AMONG THE NEW WORDS

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Following our custom in recent years, we have prepared an installment devoted to the words of the year chosen at the annual meeting of the American Dialect Society. The proceedings, which were held in Boston on 9 January 2004, received a good deal of attention once again from the news media, and word nerds you know became stars on WNYC, CNN, Voice of America, and other radio stations. There was a report on NPR, and newspapers around the world picked up a wire story on the winners. We thank Grant Barrett for putting the nominations and winners on the ADS Web site as soon as the information was available; his efforts saved our voices and kept our cell phone bills in check. The complete list of winners follows:

MOST USEFUL: flexitarian
MOST CREATIVE: freegan
MOST UNNECESSARY: freedom (as in freedom fries)
MOST OUTRAGEOUS: cliterati
MOST EUPHEMISTIC: pre-emptive self-defense
MOST LIKELY TO SUCCEED: SARS
LEAST LIKELY TO SUCCEED: tomacco
BEST REVIVAL (OF AN OLD TERM): spider hole
WORD OF THE YEAR: metrosexual

You may view our entry for sars in the winter 2003 installment of “Among the New Words” (American Speech 78: 437–38). Entries for the others appear below.

Nominations and citations were sent to us before the meeting by W. Kirwin, Frank Nuessell, and W. R. Walters. Nominations came from those in attendance too, but once again we failed to record their names. We humbly beg their forgiveness.

cliterati n, pl [clitoris + literati] Feminists (some with an announced interest in clitoral stimulation) 1996 Feb 19 Roger Warwick Evening Post (Wellington) 4 (Lexis-Nexis) Since my fall from grace I am no longer considered a member of the glitterati, literati or cliterati, and did not receive an invitation to the casino opening. 2002 Apr 14 Frances Dickenson Independent on Sunday (London) 1–2 (Lexis-Nexis) Let’s get the name-calling out of the way first. It’s
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an act of liberation to grab hold of the verbal sticks and stones that have been hurled at you and toss and twirl them like parade batons. Which is partly why I enjoy being called a lesbian or a dyke and why I revel in collective puns such as The Cliterati and Ladies Who Munch. 2003 Mar 3 Nation 25 New Yorkers Say No to War (NYSNTW) is a good example, says Chris Cuomo, a feminist philosopher now teaching at Cornell University and active in the group, founded just after September 11. Its first meeting, held at Eve Ensler’s apartment, was a who’s who, as Cuomo puts it, of “the New York cliterati,” including Urvashi Vaid, Laura Flanders, Sarah Schulman and other notables. May 3 Emma Tom Weekend Australian Sat preprints ed B31 (Lexis-Nexis; head & text) Cliterati set: members optional / IT’S the clitoris, stupid. After all these years of sexual revolution you’d think the world would have got the message: Most women require clitoral stimulation to have an orgasm. [¶] Yes, I realise it’s all terribly shocking and first-wave feminist. But some 1970s trends do last the distance. July 31 Laura Barton Guardian (London) 11 (Lexis-Nexis) Finally, Sidelines would like to wish a happy third birthday to Cliterati, the text-based sex website for women, boasting some 1,500 stories of an erotic nature. You can find Cliterati at www.cliterati.co.uk. Yes, right there. No, no, left a bit, down a bit.

