

LSSU issues annual list of banished words

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SAULT STE. MARIE, Mich. -- Lake Superior State University proposes an exit strategy for 2006: the 32nd annual List of Words Banished from the Queen's English for Mis-Use, Over-Use and General Uselessness.

On Dec. 31, 1975, former LSSU Public Relations Director Bill Rabe and some colleagues cooked up the whimsical idea to banish overused words and phrases and issued the first list on New Year's Day. Much to the delight of word enthusiasts everywhere, the list has stayed the course into a fourth decade.

Through the years, LSSU has received thousands of nominations for the list, which is closing in on its 1000th banishment.

This year's list is culled from more than 4,500 nominations received mostly through the university's website, www.lssu.edu/banished. Word-watchers target pet peeves from everyday speech, as well as from the news, fields of education, technology, advertising, politics and more. A committee makes a final cut in late December. The list is released on New Year's Day.

So gitmo chipotle-flavored egnog, curl up with an undocumented alien, and cut-and-run to the 2007 list. It won't be coming to a theater near you.

GITMO -- The US military's shorthand for a base in Cuba drives a wedge wider than a split infinitive. "When did the notorious Guantanamo Bay Naval Base change to 'Gitmo,' a word that conjures up an image of a fluffy and sweet character from a Japanese anime show?" -- Marcus W., St. Louis, Missouri.

COMBINED CELEBRITY NAMES -- Celebrity duos of yore -- BogCall (Bogart and Bacall), Lardy (Laurel and Hardy), and CheeChong (Cheech and Chong) -- just got lucky. "It's bad enough that celebrities have to be the top news stories. Now we've given them obnoxious names such as 'Bragelina,' 'TomKat' and 'Bennifer.'" -- M. Foster, Port Huron, Michigan. "It's so annoying, idiotic and so lame and pathetic that it's 'lamethetic.'" -- Ed of Centreville, Virginia.

AWESOME -- Given a one-year moratorium in 1984, when the Unicorn Hunters banished it *"during which it is to be rehabilitated until it means 'fear mingled with admiration or reverence; a feeling produced by something majestic."* Many write to tell us there's no hope and it's time for "the full banishment." "The kind of tennis shoes you wear, no matter how cute, don't fit the majestic design of the word." -- Leila Hill, Damascus, Maryland. "That a mop, a deodorant or a dating service can be called 'awesome' demonstrates the limited vocabularies of the country's copywriters." -- Tom Brinkmoeller, Orlando, Florida. "Overused and meaningless." My mother was hit by a car.' Awesome. 'I just got my college degree.' Awesome." -- Robert Bron, Pattaya, Chonburi, Thailand.

GONE/WENT MISSING -- "It makes 'missing' sound like a place you can visit, such as the Poconos. Is the person missing, or not? She went there but maybe she came back. 'Is missing' or 'was missing' would serve us better." -- Robin Dennis, Flower Mound, Texas.

PWN or PWNED -- Thr styff of lemgendz: Gamer defeats gamer, types in "I pwn you" rather than I OWN you. "This word is just an overly used Internet typo. It has been overused to the point that people who play online games are using it in everyday speech." -- Tory Rowley, Corunna, Michigan.

NOW PLAYING IN THEATERS -- Heard in movie advertisements. Where can we see that, again? "How often do movies premiere in laundromats or other places besides theaters? I know that when I want to see a movie I think about going to a shoe store." -- Andrea May, Shreveport, Louisiana.

WE'RE PREGNANT -- Grounded for nine months. "Were men feeling left out of the whole morning sickness/huge belly/labor experience? You may both be expecting, but only one of you is pregnant." -- Sharla

Hulsey, Sac City, Iowa.

"I'm sure any woman who has given birth will tell you that 'WE' did not deliver the baby." -- Marlina Linne, Greenfield, Indiana.

UNDOCUMENTED ALIEN -- "If they haven't followed the law to get here, they are by definition 'illegal.' It's like saying a drug dealer is an 'undocumented pharmacist.'" -- John Varga, Westfield, New Jersey.

ARMED ROBBERY/DRUG DEAL GONE BAD -- From the news reports. What degree of "bad" don't we understand? Larry Lillehammer of Bonney Lake, Washington, asks, "After it stopped going well and good?"

TRUTHINESS -- "This word, popularized by The Colbert Report and exalted by the American Dialectic Society's Word of the Year in 2005 has been used up. What used to ring true is getting all the truth wrung out of it." -- Joe Grimm, Detroit, Michigan.

ASK YOUR DOCTOR -- The chewable vitamin morphine of marketing.

"Ask your doctor if 'fill in the blank' is right for you! Heck, just take one and see if it makes you 'fill in the blank' or get deathly ill." -- R.C. Amundson, Oakville, Washington.

"I don't think my doctor would appreciate my calling him after seeing a TV ad." -- Peter B. Liveright, Lutherville, Maryland.

CHIPOTLE -- "Prior to 2005 . . . a roasted jalapeno. Now we have a 'chipotle' burrito with 'chipotle' marinated meat, 'chipotle' peppers, sprinkled with a 'chipotle' seasoning and smothered in a 'chipotle' sauce. Time to give this word a rest." -- Rob Zeiger, Bristol, Pennsylvania.

i-ANYTHING -- 'e-Anything' made the list in 2000. Geoff Steinhart of Sault Ste. Marie, Michigan, says tech companies everywhere have picked this apple to the core. "Turn on...tune in...and drop out."

"Banish any word that starts with it. i am just tired of it. it's getting old. -- Brad Butler, Adrian, Michigan.

SEARCH -- Quasi-anachronism.

"Might as well banish it. The word has been replaced by 'google.'" -- Michael Raczko, Swanton, Ohio.

HEALTHY FOOD -- Point of view is everything.

Someone told Joy Wiltzius of Fort Collins, Colorado, that the tuna steak she had for lunch "sounded healthy." Her reply: "If my lunch were healthy, it would still be swimming somewhere. Grilled and nestled in salad greens, it's 'healthful.'"

BOASTS -- See classified advertisements for houses, says Morris Conklin of Lisboa, Portugal, as in "master bedroom boasts his-and-her fireplaces -- never 'bathroom apologizes for cracked linoleum,' or 'kitchen laments pathetic placement of electrical outlets.'"