

Winding Trails: by Al Hobart

Thursday, October 20, 1966
Illinois Valley News

PCT Skyline Trail– Middle Sister

Sandwiched in among the joyful memories, here and there I run across one that produces a disagreeable little shudder. These I don't like, and with time and persistent maneuvering I finally get them backed into a corner where they don't seem so malignant. But now, thanks to Toby Williamson, there's a non-joyful new vision that pops into my mind now and then, accompanied by a grade-A shudder.

Charles and I first met Toby when after dark Saturday night we came trampling into Sunshine Shelter camp, up on the Cascades' Skyline Trail, after a 200-mile drive and a 4-mile uphill hike. We were greeted by a fearful voice that seemed to come from the very bowels of the earth, and a plunging bear-size black Hound of the Baskervilles that seemed bent on making a meal of us. That was Toby. We were saved by an authoritative voice from somewhere in the semi-darkness near the campfire commanding Toby to lay off. The voice belonged to Toby's master, Dave, who with his partner LeRoy, was camping at the shelter for an early assault on the 10,000-ft.-plus Middle Sister the following day.

Charles and I had left Grants Pass in the early afternoon, driven north to the vicinity of

Eugene, then east up the McKenzie River to the neighborhood of McKenzie Pass, and left the Volkswagen at Frog Camp. From there we climbed the 4 miles up Obsidian Trail to where it intersects the Skyline Trail at Sunshine Shelter, our destination for that day. Our objective too was the top of Middle Sister.

Dean and Joe, the other two members of our old squad, were lured away by the siren call of the hunting season and missed out on this wonderful climb. The last I saw of them they were arguing as to how they would handle all the big game they were going to bring back from Huckleberry Hill or wherever it was they were going hunting. Next time I see them I suspect I'll hear all about the big ones that miraculously got away, and what outrageous prices those blankety-blank butchers are getting for the cheapest cuts of beef these days.

As for Charles and me, neither one of whom is a very enthusiastic hunter, we can boast of having been up where the view alone is worth 10 times the cost and effort of getting up there – the top of beautiful Middle Sister. Of course, there's that little smudge on the picture caused by the narrow escape from falling of that big friendly black flea trap, Toby.

By the light of our new acquaintances' campfire, which we found most welcome in the freezing temperature of that altitude, we prepared our belated dinner on our little Bleuett gas stoves. There was room inside the shelter for all of us, but

Charles and I preferred to sleep out in the open where we could look up at the bright starlit sky and watch the M. M. Satellites go by. The temperature dropped to 25 degrees during the night, but in our down-filled bags we were immune to the cold and frost.

Next day we ate an early breakfast and all 5 of us (Toby included) set out on the 4 ½ mile climb to the summit of Middle Sister. We climbed up Renfro glacier, up across a field of flagstone and slippery shale to the great saddle that lies between North and Middle Sisters. From here on up the going gets steeper and steeper, and for much of the way we went up a narrow ridge with a high sheer drop-off on the east side and a long rocky fall on the west side. It was on this side that Toby almost met disaster.

Near the top, where we had to traverse up across the steep west face, the rock was mostly covered with a treacherous coating of ice. It was ticklish going for all of us, for the pooch next to impossible. This was no place for a dog and Toby knew it, so scared at times he shook like a leaf. Coming back down of course was the toughest, poor old Toby not being equipped with holdback claws. At the hairiest place he slipped and almost went over, hanging on with his front feet and whimpering, his hind claws unable to hold on to the almost perpendicular ice. But Charles, by edging down as far as he dared, and with Dave braced and hanging on to one of Charles' hands, reached down

and grabbed Toby's collar and yanked him to safety. Where was I while all this was going on? – a rod above and to the rear, clinging to my rocky hand-holds like I was afraid the mountain was going to run away.

As a consequence of this incident Charles is thinking seriously of forming what will be called the Fleatrap Mountain Rescue Corporation, with himself as chairman; I've spoken for the position of treasurer, strictly an office job.

When Charles and I got back to the car at Frog Camp, after our 9 ½ mile descent, it was nearly dark. By the time we reached Blue River, 20 miles or so down the McKenzie, we were so nearly starved our bones rattled, and so thirsty I stepped on my tongue when I staggered out of the car in front of the eatery there.

It was 11:30 p.m. when we reached Charles' place in Grants Pass. Little Toot snorted joyously when we pulled in, and started backing out before I got the keys out of my pocket. At 1 a.m. I was back home in Packer's Gulch.

Ascent of the Middle Sister was one of our choicest climbs. With South Sister (highest of the three) already disposed of, we still have the North Sister to go. And with the cool fall days here, and our mountain fever mounting by degrees, this last of the trio of beautiful Sisters can consider herself in the bag.

ROGUE VALLEY



COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS

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WEDNESDAY - OCT. 26

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Cold temperatures and aging

Now that the warm weather has abandoned us, it is time to think about the effects of cold on the body. Cold can lower the temperature inside the body. A drop in body temperature for prolonged periods is referred to as hypothermia. As the body ages, it can lose the ability to warm itself. A body temperature below 96 degrees Fahrenheit may not seem like much below the normal body temperature, however it can be dangerous. It may lead to an irregular heart rhythm, further leading to heart problems and death. Shivering is the body's response to cold. It warms the body by causing increased muscle cell activity that, in turn, makes heat. Shivering by itself however, does not mean hypothermia. Look for the "umbles" -stumbles, mumbles, fumbles and grumbles- these show how the cold is affecting the way a person's muscles and nerves are working. If you find someone in a chilly room or other signs that they have been in a cool place, watch for confusion or sleepiness, slowed or slurred speech or shallow breathing, a weak pulse or low blood pressure, a change in behavior or in the way a person looks, stiffness in the arms or legs, poor control of body movement or slowed reactions and a lot of shivering or no shivering. What should you do?