flexitarian 1: n [flexible vegetarian] Vegetarian occasionally eating meat

1998 July 31 John Kessler Atlanta Journal-Constitution 3Q (Lexis-Nexis) The icky neologism touted by the Food Channel is “flexitarian,” which is a meat-eating semi-vegetarian who determines his/her eating preference based on mood rather than ideology. 1999 May 5 Anne Schamberg Milwaukee Journal-Sentinel Food 1 (Lexis-Nexis) She has a passion for the occasional pork rind and describes herself as a “flexitarian,” meaning that she is flexible about what she eats. 2001 Apr 18 Kristin Browning-Blas Denver Post E-01 (Lexis-Nexis) “People are looking at what is in our food supply—hormones, disease, antibiotics, whatever,” [sic] says Justina Walls, who teaches a class called Transitioning to Vegetarianism at Colorado Free University. And that concern has led to a burst of interest in meatless dishes, and a new breed of ‘flexitarians’ who eat primarily fruits, grains and vegetables, but who won’t say no to steak or salmon. 2: adj Of a vegetarian occasionally eating meat 1992 Oct 17 Linda Anthony Austin American-Statesman (http://www.wordspy.com/words/flexitarian.asp) The quiet cafe, tucked behind a 7-Eleven at 26th and Guadalupe streets, features what chef-owner Helga Morath calls “flexitarian fare.” That’s her way of describing health/vegetarian food prepared with a Continental cast.

freedom adj French (political taboo deformation) 2003 Feb 17 Associated Press (Lexis-Nexis; head, dateline, & text) French fries are out, freedom fries are in / BEAUFORT, N.C. / You can get fries with your order at Cubbie’s, but just don’t ask for french fries. [¶] “Because of Cubbie’s support for our troops, we no longer serve French fries. We now serve freedom fries,” says a sign in the restaurant’s window. [¶] Owner Neal Rowland said the switch from french
fries to freedom fries came to mind after a conversation about World War I
days when anti-German sentiment prompted Americans to rename familiar
German foods like sauerkraut and frankfurter to liberty cabbage and hot dog.
Rowland said his decision to change the name of french fries reflects a
political sentiment that comes as Americans watch France back away [sic]
from support for war in Iraq. “Everyone wants to have their freedom fries.
They’re going right along with it,” said waitress Amy Foster, who cleared tables
after the first lunch crowd to hear about the menu revision.

Feb 22 Jonathan Green (Melbourne) 12 (Lexis-Nexis) Would you like Freedom Fries with
that? Probably not if you’re among the figure conscious, a group that we can
now extend to include Australia’s international cricketers, a body of men
clearly under far greater performance pressures than we knew. Mar 11 Jay
Ambrose Scripps Howard News Service (Lexis-Nexis) Will it fry the French
when they learn what’s happened to french fries in America? Probably not, but
here’s the story: In some restaurants, and in cafeterias of the House of
Representatives in Washington, french fries have been renamed freedom fries.
Same thing with toast. It’s freedom toast now, not french toast. Mar 13 Joan
Ryan San Francisco Chronicle final ed A23 (Lexis-Nexis; head & text) 4 calling
birds, 3 freedom hens / Led by big-thinking Republican Rep. Bob Ney of
Ohio, the cafeteria struck the word “French” from the menu. French fries are
now freedom fries and french toast is freedom toast. . . . Ney’s bold move
immediately rippled through the cafeteria, spreading the spirit of patriotism
and defiance to every table . . . [ellipsis in text]

“Hey, Bill, how’s that daughter of yours? The one with the lovely freedom braids?”
“Thanks for asking, Tom. She’s visiting her grandparents in Freedom Lick, Ind. She loves it there,
mostly because my folks have three dogs.”
Three dogs? [sic] “Freedom poodles. My daughter dresses them up in these little freedom couture clothes
with hats and scarves, the whole shebang. She even gives them freedom manicures!”
“My daughter used to dress our dog in a freedom maid’s outfit—you can imagine the looks we got strolling down the Capitol steps.”
“I remember! Now, is this the same daughter who plays the freedom horn?”
“She used to. She gave up music a few years ago to major in history. She’s
writing her thesis on the Freedom and Indian War.”
“In support of the Indians, I hope! Ha-ha!”
“Right! Waiter, can we order? What’s the soup?”
“Freedom onion.”
“OK, I’ll have the soup and a hamburger with freedom fries. I’m going to have the Cobb salad. Does that come with
those long freedom beans I love so much?”
“Yes, sir, it does. What kind of dressing? Italian, Russian or freedom?”
“Freedom. And bring us some freedom bread.”
“Tom, I’ve been meaning to ask where you get those
great-looking shirts. I love freedom cuffs.”
“I go to a wonderful old tailor in New Orleans. He has a little shop in the Freedom Quarter.”
“I think I know the one. It has a striped awning and freedom doors?”
“Right, that’s—damn it to hell! Oh, excuse my freedom! I spilled tea on my jacket!”
“Take it down the street. There’s a freedom laundry down on K St. that will fix it right
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up.” [¶] “It’ll be OK. So, answer me this, Bill. If we’re trying to send a message to our troops about how angry we are over France’s betrayal on the U.N. Security Council vote, why don’t we take french fries and french toast off the menu altogether? Wouldn’t that really show them?” [¶] “Because, Tom, only war itself demands of us the great sacrifices. And believe you me, our party stands ready to sacrifice. The president is instituting a ban on freedom kissing in the White House for the duration of the war.”

