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**Mid-July Letter**

**Burning , (**2004NHN&WR letter/story #10)

An open confession to our reading public, and nearby neighbors. We are sorry we have contaminated the local area for 42 years. Recent articles in the local newspaper by the Northwest Vermont Solid Waste Management District concerning the dangers of outdoor burning have worn us down. We have seen the light and we surrender. Our *‘Burning Barrel’* is located at longitude 73-17’, latitude 44-49’. NWSWD, please add us to your helicopter surveillance chart. The un-used, rusted, and half-caved-in carcass will be preserved as a monument to another day and age. Perhaps a plaque?

No doubt we were prime felons in the conflagration community. We operated a communal burn site of which some neighbors took advantage. In addition, we ran a burn barrel *‘chop shop’* wherein we cut out tops of barrels, vented sides and drilled drain holes in the bottoms for other incinerators. While coming forward ourselves, we can not bring ourselves to rat on our former burning buddies. However, like fruit from the tree, our burn barrel production is not far from the above coordinates.

Hopefully prior sins will receive absolution. If not, we will say we were denied a lawyer and our confession was obtained under duress by holding our feet to a hot iron. (Electrically heated of course.) We are re-adjusting to a re-cycling lifestyle fairly well, but have one outstanding concern. Hopefully, the wood stove which keeps us warm in the winter will not be on the *"No No"* list, ... but then, how are we supposed to light it? We have always scrunched up old ‘*Islanders’.* One issue per fire was just about right. But now? Do inside burning rules differ from outside burning rules? If they do will we slowly revert to our errant ways of the past? First the ‘*Islander’*, ... then kleenex, ... paper towels, ... and on to soup can labels etc ... as we spin down into sin again. Will counseling be available? Is a*"Cedarvale Incinerators Anonymous*" called for? Just what we need, another CIA.

(We have recently read *"Eats, Shoots and Leaves"* ,courtesy Jane Perry, and are trying to shape up our punctuation. It’s not going too well, but at least ellipses have gone from ..... to ... .) Does that last period after the three period ellipse go inside or outside the parenthesis? English and Americans differ on this one, but which is which?

Humbly offered, The Jeffersons, 491 Cedarvale Lane, North Hero, VT 05474.

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