

Name of the Year 2011

CLEVELAND EVANS

Bellevue University, USA

The seventh annual Name of the Year vote was held at the American Name Society meeting in Portland, Oregon on January 6, 2012.

For 2010 we had twenty total nominees, tying the previous year's record. Seventeen nominations were made by email before the meeting, and three were nominated from the floor during the voting.

There were originally five nominations for Trade Name of the Year. Arab Spring, the name of the pro-democracy movement in the Middle East, and Occupy Wall Street, the movement claiming to represent the 99 percent of non-wealthy Americans which began in New York City and spread to other places around the world, were two of the nominees. The group decided to remove these from the Trade Name designation and have a special vote on the "Political Event Name of the Year." Arab Spring won that title by one vote.

The first of the three remaining Trade Name nominees was Aubagio, the name of a drug for multiple sclerosis marketed by Sanofi. The nominator said the name "epitomizes the growing trend among pharmaceutical brands for purely abstract names." 200 Stories Tall, the name of a production, direction, and editing firm in Chicago, was nominated because of the way it used visual imagery to imply the firm's towering ability to skillfully create stories for clients. Siri, the name of the voice-activated "digital assistant" on Apple's iPhone, was nominated for how this "exotic and enigmatic name" helped lead users to think of the technology's robotic female voice as a real woman. Siri won the prize as Trade Name of the Year with three-quarters of the votes.

There were three nominees for Place Name of the Year. Fukushima, the site of the tsunami-crippled nuclear power plant in Japan, was nominated for its now iconic status alongside Chernobyl and Three Mile Island. Tahrir Square, the place in Cairo where demonstrations that led to the overthrow of the Mubarak regime were concentrated, and Zuccotti Park, the privately owned public space in lower Manhattan where Occupy Wall Street began, were the other two nominees. Fukushima won with 60 percent of the votes.

Seven nominations for Personal Name of the Year had been received before the vote. These included Herman Cain, name of one of the Republican candidates for President; Casey Anthony, name of the defendant in a well-publicized murder trial; and Rebecca Black, the name of a singer whose YouTube rendition of the song "Friday" was widely derided by viewers. Steve Jobs, the name of the founder of Apple Computers who died in October, was nominated for the coincidental link

between the surname Jobs and the recession as well as for Jobs' own fame. Tebow, surname of Tim Tebow, quarterback for the Denver Broncos football team, was nominated because of how it had inspired the eponym "tebowing," meaning "taking a knee in prayerful reflection." Harper Seven Beckham and Moroccan Cannon were nominated as celebrity baby names that exemplified current trends in American child naming.

There were two nominees from the floor at the meeting. The first was Amy Winehouse, the name of the late British singer. The nominator said her surname was descriptive of the manner of her death. Qaddafi, Kathafi, Khadhafi, etc. was nominated because of how the scores of different spellings used for the name of the late dictator of Libya illustrated the difficulties in transliterating Arabic names into the Roman alphabet.

Initial voting resulted in a tie between Steve Jobs and Qaddafi, Kathafi, Khadafy. The run-off vote was won by the various forms of Qaddafi, with 54 per cent of the total cast.

Two nominees for Fictional Name of the Year had been received before the meeting. The first was Katniss Everdeen, the name of the heroine of Suzanne Collins' "Hunger Games" series of dystopian novels, for how it fit the character and cleverly used the name of an edible aquatic plant for the given name. Tyrion Lannister, name of a chief character in George R. R. Martin's "A Song of Ice and Fire" fantasy series, the first book of which, *Game of Thrones*, became an HBO television series in 2011, was nominated because of how it blended the familiar and exotic at the same time and how the surname linked with Lancaster, name of a family famous during the medieval English Wars of the Roses.

Lisbeth Salander, the name of the heroine of Swedish author Stieg Larsson's "Girl with the Dragon Tattoo" series, which inspired film versions in both Sweden and the United States, was nominated for the huge cultural impact of the story. Lisbeth Salander was chosen as Fictional Name of the Year with 65 percent of the votes.

The five winners in the categories were the only nominees for overall Name of the Year for 2011. Arab Spring was proclaimed Name of the Year for 2011, receiving 56 percent of the votes on the first ballot.

For 2012, the American Name Society will again vote on Names of the Year in the four categories of Fictional Names, Place Names, Personal Names, and Trade Names before choosing an overall winner. Send nominations to Dr Cleveland Evans, either by email at cleveland.evans@bellevue.edu, or by postal mail to him at Psychology Department, Bellevue University, 1000 Galvin Road South, Bellevue, NE 68005-3098, USA. Please include a rationale for your nomination, which can be included on the list of nominees presented at our annual meeting in January 2013.