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2008 NHN&WR letter/story #12

**Nostalgia**

As the final ‘Clean Up’ to our recent storm, a wonderful neighbor secured a chipper. It was big, noisy and chewed up fair sized logs, no good for firewood, with ease. (Kudos Chris Taylor.) The Jeffersons were standing by watching the ballet-like operation, as their assorted debris was tossed into the hopper. In mid throw one log is abruptly tossed aside, ... rejected. Amid the noise, conversation is difficult, but an evil finger is pointed at the reject. Ken walks over and inspects same. Good Grief, ... an eyebolt of significant size is imbedded in it! Mr. Chipper would not have liked that. Ken starts to look for a sturdy branch which would fit into the eye. Chris goes to his truck cab, gets claw hammer and gives it to Ken. Eyebolt is unscrewed from tree. Eyebolt is eyeballed. (That’s kind of a catchy sentence huh?) Hmmmn, what on earth was that doing in this tree? Ah, comes the dawn,

**THE PANIC FLAG!**

Prior to the dedicated efforts of a small group of super canvassers, (we won’t mention names), which resulted in availablity of town water for the area, property owners got their non-drinking water from the lake. This posed a major problem in the winter, with its frozen everything. Your writers’ solution was kind of Rube Goldberg, but it sufficed: Ice auger, pump, manifold, garden hoses, 2 dozen 55 gallon drums in the basement and one tennis ball. On a nice day in mid-winter it would be,

*"Hey, let’s fill up the barrels, we’ve only 4 full ones left."*

The refill team springs into action. Ken and dog of the time Jason, would go off on the ice with setup gear on an old skidoo. One large hose from the pump lead to the manifold which split the flow into three garden hoses. These were put through the cellar window. Hole in the ice was drilled and suction hose inserted. Lucile puts the garden hoses into three barrels. Lucile yells down to the lake,

*"OK, start the pump."*

The pump is started. Lucile moniters the filling. Barrel fill time depended on how much water was left in the barrel. Did not take long before the water levels in the three barrels being filled were all different. Lucile waltzes from one barrel to another to be able to affect a ‘hose swap’ at the proper moment. Ken & Jason? Playing with the tennis ball out on the ice. The end game was a delicate balancing act because all three hoses would not fit into one barrel’s bung hole. When Lucile thought the critical moment had arrived she yelled out the hatchway,

*"Stop the pump!"*

Were the playmates on the ice always paying attention? Of course not. Walkie-talkies would have been the sensible solution, but our crew opted for a red panic flag. The flag was crafted from worn out long johns, attached to a rope which was threaded through the afore-mentioned eyebolt about 8 feet up a cedar tree at the top of the cliff. The onus was then placed on the playmates,

*"You guys watch the flag or you’ll mop up the mess by yourselves."*

Ah, ... how soon we forget. Drinkable water, no waterlogged pump going on and off in the middle of the night, system losing prime, inoperable foot valves, balky pumps, anchoring the lake pipe in cold, cold water each Spring, and on and on. The ‘Panic Tree’ is gone, but we do have the ‘Panic Eyebolt’. We will entertain suggestions, but no doubt its end resolution will provide another NHN&WR.

If we can just come up with another letter in three days we will be back on schedule! Think we’ll do a deja vu of *"Ol’179"!* (Are you listening Dave Jefferson?)

From North Hero,

Take care, Lucile, Bailey & Ken.