

# Dean Wilson

## Becomer's Mystery Person of the week - September 21, 2008

1. Born a preacher's kid, and grew up in preacher's family with 7 kids. Moved a lot. Tried to run from the notoriety and microscope of being a preacher's kid, yet always secretly drawn to the church, and proud of preacher parents.
  2. Dad was missionary in Kentucky, and went to first 5 grades there. Don't even remember wearing a pair of shoes from March to October.
  3. Large family was a hoot. 9 people, 1 bathroom. Luckily one brother just whizzed in the closet. Pretty much always on trial. Brother died and I got his yearbook. In it a friend wrote, "I hope your dad keeps preaching good sermons so you don't have to move, and can finish school with us." We moved the next year.
  4. Sports from the beginning. County champ in baseball throw and long jump as 8-year-old. Won a guitar. Envy of all the older kids on the bus ride home.
  5. Played any sport available in high school, and won 14 varsity letters. Later, our mother asked me, "Son, were you ever in any sports in high school?" She was busy with seven kids, preacher's wife, full time nurse, and choir director.
  6. Played football and ran track in college. Got a chance to meet world record holder in the mile, Tom OHara, and talked to him at length about training regimen. After following his advice, I cut 30 seconds off time in the mile and won conference championships in mile and 880, breaking a 20-year-old record in the mile and led team to first conference championship in years.
  7. Career ended when I hurt my foot on a motorcycle, but met the prettiest girl in town because of it.
  8. Spent 15 minutes in jail, and after 10 minutes I was rattling the cage yelling, "Let me out." Terrible experience that still makes me hyperventilate. I was janitor at the field house in college. The high school team left one of their T-shirts in the locker room. Instead of throwing it away, I took it home, laundered it, and wore it down the street. The high school athletic director screamed up to me in his car, and demanded that I give him back "his shirt." I told him I wasn't going to take off my shirt in public, and he called the police. I got my back up, and ended up in jail.
  9. Arrested on La Cienaga Blvd. by six CHP who forced me and my sister Miriam to lie face down on the concrete pavement in the middle of six lanes of traffic with our hands handcuffed behind us. The six CHP had guns drawn. It turned out that we had a new company van that "looked like" someone else's van. So, he reported it stolen, and we were the victims. Imagine if we had been some minority! We never even got an apology. We also never found out who had the power to divert six CHP, wrongly, to arrest two senior citizens while the rest of the city was unprotected.
  10. Ended up on TV as an "expert" on "What to do to combat El Nino." Larry Carroll of Channel 9 asked if he could come to do a special on things citizens could do to get ready for the El Nino floods. I told him, "Sure." I got several experts from around the store to get things ready for his arrival. He did not get to the store until about 10 PM when all the "experts" had gone home and I was the only person left. He said TV was a piece of cake, and I could just do it myself. I did. The 11 o'clock news began with a 15-foot wave crashing through the glass wall of a beach home in Malibu. The announcer said, "El Nino. What can you do to be prepared? Stay tuned when we talk to an expert from the hardware store."
- Wow! My ideas of getting out the caulking gun and putting some door bottoms to keep the flood out are going to seem ridiculous. Amazingly, they liked it, and Michelle Tuzi said, "That was great. Lots of good ideas."

11. First job was Jr. Hi teacher for grades 6,7, and 8, all in one room. Plus, being the basketball coach. After I signed the contract at the board meeting, the president of the board invited me to his house for "ice cream." I went. On the porch he got me alone and said, "Oh, we would also like for you to be principal." 21 years old! First job! Psychology major. Principal. Don't ever go for ice cream if your boss invites you.

12. Son George was born in Thailand. I picked out his name while walking down a street in Singapore. His first name was George to represent the U.S. and, his middle name is Vladimir to represent the USSR. That way, the two nations would come together and end the cold war. They did, and there's a Thai-American man running around named George Vladimir Wilson who really ended the cold war.

13. Ironies involving the Secretary of State in Illinois and Rock Hudson.

14. I joined the U.S. Peace Corps. I put down my first 3 choices for assignment as Thailand, Thailand, Thailand. I was selected to go. I taught English as a Foreign Language in a secondary school on the Thai-Malaysian border for 2 years. I was the only American, only native English speaker, only Caucasian for 50 miles. It was like being on the moon. The whole 2 years there I was a "farang," a foreigner. When I walked to town all the little kids came out and pointed and yelled "farang." I told them. Hey, you know me. I'm Achan Dean. I have all your older brothers and sisters in class. " But, it did no good.

b. Amazingly several people also called me "James Bond," and one woman came up to me in the market and said she wished her son had a nose like mine.

c. Aside from those slights of ignorance, people treated me wonderfully. When our bus turned over on a curve, they came to help me. I was all right, except for a few scratches.

d. I made all kinds of faux pas in language, and I gave them plenty to laugh at.

e. When I left, half of the town rode buses to a town 30 kilometers away to see me off on the train. What a thrill.

f. Miss Thailand was Miss Universe 2 of the 5 years that I was around Thailand. When my buddy and I heard that one of them, Apasra, was going to be at a hotel in a resort town near Bangkok, we went there to wait to take photos of her. I had a movie camera. We waited for nearly two hours nursing ice teas in the restaurant of the hotel. Finally, the word came that she was coming down the stairs. I turned my camera on and shot all the rolls of film I had of Apasra's sister!

g. Met the father of "the prodigal son" there in my little town.

