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LAKE SUPERIOR STATE UNIVERSITY

OFFICE OF PUBLIC RELATIONS • SAULT STE. MARIE, MICHIGAN 49783

The following words and phrases are 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.

Banished 1992

Viable Alternative: "This phrase is banned for overuse, resulting in uselessness. The principal meaning of viable is biological: 'capable of living.' It has evolved to mean capable of actualization, hence practicable. But its overuse is judged to have degenerated from biological precision to banality. Terminate its viability."

Whenever a politician, educator, coach, or policy analyst cannot explain the status quo, he claims to be seeking one or more "viable alternatives."

Few of these alternatives ever come into being. Everyone is seeking; no one is finding. Alternatives never materialize. Specify the alternatives being considered.

Come on, Anglophones, give your alternatives names. Don't lump or hide them under "viable."

—Prof. Justin Agony
Sault Ste. Marie, Mich.

Angst: "The former hit TV show 'thirtysomething' convinced half of the U.S. population that they are victims of 'angst' or just 'angst-ridden.' Enough with the ANGST already. It's making me anxious. Get rid of it. And banish the variations on the theme 'thirtysomething' while you're at it. I'm tired of 'fortysomething,' 'teenagesomething' and 'angstsomething.' 'Somethingsomething' has to give."

—Tom Rademacher
Grand Rapids, Mich.

The apostrophe: "Get rid of it. Ban it. No one knows how to use it. It is a possessive code mark, not an expression or a word. You cannot purchase 24's of Apple Crisp or 12's of your favorite cold capsule. There are no do's; there are don'ts. There are no MD's with special training, nor are there CD's all in one case. Clothiers do not sell sock's, nor do jewelers deal in 1000's of items. You might as well banish the apostrophe. Too few Americans have the slightest idea how to use one."

Surrounding Environs: "which is a pale redundancy when compared 'to return back again,' which I have heard uttered on radio and TV broadcasts."

—Michelle Mooney
Los Angeles, Calif.

Deaccessioning: As in art work being "deaccessioned." This is evidently considered a more-tasteful term than "dumped."

—Gene J. Gilmore
Grand Rapids, Mich.

Sanction when we mean restriction;

Oversight when we mean supervise or monitor;

Bottom Line, for terminal overuse.

—Sheridan Baker
Ann Arbor, Mich.

"Up Front ought to be banned, as in 'let's be up front about this.' It makes me want to upthrow."

Connect or Hook Up: "I'll connect or hook up with you later," and "Thanks for connecting (or hooking up) with me." Good Lord, don't tell my wife that we "connected."

—J. Gregory Winn
St. Paul, Minn.

Arguably should be banished as overused.

—Norman W. Larson
St. Paul, Minn.

(Ed.: We're reasonably supportive of this banishment as in "Bubba is arguably the worst place-kicker in the NFL.")

"Deproliferation needs to go. It isn't in any dictionary I've perused. Yet it is a part of day-in, day-out language."

—Lisse Hill
Ypsilanti, Mich.

Out-placement (a euphemism for fired); Talk to Real Live Girls on 900-... (Would you talk to dead girls?); Done Deal: Is that anything like a dead lock?

Customer Capital-Reduction Plan: It means downpayment. Why not leave it at that? The only reduction is to your bank account.

—Nell Gaball
Marquette, Mich.

"In my humble opinion" should be banished because it makes me feel abused, amused, misused, confused, suspicious, and nauseous."

—Joan Niederhofer
Frankfort, Mich.

Overview: "Wouldn't summary or commentary be better?"

—M. June Dohse
Anchorage, Alaska

Apparent: as in "he died of an apparent heart attack." It's "he apparently died of a heart attack." (Ed.: If the attack were apparent, someone should have noticed.)

—Harry Shecter, M.D.
Farmington Hills, Mich.

Big Time: "as in 'He's doing cocaine big time.' If he is, he's liable to be doing time big time." (Ed.: In the big house!)

Quality: when used to denote ice cream, time, or merchandise of any kind. "Quality has none anymore because it's associated with everything from groceries to services, and most of the time falls far short of quality." (Ed.: This qualifies!)

Condition: as in a "heart condition." What does that mean? (Ed.: We hope, hearts are in good condition.)

Positive to mean good.
Negative to mean bad.

—Edward X. Tuttle
Southfield, Mich.

Fisherperson and other gender-neutral phraseology. "I am saddened by the passing of MANkind, the huMAN race, the family of MAN, and never again being a chairMAN, alderMAN or fisherMAN. Fisherperson is unnecessary terminology anyway, given that 'angler' already exists. Let's get rid of 'political correctness' and 'gender neutral' while we're at it."

—W. Van Sickle
St. Joseph Island, Ont. Canada

Memento: instead of memento. This mistake is more common in speech than in writing, but a newspaper wrote "officials wanted mementos carved for the 1990 Labatt Brier...." (Ed.: Sounds like a lapse in time.)

