

Wördos? About 20 persons who meet once a month in Minneapolis and talk about our English language. Abbreviations: ST = Minneapolis Star Tribune, PP = St. Paul Pioneer Press, NYT = N.Y. Times, WSJ = Wall St. Journal, unatt = don't know source, undtd = don't know date, nsltr = newsletter, newsrls = news release, AHD = Am. Heritage Dict. III, GMAU = Garner's Mod. Am. Usage, OED = Oxford Dict. Of Eng. Lang. II, Warriner = Warriner's English Grammar & Composition, YFIO = you figure it out., Stringer = contributor. Italics used freely for emphasis. We have a Web page: <http://www.wordos.net>. Our motto: *Claritas super omnia*: clarity above all."

First frost bumps

- “She had memories as a child ... she loved *hearing* the first frogs in their back pond *and the first blooms* of her mom’s forsythia at the corner of their house...” (Edmonson News, Brownsville, KY, 9-10)
- “Man *Critical* After Nearly Drowning In Hotel Pool.” (Head, ST, 8-12) The first two words – *man*, *critical* – suggest that a certain man was critical – i.e., that he was unhappy about something, perhaps errors involved in his rescue. – Ed.



Apostrophes that jump around, or aren't there at all: “She was *Douglas’* aunt.” (Neil Justin, 10-29-‘08) “*Minneapolis’* record...” (ST, undated) “Brief *Gophers* Lapse Paves Way For Buckeyes.” (ST, 2-10) “*Gettysburg Address’* Global Recitation Aims For A Record.” (Diane Raedo, ST head, undtd) “ ... a favorite *of Pohlads’*” (ST, 7-4) Wördo Fred Webber: “Why not ‘a favorite *of Pohlads’*?”

Agreement, sad lack of: “... the first resident to add *their* (his or her, or recast) photo.” (Chelsea Woods Trails newsltr, July-Aug.) “One in 100 Americans *are* (is) behind bars.” (Col. Journalism Rev., July-Aug.) “... the arrests ... *continues* (continue) (Lakeshore Wkly News, 8-1) “A colony of bacteria *glow* (glows) ...” (WSJ, 9-8)

Bravos for better-than-average metaphors: “Big Apple Is Resilient *To The Core*” (ST, 9-11) “Dutch Keep Teen Sailor *At The Dock* For Now.” (ST, '09) Another bravo word from the same entry:: *scupper*. “(The judges) refused to *scupper* it completely.” *Scupper*: (1) To ruin, destroy, overwhelm. (2) Opening in the side of ship’s deck level to allow water to run off.” (AHDIII) Re: judges’ ruling to prevent a 13-year-old girl to proceed on an around-the-world sailing voyage.

Buzz-words, late arrivals: *Desertification*, as employed by Louisa Lim, NPR’s Shanghai correspondent, undtd. Ms. Lim used the word to describe grasslands being turned into deserts by excessive goat-herding.. “... *desertification* will be a critical task.” (Second appearance, NYT, 10-6) Easily confused with *decertification*.

Fewer-less: “... three ingredients or *less* (fewer).” (TV ad, CH4, 8-2) “Try taking *less* (fewer) pills.” (Air America website, 7-30) “... *a few less* (fewer) bosses to report to.” (WSJ, 7-29) “... *less* (fewer) than 200 mice survive.” (Minn. Outdoor News, 7-31) “Try taking *less* (fewer) crazy pills next time.” (Air America website, 7-30) “... three ingredients or *less* (fewer).” “DNR estimates *less* (fewer) than 100 mice survive.” (Minn. Outdoor News, 7-31)

Host-hoster: “*Host* has become so over-worked as a verb that, apparently, it is no longer useful as a noun. Reading through the ‘FAQ’ of a pico search box function, I found that the noun now is *hoster*.

A problem arises: if your *hoster* leaves the HTTP field blank ...you would have to ask your *hoster* to fix the situation.” Wördo Stringer Natty Bumpo.

