

BANISHED

1991

The following words and phrases were BANISHED and included in toto and en masse on the All-Time Dishonor List of Words Banished from the Queen's English for Mis-, Mal- or Over-Use, as well as General Uselessness.

OXYMORONS

Faux pearls or diamonds: "with a certificate of authenticity."

—Marie Pooler
Aurora, Colorado

Partial release: "perhaps a leak?" From a news clipping: "Several members of the Muskegon County Friend of the Court said they were 'upset' by Thursday's partial release of a state report on the office's operations."

—Amelda Boulton "The Writers"
Muskegon, Michigan

SPORTSTALK

"Not every sportscaster is Dizzy Dean, so please help me understand 'former first-round draft choice.'"

—Abelardo J. Massa
New Orleans, Louisiana

REDUNDANCIES

Two twins: "I am a twin, and when people see my sister and me (not 'myself') they say, 'Look at the two twins.' Ugh! Two twins amount to four people."

—Shirlee G. Vale
Metairie, Louisiana

False Pretenses

—Don Gottschalk
Springfield, Illinois

End Result

—M.P. Clark
Cincinnati, Ohio

Actual facts

The honest truth

—H.P. Gouge
Coolbinia, Australia

Non-Essential Government Workers

—Michelle Mooney
Los Angeles, California

SIGNS OF THE TIMES

Mouth-watering prices: "Gosh, even the prices are mouth-watering!"

Apartments Now Renting: "If apartments can rent, why hire managers?"

—Nell Gaball
Marquette, Michigan

Up to over half off: From an advertisement in an office furniture catalog. "Huh?"

—Jessica Stanaway
Brimley, Michigan

Center median: "as in, 'The snow is causing cars to slide into the center median.' Where else could the median be?"

—Lucinda Gangler
Durand, Michigan

NON-SENSE

Senseless: when used in "senseless violence, senseless killing and senseless vandalism. I suppose it's O.K. to drop the senseless when Rambo is doing it in the name of God, country, mother and Old Glory."

—Frank G. Nolte
Lincoln Park, Michigan

BUREAUCRAP

In a letter from Comsearch in Reston, Virginia, to Lake Superior State University's Information Services Department:

"Dear Client: Frequency protection studies of your private operational fixed microwave facilities during the month of November, 1989, found no changes or modifications to any private operational fixed system within the contours of your facilities. No cases of potential interference remain outstanding from previous months." (Editor: We'll take your words for it.)

Several entries below from Jeff Fox, managing editor of *The Mesabi Daily News*, Virginia, Minnesota:

Proactive: "...a popular non-word among bureaucrats and other officials...It seems that budget and other constraints over the past few years have forced...public agencies into a reactive mode, which apparently is to be abhorred and avoided at all costs. So officials who see themselves as taking the reins of power and boldly charging into the future insist they are taking a proactive stance." (Editor: Public employees are no longer assumed to be active. Shadow employees, who have been hired to replace the actively absent-minded, rather than the absent, may be considered "pro-active," in the sense that shadow employees actually work.)

Zero-percent increase: instead of budget or wage-freeze.

Unrequested leave of absence: instead of lay-off.

"The reigning fat-copy champion: 'On a basis.' The board meets on a weekly basis. We should review this program on a regular basis. This proposal should be examined on a financial basis. What ever happened to: The board meets once a week. We should review this program regularly. We need to figure out what this idea will cost.' It's enough to set a copy editor's teeth on edge, but it's gaining wider and wider use."

Negative Supplement: "Our wizards in Lansing (Michigan) no longer find it necessary to issue Executive Order cuts to balance the state budget. We are now subject instead to 'negative supplements.' A rose by any other name..."

—Larry McConnell
Sturgis, Michigan

Budget/Deficit Reduction Plan: "Get real! The only folks with wallets big enough to tackle America's deficit are Japanese bankers. We all know how fat their wallets are from the interest alone! Add in new pork-barrel spending programs attached by Congress and what you've really got is a black hole/economic collapse/drag-down plan."

—Nick Sawyer
Escanaba, Michigan

Address: "It's political doubletalk, as in 'We must address that problem.' Perhaps something would actually get done if people would identify, analyze and resolve problems, not just say 'howdy' to them."

—Jack Dietrich
Albuquerque, New Mexico

"Please close the **Window of Opportunity**." (Editor: It's cold.)

