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Saturday, November 17, 2007 c:/wklylt7.7wc18

(2007 NHN&WR letter/story/poem/card #19)

**Beer & Chainsaw #3**

The third Beer & Chainsaw weekend on Cedarvale Lane, North Hero, VT, has just been completed. Maybe we should title it *“The Vermont Chainsaw Massacre III”*. This is sort of a *“Guys Thing”*. Cedarvale residents are far from inept when it comes to cutting/pruning trees, but there are some trees better felled by group action than individuals. Residents desiring trees cut down tie a yellow ribbon around them and on B&C weekend, down they come. Participating this year were: 4 loggers, 1 cook, 2 consultants, 2 observers and 1 guard dog. Gender was: nine males and 1 female (the guard dog).

Box score:

Resident Trees Cut

Demand 1

Dawson 3

McDevitt 5

Jefferson 1

Baker 14

Jacobs 2

Bowman 2 ½

Perry 4

(Baker is obviously the big winner, … we will let him buy wine next year.)

Menu

A few lines about food. Year one everything served began with a “B” for beer, as in Bouillabaisse . Year two everything began with a “C” for chainsaw, as in Corned beef & Cabbage . Year three we couldn’t come up with another appropriate letter so meals were sort of a mishmash. A typical meal apart from breakfast was: Appetizer, Entrée & Dessert. Or, … to be more definitive: Beer, Meat & Beer. One obvious fact surfaced. Feeding a group entailed: preparation, serving and cleanup. The surfacing fact, … upon completion of cleanup, there was hardly enough time to squeeze in a martini before it was time to start preparing again. Admiration and awe set in, mothers may do this day after day after day. Amazing!

Equipment

One chainsaw, … the one Home Depot doesn’t sell. In anticipation, the owner had gone into the dealers (Colchester) with the saw and purchased two new blades. Doing a little trimming on his own, owner noticed a spark pop out of the cut. Bad, … nail, bullet, stone? Morning #1 (Friday November 9) owner relates the fact that the blade might be questionable, but says there is another new one on the shelf above the “*Harvard*” hook. Perhaps a word of explanation. When one owns a chainsaw one has two kinds of blades, sharp & dull. The owner of this chainsaw has two hooks for blades, one labeled ‘*Harvard*”, the other “*Yale*”. Nuff said. After a few minutes cutting, the cutter said, *“Blade’s not too good.”* Owner replied, *“I’ll get the other one.”* The other one was 5 links longer! Egad! Into Colchester, swap the long one, buy a second spare and return. Wasted time: 1 ½ hours. What a way to start, however, saw & cutter performed admirably the balance of the weekend.

One truck, … 1996 F150. This item is required for: hauling ladders & loggers, ropes, cut up wood, gas, & oil. It is also the ultimate backup if the loggers feel they may have difficulty directing the path of a falling tree by rope. (Truck hauled no beer.)

4 Ton Log-splitter, co-owned by two Cedarvale Laners,... a new weapon in the arsenal. Works like a charm when it’s working. Mysteriously, sometimes it just stops working. After several hours use Saturday A.M. it went on strike.

Opinion #1. Beer and hydraulic fluid do not mix.

Opinion #2. The weather was too cold.

Opinion #3. The log-splitter is female, … mysterious and unpredictable.

**HOLD IT!**

A red flag has been thrown into the NHN&WR production office.

*“The last sentence has been challenged and is under review.”*

(Too bad we can’t run a few commercials here. Wait, here comes the decision.)

*“Upon further review, opinion #3 has been changed to:”*

Opinion #3. The log-splitter is male and does not work properly because there is no female present to keep it under control. (The Guard Dog would not read the manual and was thus ineligible to operate the splitter.)

Well anyway, the consultants present took the log-splitter back to their shop, warmed it up and inspected same. The splitter requires two hands to operate. One hand must be kept on the starter button and the other hand on a lever which activates the wedge. The set screw on the lever was missing and the lever proved to be 180 degrees out of phase with the wedge. Whether temperature has anything to do with performance is still unknown, but the splitter then worked fine in the shop. Kudos to consultants.

Problem Trees. Finally, a few words about a few of the more interesting trees.

The Wedgers.

Two tall trees decayed at their base were wedged in between two other trees at the top of about a 20 foot cliff with no clear path to drop them. Piece of cake for the professional crew. Interesting sidelight here. One of the loggers, un-noticed by the others, had managed to put a yellow ribbon around a tree which was growing out of the cliff about 1/3 of the way down.

As the crew was getting ready to move to the next site he said,

“ Wait a minute, there’s one more.”

Conversation followed.

*“Where?”*

*“Down There.”*

*“Oh my goodness, you guys’ll have to lower me on a rope.”*

Fortunately the crew member who was shown the trees to be cut on this site was present and said,

*“Don’t know where that ribbon came from, but I wasn’t told to cut anything on the bank.”*

The cutter looked relieved.

The Johnnie.

One Cedarvale resident has an outhouse that could be cataloged in the National Historic Register. Nestled in a secluded woodsy spot, it was being crowded by a cedar tree. Another year or two and the cedar would begin to impose a bit of a tilt to the facilities. Cutting the offender was easy. Getting it out of the copse without demolishing the outhouse was a problem. One group to the west of the copse hauled on a rope tied to the top of the cut tree. A second group on the east hauled on a rope attached to the bottom of the cut tree. Once the tree was on the ground the battle was over.

We think a plaque would be nice.

This Outhouse was saved

From Encroachment

By

The 2007

Beer & Chainsaw Crew.

The Birch.

One cabin had a significant birch tree growing right across the roof at about a 30 degree angle. Like a sword of Damocles, very menacing. Solution: Lash a beam across two other trees, to protect the roof. Move everything out of the potential/desired path of the falling birch.

*“Don’t bother with that barbeque, … it’s way out of the way.”*

Operation gets underway.

Three loggers and two consultants haul away. Biggest, strongest, youngest hauler slips. (There was no way F150 could be gotten into position to aid.) Tree deviates a bit from planned route. The last two inches clip, yes you guessed, the Barbie.

One barbeque joins 96 beers as weekend casualties.

Other than that it was a great weekend!

Hey, … a few lines left on page 4.

*“Other than that”* always brings to mind the media interview post 1865 assassination.

To wit:

*“Well Mrs. Lincoln,’ … other than that’, how did you enjoy the play?”*

Lucile, Guard Dog & Ken.

Ottawa.