

Unusual Word

By Hap Hansen

I have not used or heard the word 'serendipity' for many years. I do recall the 'Serendipity Singers' from many years ago. I do not recall what they sang, or why they were called the 'Serendipity Singers'. Apparently, they were 'serendipitous'!

I looked up the word in my handy-dandy Webster's Ninth New College Dictionary. The word means, 'the faculty of finding valuable or agreeable things not sought for.' What? Why would I try to find things for which I did not seek? Makes no sense to me. Anyway, I will tell a serendipity story.

Years ago, the heavyweight boxing world was about to witness another embarrassment. The undefeated champion had destroyed all the contenders but one. The one remaining was an aging pug with a so-so record. His 240-pound body was layered in fat instead of muscle and his face looked as though it had been hammered by countless two by fours. In a television interview, the contender's wife was asked about her husband's chances against the undefeated heavyweight boxing champion of the world. She said, 'If you're going to race a Volkswagen at the Indianapolis 500, you had better know a helluva shortcut!' It would be fun to report that the contender won the fight. He didn't. He was mercifully knocked out with fifteen seconds gone in the second round. When asked later if he would demand a rematch, the fallen warrior replied, "As long as I am a contender, I will fight for the Champion's belt." He did not seek to be knocked out. But, he did find valuable and agreeable things in which he could partake. Was it then serendipity, or was it stupidity? Here was a boxer who thought he was better than he really was. And because he thought that way, he was at least a contender.

Serendipity. It is a difficult word to describe. However, as it is with most of us, we find valuable or agreeable things for which we did not seek. Just so you know, when it comes my turn to give the subject for discussion, I am strongly considering the song from a long-ago movie, 'Supercalifragilisticexpialidocious'!