Sandy voted Name of the Year

The American Name Society voted “Sandy” Name of the Year for 2012 at its annual meeting in Boston, MA on January 4.

“Sandy,” the name of the hurricane or “Superstorm” which devastated New Jersey and New York in late October, was cited for its historical importance and the use of the phrase “Superstorm Sandy” to create a memorable name which will bring to mind this event for years to come.

Donna Lillian, incoming President of the American Name Society, said “Sandy is also memorable because of its association with the sand that filled many shoreline homes as a result of the storm.” Because of the tragedy at Sandy Hook elementary school in Newtown, CT, Sandy is also linked with the two biggest tragic news events of the year for the northeastern United States.

The society also chose winners for Names of the Year in four separate categories:

“Fiscal Cliff” was voted Trade Name of the Year. Ben Bernanke’s use of this term has made it famous worldwide. Iman Nick, first Vice President of ANS, said “This name is now universally understood throughout Europe as well as in the United States.”

“Gangnam” was voted Placename of the Year. This name of a trendy affluent district of Seoul, South Korea has become known through the United States and worldwide as a result of the YouTube video of a Korean rapper’s song “Gangnam Style”, which now has over a billion views. Hundreds of parodies of the song have been made, and scores of politicians and celebrities have appeared doing the dance featured in the video. The Korean placename means “south of the Han River.”

“Malala” was chosen as the Personal Name of the Year. The first name of Pakistani teenager Malala Yousafzai, who was shot by the Taliban for refusing to abandon her campaign for girls’ education, is now known worldwide as a symbol for women’s rights.

“Downton Abbey” won as Fictional Name of the Year. The name of the estate featured in the British television series broadcast on PBS in the United States has become recognizable as a symbol for elegance and aristocracy, being one of the most popular programs ever shown on the noncommercial public network.

The American Name Society, founded in 1951, is a professional organization devoted to the study of names and their role in society. In 2011 “Arab Spring” was the ANS Name of the Year. In 2010 “Eyafjallajökull” was chosen. In 2009 it was “Salish Sea”, and in 2008 “Barack Hussein Obama” was the winner.

For more information on ANS or the Name of the Year vote, contact Cleveland Evans at Cleveland.evans@bellevue.edu, or 402-210-7458.