Wednesday, March 12, 2003      c:/wklyltr3.3wc12

(2003 NHN&WR letter/story #5)

Special Mid March Edition.

The Duct Tape Wallet.

We first became aware of the word ‘ubiquitous’ in connection with the

original VW Beetle.  This popular car was often described as "The

Ubiquitous Bug".  Reference to a thesaurus illustrates the aptness of

this description: universal, omnipresent, allover, everywhere, being.

One of the few modern products qualifying in all above instances is good

old duct tape.  Now, we don’t know if the subject of this letter is in

any of the thousand and one books on the "Thousand and One Uses for Duct

Tape" but we have recently been exposed to an example and it was

certainly new to us.

Back in January Moira & Eric St. John of Welland, Ontario and formerly

North Hero, VT, paid us a pleasant visit in Ottawa.  In the course of

this visit, Eric showed off a newly received gift which he proudly

withdrew from his rear pocket and displayed to all.  Wonder of wonders,

….. a DUCT TAPE Wallet!  Passed around the assemblage  it drew admiring

comments.  Bag balm & duct tape have had honorable mention in these

pages before, but this was real duct tape art of the first order, even

having a self-contained repair kit.  Everybody wanted one.  (Actually

all this praise fell on deaf ears as far as the owner was concerned.  He

was worried to death that the $5.00 (can) bill in the folding money

section would disappear among the viewers.)  Needless to say the

specimen was minutely scanned by NHN&WR. Thinking, as we looked at the

finished product and visualized the probable cost , "What a wonderful

gift item for old and valued subscribers!"

The mechanics of reproduction did not appear difficult.  Outside

surfaces were all duct tape .  Inside surfaces were a light weight

mesh.  Any normal wallet, sans zippers and snaps, would work as a

model.  The seed was planted.  Because the seat of a lyre back side

chair had been rained on during the Ottawa move it was being recovered

at Kessel’s upholstery shop .  This family heirloom was bailed out over

a glass showcase.  Inside the case, ….. a sample of light weight outdoor

mesh!  We entered negotiations and were given a couple square feet

gratis.  A half used roll of duct tape had been on a work bench when the

Ottawa house was taken over.  Ha!  Don’t you just love it when a good

plan comes together?  Re pilot production, possibly penultimate perusers

perhaps perceive potential problem points .  Free duct tape?  Free

mesh?  Zero cost?  Right, ….. The Great Annual Freebie Giveaway Rules,

….. all NHN&WR wallet production would be Freebies!  Bad.  We would

counter this by including a worn out straight razor blade  which had

involved money exchange in each ‘Duct Tape Wallet Repair Kit’.  There,

all set, on to experimental pilot production.

Gather material: Cutting board, Shears, Razor Blade, Duct Tape, Mesh,

Pencil, Rule, Samples; leather wallet, folding money, credit card.

Check the time.  Go.  Thirty minutes later we have one Duct Tape Wallet

with self-contained Repair Kit.  Hey, ….. Piece’a Cake!  Circle four and

on to the next .

Two things.

We should shakedown our experimental model.  A month’s test use by

three guinea pigs ought to do the job.  Hmmmmn, two more experimental

wallets, but should be worth the effort.  Users would make careful note

of any comments  encountered en passant . Incorporating test use

recommendations, we would then go into production.  Any guinea pig

volunteers?

        Now, how do we determine an "old and valued subscriber"?  Even

more to the point, do we have any?  And knowing our readers well, …..

if we do have any, how many will say, "I wouldn’t be caught dead with a

NHN&WR Duct Tape Wallet even if it does have a self-contained repair

kit".  Should these gems be presented as awards for faithful

readership?  Made available by request?  To the first 10 readers

responding?  Decisions, decisions.  Well, we can work it out.

One late note.  It has been brought to our attention that the

‘Inspirational St John Duct Tape Wallet’, the cause of all this

nonsense, has a past of its own.  It was purchased by their daughter

Shelley in an exclusive London Sporting Goods Shop for $10.00 .  Wow!

Ten bucks?  Yeah, ten bucks!  Like Oliver’s Fagan, "I think we’d better

think this out again."  The thirty minutes for a pilot could easily be

reduced to ten in mass production.  Zero cost, six wallets per hour,

$60.00!  Eight hour day, $480.00.  Hmmmmmn ….. , we hardly ever hear

from our readership.  Do they really deserve a Gift?  Plus there’s the

shipping and handling which we really haven’t thought about.  However,

…. on the down side, can’t you just imagine the following Jeopardy

appearance.

Alex, "And now our contestant from North Hero, Vermont.  What do you do

for a living sir?"

Answer, "Well, tell’ya Alex, I make Duct Tape Wallets".

Think we’ll take Watercolours over wallet making as an on-going

avocation.  Much less boring too.  In the meantime, we will follow this

opening gambit up in May/June with a second letter detailing decisions

re the ‘Great Duct Tape Wallet Giveaway’.  One decision is already cast

in stone.  There will be no five dollar (can) bills enclosed with any of

the Duct Tape Wallets/self-contained repair kits.  Missed the

alliterative record by two, but ten footnotes is a new seven year NHN&WR

high.  Come to think of it, don’t know if footnotes even show up on

pasted Email documents.

Lucile & Ken.

219 Atlantis Ave

Ottawa, On  K2A 1X9

613-761-6519  (ken.jefferson@sympatico.ca)

Regular Distribution.