

LAKE SUPERIOR STATE UNIVERSITY 1996 BANISHED 96

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.

CONTEMPORARY COLLECTION

Cyber- "Cyber-ANYTHING sets my teeth on edge. Writers try to outdo each other finding finishes or flourishes to the "C"-word."

— Michelle Mooney, Los Angeles.

(Michelle, a longtime follower of the Word Banishment effort, sent us a cyber-ton of newspaper clippings to prove her point. Among the cyber-coins: cyberia, cyberconcert, cyberspuds, cybertherapy, cyber mall, cybercommunity, cybernaut, cyberheaven, cybersea, cybersex, cyberpunk, and cyburbia.)

Online - "Where is the 'line' that everyone is on? It sounds like someplace a fish should be - not a computer user."

— Michelle Batterbee, Ellsworth, Mich.

Virtual Reality - "Is it, or isn't it?"

— Jean Barnard, Lake Orion, Mich.

O.D. ing on O.J.

In spite of the attention paid to the O.J. Simpson trial, only a handful of trial-related nominations were offered. Most of the submissions were the ones you would expect, including:

O.J. - for over-use.

— Billie Rae Bates, Detroit

(Many other readers expressed similar sentiments: "Just say NO J.")

The Race Card -

— Angela M. Otterbein, Bad Axe, Mich.

(Many nominations for Sidebar came from radio talk shows throughout the country.)

TOPPING THE CHARTS

Unplugged - "No other word has dominated the world of music to the extent that unplugged has. We've heard Nirvana unplugged, Mariah Carey unplugged, even KISS unplugged. The word has spread outside the music industry, too - ever see the Muppets unplugged? What about T.V. Bloopers unplugged? It's ubiquitous."

— Jeff Barak of Minneapolis, through Brian Oake's morning show on REV 105.

Revisit - "Please stop revisiting issues, ideas, statements, etc. How about revisiting Aunt Martha?"

— Jack Pollard, Lansing, Mich.

Your Call is Very Important to Us - "If my call was really important, there would be a real live person to answer the phone, and enough people on duty so one would not be left hanging on hold and functioning as an unpaid telephone operator."

— John Mertes, somewhere in "cyberspace."

Ethnic Cleansing - "Why not just plain murder?"

— James Blashill, LSSU professor and chairman of Criminal Justice & Fire Science.

Been There, Done That - *(Another entry from Blashill. "First of all, who cares? Been where? Done what? It is REALLY overused.")*

Alternative Music - "Is it truly a new concept, like jazz, pop, country, etc., or is it an alternative to something? Alternative to what?"

— Beverly Meyers, Pickford, Mich.

RUN WITH IT

Touch Base - "In baseball, base-touching with someone is invariably a BAD thing to do, whether with a teammate or an opposing player."

— F. Willard Brooks, somewhere in "cyberspace."
(Several others touched base with this nomination and want it struck out.)

IN CLOSING

Done Deal - Perhaps this qualifies for the redundant category as well as being overused: if it isn't a deal, it's not "done."

— Jack Z. DeLorean, Bloomfield Village, Mich.

More Bang for the Buck - "This one really grates on my spinal column. I just hate it."

— Eric Brooks, morning show producer at WEAT/WOLL Radio, West Palm Beach, Fla.

(Gee, how do you REALLY feel about it, Eric? We heard from others who "felt your pain.")

Closure - "To get closure." "To come to closure."

(Several nominations, including Toronto's Talk 640 AM radio and Pam Holmes, English teacher at Chelsea High School, Chelsea, Mich. - "What's wrong with saying 'finish' or 'decide'??")

On the same page - "I don't mind following the game rules, but can't I read a different book?"

— Norma Jean Acker, English teacher, Maple Valley H.S., Vermontville, Mich.

(Also nominated by listeners of David Newman's show on WXYT, Detroit.)

Absolutely! - Instead of just saying, "yes."

