NEOLOGISMS FOR THE NEW MILLENNIUM

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Editor’s Note: This is an excerpt from his recently-finished manuscript Verboddities.

My friend Lois Fischer refers to a one-sided conversation as a unisation. Another friend once suggested that affluental describes influence obtained by affluence. The killing of a book by negative reviews or poor promotion could be referred to as bibliocide. Comedic suicide could be called self-induced comicide. The act of home-wrecking could be a case of domicide. I envision the word webster as the shortened form of webmaster. Agnesia is the state of forgetting one’s agnosticism when threatened by mortal danger. An andrivore is a man-eater. A love potato is rich in sentiment or affection but otherwise useless. A mouse potato is a person who seldom leaves the computer keyboard. The silver ceiling (by analogy with the glass ceiling) discriminates against the middle-aged or elderly. Tanorexics are people addicted to tanning salons. Unitaskers can do only one thing at a time. Word-watchers report the following recent coinages, some of which are in actual use:

afterism a delayed aphorism; a concise, clever statement that you didn’t think of until too late (James Alexander Thom, US author)
fuzak the music generated by a jazz-rock fusion band (J. Poet, in the San Francisco area newspaper East Bay Express in the early 1980s)
generonym a brand name that becomes a generic name for its product category (Paul McFedries)
gimmage an apparent blend of gimmick and image (Bob Saget, guest host of “Saturday Night Live” on May 6 1995)
nuzak non-news, by analogy with muzak (San Francisco columnist John Carman, in reference to the November 2000 ballots feud between Gore and Bush)
oddenda odds and ends, miscellany (quote from Carl Calvert Bettis, “Tosca” in the cyberworld)
oropodiatry therapy for foot-in-mouth disease (writer Jeff Burdick)
pregnesia memory loss caused by pregnancy (according to many women)
skategoats people who didn’t vote because they believed their votes wouldn’t make a difference (Bonnie L. McCafferty, “New Words For $200, Alex” in the October 1995 Louisville Magazine)
unclude to exclude by nominal inclusion, token representation (quote from Carl Calvert Bettis)
vacolumnist a writer who fills in for a vacationing columnist (Bonnie L. McCafferty, “New Words For $200, Alex” in the October 1995 Louisville Magazine)
wasm past tense of “ism” (British historian John Lukacs who, after the USSR fell, commented “all the isms are now wasms”)