

June 4, 2012

This is Jill Duffy, with Community Comment

During the summer of 1987, a friend and me decided to travel California. Before departing, we met friends at Sidelines for a bon voyage party – and listened to the various jocks as they'd greet each other 'Dude!'.

Off we went, first spent the week with friends in San Francisco. Wandering the SF Museum of Modern Art, the DeYoung, and dinner at Sam Wu's where you had to bring in your own beverage and write your order only to be insulted by a surly waiter. We visited the Palace of Fine Arts, walked along the bayfront, dinner at Tadage Grill. And we noted....never heard the word 'Dude'.

We worked our way down the coast, arriving in Los Angeles, where we often heard the word 'Dude' – which cracked us up, especially when we heard girls saying so to each other. Then off to Palos Verdes and Venice Beach, where every other word was 'Dude'. We kept track of the many ways the word Dude was employed, and not a one of them had anything to do with spending time at a vacation ranch. From greetings, to exclamation, disappointment, surprise, cajoling, excitement, description of a person, warning and goodbyes. We drove towards Yosemite and stopped along the Merced River, we'd found a perfect swimming hole and set up for the day when suddenly ...."DUUUDDEE" rang out in exhilaration as a young man cannonballed into the river from above us –

The Dude was everywhere. No matter where we were, the air was literally full of dudes.

“Literally full of Dudes” ...Really... Talk about a word that has been horribly abused...literally. And then there is “Iconic”. The Iconic rockband “Skidrow”, and “the food icon Bobby Flay and his iconic chicken and waffle dish from his iconic restaurant”. How about ‘the iconic SpongeBob Squarepants?’ It’s enough to make one groan.

And as political rhetoric heats up, another word emerges for abuse. Socialism.

This word sends people flying into corners, fists ready...But in truth, the word can be used in as many different ways. We expect government to provide services that could be deemed as ‘socialism’ and we either vote individuals in, or place forward initiatives that have brought us many services. Fire, police, roads, bridges, harbors and airports necessary for the movement of commerce..., education, social and mental health services, water and wastewater, public transportation, recreation, senior citizen services such as lunches and in-home support, animal control, agricultural services and subsidies, jails and prisons, incentive programs so property owners can afford to deal with legacy issues such as contaminated properties or watershed restoration and of course I’d be remiss to exclude Social Security and Medicare. We demand that government keep taxes down, but we also demand an incredible array of services for our money.

So, please use the socialism rhetoric sparingly. I know of very few who could afford to pay for the true costs associated with the level of service the public expects. It's an uneasy social agreement that we hold – to collect and distribute taxes and fees to fund the programs, projects and entitlements we all benefit from.

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