"GAZA" AND "BARBIE" CHOSEN AS JOINT 2023 NAMES OF THE YEAR

"Gaza" and "Barbie" were chosen as the joint winners of the Name of the Year for 2023 by the American Name Society at its annual Name of the Year discussion and vote on January 4, 2024. The pairing of these names neatly captures the dichotomy of 2023: the reality of Gaza, the tragedy of another war in the Middle East, and the escapism of *Barbie*, a comedy movie about a classic toy that imagines a doll embracing feminism. Despite runoff votes, ANS members could not choose a winner, a rare event in the Name of the Year vote; these two names perfectly represent the zeitgeist of 2023, as well as two different types of contested spaces.

"Swiftie" was chosen as Personal Name of the Year. "Swiftie" is the self-identifying term for fans of Taylor Swift, a neologism that is a modification of Swift's name. The term was quickly picked up and used by the media. Linguistically, it employs the diminutive ending "-ie", which is a particularly productive pattern in pop culture (e.g., Trekkie for *Star Trek* fans, Durannie for Duran Duran fans); unlike many new words in pop culture, it has shown impressive longevity, being first attested in 2010. In 2017, Taylor Swift even trademarked the name for commercial usage, making it an interesting brand name as well. Other candidates in this category included Taylor Swift, Vivek Ramaswamy, George Santos, and Sheynnis Alondra Palacios Cornejo.

"Gaza" was voted Place Name of the Year. Gaza is the name for the stretch of land between Egypt and Israel, and has become shorthand for the ongoing Israel/Hamas War. Its Hebrew name is "Azzah", meaning *"strength"* and its Arabic name is "Ghazzah". It refers not only to the geographic region, but is now regularly used to refer to the current humanitarian disaster happening there. Other candidates in this category included Maui, Palestine, and Haudenosaunee Confederacy.

"ChatGPT" won the title Brand Name of the Year. The name of OpenAI's artificial intelligence tool is a compound of the word "chat", referring to the chatbot, and the initialism "GPT", for "Generative Pre-trained Transformer". It promises an interaction with AI as simple and casual as having a chat with a friend, while retaining the mystery of technical jargon that most people

do not understand. Other candidates in this category included Discord, Ozempic, and OceanGate.

"Barbenheimer" was chosen Artistic Name of the Year. It is portmanteau of the movie titles *Barbie* and *Oppenheimer,* which opened on the same weekend in 2023. The name arose organically and captured the trend of people going to see both movies sequentially, and inspired Halloween costumes, memes, and fake movie trailers. It became a cultural phenomenon because of the huge success of both films, along with their wildly contrasting images of a fantasy comedy built on the Barbie doll vs. a very serious Oppenheimer biopic dealing with nuclear holocaust. Other candidates in this category included The Eras Tour, *Barbie*, and *Renaissance* (Beyoncé's tour and movie).

"X" was voted E-Name of the Year. The attempted—and mostly failed—rebranding/debranding of Twitter by new owner Elon Musk illustrates the extreme difficulty of using a single letter as a brand. It was also a case study in the sacrifice of a tremendously valuable brand (the name Twitter, the verb "tweet", the blue bird iconography) for the sake of a purportedly "edgy" and "disruptive" brand. Other candidates in this category included the hashtag #freepalestine, OpenAI, and Lu Do Magalu (a popular Brazilian virtual influencer).

The American Name Society is a scholarly organization founded in 1951 devoted to studying all aspects of names and naming. The Name of the Year vote has been held since 2004.

The 2022 Name of the Year was "Ukraine", and "Great Resignation" won for 2021.

The 2020 Name of the Year was jointly held by "Kamala" and "COVID-19." "Brexit" was Name of the Decade and "Arrokoth" was the 2019 Name of the Year. "Jamal Khashoggi" won for 2018, "Rohingya" for 2017, "Aleppo" for 2016 , "Caitlyn Jenner" for 2015, "Ferguson" for 2014, "Francis" for 2013, and "Sandy" for 2012.

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