

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, newsrsls = 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."

August regrets

- “Hundreds of mourners streamed through a Cape Cod church to pay tribute to the late Eunice Kennedy Shriver, the sister of Massachusetts Senator Ted Kennedy and of the late President John Kennedy, *who died on Tuesday*.” (Paul Brown, NPR, 8-14) Wördo Peg Alnes: “If you say so, but it seems to me that he died longer ago.”

- “They learned that he died early this morning *over the phone*.” (Karla Hult, CH11, 7-15) Wördo Jack Finnegan: “Terribly bad connection.”

- “Remains (of long-dead American Indians) usually are analyzed and then released to that individual’s *ancestors* (descendents) or tribe.” (Andy Rathbun, P-P, undtd) Wördo Jack Finnegan: “By their psychiatrists?”

- “If the (fishing) line remains slack after raising the lure, set the hook. *Suspended crappies often do this*.” (Mich. Outdoor News, 8-10) Every crappie has a death-wish. - Ed.

- “Several members of the party *that included the dead climbers* made it off the mountain safely.” (ST, 7-17) Wördo Jack Finnegan: “And all were dead tired.”

- “Dawson, with two gunshots to the abdominal area, made it to the operating room *but was beyond repair*.” (Paul Levy, ST, 7-21) The word *repair* used here as a noun doesn't seem appropriate. Surgeons do not *repair* wounds as one would repair the broken leg of a chair: they *dress* wounds. (AHD) ”*Dress*: To apply medicines, bandages or therapeutic materials to a wound.”



Agreement, regrettable lack of: “Every family member has *their* (his or her) special *niche* (niche).” (ST, 8-12) “Nissan found that a bit more power and a slightly larger wheel base *pays* (pay) off.” (ST, 8-15) “Which one is *best* (better)?” (Ad, CH11, 7-13)

Ambiguous reference: “At issue is a proposal to repeal the ban on gay and lesbian ministers *from leading churches* unless they promise to be celibate.” (Jeff Strickler, ST, 8-16) *Leading* here can be taken in two ways: (1) as a verb: ministers directing or leading, churches; or (2) as an adjective: ministers of prominent, i.e. *leading*, churches. “Man Accused Of Hurting Child *During Temper Tantrum*” (Rochester P-B., 7-29)

Huh? “One Killed In Motorcycle Accident” (Head, Fergus Falls Daily Journal, undtd) Immediately above the story, an ad for a local funeral home; below the story, right: ad for upcoming motorcycle gathering. “Music’s *affect* (effect) on the brain ...” (TV Guide, 6-30) “In 1951 *he married his wife*, Gail.” (ST, 7-26) “(He) handed out anti-war leaflets in Dinkytown to *disinterested* students.” (Jon Tevlin, ST, 7-29) *Disinterested* means impartial, and is often confused with *uninterested* which means not interested. In this item, neither seems to fit.) “They sow the *whirlwind*.” (undtd, unatt) No. “They sow the wind and reap the whirlwind.” (Hosea 8:7) “Having watched John Michels coach the offensive line ... it was great to hear McDaniel not forget Michels...” (Sid Hartman, ST, 8-10) It watched John Michels. “Two shooters were *laying* (lying) in wait.” (Fox News, undtd)

One thousand: Correct abbreviation? Let's call the whole thing off. Wördo Fred Webber was quoted in this newsletter on July 14th: "Generally, a lower case m equals one thousand, an upper case m equals one million." Fellow Wördo Jerry Witt took exception: "The SI system (System International) symbols are used in the sciences. There, K (kilo) is the only symbol for 1,000, as in Km, kilometers. Small m in SI units means meters and also means milli, 1/1000 of. So mm is millimeters (1/1000 of a meter). Capital M means millions and stands for Mega (as in a 20-megaton bomb.) In car ads I've seen M used for 1,000, as in \$13M; \$13K is more common. But small m has never been used for 1,000 anywhere, as far as I know."