(Ronald Donoghue of Farmington Hills, Mich., said it had its origins of overuse in the film "Rocky." "Absolutely!" is another favorite nomination of WXYT listeners.)

THE BUSINESS REPORT

Grow -

(We heard from the educators on this one, including:)

They're weary of hearing how to "grow an economy" or "grow their employees."

— English Dept. Chairman Doug Cartwright, Goshen H.S., Goshen, Ind., and Tim Clancy, Ishpeming H.S., Ishpeming, Mich.

"I'm not bothered by an inanimate growee as the subject of a sentence: 'The economy grows.' Nor, of course, am I bothered by a direct object which is living: 'We grow corn.'"

— Mary Schwark, Spanish instructor at Henry Ford Community College, Dearborn, Mich.

(None said they could grow an ironclad case for misuse, but all voted in favor of overuse.)

Upscale - Examples of its overuse:

"upscale homes," "upscale villages," "upscale, rural neighborhoods," even "upscale soft drinks"

— Nancy Fletcher, Oscoda, Mich.

"It's an old, overused, 1980s yuppie expression."

"What's the opposite of upscale? Downscale?"

— David DeVries, Kalamazoo.

Robust - "Please accept my nomination, due to abuse and overuse, the word 'robust' (in the auto industry, only)."

— Rob Robinson, Livonia, Mich.

(Rob pulled nine references to 'robust processes,' 'robust materials,' and 'robust packaging,' from the first 13 pages of the Ford Automotive Operations MS-9000 requirements.)

'Robust' is used too often to describe various designs.

— Carlos Altgelt, Dearborn Hghts, Mich.

Lightweighting - "Driving forces within the automotive industry that continue to favor plastics, include: Lightweighting."

— LSSU alumnus Ron Bishop, Lowell, Mich.

(Ron discovered the word as it was used in the June 1995 issue of Plastics World magazine, by the way...congratulations, Ron. You were the first person to use 'cyberspace' to submit a nomination.)

HUH?

De-water - "For generations the term 'to bail' has been universally understood. But Washington's word merchants have recalled bailing. Official U.S. Coast Guard documents replaced the time-honored term with 'de-watering.' Quick! Don your Personal Flotation Device (what we used to call a life vest) and, as the publication directs, grab a de-watering device and start de-watering our sinking ship. Our de-deaths depend upon it!"

— John E. Bates, Jr., Warren, Mich.

Frankly - *(From folks who are paying close attention to Newt Gingrich's speeches. They nominated frankly as overused by the Speaker of the House.)*

Gingrich used "frankly" 12 times in a late November speech.

— Margaret DeChant, Boca Raton, Fl.

Mission/Vision Statements: "Many companies are wasting incredible amounts of time and effort (and sometimes cash) to define these, with no noticeable benefit."

— Meir Pann, Miami Springs, Fla.

REDUNDANCIES

Each and every one of you - "...From the speeches of silver-tongued speakers who have nothing to say, yet insist on saying all of it, and more!"

— Dr. Steve Person, LSSU biology professor.

Armed and Dangerous - (When referring to a criminal at-large, perhaps the term should be: "Armed and MORE Dangerous.")

— Dennis Srednicki, Novi, MI.

OXYMORONS

Common sense - "If it's so common, why doesn't everyone have it?"

— AP English Class, Maple Valley High School, Vermontville, Mich.

Peacekeeping Force - "A truly Orwellian juxtaposition of words. They call it terrorism when perpetrated by freelance criminals."

— Tony Pivetta, Royal Oak, Mich.

Clean Fill Dirt -

— Joyce Hennon, teacher, Michigan School for the Deaf, Flint, Mich.

(Finally, a note to the student at Bethesda Christian School, Warren, Michigan who asked us to banish "homework." Sorry, pal. We had to do it. So do you.)

Nominations for the 1997
Banished list
will be accepted anytime.

Send Nominations to:
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