-5:15

Reception, Survivor Challenge,  
Poster Presentations & Entertainment to follow in  
the Singleton Room, Roberts Hall



## Join Us in Congratulating Bob!

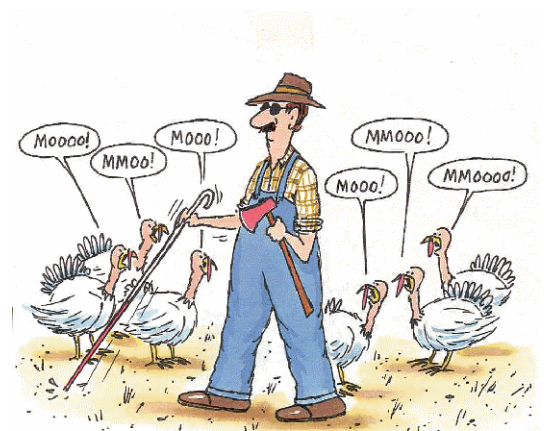


Robert Siegler, PhD, has been awarded APA's Distinguished Scientific Contribution Award for 2005. This award is given to only three researchers across all areas of psychology each year. Previous recipients of this award from the area of Cognitive Developmental Psychology include the likes of: Eleanor J. Gibson, PhD (1968), Jean Piaget, PhD (1969), John H. Flavell PhD (1984), Rochel Gelman, PhD (1995), and Elizabeth Spelke, PhD (2000). This award, which is APA's highest honor, has been made annually by the APA since 1956. Awards are traditionally presented at the annual APA Convention.

## Graduate Students Receive Simon Teaching Award!

Congratulations to  
**Steve Graham** who won the  
Herbert A. Simon Graduate Teaching  
Award 2003-2004 for distin-  
guished contribution to education in  
the Psychology Department and

Congratulations to **Erin Hahn**  
who won a Special Citation for  
Teaching Excellence 2003-2004!



# A Holiday Story From Dr. Cohen



A young man named John received a parrot as a gift. The parrot had a bad attitude and an even worse vocabulary. Every word out of the

bird's mouth was rude, obnoxious and laced with profanity. John tried and tried to change the bird's attitude by consistently saying only polite words, playing soft music and anything else he could think of to "clean up" the bird's vocabulary.

Finally, John was fed up and he yelled at the parrot. The parrot yelled back. John shook the parrot and the parrot got angrier and even ruder.

John, in desperation, threw up his hand, grabbed the bird and put him in the freezer. For a few minutes

the parrot squawked and kicked and screamed. Then suddenly there was total quiet. Not a peep was heard for over a minute.

Fearing that he'd hurt the parrot, John quickly opened the door to the freezer. The parrot calmly stepped out onto John's outstretched arms and said "I believe I may have offended you with my rude language and actions. I'm sincerely remorseful for my inappropriate transgressions and I fully intend to do everything I can to correct my rude and unforgivable behavior."

John was stunned at the change in the bird's attitude. As he was about to ask the parrot what had made such a dramatic change in his behavior, the bird continued, "May I ask what the turkey did?"



## Psychology Professor Moonlighting as Vinegar Pin-up?

You be the judge...

Photo credits: Kelly Sacco



??????

# Psychology Halloween



# First-Year Grads Get Creative with NSF: Funding Windfall Anticipated

**BACKGROUND:** As a “favor,” first-year grad Roxanne Thrush crafted this NSF Fellowship proposal for her fellow first-year colleague Jennifer Brace. And a new fall tradition is born...

Fate is perhaps the only non-scientific construct to which I allow myself to subscribe. What other explanation could be more feasible and appropriate to explain the force that has guided me along my tenuous path of earth-shattering research interests? Verily, I tell you, the plan of research I propose will change the world. You need only refer to my broader impacts essay to be reminded of the concrete, specific means I have limned for nourishing all the hungry children in the world, arresting the development of nuclear and biological weapons, rehabilitating petty drug offenders and mob bosses alike, preventing whales from ingesting freight-ship-spilled oil, and encouraging every Amazonian to hug, nee cling, to their precious botanical beauties (you know, trees) so that humanity can become good and responsible stewards of the earth. So you ask, how Jen – how will such Nobel-worthy feats be accomplished? I would argue that this is obsequiously obvious to even the most casual observer; yet for the benefit of my less astute audience members, I shall proceed to describe the nascent projects that will propel me along toward world peace, like being propelled into space via a colossal sling shot.

The key is face recognition. Objects are boring, inconsequential, a dime a dozen. But faces are the peace vehicles of the future. Essentially, it boils down to beauty. How can there be hate, anger, or irresponsibility in the face of such beauty, no pun intended.

(Well, okay, the pun was intended, but it was just too brilliant, don't you think? Oh, parenthetical comments don't count toward the evaluation of this essay). This epiphany struck me suddenly, like a swift slap to the face by a volatile soccer mom frustrated by her confinement to domesticity.

My interest bloomed upon exposure to my very first face. The ordinary population may be so unfortunate as to be unable to recall first distinguishing faces from objects, but this sacred moment was preserved for me, rather accidentally but nonetheless fortuitously, by overly solicitous parental figures. Mildly concerned with the possibility of inhaling germs, or “jiggers” as my parents scientifically termed them, my family and I wore gas masks at all times. This only became a problem socially when I exchanged my intellectually stimulating home school experience for the devastatingly shaming “education” known to the lay as “junior high school.” My gas mask eye lens fogged from cascades of flowing tears at the first separation from my only significant attachment figures. I could see nothing. This is akin to what we meteorologists call, “transubstanticountenancialism.” After bumping into hallway walls, falling through doorways ... chaos ... chaos and snide laughter swirling around me ... swirling and flooding into my soul through its empty windows ... crowding out the life force until all that was left was desperate desolation. Well, that is when I knew it was time. Time to remove the mask that shielded me from the personal oppressions of the harsh, cruel world about which my parents had warned me. If I was ever to save this cruel world from the devastating implications of its own evil, I first needed to face it.

You can just imagine my surprised delight to discover my very first mirror – and consequently my own face. Words cannot even begin to describe the beauty staring back at me. Saline droplets once again formed in my eyes; but these were of sheer ecstasy (not the drug, just the emotion). I remember thinking my face was simply the most beautiful perception I had ever experienced. My first research question, on which topic I have already presented a talk at the APA annual meeting, was: is the face a common feature to every human? More simply put and avoiding alienating psychological jargon, could it be the case that every human possessed these features – eyes, a nose, a mouth, cheekbones, eyebrows, etc.? Attesting to my inordinate psychological research prowess, I was able to confirm this hypothesis ( $p < .09$ ) within minutes of formulating my hypothesis. Indeed, everyone else in this school had a face. Perhaps the most interesting finding, however, was that none were as gorgeous as mine.

The results of this first study directly led to my current research proposal. Surely, and I believe Fodor would agree with me here, there must be a specific region of the brain for processing beautiful faces. It simply cannot be the case that a face as gorgeous as mine would be processed in the same structure as the faces of all the ugly people in the world. It just is not possible. So, although I have yet to locate and characterize this elusive structure, I have chosen to term it the Brace Face Area (C. Watson, 2004) ... in honor of myself. So essentially, my hypothesis is that the Brace Face Area exists. And my proposal is to test this. I am certain that I will be successful, so it is, therefore, the moral obligation of the National Science Foundation to fund my graduate education (and maybe throw in a few extra perks just for me – nothing extravagant of course; perhaps just along the lines of a new car, a pony, and a box of cracker jacks). My sincerest