Sunday, September 14, 2003 c:/wklyltr3.3wcxx

**Title: Sabbatical Report. Month Letter/Story # ?? (No Idea)**

We’re Back!

When we last left you back in April, our whole staff (Lucile, Jason & Ken) was en route to Hartford, CT where Ken was scheduled for (and we use official terminology), ..... a ‘*Complete Hip Replacement’*. This of course begs the question, *"What is an ‘Incomplete Hip Replacement’*?" Naturally we asked. Incomplete hip replacements are called *‘Partial Hip Replacements’* and done mostly in accident situations.

We are in North Hero, having been dragged home by Nancy and Dave June 5th. No doubt glad to be rid of their 6 week guests. The 2003 distribution list is in Ottawa. Hopefully we are including all who re-upped for 2003 and are not spamming any who canceled their subscription. True to our *‘Nom de Game’* we have led a very ‘*reclusive’* life since returning. The large notice on the door has worked like a charm, ..... DO NOT DISTURB. Ken is in favor of leaving it posted permanently. The first week of our sabbatical, operation week, went smoothly. The next 5 weeks, the staph infection, was a nightmare and we are still not able to report on this rationally. A few comments on hospital stay #1, which lasted 3 1/2 days, follow.

We entered Hartford Hospital the morning of April 21st. Following printed instructions, we packed only a duct tape wallet, medicare card and $2.00.  Took orders for three wallets before leaving. The operation took place late afternoon same day. Woke up next morning feeling fine and with a brand new hip. Piece’a cake. Hospital routine took over. Patients who sleep on their backs have a distinct advantage over tummy sleepers who now can’t. It was, "Don’t cross your legs, don’t bend your left leg past 90 degrees, keep a pillow between your legs." Immaterial anyway because in-place plumbing prohibited rollovers; an IV, a panic pain button hookup, and a catheter. How does one use a bed pan without bending 90 degrees at the hip? And the catheter, ..... how do they get that thing out of there anyway? Stress, stress, stress.

There was an obvious ‘Caretaker’ hierarchy. There were ‘Vital Sign Takers’, ‘Needlers’, ‘Scale of One to Ten’ers’ and Doctors who we referred to as ‘God’. (Have you seen God today? No, not yet.) The first two went about their chores in a business like way without much conversation. ‘One to Ten’ers’ asked questions.

*"Well, good morning Mr., Jefferson and how are we feeling today?"*

*"Fine."*

*"Did you sleep well?"*

*"No."*

*"What was the matter?"*

*"I am not used to sleeping on my back and your friends must have been watching cause as soon as I would doze off, they’d wake me up."*

*"Well, ..... you’ll get used to it I’m sure. Now on a scale of one to ten, how would you rate your pain?"*

*"I don’t have any pain."*

*"What do you mean you don’t have any pain?"*

*"I mean ..... I don’t have any pain."*

*"On a scale of one to ten then you’d say one?"*

*"No, ..... I’m a zero, off the scale."*

At this point patient gets the ‘Are you sure you didn’t take the last cold beer in the refrigerator’ stare. ‘One to Ten’ then walks around to the Panic Pain Push-button and squints closely.

*"You didn’t push the button once.!"*

*"I didn’t want to become a junkie."*

*"Humph, .....if you are feeling so well, we’ll see about getting you up this morning."*

*"Fine."*

Getting up involved a walker and a traveling hat rack thing over which all my plumbing was draped. Under the close scrutiny of ‘One to Ten’ I rose to my feet, determined to smile through any pangs of scale ten pain. There was none. For the first time in two years walking didn’t hurt. Grinning like the Cheshire Cat, patient asks ‘One to Ten’ if there is a bar in the neighborhood where they could get a drink.

*"You’ve been up long enough, you’re going back to bed."*

Stress items were removed before my next stroll. Someone who can walk does not need a bed pan. One "YE .... OWWWW" took care of the catheter and ‘Needler’ disconnected the IV. Come afternoon, patient was tooling around with the walker in great fashion.

A new toy was added the second night. Booties which squished my feet alternately. First the left foot would feel squeezed as by someone’s hand and then released with a sighing noise which sometimes was quite loud, ....phizzz, ..... like air from a balloon One minute later the right foot would feel grabbed and released. Supposedly this reduced the fear of blood clots, but for someone already having trouble sleeping this was tantamount to a Chinese Water Torture, lying in the dark, immobile and awaiting the next squish. More fun was in store come morning. After the usual pain scale routine, ‘One to Ten’ had new questions; Bowel movement? Urinate? And,

*"Do we have any gas this morning?"*

*"Nope, no gas."*

*"Are you sure?"*

*"Yes, none at all."*

At this point ‘Left Bootie’ goes into its act and finishes with a marvelous imitation of a you know what.

