Written by Rick Folstad
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? ???? Gee. Win a world title and you’re suddenly more popular than Pamela Lee at a teamster’s convention, more in demand than the beer vendor at a chili cook off.

The door leading to IBF cruiserweight champ James "Lights Out" Toney is becoming worn out from all the heavy knocking, guys standing in the doorway saying they want a piece of the champ, or at least a piece of the prize money that comes with him.

IBF heavyweight Chris Byrd has stopped by and WBC cruiserweight champ Wayne Braithwaite has left his calling card and new WBC light-heavyweight champ Antonio Tarver dropped off a message.

Oh yeah, and undisputed middleweight champ Bernard Hopkins….well, he didn’t knock on Toney’s door as much as he busted through it and shouted a few choice words.

That’s what happens when a former world champion wins another title. Everyone wants a slice of the pie. Memories come storming back and people scratch their heads and wonder how the ol' hoss pulled it off, how he managed to become a world champion again after so many years, after everyone said he was too fat or too old or too slow or he didn’t care anymore.

Toney proved them all wrong.

The fight out there for him right now is probably Hopkins. They can book it, "Does this mean it’s ‘Lights Out’ for the ‘The Executioner?’ "

If the fight does happen, you know it will be at cruiserweight. Hopkins can go up in weight, but Toney isn’t about to come down. There are limits to what a man can endure. The 190-pound class appears to fit him well, at least for now, at least when there‘s a few million bucks riding on his making weight.

"The fight looks like a real possibility," said promoter Dan Goossen, who is partly responsible for Toney’s return trip to world-champion status. "I’ve had two very good conversations with Don King. We’re zeroing in on September or October."

Yeah, but this fight will start early if the front office can put it together. Both fighters have strong conversational skills, honed and perfected through a lifetime of steady use. They communicate extremely well with their peers and they are always ready to exercise their right to express themselves, to take advantage of the sound principles under which this country was founded, beginning with their freedom of speech.

These two do not go gently into any good night, but follow the old adage that reads, "If you have something to say, spit it out."

Goossen put it right.

"This is the type of fight where you could charge admission to the press conference," he said.

If these two guys - no, make that when these two guys go after each other verbally and the pace picks up, we'll require a blow-by-blow announcer.

"Oh, Hopkins lands a solid analogy, comparing Toney's punching power to that of his best friend's youngest sister. Toney appears to be wobbled by the comparison, but whoa, wait a minute, he counters with a stinging accusation, claiming Hopkins hasn't beaten anyone with an actual chin and two fists in almost two years."

It's the kind of "friendly" banter that sells tickets.

As for Goossen and Toney, they're taking all this good stuff in stride, enjoying the wild ride of a world championship.

"It's been crazy," Goossen says. "But we've got to remember. We're only as good as our next fight."

Knock, knock, knock.