

LSSU issues its 30th annual list of banished words

January 1st, 2005

SAULT STE. MARIE, Mich. – “You’re fired!”

That’s how Lake Superior State University selected words and phrases that make up its 30th annual List of Words Banished from the Queen’s English for Mis-Use, Over-Use and General Uselessness.

A svelte word banishment committee, fresh from a low-carb diet, said the process of selecting this year’s words was an amazing journey through hundreds of nominations.

“We’re über-serious about this list,” said one committee member, who noted the committee would issue its list through a traditional press release rather than using a blog or webinar.

LSSU has been compiling the list since 1976, choosing from nominations sent from around the world. This year, words and phrases were pulled from more than 2,000 nominations. Most were sent through the school’s website: 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 2005 list (and more!) follows:

BLUE STATES/RED STATES – Who’s who, anyway? “I remember when I was a kid and Georgia was purple,” says Peter Pietrangelo, Sault Ste. Marie, Mich. “A good map has more than two colors.”

FLIP FLOP/FLIP FLOPPER/FLIP FLOPPING – They belong at the beach, not in a political dialogue. “Republicans used it; Democrats used it back. Flip-flop back and forth it goes.” – Jeff Lewis, Ada, Mich.

BATTLEGROUND STATE – “During an election, every state is a battleground.” -- Austin White, West Hartford, Conn.

“Did it mean Bush and Kerry would go toe-to-toe?” – Evan Cornell, Ligonier, Penn.

“... AND I APPROVE THIS MESSAGE” – Received the most nominations of the words and phrases that came out of the presidential election. From political ads to auto parts...

“What started in political ads is spiraling out of control.” – Jim Blashill, Sault Ste. Marie, Mich.

“I’ve heard three local car commercials where the morons use that phrase!” – John Venezia, Colorado Springs, Colo. – “Would a political candidate approve a message they did not agree with?” – John Gorsline, Albuquerque, NM. “I’m Kristina and I approve this nomination.” – Kristina, Granite City, Ill.

POCKETS OF RESISTANCE – “Are we talking about someone not buying a round of drinks or people shooting at each other?” – Rob of Crawley, West Sussex, UK.

“Sounds like someone having trouble pulling their hands out of their pants pockets.” – Joe Hutley, Las Vegas, NV.

IMPROVISED EXPLOSIVE DEVICE – As opposed to what used to be referred to as a bomb or mine. “Is this anything like a bomb or is it more (or less) sinister?” – Harold Blackwood, Sault Ste. Marie, Ontario.

ENEMY COMBATANT – “Makes no sense. Do we have friendly combatants? Neutral combatants? Or how about enemy bystanders? If they are your enemy, just say so.” – Bill Sellers, Hampton, Va.

CARBS – low carbs, high carbs, no carbs, carb-friendly... Meant ‘carburetor’ in a previous life. Needs to be purged from our system.

“You’re not fat because you eat bread; you’re fat because you eat too much!” – Emily Price, Norfolk, Va.

“What’s the point of low-carb beer? A person that concerned about ‘carbs’ shouldn’t even be drinking beer.”
Roger Briskey, Orlando, Fla.

YOU’RE FIRED! – “...and the little hand movement, too!” – Jason Ranville, State College, Penn.
One nominator suggested that to say it would soon constitute a trademark infringement.

ÜBER – Nominated by many over the past few years, including Paul Freedman, Sault Ste. Marie, Mich. “Since when has this become a prefix for everything? That’s über-rific!” – Lolina, Sault Ste. Marie, Ontario.
“...Everything that is big, amazing, unique is described as über.” – Sue, Colorado Springs, Co.

‘IZZLE’ – SPEAK – By far, the abomination that received the most nominations. Some sort of ‘Rap-Latin’ suffix, as in fa’shizzle, which means ‘for sure.’
“It was clever for about five minutes, or should I say five ‘minizzles?’” – R. Glover, Waterford, Mich.
Derek Hogan of Mississauga, Ontario, said it was cool when a rapper came up with it a few years ago, but now it’s over-used and is even being used in television commercials.
“Like Superbowl excesses, it is too much of too much,” – Daniel Baisden, Savannah, Ga.

WARDROBE MALFUNCTION – “Janet Jackson’s bodice did not ‘malfunction,’” says John Wetterholt, Woodstock, Ill. “Justin Timberlake pulled too much and too far and I could hear the cogs turning in his publicist’s head trying to come up with that excuse!”
“It wasn’t the wardrobe’s fault!” – Jane Starr, Edmonton, Alberta
“Sure to be this generation’s Watergate, misapplied to all situations both imaginable and not so.” – David Edgar, Sydney, Australia

BLOG – and its variations, including blogger, blogged, blogging, blogosphere. Many who nominated it were unsure of the meaning. Sounds like something your mother would slap you for saying.
“Sounds like a Viking’s drink that’s better than grog, or a technique to kill a frog.” Teri Vaughn, Anaheim, Calif.
“Maybe it’s something that would be stuck in my toilet.” – Adrian Whittaker, Dundalk, Ontario. “I think the words ‘journal’ and ‘diary’ need to come back.” – T. J. Allen, Shreveport, La.

WEBINAR – for ‘seminar on the web.’ “It’s silly. Next we’ll have a Dutch ‘dunch’ ... bring your own lunch for a digital lunch meeting.” – Karen Nolan, Charlotte, NC.

ZERO PERCENT APR FINANCING – sending a dollar to do a nickel’s worth of work. Michael Hehn, Ferrysburg, Mich. “They could just say ‘no interest.’”

SAFE AND EFFECTIVE – “Try the new, clinically proven, safe and effective wonder drug you never knew you needed... Safe and effective should not be a selling point, it should be an FDA requirement!” CW Estes, Roanoke Texas.

ERECTILE DYSFUNCTION – Do we need to hear about it daily on TV and radio, even on racecars? Firmly rejected by the committee. “Too much information!” Carolyn Jamsa, Chillicothe, Ill.

JOURNEY – “Every single person on every reality show comments on how amazing the ‘journey’ was. Since when does dating a dozen nerds over a six-week span or conniving to win a million dollars over 15 other people qualify as a ‘journey’?” – Cindy, Victoria, British Columbia.

BODY WASH – “Also known as ‘soap.’” -- Ray Hill, Jackson, Mich.

SALE EVENT – “Year-end sales are now ‘sales events.’ Now most have shortened it to ‘event.’ Does the sale exist any longer? ‘Hey, nice new Chevy, Bob!’ ‘Thanks, it was on event at the dealer last week.’” – Allan Dregseth, Fargo, ND.

ALL NEW – referring to television shows... “Of course it’s all new. Why can’t they just say ‘new’? There are no partially-new episodes, no repeat of last Tuesday’s episode with a slightly reworked Act 2.” – Greg Ellis, Bellevue, Wash.

AND MORE! – The merchants way of giving you something “value added.” “Every merchant offers carpets, flooring and more. Can we envision baskets, caskets and more? Need I say less?” – Ray of Willard, Ohio. “Goods and services no longer have limits! Everything marketed can be something else! ‘It’s a hamburger meal, but it’s much, much more...It’s a time machine, too!’” – Mark of Kanata, Ontario.