Nominations for the 2008 Word of the Year
to be voted on by the American Dialect Society
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http://americandialect.org/woty2008/

Barnhart’s Words of 2008 by David K. Barnhart
The Barnhart Dictionary Companion
Lexik House
P.O. Box 2018
Hyde Park, New York 12538
Lexik@highlands.com
(914) 850-8484

The national election in the United States certainly played an important role in the development of English vocabulary. From the political realm:

absentee-vote, v. [=To vote using an absentee ballot]

big-umbrella politics [=political policies which encourage people of different attitudes to join together to support a single candidate]

blagojevich-gate [=the political scandal which has engulfed Governor Rod Blagojevich of Illinois]

get (or jump) in the box [= “to get on board,” especially in a political campaign]

Bradley effect. [=The discrepancy between what people say to pollsters and how they vote in a political race in which race is possible issue.

bus; (throw) under the box [=to sacrifice someone for one’s own gain, especially of a campaign worker in politics]

change [=as of administration and its accompanying policies]

cyberwhisper campaign [=a whisper campaign conducted on the Internet]

early-vote, v. [=To vote by using a mail-in ballot before election day]

exit plan [=a schedule for withdrawal of troops from Iraq; formerly called exit strategy, from the Vietnam War]

-gate. A combining form designating a political scandal, as in Palingate, McCaingate, Obamagate, Spitzergate, Clintongate, Huckabeegate, etc. Probably Blagojevich-gate is the most recent (but hardly characteristic of the year). Wardrobe-gate and bittergate show that not all -gate words are formed on personal names. cf. Troopergate. The proliferation of these is substantial especially in an election year.

hockey mom [patterned after soccer mom of the 1980’s???.]
Joe the Plumber [=a generalized image of a blue collar worker, especially self-employed] (This reminds one of Lenny Skutnik moment from the 1980’s.)

kryptonite [=something or someone unwanted]

lipstick on a pig [=the answer to the question “What’s the difference between a hockey mom and a pig?”]

Mulligan primary [=a do-over primary election] (It didn’t happen, but someday?)

Obama- [=The last name of President-elect Barack Obama combined with suffixes, as in Obamanation, Obamanomics, and Obamacan. Both Bushes, the Clintons, Nixon, Reagan, even Ford and Carter. There are zillions of these, probably with many more to come.]

Palin effect or Sarah Palin effect [=the impact, especially negative, of the selection of Governor Sara Palin to be Senator John McCain’s running mate]

pay-to-play politics [pay to play in the context of politics can be traced to the early 1980’s, maybe further]

play Waldo or play where’s Waldo [= to challenge someone for not being where one thinks they should be or doing the work one should be doing]

post-racial [=a period in which people no longer consider a person’s race as a significant consideration, especially in American political campaigning]

Sam’s Club Republican [=a registered Republican who shops at Sam’s Club or similar discount stores]

Spitzergate [=the political scandal that led to the resignation of newly elected Governor Eliot Spitzer of New York]

superdelegate [=Not because it’s new but because so many made such a fuss over them.]

Trooper-gate [Yet, again! Trooper-gate began in a different episode in the 1990’s. It arose earlier in 2008 in New York and then moved to Alaska.]

wardrobgate [see below at “fashion”]

The recession of 2008, may well trump the election for long-term impact of the words it has employed. From the activity in Economics:

bailout

BRIC [=Brazil, Russian, India, and China: These countries viewed as a powerful economic bloc]

credit default swap or default credit swap, Abbreviation: CDS [=]

daycation [=time off from work take as a day here or a day there]
e-lavaway

FSBO [=for sale by owner]

recession

staycation [=time off from work in which a person does not travel far from home]

201(k) [=a retirement account, especially a 401(k), which has been greatly reduced in value due to the current recession]

unemployment [=a condition that has reached a very large number of people in the workforce]

The entertainment industry has continued to occupy people’s linguistic inventiveness. From entertainment:

microblogging [=engaging in a blog with typically very brief message, as on TWITTER]

Oprah effect [with political overtones] [=the influence Oprah Winfrey has on her listenership, especially to cause them to accept or reject something or someone]

personal seating license (PSL) [=... in a sports arena]

Tweet [=a message conducted through TWITTER]

Twitter [=a specific Web site that enables people to communicate through brief messages]

The residents of computerdom continues to conger up interesting words:

cloud computing [=]

crowd sourcing [=reliance upon a widely distributed internet solicitation for feedback]

MOOFing [=mobile out of office] (also -er, ...)

From engineering and technology:

CFL [=compact fluorescent light bulb]

genome engineering [=genetic engineering on a scale needed to reconstruct a mammoth, Neanderthal, or similarly long extinct animal]

wrap rage [=overreaction to the toughness of rigid plastic packaging]

From the world of fashion:
**fauxhawk** [=a haircut which resembles but is not quite as severe as a Mohawk]

**Wardrobegate** (also in politics) [=the dustup over excessive spending on fashions for VP candidate Sara Palin]

**From transportation:**

**kiss ’n’ fly zone** [=the drop-off “no-parking” zone at an airport terminal]