

A Seeker's Journal

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ED STEINBERG AND THE AMERICAN HERITAGE DICTIONARY OF THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE

By *Delores Miller*

Ed Steinberg was a crabby, grumpy old cavalier who lived and floated around Hortonville trying to sell insurance from his agency. A self-important little gentleman and scholar who, with his wife, had a collection of spinning wheels and went around to clubs and schools demonstrating the art of making raw wool into yarn. He never seemed to remember who we were, so we just ignored him.

Ed grew old and senile and was finally admitted to a nursing home where he wandered the halls, irritating the nurses and patients. Finally the Good Lord granted him a peaceful death.

The powers that be and administrators had an estate auction of his household goods, antiques, the spinning wheels, and other junk. Being inquisitive, I went to the Ed Steinberg auction and hung around till the last dog was hung. Few people stayed that long. Painted and decorated milk cans went for five dollars each and I'm still sorry I didn't buy the lot. A late item the auctioneers found was "The American Heritage Dictionary of The English Language." No one wanted this large red book. Finally I bid a buck and got it.

It has been my constant companion for the last fifteen years. It measures eight and one-half by eleven inches, copyright 1975, 1550 pages, alphabetically thumb indexed, weighs ten pounds, illustrated vocabulary; good deal for a dollar.

But I changed my mind about Ed Steinberg. The whole book is stuck full of notes, words underlined, notes written in the margins, church bulletins, newspaper articles, and even a beautiful red maple leaf. Ed must have written many letters for his insurance business and needed the dictionary and thesaurus to find just the right words. He typed frequently used words on pink sheets of paper which he stapled at the beginning of each indexed letter. I use it, too, for the right words, but spend more time reading Ed Steinberg's notes.

Best dollar I have ever spent. #

WISH LIST FOR 2005

TAKING INTO consideration the ultimate results of making New Year's Resolutions in years past, I have chosen to make a wish list instead. These are a few things that I cannot personally cause to happen, but who knows?—if enough people wish for the same things they may come to pass.

Worldwide wishes:

Every American Soldier serving on hostile soil is brought home safely.

Every terrorist becomes convinced that Allah wants no violence to occur anywhere in the world.

Every nation learns to peacefully co-exist with all other nations.

World health organizations conquer AIDS and the other deadly diseases around the world.

Wealthy nations join together to feed the world's hungry and teach them to produce their own food.

Nations capable of producing atomic weapons are persuaded to use atomic technology for peaceful purposes only.

National wishes:

Congress adopts Social Security and Medicare as its only benefits and reduces its salary to the level of elementary and high school teachers.

Scientists develop the ability to accurately forecast volcanic eruptions, earthquakes, landslides, tidal waves, avalanches, and tornadoes.

Auto makers produce vehicles that run on a cheap and inexhaustible energy.

Educators develop teaching methods that enable students to achieve doctorate degrees in just two years of college attendance.

The American economy prospers so well that all education is provided free of charge.

Local wishes:

The autos of drivers who run red lights are automatically disabled and the car is given to charity.

Drug sellers and users develop bright green skins.

Fred Liddle publishes *Weaker Moments* No. 2,500.

