

LSSU unleashes 42nd annual List Of Banished Words into a post-truth world

December 31st, 2016

SAULT STE. MARIE, Mich. – The wordsmiths at Lake Superior State University have taken their best "guesstimate" and released LSSU's 42nd annual List of Words Banished from the Queen's English for Mis-use, Over-use and General Uselessness.

"Overused words and phrases are a 'bête noire' for thousands of users of the 'manicured' Queen's English," said an LSSU spokesperson, who released the 'historic' list during a town hall meeting. "We hope our modest 'listicle' will figure 'bigly' in most 'echo chambers' around the world."

LSSU's word banishment tradition is now in its fifth decade, and was started by the late W. T. Rabe, a public relations director at Lake Superior State University.

Rabe and fellow LSSU faculty and staff came up with the first list of words and phrases that people love to hate at a New Year's Eve party in 1975, publishing it on Jan. 1, 1976. Though he and his friends created the first list from their own pet peeves about language, Rabe said he knew from the volume of mail he received in the following weeks that the group would have no shortage of words and phrases from which to choose for 1977. Since then, the list has consisted entirely of nominations received from around the world throughout the year.

Through the years, LSSU has received tens of thousands of nominations for the list, which now includes more than 850 entries. This year's list is culled from nominations received mostly through the university's website, Issu.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. Compilers hope this year's list is "on fleek."

And now, the 2017 list:

You, Sir - Hails from a more civilized era when duels were the likely outcome of disagreements. Today, we suffer on-line trolls and Internet shaming.

Focus - Good word, but overused when *concentrate* or *look at* would work fine. See 1983's banishment of, *We Must Focus Our Attention*.

Bête Noire - After consulting a listing of synonyms, we gather this to be a bugbear, pet peeve, bug-boo, pain, or pest to our nominators.

Town Hall Meeting - Candidates seldom debate in town halls anymore. Needs to be shown the door along with "soccer mom(s)" and "Joe Sixpack" (banned in 1997).

Post-Truth - To paraphrase the late Senator Daniel Patrick Moynihan, we are entitled to our own opinions but not to our own facts.

Guesstimate - When *guess* and *estimate* are never enough.

831 - A texting encryption of, *I love you*: 8 letters, 3 words, 1 meaning. Never encrypt or abbreviate one's love.

Historic - Thrown around far too much. What's considered as such is best left to historians rather than the contemporary media.

Manicured - As in a manicured lawn. Golf greens are the closest grass comes to being manicured.

Echo Chamber - Lather, rinse, and repeat. After a while, everything sounds the same.

On Fleek - Anything that is on-point, perfectly executed, or looking good. Needs to return to its genesis: perfectly groomed eyebrows.

Bigly - Did the candidate say "big league" or utter this 19th-Century word that means, *in a swelling blustering manner*? Who cares? Kick it out of the echo chamber!

Ghost - To abruptly end communication, especially on social media. Is it rejection angst, or is this word really as overused as word-banishment nominators contend? Either way, our committee feels the pain.

Dadbod - The flabby opposite of a chiseled-body male ideal. Should not empower dads to pursue a sedentary lifestyle.

Listicle - Numbered or bulleted list created primarily to generate views on the Web, LSSU's word-banishment list excluded.

"Get your dandruff up . . . " - The Committee is not sure why this malapropism got nominators' dander up in 2016.

Selfie Drone - In what could be an ominous development, the selfie - an irritating habit of constantly photographing and posting oneself to social media - is being handed off to a flying camera. How can this end badly?

Frankenfruit - Another food group co-opted by " Frankenfood." Not to be confused with other forms of genetically modified language.

Disruption - Nominators are exhausted from 2016's disruption. When humanity looks back on zombie buzzwords, they will see disruption bumping into other overused synonyms for change.