

The following words and phrases are **BANISHED** and will be included on the **All-Time Dishonor List of Words Banished from the Queen's English for Mis-use, Over-use, or General Uselessness.**

# from the world of politics:

**Liberal** — Columnist **Bob Cudmore** of *The Record* in **Albany, NY**, recently wrote: "Banish liberal or at least have it declared an obscenity, which is what the word has become. It's probably better today to be called a Marxist, a Commie, a pinko, a fellow-traveler or a useful idiot...If liberal was deemed obscene by academics and dictionary-makers, maybe conservative talk show hosts, callers, commentators and politicians would be less likely to use the word...Perhaps then, instead of deploring an idea as liberal, conservative speakers would have to explain why they are against it."

**Family Values** — "The definition of 'family values' has come to mean anything that fits into the right-wing fundamentalists' agenda. If you don't fit into that narrow category, you don't have 'family values.'" **Michelle Barrerebec, Central Lake, Mich.**

**Mean-Spirited** — Do politicians know any other word to describe those with whom they disagree? **Rick Morrow, Sault Ste. Marie, Ont.**

**Embrace** — "Put this in the Tired Metaphor Category: The senator hopes his constituents will 'embrace' the idea." To what degree can we expect the physical (metaphorical) action? A mild hug? A gut-wrenching emotion? Enough already! I'm claustrophobic as it is!" **Tom Tucker, Grass Lake, Mich.**

# oxymorons:

**Slight Glitch**  
**Shawn J. Hunter, Heritage High School, Saginaw, Mich.**

**Target Audience** — "A delightful combination of oxymoron and mixed metaphor."  
**Leonard Wheat, Alexandria, Virginia**

**Pretty Bad** — (Or pretty ugly)  
**Nicole Crawford, St. Martin De Porres High School, Detroit, Mich.**

**Jumbo Shrimp** — The favorite nomination which seems to have escaped the list until this year.  
**Tanya Dugree, Kingsford High School, Kingsford, Mich.**

# redundancies:

**Vast Majority** — Another one which escaped banishment in years past. **Bill Bloemendaal, Holland, Mich.**

**No Parking at any Time** — Nominated by **George Drury** of **Milwaukee, Wisc.**, who gave special mention to "that Milwaukee favorite: Temporary No Parking Any Time."

# miscellaneous:

**I Feel Your Pain** — Where does it hurt?  
**Troy Voth, Great Lakes Adventist Academy, Cedar Lake, Mich.**

**Sudden Death** — "Used to describe a tie-breaking period in sporting events...but losing the "sudden death" contest is seldom fatal. Why not call it a sudden victory (loss) period?"  
**Tim Hall, Sault Ste. Marie, Mich.**

**To Die For** — "I love food, but 'to die for'?" If something is that good, shouldn't it be: "to live for?"  
**Lyn Satsky, Raleigh, N.C.**

**Humanitarian** — Overused in the news and elsewhere. "Two oxymorons showed up on the same prime-time news broadcast: humanitarian disaster and humanitarian tragedy. I suppose if you must have a disaster, a humanitarian one is the best kind."  
**Bill Fitzpatrick, Namaimo, B.C., Canada**  
(Editor's Note: We've also included "Humanitarian Aid" for its redundancy value. If one gives aid, that person is most likely to be a humanitarian.)

**My Plate is Full** — Meaning "I have a busy schedule." Variations include "I have enough on my plate," or "I have too much on my plate." So eat, already!  
**Ken Behrens, WJBC Radio, Rock Island, Ill.**

**Information Superhighway** — Where's my map? Can I pull over for directions? How about a bathroom stop? Are we there yet?  
**Peter Warner, CJOB Radio, Winnipeg, Man., Canada**

# percentage purists:

Several readers nominated expressions that misuse the word "percent":

**I'm 150 Percent Behind You** — "Perpetuates the greed so apparent in our society — 'completely' isn't enough!"  
**Linda Schwind, English Chair, St. Martin De Porres High School, Detroit, Mich.**

**Percent Pure** — Such as the claims made by certain advertisers about their products. "Either it's pure, or it isn't."  
**Wayne Montgomery, Goulais River, Ont., Canada**

# from the business reports:

**Soft** — "As in 'soft markets,' when describing a particular commodity with poor sales. Does this mean the steel market will be 'hard' when sales increase? Sounds as if the executives are trying to 'soften' the news to shareholders if you ask me."  
**Ron Bedford, Algoma Steel Ltd., Sault Ste. Marie, Ont.**

**Consumer Confidence** — Nominated by an exasperated **Charles Rufino** of **Dix Hills, N.Y.**

**Pushing the Envelope** — This one is enough to make stamps come unglued.  
**Listener of Peter Warner, CJOB**

**Medaled** — "The word 'medal' is a noun...but the misuse of this word by Olympic reporters has become even more common. In addition, I was stunned to learn from one of the Detroit sports reports that the USA athlete who 'medaled' in the downhill ski competition also 'silvered'. Perhaps the athlete was dipped in a large vat of silver compound for that winning metallic glow?"  
**Karen Gooze, Westland, Mich.**

**Given** — "Given the number of people who use 'given', I must give in after much give-and-take debate and request that we give the heave-ho to 'given' with respect to the 'given' usage, even though it may be a 'given' that some people will be 'given' a severe blow to their 'given' conversational styles."  
**Bob Tulloch, Sault Ste. Marie, Ont.**

**Warm Fuzzy Feeling** — "An expression used to describe a 'feel-good-about-everything-and-everybody' state of mind, but sounds more like the result of having swallowed a gerbil."  
**Michael McQuade, Sault Ste. Marie, Mich.**

**-Challenged** — "When referring to disabled people as 'physically-challenged' or others who don't fit into the homogeneous mold of 'average'. What's next? Why not classify short or tall people as 'vertically-challenged,' or refer to homeless people as 'habitat-challenged'? Let's provide warm hats for the 'follicly-challenged.' How about 'vocabulary-challenged' for the people who come up with these ridiculous euphemisms?"  
**Anonymous, Sault Ste. Marie, Mich.**

**Post-Consumer Products** — "I always wonder where these products come from: a post-mortem, perhaps?"  
**A. Kozlowicz, Dept. Chair, Roseville High School, Roseville, Mich.**  
(Also nominated were post-modern, post-feminist, post-pubescent, post-shave healer, post-Cold War, post-boomers, and 'the post-thing'. You get the idea: post is now post-use.)

**Po-mo** — **Michele Mooney** of **Los Angeles** sent us this abbreviation for post-modern from a dictionary of L.A.-speak. It's listed as a noun, with the following example: "That minimal is a **po-mo** mess." Honest. Michele sent us eight pages of examples which she had clipped from newspapers and magazines in L.A., where she says everything is referred to as either pre- or post-riots.

# from the schools:

One of the most-nominated words this year was "**sucks**," as in "this sucks," "that sucks," "someone or something sucks." Most of the nominations came from high school students and their teachers. Here are some of their comments:

"This X-rated personification has become the negative of choice among anal-retentives of the world. It must be crushed like the verbal plague it is."  
**Shawn Tooley, Daniel Cross (students) and A.T. Sutton (instructor) of Western High School, Parma, Mich.**

"Good profanity is becoming harder to find."  
**Anonymous high school teacher or student from Kalamazoo.**

"It is a lazy response," said **Rick Fowler, Boyne City High School English Teacher**. He said students seem to believe that all required subjects "suck."

**Nominations for the 1996 Banished list will be accepted anytime.**

**Send Nominations to: Public Relations Office Lake Superior State University Sault Ste. Marie, Michigan 49783**

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