freegan  n  [free vegan]  1: Person motivated by a political and social philosophy to eat only free food otherwise intended to be thrown away  2000 Feb (accessed Feb 2004) Why Freegan? (http://www.geocities.com/CapitolHill/Lobby/3609/lib_whyfreegan.html) Freeganism, also known as ethical eating, voluntary simplicity, monetary minimalism, the ultimate boycott, etc [sic] is fun and easy. Here are some basic tips: Quality of Food—Freegans wi[d]ely vary in their concern for health—some freegans gorge themselves on dumpstered donuts and some are still totally vegan, but get all their food for free. Most fall in the happy medium who would rather eat a load of bread with whey in it than make a $2 donation to the corporate death machine. Some freegans eat “edgy” food (on the edge of edibility[]) and some don’t take chances. Some folks are even “Meagan”—they eat meat if they get it for free.  2003 Nov 23 Observer 3 (Lexis-Nexis) YOU CAN cut up the credit cards, give Topshop a miss and take a well-earned break from consumerism—but you still have to eat. So as this weekend’s Buy Nothing Day approaches, it’s hard to imagine large supermarkets quaking in their boots. [¶] They would be, perhaps, if everyone became a ’freegan’ for the day. [¶] Derived from the word ‘vegan’, the term describes people who eat free food otherwise destined for the landfill site. Eating old, blemished or surplus produce found in supermarket bins, market stalls and bakery doorways, freegans make an anti-consumerist statement against waste and its impact on the environment.  2: Vegan with some flexibility in diet  2003 Dec 23 Robert Fulford National Post (Canada) Nat ed AL01 (Lexis-Nexis) Bees are animals, and vegans don’t eat anything that comes from animals. It’s said that some vegans, when alone, drip a little honey into their cup. Gwen, who is sweet, funny and absolutely committed, calls those people non-fundamentalist vegans. Others call them “freegans.”

metrosexual  [metropolitan heterosexual; BDC 12.4 (1994)]  1: n  Fashion-conscious heterosexual male  1994 Nov 15 Mark Simpson Independent (London) 22 (Lexis-Nexis) Metrosexual man, the single young man with a high disposable income, living or working in the city (because that’s where all the best shops are), is one of the most promising consumer markets of the decade. In the Eighties he was only to be found inside fashion magazines such as GQ, in television advertisements for Levis jeans or in gay bars. In the Nineties, he’s everywhere and he’s going shopping. . . . Metrosexuals are the creation of capitalism’s voracious appetite for new markets. [¶] Heterosexual men used to be the world’s worst consumers. [¶] All they bought was beer, fags and the occasional Durex; in a consumerist world, heterosexual men had no future. So
they were replaced by the metrosexual. 2003 Dec 28 Marek Fuchs New York Times late ed-final Sec 14WG/1/2 (Lexis-Nexis) CHEWING over the phrases that became popular in 2003, I found one stuck between my teeth like a raspberry seed: Metrosexual. A metrosexual is a straight urban man who is enough in touch with his feminine side to know the latest in fashion, hair care, moisturizer and organic spa treatment, and to be indifferent to the suggestion that such knowledge or fashion choices make him appear to be gay. At least that’s what we were told in newspaper and magazine articles and countless social commentaries.

