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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**2009 WORDS OF THE YEAR
TO BE CHOSEN BY AMERICAN DIALECT SOCIETY**

Poughkeepsie, NY, December 18, 2009 ---- Nineteen years ago the American Dialect Society inaugurated the idea of “Word of the Year”—a word or phrase that best reflects the language and preoccupations of the year gone by. Continuing this tradition, the society will choose its “Words of the Year 2009” on January 8, 2010 at its annual meeting in Baltimore, Maryland. Among the list of WOTY candidates to be presented are those of Poughkeepsie, NY, lexicographer, David K. Barnhart, a regional secretary of ADS, a past president of the Dictionary Society of North America, and editor and publisher of *The Barnhart Dictionary Companion*—a journal devoted to recording “new words.”

Word of the Year is interpreted in its broader sense as “vocabulary item”— not just single words but also phrases. The words or phrases do not have to be brand-spanking new, but they have to be newly prominent or notable in the past year, in the manner of *Time* magazine’s Person of the Year. The election is serious, based on members’ expertise in the full-time study of words, but it is far from solemn!

“This year, politics and economics certainly affected our language,” Barnhart says. “There is no crystal ball in which to predict what will happen this January. However, vocabulary of the recession may well trump the election’s impact. I suspect that the term *Great Recession* will have more long-term resonance than that of *climategate* or *death panel*—as attractive as those terms are. For the outcome we’ll have to wait a few years. Only terms that answer some social need will endure.”

This year, among Barnhart’s nominees are:

black jail (or prison) “a secret prison.” (e.q. 2005 for ~ *jail*; 2003 for ~ *prison*)
bloggerati “those who engage in blogging.” (e.q. 2003)
Cadillac health plan “comprehensive and expensive health plan.” (e.q. 1989; 1980-81 for *Cadillac health care*)
cap-and-trade “having to do with an economic program of incentives for ecological protection .” (e.q. 1997)
charging station “facility to recharge the battery of an electric car.” (e.q. 2009?)
climategate “alleged falsification of the climate change data.” (e.q. 2009)
cloud computing/the cloud “ability to connect to software and data on the Internet.” (e.q. 2001?/1997?)
coffee summit “a meeting of two politicians over coffee to address differences of policy.” (e.q. 2009?)
dark pool “semi-private marketplaces available only to select investors.” (e.q. 2009?)
death panel “a supposed government policy mandating end of life measures.” (e.q. 1996?) MORE ...

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DWT (=driving while texting) (e.q. 2007) (e.q. 2005)
e-marriage (e.q. 1998)
 “an electronic-mail connection”
 “a marriage with e-mail”
 “a marriage licensed through e-mail”
flash trading “trading of stocks and bonds through ultrafast computers” (e.q. 2008?)
go[ing] rogue “become uncontrollably self-directed.” (e.q. 1985)
Great Recession “the economic recession of 2008-9.” (e.q. 2008)
hill to die on for “a cause to be fought for ‘to the death’.” (e.q. 2009)
H1N1 “a variety of swine flu.” (e.q. 2005?)
mo-blogging “blogging while using a portable computer.” (e.q. 2003)
optic: the optics “appearances; visual impression.” (e.q. 2009)
Pashtunistan “the region of Pakistan and Afghanistan occupied by Pashtuns.” (e.q. 1955!)
Poliwood “the blending of politics and entertainment.” (e.q. 2003)
public option “a government-supported health insurance plan.” (e.q. [1988] 2009?)
reset, especially hit the reset button “to redirect a process to resume it at an earlier stage.” (e.q. [1992] 2006?)
shovel-ready “ready to begin construction, especially excavation.” (e.q. [1997] 2009)
slow media “non-electronic media, such as letters, landline telephones, etc.” (e.q. 2009)
Susan Boyle moment “a strikingly grand performance.” (e.q. 2009)
teabag “of or having to do with a protest of government policy.” (e.q. 1990)
Tea bagger:
 “person who uses a tea bag to make a cup of tea” (e.q.1998)
 “a device for filling tea bats” (e.q. 1998)
 “one who throws a tea bag as a demonstration of protest” (e.q. 1995)
 “one who bobs up and down as part of a dance” (e.q. 1997)
 “a homosexual ...” (e.q. 1998)
 “a politically very conservative protester of government policy” (e.q. 2002)
Tea party
 “a group of politically very conservative protesters of government policy” (e.q. 2009?)
 “a meeting of such a group” (e.q. 2009)
thumb novel “a novel composed on and circulated by cell phone.” (e.q. 2009)
TWD “texting while driving.” (e.q. 2007)
tweet “send a message by Twitter.” (e.q. 2008?)
Twitterable, -ability “suitable (or suitability) for sending by Twitter.” (e.q. 2008)
Twitterati
 “people all exited” (e.q. 1989)
 “people who use the communications system Twitter.” (e.q. 2009)
vook “electronically transmitted text and image, via the Internet or iPhone.” (e.q. 2009)
WiMax “a system for mobile access to data on the Internet.” (e.q. 2003)

