

LSSU Issues List Of Banished Words For 2003

January 1st, 2003

SAULT STE. MARIE, Mich. – 'Make no mistakes about it,' Lake Superior State University issued its 28th annual 'extreme' List of Words Banished from the Queen's English for Mis-Use, Over-Use and General Uselessness, which the world needs 'now, more than ever.'

LSSU has been compiling the list since 1976, choosing from nominations sent from around the world. This year, words and phrases were pulled from a record 3,000 nominations. Most were sent through the school's website: <http://www.lssu.edu/banished>.

Word-watchers pull nominations throughout the year from everyday speech, as well as from the news, fields of education, technology, advertising, politics, and more. A committee gathers the entries and chooses the best in December. The list is released on New Year's Day.

The complete 2003 list follows:

POLITICS AND THE MEDIA

MATERIAL BREACH -- "Suggests an obstetrical complication that pulls a physician off the golf course," says a nominator from Washington, D.C. Sounds like contract lawyer-speak rather than the world-worn parlance of war planners and diplomats. At one time, UN resolutions were violated. Violators were held in contempt. How long until treaties are ripped up in the presence of attorneys?

MUST-SEE TV -- "Must find remote. Must change channel," laments Nan Heflin from Colorado Springs, Colorado. Television once pitched entertainment. Apparently now it's taken on a greater imperative. Assumes herd mentality over program taste.

UNTIMELY DEATH -- Balky attempt to make some deaths more tragic than others. "Has anyone yet died a timely death?" asks Donald Burgess of South Pasadena, California.

BLACK ICE -- From the weather and news reports. Ice is ice. Watch your step. "Ice is usually clear and shiny when you see the black pavement through it." Robert Irving, Tahoe City, California.

ON THE GROUND -- Media hip-speak and frivolous dramatization. David Cheng of Rockville, Maryland, points out that humans live on the ground, "not suspended 100 feet in the air or 100 fathoms beneath the ocean." "Especially annoying during the presidential election recount, but still shows up in major news stories," Robert Prince, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. "Where else would you be?" Ken Finkel, Dundas, Ontario. "Only in a few situations is it necessary," Andrew Makepeace, Vancouver, British Columbia.

WEAPONS OF MASS DESTRUCTION -- Used more and more (and just too much according to James of Canberra, Australia) as a card that trumps all forms of aggression. In danger of becoming a push-button buzzword. Many nominators point out that any weapon, used effectively, does a lot of destruction. "A few thousand machetes in the hands of an army in Africa can lead to mass genocide," writes Howard Stacy of Atlanta, Georgia. Jack Newman of Cypress, Texas, often hears the hybrid, "wepuhmadistrictshun." "Over-used, over-wrought." Michelle Gill, Chicago, Illinois.

MAKE NO MISTAKE ABOUT IT -- Nominated by many, including Angela Wood of Anchorage, Alaska, for over-use since the 2000 election. "Generally used instead of 'don't underestimate' or 'understand,'" says John O'Connell of San Jose, California. Are listeners really going to mistake what the questioner is saying? "Who's mistaken, anyway?" asks Barb Keller of Sault Ste. Marie, Michigan.

HOMELAND SECURITY – A new and improved buzzword. With billions of dollars at stake, perhaps "national security" is just plain blasé.

"What happened to the Department of Defense?" asks Rick Miller of Champaign, Illinois.

BUSINESS/INDUSTRY/MARKETING/TECHNOLOGY

EXTREME -- This over-used word in advertising and marketing drew the ire of citizens throughout North America, from coast to coast. Al Slang of Duncan, British Columbia, said "It's used 24/7 (we banished that in 2000, Al) on everything from store sales to deodorant ads."

"Extreme sports, extreme cars, extreme soft drinks...I'm tired of hearing it." Doug Hagen, Newton, North Carolina.

Razors aren't extreme. Neither are deodorants or cheeseburgers." Cliff of Pensacola, Florida.

"I saw a church billboard advertising 'Extreme Adventures' at their vacation bible school. What the heck does that mean?" Cheril Lin D. Abeel, Detroit, Michigan.

NOW, MORE THAN EVER -- Many, including Valli Irvine of Austin, Texas, thought this should have been included on the 2002 list.

Matthew Lowe of Kew Gardens, New Jersey, summed it up for the many who nominated this tiresome phrase: "It has become over-used since the terrorist attacks...from warnings to be safe, to stores having sales...It has to go!"

Lowe's neighbor, Mike Bowers of Lebanon, New Jersey, agrees: "What's next? 'Now, more than ever, Americans need 50% more raisins in their cereal?'"

"This precious way of saying, 'Now that we've had a terrorist attack on U.S. soil, we have a duty to recognize the important things in life' seems to be the recent darling of advertisers and politicians...What simpering balderdash!" Josh Mandel, Colonie, New York.

BRANDING -- "This word, once properly associated with marking livestock to prove ownership, has been co-opted by the MBA crowd and now seems to refer to any activity that supports a company's desire to clearly define its products and/or services. Can't we just say 'Promotions and PR?'" Nancy Hicks, Fairfax, Virginia.

MISCELLANEOUS

HAVING SAID THAT and THAT SAID -- Nominated by many for over-use, especially in the news media, according to Kay J. Jauch, Edmonton, Alberta, and William Hamlin of Wappingers Falls, New York.

"I heard you the first time," said David Patrick of Lafayette, Indiana.

"Annoying useless filler," said Sadie Campbell of Scarborough, Ontario.

"It seems like the intellectual form of 'ya know.'" Shelley Gaskin, Scottsdale, Arizona.

PEEL-AND-EAT SHRIMP -- "Do they think that, if the name did not contain instructions, we would peel-and-throw-on-floor?" Miguel McCormick, Orlando, Florida.

CHALLENGE -- "No one has problems anymore, they only face 'challenges.'" Sonia Jaffe Robbins, New York, New York.

"I think it's a weasel word. 'Challenges' only have to be met. Problems require solutions!" Ray Lucas, Ann Arbor, Michigan.

IT'S A GOOD THING -- "This phrase is 'ramped up' (banished in 2002) for over-use," says Mark Dobias of Sault Ste. Marie, Michigan. "The question is: good for whom? For example, insider trading may be a good thing, but only if one does not get caught. Then it is a bad thing."

AS PER -- "As per a conversation I had with a co-worker and 'as per' common decency to your fellow human beings, please substitute 'according to.' If I hear 'as per' ever again, I will need to take some 'aspirin.'" Greg Gibson, Tucson, Arizona.

REVERSE DISCRIMINATION -- "Discrimination is discrimination, regardless of who is being discriminated against." Kristen of St. Paul, Minnesota.

SPORTS

THERE IS NO SCORE -- "It is inaccurate and misleading. There IS a score. It is 0-0." Paul Jertson, Christmas Valley, Oregon.

GOT GAME -- "I hear this phrase used by sportscasters trying to be hip: 'He's got game tonight!' They mean he's playing well." Scott Tolentino, Garden City, Utah.

MENTAL MISTAKE -- "Used often in the sporting world," says Paul DeCarlo of Helena, Alabama. "What mistake is not mental?"

TAUTOLOGY AND OTHER CIRCUMAMBAGES

___ IN COLOR - "As opposed to green in size," quips Janet Litherland of Thomasville, Georgia. Lends an empty air of precision.

UNDISCLOSED, SECRET LOCATION – Redundant stacking of adjectives often used to describe Vice President Cheney's whereabouts. "If it's a secret, it's pretty much undisclosed, and if it's undisclosed, it's a secret," says Bill Lodholz of Davis, California.