*"What was that?"*

*"What was what?"*

*"That gassy noise."*

*"Not guilty, wasn’t me ."*

Patient was beginning to enjoy this, ..... almost time for Right Bootie to sound off.

*"Did it sound something like this?"*

Right Bootie on cue, " *..... phizzz!"*

*"Oh for goodness sakes, it’s your boots."*

*"Right."*

Wednesday the patient was scheduled into two therapy sessions. Walked to Thursday morning’s session with a cane and was discharged and sent by ambulance to Glastonbury Health Center in the afternoon for further therapy. (The cane, a Canadian James Bond version, courtesy of friend George Dawson has subsequently disappeared and we are having trouble replacing it. Does anyone know where to get a cane with a hidden dagger which pops out the bottom at the flick of a button?) With this almost instant rejuvenation, could not help but think how dumb to limp around in pain for years. Ken had not been hospitalized since 1945 and Hartford Hospital was in a different league from a wartime naval facility. Should my other hip start to act up, I told myself , I’ll go back in a flash. Excellent Doctors, excellent care.

By Sunday, day seven, patient was negotiating stairs unassisted and was given his walking papers. Jason was overjoyed to see Ken, Lucile was relieved to be through with her hospital visits and Nancy and Dave looked forward to getting their home back. Tuesday, April 30th was to be ‘Drive to North Hero Day’. It didn’t happen that way.

Next month: Lessons learned from a footless finch and a three-legged deer.

Thanking all who kept in touch through Lucile & Nancy,

Ken & Lucile

P.O.Box 115

North Hero, VT.

CC: George & Jane Dawson c/o Keiith Dawson..

Regular recipients. c:/wklyltr2.02recip

*NHN&WR* is now available to 64 readers @ 20 E-mail addresses(\*) & 8 Snail-mail addresses.

\* Raleigh Armstrongs. 3 Carol, Bruce & Mackenzie, business & nursery cohorts from Atlanta days.

Charlie Bennett 1 Cousin of Ken.
(The Boca Rat)

\* Gerry Bennett & Carol 2 Son of Lucile & interested reader.

\* Marc Bennett & Michelle Burke 2 Marc is Son of Lucile.
(Sherman & The Professor)

Beth Brock (Miss Piggy) 1 Sister of Ken

\* Jeff Brocks 5 Son of Beth, spouse Susan, Elizabeth, Gracie & Taylor

\* Gene & Marilyn Cotton 2 Georgia Squires.

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Atlanta Jeffersons 3 Sons of Ken: Greg, Mike, Phil.

Pittsford, VT Jeffersons 4 Matt, son of Ken, Spouse Heidi, daughter Morgaen (Music Man) & son Marz.

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\* Glastonbury Jeffersons 3 David, brother of Ken, spouse Nancy & Son Bill.
(Nutmeg & Riverboat)

\* Linda Jefferson & Kelly Hoffpair 4 Linda is David & Nancy’s daughter, spouse & children, Sara and Nicky.

\* Looloolabas 2 Australians Andrew & Mark.

\* Lucile & Ken (The Recluses) 2 .

\* Sue McCleskey 1 Daughter of Ken

\* Frank & Etta McDevitt 2 Linda McD in-laws.
(Leprachaun & Etta the Red)

\* KC & Michael McDevitt 6 Linda McD in-laws and children

\* Linda & Norman McDevitt 2 Daughter of Lucile and spouse
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\* Carole & Jim Peck 3 Daughter of Beth Brock, spouse, and Guy

\* North Carolina Pecks 4 Sara, daughter of Ken, Bill Peck Jr., Dan & Colin

\* Jane & Bob Perry 2 North Hero neighbors

Gladys & ‘Pete’ Peterson 2 Vermont friends of Lucile & Ken. ‘Pete’ is grade school chum of Ken.

\* Jean Snow 1 Florida friend of Charlie Bennett.

\* Moira & Eric St. John. 2 North Hero neighbors.

\* Art & Addie Ward. 2 Pennsylvania friends of Lucile & Ken.