Honing in – homing in: “... said he is *honing in* on the weeds.” (P-P, 9-16) “*Home in* is the correct phrase ... In the 19th century, the metaphor referred to what homing pigeons do ... (but) by the late 20th century some writers had begun mistaking the phrase by using the wrong verb, *hone* (= to sharpen) instead of *home*.” (Bryan Garner, GMAU)

Huh? “... to *squash* (quash) rumors.” (ST, 9-11) “The risk ... is *very minimal* (minimal).” (NYT, 1-11) “A *prediction* that proved *prescient*.” (“Coyote Warrior,” Paul Van DeVelder) Redundant. “(He) found the excess of zeal *discomforting* (decomfitting).” (undtd, unatt) Wördo Marlene Reuber: “The original meaning of *discomfit* was ‘to defeat in battle, to thwart the plans of, to frustrate.’ Now, through confusion it has come to mean ‘to disconcert, to distress, to make uncomfortable.’” (“(She is) able to *live and exist* in her home without difficulty.” (ST, 8-23) “The Offense Slumped Just As The Pitchers *Found A Groove* (groove)” (ST head, 9-7) “... *healthy* (healthful) eating,” (ST, 8-1) “... *those kind* (those kinds) of successes are few.” (ST, 9-14) “Stay for *as long or short* (a time) as you wish.” (Plymouth News, Mar.-Apr.) “Grief is a journey, and one that men often travel differently *than* (from) women.” (Nesltr, Holy Name of Jesus, Plymouth, undtd) “... New York’s quietly heroic efforts to return to some kind of *normal* (normality or normalcy).” (ST, 9-11) “... after the bottle was *shook* (shaken).” (Anthony Lonetree, ST, 8-1) “Before *laying* (lying) down to take a nap.” (Robin Robinson, Fox 9 News, 8-26) “I *laid* (lay) down.” (WCCO Radio, 8-29) “...totally *unique*.” (TV ad for Sonic Drive, 8-31) *Unique*, like pregnancy, can not be qualified.

“Phantonims:” Words that look as if they mean one thing but mean another. Jack Rosenthal, president of the N.Y.Times Co. Foundation, introduced the word. (NYT magazine, 9-27) “A word that is the opposite of another is an antonym; a word that looks as if it means one thing but means quite another could be called a *phantonym*.” He lists these *phantonyms*: **Fulsome** doesn’t mean *full*, but *disgusting, excessive, insincere*. **Noisome**: not *noisy*, but *smelly, unhealthful*. **Enormity**: not *enormous*, but *great wickedness, a monstrous act*. **Disinterested**: not *uninterested*, but *indifferent, bored*. **Enervated**: not *energized*, but *weakened*. **Fortuitous**: not *fortunate*, but *happening by chance*. **Penultimate**: not *ultraultimate*, but *next to last*. **Presently**: not *now*, but *in a little while*. **Restive**: not *restful*, but *stubborn, balky*.

Prepositions, wrong ones: “... search *of* (for) a missing person.” (Minn. Outdoor News, 8-27). Thanks, Tim Spielman. “Her effort... aims *at* (to) help folks hurt by the recession.” (ST, 9-13) “... damage *incurred to* (why not simply *to*?) local residences. (Tonka Times, Sept.)

Slang invasion: should we write the way we talk? “So, *Whaddya* Think Of That ‘57 Ford?” (ST head. 10-3) “He used the appearance to strike back at critics *who’d* attacked him ...” (ST, 5-25) “(They) allegedly provided *booze* to an underage (youth).” (ST, 3-7) “... she’d have to *pick up the tab*.” (ST, 3-10) “(Earnings fell) because of ... *lousy* refining results.” (ST, 7-30) “*It’d* do well to consider this additional step.” (ST, 8-21) “(To) *Google*, to *do a Google search* ...or *post a Twitter update* ... have a colloquial tone that is out of place in straight news.” (Philip Corbett, NYT, Times Topics, 9-22)

Spelling: Was it a typo or didn’t they know? “Gophers fans have waited nearly 30 *yards* (years) for the game to return to campus.” (ST, 9-13) “President **Barrack** (Barack) Obama will visit the Twin Cities ...” (P-P, 9-9) Thanks, Holly Wenzel, Lillie Suburban Newspapers. “The Kids’ Journalism Is *Alright* (All Right).” (Time, 8-31) “... a *beak* (break) in (the river) ...” (Crow River News, 8-28) “... up the *crick* (creek) without a paddle.” (ST, 9-7) “The Time For Games Is *Passed* (past).” (ST head, 9-13)

YFIO, we can’t. “Organizers are hoping *also* to clean up.” (P-P, undtd) “St. Paul Republicans endorsed a businesswoman to take on DFL incumbnt Mayor Chris Coleman, as well as two other men to vie for open seats on the school board.” (ST, 4-5) “Patterson and Schroeder were followed from their work place in Plymouth on Aug. 13 and Wednesday and saw them break into homes.” (ST, 8 -22)

- yr *humble & obt svt*, Robert MacGregor Shaw