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**“ARROKOTH” CHOSEN “2019 NAME OF THE YEAR” AND
“BREXIT” NAME OF THE DECADE**

“Arrokoth” was chosen the Name of the Year for 2019 by the American Name Society at its annual meeting in New Orleans on January 3, 2020.

The winner was also chosen ANS’s Place Name of the Year. In November NASA announced this as the name of “minor planet 486958.” Before the *New Horizons* probe flew over it on January 1, 2019, NASA received about 34,000 name suggestions. Their initial selection, Ultima Thule, was abandoned when it turned out that Ultima Thule was used by Nazi occultists as the mythical home of the “Aryan race.” Arrokoth means “sky” in Powhatan an extinct Algonquian language formerly spoken in eastern Virginia.

“Greta Thunberg” was chosen as Personal Name of the Year. Swedish climate activist Thunberg, who turned 17 on January 3, is a leader of the global youth addressing climate change. Chosen by *Time* magazine as its Person of the Year for 2019, her name itself has become a byword for youth activism. The influence of youth climate activism on politicians is now called “The Greta Effect”, and a documentary film about the movement is titled “Make the World Greta Again.”

#Fridaysforfuture won the title of Ename of the Year. This became the name of Greta Thunberg’s movement, referring to her original protests on Fridays in Sweden. In a relatively short period of time, this e-moniker has spawned many other e-names. It has also become the name for a global movement and has spawned names for analogous protest groups (*#Fridaysforfuture*→ *Fridaysforfuture*→*Scientists for Future, Parents for Future, All for Future*).

TikTok was voted Trade Name of the Year. The TikTok app for making and sharing short videos was launched internationally in September 2017 and now has more than 500 million users. It’s the first Chinese-made app to succeed on a mass scale outside China. The TikTok name, used

only outside China, is based on *tick-tock*, onomatopoeia for clocks and a term for countdowns and minute-by-minute action.

“Baby Yoda” was chosen Artistic Name of the Year. In the Star Wars series “The Mandalorian,” which premiered on the Disney+ channel in November, the recurring character with the saucer eyes and batlike ears is known simply as The Child. However, critics and viewers quickly dubbed him “Baby Yoda.” The character is almost always referred to that way on social media. This is a highly unusual case where the name of a fictional character has been created by fans instead of those writing or producing the program.

“Antivax(x)er” was chosen as Miscellaneous Name of the Year. According to the World Health Organization, one of the ten largest threats to global health is the increasing reticence of adults to receive or allow those in their charge to be given a medical vaccination. People who are opposed to vaccination legislation have been given the name *antivaxer* or *antivaxxer*. Although Merriam Webster asserts that the name first was attested in English in 2009, the name reached particular prominence in 2019, when health organizations around the world began to ring the alarm about the deadly re-emergence of many contagious diseases. The highest rate of Google searches ever reached for the name of this resistance movement was in April/March of 2019.

Voters at the meeting spontaneously decided to designate a “Name of the Decade” for 2010-2019. “Brexit” won that title. This name for the withdrawal of the United Kingdom from the European union, created by blending “Britain” with “exit”, was created before the June 2016 referendum on the issue. The term has remained in the news and has continued to spawn similar names. For example, “Grexit” refers to the proposal that Greece leave the European Union. In the United States, those who advocate that Texas and California become independent call their ideas “Texit” and “Calexit”, and the hashtags #Orexit, #Washexit, and #Nevexit are used by those who wish Oregon, Washington, and Nevada to join with California in a new nation. An internet list of terms dealing with Brexit is called “Brexicon”.

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. “Jamal Khashoggi” was the 2018 Name of the Year. “Rohingya” was the 2017 Name of the Year. “Aleppo” won for 2016, “Caitlyn Jenner” for 2015, “Ferguson” for 2014, “Francis” for 2013, and “Sandy” for 2012.

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