*North Hero News and World Review ….*

*…….mostly stuff no one else would print.*

Friday, February 29, 2008 c:/wklylt8.8wc13 (2008 NHN&WR letter/story/poem/card #04)

(Not quite March, but we’re trying to hurry Spring along. Tired of Winter.)

**Border Line Cases**

We’ve a high degree of interest in the tightening of U.S. Customs procedures at border crossings. Plus, our interest is colored by the fact that this whole scenario seems comically ridiculous. We generally cross the Can/U.S. border west of the small town of Rouses Point, N.Y\*. After passing through town, the distance to customs is about 2 km, through quite an unpopulated section of New York State. We pass one small house. On the left side of the road is a horse pasture with an electrified fence. On the right a cornfield, unfenced. A peaceful, bucolic setting. There is no clue that the left side of the road is the U.S. and the right side is Canada. Upon re-entering the U.S. at this same customs we will be asked to open the trunk so a military presence can see if there is someone in there. We are always tempted to say,

*“There is nobody in the trunk , … we let them out at the cornfield”.* Fortunately we have resisted the urge.

As to the comic reference above, read this!

Rouses Point’s mirror image just across the border is Hemmingford, QC. The Fire Departments of these two towns have an agreement, to wit:

*“Hey, … if you need help, just call.”*

Last fall the biggest restaurant in Rouses Point caught fire. The RPFD called. The HFD responded, … donned emergency gear, manned their trucks and headed for the border with bells and sirens ringing/blaring madly. Unfortunately they came to an abrupt halt at the U.S. Customs. Their emergency gear did not include proper photo IDs. The restaurant was a total loss by the time the mess was straightened out. Reads like an episode of *“The Keystone Kops”* or maybe *“Blazing Saddles”,*  where the posse filed through a toll station in the middle of a desert. Unbelievable! (Uh Oh, shouldn’t bring up *“Blazing Saddles”*, definitely a sore point here.)

When all these new rules/regulations began appearing, we took the bull by the horns and got passports. Already had photo ID via driver licenses, but figured, *“Can see the writing on the wall”*. Either Lucile or Ken showing more than one of their IDs would instantly arouse suspicion as photos depict entirely different people. Ken actually now has three photo IDs. His Veterans Administration ID looks like a Transylvanian ogre made up to play *“Jack the Ripper”*. (There are some who say this ID is the best likeness of him they’ve ever seen.) Went to the trouble of passports mainly to speed our egress though customs. Didn’t work. Most of those in line ahead will have none and take an interminable amount of time pass or flunk inspection. When one’s time on stage finally arrives they do help. At our last ‘ordeal’, we handed them to the guard. Guard looked at them, looked in the car and said, *“My, passports, what a novel idea! Have a nice day.”* To date Bailey has been a non-player at customs confrontations. How do they know she’s not a terror canine trained to self-destruct by a nuclear facility?

Our concern has been heightened lately by the news that Canada and the U.S. are now actively sharing all sorts of misdemeanor information about their citizens. Good Grief! How far will they carry this? Ken could be in deep poop. He was given a speeding ticket outside Savannah, GA in the early 1980’s. Will his brand new passport end up being confiscated by Canadian or U.S. Officials? He’s worried, so as “The Music Man” would sing:

*Trouble, oh we got Trouble.*

*Right here in Ottawa City*

*With a capital “T*

*That rhymes with “P”*

*That stands for pool passport*

*We really got trouble*

*Right here in Ottawa City*

*Right here*

*Gotta figure out a way”*

Will the staff of NHN&WR make it back into the U.S.? Will they end up in Guantanamo? Stay tuned.

From Ottawa,

Lucile, Ken & Bailey.

\* The Town is small, but the Rouses Point/Champlain area is the 5th largest

crossing location along the US/Can border. (3,805,894 in 2007, Time Canadian Edition Feb 18, 2008)