pre-emptive self-defense n Attack made in anticipation of an attack 1981 Oct 1 William Safire New York Times Late city final ed A35/1 (Lexis-Nexis) Now switch identities. You are Marshal Ustinov, the Soviet defense chief. You have no intention of invading Pakistan, because that might trigger a war with the U.S. But if your ally India, in pre-emptive self-defense, attacks Pakistan—that would not be an East-West superpower confrontation. 1986 Apr 21 Lou Cannon Washington Post Final ed A2 (Lexis-Nexis) Last week, U.S. planes had Libyan leader Muammar Qaddafi in their bomb sights and wound up killing his infant daughter. That is what happens in war, any war, and the provocations for this raid included many incidents in which terrorists directed or harbored by Qaddafi deliberately murdered civilians. So, Reagan probably has a justifiable case that he acted in preemptive self-defense, even though he said at the June 18 news conference that “striking a blow in a general direction” would be “a terrorist act in itself and the killing and victimizing of innocent people.” 2003 Mar 31 Stephen Hoadley New Zealand Herald np (Lexis-Nexis) The US Government has decided that traditional notions of self-defence are inadequate to meet new threats from terrorism and proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. The UN Charter was drafted in 1945 to manage interstate wars, whereas now conflicts within states, and terrorism, inflict the vast majority of mayhem around the world. Thus the US has adopted a new doctrine of pre-emptive self-defence. Almost universally decried, this doctrine is less radical than it seems, for it has been applied by other governments when it suited their interests. June 26 Ellen Goodman Boston Globe 3d ed A17 (Lexis-Nexis) But by any definition, the script for a preventive war of pre-emptive self-defense was a crafted designed White House sales pitch. 2004 Jan 8 Sidney Blumenthal Guardian (London) Final ed 24 (Lexis-Nexis) Powell’s elegiac tone is in striking contrast to the reigning triumphalism of official Washington. Bush’s popularity has spiked to one of its high points with Saddam Hussein’s capture. His campaign operation is ginning up his national
security doctrine of “pre-emptive self-defence” (as a Republican TV ad has put it) to pose against the supposedly soft Democrats. And, meanwhile, Powell presents himself as bereft, tragic and noble.