—Margaret DeChant
Newberry, Michigan

URGENT ACTION IMPERATIVE

Myself:

The misuse of this reflexive pronoun has been nominated for more than a decade and was banned in 1990. "Please see Mr. Keating (Lincoln Savings and Loan) or myself for any large unsecured loan that you need," should be "see Charles Keating Jr. or me." What's the dodge behind the overuse of myself? The diminishment of personal responsibility? Avoidance of incrimination by self-indulgence?

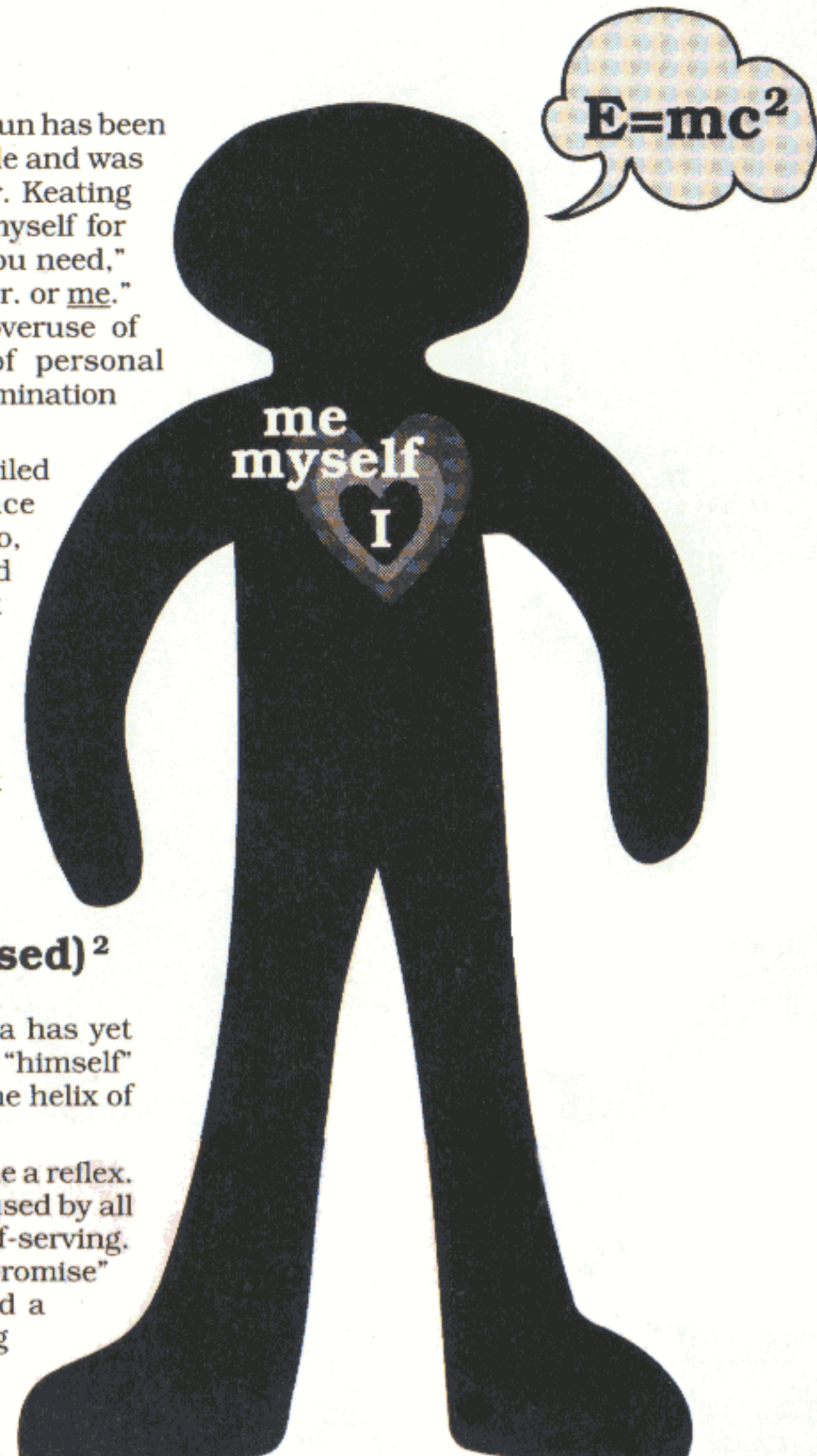
The 1990 worldwide censure failed miserably. Empirical evidence gathered from the press, radio, television (including C-Span) and eavesdropping suggests that myself is disproportionately displacing me in routine usage.