15. Met Harry Truman and had my picture taken with him in Springfield, Illinois. Got a chance to talk with Jimmy Carter about his 3 sons in Evansville, IN (I have 3 sons). Shook hands with Adlai Stevenson (one of my all time heroes) on the boardwalk in Atlantic City. Got a personal letter from Lyndon Johnson. Shook hands with Hubert Humphrey, but he didn't even take time to look at me.

16. Met my wife Norma by accident. I went to hear a speaker on psychology at the C.C. He was sick, and they had a substitute, a great singer who had such a neat personality that I wrote her a long letter telling her how much I enjoyed the concert, and commenting on some of the unique highlights she brought to the performance. Later, we got together at the singles New Year's eve dance. We danced every dance, and got engaged 1 month later.

17. When I was in high school, I got a job for 40 hours per week. My younger brother was too young to get a full time job. For some reason I split my paycheck with him, mostly because I loved him, I guess. Little did I know that would be the best investment of my life. He became a multi-millionaire entrepreneur, and gave me the best job I could ask for, and still love, even now.

18. The job allows me to run into some of the heroes I had growing up. One example is Stan Freberg. One day I heard a man in the next aisle saying "Freberg here." I knew it was comedian Stan Freberg. I went over, introduced myself, and we became nice acquaintances.

When his wife died, he was sad. I told my wife I was going to invite him to dinner to cheer him up a bit. She agreed, and I called him. He came to the store, parked his luxury vehicle in the garage, and we drove to "The Daily Grill" (his choice) in our 10-year-old Oldsmobile. He ordered "Yankee Pot Roast." For the next 2 hours, we sat and listened as he told story after story of his amazing career. We didn't even have a tape recorder or camera. Our kids surety were impressed. They know most of his skits by heart.

19. God has been the central guide and protector throughout. After we moved to Ca., with 5 kids, we had to return to Illinois to do some work on some apartment buildings we owned but were unable to sell back in the early 80's. I had no money for the trip and vacation.

I was walking down Santa Monica Blvd. I saw an envelope on the sidewalk. It had the name of one of our customers on it. I looked. Inside was \$1200 in cash, a heck of a lot of money in 1980. I took it to the store and told my brother and the office manager about it. She called the company and they were out of business. We could not find anyone who knew anything about it. Everyone said to just keep it, it was probably drug money. God does act in mysterious and amazing ways. There was the money for our vacation.

We have 8 children in our blended family, and 16 grandchildren. And, God has never failed us yet. And won't. He'll even get us through the teen age granddaughter from h \_ \_ \_ . Luckily, we have an 8-year-old in Hawaii who is our pen pal and writes us almost once a week. She writes things like, "I wish I had wings so I could flyover and see you." God is good!

#### **SOME FAVORITE BIBLE VERSES:**

A. John 13:34. " a new commandment I give you- Love one another!

B. Psalm 112. Selected verses.

1. All who trust and fear God will be blessed beyond expression.
3. Their children will be honored everywhere, for good persons children have a special heritage.
7. Such a person does not fear bad news, or live in dread of what may happen, for they have settled in their mind that Jehovah will take care of them.

C. Proverbs 3:13. A person who has good judgment and common sense, and know s right from wrong is happier than one who is immensely rich. Such wisdom is more valuable than precious jewels. Nothing compares with it. Such wisdom gives a good, long life, riches, honor, pleasure and peace.

#### **PERSONS TO INVITE FOR DINNER:**

A. Jesus (maybe, of course) but, would love to ask HIM some questions such as

"What HEAVEN is like"

Does Jim Kok really know what he is talking about?

What about Muslims and other religions, about homosexuals, where do they fit in

About every word in the Bible, such as passages about killing babies of enemies of Israel

About Capitalism

About virgin birth.

B. Abraham Lincoln. Lee surrendered more to Lincoln's kindness than to Grant's army. What about care and kindness?

C. My Mom and Dad. Thank them for the incredible sacrifices they made for me and my siblings.

D. Adiai Stevenson, if time and space.

#### **BUCKET LIST: To do before I kick the bucket!**

A. Prepare for my "graduation."

1. Get "instruction manual" for Norma.
2. Instruction manual on my job.
3. Write my story for my kids and descendants.

B Thank all who have helped me.

2. Ask forgiveness for those I have offended.
  3. Encourage those who will listen.
- C. Make everything sustainable. Live below my means. Budget, health care, transportation, etc.
- D. Go one on one with President Obama-in Basketball- in a game of horse!