—Roy Sulton
Sault Ste. Marie, Ont., Canada

Get With The Program: "I reply: 'it's being revised,'" (Ed.: correct if addressed to computer operators.)

—Wanda Johnson
Wayne, Mich.

As Well: "Radio announcers who use the phrase apparently are impressed by their own verbosity. 'As well' lacks the succinct dynamism of 'also' and the punch of 'too,' which it is intended to replace."

—John Pehoski
Lake Superior State University student
Sault Ste. Marie, Mich.

Home: when it refers to real estate. Example "home builder." The person is a "house builder." Others: "Home sales are up." "An 18th-century home." "Four homes were destroyed." These are all institutional references. It's HOUSE, not home. If you "work outside the home," are you employed away from your house, or maintaining the grounds at a mental institution?

Please banish the rare quadruple negative printed in the accompanying newspaper article headed: "obscenity issue dropped from arts bill:"

"In a 214-205 vote, with several Western lawmakers switching positions, the House REJECTED an attempt to OVERTURN a deal that AXED the ANTI-obscenity measure in exchange for maintaining grazing subsidies for Western ranchers." Say What?

—Joseph Kimble
Lansing, Mich.

Spousal Unit and Female Brethren. "The author of an article containing both of these phrases is guilty of excessive pseudo gender sensitivity."

—N.O. Stockmeyer, Jr.
Lansing, Mich.

"I see what you are saying": used by persons with exceptional eyesight and questionable word selection. (Ed.: It's correct if uttered by a person reading lips.)

—Jack Dietrich
Albuquerque, New Mexico

To Be Perfectly Honest With You: "When someone says that to me, it shows me he has already considered the possibility of lying to me and, for some reason, has discarded it. It also makes me wonder if he's lied to me before, and now is trying to lead a more-moral life."

—Dianne Linden
Edmonton, Alberta, Canada

SPORTSTALK

RBI: "The baseball term RBI is short for 'runs batted in.' Hence RBIs is incorrect. The term, after all, is not 'runs batted ins.' Wally Joyner of the California Angels did not have 96 RBIs in 1991. He had 96 RBI."

—G.N. Constable
Mansfield, Ohio
(Ed.: And, thanks in part to all those RBI, Wally signed a huge free-agent contract in the off-season with the Kansas City Royals.)

Level Playing Field: "Is there any other kind?"

—Margaret DeChant
Newberry, Mich.

Cautiously Optimistic: "Can you be cautiously reckless, or recklessly cautious? Let's find a less-bombastic phrase like 'timidly hopeful' or 'hoping timidly.'" (Ed.: We're cautiously cynical that banishment will be effective.)

—David McFarlane
Haslett, Mich.

Ministry: as applied to lay people performing any function whatever in church circles.

—Carol Smith
Fairbanks, Alaska
(Ed.: Is there a ministry of snow removal, yet?)

Community should be banished for overuse. "The original meaning of this word has been lost in the media, which blithely gives us such nonsense as the ballet-dancing community; the stock-broking community; the international community (whatever that is) and, my all-time favorite, the intravenous drug-using community."

—David McFarlane
Haslett, Mich.

Shallow Grave: "Every time the body of a murder victim is discovered in the ground, the news media tell us the body was discovered in a 'shallow grave.' What exactly does that mean? How shallow is shallow? Are murder victims ever found in 'deep' or 'average' graves? Let's eliminate the cliché. Either tell us how deep the grave was - in feet, inches, meters, etc. - or just report that the body was found buried."

—David W. Downing
St. Paul, Minn.

More Importantly: "This is the most-overworked phrase in the English language today. What's worse, it's grammatically incorrect. Important is an adjective, not an adverb. Translation: this is important; this is more important. Everyone in the U.S.: scholars, media types, politicians, speech writers everywhere, abuse this phrase. Let's consign this one to the trash can forever."

—Dorothy Powers, WJR Radio
Detroit, Mich.

Quality Education: "No doubt, higher educators define, even quantify this term for their own use. But few if any politicians know what they're buying with the growing billions of dollars worth of higher-education services for which they're paying. Teaching has become the principal outcome of education, not learning. You can validate this hypothesis by counting the words 'teaching' and 'learning' in news media coverage of our educators and politicians. This obviates independent learning capabilities as a desired outcome of education because it conflicts with the educators' goal of indispensability. Ask a shop teacher what time it is and he'll tell you how to build a clock."

"Is it possible that Lake Superior State is a covertly subversive organization? Do you have any idea of the hallowed institutions that are built on jargon?"

—Howard Garver
M/SGT retired U.S. Army
Urbana, Ill.

BANISHED

REMEMBER:
Nominations for the 1993 Banished list will be accepted anytime. Open season is Nov. 1 to Dec. 1, 1992

Send nominations to:
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