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Hi all, ... little early, but don't want to get to Vermont and find we left our letter in Canada.

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Friday, April 27, 2007 c:/wklylt7.7wc08

(2007 NHN&WR letter/story/poem/card #05)

**Mr. Potato Bulb.**

We have had our Ottawa, *“Goodbye Neighborhood,”* Spring, party. This occasion is always a near thing weather-wise since we much prefer to have it outside. On April 11th we hand distributed invitations for Saturday afternoon April 21st. (Cheap wine/low end beer provided, bring thirst) Back home, post delivery, we mused with a double martini. Yes, … the situation definitely called for divine assistance. We do not have a great outstanding credit balance in this area, so we opted for a trial run. Martini sip, fervent prayer, … martini sip, fervent prayer, *“Please let there be nice weather this weekend.”* ‘This weekend’ being that of April 14. Hey hey! Live anywhere from North Carolina to Quebec? How about that weekend huh? Seven inches of rain in Central Park, snow, ice, slush, flooding, power outages, the works. Can’t help thinking we’re responsible for that mess. For the sake of Northeast North America we thought it best to continue the martinis and forego the fervent prayer. Real Party Weekend in Ottawa was the nicest weather one could ask for. ( A real ‘green’ party also. 18 guests, 15 non-emission arrivals including one roller-blader.) Must be some kind of climate lesson to be learned here, … but we digress, what has agnostic forecasting got to do with *“Mr. Potato Bulb”*?

With a two-home life-style and a one-home income, renting our Ottawa house for six months has worked out very well. Unfortunately, things one would be very happy to procrastinate over, must be fixed. ‘07’s chores included: Paint a bedroom, re-hang two pair of sliding doors, re-glue a twin bed, keyed entry locks for the wine cellar & office, de-thatch the lawn, trim the cedar hedge, new door chimes and clean out the garage. All these were sort of on the mundane side for an old ‘Punch Out Man\*’. Not so *“Mr. Potato Bulb”*.

In our Lavatory, Powder Room, or whatever they are being called today, there is a vanity with an overhanging valence into which are recessed (deeply) two regular light bulbs. Upon repossession of our premises in early December ‘06 we found the right hand bulb out. In early January ’07, about par for him, Ken went to change it. The glass part of the bulb came away in his hand. The socket part remained in the fixture. In early February ’07 this residual piece was attacked by ‘Mr. Punch Out Man’ (POM). POM was working blind, his hand took up the whole recessed channel, trying to catch the edge of the bulb’s metal rim with pliers by feel alone proved impossible. In early March ’07 POM is still puzzled, … bulb still not replaced.

Lucile, *“ Why don’t you ask someone how to get that bulb out of there?”*

POM, *“Ask someone! Me? You can’t be serious!”*

Lucile, *“We’ll go to that big old style hardware store and ask the man in the electrical section if there’s a tool to do this.”*

Mid-March ’07, our dynamic duo sneak into the hardware store on a slow day. Punch Out Boy (POB), recently downgraded from Man, describes the situation and asks, *“ Is there a tool to do this?*

Manager, *“Yes, and it works very well.”*

POB, *“ Do you have one?”*

Manager, *“No, but you probably do. It’s called a potato.”*

POB, *“A potato?”*

Manager, *“Yup, … cut the end off square, jam it up in there real hard and then just screw it out.”*

POB at this point, “Is this guy putting me on?”

Lucile at this point, “ And it took me two weeks to get him to come in here and ask.”

Manager at this point, “Obviously this guy doesn’t believe me. Doesn’t look too smart either, better tell him to shut off the electricity first.”

Armed with this new knowledge POB returns to the battlefield.

A dry run on site (sans potato) revealed two POB deficiencies, a short non-contortionist body and critical lack of upper body strength. No need to panic. Tall, supple son-in-law is close at hand. Early April ’07, the potato is put to work. And work it does, the metal socket comes out welded to the potato looking like it was made that way.

Did this 5 month travesty teach POM anything? Of course not, he’s still mad he didn’t think of a potato himself.

Is Lucile entitled to exclaim those favorite words of us all, *“I told you so!”*  Definitely.

Son-in-law has probably salted the experience away so as to appear a genius sometime further down the road.

The artist in Ken is mulling over an Andy Warhol type painting, a Potato with a light socket on its end. Wouldn’t come close to Marilyn but might be better than a Campbell’s Soup Can.

When next we communicate, Lucile, Bailey and POB will be coming to you from North Hero, VT. North Hero neighbors who receive these epistles may think, *“ Humpff, … they don’t have a big bash for us when they go to Ottawa!”* Very true, and we’ll do something about it this year. Everyone on Cedarvale Lane, still in residence when we leave for Ottawa, will be invited to a “Goodbye Neighborhood Late Fall Party.”

Have a wonderful Spring all, L,B,K.

\* Punchout Man: U.S. construction term. New home, interested parties walk-thru, list all outstanding problems, list given to POM with instruction to, *“Fix these three hundred things before the closing on Friday.”*

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