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Dear Reader,

Here is another year-end collection of pet peeves from *EC Buzz* Readers. Not surprisingly, political expressions have been grating on readers' nerves lately.

And this news just in – *EC Writing* is a true maverick! Last month we questioned topical use of the word *maverick*. It turns out that Fontaine Maury Maverick, grandson of the patriarchal Texas rancher Sam Maverick and a two-term U.S. congressman, coined the term *gobbledygook* in frustration at the convoluted language of bureaucrats.



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## Readers' Pet Peeves

1. **Back in the day.** When was that, exactly? Was it back in the proverbial "good old days", or just the last time things felt good? Life may be faster-paced now, but this expression sounds a little silly when used by people too young to remember when Rick Astley was famous the first time.
  2. **Breaking news.** These words used to herald events of such profound significance that their reporting couldn't be postponed until the six o'clock news broadcast. Now with 24-hour news networks desperate to fill air time, any banal non-event seems to qualify as *breaking news*. The latest antics of some vapid celebrity are hardly world-shattering.
  3. **Change.** Election candidates frequently like to promote themselves as agents of *change* in one form or another. The sobering reality is that once in office it's often their tune that changes, whether by necessity or design. But hope springs eternal...
  4. **Pork barrel politics.** Allegations of *pork barrel politics*, a colourful term for *political bribery*, or more politely, *political patronage*, routinely surface whenever elections come round. Will pork barreling ever disappear? When pigs fly!
  5. **Wall Street/Main Street.** The Wall Street/Main Street contrast was clever the first few times but got old fast through overuse. Maybe it's time to come up with some other cute slogan, like "Wall Street is no longer Easy Street."
  6. **Look to.** We may *look to* the future with hope, or *look to* our leaders for answers, but since when did we *look to* hire new managers or *look to* improve the bottom line? We *expect* or *intend* to dump this usage.
  7. **Incent.** Meaning *to give an incentive*, this is a hideous back-formation. The alternative *incentivize* is almost as bad. But fortunately there's already a perfectly good word for this concept – *motivate*.
  8. **Text messaging style creeping into other forms of communication.** wtf? not proof redn yor emsgz iz bad enuf. bt f u typ txt lingo n biz cmunik8shnz insted of ur cel fone o mob device, u swnd lik an iliter8 teen. pln eng, pls!
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## Parting Words

"Let's have some new clichés."

- Samuel Goldwyn, movie producer (1879-1974)