Fred, then, cited other sources: "A lower-case m is 1,000 and that's how the mm came to mean a million: a thousand times a thousand. The letters mm is NOT the Roman numerical equivalent of million, It is the common-day – especially financial – shorthand of a million." To which Jerry responded: "My advice to writers is not to use such abbreviations at all. Write the number out, \$125,000, or write \$125 thousand or million or billion and remove any possible misinterpretations." On this they both agreed.

Redundancies and thoughtless errors: Garner in GMAU cites redundancies: *absolute necessity, advance planning, basic fundamentals, consensus of opinion, fellow colleagues, few in number, free gift, future forecast, future plans, merge or mingle together, new recruit, reason is because, reelected for another term, still continues to, surrounded on all sides, temporary reprieve, and visible to the eye.*

Spelling: typos or intentional? "Where should we send the gift *too* (to)?" (Media Channel online survey, 7-28) "Mother's *worse* (worst) fears." (CH4 graphic, 7-30) "The shell creatures can smother native *claims* (clams), cling to boats..." (ST, 8-1) "I know he's been gone *a while* (awhile)." (ST, 8-3) "... strong *mangers* (managers)." (The Economist, 8-8) "In *tha* (that) tournament." (ST, 8-1) "...orthographic conventions are just that – conventions ... We try to settle on spelling not because it is fundamentally right but simply because we desire consistency and order in our writing." (Philip B. Corbett, NYT, 5-20-'09)

TV people: how they talk! "He may have *hid* (hidden) assets." (CH4, 7-30) "They will interview her tomorrow or *in the coming day*." (KTNF AM radio, 7-13) "... to have your debt *potentially* reduced." (KTNFM radio, 7-17) "Tons of dirt *was* (were) removed ... so unique." (Steve Shaw, CH5, 8-1) No. removing tons of dirt is not unique. "It was *completely urgent*." (Speaker, Bill Moyers's show, CH2, 8-8) "I have an MA in *public government*." (Wildlife specialist, C-span, 8-1) "His *fellow colleagues*..." (CH5-7-9) "This is an *abject* (object) lesson." (Judge Joe Brown, CH9, 7-20) "What's got the Salvation Army to do with it?" (CH5, 8-2) "The whole ground was *tremoring*." (Weatherman, CH4, 8-12) Reckless verbification. "There are 67 teams left in the Iditarod and 69 are still running." (CH11, undtd)

Words, phrases seldom seen: *Naif*, as in "They contend Obama is a *naïf*." (NYT, 7-5) AHD: "*Naif*: adjective and noun: variant of naïve." *Sophomoric*, a word discussed at the Wördos's May meeting. AHD: "*Sophomoric*: showing naïve lack of judgment that accompanies immaturity." *Commoditized*, as in "...a service that has been *commoditized*." (ST, 7-27) Cannot find hide nor hair of this word in any dictionary. *Tranche*, as in "... took its own *tranche* of the bubble." (NYT, 6-21) "*Tranche*: portion, share." (Webster's Collegiate Dictionary) "Newlyweds **busted a move** after exchanging their vows ..." (ST, 7-25) Caption shows young couple at wedding. YFIO. **Round on**, as "Physicians will no longer *round on* (make their rounds on?) their patients." (St. John's Hospital nwsltr, undtd) **Viral**, as in "An Internet posting that has gone *viral*." (Unatt, undtd) Gone kaput?

YFIO, we can't. "(The head of the Board of Veterinary Medicine) said he discourages veterinarians from taking over pets from owners, but he acknowledges that might require vets to euthanize an animal that could be saved." (Lora Pabst, ST, 7-16) "Bond started his sophomore football season in 1996 hoping to be a starting offensive lineman, the next step in his seven-year football career." (Alex Ebert, ST, 7-18) Wördo Fred Webber: "He didn't have a seven-year career." "(On Memorial Day) there will be a lot of riding, and everybody on two wheels has to know that everybody else is trying to kill them." (Joe Soucheray, PP, undtd)

- yr humble & obt svt, Robert MacGregor Shaw