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Dixon Ticonderoga Company
195 International Parkway
Heathrow, FL 32746

Dear Pencil Pundits:

I still remember the days when I was a child in elementary school. In my school, we all were assigned classroom housekeeping tasks. The teacher would rotate those tasks on a weekly basis so that we would each have a chance to be assigned all of the job duties. Some of the more popular jobs were chalkboard washer (washing the board at the end of each day with a bucket of water and a sponge), chair duty (putting the chairs up on the desks at the end of each day), and windows (opening and closing the classroom windows at the start and end of each day, or tending to the window shades to make them all raised or lowered to a uniform length). But my all time most favorite job was "pencil sharpener emptier".

I like to write, but sadly, most of my writing these days is done on a keyboard. Sometimes I miss the feel of a wooden pencil scratching against a pad of paper and I go back to that for note taking. At one point, I had a college professor who was very anti-technology. He was not related to Ted Kazinsky in any way, but he was Jewish. He did not have an e-mail address for us to send our questions to like most of the other faculty members and he despised using a computer. He used to say that he could get just as much productivity out of his "Number 2 Wood Processor".

Which brings me to my ultimate point for writing this letter. While I enjoy using a wood pencil every now and again, I get very frustrated with number 3 pencils because they appear too light on paper to make them suitable to write with. I prefer the softer and more subtle number 2. Also, the number 3 pencils never seem to work on those fill in the bubble/circle computer scan sheets.

I think that if there were only number 2 wooden pencils that more people would come back to them. I know that I probably would. We could even send out teams to collect number 3's and higher pencils and have a large pencil bonfire and roast some marshmallows while we are at it. "Bring us your number 3 and we'll give you three hot and sticky marshmallows in exchange!"

I wonder if roasting marshmallows over a fire of burning number 3 pencils would cause lead poisoning in those who eat the marshmallows. But they don't really use lead in lead pencils do they? I think that was just a nasty rumor started by the ball point pen industry. But we should

look into this before scheduling the bonfire.

We could hold the bonfire at your old factory right here in my hometown! I live in Sandusky, Ohio: home of the tallest and best roller-coasters in the world and former home of a Dixon-Ticonderoga facility. (Are you saving money now that you moved those Sandusky jobs overseas?) I would be more than happy to help with the arrangements, just let me know who I would need to talk to and I will write them a letter.

One of my co-workers, Tellula, insists on infesting our office with number 3 pencils -- **they are everywhere!!!** I could get SICK on all the marshmallows I would be entitled to if I turned all of those in at our bonfire. And I don't mean lead poisoning sick, I mean tummy ache because I ate too much sick.

I know that there may be a small contingent out there who would object to burning all the number 3 pencils (like Tellula), but I don't think the overall number of objectors would be very many and I assure you that we could change their minds with a little bit of PR and spin doctoring. I would be willing to contact the Bush and Kerry campaigns once the election is over to see if their spin doctors are available for out-sourcing. I bet they could really help us to stamp out number 3's. They are doing an excellent job of stamping out (number 3) Ralph Nader right now!

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Rusty Lucas".

Rusty Lucas

p.s. Do you have any free baseball caps with your writing implement logo on them? I was thinking that if you agree with my campaign to wipe out number 3 pencils, we might join forces and I could wear a Dixon Ticonderoga baseball cap on my head everywhere I go (except in the shower and on the roller-coasters across town). I could then have some t-shirts printed up with a mutually agreeable slogan to "Erase number 3 pencils." Maybe THAT could be our slogan! Please send me a free baseball cap if you have one.