

**LOOKING AT LANGUAGE**

**The Way We Word**

Back in the olden days we had a lot of moxie. We'd put on our best bib and tucker and straighten up and fly right. Hubba-hubba! We'd cut a rug in some juke joint and then go necking and petting and smooching and spooning and billing and cooing in (depending on when we were making all that whoopee) flivvers, tin lizzies, roadsters, hot rods and jalopies in some passion pit or lovers' lane. Gee whillikers! Heavens to Betsy! Jumpin' Jehoshaphat! Holy moley! We were in like Flynn and living the life of Reilly, and even a regular guy couldn't accuse us of being a knucklehead, a nincompoop or a pill. Not for all the tea in China!

Back in the olden days life was a real gas, a doozy, a dilly and a pip; flipsville, endsville, the bee's knees, the cat's whiskers, the cat's meow and the cat's pajamas; far out, nifty, neat, groovy, ducky, beautiful, fabulous, super, terrific and copacetic. Nowadays life is the max; ace, awesome, bad, sweet, fly, kick-ass, gnarly, rad and phat. Life used to be swell, but when's the last time anything was swell? *Swell* has gone the way of beehives, pageboys, and the D. A. (duck's ass), of spats, knickers, fedoras, poodle skirts and pedal pushers. Oh, my aching back. Kilroy was here, but he isn't anymore.

Like Washington Irving's Rip Van Winkle and Kurt Vonnegut's Billy Pilgrim, we have become unstuck in time. We wake up from what surely has been just a short nap and, before we can say "Bob's your uncle!" or "I'll be a monkey's uncle!" or "This is a fine kettle of fish!" we discover that the words we grew up with, the words that seemed omnipresent as oxygen, have vanished with scarcely a notice from our tongues and our pens and our keyboards. Poof, poof, poof go the words of our youth, the words we've left behind. We blink, and they're gone, evanesced from the landscape and wordscape of our perception, like Mickey Mouse wristwatches, Hula-Hoops, skate keys, candy cigarettes, little wax bottles of col-

ored sugar water and an organ grinder's monkey.

Where have all those phrases gone? Long time passing. Where have all those phrases gone? Long time ago: Pshaw. The milkman did it. Think about the starving Armenians. Bigger than a bread box. Banned in Boston. The very idea! It's your nickel. Don't forget to pull the chain. Knee high to a grasshopper. Turn-of-the-century. Iron curtain. Domino theory. Third world. Fail safe. Fiddlesticks! You look like the wreck of the Hesperus. Going like sixty. I'll see you in the funny papers. Don't take any wooden nickels. And awa-a-ay we go! Oh, my stars and garters! It turns out there are more of these lost words and expressions than Carter had liver pills.

This can be disturbing stuff, this winking out of the words of our youth, these words that lodge in our heart's deep core. But just as one never steps into the same river twice, one cannot step into the same language twice. Even as one enters, words are swept downstream into the past, forever making a different river. We of a certain age have been blessed to live in changeful times. For a child each new word is like a shiny toy, a toy that has no age. We at the other end of the chronological and language arc have the advantage of remembering that there are words that once did not exist and that there were words that once strutted their hour upon the earthly stage and now are heard no more, except in our collective memory. It's one of the greatest advantages of aging. We can have archaic and eat it too.

*(A version of this article appeared in the March/April 2005 issue of AARP/The Magazine.)*

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*His current book is "The Revenge of Anguished English." He is the 2002 recipient of the Toastmasters International Golden Gavel Award. Explore his website at [www.verbivore.com](http://www.verbivore.com)*

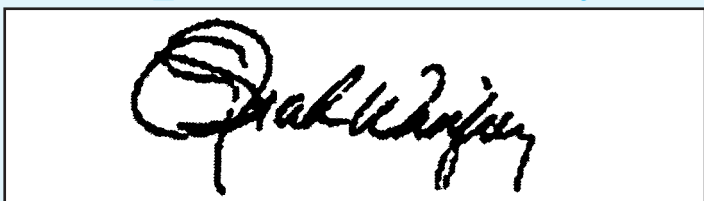


**Richard Lederer**

*In 18<sup>th</sup> century America artists journeyed from town to town with paintings of man and woman, complete in every feature but the faces. A person wishing to sit for a portrait had to select the body he liked best and let the artist fill in the missing hair and face.*

**WHAT'S IN A NAME**

**Oprah Winfrey**



The rightward slant of her writing reveals that Oprah bases many of her decisions on feeling rather than logic, and that she is likely to express her emotions. The "O" of Oprah is much larger than the "W" of Winfrey, indicating that her given name has more significance to her than her family name. The embellished "O" reveals showmanship and a desire to be "center stage."

Needle like strokes at the top of her "n" and her "r's" disclose a quick thinker. Insight is evidenced by the break between the letters "r" and "a."

Oprah favors action rather than contemplation. She jumps right in to accomplish her goals. She need solitude at times and is more giving to others than to herself.

*Mimi Levin, a handwriting analyst, lectures in the Palm Beach County area and does in-depth personality profiles, compatibility screening and personnel screening. She can be reached by writing to her at 5451 Verona Drive, Boynton Beach, FL 33437.*



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3. The costly features in the new contracts may not be needed.
4. The sales representative will be getting paid a higher commission on a variable annuity sale than on other investments.

NASD Rules require that before a broker recommends the purchase or sale of any variable annuity, the broker must have reasonable grounds to believe that the recommendation is suitable for this customer in light of his needs and investment objective.



**Howard M. Rosenfield**

Switching from one variable annuity to another that does not improve the customer's position but simply generates another commission for the broker, is prohibited.

The broker must be certain he has made an adequate effort to obtain complete customer information concerning the customer's need for liquidity and retirement income. A similar effort must be made when recommending a variable life insurance policy.

The Investor Alert may be found at the NASD's website: [www.nasdr.com/investor/alerts](http://www.nasdr.com/investor/alerts).

*Howard M. Rosenfield is an attorney specializing in arbitration and mediation for investors who have a dispute with their broker and/or brokerage firm. He is a member of the Public Investors Arbitration Bar Association (PIABA) and can be contacted by calling 1-800-637-3243.*

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