**spider hole n** [W3 Addenda 1993] Hole with covering used for ambush and protection in war 1990 Dec 1 St. Louis Post-Dispatch 3B (Lexis-Nexis) Upon arrival in Vietnam, I had fully believed 18 years of propaganda and grand lies. I was a good old red-blooded American boy and these communist devils wanted to kill my mother and take away my apple pie. The first deaths dispelled my foolish beliefs. They were a father and his young son. Sharing a rusty bolt-action relic of World War II and a few precious rounds of ammunition, they held off the well-trained forces of the most powerful nation on Earth—until we rushed them and dropped seven fragmentation grenades down their rock-lined spider hole. 1994 Oct 29 Houston Chronicle 2 Star ed A32 (Lexis-Nexis; head & text) WWII REMEMBERED; Invasion of Leyte a traumatic affair / Lt. Col. Albert Hartl, then 33, commanded the 1st Battalion, 17th Infantry Regiment, 7th Infantry Division. He recalled how Japanese soldiers, concealed in what were called “spider holes,” harassed Yanks as they moved into the island’s interior. [¶] “They would dig round holes deep enough to stand in and camouflage them,” Hartl said. “They would wait until you came by, then delight in shooting you in the back. You had to be very careful and look at brush piles very closely.” [¶] Some spider holes contained primitive land mines [sic] that the Japanese apparently were supposed to detonate if a tank or other vehicle rolled over them, he said. [¶] “This was a suicide mission for the soldiers in the spider holes, but I don’t think the soldiers were told that,” he said. [¶] “Bear in mind that dying for their emperor was an honorable thing to do.” 2003 Dec 14 Gary Martin San Antonio Express-News Extra A2 (Lexis-Nexis) President Bush today called the capture of former Iraqi leader Saddam Hussein the end of a brutal government and crucial to the rise of a free country and the people who once feared his return to power. [¶] “Now the former dictator of Iraq will face the justice he denied to millions,” Bush said in a televised address from the Cabinet Room at the White House. [¶] “The capture of this man was crucial to the rise of a free Iraq. It marks the end of the road for him and all who bullied and killed in his name,” Bush said. [¶] Bush was joined by Democratic presidential hopefuls in congratulating U.S. troops from the Army’s 4th Infantry Division, based at Fort Hood, who pulled Saddam from a man-made “spider” hole in the basement of a farmhouse near Tikrit. 2004 Jan 4 William Safire New York Times late ed final Sec 6/12 (Lexis-Nexis) In the sense General Sanchez had in mind, earliest citation so far comes in from Barry Popik of New York. A Washington Post [sic] photo caption dated Jan. 16, 1941, reads, “Soldiers at Camp Ord . . . [ellipsis in text] here demonstrate the Army’s new ‘spider hole’ method of hiding a soldier.” Jan 27 Pittsburgh Post-Gazette Sooner ed C-5 (Lexis-Nexis) “The players aren’t caught up in all the streaks, but they would
have to live in a spider hole with Saddam Hussein not to hear the things being said about them[,]” Saint Joseph’s coach Phil Martelli said.

tomacco

(http://www.thesimpsons.com/episode_guide/1105.htm; 20 Jan 2004 access date) Homer begins challenging everyone around him to duels after he sees a Zorro film at the Googoplex. Most people back down, until Homer meets an old-fashioned Colonel who takes him up on his dare. Unable to get out of the contest with the Colonel, Homer and his family flee to the country, where they become farmers. Farm life is difficult until Homer creates a new crop called tomacco—tomatoes crossed with tobacco. The new fruit is disgusting to eat, but incredibly addictive. Selling barrel upon barrel of tomacco, Homer attracts the attention of some tobacco industry executives who want to capitalize on his new crop. 2003 Nov 14 Scott Stinson Chicago Sun-Times 5 (National Post; Lexis-Nexis) An Oregon scientist inspired by Homer Simpson has successfully created “tomacco”—a tomato plant that contains nicotine. [¶] But Rob Baur is now worried he has produced “the ultimate Frankenfood” and that it could, in fact, be deadly to eat. [¶] Baur says the idea to cross-breed tomatoes and tobacco came from a 1999 episode of “The Simpsons.” After inadvertently challenging a Southern colonel to a pistols-at-dawn duel, the Simpson patriarch decides to flee to his childhood farm with his family to live off the land. [¶] He accidentally mixes tomato and tobacco seeds, and after applying borrowed plutonium to his fields—“a little boost for Mother Nature”—grows the tomacco hybrid. It tastes awful, but is highly addictive, as several farm animals and his son, Bart, soon discover. [¶] Baur, 53, vaguely recalled reading about cross-breeding the two plants during a university class in the 1970s. The idea kicked around in his head for a while, then he set to work. He grew both plants, then cut the tops of each and switched them around. Both promptly died. [¶] Undeterred, and without a source of plutonium handy, Baur grew the plants again, this time hollowing a portion of each out and grafting them together. The plant took form, and after weeks of pruning, he now has a large tobacco root that has sprouted a tomato branch. The branch has yielded one ripe fruit, and tests have shown the leaves contain nicotine—the fruit will be tested for nicotine today. The scientist says he expects the fruit will contain much higher levels of the addictive ingredient.