Barnhart’s nominations for last year included:

Obama [=The last name of President-elect Barack Obama combined with suffixes, as in *Obamanation*, *Obamanomics*, and *Obamacan*—there are zillions of these, probably with many more to come]; selected as most useful for 2008!!
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]
staycation [=time off from work in which a person does not travel far from home]
microblogging [=engaging in a blog with typically very brief message, as on TWITTER]
cloud computing [=ability to connect to software on the Internet instead of on your hard drive]
wrap rage [=overreaction to the toughness of rigid plastic packaging]
Wardrobegate [=the dustup over spending on fashions for VP candidate Sara Palin] MORE ...
kiss ’n’ fly zone [=the drop-off “no-parking” zone at an airport terminal].

On Friday, January 8th, the final vote will be taken at 5:30 p.m. at the Hilton-Baltimore. The nominating meeting is at 5:45 p.m. Thursday, January 7th.

David K. Barnhart's background is long; he serves or has served on the executive boards of the American Dialect Society, the International Linguistic Association, and the Southeastern New York Library Resource Council and has been a member of the National Council of Teachers of English-Commission on the English Language. His articles have appeared in such journals as *American Speech*, *Dictionaries*, and *Word*. He has also contributed columns on new words in American history to such newspapers as the *Poughkeepsie Journal* and the *National Post* (Toronto). In addition, Houghton-Mifflin, Macmillan, Springer Verlag, and Merriam Webster have published his work. He learned the craft of lexicography working with his father, Clarence L. Barnhart, on the Thorndike-Barnhart dictionary series. He now edits and publishes *The Barnhart Dictionary Companion* (quarterly). He has lectured on the English language to adults and students throughout the North America and Europe.

The American Dialect Society began choosing Words of the Year in 1990. 2009 winners are listed below.

American Dialect Society: 2009 Words of the Year

2009 Word of the Year: ...

bailout,

the rescue by the government of companies on the brink of failure.

MOST USEFUL: *Barack Obama*. Both names as combining forms.

MOST CREATIVE: *recombobulation area*. An area at Mitchell International Airport in Milwaukee in which passengers that have just passed through security screening can get their clothes and belongings back in order.

MOST UNNECESSARY: *moofing*. From "mobile out of office," meaning working on the go with a laptop and cell phone.

MOST OUTRAGEOUS: *terrorist fist jab*. A knuckle-to-knuckle fist bump, or "dap,"

MOST EUPHEMISTIC: *scooping technician*. A person whose job it is to pick up dog poop.

MOST LIKELY TO SUCCEED: *shovel-ready*. Used to describe infrastructure projects that can be started quickly when funds become available.

LEAST LIKELY TO SUCCEED: *PUMA*: An acronym for Party Unity My Ass, used by Democrats who were disaffected after Hillary Clinton failed to secure a sufficient number of delegates.

NEW CATEGORY: Election-Related Word: *maverick*. A person who is beholden to no one. Widely used by the Republican Presidential and Vice-Presidential candidates, John McCain and Sarah Palin.

For earlier Words of the Year visit www.americandialect.org.

MORE ...

WORD OF THE DECADE. As the end of the first decade of the new century is upon us, the assembled attendees of the convention will take this opportunity to select a word which similarly captures linguistically the "oughts." They might choose one of the WOTYs from the decade. Or, they might choose a different word. Barnhart's nomination will be *security*.

The selection for the first Word of the Decade in 2000 was Web (for explosion of communication it facilitated).

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