(Took long enough to get around to sending this.)

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2005 NHN&WR letter/story #14)

**Water**

When we think of North Hero we think of: Family, Friends, Dogs, Serenity, Lakeviews, Mountains, Croquet, Volleyball and ... WATER. It is now 2005 and Cedarvale cabin owners have a water choice, ‘*Lake’* Water or ‘*Town’* Water. From 1960 to 2003 there was no choice, it was ..... the ‘*Lake’*. Sort of a dividing line here, BTW (Before Town Water) and ATW (After Town Water.) Let’s see if we can capsulize the ramifications of ‘*Lake’* Water.

First of all you couldn’t drink it with an easy mind. (A local "Jack of all Trades" is now 93 ((?)) and has drunk it all his life, but not too many Cedarvale residents are native Vermonters.),

Secondly, Lake Water requires a lakeline with footvalve, water pump and captive air tank, all of which are subject to frequent bouts of oneryism. Coping Cedarvalers set up "Crossover" water systems in anticipation of storms and mechanical failures. When you had a wipeout/washout/waterlog situation just open a valve and piggyback on your "Crossover" buddy. Lakelines were lots of fun to put in and take out, ... and take out and put in, ... again and again. They were also an outlet for innovation. One enterprising soul anchored his line with an old lawnmower. Worked fine, although he did look a little foolish mowing his way into the lake.

Thirdly, with the first hard freeze, forget it, ... no water.

Pre 2003 your NHN&WR Staff survived winter water problems with a barrel system . In advance of the first freeze, twenty 55 gallon barrels set up in the cellar were filled with lake water. The line to the lake was hauled out of the water and one valve was turned directing the pump to suck from the barrels instead of the lake. Let the elements roar, we’d a self contained water supply. When the pump sucked away on a dry barrel one just had to go down and put the pickup pipe in a full barrel. Unfortunately .... twenty barrels did not last through the winter. Refilling the barrels in mid-winter with temperatures below zero was also lots of fun. Oh boy, ... the number of times we debated flushing the toilet for #1. Does the bathroom smell objectionable enough to use 3 gallons of our water supply?

Anyway we coped with:

A pump mounted on an old skidoo chassis, an ice auger, a ‘Splitter’ to divide the pump output into two garden hoses, gasoline can and a ‘Panic Flag’ setup to indicate the last barrel was half full. i.e.: **TURN OFF THE PUMP**! On fill up day, Ken & Jason went out on the frozen lake, drilled a hole, dumped in a hose, started the pump and played with a tennis ball. Lucile played musical barrels in the cellar with the two garden hoses. When both hoses were put in the last barrel Lucile would yank on the rope which raised a red flag at the top of the cliff overlooking the lake. Hopefully the lake crew was attentive. We ended up with a bit of water on the cellar floor a couple of times but nothing catastrophic. Ah, ... the good old days, but we are now one of those who opted for Town Water. Actually, not an easy decision. Understandably, some are still ‘On the Lake’. Why pay hundreds of dollars for some thing you can have almost free? An aversion to immersion and creaky bodies were the two cardinal factors in our decision to go with the Town. We turn the water on in the spring, turn it off in the fall and winter in Ottawa.

We sat on our porch today. The hose was dribbling away in the yew nearby. No *‘on again off again’* pump noises from the cellar. Blissful. Do you know what a captive air tank is? It is a tank which starts out with a certain amount of air pressure, say about half of what you want your system to run at. Want about 45 pounds of pressure in your water system? Load the tank with 23 pounds. Fill the tank with water. The water compresses the air to 45 pounds and the pump shuts off. Unfortunately, over time the air pressure seems to dissipate and the tank becomes waterlogged. This results in the pump coming on every time a tap is opened. We had one male guest shaving in the bathroom and the pump went off and on 45 times! Another ‘barrel’ time we had inadvertently turned the hot water heater off and a guest went in the bathroom to take a shower. He used a whole barrel (55 gallons) waiting for the water to get hot and we thought he was just taking an awful long shower.

We have delayed (2003-2005) this water letter because of the "drinkability" factor.. A neighbor of ours opted to remain on the lake, as stated above, ... a viable choice. We told them that if they ever had a drinking water emergency it was okay if they filled a couple bottles at our outside tap. Well, off and on, we’d see the neighboring lady walking to the tap, filling a couple bottles and leaving. Hmmmmnn, ... a devious NHN&WR mind has a thought. The outside tap in question is directly under the window of the master bedroom.

*"Lucile, next time we see her coming let’s run into the bedroom, jump on the bed and make like we’re having "Afternoon Delights".* (Skyrockets in Flight.)

*"Oh for heavens sake, we can’t do that!"*

*"Why not? It’ll be fun. She’ll either listen, just leave or most probably run away laughing herself to death."*

Well, we have to report that this caper never came to fruition and we have given up hope of performing our Passionata act.. The lady stopped coming over for water. Clairvoyant? Found a better source? Warned by Lucile? Hmmmn, ... guess we’ll never know. One thing though, our *‘Lady of the Lake Water’* may well have been able to walk on water because occasionally a bottle of wine would magically appear at our back door.

Gosh it’s hot today. Think we’ll have nice tall glasses of water.

Lucile & Ken

North Hero, Vermont