Take the person's temperature, if it does not rise over 96, call 911. The only way to know for sure if someone has hypothermia is with a special thermometer that most emergency rooms have. While waiting for help to arrive, keep the person warm and dry. Move them to a warmer place if possible. Wrap the person with blankets, towels, coats- whatever is handy. Even your body warmth will help. Lie close, but be gentle. You may be tempted to rub the person's arms or legs, but it can make the problem worse. The skin of an older person is thinner and more easily torn than the skin of someone younger. A skin tear can cause more body heat to be lost. Hot (but not hot enough to burn) or warm drinks or hot dense foods like oatmeal might help. Foods like honey, bananas, rice crackers or white bread that can be quickly converted to energy should be given if they are fully conscious. Caffeinated or alcoholic beverages should not be given as they will hinder the warming process. Generate heat in the muscles by trying to get the person moving, either under their own power or yours by moving their limbs. (You can contact I.V. Wellness Resources at www.iwellnessresources@gmail.com.)



Illinois Valley Wellness Resources

Senior Bulletin

HOME SAFETY EVALUATIONS

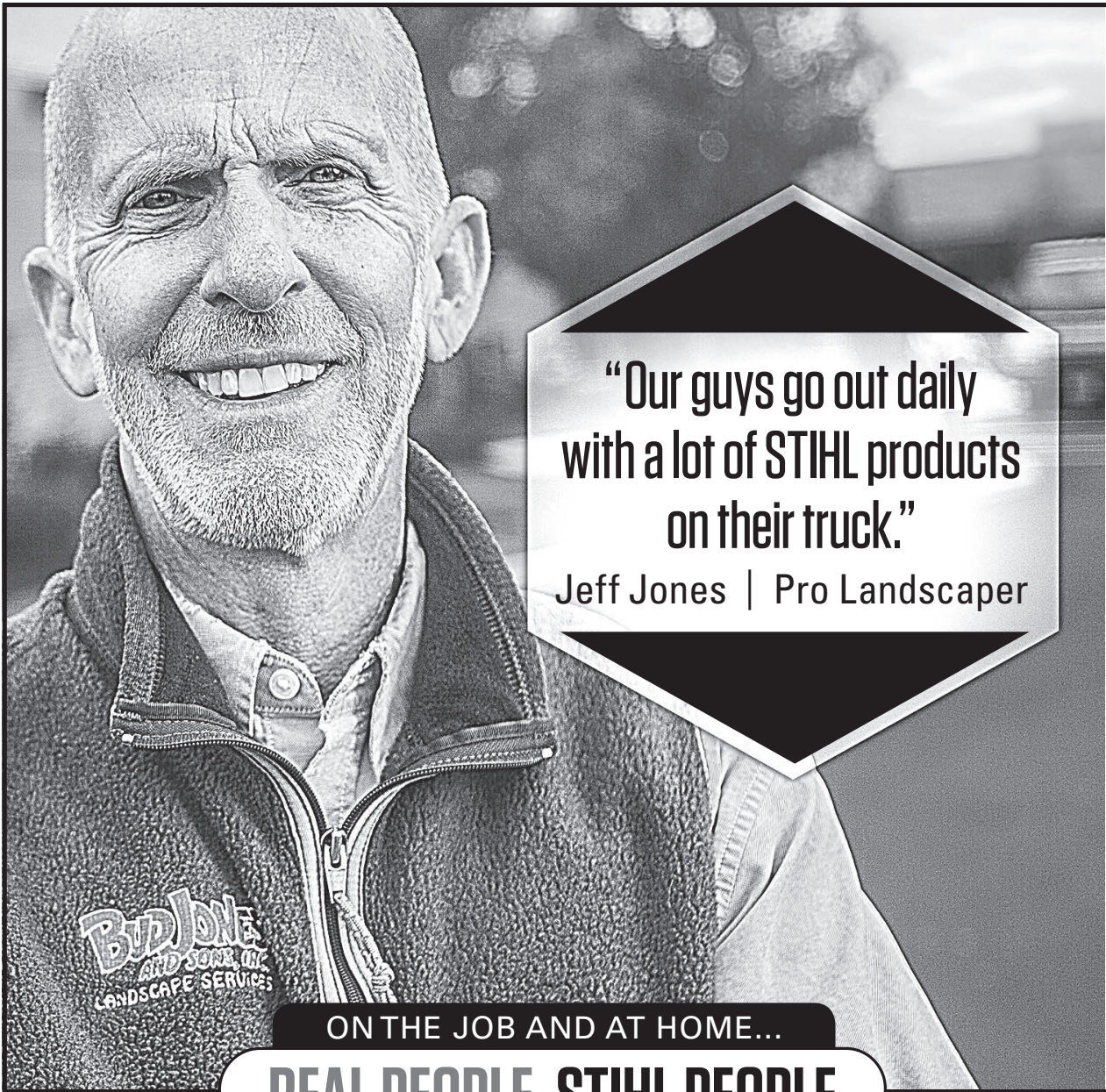
Call Pat Jenkins, RN, MSN with I.V. Wellness Resources for a low cost evaluation at 541-415-0465.

SENIOR COMPANION

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