The displacement ration is estimated at 5000:1, and may be expressed, and recalled, if not entirely understood, as $E=mc^2$.

**E (big Error) =
m (me) c (compromised) ²**

Although no comparable formula has yet been developed, "yourself" and "himself" are fast following "myself" into the helix of misuse.

The reflexive pronoun has become a reflex. It appears to be overused or misused by all those who fear being labeled self-serving. It should be termed the "compromise" pronoun. It may also be termed a "refuge pronoun" for those seeking to avoid personal responsibility and any form of accountability and prosecution.



PHRASES THAT FAZE US

Mopping-Up Operation: To refer to a military action. "This is far too friendly a description for a situation where people are being shot. Please eliminate it before we start 'mopping up' in the Middle East." (Editor: What's around to mop after the battle? Can you mop-up sand?)

—Rick Duerson
Escanaba, Michigan

Track record: "When the meaning is simply 'record,' but people evidently want to add some sporting fillip to what they're saying. We hear banks bragging of their 'track record' when they have not (one hopes) been close to the horse game and certainly have not been doing the 400-meter hurdles."

—Glenn O. Brown
Austin, Texas

If you will: "A most painful, ear-splitting speech affectation. A day does not pass without hearing it at least a dozen times from every politician, government official, talk show host, newscaster, sportscaster, interviewer, interviewee and pseudo-intellectual." (Editor: "If you will" may replace "In God We Trust" as the motto for our "kinder, gentler" and secularized nation.)

—Adam E. Klafra
San Diego, California

Longer hours: "Users of this phrase mean 'more hours', not longer hours. This is a clear corruption of language and logic." (Editor: A longer hour may be 63 minutes. Watch out, workers.)

—Marty Bloom
La Jolla, California

Multidisciplinary Current Awareness Product: In a news release advertising a research journal from the Institute for Scientific Information, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

—Anne Woiwode
Lansing, Michigan

Self Storage: From an advertisement selling "self storage" bins with "solid walls and cement floors." "How many people want to store themselves? Especially in a room with solid walls and a cement floor! It's nice to get away from it all, but this is going too far." (Editor: Maybe self-storage should refer to a cemetery, a locked and padded room, or a nice urn of ashes for the day room?)

—Marion Boyer
Sault Ste. Marie, Michigan

Creative Differences: "Hollywoodspeak for 'We hated each other's guts.'"

—Dale M. Johnson
Cincinnati, Ohio

Realtors' Vocabulary: **Step-Saving Kitchen** - Too small in which to turn around.

Pond Site - Swamp area.

Lower Level - Basement.

Close to Everything - In the middle of a commercial area.

Handy-Man Special - Condemned.

Recently decorated - Water stains on basement wall have been painted.

—John T. Brown
Mansfield, Ohio

ARGOT IN DISTRESS

Rocket Scientist: New cliché. "He's no rocket scientist." (means he's unintelligent) or "You don't have to be a rocket scientist to use this cordless screwdriver."

—Dan Sweeney
Sault Ste. Marie, Michigan

"We can send a man to the moon, but we can't..." (Editor: "...all be rocket scientists.")

—Joe Sachetti
Iron Mountain, Michigan

Parenting and Parenting Skills: "Parent is a noun overworked as a verb." (Editor: Parenting: We don't have the time to actually become nouns, i.e. parents, so we create a handy gerund - which is parent-thetical! Parenting Skills: A lack of which means "can't figure out how to use the two pieces of tape on a disposable diaper.")

—Samuel E. Burgess
Sault Ste. Marie, Michigan

Dead meat: "About as annihilated as you can get." (Editor: Meat means edible flesh. Only cannibals are known to find fresh flesh to be edible. We don't have dead meatballs or dead meat loaf, and the supermarkets don't advertise their "dead meat department.")

Scenario (reissued): "Sink the U.S.S. Scenario" (Editor: Launch the U.S.S. Plan, Plot, Connivance, Conspiracy, Outline, Design, Proposal, Model, Scheme, Stratagem, Blueprint, Enterprise...)

—Margaret DeChant
Newberry, Michigan

Venue: "A venue is the county or locality in which a legal action occurs or a crime is committed. It is not 'an NFL stadium,' as in 'The Superdome is the venue for next Sunday's game.'"

—George Constable
Mansfield, Ohio

Choreography: (for planning, rather than dancing.)

Cut a deal

Cast in anything (stone, steel).

—Wilbur T. Scrivnor
Muskegon, Michigan