

Words Poorly Used – Another Devil’s Dictionary #1

I particularly want to say thanks to my Writers Group friends who sent links that brought about quite a bit of thought in the Forelle cranial vault. Emerging is an homage to Ambrose Bierce, the author of *The Devil’s Dictionary*.

Framing — the persuasion technique for painting a vision in which the camouflage is more important than the hidden essence. I saw the case the other day where a referendum had been conducted on a question of a universal good, but worded in a way that the voter had little chance of decoding. It went something like this: Would it be permissible to not label the direction in which the non-*terra firma* lies as “down?” But the label should read in opposition to the direction of toward the center of the planet, third from the sun?” When a plain spoken proposition would have read, “the sky is up.”

Federal Funding — the practice of allocating too little, then freezing it or reducing it until a stasis less than efficient is reached. The strangled programs remain as monuments to the originating politician and to the federal government’s facade of caring. It further discourages private charity, which is desperately needed in view of the political cynicism.

Homeless Children — the theme of Nancy Isenberg’s *White Trash* is that society by political means is in a continuous cycle of trying to segregate classes. The meticulous rules for identifying and classifying homeless children may actually mask an official campaign to label yet another class of undesireables.